



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, September 22, 1998**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 22, 1998

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[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 ten petitions.

\* \* \*

[English]

### PETITIONS

#### THE FAMILY

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by grandparents who as a result of death, separation or divorce of their children are often denied access to their grandchildren by their guardians.

Legislation in several provincial jurisdictions, including Quebec and Alberta, contains provisions to ensure the right of access of the grandparent to their grandchildren.

• (1005)

The petitioners would like parliament to support private member's Bill C-340 regarding the rights of grandparents to have access to or custody of the children.

BILL C-68

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, today, as thousands of law-abiding, responsible gun owners are congregating on Parliament Hill, I am pleased to present 605 pages of petitions with 13,933 signatures of concerned citizens from Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, B.C. and the Yukon calling on the government to repeal Bill C-68, the Firearms Act.

My constituents have asked me to keep a running total of the repeal of Bill C-68 petitions. This year I have introduced 744 pages with 17,342 signatures.

These Canadians are very concerned that this billion dollar licensing and registration scheme will do nothing to curtail the criminal use of firearms, is not cost effective in addressing the violent crime problem in Canada, is putting tens of thousands of jobs in jeopardy and is opposed by the majority of police on the street and the governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and the Yukon.

Therefore, they request parliament to repeal Bill C-68, the Firearms Act, and spend their hard earned tax dollars on more cost effective, crime fighting measures such as hiring more police to fight organized crime and more crime prevention programs.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member who spoke before me, I too have a petition to submit with respect to Bill C-68, the gun control legislation.

The petition comes from my constituents in Brandon—Souris who also disagree with the legislation put forward by the current government and feel that the gun registration will not provide what this government believes it will provide to the Canadian public.

I would like to table this petition on behalf of the constituents of Brandon—Souris.

#### MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INVESTMENT

**Mr. John O'Reilly (Haliburton—Victoria—Brock, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have a petition to present calling on parliament to impose a moratorium on the ratification of the MAI until full public hearings on the treaty are held across the country so that Canadians have an opportunity to express their opinions on it.

BILL C-68

**Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege on this particular day, as we have a large number of citizens across Canada coming to protest the gun law, to be able to present on behalf of 100 members of my constituency of Nanaimo—Cowichan a petition expressing their opposition to Bill C-68, the gun registration law. They feel that it is nothing more than an illegitimate tax grab of their money and that it will do nothing to really curtail crime on the streets.

*Routine Proceedings*

They indicate that criminals do not register their guns.

[Translation]

## SENIORS BENEFITS

**Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table before the House a petition signed mainly by citizens of Stornoway, urging the federal government not to consider average family income in the calculation of seniors benefits.

I strongly support my fellow citizens of Stornoway.

## DIVORCE ACT

**Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by many Canadians requesting that the Divorce Act be amended.

They are concerned about grandparents, who are often cut off from their grandchildren after a divorce, death or separation.

[English]

## BILL C-68

**Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to stand on behalf of my constituents of Battlefords—Lloydminster to present petitions on their behalf regarding Bill C-68. With the big rally here today it is very timely.

The constituents are very concerned that their federal government is going down the wrong road on this issue. They pray that the government will rescind Bill C-68 and really take a harder line on criminals.

• (1010)

## JOYRIDING

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present four petitions today. The first petition requests parliament to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to increase the minimum and maximum penalties for the offence of joyriding, since joyriding, which is a misnomer, is car theft and people want it treated as such.

## AGE OF CONSENT

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, other petitioners call upon parliament to amend the Criminal Code to raise the age of consent for sexual activity between young people and an adult from 14 to 16 years of age.

There are some very sad cases in British Columbia where people have been wooed into prostitution at a very young age.

## CHILDREN

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, other petitioners call upon parliament to amend the criminal code to

increase surveillance and supervision of those convicted of sex offences against children.

## YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the fourth petition is a larger petition which calls upon parliament to significantly amend the Young Offenders Act, including but not limited to reducing the minimum age governed by the act from 12 to 10 years of age, allowing the publishing of violent offenders' names, increasing the maximum three year sentence for those convicted of murder, ensuring parental responsibility and giving the parents the right to raise their children.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 62 and 66.

[Text]

Question No. 62—**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:**

Can the government provide a detailed outline of the process used by the Pest Management Review Agency to determine how levels are set for cost recovery?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Cost recovery is a federal government policy established for deficit reduction. For the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, the level of cost recovery was set at \$22 million by cabinet when the agency was created in 1995.

The government process to determine how cost recovery levels are set is a Treasury Board policy. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency implemented this Treasury Board policy under the supervision of Treasury Board officials.

Treasury Board Secretariat analysts provided input to costing of activities and different options on fee collection protocols contained in the *Discussion Paper: Cost Recovery Analysis* that was released on March 1, 1996. They confirmed that our proposed fees were based on cost of providing the service.

Representatives from Treasury Board Secretariat, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Industry Canada, and Natural Resources Canada participated fully in the various impact assessments. Treasury Board Secretariat was involved in the planning of the business impact test conducted on the Pest Management Regulatory Agency cost recovery proposals. Treasury Board Secretariat and Industry Canada representatives attended the April 22, 1996 business impact test meetings with stakeholders. Representatives of the above departments attended the May 29, 1996 meeting of the Interim Canadian Pest Management Advisory Council to discuss the impact assessments. They also attended the September 23, 1996 stakeholder meeting in Toronto where the results of the impact

assessments were presented and participated in the September 30, 1996 consensus-building process to develop a fee structure with stakeholders.

On September 20, 1996, Treasury Board Secretariat called an interdepartmental meeting, attended by the Privy Council Office, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Industry Canada, Natural Resources Canada and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency in preparation for the September 23 and 30, 1996 meetings with stakeholders.

Re-engineering processes established by the new Agency provided savings which reduced the cost recovery portion of the budget to \$15 million. This amount was further reduced by another \$3 million for the next six years through grants from Health Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The total amount to be cost recovered as delineated in the regulatory Impact Analysis Statement of April 16, 1997, is \$12 million.

Question No. 66—**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:**

Concerning individuals and businesses who have to pay fees allocated by the Pest Management review Agency, can the government please provide a list of all user fees these individuals or businesses have to pay?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** There are two types of fees:

1. Application fees to be paid for an examination of an application in respect of a pest control product (PCP). The fee payable for applications received after April 15, 1997 is determined on the basis of the data component(s) included in the application. The fee for the various data components range from \$150.00 to \$98,248.00. The fee payable for one application is equal to the sum of the applicable fees for all the components included in the application. The fee payable for a new technical active and an associate end-use product could amount to \$228,832.00. The regulations also provide certain exemptions. As well reduced applications fees are offered to facilitate access to the Canadian market for low volume, niche products. To be eligible for a reduced fee, a registrant's revenue from sales in Canada of the pest control product(s) during the three years of the sales verification period must be less than ten times the applicable application fees.

2. An annual maintenance fee of \$2,690.00 is charged per registered product (per PCP number) for the right to manufacture or sell a product in Canada. There are reduced fees for products with sales of less than \$89,667.00. The reduced fee is 3% of sales. However, there is a minimum fee of \$75.00.

[Translation]

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Supply*

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—FIREARMS ACT

**Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.)** moved:

That this House condemns the government for its refusal to replace Bill C-68, the Firearms Act, with legislation targeting the criminal misuse of firearms and revoke their firearm registration policy that, in the opinion of this House: (a) confiscates private property; (b) contains unreasonable search and seizure provisions; (c) violates Treasury Board cost/benefit guidelines; (d) represents a waste of taxpayers dollars; (e) is an affront to law-abiding firearms owners; and (f) will exacerbate the illicit trafficking in firearms.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to let the table and the Speaker know that Reform Party members will be dividing their time today into 10 minute speeches each.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to move the motion before us and to speak in favour of it.

It has been said that bad laws are the worst form of tyranny. What we have in Bill C-68, the Firearms Act, is legislation that violates the property rights of Canadians and is a colossal waste of our money.

The intended purpose of Bill C-68, quite frankly, is an insult to the three million firearms owners in Canada. The reason for what I have just said will become evident as we listen to the course of debate throughout the day.

Allow me to begin by explaining the motives of the Liberal government in pursuing a firearms registry.

It was the current health minister and former justice minister responsible for this legislation who said that it is his firm belief that only the police and military should have access to firearms.

Let us analyse that statement. What we have is a Toronto lawyer with no concept of what life is like in rural Canada. The minister is trying to lead Canadians to believe that criminalizing the legal ownership of firearms will somehow reduce crime.

Let us be clear. We are talking about hunting rifles and shotguns, not handguns. We have had a handgun registry since 1934 and we all know the extent to which crime has been reduced by that measure, do we not?

I would like the minister to explain what intellectually stunted logic he is using by making a farmer in Saskatchewan register his .22 rifle. Will that somehow help him to sleep better at night? Will it somehow reduce crime? How will that affect the criminal misuse of firearms?

*Supply*

• (1015)

The minister may not be aware of this fact but criminals do not register their guns nor do they break into people's homes and decide not to steal a gun because it is registered. I will go out on a limb and suggest that the criminal who does steal a firearm is not going to decide whether or not to use it in the commission of an offence based on whether it is or is not registered.

Not only does the former justice minister believe that Canadians should not be entitled to own firearms but Liberal senator Sharon Carstairs said that registration of hunting rifles is an important first step in socially re-engineering Canadians. The absurdity of that statement is self-evident. It is important that we understand where these people are coming from. They do not understand that to a farmer in Saskatchewan a .22 rifle is a tool. Toronto lawyers do not usually face rabid skunks walking on to their property. Then again many farmers in Saskatchewan would argue that a Toronto lawyer is a rabid skunk. In any event, the usefulness of a rifle as a tool to rural Canadians is very important. However, that fact may not be readily apparent to those who are trying to socially re-engineer Canadians.

What do they mean when they say that registration is a first step? Under Bill C-68 the justice minister can by order in council, in other words without coming before parliament, declare any firearm prohibited. What we have is a slippery slope. The minister can declare 10 gauge shotguns prohibited and they can be confiscated without compensation to the owners. Then it could be 12 gauge shotguns, 16 gauge, 20 gauge and eventually the elimination of all legal firearm ownership in Canada.

The motion we have put forward today covers an extensive list of deficiencies in this bill. I will speak to one aspect of the motion, Treasury Board cost benefit guidelines. According to Treasury Board policy when the government is preparing to establish new regulations it must provide a cost benefit analysis of those regulations. The policy states specifically: "When regulating, regulatory authorities must ensure that benefits outweigh the costs to Canadians, their governments and businesses, and the limited resources available to government are used where they will do the most good".

The new gun registration system established under Bill C-68 has failed the Treasury Board test. In particular, the government has left a number of important questions unanswered. For instance, what is the approximate number of individuals to be licensed? The government does not know. What is the approximate number of firearms to be registered? That is undetermined. What will the impact on businesses and the economy be? It is yet to be seen. How many jobs will be lost? How many business closures will there be? Again we do not know. Will these regulations improve public safety? Clearly the evidence before us which we will see today is very strongly in the negative.

With these questions unanswered it is impossible to determine the cost effectiveness of registration. Despite this, the government

is pushing ahead with its registration plan. The reason is that it is the government's first step in eliminating legal firearm ownership in Canada.

Registration was supposed to begin October 1 but that date has been pushed back to December 1. The registration system was originally projected to cost \$85 million. Cost projections are now well over \$120 million. Some are estimating the system will actually cost over \$500 million. Considering these huge sums of money I think we could agree this money could be better spent on areas such as health care, education and tax cuts to lower and middle income Canadians who are burdened excessively by the high spending ways of this Liberal government. The government did not do a cost benefit analysis of this legislation because it did not want to impede its efforts to eliminate legal firearm ownership in Canada.

• (1020)

I am very pleased that the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville has seconded my motion. I urge all members of this House to listen very carefully not only to what I have said and not only to the analysis of the legislation that we are about to hear from the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville but to all hon. members who speak in support of this motion today.

**Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly enjoyed the presentation by the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt today on Bill C-68.

The one thing he did not touch on and the way the government is selling this is on the proof that there will be tremendous criminal reduction in activity there. There will be fewer suicides. Domestic violence of course will be toned down and so on.

Does he have any thoughts in that regard? Does he know other jurisdictions where this has been tried? What were the results?

**Mr. Jim Pankiw:** Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that in every jurisdiction in the world where a gun registration exists, not one case of a crime solved or prevented can be demonstrated.

I would also like to correct myself earlier. I believe the leader of official opposition will be resuming debate at the end of this question and answer session.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, subsequent to the Liberals passing this legislation in my riding five people were blown away one night with a gun. I do not think we found the registration certificates of those who did it in the area. They did not leave anything behind.

I guess it brings to mind the question about really how much gun control legislation will prevent crime. I would like the hon. member to address that situation specifically. How much in Canada

are we preventing crime, the criminal use of firearms, by this legislation?

**Mr. Jim Pankiw:** Mr. Speaker, as I explained in my speech, what we see from the criminal misuse of handguns is that first of all, criminals do not register their handguns. Second, the registration of a handgun does not prevent its theft by a criminal or subsequent use in a crime by that criminal.

I think by logical extension we can assume that the registration of hunting rifles will serve no useful purpose whatsoever. The costs that we will have to bear as a result of this registration system will be enormous.

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I just want members to know that in replying, the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt did not reply to the question that was asked of him.

He was asked to supply details, some facts, some statistics, not some speculation.

**Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this issue reminds me very much of one that occurred last year during the election campaign when millions of Canadians were very upset with the government for proposed regulations for natural health products. They were millions of signatures on petitions and this sort of thing.

We have the same kind of situation again where there are millions of people who are very much against the gun registration law proposed by this government in Bill C-68.

I am wondering if my colleague could perhaps enlighten us all on the reasons why this government continues to press on with, this flying in the face of the wishes of millions of people across this country.

• (1025)

**Mr. Jim Pankiw:** Mr. Speaker, that question can be asked of almost anything this Liberal government does. Why has this government increased taxes 37 times in the last four years? Why does it impoverish middle income Canadians with their excessive tax burdens?

Those questions are harder to answer than the one regarding why it is pursuing a firearms registration opposed by so many Canadians and which will clearly achieve no benefit to Canadians in that regard.

The answer to that question is because it views it as a tool, a first step in eliminating the legal ownership of firearms in Canada. In the Liberals' minds if they can have everyone register their firearms then they will know where those firearms are, what they are and they can systematically by order in council declare them prohibited and then confiscate them.

### *Supply*

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on today's supply day motion for two reasons, first because it does articulate a longstanding Reform policy that Bill C-68, the Firearms Act, should be repealed for obvious reasons that are stated in the motion.

My second reason for participating is today a large group of Canadians are assembling on Parliament Hill for what they had styled as a fed up rally in which they will be exercising their democratic rights to protest a government policy to which they object.

I want to address my remarks both to the House and to this broader audience of Canadians who are here today mainly because I think a democratic protest, the right to democratic protest and the necessity of this House to recognize democratic process need some beefing up and some reassurance at this time.

The members on this side of the House have observed since we came here in 1993 that the present Liberal government is weak on democracy. The Liberals permit no free votes in this House on government bills. They continue to permit 25% of the members of this parliament, I refer to our unelected, unaccountable senators, to be appointed by one man, the Prime Minister, rather than to be elected by the people.

Last year the Prime Minister and foreign affairs minister told the RCMP that the rights of an Asian dictator to freedom from embarrassment were more important than the rights of Canadians to freedom of speech and freedom of expression.

The government is weak on democracy, even hostile to the exercise of democratic freedoms. So the presence of this group of Canadians here in Ottawa today in particular to express their democratic objections to Bill C-68 needs some bolstering, some amplification and some recognition in this Chamber, and that is my second reason for participating in this debate.

With respect to Bill C-68, the government's ill conceived gun control legislation, I was the last speaker on that bill when it went through the House in June 1995. Some members will remember that was the conclusion of a long debate in which members such as the member for Crowfoot, the member for Yorkton—Melville, the member for Wild Rose and others put forward a host of amendments concerning the defects of the bill. Many of those defects have now come home to roost. At that time they were academic, sort of projections of what might happen. Now they are self-evident to many Canadians.

Members, not just on this side of the House but on other sides of the House, put forward more than 200 amendments to try to correct the defects of that bill. It was typical of the government that it disregarded every argument made about the defects of the bill and ignored and rejected every amendment, including amendments put forward by its own members.

*Supply*

The official opposition's position on Bill C-68 has not changed from 1995. We maintain, first of all, that it is constitutionally defective. It infringes on individual property rights. As members of this House know, the one area where our bill of rights is defective, mainly because of the prejudices of the Liberals who put it together, is in the area of economic rights. It contains no affirmation of economic rights and therefore it is easier for legislation to infringe on things like property rights.

• (1030)

However this bill is also constitutionally defective in that it infringes on provincial jurisdiction. Again we have a case of provinces challenging the jurisdiction of the federal government in this area.

Personally I am becoming increasingly alarmed at the number of confrontations between this government and the provinces. It has infringed on rights of the provinces in the area of health care. It has slashed transfer payments to provinces in that area.

The Prime Minister has a row going with the premiers on the proper distribution of rights and finances with respect to health care. There is a row with the provinces over the administration of gun control. The list of confrontations between a government that professes to be committed to positive federal provincial relations is getting longer and longer and therefore we cannot ignore the confrontation developing over Bill C-68.

We also maintain that the legislation is administratively unworkable and will lead to a wasteful expenditure of public funds which will in no way enhance public safety. No one in this House, certainly no one on this side of the House, believes the estimates of cost that are presented by ministers when they bring forward bills like Bill C-68.

You will note that already, Mr. Speaker, the projected costs of administering the gun registration are three to four to five times higher than the figures that were quoted here by the minister when he introduced the legislation.

The cost figures brought in with government proposals are utterly meaningless. We have to develop a multiplier, look at which minister it is, depending on how soft headed they are, and multiply by five, ten or fifteen to get the real cost implications of what they are doing.

We therefore maintain that this legislation should be repealed and replaced with tough Criminal Code amendments targeted at the criminal misuse of firearms. That has been our position since 1995; it is our position at this time.

I want to conclude by saying that this is our position. I do not think anyone doubts our commitment to it but more needs to be

done. I address myself more to the people who are assembling in Ottawa today to protest this legislation. More needs to be done to translate opposition to this legislation into political action that will repeal it and replace it.

If the House actually practised freedom of voting, it would be possible to amend this type of legislation and even replace it without defeating or replacing the government. Unfortunately because of the rigidities of the government, the intransigence of the Prime Minister on getting into the 20th century before it is over and permitting a more democratic exercise of freedom in voting in the House, the only way to repeal a government's position in the House is to get a bigger majority and actually replace the government.

Bill C-68 will not be repealed and other Liberal policies will not be repealed or replaced until there are 150-plus members in the House who are committed to doing so. It cannot be done by 50 or 60 members no matter how sincere we are or how hard we work. To win votes, not just arguments in the House of Commons, we need a majority of 150-plus members.

I therefore appeal to the people who are assembling in Ottawa today. I commend their efforts, those who are organizing this fed up rally, as one of the items on their posters says, to organize those who oppose Liberal policies into a politically powerful alternative voting block.

As Leader of the Official Opposition I have a constitutional duty not just to hold the government accountable for its mistakes but to help create a viable alternative to the government, a united alternative to the Liberals for the 21st century.

This is what my colleagues and I will be devoting much of our attention to over the next year. We welcome the advice, encouragement and support of the people meeting in Ottawa today.

In the meantime we therefore welcome the opportunity to make clear our position on this issue and urge support of the motion:

That this House condemns the government for its refusal to replace Bill C-68, the Firearms Act, with legislation targeting the criminal misuse of firearms and revoke their firearms registration policy that, in the opinion of this House: (a) confiscates private property; (b) contains unreasonable search and seizure provisions; (c) violates Treasury Board cost/benefit guidelines; (d) represents a waste of taxpayers dollars; (e) is an affront to law-abiding firearms owners; and (f) will exacerbate the illicit trafficking in firearms.

• (1035)

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am amazed that the Leader of the Opposition would stand in the House to attack a bill that deals specifically with the safety of our communities from coast to coast. I am surprised because I thought the Leader of the Opposition would stand to say that he was sorry his party voted against Bill C-68. I thought the Leader of the



*Supply*

Opposition would stand to talk about all the benefits that exist in Bill C-68.

I represent an urban riding. In my constituency—and I would say this is probably the case across the nation from coast to coast—there is overwhelming support for Bill C-68. There is overwhelming support for banning firearms. There is overwhelming support for the government's initiative when it comes to community safety across the country.

I am surprised to see the Leader of the Opposition stand in the House to attack Bill C-68 and cater to the fundamentalists of firearms, those who have not taken the time and energy to read the bill to see what is in it. I have not seen one of those people come forward with a logical approach or logical reason for being opposed to it.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition to tell all victims of stolen firearms specifically what is in Bill C-68 that he does not like.

**Mr. Preston Manning:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. First let me remind him that I also represent an urban riding, so I am not unfamiliar with the concerns of urban voters.

Second, let me make it abundantly clear to the hon. member—perhaps the fact that we have said this a thousand times still has not permeated his mind—that we are primarily concerned about public safety but do not believe this approach to gun control enhances public safety one iota.

The member mentioned what his constituents are concerned about, people who stole firearms and used them against other citizens. Note the word stole. This is criminal use of firearms which is precisely our position: target gun control legislation at criminals. That is not what the bill does and that is what we propose.

Last, with respect to the matter of so-called public support for the bill, I suggest it is exactly in the same category as the Charlottetown accord. The government comes out with a proposal accompanied by all the PR it can muster, all the spin-doctoring and so on.

When that happens the general level of support for that type of thing within the first few months is 60% to 65%. We have seen this time and time again, not just at the federal level but at the provincial level. However, as the public starts to learn what it is about, as the provinces and the municipal officials that have to administer it start to talk about the difficulties, as the costs start to pile up, and as they find out that the public has been misled as to the cost, where does that support go? It goes exactly in the same direction as it did on the Charlottetown accord. It goes down.

At the end of the day there will be more support for the position on gun control that is being put forward by the official opposition

than there will be for the bill that was put forward by the government.

• (1040)

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the comments of the Leader of the Opposition. Generally speaking we in the Conservative Party embrace many of those comments. We are united in that approach, but I would quickly add that we are not united in anything else with the Reform Party.

My question for the Leader of the Opposition is with respect to costs. I know this is a broad, sweeping piece of legislation which touches on civil rights and other property related issues like the ones before the court in Alberta.

This debates today comes on the heels of the debate yesterday concerning Bill C-68. In terms of priority and the spiralling costs, would not the money be better spent on a registry that registers criminals and not guns?

**Mr. Preston Manning:** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member's comment that we are united in this approach. We are hopeful that we may be even more united in some other approaches, but that is a subject for further discussion.

I agree with the suggestion implicit in the member's question. The dollars that are being invested in the registration of firearms, particularly when the people we are trying to get at, the people who will use firearms in a criminal manner, are the last people to participate in the registry. The justice minister can put an add in the *Mafia* magazine saying please register your firearms, but it is entirely unlikely that he will get a response that will justify that expense.

I concur with the suggestion of the hon. member that if one is to register it might be better to register the people who are inclined to use firearms in a criminal way rather than to focus on the weapons.

**Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again I rise in the House to participate in yet another debate on gun control initiated by the official opposition that just does not get it. Also I want to speak to Canadians.

We have given ample opportunity in the House and across Canada to everyone concerned to speak to this issue, but Her Majesty's Official Opposition continues to misinform the public and to openly support the highly visible and vocal gun lobby.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about democratic freedoms. That is why we have people outside the House today demonstrating their opinion. In some other countries in the world, to get on the Hill as in this case they would have to get past walls that are six feet high and three feet thick. If there are countries in the world where there is freedom of speech it certainly is this country. We should applaud that, not condemn it as the opposition leader says. The

*Supply*

minister is currently at a press conference and will be speaking later in the House.

Let us talk about some of the statistics because there is a lot of support in the country for the legislation. In a recent Angus Reid poll 82% of Canadians approved the universal registration of rifles and shotguns; 72% in rural communities. The opposition is completely out of touch with Canadians.

In Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver handguns are seized as often as rifles and shotguns: 70% of firearms that are seized are legally owned and for handguns it is less than 10%. Approximately 40% of women killed by their husbands are shot. It appears all these statistics have no bearing on the opposition's memory. Some 78% of legally owned guns—

**An hon. member:** It is women, after all.

**Ms. Eleni Bakopanos:** Yes, it is women after all. Some 1,400 lives are lost each year at a cost—and we talked about the medical cost—of \$70 million. That is a burden on our health care system.

[*Translation*]

When one hears certain members of the opposition, not to mention the loud protesters, one might think the government had not done anything in recent years to address the concerns of the gun lobby. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The legislation passed by this House includes, in section 18, an unprecedented obligation on the part of the government to table draft regulations before each House of Parliament and to ensure that such regulations are reviewed by an appropriate parliamentary committee.

• (1045)

We tabled regulations in this House on two occasions, first in November 1996 and then at the end of October 1997.

[*English*]

In respect of the first set of regulations, the standing committee made a total of 39 recommendations. We were able to accept in whole or in part 38 of these 39 recommendations and to make amendments to the regulations to reflect those recommendations. For the second set tabled at the end of October of last year, the committee again made 39 recommendations of which we were able to accept in whole or in part 35 of them and to make consequent amendments.

When the statute was passing through the House, concerns were expressed about whether the statute provided appropriate opportunity to protect the constitutional and treaty rights of Canada's aboriginal peoples. Amendments were made to the statute to permit development of regulations respecting the matter in which any

provision of the statute or the regulations applies to any of the aboriginal peoples of Canada and to adapt any such provision for the purpose of its application to aboriginal peoples.

We developed a full set of regulations called the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada Adaptation Regulations. Both the development and implementation of these regulations have involved consultations and communication with a wide variety of native communities across the country.

My former colleague, Mr. Anawak from the Northwest Territories, stated that it does not prevent our native people from putting food on the table, nor does it take away their guns; it simply means that they must register them. They still can keep their guns.

More recently we have made more adjustments and accommodations. There was concern about our forms. We engaged focus groups and held consultations with interest groups. We revised the forms extensively and in a way that improves their acceptability to all concerned.

There has been concern raised again from the same circles about certain categories of individuals who were the victims of unintended consequences of the legislation, particularly in respect of some categories of restricted firearms. The minister has indicated that an amnesty will be available to provide additional time for those persons to bring themselves into compliance with the statute.

Yesterday the minister postponed the implementation of this program for 60 days to address the suggestion from law enforcement organizations that more time would ensure more complete data input and thus enhance public security.

[*Translation*]

This whole legislation has to do with public security. We want to make sure that firearm users have the required permits and that, before they obtain such permits, they can demonstrate that they are responsible, law-abiding citizens, that they were never involved in criminal activities, and that they have received at least some basic training in the safe handling of firearms.

Moreover, in order to better control the illegal movement of firearms and to provide better tools to police officers when they conduct criminal investigations or try to settle family disputes, all firearms will be registered by the year 2003.

These are major public initiatives that relate to public security and that are applied in a customized and responsible manner to all Canadians. As my colleague, Mr. Rock, indicated, Bill C-68 has to do with the kind of country in which we want to live. It has to do with the kind of society we want for ourselves and for our families. Passing that legislation means our lifestyle and values will be determined by all Canadians, and not by the gun lobby.

*Supply*

[English]

Firearms cause more than three deaths daily in Canada. The rate of mortality from gunshot wounds varies among provinces and territories, ranging from 5.7 to 21.2 per 100,000 people. Most deaths from gunshot wounds occur in the home, with more occurring in rural areas than in cities, and are inflicted with legally acquired hunting guns. The cost of the consequences for the improper use of firearms in Canada has been estimated at \$6.6 billion per year.

The official opposition leader spoke a lot about making changes to the Criminal Code. The Firearms Act is part of an overall strategy of this government for safer communities. It is one piece of the puzzle. This includes changes to the youth justice system, to crime prevention, to victims assistance and the setting up of a DNA data bank. We believe that all those together will lead to safer homes and safer cities.

• (1050)

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the myths, the misleading of the public continues even in that speech, a couple of years after the bill was passed.

For example, one of the things the minister trotted out is that large numbers of people out there support Bill C-68. She quoted a poll from Angus Reid in which 82% of the people contacted support gun control. What she neglected to say, and this is a key point, is that when people find out what the gun control measures that this government has put in place are, the support drops to less than 45%.

The government has given the impression, which I am sure is just pure politics, that it is doing something wonderful for society by bringing in a gun registration scheme that is already costing \$200 million, two and a half times the original projected cost, and will probably by the government's own figures cost \$1 billion by the year 2015.

When the public finds out what the registration scheme is all about, support drops to less than 45%. In fact it is in the neighbourhood of 43%. She neglects to mention that when she quotes these polls that have been taken.

Another thing that she trotted out is that there are over 1,000 lives lost in regard to this but she neglects to mention that there is no connection between this registration scheme and any way that the number would be reduced. The Liberals always trot out these figures in some attempt to convince the public that what they are doing is going to reduce that number.

She then goes into a description of the form, a form that has been described by their own members as being no more complex than the Income Tax Act. She describes this piece of paper. What she

does not tell us is how laying this piece of paper beside one's gun is going to reduce crime. Nowhere in the entire world is there documented evidence that this reduces crime. She neglects to say that when she describes this.

My question for her comes from her very own user group that has said there is going to be a 50% error rate in regard to this registration scheme. The police are asking for this. If there is going to be an error rate, at what level will the error rate be acceptable?

The reason this system has been delayed for the fourth time is because the government cannot make it work and it will never work. My question for her is at what level does the error rate have to be reduced so that this will be some kind of a system that might have a chance of doing anything? At what level would she accept this error rate that she described to be?

**Ms. Eleni Bakopanos:** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to quote from the hon. member himself about how he thinks that the American system is the best system in the world and how proud he is that we should have the same type of system in this country. Thank God we do not have the same system in this country.

As far as the error rate, one of the reasons we are delaying the implementation of this is to make sure that there will be no errors in the system.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. parliamentary secretary made reference to the American system. I presume she does not realize that there is no monolithic, all-encompassing legal system in the United States governing firearms.

The District of Columbia for example has the most stringent firearms regulations in all of the western world, much more stringent than anything she and her government are proposing in this bill. It also has the highest rate of firearms homicides in the western world. It is 80 per 100,000 if anyone can believe it. This is in a strictly regulated environment.

In the wide open state of North Dakota where anyone over the age of 14 can possess and use unsupervised almost any type of firearm, the homicide rate per 100,000 is roughly equal to that of Japan, 1.5.

• (1055)

I wonder if she is even aware of these circumstances. Has she done any sort of study of gun control legislation as it pertains to the United States and around the world? I wonder how she would explain these anomalies which seem to indicate there are factors more important than mere possession of firearms or registration of firearms in firearms homicides.

**Ms. Eleni Bakopanos:** Mr. Speaker, speaking of statistics, the murder rate with guns in the United States is 10 times higher than it is in this country. Let us get the statistics right. Gun death and

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injury rates are higher in western Canada and rural areas because of the use of firearms. There is also a direct link—

**An hon. member:** Answer the question.

**Ms. Eleni Bakopanos:** You are not listening. You don't want to hear the answer.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order please. It is very difficult for the Chair to hear the answer in light of the noise in the chamber. Perhaps members might restrain themselves so all hon. members can hear the answer of the parliamentary secretary which I know will be very brief.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Is there no requirement whatsoever in this House for a member opposite to answer the questions directly?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member is an experienced member. He knows that when members are asked questions they can answer them in the way they see fit. I am sure hon. members will want to be able to hear whatever answer is given. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice.

**Ms. Eleni Bakopanos:** Mr. Speaker, thank you. I suppose they are listening.

There is a direct link between access to firearms and firearms death and injury. This comes from statistics collected all over the world. If they are interested in having statistics, they are there, but the members of the official opposition are not interested in the statistics nor in the truth. They are interested in supporting a gun lobby that is using its power to come to the House and to tell us to support the official opposition in misinforming the Canadian public.

**Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There is such a large number of government members who wish to participate in this debate that I want to inform you and the entire House that we will be splitting our time in subsequent rounds.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member from the Liberal Party did not answer the question so I seek the unanimous consent of the House to allow her time to answer the question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to extend the time for questions and comments?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is no unanimous consent.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, gun control legislation, it will be recalled, is legislation that we supported.

The primary goal of this legislation—and this is something I remember, having been a member of the Standing Committee on Justice at the time—was to reduce the number of incidents in which people going through a psychologically difficult period in their life come across a gun and turn it on themselves, with fatal or very serious results, having first in some cases fatally wounded members of their own family, their wife or children, or strangers.

This extremely tragic kind of behaviour, attributable to temporary psychological distress, would not have taken place if a gun had not been available at that particular point in time.

• (1100)

This is not the case with hunters or employees whose activities give them legitimate access to firearms. Statistics show that this kind of accident occurs when guns are stored, sometimes for many years, with ammunition nearby. The gun has not been used in ages. The original owner no longer uses it. In short, there was no need for the weapon to be available to anyone. Unfortunately, it was available at a particular and tragic point in time and was used to kill one or more people.

Faced with legislation that could reduce this risk, that could save human lives, one could hardly do other than support the underlying principles.

The then Minister of Justice introduced a bill in the House the very purpose of which was to reduce these risks, to save lives. Faced with these objectives and principles, the Bloc Québécois could only agree with a bill that preserved human life, a very precious commodity.

At the time, however, the Bloc Québécois asked the Minister of Justice to make a number of amendments. An initial group of amendments was intended to ensure that hunters and members of shooting clubs were not unduly hindered by the legislation in the exercise of their sport. The Bloc Québécois introduced a number of amendments.

Some of them were accepted. The Bloc Québécois' proposal, for example, that the costs of registration be low, was well received by the government, and the costs are very reasonable indeed. However, in the case of the Bloc's proposal that a hunter's failure to register be decriminalized, the government's response was less positive.

The Bloc sought to have gun handling courses taken in the past recognized, and the bill permits this.

In the end, the bill as amended got the support of the Bloc, first and foremost because of the principle of the value of human life and then because a number of amendments had smoothed the rough edges. Today, however, we are well past that situation. Regulations have been submitted to the Standing Committee on Justice and discussed. These regulations were introduced and tabled here in the

House and are now part of the package permitting the legislation to be applied.

In this regard, I would like to quote to you two paragraphs of the Bloc's dissenting opinion in the justice committee report on the proposed regulations introduced by the minister in connection with the Firearms Act, and I quote:

Representatives of industry, hunters and gun clubs all complained that they had not really been given the time to prepare properly. Moreover, even though some witnesses had devoted hours to putting together briefs as best they might, in many cases as volunteers, and had submitted them to the Committee Clerk, the briefs were never distributed to the Committee members because there was no time to have them translated into both official languages. It is attitudes like this on the part of the federal government that undermine the credibility of elected representatives and institutions in the eyes of the people.

I will finish the quote:

While the Bloc Québécois supports the concept of gun control and endorses the Committee's recommendations, it strongly deplores the fact that the disgraceful haste insisted on by the government and the Committee's Liberal majority has cast doubt on the quality of these regulations and put at risk the support of all Canadians and Quebecers, which will be indispensable in the near future for the implementation of such an important piece of legislation.

• (1105)

We have indeed got to that point. The problem is not the principle of the law; it is not that the law wants to save human lives. The problem is the way it is being applied at the present time.

We are faced with cost overruns, unmet timetables, things that had been anticipated and with which the Bloc Québécois cannot agree.

But, as I read the motion put to us by the Reform Party, I see that it swings the pendulum totally in the other direction. We are in favour of the principle of the legislation. The Reform Party has never been in favour of the principle of the legislation, and that is where our paths diverge.

Consequently, we cannot be in agreement with the Reform Party motion, although we continue to strongly disagree with the way the Minister of Justice is currently proceeding with implementation of this legislation.

I offer one example: believe it or not, they are calling for volunteer auditors. I have here a letter dated July 8 and signed by Mr. Buisson, the superintendent of the national firearms registry. He says:

The business auditors designated by the director are volunteers who will be responsible for checking business inventories and all transfers to and from those inventories.

This creates a situation in which reliance is being placed on people's good will to ensure application of the very mechanics of

### *Supply*

the legislation, of the regulations, and is just one more example of how this legislation is not being properly implemented.

In conclusion, the Bloc Québécois maintains that, for the sake of human lives, the legislation implemented must deliver the services we expect from it. The value of human lives, however, is such that implementation of this legislation must be done in such a way as to respect all those involved, and this is not the case.

[English]

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to add my voice of concern to the direction in which this government is leading this country.

I am going to ask a question at the beginning of this debate. Why are we debating this issue today when there should be other issues that are much more important in this country? The reason we are debating this today is because this issue strikes right to the heart of what is wrong with this government. This issue strikes right to the heart of the problems we are trying to solve in this parliament.

We have had politics enter the area of justice and because of that the government is putting the whole country at risk.

Why do I say that this is politics?

Since the passage of Bill C-68 and all the debate that took place in 1994 and 1995, I have been asked many times "Why is the government forcing this upon us when it flies in the face of common sense? Why is the government pushing forth with this bill?" People are asking me "What will it accomplish?"

I have to be honest with them. I cannot read the mind of the government, but I observe, as we look at this legislation, that this government is trying to create the impression that it is doing something wonderful for society by introducing a gun registration scheme. The government is equating this gun registration scheme with reducing crime in society.

• (1110)

When we scratch the surface, when we look underneath, we realize that there is nothing there. Then people say "How does laying a piece of paper beside your gun reduce crime?" I say that it cannot. It does not. And nowhere is there any documented evidence in the world to support this. Countries have tried this around the world.

The government has not even answered the question that I have asked many times. We have had the registration of handguns since 1934. Give us some evidence of how this has saved lives; of how this has reduced crime. The government cannot do it. It flies right at the very heart of democracy and debate. This government has hidden information from the Canadian people. They have not been

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able to properly judge this legislation and other legislation that comes before the House. This is a very good example of what is wrong with this country.

The demonstration that is going to take place this afternoon demonstrates, just like it did in Vancouver, that we can demonstrate all we want but our government does not listen. It ploughs ahead in the face of contradictory facts with legislation that will not work.

Many Canadians have been deceived. That is my theme. I want to emphasize it. They have been deceived by their own government into believing that gun control is crime control and that it will somehow make our lives safer.

There are several myths that have been spread about by the Liberals. Once people find out the truth about them, the support for the registration drops dramatically.

The hon. parliamentary secretary quoted the statistic that 82% of Canadians support this. She did not finish the story. When the polling company asks them whether they would support it if the costs are \$200 million, as they now are, rather than \$85 million, or when they rise to \$1 billion whether they would still support it, the support goes way down. It becomes a minority of people. That is hidden.

The government always creates the impression that this is supported by the public, but it is not. Once the public finds out the true facts it drops dramatically.

Why are these myths being spread about by the Liberals? There are at least 10 of them. Unfortunately, in a 10 minute speech I do not have time to touch on all of them. One of the myths that is spread is that it is going to be cost effective. It is not.

Originally we were told that this was going to cost \$85 million. That number disappeared a long time ago. In fact the budget for this year is over \$133 million and that is just for the upfront costs. That is not for the hidden costs of all the other departments, what the provinces have to spend and the cost that is probably well and beyond that. Also, the year previous it was \$67 million. That is \$200 million in just the last couple of years.

Then the government goes on to tell us that it is going to take \$50 million or \$60 million per year to maintain the system. By the government's own numbers that is \$1 billion by the year 2015.

If we ask people whether they would prefer to have that \$50 million or \$60 million per year spent fighting organized crime rather than a registration scheme, guess what they say? "Let's fight organized crime. We don't need a bureaucratic boondoggle, such as the registration system, in this country. It will do very little. It is not cost effective. We would rather have \$50 million or \$60 million to fight organized crime, which is a big problem. Target the criminal, not the law-abiding citizen".

If we ask them whether they would rather have \$50 million or \$60 million to set up a DNA data bank, guess what they say? "We would rather register criminals than law-abiding citizens. We would rather have that facility available to us".

If we ask them whether they would rather have \$50 million or \$60 million spent compensating victims of crime, or victims of the HIV blood scandal that we had in this country and is still being debated, there is no doubt as to where they would spend that \$50 million or \$60 million.

• (1115)

That needs to be debated in this House. We are in charge of the public purse. We have to decide as parliamentarians by looking at the big picture what is happening in the country and how we are going to spend taxpayer money.

When people find out about this registration scheme they would rather have the money spent elsewhere. If they were asked whether they would rather have \$50 million or \$60 million spent fighting child pornography or child prostitution, guess what they would say.

The government claims it does not have money for many of these very important things and yet it spends it on a registration scheme that is soon going to cost us \$1 billion.

When members of the public are asked whether they would rather have \$50 million or \$60 million spent on crime prevention or a gun registration scheme, they always choose the crime prevention, or \$50 million or \$60 million to combat family violence. Guess what they say. They would rather have the money spent combating family violence. When asked if they would rather \$50 million or \$60 million be put into police resources so that they can investigate all the unsolved murders and sex offences, guess what the public says.

Today in British Columbia they are short \$15 million which translates into 300 policemen on the street. They are short that much in order to provide the proper law enforcement resources in that province alone, and this exists across the country. Instead we put money into a bureaucratic scheme so that every gun owner can put a piece of paper beside his or her gun.

This defies common sense. This is ridiculous and the public is fed up with it. There are so many myths associated with this that need to be dispelled. One is the cost and the other is the that the public supports this.

Not only does Bill C-68 not accomplish anything, it does the exact opposite of what is intended. It takes resources and money from areas where it could be much better spent as I have just explained and puts it into forming more big government. It also takes police off the street. It takes away police resources and puts it into an area where it is much more needed.

*Supply*

We do not need this. We need to have our police on the street and a registration scheme ties up the police behind their desks, not out on the street where they would do a lot more good. When the public realizes that it would do the opposite of what is intended, of what the government has said, the support for this drops dramatically.

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to direct a question to my friend from Yorkton—Melville, the first chance I have had an opportunity to do that in this parliament.

I suggest this is a kind of issue where there should be a free vote in the House of Commons, where we could have the reflection of the great diversity of this country.

I think we need in general parliamentary reform, electoral reform to make this a more democratic institution that represents the general will of the Canadian people. After all, that is what parliament is supposed to be for.

The Reform Party has talked for a long time about more free votes in the House of Commons, reflecting the diversity of its constituents. Can he assure us at this time that there will be a free vote on this issue in the Reform Party so that we can see that reflection and diversity in the Reform caucus? It has talked about that for years. It was a promise in 1993. It was a promise in 1997. I remember those promises very well. I have not seen that promise reflected in the House of Commons since its members were elected to this place. I wonder whether on this issue, which is not really an ideological issue per se, this might be an example of a free vote in the Reform Party of Canada.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, it is with great joy that I point out to the member that we had a free vote on Bill C-68 in this House and we were roundly criticized by the NDP which did not have a free vote on this. We did. We had a free vote and our members are free to express that. They can represent their constituents. In fact, we go beyond that. We would like to see a lot more democracy in this country.

• (1120)

I remind the member that he has been going around the country saying we should get rid of the Senate and he has joined together with a Liberal member of parliament from Ontario to do that. Unfortunately that would not improve the democracy in this country. We need to have a Senate that has some free votes and some accountability and is not appointed by the prime minister.

We go well beyond what this member is saying and we truly want to democratize this institution. Those demonstrators who are out there today show very clearly one of the problems we have with this country and that is that when people express themselves they

are not being listened to by this government. I think it should be of major concern to this member here that the people of Canada cannot express themselves and let their will be known.

**Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on September 1 the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville told Alberta radio listeners that Canada should look to the United States for leadership on guns. He was asked a specific question about the American practice of allowing people to carry concealed weapons. He told the host and listeners: "I think we should take a look at their experience there. I think they are ahead of us on that".

I come from Windsor, right across the river from Detroit, Michigan, which used to be the murder capital of the United States. Every day children are shot there in schools and on the street. They talk about it on their newscasts like it is a car accident. I cannot believe the Reform Party would hold up the American gun culture as an example for Canada to emulate. Every day Canadians watch in horror as American television beams yet another firearm tragedy into our homes.

How many children have to die before the Reform Party realizes that the United States is not the example Canadians want us to follow? How long will it take for him to realize and how long will it take for his colleagues to realize that these are not Canadian values?

The other question I want to ask is how can grown men, and they seem to be mostly men, get so upset about our wanting to regulate a lethal commodity in our society?

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting how members opposite cleverly manipulate the discussion in the House to try to show that what they are doing is so wonderful for society. It becomes quite clear that they are trying to re-engineer society to get people to think that they are thinking in some way of what they are doing here.

The focus of the discussion today is a registration scheme.

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

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, maybe we should wait for a moment for them to be quiet so they can listen to the answer.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member would not want to wait too long, his time is about to expire.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, I point out to the member in answer to her question that we need to do research around the world on what is happening and the experience. That is the point I made that she was quoting, that we have to look at what is happening around the world and the experience that people have had with registration around the world. We find out that it has not worked anywhere, so why should we try to spend hundreds of millions of dollars here when it has not worked anywhere?

*Supply*

The Americans have had some very interesting experiences and we ought to look at what they have done in the city of Miami and how they have been able to reduce crime there in a very effective way. Sexual assaults went down 86% when they did a certain experiment.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I start off by explaining that I am an active firearms owner and user. I am a trap and skeet shooter. I am not particularly good at it but I enjoy doing it.

• (1125)

I am also a competitive pistol shooter. I am much better at that. Having said that, I say to the Liberals across the way and to everyone else that I support gun control. Gun control is good. We should have it in Canada. There is no question about that.

Gun control is ensuring that international arms dealers do not operate out of our country. Gun control is about ensuring that criminals do not smuggle Uzis and AK-47s into this country. Gun control is about ensuring that terrorists cannot easily arm themselves with illegal weapons. Gun control is about getting firearms out of the hands of criminals. Gun control is desirable for the average Canadian, and I agree with it. But Bill C-68 is not about gun control.

I have had a lot of people write to me. An overwhelming majority were opposed to this bill. Some were in favour. I spent as much time looking at their letters as I do with the others, perhaps even more. I know what a lot of the people opposed to it are going to say but I want to see what the people who are in favour in this bill have to say about it. One woman said if it saves only one life is it not worth it. I am not going to brush that off. I am going to have a very serious look at that. If it saves even one life is it worth it? The figure that was going around at the time was \$89 million. Later it went to \$118.9 million. That figure is now quite low but that is the figure I worked with and looked at.

In 1993, 1,354 lives were lost in some manner related to a firearm, suicide, homicide, accident, legal intervention, every means we can connect to a firearm. The same year I looked at those figures I found out from talking to a doctor in charge of the breast cancer detection program in British Columbia that 17,000 women would be diagnosed that year alone with breast cancer. Of those 5,400 would be terminal. I asked if I provided him with \$118.9 million what would he do with it and what results would we get. He talked to some of his colleagues. They did some math. He came back and said that if I gave them that much money they could double the early detection screening in the high risk category. I asked what results would that give. He said that statistically they could save 1,710 lives. That is 1,710 real lives saved, victims in this country, or some unknown percentage in some unknown way

of 1,354 that has never been explained to us by the past justice minister or the present one. If this bill is about saving lives there are a lot better ways to spend the money.

We have another consideration. There are going to be a lot of things talked about today. I want to hit on a couple of very specific points. There is a challenge by the province of Alberta that has gone to court and is complete. We are waiting for the decision of that court challenge. The government is spending a lot of money on that court challenge. I might add that the province of Alberta is supported by the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and the territories.

When they say there is a lot of support out there, yes there is. I think it is because of misinformation. But that aside, there is a lot of support out there. There is also a lot of resentment to this bill from individuals Canadians, from groups of Canadians and from entire provincial governments. There is a lot of opposition to this as well. That should be a clue to the government that even if it wants to keep this bill it should perhaps at a very minimum look at it and see if there is some alternative to some of the aspects of it. Even without the most objectionable parts of it there is some alternative to what it is proposing to do.

Under the Alberta court challenge it is anticipated, and this is from fairly high up and not our opinion, that the federal government is going to lose that challenge. The decision will likely read that the federal government does not have the right to regulate private property. If that happens what it will do is not only strike down the registration provisions of Bill C-68, it will strike down the registration of handguns as well.

• (1130)

If there is support for Bill C-68 from people who want to see sporting rifles and shotguns registered, can we imagine the outcry from these people if the actions of the government, albeit intending to support the desires of those people, inadvertently causes the loss of the registration of handguns? I think the government would end up losing ground rather than gaining. In light of that it might want to reconsider.

The government, by claiming that the bill would reduce crime, has played a very cruel hoax on Canadians by providing them with a false sense of security and possibly reducing vigilance against criminal attack. The government claims that Bill C-68 will make our homes and streets safer but the legislation does absolutely nothing whatsoever to justify that claim.

The money the government is wasting on Bill C-68 could be spent far more effectively on disease prevention, detection and cures; on policing costs; on establishing DNA databanks to aid the police in apprehending and convicting violent criminals; on post-secondary education for young people who are inheriting a debt of two decades of wasteful program spending, which I might add can



be compared very closely with this bill and the amount of money it will cost.

Bill C-68 is not gun control. It is a phenomenal waste of money. It provides a false sense of security to Canadians. It does absolutely nothing to hamper the criminal misuse of firearms. If anything, it actually helps criminals by diverting police activities from their apprehension.

The Canadian Police Association, the frontline police officers, not the politically appointed chiefs of police, who deal directly with criminals and criminal situations are totally opposed to the bill.

If the government's intentions were good, now is the time to correct the outcome. What the government intended may not be the way it will come out. I call on the government to rescind Bill C-68 and replace it with legislation that cracks down on the criminal misuse of firearms. If the intention is good that is great.

In the first speech I ever made in the House of Commons I said, and sincerely meant it, that I was not here to oppose the government for opposition sake. If the government does something right I will be the first to congratulate it. If the government comes out with a bill that I do not happen to agree with, I will speak out on it and try to suggest alternatives to make it a better bill.

I have done that in committee. I have worked with government officials not to try to expose what they are doing and say they are a bunch of whatever but rather to say what I believe the problems are and to give a justifiable and valid alternative.

There are alternatives. The government should not blindside itself by saying that everything it does it automatically right. It would be far better to say that everything it does it means to be right but sometimes it will have to make some changes along the way.

I believe this is one of those times. I hope enlightened members will look at it and see that it is not a weakness to suggest that the intentions were good but perhaps some changes are needed. This bill is one of those occasions.

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat puzzled. I do not understand the contradiction in Reform Party policy when it comes to community safety. I do not understand why it would oppose crime control Bill C-68. Why does it want to oppose crime control legislation that will guarantee the safety of our communities?

The bill takes into consideration the interests of law-abiding citizens who own guns and the community at large. It strikes a balance between those who have and those who want to be protected.

I do not understand how the member could stand in the House to oppose gun control legislation and crime prevention Bill C-68.

### *Supply*

Victims groups in his constituency, the majority of people in his community and across the country, chief of police organizations, police associations and health organizations were involved in the development of the registry part of Bill C-68.

• (1135 )

On a number of occasions his own party has indicated the need to control the use of firearms. Back in 1994 it passed a motion that if elected a Reform government would introduce legislation by which the criminal misuse of firearms would be severely punished.

What happened between 1994 and 1998? Why is the Reform Party now falling into the trap of special interest groups and lobby organizations? Why is it not defending the interests of its own constituencies and those of victims? Why are Reformers not standing up for the rights of those who wanted them to stand up for their rights, for those who have written to them over and over again to tell them to support Bill C-68? Why are they going with special interest groups and against the will and interests of the community at large?

**Mr. Jim Gouk:** Mr. Speaker, that was a very interesting little spiel from the hon. member. I am sure he has been taking lessons from the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He said that the bill was about crime control. That is a myth that I cannot believe they believe. It has nothing to do with crime control.

Law-abiding citizens are not the problem. Criminals are the problem. By definition criminals break the law. Why does the government think a registration program law-abiding citizens have to comply with will solve crimes?

Can we imagine the bank robber on his way to the bank saying "Gee, we had better not rob the bank today because I haven't registered this rifle?" When was the last time somebody robbed a bank with a rifle?

Crime control, give me a break. If the member wants to talk about what we are doing today then at least he should make some sensible remarks.

The hon. member said that the chiefs of police were against us. I acknowledge that. Politically appointed chiefs of police are inside with the government that appoints people. What a surprise. I do not know if it was intentional or not, but he was wrong when he said that police associations were in favour of it. They are not. The Regina police refused to support the RCMP in a request to register firearms. The Canadian Police Association that covers police from one end of the country to the other, frontline police who do the work, is opposed to the legislation.

He talked about my constituents. I surveyed my constituents with a question that firearms owners challenged me on. They asked why I was being so neutral, why I was not being stronger and more supportive in the way I asked questions. I told them it had to be an absolutely neutral, fair question which we had designed for us. I

*Supply*

got the biggest response on that survey of any householder survey I have ever sent out.

**An hon. member:** Table it.

**Mr. Jim Gouk:** I will table it. I would love to. I will give the member the figures on that. Ninety per cent of respondents opposed the bill after being asked a totally neutral question. I am representing my constituents. I would suggest to the hon. member that he has a lot of backbenchers over there who are not representing their constituents.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I regret to inform the House that the time for questions and comments has expired.

The Chair is in a bit of difficulty. I would appreciate the assistance of hon. members. Prior to the speech of the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, on the special agreed order in respect of rotation it was the turn of the New Democratic Party to offer a speech followed by the Conservative Party. That unfortunately did not happen.

Is there consent to revert to those two speeches so we may clear this up today and then allow government members to follow since the official opposition has had its first two speakers? Would the House agree to revert to allow these two 10 minute speeches to follow in the usual case?

In effect we started a new session yesterday and members may not be accustomed to the usual practices. I hope there would be agreement to do this. Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

• (1140)

**Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I start by thanking the House for its indulgence on this matter. I appreciate the effort of my colleagues. It is perhaps a good juncture to see the House agree to allowing me and the Conservative Party to speak to this issue.

We have had probably an hour and a half of very partisan and very heated debated on the opposition motion. I would like to talk a bit about gun control and the gun control registry, the history of it in the country and what it has meant to all Canadians. Let us not forget that we are here to represent Canadians in rural parts of the country, aboriginal Canadians and Canadians in urban centres, many of whom have different positions on the legislation because of their own different experiences and the different places in which they find themselves today.

Of course the history of gun control and registration is not new. Since 1877 Canada has restricted the use of some firearms to

protect public policy. Since 1968 Canada has classified weapons as prohibited, restricted and non-restricted. In 1977—and this has been referred to by members in the debate—an act was introduced which created the firearms acquisition certificate. For a long time there has been debate in the House—this is not a new issue—about how firearms are to be controlled and whether or not we need gun registration.

Many Canadians have opposed the bill. When it was introduced in the House last year there was tremendous debate. Today we revisited much of that debate. We have to be clear that although the motion speaks to registration there is a rally opposed to Bill C-68 on Parliament Hill today. Much of the debate is focusing in reality on that bill.

This piece of legislation has concerned many Canadians on both sides of the issue. I have listened to many convincing arguments by Canadians and by their representatives in the House who oppose Bill C-68 and who oppose registration.

In my caucus the member for Churchill has been eloquent in presenting to me as the justice critic the interests and concerns of her constituents about the legislation. The member for Yukon in the caucus has told eloquent stories about aboriginal women in her community who use firearms as part of their daily lives and see in many cases Bill C-68 and the registration of firearms as an imposition on them and their historic way of life.

On the other hand—and this reflects the diversity in the country—I have heard from the member for Burnaby—Douglas about the concerns of his constituents in a very urban riding who say that gun control is necessary for them to feel safe in their homes and in their streets.

I have heard from my seatmate, the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre, eloquent stories about constituents who have come to him and said “We are afraid to sleep at night. We cannot sleep at night in this city in this country in this year because of the sound of gunfire”. We are not talking about Sarajevo. We are talking about Canada.

These constituents are Canadians. All these Canadians look at the legislation from their perspective and from where they live. If there is one thing Canadians expect from the House, it is that we take this most serious issue and do not play politics with it, that we take this most serious issue and reflect the concerns of Canadians on both sides.

The whole issue of gun control came from well-intentioned people. Its opposition is from well-intentioned members. When the Minister of Justice introduced the legislation I do not think he was trying to anger or that he did not take into account the concerns of rural Canadians and aboriginal Canadians. I do not think members of the opposition party when they were first elected and opposed this bill did so simply to play politics.

*Supply*

• (1145)

I think it reflects the real divisions in this country. We have always suggested that the legislation needed to be reviewed. We needed to take into account the aboriginal community, the rural and urban Canadians and find a way in this great country in our history of consensus building to meet the needs of all these individuals.

At the beginning of this debate the hon. Leader of the Opposition said that the Reform Party came here in part to make parliament more democratic. He called for more free votes. He called for better ways for us to discuss the issues of Canadians and Canadians' concerns. No party in this legislature has a monopoly on democratic reform.

We in the NDP have for a long time argued that there has to be a different way to deal with very contentious issues. We have called for the abolition of the Senate but that is not the purpose of this debate today so I will not go into it. We have called for proportional representation. And today on this issue we call for a free vote. Today on this issue we will demonstrate the commitment of our party to the reformation of this institution and ask for a free vote. We will vote that way in this party reflecting the diversity of Canadians on this contentious issue, reflecting the wishes of our constituents and reflecting our history on this issue.

Let us not forget that when this law was introduced there were nine members of the New Democratic Party in this House. Since then more than half of this caucus is newly elected. We spoke to our constituents about their concerns. I have given some examples of what those concerns have been. We will be voting freely on this motion before the House.

I do wish that the opposition motion called for a review of the firearms legislation. I do wish that the implementation by the government had proceeded in a better way. I do wish that we played less politics with this particular issue and listened more to Canadians. At the end of the day in this party that is what we will do. At the end of the day when the vote is called, we will vote according to that.

That being said, there are different merits on different parts of the legislation. As I have indicated I would be happier had both the government and the opposition attempted to find a way to change the legislation to make it accommodate all of the interests in the country. I believe that we can truly reflect the interests of Canadians in that way. I call upon the members of this House to do so.

Questions were put to the Reform Party whether there would be a free vote on this issue. The Leader of the Opposition questioned the government, will there be a free vote on this issue? Well, there will be for some of us. I throw that out as an answer.

I suggest again that the people who live in parts of this country that have genuine concerns about firearms ought to be respected, but so too and not at the expense of other Canadians.

We in this country have always found a way to compromise on the most difficult and contentious issues. We look to our parliamentarians and we look to our leaders for that compromise. We have proposed for a long time a review of the legislation, that we travel the country and hear the concerns of Canadians which I think is the Canadian way.

I thank the House again for its indulgence in allowing me my turn to speak.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I wanted to address the hon. member with a bit of historical information about the debates on this bill back in 1994-95. There were in fact great efforts made to make the bill better, make it acceptable to all concerned. There were some 200 amendments proposed both by opposition members and by members on the government side. The government stonewalled almost all of them. There was no consideration given to them. There was no compromise, a sort of take no prisoners attitude.

• (1150)

I would ask the member if he feels that the total rejection of more than 200 amendments really represents an effort to govern or if it is merely an effort to steamroll.

**Mr. Peter Mancini:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments. They are enlightening to me as a member who has been in this House for a year.

One of the things I am going to reflect on and honestly one of the things I have learned here is that sometimes amendments are put forward in good spirit and sometimes they are put forward for purely political purposes to filibuster. I am learning that. It is one of the things that I am learning about perhaps the darker side of the rules in parliament.

When the member asks me whether that was stonewalling or whether it was a poor attempt to govern, I do not know what those amendments were in fairness. I do not know what they reflected. More than 200 certainly means that they were doing their job I suppose. They were reviewed by the justice committee. My experience on that committee to date has been that oftentimes parties seize on a particular issue and will sometimes play politics with it. Sadly, I was not here but I thank the hon. member for his history lesson. I unfortunately cannot determine whether or not those amendments were in good faith or not.

I heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice speak earlier. She indicated that during that debate all kinds of amendments were accepted. I do not know how many must have

*Supply*

been put forward to the government. Some were accepted. Obviously 200 were rejected. It does not sound to me like the best way to do business though.

**Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member which I would like to preface.

I would like to ask the member whether he really believes that this piece legislation, formerly known as Bill C-68, is more about taxation than gun control. I would ask the member to share his thoughts with respect to whether he thinks that registering the long rifles of innocent deer hunters, duck hunters and farmers will have any effect on deterring the criminal use of firearms. I think ultimately it will not and the excessive registration costs which are rumoured to be in the area of \$300 million to as high as \$1 billion are far too excessive for our law-abiding citizens.

If we really want to deter the criminal use of firearms in this country, I would ask the hon. member to answer the question of whether this \$60 million to be utilized on an annual basis would be better used to put more police on the street, to actually seriously fight crime in a real way.

I also have a more specific question for the NDP in general. In 1993 the NDP called for a national gun registry, yet during the last parliament the majority of the NDP caucus opposed Bill C-68.

In 1997 in the riding of Kings—Hants the candidate actually painted himself as being anti Bill C-68 while the member for Halifax and the NDP leader painted themselves as pro Bill C-68. Where is the position of the NDP with respect to Bill C-68?

**Mr. Peter Mancini:** Mr. Speaker, there were many questions but I will answer the first question first and then in the order in which they came.

The question was, do I think the \$60 million might be put to better use. I suppose it depends on one's perspective. In the last session of this House before I was a member of parliament there was a great deal of talk and discussion in Cape Breton, where we have a staggering rate of unemployment, that the gun control registration centre would be placed in my riding creating upwards of 100 jobs. That was a pretty enticing argument.

I suppose from the perspective of a member of parliament who might possibly have some of his constituents put to work in a gun registration centre in an area of high unemployment it is not too much money. On the other hand if it is going to stay here in Ottawa, maybe that changes my perspective a little bit and I do not think it is going to be located in Cape Breton.

Could the money be put to better use? There is no shortage of money in this country—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time has expired. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

• (1155 )

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for its indulgence. It is always an honour to follow my colleague from the New Democratic Party, a learned counsel, justice critic and fellow Nova Scotian. He has given a view from his perspective on this particular debate and I hope to add my humble remarks.

With respect to the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt, I am pleased to pledge our party's support for this particular motion before the House. It reaffirms the position taken by the hon. Jean Charest in the last parliament, in the last election and the position of our party throughout this debate, the unwavering opposition to this ill conceived long gun registration.

The focus here should not waver. It is about long guns. It is about shotguns and rifles. The emphasis here is on long guns.

One of the key commitments I made to the constituents of Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough was that I would continue to oppose this piece of legislation. It is ineffective and unproven mandatory gun registration. The legislation concentrates and targets law-abiding citizens as opposed to criminals who would be using firearms.

Bill C-68 clearly does not approach and does not affect the root causes of crime. One of the first motions I tabled in this House last September was to achieve the very goal which this particular motion sets out to achieve.

This motion is very timely. Obviously when we hear the cries of thousands and thousands of law-abiding gun owners who have assembled here on the hill today, there appears to be some opposition to what the government is going to do with this piece of legislation.

Others have already detailed the specific problems with this particular act. Those problems were highlighted at the justice committee with the numerous amendments that were struck down by the government. I would suggest they were useful, non-partisan amendments that were aimed at improving the act. If we cannot kill it, the very least we can do is try to improve it.

In the past several weeks I have had the opportunity to personally meet a number of representatives from organizations in my home province of Nova Scotia, individuals such as Tony Rodgers of the Nova Scotia Wildlife Federation to review the negative impact that has already resulted from this act.

Businesses in the province of Nova Scotia and like businesses in other provinces are going to be extremely negatively affected by the implementation of this legislation because, as we know, it is going to force businesses to subject themselves to an extremely

bureaucratic, cumbersome registry system that is not going to impact on the criminal use of firearms.

We know, and it is a proven fact, that Canada already has one of the toughest gun control laws in the world. We are now furthering that by adding burdensome registration fees which amount to nothing more than a tax, which was alluded to by the member for Fundy—Royal.

The Liberal government and its well intentioned allies I might add have attempted to sell this issue of firearms registration as a question of crime control and safety. It could not be any further from the truth.

The Liberals have made it an issue of black and white: proponents of Bill C-68 support gun control whereas opponents of Bill C-68 oppose gun control. That is completely untrue. Let us make this perfectly clear. I do not think there is anyone in this House, anyone in the opposition, who has any opposition to gun control per se. This is about long gun registration.

Firearms owners I know and meet on a regular basis are some of the most responsible in handling guns and the most responsible and supportive of effective safety measures when it comes to the handling of firearms.

If we want to do something specifically aimed at those who use guns for a criminal purpose, let us toughen up the code sections, let us toughen up the response of the courts to those who use firearms in a criminal way.

It came to light last spring that statistics used by the government to justify the mandatory registration of firearms were seriously flawed. This came specifically from the commissioner of the RCMP himself, words like exaggeration and misuse of these statistics were then met by the reply of the Minister of Justice that these were simply a difference in methodologies.

This seems to me to be a convenient excuse for the government to dismiss the facts it does not like to hear. Is it any wonder that the provinces of Alberta, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Manitoba and two territories have embarked on a challenge in the Supreme Court of Alberta to strike down Bill C-68.

• (1200 )

Another fact the government conveniently ignores is that under a Conservative government Canada adopted tough gun control legislation through Bill C-17, which was passed through this parliament in late 1991 and came into effect over subsequent years. In fact this government played a part in implementing some of those pieces of legislation.

Under this previous gun law, applicants were required to obtain firearms application certificates, FACs, which required them to take a gun course, undergo police checks and wait up to 28 days.

### *Supply*

Handguns were considered restricted weapons and owners were required to have ownership permits. Handgun permits were only issued to certified gun collectors and sports club members who were taking part in shooting competitions. Private ownership of most military assault weapons was banned or restricted. Those wanting to hunt were required to take mandatory hunting courses or required to take firearms handling safety courses.

The previous law also included stringent storage and transportation regulations, making it an offence to breach these regulations.

With all of these tough restrictions in place, what did the Liberal government then do upon assuming power? Did the Liberals evaluate the effectiveness of the law? No. They embarked on a new form of intrusive and restrictive gun registration which, I submit humbly, was a knee-jerk and emotionally driven reaction to tragic circumstances that occurred in this country.

The Liberals have cited national opinion polls reporting overwhelming support from Canadians for this legislation. I wonder how many Canadians, particularly urban Canadians, really understand what the impact of this legislation will be. Would they be so supportive if the legislation was prefaced with the fact that Canadians already possess some of the most stringent gun control and registration laws?

Perhaps these public opinion polls are of concern to some in the House, but the practicality here is that this legislation is not going to impact on the criminal use of firearms.

The former minister of justice also promised that it was only going to cost \$85 million, despite evidence from witnesses at the original justice committee hearing that put the price tag as high as \$500 million.

We have heard from all sorts of groups throughout this country, including aboriginal Canadians, predominately Canadians from the rural centres, who participate in perfectly legitimate legal activities involving the use of firearms such as hunting and target shooting. These people have overwhelmingly voiced their opposition to this act.

Since the former minister's promises, we are now coming to the conclusion that the Canadian firearms centre and its administration charges are going to exceed \$133.9 million to this point in time and we have not yet seen a single gun registered.

The justice department will not deny the reports that are appearing in the media that this is going to escalate to the point where it may exceed \$500 million. For this reason I wrote to the auditor general last week to urge his office to conduct a money for value audit on the Canadian firearms centre and the divisions of the Department of Justice responsible for the implementation of this act. Canadians need to know why this money is being spent in this fashion.

*Supply*

I question the government's priorities. This amount of money could easily be spent on front line policing, as was suggested earlier. It could be spent on homes for battered women. It could be spent on all sorts of justice initiatives, including the minister's much awaited and much ballyhooed young offender changes that we are anxiously anticipating.

I would also suggest that outside the area of justice, the money could be spent in the area of compensating hepatitis C victims and compensating public service employees who have been long awaiting compensation.

Without any doubt, the priorities of this government have to be questioned. Why not focus on the root causes of violence? Why not use these resources in more effective ways?

Time and time again we have seen this government switch its priorities at the last minute. In recent days we have seen its decision to delay this further. Why not take a hard look at what is taking place in this country with respect to this piece of legislation?

Before I conclude I want to commend the NDP for its decision to have a free vote. I can assure this House that there has been much debate amongst our party. We are going to be voting as a unified front on this, which comes about because of much consultation with our constituents.

• (1205)

I make this plea to all members of the House. Let us not target law-abiding citizens, let us target criminals. Let us support this motion and replace Bill C-68 with anti-crime legislation, not anti-gun owner legislation.

I would like to amend the motion by adding the following words to the main motion:

; and that this House also urges the government to conduct a public, independent evaluation of the 1991 firearms legislation with respect to reducing firearm-related crime before it proceeds with any new firearms legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** May I ask the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough who the seconder of the motion is?

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** It is seconded by the hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This amendment would be acceptable, and it is certainly a good point as far as the official opposition is concerned. We are waiting to hear your decision as to whether or not this is acceptable within the parameters of the original motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. member have any submissions to make on that point?

**Mr. Randy White:** We are waiting for you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have considered the amendment and it is safe to say that the Chair has some concerns concerning the amendment, in that it appears to enlarge the scope of the original motion as moved.

However, in the circumstances, the issue raised by the amendment is relevant to the main motion. It is an opposition day. It appears to be something that could be considered under the rubric of the main motion and, accordingly, the Chair is of the view that the amendment is in order and will allow the amendment.

**Ms. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member of the Conservative Party. I certainly intend to wholeheartedly support the amendment and the motion.

I speak on behalf of my constituents, who are quite comfortable in this area, recognizing the diversity within Canada and also recognizing that as a rural northern area we probably fall into an area that has related incidents or deaths. But we also recognize that the problem is not the gun, but rather the situation that precipitates what happens with the gun. That has long been recognized in a number of our communities.

We are not willing to sacrifice the dollar usage for gun registration, which we in our constituency believe is faulty. We do not intend to imply that law-abiding citizens should be affected by this legislation.

• (1210)

If I believed one iota that gun registration would lessen deaths I would be there a hundredfold.

The parliamentary secretary indicated that legally acquired weapons are used. That is the issue. There has never been enough enforcement in this area. There has never been enforcement of storage or follow through with FACs, who had acquired them and whether they had committed a crime after the fact. That is where the fault lies with gun registration and gun control.

There needs to be greater gun control, not gun registration. There needs to be greater enforcement. The dollars should be utilized to ensure that there are better programs within communities and better support systems.

I want to commend the hon. member for his amendment.

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I will respond very briefly.

I thank the hon. member for her remarks. She knows of what she speaks. It is clearly a fact that it is not guns that kill people, it is the person pulling the trigger.

Her question allows me to make another point, which is that this registration system is aimed at helping police officers to identify which homes are going to house these firearms. It is aimed at putting a serial number on a gun, on an inanimate object. That is

not going to prevent the object from killing or maiming a person if it falls into the wrong hands.

The point to be made is this. That information is not going to be accurate. Canadians, by their very nature, are transitory. Knowing where those weapons are, who houses them, who is in possession of them is going to be an absolute impossibility.

As has been stated many times before, criminals are not going to participate in this registration system. The information is going to be inaccurate. Police officers are not going to be able to rely on the information with any degree of confidence. I suggest that this will create a false sense of security amongst the policing community and amongst Canadians generally.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough in his original speech went to great lengths to try to illustrate that Bill C-68 has nothing to do with crime control. Everybody, certainly every member of the opposition, is in support of gun control. But gun control is about safe usage, storage and handling, and targeting the criminal misuse of firearms. It is not about the legal use, legal possession and ownership of firearms by law-abiding citizens.

The justice minister in a few moments is going to be on a tirade with a bunch of statistics. In anticipation of that and in anticipation of studies which quote that 82% of Canadians favour gun control, I want the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough to illustrate for the House how that is very misleading. It is not about gun registration, it is about the safe usage, storage and handling of firearms that Canadians are in favour.

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. It is a rare opportunity to respond to a question in the presence of the Minister of Justice, in anticipation of what she is going to say.

I am sure we are going to hear a great deal about the methodological approach of the government and the statistics that it has been using to justify this particular bill.

However, the point is well made. The emphasis should be on the criminal use of weapons, not targeting those who are using guns for a legitimate purpose, recreational or otherwise. It should put the emphasis on what criminals are doing with their guns. This legislation does not do that.

As the member of the NDP suggested, why not put those statistics into front line policing and into areas where the police will be able to enforce the current laws, rather than create a new cumbersome process that simply will not work?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this morning I spoke at a

### *Supply*

press conference and thanked Canadians for their ongoing support of our government's firearms control program.

I specifically thanked CAVEAT, Victims of Violence International, La Fondation des victimes du 6 décembre, the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime and the family members of victims who are here to ask the government to hold firm and implement its plan.

• (1215)

I also took the opportunity to thank the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, municipalities, educators, child support agencies and the almost 700 member agencies of the coalition for gun control which have been tireless supporters of this program. These are the people who have learned through painful experience the terrible tragedies that can occur when firearms are not safely stored, when firearms fall into the hands of children, when police are asked to deal with a domestic violence call and have no knowledge of whether firearms are at play or when an illegal firearms industry develops with inadequate controls in place.

Today opponents of gun control are demonstrating on Parliament Hill. Some will make wild and outlandish claims. Let me make one thing clear. We will not be deterred by inflammatory and irresponsible rhetoric.

The vast majority of Canadians support gun control. Support for gun control today, including support for registration, is at its highest level ever, at 80% in some polls. Today a majority of gun owners support gun control. Canadians have debated the merits of gun control for several years. Canadians have decided they believe in gun control. The debate is settled. The debate is over. Gun control will be implemented on December 1.

Canadians are law abiding citizens. I understand that when angry, people can make outlandish and even irresponsible statements but I know the vast majority of gun owners respect and obey the law. So I say once again to those who demonstrate today that they have nothing to fear from me or from this government. My commitment is to ensure that gun control is implemented in the fairest and most efficient way possible.

The Firearms Act is about building a culture of safety around the use of firearms. Through it we hope to achieve many things. Firearms registration and licensing of all gun owners will help keep firearms away from people who should not have them. It will encourage awareness on the part of gun owners of the essential responsibility they have for their firearms, including their safe use and the importance of safe storage and transportation.

A central processing site is already in service in Miramichi, New Brunswick. All applications will go through there. Owners will be able to get a form through a toll free line, at a post office or a gun shop. They can fill it in at home and send it in. Visits to the police will no longer be required. This will allow our police to spend their time and resources on police work and not on preliminary paper-

*Supply*

work. Starting December 1 for a one time cost of \$10 firearms owners will be able to register all their firearms. They will register on forms made simple after consultations with the firearms community.

We have taken every step we can to ensure the registration and licensing of firearms in Canada is hassle free and easily affordable. I have every confidence that firearms owners, once they participate in the program, will discover that their concerns were groundless.

Hunting is an activity that has been enjoyed by many Canadians for generations. To farmers firearms are needed to protect crops. Target shooting is a sport at which Canada excels internationally. Firearms for some are needed for sustenance and are part of a way of life. All these activities are legitimate and will not be hampered in any way by gun control.

Let me make it perfectly clear, the Government of Canada unequivocally respects the legitimate rights of gun owners. Our new Firearms Act is not about confiscation. Such fears were raised when gun control was first introduced in Canada in the 1970s. They are being raised again today but they are as groundless as they were then.

Today's debate is essentially about values. Canadians have told us that they want effective gun control. Polling shows that a majority of Canadians in every province support the universal registration of firearms.

• (1220)

Our government and our Prime Minister will stand with the Canadian police, victims of firearms crime and accidents, law abiding gun owners and all Canadians who care about safer communities.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to hear that the minister's heart is pure. I feel better already.

She has gone to great lengths to tell us that there is nothing to fear in the legislation. I believe that she believes that. However, if she would look around the country she would find that even under existing legislation let alone the draconian stuff that is being proposed here, ordinary citizens are being harassed and guns are being confiscated without compensation.

The hon. parliamentary secretary thinks this is a joke. I wonder if Darrell McKnight, head of the computer department at the University of New Brunswick, would think it was a joke. His home was invaded by not one but three police officers searching for a firearm which he had duly registered and had bought in good faith. It was a legally owned weapon. By order in council the previous justice minister had declared this was no longer a legal weapon. The police came when he was not at home. They terrorized his teenage daughter, telling her she could go out and stand in the snow bank

while they took the house apart. This is in Canada. So please spare me this stuff about it is not a danger to us. It is. It always has been and it always will be.

**Hon. Anne McLellan:** Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the hon. member actually asked me a question but let me say to the individual in question that I have no knowledge of the situation involving the person named. If he has a concern in terms of the way the police discharged their duties, if he has a concern with the way the attorney general of the province of New Brunswick conducted himself, or if he has a concern with the way I as Attorney General of Canada conducted myself in relation to the specifics of that situation I would appreciate that individual getting in touch with me. I would be very happy to sit down with him and talk to him about his experience.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I myself am a firearm owner as well as a big-game hunter. I mention this because, unfortunately, there are still a few men who wonder what my involvement is in the debate on this issue, and I have been involved for a number of years. When I sat on the special committee on firearms in 1990, I was the only committee member with a FAC, or firearm acquisition certificate.

My first question to the minister is this: Why does the government let those opposed to gun control spread all sorts of falsehoods?

Yesterday, for instance, I tuned in to an open-line program on an English-language station. The caller was saying "This means I will have to pay \$10 per firearm every year; it is going to cost me \$60 a year for a permit." As you and I know, this is absolutely false. Once the firearms are registered, that is for life. As for the permit, it is good for five years. Why are all these falsehoods still being spread?

My second question to the minister concerns the \$350 million tab we are hearing about. I would like to know, first of all, if we will indeed have to pay such a tab and, second, how it got to be so high. If this is not true, I think that a public denial is in order.

I would like the minister to clarify this for us today.

• (1225)

[*English*]

**Hon. Anne McLellan:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a very important point and that is those who choose for whatever reason to propagate misinformation and misrepresentations surrounding the new federal gun licensing and registration program.

I can assure the hon. member that wherever possible I take the opportunity to rectify those errors. But I think all of us in this House who are people of good faith who are either legitimate gun owners such as the hon. member or those of us who are not gun



owners support the right of legitimate gun owners to possess their weapons.

It is our obligation to engage those who would lie and misrepresent the truth. We must engage them. We must destroy the propaganda. We must work with all Canadians together to ensure we have a degree of public safety and security that all Canadians have told us over and over again they want and they deserve.

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the resolution we are debating today contains a type of misleading information that we have come to expect from the opponents of this legislation.

Before I proceed I want to emphasize that Canadians understand that the Firearms Act and the amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada in Bill C-68 are an investment in crime prevention which will preserve the culture of safety in Canada. I can tell all members that as former chairman of the Waterloo regional police I know this is correct and is very important.

It is not a surprise that 82% of all Canadians support the registration of all guns. Seventy-two percent of rural Canadians approve of registration. Seventy-eight percent of respondents say they approve of the act and almost half the gun owners approve of the Firearms Act as well. There is massive support for this legislation.

Our opponents who are clearly driving the resolution before this House today are a small minority of special interests out of touch with the main street Canada on this issue. It is most unfortunate but typical.

The resolution suggests that the government should be condemned for its refusal to replace Bill C-68. Let us review for a moment the background of how this legislation came to be. It was introduced in the House of Commons on February 14, 1995. Through successive debates including an extensive list of amendments brought to the bill in committee and in debate on third reading the bill was finally approved in December 1995.

The Firearms Act contains unprecedented provisions in section 118 which require that all regulations under the Firearms Act be tabled before both houses of parliament on the same day and that each of these regulations shall be referred by the Chamber to an appropriate committee which may conduct public hearings in respect to the regulations.

Two major sets of regulations were processed in this manner with the first set being tabled in November 1996, the second in October 1997. The standing committee reviewing the first set of regulations made 39 recommendations, 38 of which were accepted in whole or in part. In respect to the second set of regulations the

### *Supply*

standing committee again made 39 recommendations, 35 of which were accepted in whole or in part.

My point in this brief review is to ask the opposition why in view of the extensive parliamentary involvement in both the legalization and the regulations and in view of the number of changes and accommodations which were made as the legislation passed through the House would we even consider replacing Bill C-68. Why would we want to do that? Let us remember that this is legislation that enjoys the support of 82% of Canadians.

Those who support this motion would have us believe that this legislation does nothing to address the criminal misuse of firearms. Opposition members may wish to consult the Criminal Code in this respect. A significant number of offences in the code were modified to carry a minimum punishment of imprisonment for four years. These Criminal Code offences were found under the headings of causing death by criminal negligence, manslaughter, attempt to commit murder, causing bodily harm with intent, sexual assault with a weapon, aggravated sexual assault, kidnapping, hostage taking, robbery and extortion.

• (1230 )

Other offences are found for a variety of criminal offences including activities such as weapons trafficking, possession for the purpose of weapons trafficking, automatic firearms importing and exporting, knowing it is unauthorized, and tampering with the serial number of a firearm.

We were very attentive to criminal activities in formulating the offence provisions of Bill C-68.

Members of the opposition, if they really took the time to study the issue, would also find that there have been a number of appeals of the four year minimum sentences that have taken place over the past two years. All of them have been upheld on appeal as appropriate sentencing, expressing the will of parliament. They also express the will of the Canadian people, 82% of whom support this legislation.

The opposition in its resolution suggests the government should abandon the policy of firearms registration. There are a number of excellent reasons why the registration of firearms is a good idea. Let me address a few of these at this time.

Every year an estimated 70,000 firearms are sold privately in Canada. At the same time a large number are stolen, lost or otherwise unaccounted for, for firearms circulate within Canada. The registration of all guns, rifles and shotguns as well as handguns will contribute to a reduction in the grey and the black market sales of guns and provide protection for both sellers and purchasers.

The licensing of firearms users is one of the central features of this legislation. Only people who are responsible and have not been

*Supply*

within the past five years convicted of Criminal Code offences will be eligible to use firearms. If they have been convicted of an offence involving violence against a person, an offence involving criminal activity, the contravention of the Food and Drugs Act or the Narcotic Control Act or if they have been treated for a mental illness that involves violence or other behaviour involving violence, then they will be caught by the licensing system.

People who sell guns should know to whom they are selling. If the person buying the gun has a licence there is some reasonable assurance that the person is a law abiding, responsible person.

Further, persons with licences will have completed and passed the Canadian firearm safety course and should have at least the basics in respect of the safe handling and use of firearms.

In summary, registration contributes to public safety by keeping guns away from people who should not have them. Many of the lost, stolen or missing firearms eventually come to the attention of the police. A system of registration can assist the police in returning these firearms to the rightful owners. Registration can assist in the private property return to legitimate owners who have been the victims of crime. Since licensed users will have shown not to have been involved in criminal activity and to be otherwise responsible, and since guns will be registered the police will have an invaluable tool to assist them in their fight against crime.

Opponents of the legislation contend that criminals will not register guns. We agree with that. The legislation through the licensing and registration provisions, however, will assist the police by providing them with additional tools to charge criminals and to address organized crime issues.

The registration system will provide police with an invaluable tool to trace firearms among former owners. The tracing of these firearms is an invaluable tool for the investigation of crime. It helps to identify traffickers in illegal firearms. It helps to identify illegitimate businesses and it provides through ballistic evidence a means to identify guns involved in previously unsolved crimes.

Registration increases the likelihood that criminal offenders will be charged and convicted for their crime. What parliamentarian would disagree with that?

Many guns come to Canada from the United States. The attitude in the United States with respect to guns is significantly different from that of Canada. It will come as no surprise that the illegal movement of firearms into Canada is a problem of considerable magnitude. The registration system will register guns coming into and leaving Canada and the movement of those guns within the country. Illegal shipments will be easier to stop. Customs officers will be able to identify shipments against the registration database. Any firearm imported into Canada for sale will be traceable through its history in Canada.

• (1235 )

The reduction of firearms smuggling is an important way in which the Firearms Act and registration system can contribute to the reduction of crime.

The Firearms Act is all about the regulation of potentially lethal commodities while at the same time permitting legitimate use by responsible owners. The registration system created by the Firearms Act is an important part of Canada's effort to establish that our way of life and our values are the values of a peaceful and safe nation.

The opposition contends that the Firearms Act confiscates private property. We have said time and time again this legislation is about regulation, not confiscation.

This issue was referred by the province of Alberta, we know that. In particular, Alberta has asked its court of appeal if the licensing and registration provisions of the Firearms Act could be ultra vires of the Parliament of Canada. The outcome of this case will simply determine whether the constitutional powers of the Canadian government have been properly exercised in respect to this act. We will argue, as a matter of law, that it is in the order of peace, order and good government which are clear areas of federal jurisdiction. We hope that is the case and it most likely will be.

The residents of Waterloo—Wellington overwhelmingly support the government in this matter, as do most Canadians. The net result of the government's proactive approach in this matter is that Canada will have a far more safe and secure country.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice said that she had every confidence that firearms owners will participate in the program.

I spent a lot of time in my riding during the month of August. I held seven town hall and coffee shop meetings. From everybody I talked to I heard overwhelmingly that they are not going to participate in the program.

The legal requirement to register one's firearms extends until 2003. The fact is there will be a federal election in the interim and the Reform Party, on forming the government in the next election, will repeal Bill C-68 immediately. It is important for all Canadians to know and understand that so they can exercise their decision on voting day in the next election with wisdom.

The other thing I would like to point out is the rhetoric we hear from the Liberals on the other side of the House. It is all couched in these little fancy terms they have. They all talked about gun control and crime control. However, what this bill will really do is nothing when it comes to addressing these things.

*Supply*

The Liberals' motive behind this legislation is their desire to see the elimination of all legal firearms ownership in Canada realized. That is something which is very important for all Canadians to know.

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his questions. In making the statements he did, I think the member really showed the true colours of the Reform Party which is that it panders the special interests and for crass political reasons. It is trying to do something here which is the opposite of what Canadians want. I believe that came through loud and clear.

However, we on this side of the House are doing it in the best interests of all Canadians. We are doing it for safety and security reasons for a society, a political culture that is distinct from the Americans and distinct from the kind of thing that the Reform Party would want to see in place. We are doing the right thing for the benefits not only of this great country of ours but for each and every Canadian who lives in it.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since the minister did not answer my second question, I would like to put the same question to the hon. member for Waterloo—Wellington and ask him what this \$350 million tab he referred to is all about, as this seems to be how much it would cost to implement this firearm registration system. Is that right? I would really like to get an answer on this today. If this amount is accurate, then the public must be made aware of the costs involved. And how did they get to be so high?

I would also like to know whether this high tab would eventually make the system impossible to implement and result in Quebeckers being told "Sorry, but unfortunately the system was too expensive to be implemented." Is this a roundabout way to avoid enforcing the legislation?

• (1240)

[*English*]

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

It is very difficult to put a price tag on safety and security for the country. I know Canadians want us to proceed in a manner that is most efficient and appropriate to ensure a safe and secure country for all of us.

I know there will be a price to pay for that but it is an important underpinning of the very values and institutions that define us as Canadians and in my view unite us as a nation.

We are unlike opponents who would have us revert to some sort of American style in terms of shooting it out at high noon and all kinds of other outrageous and outlandish things, especially the

Reform Party which should know better than to cosy up to those National Rifle Association types and others. Those members above all should know better but they do not.

The point is we on the government side know we must proceed in a manner that is in keeping with our historic and political culture and our historic and political values. I am proud that we are able as a government to do precisely that.

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the constituents of Souris—Moose Mountain, very similar to those of Cypress Hills—Grasslands, would find it almost sinful if their member did not speak on this issue.

I want to inform the members opposite that I have yet to receive one letter or phone call in the last 16 months in favour of Bill C-68, not one. But I have received hundreds of letters and hundreds of petitions in opposition.

I resent very much government members, including the Minister of Justice, speaking on this bill and referring to those who oppose this bill as somewhat misaligned in thought. There are thousands of people outside who have come from across Canada, some here from Yukon, who have paid out of their own pockets to protest and they are not weak in the head. They know exactly why they are here.

I wish hon. members opposite would quit using statistics like 82% of this or 80% of that. How come this terrible misinformation wrongly or rightly got into the justice committee which completely distorted the number of guns involved? There is no remorse at all, none whatsoever from the government.

There was a Liberal by the name of Mr. Trudeau who took a political gamble that he would institute a national energy policy. Note the word national. But the word national would only affect western Canada. So they weighed it up and introduced the national energy policy and to this day western Canada has never forgiven the party for doing just that.

Let me give the history behind Bill C-68. Let us get the true history behind Bill C-68. The former Conservative government had everything in place with the previous bill but crime was on the rage in Montreal and Toronto and so the government said once again it will do like the Liberals in the past, it will take a chance and bring in a national bill even though it knew it would isolate western Canada and certain parts. It did just that and it certainly paid off politically.

One of the reasons why this government lost most of its western support was its complete disdain for western Canada. There is no remorse yet with the Liberals for the national energy policy and there is still no remorse for what they are doing to the law abiding people in western Canada with this bill. Where do they get the idea that the registration of guns will protect me?

*Supply*

• (1245)

**An hon. member:** Read the legislation.

**Mr. Roy Bailey:** The legislation says that there will be a registration of all guns. This information could fall into the hands of the wrong people who would say "There is a good house to hit. They have three long guns in that house". They cannot prove what they are saying and they know it.

Yesterday afternoon in question period the former parliamentary secretary to the minister in charge of the wheat board asked a ridiculous question about North Dakota farmers wanting to sell wheat to the Canadian Wheat Board. American farmers said on television last night, that they were getting \$2.75 U.S. but if they sold it in Canada they would only get \$1.40 U.S. That shows how ridiculous the question was. They make fun of people in different areas and they delight in doing so.

The bill is not one law for all people. It is not a universal bill. The minister has declared that the bill will be flexible in its application. That in itself is a very dangerous statement.

What do they mean that it will be flexible in its application? We know what it means. The people in western Canada know what it means, but the rest of Canada does not seem to know what it means. It means that some people will be required to register their long guns and some people will not. Yet the government supports the bill and says it will be flexible in its application.

I have taken the time to talk to the police in my constituency who have basically said no way. They want no part of it whatsoever. They have made it abundantly clear that they want nothing to do with it because they know certain people within their district will be exempt from registering their guns. It is not a national registration.

Shame on the government. It deliberately harasses honest law-abiding citizens to register their guns but at its discretion it leaves whole blocks of people who do not have to register their guns.

The legislation says that it is enabling legislation. That means the government, not the legislature, not this body, not elected officials, will have the right to change the bill at any time.

The government is asking us to support the bill. The Minister of Justice says that it is a done deal, that the legislation will go forward, that it will be law for all but will be flexible. In other words it is not law for all and it can be changed at any time. All it has to do is sit before the committee.

How can any person elected to the House who is totally in favour of the gun bill be in favour of making it selective legislation where only certain people will be required to register? How will that prevent crime? It just does not add up. The people in western Canada and the people in my constituency know this.

I asked in the justice committee if they could guarantee that every owner of every long gun would have to register their guns? Do members know what the response was?

• (1250)

**An hon. member:** No answer.

**Mr. Roy Bailey:** There was no answer. How could the government in committee change legislation that we have been discussing without it even coming to the House? It is called enabling legislation.

In closing I want to make clear that they can talk all they like about figures, fancy surveys and so on, but there is more opposition from every corner of Canada to Bill C-68 than there has ever been. Opposition from people who are aware of the bill is growing, even from those who do not own guns.

They do not have the courage to make it universal. They do not have the courage to bring it back if they want to change the legislation. Having said that, they should not have had the courage to bring the bill before the House.

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, never in my entire life have I heard so much nonsense coming from the opposition party. It is incredible.

When the legislation was introduced by the House that party indicated it opposed the bill but did not put anything on the table to say how to improve it or the things they would like to see in the bill. The bill has gone through all stages. That party had all the time—

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I think the Chair is hearing words that should not be uttered in the Chamber. I know hon. members would want to refrain from any unparliamentary language in the course of the debate even if it is from their seats. I hope I did not hear what I thought I heard.

**Mr. Mac Harb:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure you heard what you heard. Frankly it is unbecoming of the official opposition but it is an indication of the fact that it is bankrupt when it comes to ideas and innovations.

It is shameful for them to be so opportunistic as to exploit public sentiment and to time, even though the bill has passed the House, their motion to coincide with a special interest group yapping outside on Parliament Hill without the true understanding of what the government is trying to do when it comes to public safety. They should listen to their own constituents who have told them over and over again that they support the bill the government has proposed, Bill C-68, because it controls crime in society. This is community safety legislation which is well thought out and well planned.

*Supply*

The government has spent a lot of time and energy travelling around the country from coast to coast consulting the people, including special interest groups, the Reform Party, and every individual organization that had an opinion to express to the government. The government has given them that opportunity.

This legislation balances the interests of everyone. It is balanced legislation and, by the way, it is not before the House. It has been passed.

I wish colleagues in the Reform Party would wake up, smell the coffee and come up with something that is relevant to the people of Canada, such as how the government has dealt with the economic situation, community safety, health care and educational issues. The government is handling these issues extremely well, so the Reform Party is trying to dig up issues that were before the House months ago and are not before the House now. The only reason for this is that some special interest groups are out there.

The Reform Party is trying to exploit the sentiments of Canadians without having any consideration for the victims and their families who wanted to see that party stand and be counted rather than continue to hear this and that without really focusing on the overall interest of Canadians who have told us over and over again that they support what the government has put before them when it comes to the crime control bill. Let the member stand to endorse what the government has done on this issue.

• (1255)

**Mr. Roy Bailey:** Mr. Speaker, how dare the hon. member refer to the rural people of Souris—Moose Mountain as a special interest group. Shame on him. How dare he refer to the police associations out there in protest as special interest groups. How dare he refer to the Reform Party applying accountability for the position it holds by taking the bill back to the people and getting their opinion on it. How dare he make mockery of democracy.

I guess my speech has intrinsically raised some guilt in the hon. person. My people are not special interest people. They are real people. They are not ignorant people. They are very clever people. The group out there has every right to protest. He would like to say that they are a special interest group, without intelligence, and they have no right. Shame on him.

How could the member say that Reform sat idly by and did nothing when it brought in not a 150 amendments but 200 amendments to the bill. Shame on you for making that statement. You certainly are totally out—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I know the hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain intended to address his remarks through the Chair.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, as we are speaking, there are some 20,000 protesters in front of Parliament, including about 1,000 Quebecers.

These people are opposed to the registration of hunting weapons but, more importantly, they are opposed to searches without warrant and to the confiscation of private property without compensation. These people are farmers, lumberjacks, trappers, and so on. They are people who live in the country, people whom the hon. member does not like.

But not all of them are from the north. There are also urban dwellers who realize that Bill C-68 is a threat to everyone. These people believe in democracy and in civil rights. They fully understand the risk involved in giving the government the power to send police officers to our homes for the most trivial reasons, and they are getting worried.

Unfortunately, these people are not represented by any Quebec member. For example, three years ago, a coalition of seven Quebec groups representing several hundreds of thousands of people opposed to Bill C-68 sought the support of Liberal, Conservative and Bloc members, but was turned down. In the end, it was a Reform member who became the spokesperson for these Quebecers before the Standing Committee on Justice, in Ottawa.

Bill C-68 is based on unfounded biases, on the fallacious arguments of some bureaucrats, and on mass hysteria. This is a pretty weak basis for an act.

[*English*]

It is a sad fact that only a small minority of Canadians have an inkling of what Bill C-68 contains. This is not surprising when one considers its length of 137 pages and its complexity.

• (1300)

The government's reluctance to release copies for public distribution is also a factor. I have had to have my own copies printed for interested constituents. The justice department's reluctance to let the public see this awful document is supposed to be an economy measure but there is no lack of funding for distribution of departmental propaganda or puff pieces for the Canadian firearms centre. My constituency office is full of that stuff.

The provisions for arbitrary infringements or abrogations of civil rights and liberties which date back to 1689 have nothing to do with crime control and everything to do with the regulation of property which is a matter of provincial jurisdiction. Four provinces, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and two territories have tested the legitimacy of Bill C-68 in court and are still waiting after a whole year for a decision.

*Supply*

[Translation]

Oddly enough, Quebec, the champion of provincial rights, remains on the sideline. The PQ government refuses to defend Quebec's right to conduct its own business. This is strange. Perhaps the members sitting to my left could explain this situation.

[English]

In case anyone here has forgotten what the House passed in June 1995 and for the benefit of new Liberal backbenchers who probably have not read the bill, I wish to draw attention to some of the most noxious bits. I hope that new members will note the section numbers so that they can look it up themselves in case they do not believe me.

Section 102. Police will be able to search premises without warrants on the flimsiest pretext. They will be empowered to open any container, require any person to produce records, enter any computer system and confiscate firearms or any other thing. These things can be done without any evidence that a crime has been, is being, or will be committed. Oh Canada.

Section 103. A custodian of premises being searched must co-operate with the inspectors or risk being charged under section 111 with an indictable offence carrying a penalty of up to two years in prison. In other words self-incrimination is now a requirement under Canadian law.

Section 104. A warrant may be obtained to search a private home if an inspector believes on reasonable grounds, whatever that means, that the home contains a prohibited firearm or more than 10 other firearms and that entry is necessary for the enforcement of the act or the regulations and that there are reasonable grounds for believing that entry will be refused. Catch 22.

Section 117 provides the Minister of Justice with almost unlimited power to regulate firearms by order in council. Under section 108 those orders in council will become law within 30 days of being laid before parliament regardless of whether or not they are approved by parliament or even debated. Under section 119 even that slight bow to parliamentary democracy may be avoided if in the opinion of the minister these are immaterial, insubstantial or urgent.

A few years ago the former justice minister described his dream of a Canada where only police and the military would possess arms. During debates in the House he altered his position perhaps because it dawned on him that he had succinctly described a police state.

Now, thanks to events at last year's APEC summit in Vancouver, we know that the government has extended those police and military privileges to armed foreign thugs on Canadian soil. Was this indicative of philosophical kinship, a shared contempt for those damn peasants who do not know their place, who are not

capable of making decisions and who do not share the prime ministerial vision of Canada?

I have several times quoted James Madison in the House with regard to the loss of freedom. I shall close by doing it one more time. "There are more instances of the abridgements of freedom of people by gradual and silent encroachments of those in power than by violent and sudden usurpations." Words to live by.

• (1305 )

**Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I guess I should start by congratulating the gentleman across. I am quite surprised to hear that he is the self-appointed voice of Quebec now. That was quite amusing. I have a couple of questions for the hon. member.

First of all, for my interest, I am wondering if he might clarify what he considers a special interest group. I have heard some of the hon. members say you cannot classify this as a special interest group, people in my riding. I am curious if he brought the entire population of his riding or a group of citizens within his riding that are interested in one specific topic, gun registration. I would ask what his definition of special interest group is because he certainly seems to be catering to them in this House.

My second question is one on domestic violence and the fact of gun registration and is it appropriate. Domestic violence knows no borders. It happens in rural Canada. It happens in rural Alberta. It happens in rural Simcoe—Grey. And it certainly takes place in many urban communities throughout this country.

Does the hon. member not think that the police have a right to know when they are going to that most unpleasant of calls where there is nothing but emotion in play, whether or not there are firearms in the residence? Do they have that right to know? If there is a situation that is taking place where a woman is being abused and assaulted and there is a potential that there are weapons, long rifles upstairs, downstairs, somewhere in that house, should the police not have the right to know before they walk in that door? Of course, they govern themselves accordingly, but they still should have the right and it could save lives.

Does the hon. member believe that the police should have the right to know whether or not there are weapons in the house? If there are weapons that can kill people, should the police have a right to know they are in there?

**Mr. Lee Morrison:** Mr. Speaker, I will start at the top. The hon. member asked so many questions that I have already forgotten the first couple.

This question of knowing whether or not there are firearms in the house is ridiculous. I have discussed this with a lot of frontline police officers. I dare say the hon. member has not.

**Mr. Paul Bonwick:** Once again speaking on my behalf.

**Mr. Lee Morrison:** You bet.

The object of this supposedly is to make it safe for police. Any police officer who is not demented is going to approach a house with domestic violence in progress as though there were arms in that house. If he does not, he will probably end up dead at some point. They do not need and they will not rely upon a computer record to tell them they should be careful, that there are arms there.

The police officers treat every domestic incident as a potentially violent situation. So this is just nonsense that is being discussed here.

With respect to special interest groups, there is a very clear definition of special interest groups. Special interest groups are these bloodsucking institutions that get federal funding. I have not heard of those people out front, those ordinary real Canadians whose freedoms are being endangered by these cryptofascists, who are being abused, who are being threatened, tell me that they are getting federal funding. If they are getting federal funding, I would like to see the cancelled cheques.

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Wanuskewin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member, a colleague of mine in the Reform Party, if he sees any parallels between this depriving of civil liberties and freedom of speech in this obnoxious gun control bill and the APEC summit and some of the depriving of rights that took place there on that occasion.

● (1310)

**Mr. Lee Morrison:** Mr. Speaker, there is a very definite parallel. I think there is also a parallel between this and the snipers I see standing on the roof of the Langevin building today to defend themselves against a bunch of Canadian farmers. If the member does not think they are there, he should go out and take a look.

[Translation]

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech of my colleague from Cypress Hills—Grasslands. I must, by the way, congratulate him for speaking in French. I think it shows much progress and I congratulate him.

It was interesting, because he spoke at length about Quebec. I represent a riding in that province. I have lived there for many years and should therefore know what is going on.

According to an Angus Reid poll done in May 1995, 79% of Quebecers supported Bill C-68. Quebec's own Minister of Justice at the time, Paul Bégin, officially backed the bill. A few months earlier, in November 1994, a Gallup poll had revealed that nine out of ten Quebecers, or 90% of Quebec's population, were in favour of registering all firearms.

### Supply

This has been a fact of life in Quebec since 1972, because provincial legislation requires that all firearms be registered anyway.

Bill C-68 is a bill of which we on the government side are very proud. It represents the view of the vast majority of Canadians. It is a bill that was democratically and legitimately passed in this Parliament by a government majority. Today, the bill is law in Canada. To reopen this debate, as the Reform Party wants to do today, in league with the National Firearms Association, brings to mind what is going on in the United States.

[English]

The right wing and the extreme right wing have been sleeping with the National Rifle Association for ever and a day. No matter what the congress of the United States wants to do to express the desire of what has been seen in poll after poll, the majority view of the great number of Americans that want some control over firearms, the right wing has managed in the United States to defeat it because of the tremendous lobbying power of the National Rifle Association.

Thank the Lord here we will not be cowed if it is 2,000, 5,000 or 20,000. They do not represent 30 million Canadians. We do and we feel we do it well. We have been elected by a majority of Canadians to express their views. Their views on gun control legislation have been extremely clear. In fact the police chiefs across the land have pointed out as shown in a study published by the Ottawa *Citizen* on August 28, 1997 that 52% of guns found at crime scenes in Canada are shotguns or rifles.

I know registration is not very pleasant. We have to register our boats. I register my boat every year. It is something I would like to avoid if I could but I do it. If they made a law tomorrow to make licensing of people handling motorboats compulsory, I would be for it. It would be an inconvenience but if it can save people from getting hurt or from being killed then it is certainly a step forward despite the inconvenience. I register my car every year and it is not pleasant. I have to send a cheque to get the sticker. We all do. The difference between cars, boats and guns is that guns maim and kill. The experience in Canada is that guns kill a lot of people, as they do everywhere in the world.

● (1315)

If registration can save 100 lives, only 100 lives, if it can save 20 lives, if it can save just one life, then it is justified.

I cannot believe what I hear. It is always the cost. How much it will cost the government and the taxpayer to register a gun. But it is never the cost of a life lost. How much is the price of a life lost? If registration was just to avoid the killing of one life, then registration would be worth it. We should not be quarrelling about the price, whether it is \$50 million, \$60 million or \$100 million.

*Supply*

[Translation]

I sincerely thank the member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, who focussed on the broad issue of registering firearms, looking at all the ridiculous arguments that have been raised by opponents of Bill C-68. They said it will cost a fortune, and so forth, when registration will, in fact, be a one-time event, costing only a few dollars annually, just like a driving licence, just like licensing our car or boat costs a few dollars.

What harm is there in that, if registering firearms makes it possible for police forces to identify them more accurately and if it discourages us from using them?

[English]

The Reform Party speaks as if we live in a cocoon. I heard them talking about the west against the rest of Canada. Yet there was a poll taken in the riding of the member for Edmonton North which said that 55% favoured registration and 28% were against.

They seem to imply that we are alone in the world. I would like to mention a few figures to them. Licensing is required in Australia, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Great Britain, Japan, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain—

**Mr. Dick Harris:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In the hon. member's comments he is referring to poll numbers. In order that we might be better informed, could he perhaps tell us clearly what the poll question was?

**The Deputy Speaker:** With respect, I think the hon. member is asking a question and not raising a point of order. The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, it is just the usual delaying tactics of the Reform Party. It is silly nonsense. It is typical of them.

The registration of firearms is required in five of eight states of Australia, in Belgium, Finland, France—except for selected sporting rifles—in Germany, Greece, Great Britain, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland.

Of course all these people do not know any better, but they do ask for registration of firearms. They care for their sporting guns. They care for shooting. They care for hunting, but they do not mind registering their guns. They do not mind being licensed for holding guns because they believe it is better for the common safety of their population.

Compare this to the United States where a free-for-all has existed for years. Shooting and crime are rampant, no matter how many jails they build. They have more jails and more people to

execute, but there is still more crime. They will not register their guns because of the force of the NRA and the right wing.

We do not want to be the same here. We do not want to fall into the same trap, to be on the side of the Reform Party and the National Firearms Association. Let them bring thousands here. We will not change our minds. We believe that the licensing and registration of firearms will serve the best interests for the safety of Canadians. It will also save human lives, which have no price.

• (1320)

**Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, just so we can bring some truth and honesty to this debate, the question that was asked on the Liberal poll was: "Would you support gun control considering it would cut crime and save lives?" What Canadian would not vote yes for a question like that?

As this members knows, because he was here in the last parliament when the former minister of justice brought in the bill, day after day after the bill was introduced Reform Party members asked the minister and his cohorts to give us one historical piece of evidence, one substantive fact or one honest description of how Bill C-68 would cut crime in this country and we would vote for it. All through that debate the minister could not comply with that request. His parliamentary secretary could not comply with that request. Not one Liberal on that side could tell us how Bill C-68 would cut crime and save lives in this country.

Have things changed? Has the former minister of justice changed his mind about it? We cannot see any evidence and we are still asking that of the Liberal government.

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, this is so simplistic it is sad. I did not decide for myself how it was going to save lives. I am not smart enough to know that. It is not my field. I am relying on the police chiefs in my riding who I have spoken to. I am relying on the people in my riding who control justice: the judges, the magistrates, the people who are involved with crime. These people are overwhelmingly in favour of gun control legislation.

I am also relying on the example of other countries. I have cited a list of countries as long as my arm that insist on registration.

**Mr. Dick Harris:** Just answer the question.

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** This is typical of what is going on today: big loudmouths who scream, shout and put out simplistic notions but ignore what is going on around them the world. They ignore what the police chiefs, the magistrates, the judges and the great majority of Canadians are saying poll after poll after poll.

Regardless of the polls, about 75% of Canadians do not want any of the Reform Party's notion that freedom means carrying guns that are not registered and not licensed. Canadians at large are saying loud and clear that they want guns to be registered and gun owners



*Supply*

to be licensed. That is what we have expressed here as the representatives of the majority of Canadians who elected us.

This is a democratic law, passed by a democratic government. If the Reform Party does not want to abide by it, too bad. Canadians will judge them accordingly.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis on his speech and I would like to ask him, following on the questions from my colleague from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, whether according to his information, he can confirm the rumours about the costs of this new firearm registration program, forecast to be in the order of \$80 million, now having risen to \$350 million.

First of all, is this rumour correct, and second, if it is, how can the hon. member, with the information at his disposal, explain such a cost increase, and what lies behind such an increase?

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln:** Mr. Speaker, there has been no decision on costs. All that is still being put into place. All we know is that costs have been set for permit charges, and for registration charges. We do not know the exact cost of processing and of the operation as a whole.

As my Liberal colleague who spoke before me pointed out, however, the key element in all this is surely the cost of human life.

• (1325)

That is the key element in all this is. How can we judge the cost of a human life that has been protected by firearm registration and licencing? That is where the underlying principle lies.

As for the overall cost of implementing the system, I cannot give any exact figures.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jerry Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one thing that I have noticed here today is that the opponents of this legislation seem to distort, misrepresent and deny the benefits of this legislation.

When I look at and start to think about what this legislation is going to do for the average Canadian, I think it proposes safe streets, a confidence that someone can live in a community without a threat, and many, many things that we should discuss here today.

I would like to look at the positive aspects of this legislation. The law imposes tough criminal penalties. They say “Don’t touch the criminal”. That is absolute nonsense.

Even our opponents across the way have to admit that this legislation does a great deal to impose penalties on people who misuse guns in this community. The minimum penalty of four

years, in many cases, is a very strong deterrent to those people who would misuse guns in the commission of a crime.

The courts, by the way, have totally supported this legislation up to this day. The statute is about lethal instruments, articles designed for the most part to kill. This legislation is not about confiscation. Let us be very clear about that.

It recognizes that the vast majority of firearm owners and users are responsible, prudent people. The practices which are embodied in the statutes reflect the prudent practices of responsible people.

The statute strives to encourage a culture that is safe for Canadians, a culture that is well trained in activities and practices for responsible gun owners.

The legitimate practices of those responsible gun owners can continue under this statute. Hunters can continue to hunt. Target shooters can continue to target shoot. Buyers and sellers can continue activities that they have done for years. Museums can continue to display the weapons that are displayed today.

The intent and purpose of some is incompatible though. There are some uses of guns in this country that are not for sporting, that are not for the business uses that we have in Canada.

Consequently, several military assault weapons have been banned. Fully automatic rifles have no legitimate purpose in this country. Most handguns are treated with particular concern due to their lethal nature and the fact that they can be concealed.

While we have taken strong measures to deal with such firearms, the statute is focused on respecting the legitimate interests of people and good gun owners.

Many of our opponents advocate a situation respecting firearms such as that which exists in the United States. That is what I have heard opposite pretty well all day today. It is worth noting that there are 30 times more firearms in the United States than there are in Canada.

A much higher proportion of homicides in the United States involve firearms. On average, 65% of homicides in the United States involve firearms as opposed to 33% in Canada. Do members realize that? There are double the number of homicides in the United States than there are in Canada and those members are telling us to look at that country. That is nonsense.

A study for the Centre for Disease Control examined the cause of death among children in 26 developed countries and found that 86% of firearm related deaths occurred in the United States. In the United States, 86% of deaths among children involved firearms. That means there are too many guns for children to access. That means we have to lock these guns up. That means we cannot have children exposed to them. Recent news events describing school-yard shootings speak for themselves. The United States environ-

*Supply*

ment respecting guns does not give a better vision that Canadians want to see.

• (1330)

The Firearms Act addresses only crucial social situations that are created by domestic violence. Required firearms licensing and screening of gun owners will result in specific checking of probation orders, prohibition to orders before licences are granted. Licences will have to be renewed every five years. So there will be an examination of violence on a regular basis. For those who wish to acquire new firearms, the applicants must contact their former spouses or someone involved with them so that if there is a problem they will be able to bring that testimony forward.

When fully implemented all firearms owners will be licensed. They will have taken a course emphasizing safety and safe handling of guns. The guns will be registered. This will assist police in their investigations. It will encourage owners of stores and guns to make sure sales are appropriate. It will assist the recovery of lost or stolen firearms.

Registration together with licensing and other aspects of firearms is aimed at facilitating a continued enjoyment of sport in Canada by responsible safe practices. This will encourage the continuation of free movement of Canadian citizens within a culture that recognizes safety and responsibility. The Firearms Act embraces all these as positive effective contributors to all aspects of Canadian life. The Firearms Act has the support of a large majority of Canadians. It is a reflection of a country of peaceful communities and its fairness will make them much better places to live.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, listening to the comments of the hon. member opposite is a revelation of a thought process I do not quite comprehend and do not pretend to understand. I thought I was a fairly clear, reasonably thinking person. There are a number of discrepancies in what the hon. member is saying. I would like to question him on a couple of them.

I will use an example. This morning on the Internet I found some information put out by the government. It is propaganda on Bill C-68. One of the items is 10 reasons for the registration of all guns. We could go through the argument point by point but we would be wasting a lot of valuable time although they deserve to be looked at. One of the last points is less paperwork. I want to ask the hon. member about that issue. Somehow this is going to put more policeman in service on the streets because we will have less paperwork.

These are the application forms for this law that is going to bring less paperwork, make our streets safer, give us more policemen actually on the beat in our communities. It starts with 669 and goes up to 774. These are the forms that are available for registering guns.

• (1335)

There are applications for a possession only licence under the Firearms Act for individuals who currently own firearms; for a possession and acquisition licence under the Firearms Act for acquiring firearms and/or crossbows, these are for individuals; for a firearms licence under the Firearms Act; for a firearms licence for businesses and museums; for a sponsor of a gun show; for a carrier firearm licence; to register non-registered firearms, long guns for individuals; to register a newly imported restricted firearm for individuals; to reregister previously registered firearms, restricted and prohibited firearms; to register firearms for businesses and museums; for authorization to transport restricted and prohibited firearms and prohibited handguns; for authorization to carry restricted firearms and prohibited handguns; transfer and to register, and there is another full page of applications.

I want to know from the member opposite, after he sits there and gives his head a shake, how we are cutting paper and putting more people on the street. Come on now. I would like the hon. member to explain it.

**Mr. Jerry Pickard:** Mr. Speaker, I have to think you would agree with me how incredible it is that a member can stand for four minutes and describe all the different forms that we have after a speech on safety in the communities.

When we start looking at a comparison between the United States and Canada on safety of our streets and we think about what the average Canadian wants and needs for safe communities, the only question he can come to is that we have 100 forms here and we may have to fill them out.

To me it is incredible that is the mentality driving the debate. To me the critical issue is safety. It is lives. It is good community spirit. It is making sure that the use of those firearms by Canadians is still allowed. I would say that once all the guns are registered, once all the forms are filled, once we get that and it is recorded in today's society, we do have the means by which to reduce paperwork dramatically. Everyone knows paperwork can be reduced dramatically if it is organized and presented properly. That is exactly what those forms are doing. Once it is done, once it is in the registry, once we have all the paperwork done then the continuation is very reasonable and can be carried out in a good, appropriate way.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, what we have come here today to discuss and debate is a matter of utmost importance. That goes without saying. I have heard comments in here in the last few minutes about whether this is supported, safety and these various issues that come up.

With regard to support, I would like the members in the House, if they have not already done so, to take a few minutes and step

outside and look at the Canadians standing out there, average Canadians. They are not people who are looking to break the law. These are average Canadians who have come here en masse with one of the biggest demonstrations certainly that has been seen here for a long time, if not ever.

For every one of those people out there I can assure members that there are hundreds and possibly thousands represented by each one of those. The question of support for this bill, for the abolition of the Firearms Act, is represented by these people, and let us just talk about additional support for abolition of this bill.

I met the other day with the minister of justice in Manitoba, Mr. Vic Toews. If he does not represent one million Manitobans on this issue, I will eat my shirt.

The fact is he will not be appointing inspectors under this legislation. He is saying that this legislation is bad, it is wrong, he does not support it, the province of Manitoba does not support it, the premier does not support it nor do the people of Manitoba, Alberta, Ontario, the Northwest Territories and the aboriginal people.

• (1340)

How many more do the Reform Party have to identify as Canadians who are against the Firearms Act to convince the members opposite that they are out to lunch on their exaggerated numbers they claim support this bill? As referenced in the court case which happened in Edmonton, the justice department, on behalf of the Liberal government, took the RCMP statistics and built them up to a point where they were plain untrue. There was a lot of correction over that. They finally got the RCMP to admit that the figures had been misinterpreted or something. That is not true. They were outright changed.

The question of safety is one that has been debated here for some time. I will go back to my experience in life as a police officer. The question of safety with firearms was already addressed fully before the Firearms Act came into place. There was safe storage. There were firearm training programs. I was an instructor at one time. There was registration of handguns. The registration was inaccurate but it was there. I never seized any registered guns from the criminals I arrested.

With regard to safety in family disputes, you did not know whether there was going to be a firearm in the house or whether the fellow or wife was previously known to have firearms. The computer systems the RCMP and the Ontario provincial police had already had the capability of entering and tracking these people as dangerous. There were already provisions for serial numbers of stolen firearms to be entered. Residents and people who were known to be active criminals or who were known to be suspects

### *Supply*

capable of violence were entered. The computer systems were there.

The idea that this is going to increase safety it wrong. I hesitate to use these words, but the hidden agenda of this government is clearly to make up enough rules that the average law abiding Canadian is going to break some of those rules either in transferring a firearm or registering it wrongly. The government can then take that act and say they have made a mistake. From then on they will be prohibited from owning a firearm. The ultimate goal would be to remove as many or all guns from legitimate law abiding Canadians. That will leave the criminal with the guns. There is one other group of people who are going to have guns in this country, the military and the police. They have them now and it is a good thing they do.

This government is proceeding along the road of arming more of its departments. The question I ask is will this hidden agenda ultimately end up with only the government and the criminals owning guns and the average Canadian having nothing. To back that statement up, the government is arming Canada Customs. The conservation officers are being armed. There are all kinds of these things happening. It all translates into more government control.

• (1345)

Before this act came into effect the Criminal Code indicated that a criminal who used a weapon during the commission of a crime could be sentenced for that offence. The sentence could be harsher. These things were all in place. It is frustrating to know that the only impact of the act put in place by the government will be an increase in costs for average Canadians to own firearms. People who require firearms like me and the rest of the farmers and hunters in the country will have increased costs. It will also cause people to quit a hobby they enjoyed.

I will relate an experience I had the other day. I was attending a clay shoot which involves aiming at little clay targets with shotguns. There were about 60 to 70 people there from my riding. It was a beautiful sunny day. We had a nice time. I am sure we were not hurting anyone. I did not see any criminals. There were none. We are talking about support for this type of legislation. The talk that day was that the legislation would add costs for firearms and ammunition to a hobby that already had costs built into it.

As young people no longer join this hobby there will be spin-off costs. They will not buy ammunition. They will not buy firearms. They will not spending money on gas. They will not be spending money which helps the economy. More than that, what is irking a lot of us is that we have the right to enjoy ourselves. If we are doing it in a lawful manner, why should the government put hindrances and expenses on us which are not needed and will do no good other than for its belief that Canadians should not own firearms and that only governments and foreign powers that come to the country with their security guards should be the ones to have firearms?

*Supply*

I stand by my right as a Canadian to own a firearm without harassment from my government. I intend to fight for that. I support the motion entirely and I invite every member, particularly those on the Liberal side who know what their constituents want, to vote for the motion.

**Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was quite amazed to listen to the member's comments. I was wondering if some of the people in the House and some of the people watching today were actually listened to what he is doing.

The hon. member is fearmongering. He is promoting fear in Canada. He should be absolutely ashamed of himself. He is suggesting that the Liberal government is trying to create a police state. Perhaps the hon. member should visit a police state. He should be absolutely ashamed of himself. Enough of the fearmongering and enough of the false statistics. He should simply make some calculated comments without—

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** I know the hon. member by his comment has provoked something in the House, but it is very hard for the Chair to hear and I do need to hear what hon. members on all sides are saying. I would appreciate some order.

**Mr. Paul Bonwick:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for quieting them down. They get to be quite a violent lot some times. My point was simply to suggest that the Liberal government is trying to create a police state is absolutely false.

The hon. member mentioned that he was a past police officer and did not see any benefit in the legislation. Let me give him an example. What would he think if he were attending a domestic violence call in a municipality of 15,000 people where he did not know everybody? I am sure the hon. member accepts the fact that domestic violence knows no bounds, not just urban but rural. If he had to attend a domestic violence call and there was no criminal record of the people living at that address, does he not think it might be good use of information, that it might assist him in that call if he knew there were guns there? Does he not think that maybe that information might be pertinent as to how the officer is to conduct himself or herself? I ask that question.

● (1350)

The hon. member should also keep in mind if he walks in and assumes that there are guns there—I am talking about long guns—and quells this domestic situation and says: "Turn over your guns. We are here to take your guns". Should he take the person's word that there is only one or two guns, or should he not have access to knowing? Is it not fair to say that police officers should have access to knowing there are long arms in there? Perhaps, if the

member would take off his blinders, he could help officers to eliminate some domestic violence situations that turn into tragedies.

Would it be useful information to an officer responding to a call if he were provided in advance with the fact that there were long arms in there which could potentially be used in a domestic violence situation?

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom:** Mr. Speaker, no. When officers attend these domestic disputes or any other allegation of any kind of criminal activity, they go in there knowing that it is a volatile situation. The very facts of the situation cannot be known beforehand either by some computer, if it is accurate, or by the information they receive. In that area the hon. member is listening simply to chiefs of police.

He spoke also of fearmongering. Let us talk about fearmongering. He can take a look at the city police in Winnipeg and at the courts. In the newspapers the other day there was an article about a gang rape of a 15 year old girl by four bikers. This young girl refused to testify in court. She was terrified of the criminal and refused to testify, and the police could not protect her.

Fearmongering is on the side of those who promote gun registration. The moneys being spent on firearm registration should be spent on working with victims of crimes and fighting the biker gangs. There is nothing being spent on biker gangs, and \$150 million would help. Fearmongering is on the side of the Liberal government. It is not on this side.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate with the hon. member for Wild Rose.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order please. I know there is a lot of enthusiasm for the hon. member for Wild Rose, but I also know that hon. members would want to hear his remarks. I would hope that there would be some quiet.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Not to worry, Mr. Speaker, I was a school teacher for 30 years and have put up with this nonsense for a lot longer than this. The only thing is the children are a little older now and ought to know better; but they do not have any brains so it does not make any difference.

Let me make an exception. The gun registration under Bill C-68 is to cost \$200 million. Let us say that is the case. We have not been told once how it will save a life. We asked the Liberals, lots of times, to please show us how it would save a life.

Let me make a second exception. Probably two of the biggest killers we have in the country are breast cancer and prostate cancer.

If we had \$200 million and it had to go to one or the other, how many Liberals would pick gun registration over cancer research? I will tell the House how many would pick gun registration: all of them because they listen to the dictators and they do what they are told to do.

• (1355)

The Liberals billed legislation that has almost a hundred orders in council, the old thing they used to put into legislation during wars and real serious activities to protect our land; throughout the War Measures Act there were orders in council. This legislation has in it nearly a hundred times where one person in the House, one individual on that frontline can decide whether or not a certain firearm should be confiscated.

That is the power that exists under the bill. That is the kind of power to which any normal Canadian taxpayer objects. That is the kind of power they have in all these countries that have failed a hundred times under dictatorial power. When will members on that side of the House wake up and smell the coffee? I heard a member over there a while ago saying "smell the coffee".

Members on that side of the House are a bunch of sheep. They do what they are told because they believe strongly in the will of the party and not the will of the people. That is what they believe in.

Let me give an example. In a week or two they will be reading an article in the *Western Producer* written by Larry Fillo describing the absurdity of the bill. On July 10, 1998, Lorraine Dewetter was informed by two police officers of the death of her husband. Mr. Dewetter apparently died after a heart attack when his vehicle was stuck in a field. The RCMP, however, did more than just deliver the unfortunate news of Mr. Dewetter's passing. While in the Dewetter home informing his wife of his death the RCMP confiscated a .22 calibre rifle and a 12-gauge pump action shotgun.

In the pickup that was stuck there was a .410 shotgun which a lot of farmers carry around with them. The RCMP seized a legal .410 shotgun from the pickup, but when they went to inform his wife that he had died in the field they confiscated all the guns in the house.

That is what comes about with this kind of legislation: search and seizure without any particular reason. It contains unreasonable search and seizure regulations. It is unreasonable to do that. It is as simple as that. It confiscates property. It did in this case. Members can read about it in the *Western Producer* in two weeks.

**The Speaker:** After question period the hon. member for Wild Rose has the floor. He still has approximately five minutes left. Right now we are going to Statements by Members and will begin with the hon. member for Waterloo—Wellington.

S. O. 31

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### THE LATE DAVE NICHOLSON

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Constable Dave Nicholson, a 32 year old member of the Waterloo Regional Police Service who lived in Heidelberg, Ontario, recently drowned while trying to retrieve the body of a 12 year old Cambridge boy, Mark Gage.

Constable Nicholson's funeral was held in Kitchener on August 19, 1998. Thousands of police, peace officers and firefighters joined family and friends at the solemn occasion.

Constable Dave Nicholson was an outstanding police officer, a devout family man, a loving father, a wonderful husband and an exceptional citizen of our great Canada. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him, who worked with him and who had contact with him.

• (1400)

The death of Constable Nicholson underscores the courage and bravery of those whose job it is to protect Canadians wherever they may be.

I ask the House to join with me in remembering Constable Dave Nicholson. He was a man of great faith and conviction. He will be greatly missed. He is now in the hands of God.

\* \* \*

### HOUSING

**Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it seems that my parliamentary colleague and my constituency neighbour from Port Moody—Coquitlam was hit in the head by a golf ball when he shared the links with the Prime Minister this summer.

For some reason he mistakenly believes that he single-handedly dealt with the leaky condo disaster in British Columbia. He even believes that the tragedy was not that big of a deal until he brought it up in Ottawa.

If he has resolved the buck passing of this government for the water damage disaster, why are so many constituents protesting with picket signs when he speaks at local events? These concerned British Columbians are pleading for relief, the same relief which I have repeatedly asked of this government through letters, speeches and Order Paper questions.

It is time for the member to stop golfing in Shawinigan and start delivering help to constituents back home. He might remember them desperately waiting for representation, not a yes man from the golf course.

*S. O. 31*

### 1998 ONTARIO SUMMER GAMES

**Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last month over 2,500 young athletes from across the province came together in Guelph for the 1998 Ontario Summer Games. It was a wonderful chance to showcase our community. I must say that Guelph—Wellington did shine.

The theme for the games was “Reach for your dreams” and Ontario’s best young athletes did just that. With the support of their fellow competitors, families and hundreds of spectators, these athletes broke records, set personal bests and created memories that will last a lifetime.

I would like to congratulate the city of Guelph, the organizers of the games, general manager Tim Mau, and especially the nearly 1,800 volunteers who came from all over our great community.

This wonderful spirit of volunteerism and community involvement is part of what makes Guelph—Wellington the best place to live in Canada.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### HEPATITIS C

**Ms. Diane St-Jacques (Shefford, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the government is totally insensitive to the expectations of Canadians who are demanding fair compensation for all victims of contaminated blood.

Despite this majority request, the government is setting up a system of compensation by category. Some victims will receive financial compensation and specific medical services, others will receive only medical services. This is unfair and unacceptable. As one of my constituents, Jean-Daniel Couture, put it, the government’s position in this matter is absolutely disgusting.

We in the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada do not intend to give in to this irresponsible attitude. We will continue to fight in the House to ensure that all victims of hepatitis C are fully and fairly compensated.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

**Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Canadian Council for International Co-operation for undertaking an in common mission to Indonesia and Thailand with members of parliament, the native community, the civil society and non-governmental organizations.

As part of the in common campaign for a poverty-free world, the purpose of the mission was to investigate the roots of the Asian financial crisis, the effects of the crisis on the poor and its implications for Canada.

The delegation found that the human and development crises are immense and require an urgent response from Canada and the international community.

I call on my colleagues to join the in common campaign and take action to build greater awareness for the elimination of global poverty. I applaud the CCIC for bringing this important issue to the attention of both the Canadian public and government. Keep up the good work, CCIC.

\* \* \*

### GUN REGISTRATION

**Mr. Derrek Konrad (Prince Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I met with a delegation of concerned gun owners who have travelled from my riding of Prince Albert to take part in today’s Fed Up rally against Bill C-68.

In response to pressure from people like these and with less than 10 days remaining, the minister finally caved in to common sense and postponed the implementation date until December 1.

Now if the government, which has had three years to hear objections to this legislation, remains committed to it, here is what millions of law-abiding Canadians can expect: criminal charges for failure to comply; seizure of private property without compensation; padlocks on the doors of legitimate businesses.

Clearly this piece of legislation is unworkable.

We call on the minister now to commit to withholding implementation until the courts can rule on the legality of Bill C-68.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

### BIG BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF CANADA

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the month of September is Big Brothers and Sisters month. Big Brothers and Sisters of Canada focuses on mentoring activity by matching a man with the right boy, or a woman with the right girl.

Research shows that having a big brother or sister makes a positive difference to many boys and girls. Just think about it. Young adolescents saying no to drugs and alcohol, improving their school attendance and getting along better with their families and peers. All because they had big brothers and big sisters.

This is not a dream. It is a reality. This is good news particularly at a time when about 23% of all families are led by a single parent and when many people contend that nothing works in reaching teenagers.

You can reach Big Brothers and Sisters of Canada at 1-800-263-9133.

\* \* \*

### GUN CONTROL

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on September 1 the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville told Alberta radio listeners that Canada should look to the U.S. for leadership on guns.

I cannot believe that the Reform Party would want Canada to follow the American gun culture. Every day in the U.S. there are firearm tragedies happening in many homes. How many children will have to die before the Reform Party realizes that the U.S. is not an example Canadians want to follow? How long will it take them to realize that these are not Canadian values?

\* \* \*

### SECURITY SYSTEM

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, here are the top ten reasons why the Prime Minister thinks it is a good idea to spend 80,000 taxpayer dollars on a security system for his summer cottage.

Number ten, it only represents the total taxes paid by four Canadian families for an entire year.

Number nine, it is essential since eventually even the Prime Minister runs out of pepper spray.

Number eight, there are not enough registered Inuit carvings to protect himself.

Number seven, his homeless friend is okay with it.

Number six, it was already budgeted in the price of the Shawinigan canoe museum.

Number five, it costs no more than another unelected senator.

Number four, unlike the senator at least it does not go to Mexico in the wintertime.

Number three, hep C victims will understand his priority spending.

Number two, it is a national unity thing, everyone in Canada thinks it is a stupid idea.

The number one reason why the Prime Minister thinks it is a good idea to spend 80,000 taxpayer dollars on a security system? Heck a dollar is really only 65 cents so it is not that much. Really.

*S. O. 31*

### GUN CONTROL

**Mr. Murray Calder (Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the gun lobby assembled on Parliament Hill today will hear from an American, John Lott, who professes that if more people had guns, there would be less crime.

After the tragic and senseless school shootings in Arkansas, Lott wrote that fewer people would have been killed or injured if the teachers had been armed. The same John Lott told an Alberta radio audience that the homicide rate for white Americans is comparable to that for white Canadians.

I want John Lott and his American gun lobby friends to know that dividing people by race is not how we do things here in Canada. It did not work for the Reform Party during the election and it will not work for the gun lobby now.

Our government is committed to gun control that protects all Canadians. That is the Canadian way.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### COMMONWEALTH GAMES

**Mrs. Madeleine Daphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to congratulate Canada's 275 athletes, and more particularly the 35 athletes from Quebec, who participated in the 16th Commonwealth Games held in Kuala Lumpur from September 11 to 21.

Their performances put Canada in third place among the 68 delegations. The team from Quebec included three young people from Laval, including 13-year-old Alexandre Despatie, who announced upon arriving in Dorval last night "mission accomplished". He was right. His gold medal in the ten metre diving competition makes him the youngest Canadian gold medal winner in the Commonwealth Games, and likely the youngest medal winner in the history of the games.

Well done, Alexandre, and best of luck on your next mission, the 2000 Olympic Games.

\* \* \*

• (1410)

[English]

### SOUTHEAST ASIA

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I recently returned from Indonesia and Thailand on a mission led by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation to see the impact of the Asian financial crisis on the people who live there.

*S. O. 31*

The impact is catastrophic. Families are desperate, reeling from massive unemployment and skyrocketing food prices. And for many, the last threads of hope are rapidly unwinding.

Upon our return we called on the government to fundamentally change its role in global economic management. The World Bank and IMF's prescription is disastrous. These institutions must be completely overhauled to ensure that the forces of globalization create equity and serve the needs of people.

Instead of using pepper spray to stifle students protesting APEC in Vancouver, instead of ignoring the cries of hunger from citizens around the world who are paying the consequences of global capital gone berserk, this government must end its complicity with the financial power brokers and champion global reform to alleviate poverty and environmental degradation.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GUN CONTROL**

**Mr. Nick Discepolo (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, opponents of gun control are demonstrating on Parliament Hill. A number of speakers will be making unfair demands.

I wish to state that, with firearm control legislation, the government is responding to the call of Canadians, the parents of child victims of crimes or accidents involving firearms in particular.

We are going to continue to work along with these Canadians, who have called for gun control legislation in hopes of reducing the crime rate in our communities.

The government will not allow itself to be intimidated by statements from the other side of the floor, or from demonstrators on the Hill. A large majority of Canadians support gun control. The debate is closed. The Canadian firearms control program will come into effect December 1.

\* \* \*

[English]

**SWISSAIR FLIGHT 111**

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, on September 2, 1999 the citizens of Canada will pause and remember the tragic crash of Swissair flight 111. Many citizens of the south shore of Nova Scotia are living today with the aftermath of that disaster. The communities on the Aspotogen Peninsula and Tancook Island are in the midst of the ongoing cleanup effort that is literally on their doorsteps.

Fishers from those communities were among the first to respond. They, like their forebears, are no strangers to disasters at sea. They left their homes in the dark of night to assist in the desperate search

for survivors. Today there are still hundreds of men and women involved in the cleanup.

The sincere effort made by all the volunteers and professionals who have assisted and continue to assist in this tragic accident is a testimony to the strength of Canadian character and the true fibre of the men and women of the south shore of Nova Scotia.

\* \* \*

**FIREARMS**

**Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the gun lobby gathers on Parliament Hill, I would like to remind this House that the purpose of our government's Firearms Act is to help ensure Canadians continue to live in a safe society. When I look at our neighbours to the south, I am shocked to see the gun lobby fight simple protective measures like trigger locks and safe firearms storage.

I am horrified every time I hear about a child taking firearms to school and using them with deadly consequences on innocent schoolmates.

The Reform Party and other opponents of Canada's new Firearms Act would have us believe that firearms regulation is just one step on a slippery slope. Nothing could be further from the truth. I want to assure law-abiding gun owners that they have nothing to fear from the Minister of Justice or this government. Our commitment is to make sure that gun control is implemented in the most efficient way possible.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PRIME MINISTER**

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Yesterday, the Prime Minister described the Mike Harris government as "ultra-right". Rather than labelling other people, the Prime Minister should be looking at his own record.

Over his long career in politics, he was involved in the War Measures Act. He was the hatchet man in the 1982 constitutional coup d'état. He was one of the key figures in the destruction of the Meech Lake Accord. He was involved in organizing the repression of a peaceful demonstration by students at Vancouver. He has cut \$42 million from social programs. He has dipped into the employment insurance fund surplus to the tune of \$20 billion, using it clandestinely to pay back part of the debt.

● (1415)

Worse still, the Prime Minister is the one who rejected outright the unanimous agreement by the provincial premiers to put money back into health care.

With a record like this, how can the Prime Minister still claim to be a Liberal?



## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### APEC SUMMIT

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister and it is a simple question that has been asked by many Canadians.

Why will the Prime Minister not simply apologize to the Canadian students who were wrongfully pepper sprayed at the APEC summit conference?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that some people had a problem with the police there. No one wished for that to happen and that is why there is an inquiry.

Where there are situations like that, when people feel that they have not been treated fairly, there is a process to help them. It allows them to see whether the police acted in an unethical or illegal fashion. There is an inquiry into this.

At the end we will see who is responsible and who is not. That is why there is an inquiry. If some people were not well treated, certainly—

**The Speaker:** The Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is playing dumb on this question. Our complaint is not with the RCMP but with the Prime Minister who gave them their orders.

Our concerns cannot be resolved by the commission. They can only be resolved by the Prime Minister himself coming clean on this issue.

Will the Prime Minister explain to this House and to the students his role, not the RCMP's role, in this fiasco?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my role was very simple. I was the host of 19 leaders who came to Canada. The RCMP was responsible for keeping order so that the leaders visiting Canada could be safe. This is done for every meeting of this nature.

My role was to be chairman of the APEC meeting on behalf of Canada at that time. The people of Vancouver received the leaders very well.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, that is very interesting because that is not what the RCMP say. They say they were instructed to suppress peaceful protesters even if they were not a security risk.

### Oral Questions

RCMP memos say things like “PM's specific wish” or “PM wants the protesters out”. That PM was not me and it was not the Minister of Finance. Who was it?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know at least one of the two will not become the PMr.

I have been in politics for a long time. As a minister, I have seen many people in departments speaking on behalf of their ministers or on behalf of the prime minister, not knowing—

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

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, I know we all want to hear the questions and the answers. The hon. member for Edmonton North.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister seems to have his fingerprints all over this. The “PM” he is talking about is a post-mortem that Canadians want on this whole issue because they are disgusted.

Why is it that the Prime Minister resorts to blaming a bureaucrat? Why does he not believe in ministerial accountability, stand up in his place right now and say “I'm responsible. I apologize and I will explain what I did in this affair”?

• (1420)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is an inquiry that is being conducted in Vancouver on this incident, which occurred during the last hours of the APEC meeting, when the 19 leaders came to Canada and we were the hosts. The inquiry will look at all the facts.

I said before, and I will repeat, that I hosted the meeting. Until the end everything went very well. After it was over they informed me that there was an incident at the last hour of the meeting.

There is an inquiry into what happened there because—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Edmonton North.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the Prime Minister was shocked there was an incident because he very clearly pointed out that he did not want to be embarrassed and have other leaders be embarrassed.

This public commission looks into the activities of the RCMP, not the unethical activities of politicians.

When is the Prime Minister going to stand up in his place and admit he was wrong, or is he above the law?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member tends to exaggerate a bit. Just a bit. She is very consistent. Today on the Hill she was applauding a group of people who object to gun control and yesterday she did not want us to have people with guns registered in Canada coming from abroad.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the further we delve into “peppergate”, the more we realize that the real responsibility for suppressing anti-Suharto demonstrators lies not with the RCMP but with the Canadian government, which was consumed with reassuring the dictator.

Yesterday, we learned that the RCMP liaison officer was told to do everything necessary to meet Suharto’s demands.

Will the Prime Minister admit that the testimony by officer Peter Montague confirms that the extreme intervention by the RCMP in Vancouver is directly related to the directives his government issued to the RCMP?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, there is an investigation into this matter. A commission will conduct an inquiry, giving members of the public with complaints against the RCMP an opportunity to present their views, and the RCMP an opportunity to justify its actions. The commission is to begin its work shortly. Let us leave it to do its work.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the commission of inquiry will investigate the actions of the RCMP, as the Prime Minister points out. Our questions are directed not at the RCMP, but at the Prime Minister.

Would the Prime Minister be so good as to tell us what lesson we are to learn from seeing a supposed statesman deliberately crushing the individual rights of his fellow citizens so that he can stay on good terms with a dictator, because that is the fact of the matter?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Such rhetoric, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to inform the hon. member that, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs pointed out yesterday, we provided financial assistance to bring protestors to the parallel summit in Vancouver. We ourselves provided assistance for protestors to come from other countries to hold a parallel summit in Vancouver.

For people who do not want to hear anything about civil liberties, I think we have gone further than anyone in issuing an invitation to these people and paying their expenses so that they could come and protest.

**Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, for two days now the Prime Minister has been hiding behind the RCMP public complaints commission in order to avoid answering questions on the role he and his office played in repressing Vancouver students during the visit of dictator Suharto.

How can the Prime Minister hide behind this commission when the issue is that he and his office dealt with the RCMP as if it were a political police force?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there will be an inquiry. Inquiry members will question those who come before them. As everyone knows, two senior officials from my office have agreed to go and testify.

• (1425)

**Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we keep hearing the same tape. The question is very simple: are we to understand that in future the behaviour of the RCMP at demonstrations will be determined by foreign visitors, including dictators?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the rules proposed were for the protection of all leaders of all the governments present, and they were all given the same treatment.

*[English]*

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister.

A federal government lawyer claims that the Prime Minister has no relevant testimony to give before the Public Complaints Commission.

Is the Prime Minister pretending that he never discussed the handling of protesters or the accommodating of Suharto’s sensitivities with any of his officials?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was aware that some of the delegations wanted reassurance. I did that for many.

For example, the President of China was supposed to go to Victoria to receive a doctorate. We could not guarantee him that there would be no demonstrations and he declined to go. We knew that people could protest. The President of China did not accept the offer to receive a doctorate from the University of Victoria because we could not guarantee there would be no protesters.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are not demanding accountability for the Prime Minister’s awareness, they are demanding accountability for the Prime Minister’s actions.

The solicitor general has already said that any witness requested to appear before the Public Complaints Commission should do so, including presumably the Prime Minister.

Does the Prime Minister agree with the solicitor general?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I just said that at this moment there is an inquiry. It will look at all the facts. Nobody has asked me to appear.

Under the circumstances we looked at the precedence and it is not usual in Canada for the Prime Minister to appear in front of a commission. It has never happened before. We will see what happens, but there is no need now.

*Oral Questions*

I am not preoccupied. I want people to let the inquiry do its work. The leader of the fourth party is inventing stories. The facts will be told to the commission in a few weeks.

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, with his answer a few moments ago in the House to the Reform members, appears to indicate that it is better to have the armed thugs of a dictator in Canada than to leave lawful and legitimate long gun owners free from government regulations and taxation.

The truth is out there somewhere about who ordered the RCMP to stifle legitimate protesters at the APEC summit. The solicitor general said yesterday that the Prime Minister cannot avoid a subpoena to testify about the real story.

Will the Prime Minister simply explain to the House his role in the pepper spray matter today? No one—

**The Speaker:** The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have to confess one thing. After it was all over I was asked a question about the pepper spray. I did not know what they were talking about.

I asked the journalist what he meant. It is a product that I have never used. I did not know that it existed. That is why I made the joke and I probably should not have made it. I did not know that there was a spray of pepper.

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Mr. Speaker, reality seems to be imitating fiction when it comes to our American neighbours. They may already have a case like the movie *Sex, Lies and Videotapes*. Soon we may be watching a northern spinoff, *Suharto, pepper spray and cover-up*.

Will the Prime Minister tell us why a subpoena may be necessary before he is accountable to Canadians about the APEC affair?

● (1430)

**Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important to make a distinction because a couple of questions have actually represented what I said yesterday incorrectly. The reality is the public complaints commission can call whomever it wants. That is its prerogative.

**Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister.

We know from documents on November 14 that the RCMP were unhappy with the political role they were asked to play in the APEC affair. Like the Prime Minister, we want the inquiry to work.

Can the Prime Minister guarantee the House and Canadians that the inquiry will be allowed to investigate the office of the Prime Minister and not just look into the issue of the RCMP? Can it guarantee us that it will be able to look into the political role that was played in the Prime Minister's office?

**Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the reality is the public complaints commission acts on the complaints of citizens. It has a wide range of opportunities to investigate and it has a good history for the last 12 years of doing Canada justice. These people should let that committee do its work.

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, let it be very clear that the solicitor general did not answer the question.

The Prime Minister said the public complaints commission can look into those who have grievances against the RCMP. The question posed by my colleague is can it look into the affair from a political point of view into the Prime Minister's office and his complicity.

**Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, obviously the hon. member does not understand that it is not for me or the government to direct it as to what to do. It has a job to do and it will do it.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**SOCIAL UNION**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister responded to our questions concerning social union in a somewhat cavalier manner, irresponsibly even, going so far as to describe the government of Ontario as ultra-right. Really now! For the social union to work, there must be a minimum of openness and good faith.

Given the importance of the social union, the problems being experienced across Canada in the health field as a result of the federal cuts, and the consensus of the premiers, can the Prime Minister brush off a serious question of such import in such a cavalier manner?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. The debate on the social union was an initiative by this Prime Minister, from this side of the House, with the premiers at the meeting of last December, almost a year ago. We wanted to consider social union.

I have, however, always said, and say again today, that the five principles of health insurance, as set out in the law adopted by the Parliament of Canada with a view to assuring all Canadians of a program, are not negotiable. The rest, however, is.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, what I understand from the Prime Minister's response is that Lucien

*Oral Questions*

Bouchard could have been blamed if a consensus had not been reached, which would have suited the Prime Minister, but now that there is a consensus, he no longer knows what to do. That is a problem.

How, and on what basis, can the Prime Minister say that the provincial premiers want to abolish the five principles in the Canada Health Act? On what authority does he make that statement? There is nothing to that effect in the agreement.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was asked "Are you going to accept any changes to the five principles?" and I said no. Look at the transcripts and you will see this. Instead of talking through your hat, go and read the question and the answer, to see what they were.

\* \* \*

• (1435)

**HEPATITIS C**

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Health proud of the fact that all hepatitis C victims in Ontario and Quebec are going to be fairly compensated, while those in other provinces who contracted the virus before 1986 will receive nothing? Does that make him proud?

[English]

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had at heart the real interests of those who contracted hepatitis C from the blood system he would support the proposal we have made. The proposal we have made is to ensure that persons who contracted hepatitis C through the blood system at any time will not have to pay out of their own pockets for medical services and drugs they need. That is what we propose. I call on the member to support us in that initiative.

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this minister supposedly worked all summer on hepatitis C and what did he come up with? Some catchy new slogan, care instead of cash.

So what is the sick dad supposed to do, take his whole family into the hospital bed with him? This dad has no future, no car, no life insurance. What he wants is compassion instead of some catchy new slogan. When will he get compassion?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party is so profoundly out of touch with Canadian values that it does not know the way Canadians show their compassion is by their health care system. The hon. member has no idea that the way Canadians show their concern about others is through health care.

It is for that reason that we are now urging the provinces to join with us to ensure that those who have become sick because of the blood system, no matter when, have access to drugs and treatment they need. At the moment they have to pay out of their pockets in most parts of the country for interferon and important medical services.

We are saying let us put that behind us and make sure people have the treatment they need.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SOCIAL UNION**

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

Ten premiers agreed unanimously in Saskatoon: first of all, that health is a provincial responsibility; second, that, if the federal government intervenes in this sector, the provinces should be allowed to opt out with compensation; and third, that the money spent by a province must be consistent with the federal program.

What does the Prime Minister find unreasonable about this proposal?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the provinces recognize that we can invest money in social programs, we are in complete agreement. That is why we want to be sure that we can continue to do so in a co-ordinated manner with the provinces.

If, however, you are asking me whether we are going to rescind the Canada Health Act, the answer is no.

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, nobody is asking us to rescind the five principles of the Canada Health Act.

What we want to know is whether, if he decides to intervene in the health sector, he will allow those provinces that have programs to opt out with compensation for providing effective, quality services to the public? That is what people want to know.

Why is he refusing to agree to the principle of allowing the provinces to opt out with full compensation?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member really wants is for the federal government to withdraw from the health sector.

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

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien:** That is indeed what he is saying. He is saying that the provinces must be compensated instead of allowing the federal government to play a role in the health sector.

*Oral Questions*

The Canada Health Act and the five principles it sets out will remain part of federal legislation and we will make sure that there is one health system for all Canadians.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CANADA PENSION PLAN**

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canada pension plan's independent watchdog was just fired. This was mere weeks before he was to have issued his major five year review of whether enough money will be there to pay Canadian pensions.

Yesterday the finance minister told us the firing was just an internal matter. We need to be clear on this issue. Is the minister telling this House that he had absolutely no idea that Canada's chief actuary was being dismissed from his post?

• (1440)

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, neither the minister nor his office was involved in the decision. The minister was informed afterwards. This was a purely internal matter involving the superintendent of financial institutions and the public service.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is pretty hard to believe that the minister had no idea that such an important civil servant was being dismissed just before he was to give a major report on the Canada pension plan which has already given the government no end of trouble.

Is the minister saying that top officials, people who are independent and whom Canadians rely on for good independent advice, can just be thrown out the door and he does not even know that this happens?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member ought to understand the way the system works in this country. We have separated politics from the good administration of the public service. The public service takes its own decisions. The superintendent, in conjunction with the public service, had managerial differences with the chief actuary.

In addition, the hon. member will have plenty of opportunity to pursue her line of questioning. It is my understanding the House of Commons finance committee has struck a subcommittee to look into this matter as soon as the former chief actuary has had full recourse for—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière.

[Translation]

**MONTREAL CONGRESS CENTRE**

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the business community, the FTQ, the National Bank and all the economic stakeholders of Montreal are asking the federal government to help fund the expansion of the Montreal congress centre.

And yet, we learned this morning that the Minister of Industry has said he does not have one cent to put into this project, despite the statement made by the secretary of state for regional development.

How does the minister reconcile his statement that he has no money for the Montreal congress centre with the remarks made yesterday by the secretary of state for regional development in Quebec, who said he was working hard to come up with a solution?

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to repeat what I said yesterday, which was absolutely clear, we do not need anyone to tell us the economic importance of the congress centre.

I repeat, the unfortunate part is that, as a national and a responsible government, we put a tool at the disposal of the provinces called the national infrastructure program and, in the case of Quebec, it was the Canada-Quebec infrastructure works program, which was not used for this fundamental and important purpose, whereas Quebec City used the program for its congress centre and for another fair centre.

My colleague is saying that there is no fund or program as such, and he is right. However, we are working hard to come up with an alternative solution, because this is an important issue.

\* \* \*

[English]

**GUN CONTROL**

**Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my questions is for the Secretary of State for the Status of Women.

It appears obvious the Reform caucus is prepared to sacrifice the safety of some women to move forward the agenda of the National Rifle Association.

I therefore ask the secretary of state to tell the House how the government's gun control measures have taken us forward in our goal of ending violence against women.

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism)(Status of Women), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Simcoe—Grey for an extremely pertinent and important question.

*Oral Questions*

When we speak about safety and security for our citizens, the government does not see women as special interest groups, as the opposition party does. We see them as members of the public. Seventy-eight per cent of spousal homicide is done by guns in this country. One woman is killed every six days with a gun in this country. So when we bring out gun control legislation, it is our first step in creating a safe society for the women of this country.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE CONSTITUTION**

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, can the Prime Minister tell us exactly what constitutes a clear majority for a referendum in Quebec? I ask this because the will of 91% of Albertans for an elected Senate was ignored last week.

Now that we know what the Prime Minister thinks about a clear majority in Alberta, how in the world can Quebecers believe he is going to respect a clear majority in Quebec?

• (1445)

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the clear majority that would be required to break apart a country will be the subject of a debate.

We could ask the Reform Party what majority is required to amend its own constitution. If I am to believe clause 7, it reads as follows:

[English]

“That would include a majority vote of the delegates of two-thirds of the majority of votes cast”.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, section 24 of the Constitution explains how senators may be appointed. The Constitution does not mention the Prime Minister. It does not mention golf partners.

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

**The Speaker:** I know that you like I would very much like to hear the question.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer:** Section 24 of the Constitution explains how senators may be appointed. The Constitution does not mention the Prime Minister at all. It does not mention golf partners. It does not mention hockey players and it certainly does not rule out elections. All it states is that the governor general will call qualified people to the Senate.

I would like to ask the justice minister, the so-called minister of Alberta, just what part of the Constitution she thinks would stop the Prime Minister from respecting Alberta's Senate election?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the answer to his question is that it is the prerogative of the Prime Minister of Canada to name a senator and I named Mr. Roche with great pride because he will be a great senator. Even the members of the Reform Party agree with that selection.

Why we have done this and not called elections for senators is because we want a real reform of the Senate, not just on voting but on equality. The Reform Party campaigned against this when we had the Charlottetown accord.

\* \* \*

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister of agriculture will know that the blockade of Canadian trucks carrying grain, livestock and other commodities which began last week in South Dakota has now shifted and spread to some other mid-western states thus destroying utterly the minister's claims that this was electioneering, posturing by one U.S. governor.

Could the minister advise the House what he is doing to resolve this dispute and to protect western Canadian farmers, truckers and their commodities?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the hon. member says, the main issue in this in the United States is politics. It is not about food safety, health or the quality of the Canadian food product.

I have had a number of conversations with Secretary Dan Glickman, my counterpart in the United States. The Minister of Foreign Affairs will be having discussions this evening with the secretary of state in the United States. Just about an hour ago I asked the ambassador in the United States to have a meeting with Secretary Glickman tomorrow. We are stressing to them that it is their role to make sure that the people in the United States, like Canadians, obey international law.

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has to date steadfastly refused an invitation to meet face to face with Mr. Glickman. I appreciate that he has had some phone conversations.

In his answer to the first question is he now saying that he is acceding to the invitation and will be meeting with his U.S. counterpart tomorrow? Is that what he is telling the House today?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the member across is aware that I have had an invitation to meet with Secretary Glickman, it is obvious that he is intercepting my mail because I have had no such invitation from Secretary Glickman.

However, I have had three personal phone calls with him and will continue that dialogue as well as discussions between our minister of trade, Minister of Foreign Affairs and our ambassador

in the United States. We will continue to pressure and point out to the Americans that they are breaking international law.

\* \* \*

#### APEC SUMMIT

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is now clear that we have a triple E Prime Minister: evasive, elusive and erroneous.

The Prime Minister clearly showed his contempt for Parliament yesterday by hiding behind the solicitor general on APEC.

• (1450)

The solicitor general clearly showed his lack of knowledge in his own portfolio by confusing an RCMP complaints commission with a public forum.

I ask the Prime Minister, not his human shield, the solicitor general, did he or his office give the RCMP instructions to remove the protesters from the UBC campus and will he give an accounting in this House?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there will be an inquiry into it. I saw protesters when I was there. I did not ask anybody to withdraw them at all.

A place was provided for protesters in Vancouver and on the campus. That was the plan. There were to be protesters and there were. The problem that occurred is being analysed by the commission at this time. It will report and we will act accordingly.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what part of this is not a criminal proceeding. The Prime Minister and the solicitor general do not understand.

This is a question of political interference from the highest office in the land and the Prime Minister is hiding behind this. Canadians deserve to know what has happened in this affair. There should be a detailed explanation, and I ask the Prime Minister again, or the solicitor general, will they guarantee that they will broaden the mandate of the public inquiry to allow for the question of political interference to be examined at that level.

**Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again my critic from the Conservative Party fails to understand this process, that the public complaints commission itself will make the decisions as to the nature of this investigation.

I have every confidence that it will do it in a way that will satisfy all our interests if we let it do its job.

#### Oral Questions

#### LITERACY

**Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, September 8 was International Literacy Day. Recent data shows that 22% of Canadians have extremely limited literacy skills and another 26% lack sufficient skills to do their jobs properly or participate fully in Canadian society.

What is this government doing to improve the literacy skills of the 48% of Canadians who need our help?

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no question that literacy skills are crucial in order for anyone to succeed. This is why our government has increased by 30% funding for literacy since we took office in 1993.

Our government cannot do things alone. This is a responsibility for everyone to make people in Canada more aware and more sensitive to the needs of developing these literacy skills. That is the reason our government is sponsoring a number of events and festivals around the country to make people more aware of the importance of developing those skills.

\* \* \*

#### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the agriculture minister and his weak-kneed sister, the trade minister, have shown that—

**The Speaker:** I ask the member to be judicious in his choice of words.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom:** Mr. Speaker, the farmers of Canada will not be judicious in their words when they ask this minister questions outside the House.

In any event, we have seen for six days now that the South Dakota government has been rejecting our imports even though they have been passed at the international border.

When will the minister solve this and what is he doing today?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there was a suggestion made. The hon. member should have listened to the previous answer and he would not have had to ask it again. However I will repeat.

We are constantly pressuring the United States and the federal government in the United States, whose job it is to keep the states in line with the international agreements to which they are signatories. If they do not do that there are clauses and actions we can take through NAFTA and WTO, and we will do that.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**SCRAPIE**

**Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Since January 1997, following the preventive slaughter aimed at controlling scrapie in sheep, 11,000 sheep have been slaughtered in Quebec by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. There has been a total lack of information and transparency, and the producers have lost faith in the agency.

• (1455)

Will the minister agree to look at the situation immediately and put an end to the slaughter?

[English]

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am certainly sympathetic to the unfortunate situation of the plight of the young sheep industry and the sheep meat industry in the province of Quebec.

Over the last three years, however, the federal government has given \$200 million to the province of Quebec in order to support its farmers and their income. The province of Quebec chose to use that as price support and not as income support. I sent a letter to the minister of agriculture for the province of Quebec a number of months ago asking him to sit down and discuss this matter with me. He has yet to respond.

\* \* \*

**TRADE**

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade. It has to do with the shameful capitulation by the government this summer to the Ethyl Corporation over the suit brought against the government with respect to the banning of MMT, thus proving that the government is not able under NAFTA to legislate in the public interest with respect to environmental matters.

Given the lesson the government has learned about NAFTA, will the minister now commit to rejecting any multilateral agreement on investment that includes this kind of investor state dispute settlement process?

**Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no lesson because the MMT situation never went to a NAFTA panel.

[Translation]

**APEC SUMMIT**

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am ashamed to rise today in this House as Progressive Conservative foreign affairs critic.

I must say that human rights have been violated, not in Indonesia or elsewhere, but right here, in Canada, at the APEC summit in Vancouver.

In the name of freedom of expression for all Canadians, after the excuses he made today and his statement that members of his staff will testify, will the Prime Minister confirm to this House that he and all of his ministers concerned will go and testify before the commission? Yes or no?

[English]

**Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can only once again repeat that the public complaints commission is mandated. It is an instrument that was put forward through parliament by the former government to deal with complaints against the RCMP. If members opposite will give it a chance, it will do that in the fine fashion it has done it in for the last 12 years.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CANADIAN ECONOMY**

**Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the summer, many questions were asked about the value of the dollar and the state of our economy. Thanks to the decisions of this government and despite a difficult international context, fears have generally settled down.

As an example of these positive economic interventions, I would like to ask the Secretary of State, Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, to tell us what the federal government has done to help the Société de développement Angus in Montreal's east end.

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank my colleague for his excellent question, one which will give me an opportunity to tell the House about the Canadian government's policy. In Montreal, a strategy was developed in February 1996 which has resulted in the creation or preservation of 25,000 jobs.

It was in this context that we stepped in when Ateliers Angus shut down and helped form the Société de développement Angus.



This summer, and it is to this that the hon. member is referring, we contributed \$3 million towards the creation of Technopôle environnemental in order to revitalize Montreal's east end. This vision—

**The Speaker:** I am sorry but I must give the floor to the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

\* \* \*

[English]

### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Garry Breitreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, as I listen to the agriculture minister's answers it seems he is taking his direction from the minister of fisheries.

We have been asking him about the talks he is having with his counterpart in the U.S., Secretary Glickman. It is obvious these talks are very ineffective because Canadian trucks continue to be harassed as they cross into the U.S. Why is he not acting?

• (1500)

Why did he not realize that he could not resolve this and call upon the Prime Minister to intervene, to do something and to take some action against an American counterpart?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Reform Party has finally taken an interest in this. Other than a note that was passed across to me by one of his colleagues to meet me after question period, this is the first time the Reform Party has brought this issue forward.

In fact, this issue has gone on for six or seven days. Now that they have shown some interest, I can assure them that we will continue to act on behalf of the western Canadian farmers.

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, that would bring to a close the question period.

\* \* \*

### PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw your attention the presence in our gallery of a former colleague to many of us and now the honourable Minister of Small Business, Tourism and Culture for the province of British Columbia, the hon. Ian Waddell.

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

*Supply*

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—FIREARMS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion and the amendment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Wild Rose has about five minutes left in debate.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, in a letter of July 1997 the commissioner of the RCMP, Philip Murray, accused the officials in the Department of Justice of misrepresenting RCMP firearm stats by overstating the number of firearms involved in violent crime. Contents of this letter were uncovered by Reform through access to information. Other letters revealed that the former minister of justice and his colleagues used inaccurate firearms data produced by the Department of Justice to help justify Bill C-68. At the time the RCMP commissioner requested that these incorrect stats be removed from circulation.

The bottom line is that the policy and legislating decisions which resulted from these misleading stats are now interfering with justice and public safety.

By March 1998, \$240 million was wasted on registering guns owned by more than five million law-abiding Canadians. That is diverting resources from programs which would do much more to improve public safety, such as putting more police on the streets.

If there was ever a case for the auditor general to step in, this is the one. The government has tried to grossly underestimate the cost, but it is estimated that by the year 2003 \$1.2 billion will have been spent on gun registration.

• (1505)

With four provinces to date opting out of gun registration and the federal government hiring personnel to administer the system in these jurisdictions, this comedy of errors has to be brought to an end. It is becoming a real comedy of errors.

We are talking about \$1.2 billion to register firearms. And I repeat, the registration of shotguns and rifles will not save a life. It just so happens that criminals do not care if the gun they use is registered. I have not been able to get that through the heads of government members.

Let us take the \$1.2 billion and let us not say no to hepatitis C people, but help that gang out. I know some do not want to. I know that no one on the other side wants to because they all had to vote

*Supply*

no. The magic leader said “You had better or else”, so the little sheep bleated and they jumped up and did what they were told once again.

Perhaps \$1.2 billion could be put into cancer research. That would save lives. We know it and members opposite know it. But the registration of guns will not save lives. I hope someone on the other side will get up and give me an example of where the registration of one shotgun or one rifle will save the life of anyone.

Let me tell members about something that happened in Winnipeg yesterday. This was in the headlines. A local city teenager blew his head off with a rifle that he had stolen the previous day. When the owner of the gun called to report it stolen the police rushed to his house to arrest him. That is what we all feared when Bill C-68 came into existence.

I do not know if this has happened elsewhere in the country, but we know for sure there is a big outrage in Manitoba. This victim who had his gun stolen is looking at very serious jail time. He was a victim.

I looked at the Criminal Code for the last four or five years when I was in the justice area and I never found anything in the Criminal Code that was bad. I thought it was a good Criminal Code. It went after the criminals of the land. Why all of a sudden do we want to invent inclusions to the Criminal Code that go after law-abiding, taxpaying citizens, such as we see outside today, in a manner that is totally wasteful and unnecessary?

The member for Ottawa Centre said earlier today “Wake up and smell the coffee”. That is a brilliant statement. They are going to spend \$1.2 billion, according to the auditor general’s estimates, and it is not going to save a life. It is not going to make our streets safer. It is a bunch of nonsense.

Members opposite know it. Their constituents know it. Their leader knows it. But it shall be done because the dictator of Canada has spoken. The dictator of Canada has said to those members over there “Vote for this bill”. They will. They will continue to support the things that cause innocent victims to be arrested, such as the individual in Winnipeg. That is what is going to happen, but they cannot see it. I feel sorry for them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** On questions and comments, we will proceed first with the hon. member for Regina—Qu’Appelle and then we will hear from the hon. member for Wentworth—Burlington.

Hon. members would make it a lot easier for the Chair if they indicated that they wanted to ask a question. Just give me the finger or a nod and if there are a lot of hon. members who would like to ask a question, then we will keep the questions and answers short.

• (1510)

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu’Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would never give you the finger, I would give you a thumbs-up for a job well done.

This may surprise you, but I have a great deal of admiration for the grassroots instinct of my friend from Wild Rose, Alberta. Because of that I want to ask him this question.

We decided in our party to have a free vote on this issue, which will reflect the diversity of public opinion. Will the Reform Party be having a free vote on this issue later on this afternoon?

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I find that to be a strange question. Since 1993 we have always had free votes and we will continue to always have free votes.

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

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** With respect to Bill C-68, the hon. member and my hon. noisy friends across the way will remember that when we voted there were some Reform members who voted for Bill C-68. We have free votes.

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a more simple question for the hon. member for Wild Rose.

He spoke at length about the high cost of gun registration. If gun registration cost only, say, \$10 million or even \$1 million, or if indeed gun registration cost nothing at all, would he then support it?

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I would support anything that would be voluntary. In fact, this hon. member can go out and ask all the criminals of the land if they care to register their guns and see if they step forward to do it.

The point is that registration will not solve the problem. They cannot get that through their heads. I would like one member to stand over there and give me one illustration of where registering guns will save a life.

**Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I just wondered if the hon. member was familiar with the Alberta president of the National Firearms Association. Just in case he does not know who he is, his name is Mr. Lickacz, and he has an interesting statement on the Internet.

He says “Maybe not all Canadians are sheep. I find it astonishing that given the bitterness that the RFC”, the recreational firearms community, “has for the federal government with respect to the firearms situation here that this type of comment has not been seen before”.

I want to be clear that this is not something I am saying. I am simply quoting this person.

He says “I have been told by many firearms owners that they will shoot the first—cop on my doorstep that comes looking for my firearms”. I deleted an expletive, and a big one.

*Supply*

He says that these people are not the lunatic fringe. His personal opinion is that his home is his castle and whether the justice department agrees or not is irrelevant. It is his castle and he is not going to let anybody in.

He also went on to write a letter to the Minister of Justice, asking her to allow him and his little friends in Alberta to form a militia to drill and exercise. What is this? This guy is a member of the Reform Party, is he not?

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot say for sure. He could be a Liberal for all I know. I do not know the man.

There is no way in the world that any of us would support anybody breaking the law. No way in the world would we support that.

I hear a "ha" from over there. I would like the hon. member to stand up and prove me wrong.

I do not support anybody breaking the law. What I support are good laws. This is a bad law. Please look at it carefully. It is a bad law. Registration has not worked anywhere effectively.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Oxford. I heard the member for Wild Rose say, and this is pretty close to a quote, we will have to get the *Hansard* to check, that he would support anything if it was voluntary. I think that is what I heard him say.

• (1515)

Does that mean then that criminals are going to voluntarily register? On one hand they are saying that criminals will not register their guns. Obviously they will not. What the member said is that he would support the bill if it was voluntary. That is what I heard.

That is very interesting that we have principles and if you do not like them, we have other principles. The point is what I heard is that the general concept is something the member can agree. He just does not want it to be a forced situation. That is very interesting.

I wonder where the Reform Party went wrong when it decided not to support the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Association of Police Boards. You would have thought that these gentlemen and women would be lining up behind everything these groups had to say. Yet they will say that registering guns is a horrible violation which will not help the police in doing their job in fighting crime.

The three bodies I just mentioned would beg to differ. They say that registration will help police solve crimes where firearms are

recovered. That seems like a reasonable idea. It will help identify the sources of firearms that are recovered. It will enable police to trace some of the 3,000 firearms that are lost or stolen every year back to their rightful owners. It will enable police to determine whether firearms have been skimmed from commercial shipments. It will allow information on safe storage and handling regulations to be directed specifically to firearm owners. The police are very concerned about that. It will help the police to determine what types and numbers of firearms they might encounter when they are responding to an emergency call.

Just talk to someone in the business of policing. They get a phone call. Quite often it can be late at night. There is a report of violence. There is a report of someone in distress and we are asking them to simply walk into that situation with no ability to access a database that might allow them to determine that the place they are going into happens to house a firearm or a number of firearms. Why would we restrict that information from the police? Why would the Reform Party restrict it? It is truly incredible.

I listened to the leader of the Reform Party earlier today saying that it was his mandate, or words similar to that, that he would fight against these unjust laws. What he is really saying is that he is the Leader of the Opposition and therefore he is going to oppose it, whether it is good legislation or not.

We see all these folks out on the front lawn of Parliament Hill. No one can deny there is a movement against registering firearms. They ask why would we support this. They call us sheep. They say we are simply going to do what we are told. Let me tell you who is telling us what to do. It is the Canadian people, with 78% of all Canadians approving of the legislation; 86% of people in the province of Ontario approve of the legislation; and 47% of firearm owners who are registered approve of the legislation. Why would they not?

• (1520)

What is the problem? It is absolutely mind boggling. We register our cars. We have to renew the license on a regular basis. We register things like our home ownership and our mortgage. We register our dogs, for goodness' sake. We register most things. We even register our children. Why in the world would we not want to have some idea? Granted, it will not solve all the problem. There is no question that criminals are not going to come forward and say "I am here at 11 division and I want to register six firearms that I use to rob banks". We understand that. Why would we be opposed to registering weapons that could be dangerous? We need to have some confidence that they are being treated properly and that people are properly licensed.

In my view we have a real serious problem in this country. When I see the province of Ontario deciding that it is going to lower the age for hunting to 12 I get a little nervous. I understand about education, training and getting young people into a sport early to make sure they understand how to use guns properly. But I get a

*Supply*

little nervous about the sense of responsibility, about the confidence, about the understanding and the calmness. I am not sure I want to be walking around in the woods this November in Parry Sound where I have a cottage. I am not sure I want to go out in the woods knowing there are 12 year olds with rifles. It is a little nerve racking knowing there are men and women. But to go down to the age of 12, I do not know where in the world those people are coming from or what they are thinking.

The thing I find most interesting is the lack of information. The people out front, and we will hear the speeches, and the people in the Reform Party fuel myth. I cannot use the word lie, it is not parliamentary. It is a myth when they say that this act is just about registration. We know—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Hon. members, we all know that we do not bring through the back door that which we cannot bring in through the front door. Let us not make connections which we do not even have to stretch.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, I was not referring to any individual in this place. I am referring to the fact that there is misinformation. There are myths that are being propagated by members opposite to crowds which get them all emotional and excited about issues. If they would deal with the facts then we could have a calm discussion about the issue of gun control, registration and the costs involved. There will be setup costs and startup costs. There will be revenue that will offset those costs. But we never hear about that.

We hear that it will be expensive, that they are going to jack the price of registration up. Yet I have never heard anyone from the opposite side admit that for \$10 we could register 10 guns. A buck a gun. Not a problem. No one is going to come back and ask us to pay \$100 or \$1,000. I have never heard anyone mention that once the gun is registered it is registered for life. Why would we not want to do that? They want to whip people up.

The one I love is that the police are going to be able to break down the door and come running in with their dogs and their guns drawn. It is absolute nonsense. They can investigate if they know there are weapons in the house. They must either have our permission or they must have a warrant issued properly in a court of law, giving them permission to be able to enter and investigate. They would do that if they thought there was potential for abuse or potential for crime.

I wish the Reform Party would stop all the misinformation, stop leading people in the wrong direction and simply understand that this is good for Canada, good for Canadians and good for the safety of all our communities.

• (1525)

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, during the debate today the aspersions that have been thrown in this direction have been rather interesting.

I was elected fortunately in 1993 with 49% of the plurality. In 1997 I was elected with 62%. The difference of the 13% was the way the Liberals rammed Bill C-68 down the throats of all Canadians. I speak for the people of Kootenay—Columbia, and no member on that side of the House should misunderstand who I am standing up and speaking for.

This member has obviously not read the bill. He does not understand the bill. He talks about misinformation. His summation of the so-called facts of how he understands the facts clearly demonstrates that he does not understand. He just does not get it.

The bill is about Liberal social engineering. The bill is about an understanding that the Liberals have only from their own specific urban perspective. The bill is not going to make the streets of Toronto or the streets of Cranbrook any safer. The bill is doing everything to drive a wedge between honest, decent, law abiding citizens and the police forces and the government.

Let me ask the member a very simple question. How can we believe anything that the Liberal pack say when at the outset they gave us the bogus figure of \$85 million or \$87 million or \$78 million, whatever that number was—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Mississauga West.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, we can all flex our political muscles. In my riding 65% of the people voted Liberal in the last election. In the province of Ontario I think that was probably almost an average. The vast majority of the people in the province of Ontario, some 86%, support this.

The member does not understand that this is not a debate about the bill, this is a debate about the implementation and the regulations. We are not here debating whether there shall be a gun control law. That is a done deal. What we are talking about is how it is going to be implemented and how it is going to be set up. It is going to be set up in a way that will give the police some confidence in the database that will be available so they will know at least where the vast majority of the weapons are in this country when they are fighting crime and it will provide—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Kamloops.

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my hon. friend

from Mississauga West. I believe he is serious in his comments in terms of reflecting the views of his constituents.

I have a question for him regarding registration. The assumption is that if we have a decent registration system fewer people will get shot in our country as a result of that. That is presumably the bottom line.

I may have my figures out a point or two but the general thrust will be accurate. Every year in Canada about 1,450 people are shot one way or the other. That is the number of people who lose their lives as a result of firearms. Eleven hundred of those people commit suicide by firearms. Would these people likely not commit suicide using a firearm if it was registered? About 100 gangsters kill each other each year. If we have registration will gangsters not kill other gangsters?

About 100 people are shot in domestic disputes each year. If a someone wants to shoot his or her partner, would they likely not do that if the gun was registered?

About 100 people are killed in hunting accidents each year. If the gun was registered would these people likely not be shot in a hunting accident?

My serious question to my friend from Mississauga West is the following. When I look at those categories it seems to me that very little will change in those categories as a result of registration. Am I wrong?

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, I would always be careful with the hon. member to make sure he is not reading from one of our throne speeches from days gone by as he did one time when we all got up and decided to go into a rant.

I am assuming those figures are accurate. The hon. member raised some interesting issues. I want to just deal with the one on suicide.

• (1530)

Generally speaking it would be my view that someone wanting to commit suicide would find a way and it would not necessarily matter if a gun were available. We just had a tragedy in the local community park where I live. Down the street where I walk my dog in morning a man who was accused of shooting his wife shot himself. I do not know that registration would prevent suicide. They may find some other way.

All their issues are not what this is about. This is about bringing some kind of order to registering guns and putting in place rules that all Canadians know about. They can be licensed and trained. It will help the police. It will not solve crime but it will go a long way toward assisting the police in doing their job.

### *Supply*

**Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the Reform Party motion on Bill C-68 with which we dealt in the last parliament. It is interesting that the Reform Party is using its first opposition day in the new fall session to debate an issue on which it fought and lost an election rather than using it for other important issues that Canadians are concerned with. Where is the vision? Vision means looking forward, not backward.

I agree that no one wishes to give you the finger, Mr. Speaker, but I have been trying to give some of my colleagues opposite the finger for a long time.

In reference to the opposition motion I find the language in it extreme. It smacks of the kind of advertising the National Firearms Association and others put out. It states:

That this House condemns the government for its refusal to replace Bill C-68, the Firearms Act, with legislation targeting the criminal misuse of firearms and revoke their firearm registration policy that, in the opinion of this House: (a) confiscates private property—

It does no such thing. It “contains unreasonable search and seizure provisions” As my friend from Mississauga West just said, that does not apply. It is not the way it is done. The words in the motion are full of extra meaning.

—(c) violates Treasury Board cost/benefit guidelines; (d) represents a waste of taxpayers dollars—

There is a lot of waste of taxpayer dollars here and there. I wonder what is the value of human life. My friend from Kamloops referred to domestic disputes and 100 hunting accidents. Two days after I was elected my friend, the former warden of Oxford county, died in a hunting accident. His wife wanted to throw all his guns down the well that afternoon.

It “is an affront to law-abiding firearms owners” to ask them to register a gun, to ask them to pay a small fee for that privilege. It “will exacerbate the illicit trafficking in firearms”. What nonsense. Of course it will not exacerbate it. It may help stop some of it but it will not exacerbate it.

Before the last election Reformers swarmed across southwestern Ontario telling our constituents, mine in particular, that voters had to send a clear message to the Liberal government about gun control and Bill C-68. Imagine their surprise when a clear message was delivered in Ontario regarding gun control. The message was that the people of Ontario support Bill C-68.

I am sure many Reformers were embarrassed that the only Reform MP to hold a seat in Ontario voted against gun control and that seat was won by a Liberal MP. I assure all hon. members that the Liberal member for Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford is serving her constituents with distinction in the House.

I do not deny this is an important issue for many of my constituents. Several of them have positions in the leadership of the anti-Bill C-68 lobby. When Bill C-68 was first proposed I received

*Supply*

many postcards from gun owners who were opposed to measures included in the bill. After a lot of work in caucus and after voting in favour of this bill I received many letters and calls of support from the constituents of Oxford.

In that original bill there were some far-reaching things that had to be corrected. There were prohibitions on black powder use. There were prohibitions on re-enactment use. There were prohibitions on certain handguns that were used only for target shooting.

• (1535)

Many of those matters were corrected. The complaints that we find in this resolution were largely resolved. At the polls during the 1997 election most constituents indicated their support for this piece of legislation.

My re-election is an indication of the support Oxford has for this government and this legislation. The Reform candidate after finishing second in the 1993 finished third in Oxford in 1997. That is also an indication of the level of support Reform enjoys in my riding.

I would like to discuss the particulars of the bill and some of the questions that have been raised. It is true that criminals will be unlikely to register a firearm. Everyone can concede that point, but people must also concede that by that very fact criminals will identify themselves. The fact that a firearm is not registered will alert the police to the possibility that the firearm may have been stolen, illegally imported, illegally manufactured or bought on the black market.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Association of Police Boards and groups representing victims of crime support registration of all firearms for practical reasons, the same reasons that we register our cars, our bicycles, our birth, our citizenship and so on.

It will help police solve crimes where firearms are recovered. It will identify the source of firearms that are recovered. It will enable police to trace some 3,000 firearms lost or stolen every year back to their rightful owners and to return many of them.

It will enable police to determine whether firearms have been skimmed from commercial shipments. It will allow information on safe storage and handling regulations to be directed specifically to firearm owners.

With these rules and regulations and the education of firearm owners regarding proper storage, it will certainly prevent a lot of people being killed by unloaded guns, the situations where the child in the home points an loaded gun at somebody but when father put it away it was unloaded. It does not hang above the mantle piece loaded but unloaded in everybody's opinion. When the loaded gun is pointed, people are killed.

Quite clearly, if a gun is registered the owner has the possession certificate and there is nothing to fear in the bill. It is only those

who are in possession of illegal firearms, whether prohibited, stolen or unregistered, who need fear losing their firearms.

The motion put forward by the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt said that the bill allowed our police forces to confiscate private property. It does no such thing. I would anyway like to ask my friend from Saskatoon—Humboldt how an item that is illegal and illegally held can be considered private property. Will the Reform Party be saying next that police cannot seize drugs because they are the property of an individual?

I must also say how dismayed I was to hear the member for Yorkton—Melville ask us to follow the example of Miami, Florida, in dealing with crime. Perhaps this member would tell us how many gun related deaths there are every year in Miami or how much higher its crime rate per capita is to any city in Canada. Such a comparison is somewhat ridiculous and the Reform member would know it.

This is what we have come to expect from the Reform Party on this issue. This is a party that regularly encourages its membership to compare gun control measures to those of Nazi Germany, a party whose thinks the government's legitimate attempts to put forward measures supported by a majority of its citizens is bordering on Fascism.

This is a party that brags about using direct democracy to make voting decisions in the House. Yet only three Reform MPs had the courage and honesty to vote in favour of the bill after discovering their constituents supported Bill C-68. I applaud them, all three. Those members mentioned represented Calgary Centre, Edmonton Southwest and Vancouver North.

A majority of Canadians support the gun registry including those in British Columbia and Alberta where most Reformers are from. I guess the only way they could say that the public supported their measures would be to trump up questions on a survey.

• (1540)

I guess the deputy leader of the Reform Party certainly cannot vote for the motion. An Optima Research poll taken in that riding last year showed that 55% of respondents support the registration while only 28% oppose it.

I do not deny that this is an important issue for many of my constituents. I hope it will go forward after the vote this afternoon and we can get on with the many issues in which we can all get involved and do some good for Canada.

**Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC):** Mr. Speaker, many of the people from West Nova in the riding I represent are hunters. They are law-abiding citizens. They are honest, hard working people who see hunting as many of us would see golfing or any recreational sport of that nature. There is absolutely no criminal intent on their part. There is no malice in what they use their guns for.

My question to the hon. member across the way is very simple. How would registration of long guns reduce the incidence of violent crime? I ask him to explain to me how that would happen. I am known as someone who thinks very rationally, who does not rant and rave about issues, but I would really like to understand how he sees it preventing violent crime.

**Mr. John Finlay:** Mr. Speaker, I suppose I agree with my hon. colleague that registering a gun may not in and of itself prevent a crime. That is not what we are about. We are about the safe storage, use and control of firearms. That is what people—

**An hon. member:** It doesn't exist.

**Mr. John Finlay:** Oh, it does exist. Yes, it exists. Two neighbourhood boys were visiting one another. They found the father's gun and were playing with it in the bathroom. One boy asked for the gun back and the young boy from next door said "No, no", pointed it at him and shot him.

If that were a serious, law-abiding gun owner, the gun would have been locked up, would have had a trigger guard on it, the ammunition would be nowhere near the gun and the accident would not have occurred.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to what the hon. government member was saying. The hon. member said that the bill was not about decreasing crime and then went on to tell a tragic story about an accidental death.

I will repeat what my hon. colleague mentioned. How would gun registration actually decrease accidental deaths? Is the member aware of something called opportunity cost? If money is taken from *a* and put into *b*, in this case money from the functional arm of justice being put into gun registration where it is proven to have less effect than leaving it with the RCMP right now, how does he account for his government's desire to pull hundreds of millions of dollars out of the functional arm of justice and put it into gun registration which is proven not to make our streets safer?

**Mr. John Finlay:** Mr. Speaker, we do not have gun registration now. How have we proven anything by that statement?

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Yes, we do. We have had it since 1934.

**Mr. John Finlay:** Of course not. Most democratic countries in this world have gun control rules or gun registration. Many of them—

**Mr. Jay Hill:** They are not as onerous as ours and they have less crime.

**Mr. John Finlay:** Boy, oh boy. We do not have less crime but we are the best place in the world to live. There is a real objection, is it not? It is a perfectly good conclusion.

### Supply

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I heard the hon. member mention that we have to register cars, this, that and one thing or another. I want to talk about gun collectors. Does the hon. member realize that he does not have to register a car? He can buy all the cars he wants and take them to his home. They can sit there and they are his. He cannot take them on the road, though. Then he would have to register them. But he does not have to register to have a collection of cars.

• (1545)

If I am a gun collector what is wrong with me just owning guns? I am not going to use them, so should I have to have a registration?

**Mr. John Finlay:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite right. It is not owning the car, it is using it. It is the same thing with guns.

We said that if gun owners want to own a prohibited weapon, then they can disarm it. If they have a collection they can disarm all the guns. But no, they would not go for that. They do not want that. The gun is not real then. I think black powder and a ball will kill you just as fast—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Resuming debate.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on the Reform motion which refutes many of the fallacies about Bill C-68.

I say at the outset that if Bill C-68 would make our streets safer the Reform Party would support it. However, it is for the reason that Bill C-68 is going to make our streets less safe that we oppose it. I will get to the reason why.

Half of Bill C-68 is good. Half of it involves penalties for the criminal use of guns. We support that. We have been fighting for it for many years. Half of it, however, will make our streets less safe.

Point one is the registration of guns. In this country two-thirds of the people who are murdered are murdered with a weapon that is not a gun. One-third die of gunshot wounds. Of that one-third, which amounts roughly to 225 people, the number that die with a registered handgun is five.

The point I am trying to make is that the cost of gun registration is going to be hundreds of millions of dollars and the government's estimate is over \$1 billion. That money has to come from somewhere. It is going to come in part from the pockets of the citizens of this country. But in large part it is going to come out of the functional arm of justice. That means if we are going to remove money from the RCMP, if we are going to remove money from the police forces we had better make sure that where we are putting it has better bang for the buck. But the reality is it will not.

*Supply*

We are going to have fewer RCMP officers hired, less equipment, fewer training opportunities for them and in short, if we are going to have fewer officers training, those officers are going to be less able to arrest criminals.

One Liberal member I spoke to during debate some years ago said if we can save five people, then we have saved five people. I said to him if it is going to cost \$500 million or \$1 billion to save five people, is that worth it. He said any price is worth it. Although we cannot put a price or a value on human life the reality is money does not grow on trees and the money is being taken away from the functional arm of justice and will make our streets less safe. That is the fundamental issue of why we do not support this bill.

The former minister of justice appeared before the committee and gave the reasons. One is that it will decrease murder. We have proven that it will not. The second reason is that the minister said it will decrease suicides. If a person is depressed and is going to kill themselves, do they go out and get a firearms acquisition certificate, take a course, wait six months to get a gun and blow their head off? No, they do not.

• (1550)

The facts are that gun registration will do nothing to decrease the suicide rate. Will it help the police? In a domestic dispute situation the police always go in with a view that a dangerous weapon is on hand. This is standard procedure.

The members across the way have said that the police support this. If that is the case why did 91% of the RCMP officers in Saskatchewan and 85% of the police officers in Alberta not support this? The men and women on the front lines of justice in this country know full well that the money is going to come out of their funds to fight crime. They know gun registration does not work.

Does this decrease accidental death? Accidental death with a firearm is a function of the use of that firearm. If a person has registered that firearm, leaves it loaded on his or her bed and the children come in to play with it and shoot themselves or someone else and someone dies, that is a tragedy of youth. It is a tragedy of people not using guns properly. Gun registration will do nothing for that.

Contrary to the member across the way who talks about all the good things that we have, implying that we do not have issues such as the firearms acquisition certificates, storage rules and regulations and trigger locks for handguns, we have those and the Reform Party supports those. We believe, as does the government, that these are going to make our streets safer and are effective.

However, our view is that we are simply not going to pursue or support a bill that is going to make our streets less safe. That is why we have been so vocal about this for so long.

If the government were truly interested in decreasing crime then it would hit crime where it counts. The problem in this country today is that we have rules and regulations on the boards that are simply not being implemented. Most of the criminal activity with the use of firearms is done by criminals using illegal firearms. When those people commit an offence with a firearm what happens? They often get the firearms offence plea bargained away or to run concurrently with the other offence. What message does that send to the criminals?

It tells the criminals to go ahead and use a firearm because all they will get is no penalty or a penalty that runs concurrently with their other sentence. This means that there is no penalty whatsoever for those people who use firearms in the commission of an offence. That is what our party has been fighting for so long.

What we all want to do is to ensure that criminals are not going to be using firearms. What we must do is enforce the law. If somebody is using a firearm in the commission of an offence then we should take that and run the sentence consecutively, not concurrently. We must stop plea bargaining away those sentences. If a criminal is guilty of pulling out a gun in the commission of a robbery then we should hit them with the book. We must make sure they pay the penalty so they know they will not get off scot free when using firearms.

We also have to do something about the egregious situation we have in the country concerning the trafficking of firearms between our country and the United States. The penalties for trafficking are there but they are not being applied. Trafficking is taking place, for example, on certain reserves in Quebec and the RCMP are sitting back and are being told, from what I understand, not to intervene. That is a serious problem because it ties the hands of our law enforcement officers when these offences are occurring in front of their eyes. Furthermore, it puts into jeopardy the lives and welfare of aboriginal people on those reserves and the people outside the reserves.

Good effective justice and good effective laws would ensure that the laws of this country are being applied in the courts and not merely pushed underneath the carpet. That is what we are in favour of. In that way we can hit the criminals and leave the law abiding citizens out of it.

It is a serious offence for law abiding citizens, who have never been a criminal in their lives, to transfer their guns to their children and loved ones. Some of these guns are very valuable to them but the government is violating their rights as property owners. We would not be in favour of just allowing guns to go to people who do not have to go through the proper criminal checks, firearms acquisition certificate application process that law abiding firearm owners have to pursue.



• (1555)

We support that but we oppose vehemently the government's violation of people's rights to merely take those guns away from them with no recourse whatsoever.

I would ask any member of the government to tell us how that is going to make our streets safer. If we look at history and what has been taking place in other countries where they have applied and implemented gun registration, it is proven that it does not work. In Australia it did not work.

As members across the way and the government have clearly said repeatedly, this may not make our streets safer. If it is not going to make our streets safer, if it is not going to save Canadian lives, if it is not going to increase the safety of people, if it is not going to improve the ability of the police to do their job, then why do it?

Why support something that is going to make our streets less safe and hamstringing the ability of our police officers to do their job by tearing away the resources that they require to keep our streets safer?

The government needs to pursue the enforcement of the laws of this land when it comes to guns. It needs to scrap the idea of gun registration. It needs to apply the penalties for trafficking. It needs to work with us on effective measures to prevent crime and give the police the tools to do their job, as well as clean up our legal system and the judicial structure we have that hampers and ties the hands of our police officers in doing their job to keep our streets safer.

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca reminds me that the first dead person I saw was a suicide victim with a shotgun. The technique was put the shotgun in the mouth and pull the trigger and the head was completely blown off. I was 17 at the time.

Subsequently I became a police reporter, a journalist, and I saw a lot of murders and suicides in the course of that part of my career. One of the things I learned about suicides is that there are two things that often operate. One is that the suicides generally do not want to hurt themselves. They do not like to use knives and other methods that actually may do them injury or may lead to a fairly slow death. What they prefer is something that is instantaneous and something also that will answer their impulses.

Often suicides are not planned over a long period. If they get very depressed suddenly they will try to take their own lives. In the presence of a firearm in a household where there is a person who is known to be subject to these violent depressions who might be a potential suicide, registration would be very important in this instance. I would have thought that the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, in the light of his profession, would appreciate that. I

### *Supply*

was very surprised that he said the opposite because gun registration surely would save the lives of some suicides.

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member mentioned that because, as an emergency room physician, I have seen a lot of people kill themselves, the vast majority of whom did not use guns. Let us take the issue at hand.

All of us in this House would love to prevent suicides. I am glad the hon. member mentioned the issue that suicide can be impulsive. It can also be a part of an ongoing major depression and the person can be ruminating about this for a long time.

However, if somebody was going to be suicidal and they wanted to get a gun to kill themselves, in order to do that today without gun registration, it would take them six to nine months before they even get a gun because they have to go through a firearms acquisition certificate, they have to take a course, they have to go and buy the gun.

So if somebody was going to kill themselves, they would not go through that. They would find many other ways of killing themselves, which most people do.

The hon. member mentioned somebody killing themselves because a gun was available in the house. How would gun registration actually prevent that from happening? Indeed it would not because we already—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Fundy—Royal.

**Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I compliment the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for his speech. I thought it was a very thoughtful presentation.

• (1600)

I would like to highlight something he pointed out in his comments, that is, the necessity for us to have severe minimum penalties for any kind of criminal use with respect to a firearm.

Individuals such as myself and the member I believe as well are not against gun control. This has become a very black and white debate, whether someone is for gun control or against it.

We want to be very prudent with respect to gun control and require that there be a clear acquisition certificate, that weapons and ammunition be stored under lock and key in separate places, that hunter safety courses be taken. The kind of initiatives that were part of the previous legislation actually accomplished that.

I ask the hon. member whether in his estimation would he believe that this piece of legislation, Bill C-68, is more about

*Supply*

politics than crime prevention. Is it not more about taxation than deterring the criminal use of firearms?

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend from the Conservative Party. He is right on.

Unfortunately I think this bill, as my friend mentioned, is a political bill meant to pit urban versus rural voters. It is meant to seduce the urban votership onto the side of the government by the government looking like it is the big defender of the public good.

The facts are that everybody in this House wants to make our streets as safe as possible. We are in favour of the firearms acquisition certificate, the courses, the rules and regulations, the criminal checks that do our best to ensure that people who should not have access to guns do not have them, as opposed to the situation in the United States which we completely abhor and which the Reform Party opposes greatly.

The last point I want to make is on suicide. If we are truly interested in decreasing suicides, we can take the money from gun registration and put it into health care where it should be to treat people with depression.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today to address the motion put forward by my colleague concerning gun registration, specifically Bill C-68 which was about to be enacted in a couple of short weeks. It actually will not be fully put into place until December 1. That is what we have been told in the last few days.

I recognize that 10 minutes is a very short time to address such an important issue. When I say important issue, I really want to target the majority of my comments today specifically to my riding and more generally to the difference in how this issue is viewed by people residing in urban centres and by rural people.

Regarding the whole issue of “gun control” as my colleague from the fifth party just mentioned, the reality is that we who are questioning Bill C-68 are not talking about no gun control. It is not a question of gun control versus no gun control. We already have some of the most stringent gun control legislation and laws in the western world in place in Canada. My colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca talked about that very eloquently.

What I want to do in the short time I have is to try to educate some of our urban brethren as to what really constitutes the difference on how this issue is viewed by rural residents in Canada and those in the more urban centres, specifically some of the vast urban centres and the crime problems in places like Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

I noticed that in the debate today a number of members of parliament in representing their views have used specific instances

on both sides of the argument. I want to talk very briefly about one tragic incident that happened in my riding. The hon. member for Hamilton—Wentworth who just spoke from the government side used a very tragic instance from his recollection where an individual used a firearm.

• (1605 )

I have one on the other side of this issue. I would like to quote from the text of the Vancouver *Province* newspaper that carried the account of this tragic incident on August 17, 1997, just a little over a year ago.

Her husband died a hero—that much Angela Kitchen knows.

But the sudden nature of Ray Kitchen's death and the random way fate struck didn't make any sense to her yesterday.

One minute, the Fort Nelson father was stopping for a swim with his daughter and her friend on a hot day. The next minute, hearing the cries of a mauled woman trying to protect her son from a rampaging black bear, Kitchen was throwing himself into a situation that, as an outdoorsman, he knew could mean death.

The bear tore him apart. He died, as did the woman he ran to help.

“Someone mentioned that he died a hero. I'm really proud of him for that”, a tearful Angela Kitchen said yesterday. “It's just so hard”.

The savage attack Thursday night also left the woman's son and a 28 year old Calgary man injured.

It occurred as Patti Reed McConnell, 37, and her two children, Kelly, 13, and Kristin, 7, were out walking at Liard Hot Springs Provincial Park, 310 kilometres northwest of Fort Nelson. The family were on their way to Alaska from their home in Paris, Texas to start a new life in a land McConnell had fallen in love with.

It goes on to describe the incident in more detail.

More deaths were averted in this tragic incident. How were they averted? Because one individual at that scene had a firearm. It happened to be an American tourist that was stopping in this location, Liard Hot Springs. I am very familiar with this area. When I do my summer tour of my riding, and the riding goes all the way to the Yukon, I travel up the Alaska highway. I stop and talk to the lodge owners along the way. Most MPs on both sides of the House visit their ridings during the summer and they converse with their constituents.

I have often stopped at this hot springs. This was not the first incident of a bear attack or of bear sightings at this hot springs. At this hot springs there is a boardwalk of some 100 yards in length which carries people from the parking lot to the hot springs itself where people bathe.

What happened when this bear attacked those people? Someone had to run back along the boardwalk and find someone who happened to have a firearm in their recreational vehicle. I am not sure whether it was a motorhome or a fifth wheel trailer. An American tourist happened to have a firearm which was stored separately as the storage laws require. They rummaged around and got the ammunition out. This was an elderly gentleman who fortunately gave it to a younger person and said “Take my firearm

and go and save some people". This person rushed back down the walkway and shot the bear with one shot. Unfortunately for Patti Reed McConnell and for Ray Kitchen, my constituent from Fort Nelson, it was too late.

The point I am trying to make is that there is a vast world of difference between ridings such as mine, Prince George—Peace River, and this whole issue of gun control, gun registration and gun storage because what we are relating this to is the people in Toronto who do not understand guns. They do not ever want to understand guns. They do not want to own a gun. They do not understand why anyone would want to own a gun because they have never been in situations like McConnell's and Kitchen's. They have never been placed in those situations.

I was born and raised in Fort St. John in northeastern British Columbia and was a hunter as a young lad. I was raised with and had a strong respect for firearms and know how to handle them, and I can say that I do not understand people like that either. Therein lies the problem. The people in the big urban centres do not understand this issue from the point of view of rural residents. To me that is the fundamental issue.

Reform members throughout this debate, going right back to the time when we were first here, first elected in any numbers back in the fall of 1993, have tried to bring what we believe is some common sense to this issue. We have tried to represent not just the people who have legitimate concerns about safety and the illegal use of firearms in the cities of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary for that matter, but also to represent the very legitimate concerns of law-abiding firearms owners in the rural areas of our country, people who already fervently believe that we have enough gun legislation in this country.

• (1610)

In fact many would argue that we had enough under the old Bill C-17, Kim Campbell's gun legislation that ranges back to the time of the Progressive Conservative government. They would argue that we did not need parts of that legislation or it should not be applied the same in Toronto as it is at Liard Hot Springs in northeastern British Columbia.

Let us take a look at this motion. "That this House condemns the government for its refusal to replace Bill C-68, the Firearms Act, with legislation targeting the criminal misuse of firearms". I will stop there and not go on to read the rest of it. The rest has certainly been adequately covered by many of my colleagues. Targeting the criminal misuse of firearms.

I want to read again into the record what I said when I introduced a private members' bill to show what Reformers have been actively endeavouring to do since we came to the House. On December 5,

### *Supply*

1994, almost four years ago, when I introduced Private Member's Bill C-293 I said:

Today it is my pleasure to introduce the bill to the House. It will increase the minimum mandatory sentence for the use of a gun in the commission of a crime to five years.

Canadians are demanding stiffer sentences for the criminal misuse of firearms but the recently proposed four-year mandatory sentence of the justice minister is only restricted to 10 offences and is not consecutive.

He is merely introducing a minimum sentence of four years for these crimes, and with parole it may be less. Although the tougher sentences in his reaction plan are a step in the right direction, the bill would go even further. It would make the minimum five-year sentence consecutive to any other sentence and would apply to any accomplices who had access to the firearm during the crime or attempted crime whether or not the gun was fired.

Canadians want deterrents and I believe the bill would provide some.

That is concrete action that the Reform Party and indeed many members in a number of parties would like to see. Let us get tough on the criminals who misuse firearms and leave law-abiding firearms owners alone because they are already respecting the law.

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the sincerity with which the member made his remarks but in making his remarks he betrayed some of the lack of understanding of the west with respect to Ontario and central Canada.

There is wilderness in central Canada. I am one who for many years has canoed and camped in the wilderness, oftentimes in Algonquin Park which is only a few hours north of Toronto. Tens of thousands of people use Algonquin Park and the area around Muskoka. There have been two fatal bear attacks in the last 10 years in Algonquin Park.

This very weekend I was surrounded by wolves on an island as I camped with my son. At my cottage in the summer, I killed a three foot rattlesnake. My cottage just happens to be in the range of the only poisonous snake in Canada.

To use the member's logic, everyone who goes to Algonquin Park, everyone who goes to Muskoka, and there are thousands and thousands of them coming from Toronto, Hamilton, Waterloo and Cambridge, should go with a firearm every time they get in a canoe. We in Ontario do not feel that is acceptable. It is not necessary.

Surely the member opposite will admit that an attack by a wild animal, whether it is a cougar or a grizzly bear, is indeed a very, very rare eventuality and we do not have to go armed into the wilderness every time we want to go away for the weekend.

*Supply*

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, first I would like to know how the individual across the way who posed the question killed the three foot rattlesnake. With a shovel? I am not sure.

**An hon. member:** An axe.

**Mr. Jay Hill:** With an axe. He is a very brave individual.

The reality is that many lives would be saved. Earlier on in the debate individuals across the way were talking about how it does not matter how much it costs if we just save one life. I heard that statement across the way. It does not matter how much it costs as long as we save one life. What I was talking about was saving lives as well. Not every individual should probably carry a firearm in every situation. However, the reality is that people who travel outdoors and know how to responsibly use firearms because they have been trained or have been raised with firearms should carry firearms to protect themselves. There would be less incidents like the one I referred to.

• (1615)

**Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is probably a fundamental difference and fundamental disagreement between the hon. member and me on gun control.

The hon. member has tried to use personal tragedy to score some political points. He refers to an incident at Liard River Hot Springs, which I gather is in his riding. It was a terrible tragedy. He implied that somehow or another gun registration would contribute to an incident that had already occurred at a time when gun registration was not in place. Also the hon. member implied that safe storage would somehow play into the incident. He is trying to confuse the viewers of this House of Commons session.

Bill C-68 insofar as registration is concerned is not invoked. It is not in place yet and will not be on a compulsory basis until 2003. I do not understand how non-registration would have somehow prevented this terrible incident in Liard River Hot Springs.

If somehow or other the hon. member could share this information maybe we would be all better off, but as far as I am concerned I do not think gun registration is relevant insofar as this incident is concerned.

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, I will certainly share with him my thoughts in that regard and he will be better off.

The reality is that legislation like Bill C-68 and its forerunners are step by step and incrementally discourage gun ownership in Canada today. That is what it amounts to.

It is the same as any other law passed in this place that make it more and more onerous on private citizens to own certain property.

The more laws and the more difficult we make it for people to own something, obviously there will be less and less people who own it.

This legislation, as its forerunners, goes even further than that. The government can arbitrarily decide that certain makes, models and types of firearms are suddenly on the prohibited list. No one on that side has ever adequately explained how that does not constitute confiscation of private property. That is exactly what it is. At least the people in rural Canada and the people of Prince George—Peace River know that is exactly what it is.

**Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise with some considerable interest in this issue as it is a matter of great interest to Canadians and to my constituents.

The motion deals with two issues: Bill C-68 which was passed in the last parliament and the proclamation of the attendant regulations scheduled for October 1 and now postponed to December 1.

The principles behind Bill C-68 were quite eloquently stated by the president for the Coalition for Gun Control. They are the significant costs of not acting now in terms of victimization, years of life lost and economic impact. The remedy is understood, available, feasible and at a reasonable cost. Guns, crime, injury and death is a problem which will likely escalate if not addressed now. Finally the longer the proliferation of unregistered guns continues, the more difficult it will be to contain. In other words, gun registration addresses current problems and it invests in the future.

The single most important motivation behind the bill is public safety and the safety of police officers. I frankly have trouble understanding the position of the members of the Reform Party. Are they in fact against public safety? Do they wish to put the lives of police officers at risk? Do they prefer to see what we see in the United States of America?

• (1620)

I will direct their minds to certain rates. There are 30 times more firearms in the United States than in Canada. There are an estimated 7.4 million firearms in Canada. There are 222 million firearms in the United States of which 76 million are handguns. There is a much higher portion of homicides in the United States that involve firearms. On average there is 65% of homicides in the U.S. compared to 32% in Canada. Firearm homicides are 8.1 times higher in the United States than in Canada. Handgun homicides are 15.3 times higher. In the face of such startling statistics the government cannot simply stand by, ring its hands and do nothing.

I have trouble believing that the hon. member who proposed the motion wishes to go in that direction. This is a piece of legislation which is broadly supported by the Canadian public and the constituents in my riding.

*Supply*

I would draw the hon. member's attention to a recent Angus Reid poll in which 82% of Canadians approved the universal registration of shotguns and rifles. Contrary to the thesis of the member previous to me, interestingly there was 72% support in rural communities.

In addition, to give statistical response to the member's previous statement that this was really people in Toronto who do not know what they are talking about, may I suggest to him that he refer to the analysis done which says that in populations of one million the firearm homicide rate is 422 per 100,000. For communities less than 100,000 it is 427. For other homicides it is 768. In communities of less than 100,000 it is 804. Virtually identical rates for cities in excess of one million and for cities and communities of less than 100,000. There is no urban or rural divide on this issue. This is broadly supported by all Canadians.

The Reform Party and their kissing cousins, the reformatories in Queen's Park, are not responding to the public demands for public safety. Last week the reformatories proclaimed legislation enabling 12 year olds to be licensed. One has to wonder what they are thinking about by putting guns in the hands of children. In my community destroyed it absolutely destroyed their credibility on their big issue of getting tough on crime.

Canada has not been nor, if this legislator has any say about it, will ever be a country in which the right to bear arms is a constitutional, legal or moral mandate. The philosophy of Bill C-68 is sound and enjoys wide public support among many segments of the community, including those most likely to be victims, namely police officers and women.

Turning now to the regulations, I am curious to know if the mover actually has read the regulations or read the original regulations which I have in my hand. If he did, he would know that the government has moved miles in responding to quite a number of legitimate regulatory issues. This set of firearm regulations is a substantial change from that which was originally presented to us on the committee. I congratulate the government, as I do not often do, on its willingness to be flexible and not impose unduly bureaucratic regulations on Canadians.

Representations were made to the committee by manufacturers and changes were made; by the entertainment industry and changes were made; by shooting clubs and changes were made.

• (1625)

At the end of the day when the regulations were presented for a vote the only opposition on the committee came from those who fundamentally do not believe in Bill C-68. This gun control bill will never satisfy everyone no matter how reasonable, measured or balanced the regulations might be.

Turning now to the motion, the first issue is the confiscation of private property. If the mover thought about that for more than five

seconds, he would realize that a proper registration system gives security of ownership and enhances value. Far from confiscating, it does the exact opposite and legitimizes the owning of firearms.

Certainly property registration does wonders for land titles and land values as it does for motor vehicles and other forms of property. Why would it not be true with firearms?

The second point is that it contains unreasonable search and seizure. With the proclamation of the law, the police will know if the occupant is licensed to own arms and what they might expect to find behind that door. If I were a police officer responding to a call I would sure like to know.

If individuals choose not to obey this law on some misguided point of philosophy, they derogate from the rule of law. This is not the advice the hon. member should be giving to Canadians. I urge him to rethink his position.

The third point is that it violates Treasury Board guidelines. These are conclusions rather than arguments and need no comment. Given the more casual approach to public safety, I would not expect him to say otherwise.

The fourth point is that it is an affront to law-abiding firearm owners. As of October 1, now December 1, all owners of firearms are law abiding, but in the days following those dates they put themselves beyond and outside the rule of law. Until April 30, 1999 I am a law-abiding, taxpaying citizen, but if I do not file my return I cease to be a law-abiding, taxpaying citizen. So also will it be for those who fail to register their guns.

The fifth point is that it will exacerbate the trafficking of firearms. This is indeed a strange argument. Licensing will enhance property values, facilitate the processing of insurance claims and legitimize the owner. If anything, trade in illicit firearms will be carried on at the fringes. After a number of years those without proper licensing and registration will be marginalized and unable to acquire, dispose or trade. The police will know who they are, what they are doing, and will not have to unduly intrude into the lives of law-abiding gun owners that this motion purports to defend.

This motion deserves strong rebuke from the House as it defeats itself.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the suggestion that weapons control or the registration of firearms will actually enhance their value is one of the funniest things I have ever heard said in the House.

As we speak, firearms dealers in the northern tier states are scooping up enormous quantities of Canadian owned firearms at bargain basement prices because people want to get rid of them before the regulations come fully into effect. People in this country have collections of heritage weapons. In my riding, for example, one of the most popular collectors items would be a carbine that

*Supply*

was brought to the west by the Northwest Mounted Police when they made their march west. Those things are being sold off into the United States at 50 cents on the dollar because people just do not want the hassle. It is all about hassle.

The member talks about protecting police officers. I wish he would have gone outside and talked with the five serving and retired police officers who spoke at the rally and who think that the whole thing is nonsense. No police officer worth his salt would approach a dwelling in which a domestic violence has been reported without taking due precaution. He is not going to look at a computer to see if there are weapons in that house. If he did, he would probably receive a reprimand from his chief. The last thing I—

• (1630)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Scarborough East.

**Mr. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, I have trouble explaining this issue to my hon. friend because he simply does not understand.

This is the issue. I could have a pile of firearms in my home and feel it will be too much hassle to get rid of them so I dump them at 50 cents on the dollar or whatever. I recommend that my hon. colleague speak to those who think that way because they are being absolutely foolish. They are blowing out an inventory which they should not. All they have to do is register. It is a fairly simple system. Suddenly they will have preserved their asset at 100 cents on the dollar. I cannot understand why anyone would discount their assets on that basis.

On his second point about police officers looking into a computer, I do not know how many times the hon. member has been in police officer's car but there are computers in the car. They punch up the name of the person, see whether there are guns, whether the individual is a registered firearm user, and then appropriately approach the residence. This seems to be fairly fundamental. If I were a police officer, I would like to know what was behind that door.

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the constituents of Okanagan—Coquihalla who are very interested in the member's speech.

I have heard a lot of claims from the Liberals but now they are claiming that Bill C-68 will end the proliferation of guns. That is very interesting because thousands of people are on the lawn today who are law-abiding citizens. They are not smugglers. They are not illegally bringing guns into the country. However, if there is a problem with proliferation of guns coming illegally into the country, that should be dealt with in a legal manner. They should go after the criminals instead of the law-abiding citizens.

What is the Liberal government planning on doing? Is it planning to run ads in gun smugglers weekly magazine suggesting that smugglers run to the local police station to register their illegal firearms? That will not happen. This legislation is a waste of taxpayers' time and money.

The member mentioned penalties. Let's talk about them. For not registering a gun under Bill C-68 the maximum sentence is 10 years for one of those law-abiding citizens out on the lawn—

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

**Mr. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, I will respond to the first point with respect to the proliferation of guns. It is my view that a great number of homicides are committed by people who know each other; in fact something in the order of 90%. They are either business partners, spouses or family. The registration of guns will diminish that level of homicide and that level of violence.

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

**Mr. John McKay:** This is so patently obvious that the members opposite are unable to grasp the point. There will continue to be an effort on the part of the government to control trafficking in firearms.

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I begin by expressing some impatience with respect to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition in this debate. In condemning the government's legislation in Bill C-68 in the same breath he condemned parliament and the procedures by which the House operates.

I am very tired of this. The Leader of the Opposition fails to realize we are one of the oldest and most successful democracies in the world. We operate under the British parliamentary tradition, not the American system. To put the matter very delicately and to use an expression that is very common in the countryside where I live, even swine don't defecate in their own corner. I wish the Leader of the Opposition would direct his remarks as they should be directed against the government but not against parliament.

• (1635)

Second, the Leader of the Opposition also cited the charter of rights and complained in his remarks that the charter of rights contains no provisions for property rights. That indicates how the Leader of the Opposition equates human rights and human values with property. It is true that in the United States deadly force can be used to protect property. However, we in Canada honour human rights above property rights. That is one of the things that makes us Canadian. I am sorry the Leader of the Opposition fails to realize that.

I reserve my main remarks for something the member for Kootenay—Columbia said. He stood in the House and said from his heart that he was speaking on behalf of his constituents, on behalf of what he believed people wanted him to say with respect to criticism of gun registration.

Criticism of gun registration is legitimate, but I remind members what the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt said in reply to a question very early in the debate from one of his colleagues. He was asked what the government's agenda was in introducing gun registration. The member for Saskatoon—Humboldt replied that they wanted to register all the guns and disarm everybody. That is what he said. Members can check *Hansard* and find that. I want the Reform Party to hold that thought in mind.

I have always had a great interest in special interest groups. Just a few days ago the Reform Party introduced a bill that reflected my studies of special interest groups. One of the special interest groups that I tried to probe during the debate on Bill C-68 was the National Firearms Association of Edmonton that turned out to be very prominent in the lobby against Bill C-68. I found out that the leader of the National Firearms Association in Edmonton was also the riding association president of the riding of Edmonton—Strathcona. I believe he still is.

That is all the information I could find out. There was this lobby group behind the Reform Party and I could find no other data. However a computer search I did turned up another association with exactly the same name: the National Firearms Association of Austin, Texas. Thanks to the Internal Revenue Services I was able to get its basic financial data. I was also able to get a constitutional document. It is a flyer it puts out which explains what the National Firearms Association of Austin, Texas, is all about.

Apart from saying that an attack on one gun owner group is an attack on all and no compromise ever, and so on and so forth on gun control, this is the key phrase:

Only through concerted action will we emerge victorious against those who would seek to disarm the people of the United States.

Where in the debate did we hear that? We heard it from the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt and we have heard it frequently from members of the Reform Party.

There is nothing wrong in my mind with coming up here and attacking the government because perhaps gun registration is working out to be more expensive than it should be, but I caution members opposite when they speak to make sure that they are genuinely speaking for Canadians. I will show them the dangers that might be inherent in speaking for the National Firearms Association, which we suppose may have something to do with the one in Alberta.

### *Supply*

I have another statement from the document of the National Firearms Association of Austin, Texas, which reads:

Our right to keep and bear arms is an absolute inalienable God given right just like our right to live and breathe.

That is the kind of talk we get from the National Firearms Association in the United States. Americans have the right and the advantage of being armed unlike the citizens of other countries whose governments are afraid to trust the people with arms. That is the kind of rhetoric we have here.

“The strongest reason for people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is a last resort to protect themselves against the tyranny of government”. That is where it is coming from. In the United States is a movement that wants to arm itself against the government and is not too far removed from the citizens militia that caused a terrible tragedy in the United States not long ago.

• (1640 )

This document talks about the militia. It says “Who are the militia? Are they not ourselves? Congress shall have no power to disarm the militia. Their swords and every other terrible implement of the soldier are the birthright of an American”.

The document goes on and talks about a new world order. What the National Firearms Association in the United States is all about is that it is afraid there will be a new world order set up in Europe that will persuade the president of the United States to disarm all Americans and that they will lose their guns and live under tyranny.

One of the final messages in this document is that they urge all members to remember that it is not just a crisis in the United States but a crisis in the entire world and that they should be going out fighting for freedom, for guns in every other country in the world including Canada.

When members opposite talk about problems with any kind of legislation, they should remember that it is government legislation. They should not condemn parliament because this is where we have very good debates but should remember when they speak to speak for Canadians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** There are quite a few indications of interest in questions and comments. We will go first to Nanaimo—Cowichan, second to Yellowhead and third to Battlefords—Lloydminster, but members will have to keep their questions and responses short.

**Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make an observation which I have not heard in in the debate today and then ask a question of the member.

*Supply*

For many years I have been an observer of the somewhat sad condition of the human race. In spite of the fact the government maintains that gun registration will somehow lessen the number of murders or whatever, I am afraid I have to say that gun registration in itself will not in the least stop people from killing each other.

My observation of the human race is that it is done only because of the evil in men's hearts. When that is there, there is nothing that can prevent someone from hurting someone else. That is my observation.

In the face of not having any real statistics that gun registration will decrease murders or criminal activity and it being said that a number of people are now being killed by knives in this country, on the same premise the government is now taking on gun control can we expect that at some point in the near future there will be knife control brought in by the government? Is that what will have to take place?

**Mr. John Bryden:** Mr. Speaker, if the member had been here throughout the debate, as I have been, he would have realized that the government has repeatedly stressed it does not believe that registration is the cure-all or the end-all or even that it will necessarily improve the situation with respect to crime.

The reason we are bringing in legislation, to sum it up for all on the opposition side, is that we want to remind Canadians that guns in Canada are a privilege, not a right as they are in the United States, and as a privilege it must be managed competently and securely in the interest of all Canadians. That is why we are bringing in gun registration.

**Mr. Cliff Breitzkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the member from the government who just spoke talks about Reform representing Canadians. Let us talk a little about Reform representing Canadians. Let us talk about a phenomena that the government seems to be forgetting or overlooking.

It seems that the federal government conveniently forgets that it is being challenged in court over Bill C-68. Who is taking the government to court? Is it a lone Canadian citizen or a firearms association? The federal government is being challenged in the court by government itself, not by one government but by four provincial governments: the governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, and the two territories, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, over half of the Canadian population. What about geographics? It amounts to 75% to 85% of Canada's land mass. That is the stark reality.

• (1645)

This government is being challenged in court by over half the Canadian population representing a big chunk of Canada's land

mass. Can this member at least tell me why the federal government is not putting on hold the implementation of this bill until at least the Alberta Court of Appeal comes down with a decision?

**Mr. John Bryden:** Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is that if we did that with every legislation every time there was an appeal, the implementation of all legislation would be stalled because it would be an open door to block every kind of legislation.

I will address another point very quickly. I think it is the correct process that if there is any area in society, any province or group that objects to the gun registration, sure they should challenge in the courts. There is nothing wrong with that. That is due process. But the essence of my speech was that I was afraid that many members opposite, and I respect many of them, were nevertheless parroting myths and the aims of a foreign organization. I challenge them to go out and look into the finances of the National Firearms Association that is so much in your pocket, or are you in their pocket? I am really quite sure.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst, Disability Pensions; the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest, Tobacco; the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Millennium Scholarships.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to split my time with my colleague from Tobique—Mactaquac.

I would like to come at this with perhaps a different perspective. I heard the fearmongering from the hon. member on the Liberal side just recently with respect to all these terrible antics of other organizations that are now going to throw the government out. There is going to be insurrection. That is not what I want to do, come to fearmongering. What I would like to do is give detail of some of the truisms that are out there in our society today.

Number one, I am not a member of the National Rifle Association. Number two, I do not belong to the National Firearms Association was mentioned by the hon. member. I do not even own a firearm but I do represent an area of this country where firearms and long rifles and shotguns are a part of daily living. It is a rural area. It is a rural economy and in a lot of circumstances firearms are still very necessary in order to deal with predators on agricultural land as well other requirements, one of which is of a recreational nature, duck, goose and deer hunting.



*Supply*

I do not do any of those activities either but I know of people who do and they enjoy them. We are Canadians and we do have rights and we do have freedoms and for those people who wish to do so I see nothing wrong with honest, law abiding citizens of this country having the opportunity to go out and take part in a pastime which they enjoy.

As part of that pastime they require a firearm. Firearms are not difficult to control in our society today. We in the Progressive Conservative Party, and I would suggest members from the official opposition, do not have any difficulty with control of firearms, with safe storage of firearms so that they are not going to go off accidentally, that they will be looked after carefully.

• (1650)

What we do have is some difficulty with the registration component to firearms. I learned from a long time in this business of politics that it is good to pass good laws. Good laws are laws that can be enforced and maintained. Bad laws are laws that cannot be enforced and maintained.

Let us touch on that for a moment. The registration component of Bill C-68 is what we are opposed to and have always been opposed to because it is bad legislation. It is not enforceable. It never will be and never can be.

There are people who own firearms in their homes who do not and who have not used those firearms for years, in some cases for decades. These people are law abiding citizens. They will not in most circumstances register that firearm.

Therefore at the date they have to register, if they have not they are criminals. That in itself is criminal and it is unenforceable unless the police departments are going to go into people's homes to look for a firearm that may well be there that is not registered. That is very dangerous.

In another venue in another government, we passed laws and we listened to the people. People said to give the rationalization for the law, tell them why we put it into place and is it working.

We went to some of the laws that we refer to as bylaws and we looked at them. They were not working. There were certain licensing procedures that we put into place in the municipality that were not working and we went back legitimately and said if it is not enforceable and if it is not working, then don't have the law.

We struck those laws from the book. What we are asking this government to do right now is to simply take a step backwards, look at the viability and the enforceability of this component of registration with Bill C-68 and say it will not work, it will not serve the purpose that it thought it was going to serve when it put this legislation into place. Take the step backwards and do the right

thing for Canadian society. Do not take the police officers off my street to enforce a law that is unenforceable because I would prefer to have those police officers doing the job they are supposed to do.

I am not going to chastise the government for spending \$135 million to this day and not in fact registering one firearm. I will not chastise its members because I think they thought they were doing the right thing.

Those members should take what they hear now from the opposition benches. They should take what they hear from the 20,000 people who were outside this House today who were like us, law abiding Canadian citizens who simply want to speak their mind and tell the government that the law it has enacted is a stupid law. Take out the registration component and everybody will be better for it.

I heard the fearmongering. I heard that we will overthrow governments. I heard that we have militia groups behind us. I am a Canadian. I do not own a gun. I do not belong to the militia. I do not belong to firearm associations and I believe it is a stupid law. There are thousands and thousands like me out there who believe the same thing.

I appreciate the regionality in this country. I appreciate the diversity of this country and I ask nothing more of the government than to appreciate the same diversity when I and my colleagues from this side of the House say there are serious flaws in the registration component of Bill C-68. Remember what I said. Nobody here is opposed to the safe control and operation of guns.

The previous speaker said it would diminish homicides if we have gun registration. We can use that argument and I can give a rebuttal on that as well but I am not prepared to do so right now.

Simply, listen to the people who are out there telling this government what they would like to see in legislation.

• (1655)

**Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have been holding my fire today on this issue but I would like to put a bit of a lie to some of the comments that have been made in the House today.

We are talking about confiscation and discouraging gun owners and yet the Reform by its very arguments has demonstrated that is not what has happened because it has pointed out that handguns have been regulated now for 60 years and has not seen any of that happening out of the registration of handguns.

To the member who just spoke, I am not very good at predicting the future. We have to see the result sometimes. I do know that I was very impressed in this debate by an international research paper that was done by the International Police Association a few years ago that demonstrated very clearly that the stronger the gun

*Supply*

legislation is in a country, the lower the rate of violent crimes and deaths as a result.

I wonder if the member is aware of that report. If he is aware of it, has he chosen to totally ignore the results of that report which show a very clear correlation between strong gun control legislation and less violent crime? That is what I want to see for this country.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik:** Mr. Speaker, I can honestly say I have not seen that report nor have I read it. But there are a number of statistics that have been bandied about by the government used when selling this particular piece of legislation to the House.

I was also told at that time that there was support from the police association as well as the RCMP. However, false statistics were used in presenting that piece of legislation. Reports are reports and I have no reason to dispute the fact that perhaps there is less violent crime where there is stronger gun control.

However, for 60 years of gun control with handguns, which is very strict, there are still homicides being performed by handguns.

**Mr. Murray Calder (Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of sitting on the standing committee on agriculture with the member for Brandon—Souris. There are a few things we have disagreed on there.

The member knows me as an active farmer living in rural Canada. I am also a gun owner. I have black powder at home, shotguns, 44-40, .303, .22. I can go on. They are all properly stored and I have no problem with registration.

Some of the speakers on the other side have said that if we register these long guns in a very short period of time police officers are going to come in to our homes and confiscate our firearms.

We have had registration since 1934 for handguns. When the member for Brandon—Souris was mayor out west did he instruct his police force to go into homes of residents in that city and confiscate their handguns because he knew where they were, where they were registered? I think not.

I would like the member to think about this and comment on it. Registration is \$10 for ten long guns or a thousand because it is not just restricted to ten. We tried to make this as economical as possible. In my opinion this is the cheapest insurance policy we are ever going to get. Currently if someone stole my shotgun and they happened to be out in Manitoba and they were pulled over they would be asked about the ownership. Under the new law they will have to produce registration and ownership. I would get my shotgun back.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik:** Mr. Speaker, it is nice to live in a world of naivety and I do appreciate that from the hon. member.

I spoke nothing of confiscation in my dissertation. I spoke of a piece of legislation that in my estimation and in the estimation of thousands of Canadians is unenforceable.

• (1700)

I appreciate the fact that the hon. member will register his guns. I thank him very much for that. I can also assure the member that there are law-abiding citizens in my area and in areas of western Canada who will not register their guns. They will be criminals.

Is my police force to go into those houses and look for those people who have not registered a long rifle and charge those law-abiding individuals? If they are, we will need substantially more police officers in our municipalities to do that.

I do not subscribe to a lot of the rhetoric that has come from these benches with respect to confiscation. However, I do know in my mind that if legislation is unenforceable then it is not good legislation and should not be on the books.

**Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to stand in the House today to talk about the current Firearms Act, formerly Bill C-68.

When I ran for politics, during my campaign I became very familiar with Bill C-68.

I come from a rural riding in New Brunswick. As a matter of fact, I live in the woods and owned a gun at one time. When I ran for office, a lot of people in my riding, in New Brunswick, were totally against Bill C-68. As I heard and read more about it, I became totally against the bill.

When I ran to become a member of parliament I was very vocal about being against Bill C-68. My party, the Conservative Party of Canada, at that time said that if we formed the government we would scrap Bill C-68. I am now a member of parliament, but my party did not form the government. The people who put this bill forward have formed the government. I do not agree with it, but that is how democracy works.

Since that time I have been bothered by a few questions. I have personally been against firearm registration. I sold my gun because I did not understand why I should have to register it. As I had a licence and the gun was already registered, I wondered why I should have to register it a second time. For me it is purely political and a tax grab by the Liberals.

What bothers me the most is that today is a Reform supply day and all day they have been talking about Bill C-68. The Reform Party also said that if it formed the government it would repeal Bill C-68, but it did not form the government. Since then the Reform Party has been very vocal in the media and outside the House as to what Bill C-68 will do to Canadians.

*Supply*

Sometimes inside this House I feel that the story is different. We know that a subcommittee was set up last December by the justice department, made up of the justice critics from each party. Bill C-68 has now become law. It is harder to throw a law out than to throw a bill out. Now that the law is there we thought it would be easier for us to present amendments to the subcommittee which would help change some provisions within the law to make it easier for Canadians who live in rural areas to hunt. Just because we own guns does not mean we are criminals.

When the time arrived for all parties to meet at the subcommittee, the date was December 2, 1997. The critic for the Conservative Party was there with five amendments. He would have been able to change some of those provisions. The Reform Party went to the subcommittee with one amendment, which was to repeal Bill C-68 and nothing less than that.

• (1705)

I met people who voted for the Reform Party. They told me that the only gun control they want in the country is to be able to go to bed at night with a loaded gun next to their bed. Do we live in Canada or do we live in the jungles of Cambodia?

At the subcommittee, after the Reform Party brought in the amendment to repeal Bill C-68, which was defeated, instead of staying at the meeting to help the Conservative Party with its amendments, Reform members left the room saying that it was not an important issue for them. We had five amendments. On three of them even the Liberal side was split. If the Reform Members had stayed at the subcommittee three of the amendments could have passed, but we lost everything.

Today in the House we spent all day listening to speeches about Bill C-68. Personally I feel it is a waste of taxpayers' money because when members of the Reform Party had the chance to change some of the amendments they walked out.

Today there was a big rally on the Hill. From my office I could see the people. I sympathize with all Canadians because I support them and I am one of them. I do not know how many people there were at the rally. There may have been 5,000 or more. I support them and I will keep supporting them.

I am against gun control, but it is law now. Why can we not work together to try to change some of the provisions within the law to make it easier for people like me and many other Canadians who live in rural areas to own a firearm?

Members of the Reform Party come to the House and advocate one thing, but when they go outside it is another story. They tell Canadians that they are on their side and they are fighting to repeal gun control, but at the subcommittee they walked out, saying it was not an important issue for them.

What is going on here? It is a waste of taxpayers' money.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the speech we just heard was a complete misrepresentation of the facts.

The Reform Party has led the charge in opposition to Bill C-68. There is a Reform Party motion before the House today to repeal the legislation.

The only comment I have for the hon. member from the Conservative Party is that if he is concerned about taxpayers' dollars why is he in a party that jacked up government spending and the size of the federal government from about \$88 billion a year when Mulroney took office to about \$120 billion a year when he left? Why did it crank up deficits that started to exceed \$40 billion a year?

Who is interested in saving taxpayers' money? It is certainly not the Conservative Party. It, I might add, is comparable to the sinking *Titanic*. It is impossible to plug the holes. The ship is going down and the only reason that anybody is still in the Conservative Party is because when a ship sinks there is always somebody left on it when it hits the bottom.

**Mr. Gilles Bernier:** Mr. Speaker, it is sad that a member of the Reform Party would talk like that about the Conservative Party. After all, we are a national party, whereas the Reform Party is just a regional party. When it comes—

**Mr. Jim Pankiw:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member knows full well that the Reform Party—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** That is not a point of order, that is a point of debate.

**Mr. Gilles Bernier:** Mr. Speaker, I want to answer the member of the Reform Party.

He did not talk very much about gun control. He talked about the waste of the Conservative Party when it was in power. Since I have been a member of parliament we have all criticized the Liberals because of the waste they have created since 1993. I sympathize with all opposition parties.

The Reform Party thinks it is number one because it is the official opposition. It has criticized the government at every chance.

• (1710)

We remember well that during the campaign their leader said he would not move into Stornoway. No, he would turn it into a bingo hall. After the election he moved into Stornoway and wasted \$1 million of taxpayers' money to renovate it. This year he is going to waste another \$230,000. The Reform Party has nothing to show the Conservative Party.

*Supply*

**Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if we could get back to the business at hand, I have a comment and a question for the hon. member.

The comment is to state that one of the primary reasons I supported Bill C-68 and continue to support it is due to the request of the Canadian Police Association. As the front line officers dealing with law enforcement in this country, the Canadian Police Association supported Bill C-68.

I know there is a lot of controversy over their position. I would like to read from a letter dated February 19, 1996 from Scott Newark, the executive officer of the Canadian Police Association, to myself, where he indicates:

The issue of gun control is one on which we have expressed opinions over the years. Indeed, we approached the current government on enforcement aspects as early as December 1993. We were alerted to the fact that the government was considering changes along the lines of Bill C-68 and thus, at our Annual General Meeting in August of 1994 we struck a National Panel to examine the issues in the specific areas contemplated.

This group met and presented its report to our Executive Board Meeting in March of 1995. Following this, our delegates, assembled from every jurisdiction in Canada—

And I emphasize “every jurisdiction in Canada”—

—(Ontario being the largest), voted. Unlike when the Bill was presented in the House, our delegates were afforded the opportunity of voting on each item separately. Most passed unanimously and registration was passed by an approximate two to one margin, and, as you recall, subject to two very precise—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac.

**Mr. Gilles Bernier:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the hon. member from the other side of the House was referring to. He never put his question forward. I think he was just making a statement.

The only thing I can say is that today we have a supply day which is dealing with Bill C-68. I will vote in favour of repealing gun registration because I believe in it. It is not because of the Reform Party, but because I believe in it.

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the debate here today with some interest. I have to say, coming from Quebec, that I think all members know that the overwhelming majority of people in Quebec are not only in favour of the gun control act which was already adopted, but also with registration.

One of the reasons is that there are studies that have shown that deaths caused by suicide or accidents can be reduced by limiting access. One of the ways that we limit access is to take control and register guns.

People who are law-abiding will register their guns. Those who are not will suffer whatever the consequences are in the legislation. I think that is perfectly fair. There are a lot of people who know how to drive, but do not get behind the wheel because their licence has been suspended, because they have lost merit points—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I will give the last minute to the hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac.

**Mr. Gilles Bernier:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to talk about myself. I said that I did own a gun. I had an FAC licence. What more do I need? Why do I have to register the same gun twice? If that is not a tax grab, what does she call it?

• (1715)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** It being 5.15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Call in the members.

• (1750)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 224)

## YEAS

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar)
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bailey
Benoit	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Blaikie	Borotsik
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brison	Cadman
Casey	Casson
Chatters	Cummins
Desjarlais	Doyle
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duncan
Elley	Epp
Forseth	Gilmour
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Goldring
Gouk	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Hanger
Hardy	Harris
Hart	Harvey
Herron	Hill (Macleod)

Hill (Prince George—Peace River)  
 Jaffer  
 Jones  
 Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)  
 Konrad  
 Lowther  
 Manning  
 Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)  
 Mayfield  
 Meredith  
 Morrison  
 Nystrom  
 Pankiw  
 Price  
 Reynolds  
 Ritz  
 Scott (Skeena)  
 Solomon  
 St-Jacques  
 Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)  
 Vautour  
 Wayne  
 White (North Vancouver)—83

Hilstrom  
 Johnston  
 Keddy (South Shore)  
 Kerpan  
 Laliberte  
 MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)  
 Mark  
 Matthews  
 McNally  
 Mills (Red Deer)  
 Muise  
 Obhrai  
 Penson  
 Ramsay  
 Riis  
 Schmidt  
 Solberg  
 Stinson  
 Strahl  
 Thompson (Wild Rose)  
 Vellacott  
 White (Langley—Abbotsford)

## NAYS

### Members

Adams  
 Anderson  
 Asselin  
 Bachand (Saint-Jean)  
 Bakopanos  
 Beaumier  
 Bélanger  
 Bellemare  
 Bergeron  
 Bevilacqua  
 Blondin-Andrew  
 Bonwick  
 Bradshaw  
 Brown  
 Bulte  
 Calder  
 Canuel  
 Carroll  
 Cauchon  
 Chan  
 Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)  
 Coderre  
 Collette  
 Copps  
 Cullen  
 Davies  
 Debien  
 DeVillers  
 Dion  
 Dromisky  
 Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)  
 Duhamel  
 Earle  
 Finlay  
 Fournier  
 Gagliano  
 Gallaway  
 Girard-Bujold  
 Godin (Châteauguay)  
 Graham  
 Grose  
 Guimond  
 Harvard  
 Ianno  
 Jennings  
 Karetak-Lindell  
 Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)  
 Knutson  
 Lastewka  
 Lavigne  
 Leung  
 Lincoln  
 MacAulay  
 Malhi

Alarie  
 Assadourian  
 Augustine  
 Baker  
 Barnes  
 Béclair  
 Bellehumeur  
 Bennett  
 Bertrand  
 Bigras  
 Bonin  
 Boudria  
 Brien  
 Bryden  
 Byrne  
 Cannis  
 Caplan  
 Catterall  
 Chamberlain  
 Charbonneau  
 Clouthier  
 Cohen  
 Comuzzi  
 Crête  
 Dalphond-Guiral  
 de Savoye  
 Desrochers  
 Dhaliwal  
 Discepolo  
 Drouin  
 Duceppe  
 Dumas  
 Easter  
 Fontana  
 Fry  
 Gagnon  
 Gauthier  
 Godfrey  
 Goodale  
 Gray (Windsor West)  
 Guay  
 Harb  
 Hubbard  
 Jackson  
 Jordan  
 Keyes  
 Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)  
 Kraft Sloan  
 Laurin  
 Lefebvre  
 Lill  
 Longfield  
 Mahoney  
 Maloney

## Supply

Mancini  
 Marceau  
 Marchi  
 Martin (LaSalle—Énard)  
 Massé  
 McGuire  
 McLellan (Edmonton West)  
 McWhinney  
 Mercier  
 Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)  
 Mitchell  
 Myers  
 Normand  
 O'Reilly  
 Paradis  
 Patry  
 Perron  
 Pettigrew  
 Picard (Drummond)  
 Pillitteri  
 Proctor  
 Provenzano  
 Reed  
 Robillard  
 Rocheleau  
 Saada  
 Scott (Fredericton)  
 Shepherd  
 St. Denis  
 Stewart (Northumberland)  
 Szabo  
 Thibeault  
 Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)  
 Vanclief  
 Volpe  
 Wasylcyia-Leis  
 Wilfert

Manley  
 Marchand  
 Marleau  
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
 McCormick  
 McKay (Scarborough East)  
 McTeague  
 Ménard  
 Milliken  
 Minna  
 Murray  
 Nault  
 O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)  
 Pagtakhan  
 Parrish  
 Peric  
 Peterson  
 Phinney  
 Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)  
 Pratt  
 Proud  
 Redman  
 Richardson  
 Robinson  
 Rock  
 Sauvageau  
 Sekora  
 Speller  
 Stewart (Brant)  
 St-Julien  
 Telegdi  
 Torsney  
 Valeri  
 Venne  
 Wappel  
 Whelan  
 Wood—182

## PAIRED MEMBERS

Alcock  
 Caccia  
 Lalonde  
 St-Hilaire

Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)  
 Folco  
 Loubier  
 Turp

**The Speaker:** I declare the amendment defeated.

The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion, the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

• (1800 )

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

*Supply**(Division No. 225)*

## YEAS

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Axworthy (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar)
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bailey
Benoit	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Blaikie	Borotsik
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brison	Cadman
Casey	Casson
Chatters	Cummins
Desjarlais	Doyle
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duncan
Elley	Epp
Forseth	Gilmour
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Goldring
Gouk	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Hanger
Hardy	Harris
Hart	Harvey
Herron	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Jaffer	Johnston
Jones	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)	Kerpan
Konrad	Laliberte
Lowther	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Manning	Mark
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Matthews
Mayfield	McNally
Meredith	Mills (Red Deer)
Morrison	Muise
Nystrom	Obhrai
Pankiw	Penson
Price	Ramsay
Reynolds	Riis
Ritz	Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)	Solberg
Solomon	Stinson
St-Jacques	Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Vautour	Vellacott
Wayne	White (Langley—Abbotsford)—82

## NAYS

## Members

Adams	Alarie
Anderson	Assadourian
Asselin	Augustine
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélaïr
Bélangier	Bellehumeur
Bellemare	Bennett
Bergeron	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brien
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Calder	Cannis
Canuel	Caplan
Carroll	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Charbonneau
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Clothier
Coderre	Cohen
Collenette	Comuzzi
Copp	Crête
Cullen	Dalphond-Guiral

Davies	de Savoye
Debien	Desrochers
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepolo
Dromisky	Drouin
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)	Duceppe
Duhamel	Dumas
Earle	Easter
Finlay	Fontana
Fournier	Fry
Gagliano	Gagnon
Galloway	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godfrey
Godin (Châteauguay)	Goodale
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Grose	Guay
Guimond	Harb
Harvard	Hubbard
Ianno	Jackson
Jennings	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Laurin
Lavigne	Lefebvre
Leung	Lill
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Mancini	Manley
Marceau	Marchand
Marchi	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Énard)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Massé	McCormick
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan (Edmonton West)	McTeague
McWhinney	Ménard
Mercier	Milliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Murray
Myers	Nault
Normand	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Peric
Perron	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Picard (Drummond)	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Proctor	Proud
Provenzano	Redman
Reed	Richardson
Robillard	Robinson
Rocheleau	Rock
Saada	Sauvageau
Scott (Fredericton)	Sekora
Shepherd	Speller
St. Denis	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	St-Julien
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)	Valeri
Vanclief	Venne
Volpe	Wappel
Wasylcia-Leis	Whelan
White (North Vancouver)	Wilfert
Wood—183	

## PAIRED MEMBERS

Alcock	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Caccia	Folco
Lalonde	Loubier
St-Hilaire	Turp

*Government Orders*

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion defeated.

• (1805 )

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was negated on the following division:)

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

(Division No. 226)

[English]

**COMPETITION ACT**

The House resumed from September 21 consideration of Bill C-20, an act to amend the Competition Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

**The Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of several deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of Bill C-20.

The question is on Motion No. 1. The vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 3. An affirmative vote on Motion No. 1 obviates the necessity of the question being put on Motion No. 2.

[Translation]

If Motion No. 1 is negated, Motion No. 2 will be put to a vote.

**Mr. Bob Kilger:** Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent to have members who voted on the preceding motion recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting nay.

[English]

**The Speaker:** Is there agreement to proceed in such a fashion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, Reform Party members present vote no on this motion.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Mr. Speaker, Bloc Québécois members are in favour of the motion.

[English]

**Mr. John Solomon:** Mr. Speaker, NDP members present this evening vote no on this motion.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Harvey:** Mr. Speaker, members of our party are opposed to this motion.

[English]

**Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to be recognized as being in the House and as voting with the Liberal Party on this vote. I am voting no.

Alarie  
Bachand (Saint-Jean)  
Bergeron  
Brien  
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)  
Dalphond-Guiral  
Debien  
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)  
Dumas  
Gagnon  
Girard-Bujold  
Guay  
Laurin  
Marceau  
Ménard  
Perron  
Rocheleau  
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)

**YEAS**

## Members

Asselin  
Bellehumeur  
Bigras  
Canuel  
Crête  
de Savoye  
Desrochers  
Duceppe  
Fournier  
Gauthier  
Godin (Châteauguay)  
Guimond  
Lefebvre  
Marchand  
Mercier  
Picard (Drummond)  
Sauvageau  
Venne—36

**NAYS**

## Members

Abbott  
Adams  
Anderson  
Augustine  
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)  
Baker  
Barnes  
Bélair  
Bellemare  
Benoit  
Bertrand  
Blaikie  
Bonin  
Borotsik  
Bradshaw  
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)  
Brown  
Bulte  
Cadman  
Cannis  
Carroll  
Casson  
Cauchon  
Chan  
Chatters  
Coderre  
Collenette  
Coppes  
Cummins  
Desjarlais  
Dhaliwal  
Discepola  
Dromisky  
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)  
Duncan  
Easter  
Epp  
Fontana  
Fry  
Galloway  
Godfrey  
Goldring  
Gouk  
Gray (Windsor West)  
Grey (Edmonton North)  
Hanger  
Ablonczy  
Anders  
Assadourian  
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar)  
Bailey  
Bakopanos  
Beaumier  
Bélangier  
Bennett  
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)  
Bevilacqua  
Blondin-Andrew  
Bonwick  
Boudria  
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)  
Brison  
Bryden  
Byrne  
Calder  
Caplan  
Casey  
Catterall  
Chamberlain  
Charbonneau  
Clouthier  
Cohen  
Comuzzi  
Cullen  
Davies  
DeVillers  
Dion  
Doyle  
Drouin  
Duhamel  
Earle  
Elley  
Finlay  
Forseth  
Gagliano  
Gilmour  
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)  
Goodale  
Graham  
Grewal  
Grose  
Harb

*Government Orders*

Hardy	Harris
Hart	Harvard
Harvey	Herron
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hubbard
Ianno	Jackson
Jaffer	Jennings
Johnston	Jones
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)
Kerpan	Keys
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Konrad
Kraft Sloan	Laliberte
Lastewka	Lavigne
Leung	Lill
Lincoln	Longfield
Lowther	MacAulay
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Mancini	Manley
Manning	Marchi
Mark	Marleau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Massé
Matthews	Mayfield
McCormick	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McNally	McTeague
McWhinney	Meredith
Milliken	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mills (Red Deer)	Minna
Mitchell	Morrison
Muise	Murray
Myers	Nault
Normand	Nystrom
Obhrai	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Pankiw	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Penson	Peric
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Price	Proctor
Proud	Provenzano
Ramsay	Redman
Reed	Reynolds
Richardson	Riis
Ritz	Robillard
Robinson	Rock
Saada	Schmidt
Scott (Fredericton)	Scott (Skeena)
Sekora	Shepherd
Solberg	Solomon
Speller	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	Stinson
St-Jacques	St-Julien
Strahl	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibeault
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Vautour	Vellacott
Volpe	Wappel
Wasylycia-Leis	Wayne
Whelan	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver)	Wilfert
Wood—231	

**PAIRED MEMBERS**

Alcock	Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)
Caccia	Folco
Lalonde	Loubier
St-Hilaire	Turp

**The Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 1 defeated. I therefore declare Motion No. 3 defeated.

The next question is on Motion No. 2.

**Mr. Bob Kilger:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you were to seek consent, it would be granted to apply the results of the vote just taken to the following motions: Motions Nos. 2, 4, 8, 6, 9 and 10.

**The Speaker:** Is there agreement to proceed in such a fashion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Bob Kilger:** Mr. Speaker, my apologies but I wonder if I could have the opportunity to correct the proceedings of the vote just taken. It was my error in not picking up the fact that our colleagues from the New Democratic Party should be shown as having voted in favour of Motion No. 2. As I applied the votes, I regrettably did not take note of the fact that the preceding vote on which I asked for the application I misread their party's voting intention. To correct the record, members of the New Democratic Party of course on the Competition Act would continue to have voted nay, but then when we go to Motions Nos. 2, 4, 8, 6, 9 and 10, they voted yea.

I apologize for that error, in particular to my colleagues from the New Democratic Party.

**The Speaker:** Is there consent to make the changes indicated by the chief government whip?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 227)

**YEAS****Members**

Alarie	Asselin
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bellehumeur	Bergeron
Bigras	Blaikie
Brien	Canuel
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Crête
Dalphon-D-Guiral	Davies
de Savoye	Debien
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)	Duceppe
Dumas	Earle
Fournier	Gagnon
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Godin (Châteauguay)
Guay	Guimond
Hardy	Laliberte
Laurin	Lefebvre
Lill	Mancini
Marceau	Marchand



*Government Orders*

Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
Mercier  
Perron  
Proctor  
Robinson  
Sauvageau  
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)  
Venne

Ménard  
Nystrom  
Picard (Drummond)  
Riis  
Rocheleau  
Solomon  
Vautour  
Wasylycia-Leis—54

Maloney  
Manning  
Mark  
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)  
Massé  
Mayfield  
McGuire  
McLellan (Edmonton West)  
McTeague  
Meredith  
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)  
Minna  
Morrison  
Murray  
Nault  
Obhrai  
O'Reilly  
Pankiw  
Parrish  
Penson  
Peterson  
Phinney  
Pillitteri  
Price  
Provenzano  
Redman  
Reynolds  
Ritz  
Rock  
Schmidt  
Scott (Skeena)  
Shepherd  
Speller  
Steckle  
Stewart (Northumberland)  
St-Jacques  
Strahl  
Telegdi  
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)  
Torsney  
Valeri  
Vellacott  
Wappel  
Whelan  
White (North Vancouver)  
Wood —213

Manley  
Marchi  
Marleau  
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)  
Matthews  
McCormick  
McKay (Scarborough East)  
McNally  
McWhinney  
Milliken  
Mills (Red Deer)  
Mitchell  
Muise  
Myers  
Normand  
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)  
Pagtakhan  
Paradis  
Patry  
Peric  
Pettigrew  
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)  
Pratt  
Proud  
Ramsay  
Reed  
Richardson  
Robillard  
Saada  
Scott (Fredericton)  
Sekora  
Sjoberg  
St. Denis  
Stewart (Brant)  
Stinson  
St-Julien  
Szabo  
Thibeault  
Thompson (Wild Rose)  
Ur  
Vanclief  
Volpe  
Wayne  
White (Langley—Abbotsford)  
Wilfert

## NAYS

## Members

Abbott  
Adams  
Anderson  
Augustine  
Bailey  
Bakopanos  
Beaumier  
Bélanger  
Bennett  
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)  
Bevilacqua  
Bonin  
Borotsik  
Bradshaw  
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)  
Brown  
Bulte  
Cadman  
Cannis  
Carroll  
Casson  
Cauchon  
Chan  
Chatters  
Coderre  
Collenette  
Copp  
Cummins  
Dhaliwal  
Discepola  
Dromisky  
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)  
Duncan  
Elley  
Finlay  
Forseth  
Gagliano  
Gilmour  
Goldring  
Gouk  
Gray (Windsor West)  
Grey (Edmonton North)  
Hanger  
Harris  
Harvard  
Herron  
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)  
Hubbard  
Jackson  
Jennings  
Jones  
Karetak-Lindell  
Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)  
Keys  
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)  
Konrad  
Lastewka  
Leung  
Longfield  
MacAulay  
Mahoney

Ablonczy  
Anders  
Assadourian  
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)  
Baker  
Barnes  
Bélair  
Bellemare  
Benoit  
Bertrand  
Blondin-Andrew  
Bonwick  
Boudria  
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)  
Brisson  
Bryden  
Byrne  
Calder  
Caplan  
Casey  
Catterall  
Chamberlain  
Charbonneau  
Clouthier  
Cohen  
Comuzzi  
Cullen  
DeVillers  
Dion  
Doyle  
Drouin  
Duhamel  
Easter  
Epp  
Fontana  
Fry  
Galloway  
Godfrey  
Goodale  
Graham  
Grewal  
Grose  
Harb  
Hart  
Harvey  
Hill (Macleod)  
Hilstrom  
Ianno  
Jaffer  
Johnston  
Jordan  
Keddy (South Shore)  
Kerpan  
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)  
Knutson  
Kraft Sloan  
Lavigne  
Lincoln  
Lowther  
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)  
Malhi

## PAIRED MEMBERS

Alcock  
Caccia  
Lalonde  
St-Hilaire

Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)  
Folco  
Loubier  
Turp

**The Speaker:** I declare Motions 2, 4, 8, 6, 9 and 10 defeated. Motions Nos. 5, 7 and 11 are therefore defeated.

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.)** moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

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

**The Speaker:** Is there agreement to proceed in such a fashion?

*Government Orders*

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, Reform Party members present vote yes to this motion.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Mr. Speaker, Bloc Québécois members are opposed to this motion.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Solomon:** Mr. Speaker, NDP members present vote no on this motion.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. André Harvey:** Mr. Speaker, members of our party will be voting in favour of this motion.

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 228*)

### YEAS

#### Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Adams	Anders
Anderson	Assadourian
Augustine	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bailey	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélair
Bélanger	Bellemare
Bennett	Benoit
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Borotsik	Boudria
Bradshaw	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Brison
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Cadman	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Casey
Casson	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Charbonneau
Chatters	Clouthier
Coderre	Cohen
Collenette	Comuzzi
Copps	Cullen
Cummins	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepola	Doyle
Dromiskiy	Drouin
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duhamel
Duncan	Easter
Elley	Epp
Finlay	Fontana
Forseth	Fry
Gagliano	Galloway
Gilmour	Godfrey
Goldring	Goodale
Gouk	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Grose
Hanger	Harb
Harris	Hart
Harvard	Harvey
Herron	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hubbard	Ianno
Jackson	Jaffer
Jennings	Johnston
Jones	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary-Sud-Est)	Kerpan

Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knudson
Konrad	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lavigne
Leung	Lincoln
Longfield	Lowther
MacAulay	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Manning	Marchi
Mark	Marleau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (LaSalle—Énard)
Massé	Matthews
Mayfield	McCormick
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan (Edmonton West)	McNally
McTeague	McWhinney
Meredith	Miliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Mills (Red Deer)
Minna	Mitchell
Morrison	Muise
Murray	Myers
Nault	Normand
Obhrai	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Pankiw	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Penson	Peric
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Price	Proud
Provenzano	Ramsay
Redman	Reed
Reynolds	Richardson
Ritz	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Schmidt	Scott (Fredericton)
Scott (Skeena)	Sekora
Shepherd	Solberg
Speller	St. Denis
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	Stinson
St-Jacques	St-Julien
Strahl	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibeault
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Vellacott	Volpe
Wappel	Wayne
Whelan	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver)	Wilfert
Wood —213	

### NAYS

#### Members

Alarie	Asselin
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bellehumeur	Bergeron
Bigras	Blaikie
Brien	Canuel
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Crête
Dalphon-Duval	Davies
de Savoye	Debien
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)	Duceppe
Dumas	Earle
Fournier	Gagnon
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Godin (Châteauguay)
Guay	Guimond

Hardy  
Laurin  
Lill  
Marceau  
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
Mercier  
Perron  
Proctor  
Robinson  
Sauvageau  
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)  
Venne

Laliberte  
Lefebvre  
Mancini  
Marchand  
Ménard  
Nystrom  
Picard (Drummond)  
Riis  
Rocheleau  
Solomon  
Vautour  
Wasylycia-Leis—54

#### PAIRED MEMBERS

Alcock  
Caccia  
Lalonde  
St-Hilaire

Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)  
Folco  
Loubier  
Turp

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

It being 6.10 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### COMPETITION ACT

The House resumed from May 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-235, an act to amend the Competition Act (protection of those who purchase products from vertically integrated suppliers who compete with them at retail), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

• (1810)

**Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this private members' bill.

I believe this bill was well intended. The bill proposes to change the Competition Act which would prevent unfair pricing practices by vertically integrated suppliers, especially in the oil and gas industry.

I can understand the hon. member's reasons for bringing forth this legislation. In my five years as a member of parliament I have received countless letters, phone calls and petitions from Canadians living both within and outside my riding, all concerning gas prices and competition between retailers.

Both independent retailers and individual consumers have expressed concern over what they believe to be unfair pricing

### *Private Members' Business*

practices. I believe it is the concerns of the first group, the independent retailers, that the hon. member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge wished to address. Unfortunately I have serious concerns about the bill as it may not be effective in serving the intended purpose.

The proposed changes to the Competition Act are intended to prevent vertically integrated suppliers from practising below cost selling when their own gas stations are competing with the independent retailers they also supply. This is very important to ensure fair competition. However, the Competition Act already prohibits this.

Section 78(a) of the Competition Act specifically prohibits anti-competitive acts including "squeezing by a vertically integrated supplier of the margin available to an unintegrated customer who competes with the supplier for the purpose of impeding or preventing the customer's entry into or expansion in a market".

The Competition Act also prohibits selling articles at a price lower than the acquisition cost for the purpose of discipline or eliminating a competitor. Section 50 of the Competition Act outlines severe consequences for those companies guilty of anti-competitive acts.

Like the hon. member, I am strongly opposed to predatory pricing. However, I believe the Competition Act already addresses this issue as is. The problem does not rest with the provisions or wording of the Competition Act but with the lack of vigour and enthusiasm with which it is enforced by the government and its regulators. If large oil companies are in fact engaging in unfair pricing practices, a fact of which I am not convinced, then the fault lies with the federal government for not being more vigorous in enforcing existing legislation.

As I have stated before, I believe the hon. member had good intentions in bringing Bill C-235 to the House. When the committee began looking at this issue it wanted to unveil unfair practices including price fixing and collusion, which was a noble goal. However, when the hon. member found no evidence of this, he switched his focus to protecting the interests of a small group of independent retailers, some 20% of the retail market.

Somewhere in this process the interests of individual consumers, the very group that the hon. member set out to represent, were forgotten. Therefore, believing the hon. member to be an individual of good conscience, I encourage him to be vigilant, especially with regard to the bill's potential impact on individual consumers. I would implore him to give greater consideration to the millions of Canadians who will suffer as a result of government intervention and excessive regulation.

I am a firm believer in fair competition in the marketplace. However, I am also a firm believer in the market system whereby market values are determined by supply, demand and corner competition.

*Private Members' Business*

I am concerned that this bill if passed would result in the abandonment of the market system and the adoption of a floor price that would hinder rather than strengthen competition among retailers.

• (1815)

Canadian gasoline prices are among the lowest in the world and have been falling for two decades. Conversely, taxes on gasoline have been rising, now accounting for more than 50% of pump prices. This in itself is one very good reason why independent retailers are suffering

Both refiners and marketers of gasoline have seen their profit margins shrink as a result of normal competition in the marketplace but have also suffered the burden of government tax grabbing.

When gasoline prices are considered in isolation from taxation, however, it is abundantly clear that the individual consumer benefits from the current competition among retailers. Pretax prices are lower than they have been in two decades. The market system is working exceptionally well for the consumers in this way. Not only have gasoline prices fallen, but gasoline retailers have found it necessary to improve services in order to remain competitive.

Vertically integrated suppliers and independent retailers alike have diversified operations by building car washes, convenience stores and restaurants on site. These benefits to consumers are on top of low gasoline prices as determined by the market forces.

I believe this bill would protect the most vulnerable, the independent retailer, but I fear that it would also establish a floor price for gasoline much higher than the price determined by market forces.

Currently the province of Quebec is considering establishing a floor price for gasoline in that province. Quebec Professor Alain Lapointe has been studying the issue of gas pricing and estimates that the floor price would cost Quebec consumers anywhere from \$140 million to \$280 million.

So far I have discussed the negative implications of this bill. In fairness to the bill and to the hon. member from Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge, however, I think it is equally as important to consider the long term impacts should independent retailers be forced out of the market. This is one of the hon. member's concerns and I share that concern.

Even so, I am concerned about the effects the proposed legislation will have on other industries. To this point, changes to the Competition Act have been discussed almost exclusively in terms of their impact on gasoline prices. This is primarily because the hon. member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge has targeted major oil companies in his argument. However, if accepted by the

members of this House, the changes proposed by this legislation would reach much further in their application.

This means Canadians would not only face higher prices for gasoline but could face higher prices for electronic equipment, cars and a multitude of other products. Canadians would also face the inefficiencies of further government intervention and control in their lives. The successful operation of the market requires that market forces be allowed to run their course. The successful operation of the market also requires fair competition whereby predatory pricing and abuse of dominant position are prohibited by law and this law is vigorously enforced. The market system has operated well thus far, resulting in the declining pretax gasoline price for consumers.

The Competition Act explicitly prohibits predatory pricing below cost selling and abuse of dominant position. By my estimates this means that the conditions necessary for successful operation of the market should already be in place. Unfortunately, it appears as though the market is not operating successfully.

I encourage the hon. member opposite to take a hard look at the influence of his own party on market prices. Federal and provincial taxes average 28.6 cents per litre which is more than 50% of the pump price. That is 28.6 cents per litre less for the retailer. The lower the retailer's profit margin, the greater the difficulty to survive.

• (1820)

If the government is truly committed to protecting the independent retailer taxes should be reduced. With lower taxes and greater profit margins the independent retailers would be better positioned to compete with the large oil companies and to diversify their operations in order to meet the ever changing needs of their consumer base.

I conclude by commending the hon. member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge for his efforts. I appreciate his vigour and determination. I encourage him to continue his struggle, albeit in a somewhat different direction. Instead of pursuing a solution that would potentially hurt the consumer, I suggest he try to encourage his Liberal colleagues for more vigorous enforcement of existing laws and clearer definitions within those laws.

Although I have concerns with this bill I see the merit in highlighting this issue and hope that in the future the hon. member and I will be able to study this issue from the same side of the fence.

To this effect, Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That Bill C-235, an act to amend the Competition Act, not be read a second time, but that the order be discharged, the bill withdrawn, and the subject matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on Industry.

*Private Members' Business*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The amendment is in order. The debate is on the amendment.

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I am addressing the House on the subject of private member's Bill C-235, an act to amend the Competition Act.

I am pleased to state my full support for this much needed bill. I wish to congratulate my colleague, the member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge, for seeing this bill to second reading and for the work of his committee on behalf of all Canadians, especially our small and medium size businesses.

In essence, this bill would provide for the enforcement of fair pricing between a manufacturer that sells a product at retail either directly or through an affiliate and who also supplies product to a customer who competes with the supplier at the retail level. This provides a supplier's customer with a fair opportunity to make a similar profit as the supplier at the retail level in a given market area.

• (1825 )

A supplier who tries to force a customer to set a certain retail price on marketing policy may under this bill face a fine, imprisonment or both. Bill C-235 would establish a clear legislative basis for the enforcement of industry wide fair pricing policies. That is why I believe the proposed legislation would go a long way toward repairing the industry's battered image among the general public.

The reason I am so concerned about gas prices today is there can only be one winner or loser at the gas pump and that is the consumer. Unfortunately a summer's worth of rapidly changing prices at the pumps has only served to frustrate and anger consumer in my riding of Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale as well as those living both in Ontario and across the country.

Without a doubt gasoline pricing is a politically sensitive issue and will remain so until certain problems within the system are addressed. After all, gasoline prices are probably the most advertised prices in Canada. Every citizen sees them every day and often is shocked when they suddenly go up. Unfortunately normal supply and demand economics cannot account for the large price swings that Canadians see at the pumps.

Though the committee on gas pricing's report concluded that price fixing and collusion do not occur, it added that it does not occur because it does not have to. All a station manager has to do is look at his competitor's sign and match his price. Indeed price signs on retail outlets can be an easy way for market participants to achieve the same results without having the resort to any illegal activity.

Still, I would like to make it clear that there remains too much mystery surrounding the relationship between the refining and the

retail operations of integrated companies such as Shell and Imperial Oil.

What is needed is greater transparency within the industry since as things stand now very few Canadians have any idea how much these big companies charge their own stations. There is still a lot of smoke and mirrors within the industry.

I again acknowledge the tremendous initiative and leadership demonstrated on this matter by our colleague, the member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge. This member not only helped to create the caucus committee on gasoline pricing, he also agreed to be our chair.

Bill C-235 would give the customer a fair opportunity to make a profit similar to that of the supplier, hence ending the practice known throughout the industry as unfair pricing. Since that is what the bill aims to resolve I wish to call on my fellow members of parliament to join me in support of Bill C-235.

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to discuss the gas pricing issue in the House yet one more time.

I am pleased to stand and support the referral to committee of Bill C-235 sponsored by the member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge. It is a bill which has merit. It is a bill which will provide some competition seriously lacking now in the gasoline pricing industry.

The purpose of the bill is to provide a much needed first step to implementing a predatory pricing definition in the Competition Act.

• (1830 )

This is a definition that makes sense to non-integrated or what we like to call independent gasoline retailers who compete against the vertically integrated or the large corporate marketers. It is the first step in re-establishing some retail competition which, at this moment, is on the verge of breakdown.

The Competition Act was watered down significantly by the Conservative government of Mr. Brian Mulroney. We used to have a bill called the Combines Investigation Act. That bill gave regulators the power to investigate if they suspected predatory pricing or price fixing in the marketplace in gasoline or other commodities. They had the power to go into a company suspected of price fixing or predatory pricing and take the files for investigative purposes.

What happened was that Mr. Mulroney wanted to change that because the large corporations made huge contributions to his party. In response he said "I am going to let you fix prices, so I will repeal the Combines Investigation Act and set up what we will call

*Private Members' Business*

the Competition Act". I call it, and many of my constituents call it, the "lack of competition act".

It is really a monopoly act. It provides large corporations with the unfettered ability to do whatever they want in terms of pricing goods and services in this country. The reason I say that is because I have worked with the oil industry for a number of years, in particular on the issue of gas pricing.

The bill which is before the House is a very important. It tries to change the lack of competition in the current act to make it a more competitive act by providing a definition of predatory pricing.

In the act there is a very small section outlining predatory pricing. None of the people who have been charged under this clause have been found guilty by the courts. The reason is that the definition is so narrow and so precise that it really does not provide any flexibility to gather evidence to prove the charges laid.

Compare that to the United States of America, the most capitalistic society and economy in our world. They have pages and pages in their legislation on predatory pricing and other anti-competitive acts.

Twenty-eight states in the United States of America have predatory pricing practice protection for their consumers. What do we have in Canada? Zippo. We have nothing here for our consumers. That is a very worrisome development.

I see that the member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge has recognized this and has gathered some support in terms of having the committee review it.

I want to point out a few things about the independent retail gasoline marketers who are shrinking in numbers. They are the people who market gasoline or heating oil. They retail under their own brand and do not own a refinery. They operate under a type of joint venture agreement with a refiner marketer who is a vertically integrated company, such as Imperial Oil, Irving Oil or Shell.

Defined in this way, independents refer to the group that includes large retailers, such as Canadian Tire or the Olco Petroleum Group, Sunny's Petroleum, as well as a number of smaller businesses that operate only one or a few gasoline outlets.

The past eight years have seen increasingly difficult times for independent marketers who are attempting to remain viable in a market controlled by the major refiner marketers, the companies I referred to earlier.

As a result, several retailers have either sold all or parts of their chains, or they have entered into partnerships with a major oil company, for example, Pioneer or United Cooperative Ontario, or they have left the business voluntarily or through bankruptcy. Some examples are Safeway, Payrite, Gas Rite and Mohawk.

As a result, the non-affiliated independents' market share has dropped dramatically in most provinces across Canada. During this time all major refiner marketers have increased direct market share and control over the market.

I want to use some statistics which are quite illustrative of what I have just said.

In 1992, in the province of Alberta, the independent market share was 27.8%. In 1997 it was 20.1%, a decline of 25% in five years.

• (1835 )

Indeed, with the recent sale of Mohawk to Husky Oil, Alberta will see a further decline of 6.3%, down to 13.8%, which from 1992 to 1999 will mean a 55% drop in market share of independents in Alberta. In those five years alone this lack of competition has cost Alberta consumers about \$80 million.

In Saskatchewan, in 1992, the independent market share was 20.6%. That is now down to 15.1% of the market, or a decline of 25% in five years. Where has the market share gone? To the major multinational corporations.

That is very alarming because once that market share gets to a point where it is not relevant, these independent retailers will cease to exist.

I am a small business person by profession. I see these people as small or medium enterprises trying to make a living, but also providing competition and some price options for consumers and businesses. But as the market share declines with respect to the independents, we no longer have competition. We have monopoly pricing. It is pretty much the same in Manitoba in terms of the decline.

What we are seeing are independents who have to buy wholesale price gasoline at the pumps. Of course when there is a bit of a war on, when the major retailers want to get rid of the independents, they drop the price below what the independents purchase at the pumps. The independents carry on for as long as they can, but eventually they go bankrupt or they sell out to larger companies in the marketplace.

I want to say to the people who are listening that what we have here is a bill which is very supportable. It is something that will enhance and improve the Competition Act as we know it. It will indeed provide some competition. But why has the Liberal Party or the Conservative Party not supported this kind of initiative? Many Liberal members support it, but the majority will vote it down. I hope I am wrong, but that is my suspicion. I think it is because the major oil companies provide huge, substantial political contributions to the Liberal Party and to the Conservative Party. One can

only conclude that if those parties are getting huge contributions they will allow the oil companies to do as they see fit.

The issue of gasoline pricing is quite phenomenal. I want to make one reference to my home province, Saskatchewan. We have seen the price of oil at the wellhead decline by approximately 50% year over year. It has been sustained for six or seven months now in this country. It is down to \$11 to \$13 a barrel, depending on which day you are looking at. It used to be \$25 about a year ago.

What we have seen in this country is that in some areas the price of gasoline does not go down. The refiners keep the price high. They are making huge margins on their sales and everybody else pays the fare. What we have seen is that in Saskatchewan the price of gasoline has been inordinately high throughout the last six months of this low oil price.

I have travelled across the country and I have talked to people across this country. Saskatchewan has the same provincial sales tax as British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and the Maritimes. We pay between 3 cents and 9 cents a litre more in Saskatchewan.

I have been raising this issue in my province. I had a visit from Petro-Canada, my good friends, and they showed me all these graphs and told me how they are hard done by. They said "The reason it is lower in other provinces is because of volume". I said "Why do the prices go up in the springtime in Saskatchewan when the farmers need the fuel for seeding? That is more volume and the prices go up. Why does that happen?" They cannot answer that. It is the same in the fall with the harvest. It is just pure price gouging.

It is my sense that we need some competition in this country. It is my sense that we need this amendment to the Competition Act. It is my sense as well that we need support for my private member's bill, to be coming before this House hopefully before long, which calls for the establishment of an energy price review commission. That will assist the member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge in his efforts to make sure that oil companies are charging consumers fair prices.

• (1840)

**Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to support Bill C-235, a bill that would mandate that major oil companies selling gasoline to independents would have to sell it to independents at the same price that they sell it to their own branded dealers.

I have had the good pleasure of working with the member of parliament for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge on this initiative and I would like to commend him for his leadership on gasoline pricing and for chairing a task force that he put together. I was fortunate enough to work with him on that initiative.

### *Private Members' Business*

Some might ask "What is the concern? If independents are charged for gasoline at a different price they can go to someone else. Instead of buying from Esso they could go to Shell or Petro-Canada". The problem is that the wholesale market is very much a homogeneous market. It is controlled by three or four major companies: Petro-Canada, Shell, Esso and Ultramar. There is really one wholesale price that is driven by what they call the rack price. I will touch on that briefly later.

There really are not many choices, so it is imperative that the independents are charged the same price as the branded dealers.

When we set up this task force we met with Canadians all across Canada. In my own riding of Etobicoke North we had a meeting on January 23. There were representatives from the Etobicoke Chamber of Commerce, the gas dealers, trucking companies and others.

What we consistently heard across Canada is that Canadians want fair gasoline pricing. They are concerned also about the long weekend pricing and the volatility of pricing, but they really want a competitive and open market for gasoline pricing to ensure that prices are fair.

In fact, looking at gasoline prices right now, they really are not that bad. But the problem is that if the independent gasoline dealer is eliminated in Canada, then prices in the short run might be low but we will be burdened later with higher prices through this sort of oligopolistic market.

To achieve the goal of allowing independents the room to operate, to make a fair profit and to survive in a very competitive industry is a very challenging and daunting task. The independent gasoline dealers are really squeezed by the major oil companies.

In the oil industry there is a high level of concentration. There are now only 18 refineries in Canada, down from about 44 in 1960.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** If I may beg the indulgence of the hon. member for Etobicoke North, a little earlier the hon. member for Athabasca moved an amendment and I did not bring it to the attention of the House appropriately.

I am now asking for the unanimous consent of the House to revert to where we were before I erroneously read the motion. Does the Chair have the unanimous consent of the House to revisit the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** It has been moved by the hon. member for Athabasca that Bill C-235, an act to amend the Competition Act, be not now read the second time, but that the order be discharged, the bill withdrawn and the subject matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on Industry.

*Private Members' Business*

Is there unanimous consent of the House for this motion?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** There is not unanimous consent.

**Mr. Roy Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, I was describing the large degree of concentration in the oil industry. In Toronto, for example, 75% to 85% of all retail gasoline sold is priced by the major oil companies through controlled operations.

The major oil companies say that at the retail level the competition is very fierce and intensive and the economics are very poor.

• (1845)

The independents are certainly struggling and fighting for market share against the majors. The independents do not have some of the opportunities which some of the major companies have. They are unable to develop the ancillary services that a lot of the major oil companies are doing today: car washes, convenience stores, et cetera. They cannot access the capital to do these types of things.

The banks will not touch the independent retailer of gasoline because they are concerned about how long they will be in business and what they call site remediation or environmental problems with sites. The small independents cannot get capital from the banks. The banks have said categorically that they will not look at them.

What about the majors? Are they making money at the retail level? They say they are not, but if we look at their annual statements we could not tell because that information is just not provided. Even if we could decipher that from their annual statements, the fact is that major oil companies price the product right through the whole chain. They are integrated oil companies so they explore, drill, extract, refine, market and retail. These are big oil companies such as ESSO and Shell. They control the price at the wholesale level which they call the rack price.

They say they have to charge the rack price at a certain level because they are concerned about product substitution from the United States. In other words, if they price their product too high, independent retailers and others would import gasoline from the United States.

In our consultations we discovered that in theory that is interesting but in actual fact there are the problems of importing gasoline, particularly in eastern Ontario and other parts of Ontario. They are faced with transportation costs, a lack of storage and terminal infrastructure, and a lot of red tape and bureaucracy. In my view one would need at least an 8 cent per litre spread to make it worth

while to import gas from the United States. I think the argument of product substitution is a little weak.

Since 1991 many independents have unfortunately left the Ontario market. There could be a short term benefit for Ontario consumers because of the kind of pricing that goes on in the marketplace. What about the medium and long term? We have some evidence to show what happens in cases like that.

In New Brunswick and Newfoundland where there are very few independents the prices at the pump are among the highest in Canada. What my colleague's bill addresses is referred to as predatory pricing, in other words pricing designed to put others out of business.

There are industry experts who believe that major oil companies are trying to squeeze out the independents. I would just like to cite a study by Bloomberg's which reads:

—major oil companies were going to use price wars, new credit terms, and the strategic closure of service stations and refineries to squeeze independent gasoline retailers out of the market in central Canada.

Another study by ScotiaMcLeod suggested:

To set the stage for a better downstream environment beginning in 1993, it is our opinion that Imperial Oil Ltd. has put a strategy in place in 1992 to discipline the retail markets, with the aim directed at the independents.

Likewise Wood Gundy stated:

Imperial, Shell Canada Ltd. and Petro-Canada Inc. have targeted the country's independent marketers as being their most effective competition and with the current wave of rationalization, are trying to get their cost structure down to the same level as independents, who enjoy a two to four cent per litre advantage over the majors.

That is because of their lower cost structure. They do not have all the overheads to support. I think my colleague's bill addresses very well the question of predatory pricing.

I would now like to talk very briefly about the Competition Act and the competition bureau. Many Canadians have complained to the bureau and the bureau because of the legislation conducts its investigations by seeking meetings among the majors, and even at the local level, where they sit around at Tim Horton's and set prices. That does not have to happen because there are few at that level. They are price leaders and price followers. They do not have to sit around and discuss and decide on prices.

We need some beefing up of the Competition Act and to change the criminal burden to more of a civil burden.

• (1850)

In conclusion I sum up by saying Bill C-235 if passed would protect the independents we need to ensure a competitive marketplace. By ensuring that the integrated oil companies priced their product to independents at the same price they charge their own dealers we would ensure good prices for gasoline in Canada and for Canadians.



*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. Jim Jones (Markham, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to speak to Bill C-235, an act to amend the Competition Act, the protection of those who purchase products from vertically integrated suppliers who compete with them at retail.

That is a long way of saying let us go after the gasoline companies and try to score some easy political points. The problem is that it is not that simple. It is not that easy.

I want to deal with the bill in a thoughtful manner and outline the many serious concerns my party has with it. Canada has been oblivious to the issues addressed by the bill. The Competition Act implemented by the previous Conservative government to replace the Anti-Combines Act deals with the inherent issues of Bill C-235 without making any amendments.

The issues of price discrimination, price maintenance and abuse of dominance are already addressed by the act. Let us deal with the issue of fair pricing first. The problem with the legislation is that it would create an artificial profit margin by gearing pricing to competitors based on any formula that includes retail pricing.

The bill would be creating a floor price below which no one could go. The elimination of the ability to engage in discounting would be a peculiar approach to addressing fair pricing. The result would in fact be higher prices, which certainly is not in the best interest of the Canadian consumer.

The Liberal government has already overburdened small and medium size businesses across the country with outrageous reporting requirements either in the area of sales tax, payroll tax, Statistics Canada or any other number of government bureaucracies or agencies that enforce different degrees of compliance.

Legislators must begin searching for ways to ease the paperwork burden and let Canadian businesses get back to their core services. This would not happen under Bill C-235. In fact the opposite would be the case.

Let us imagine how the government could possibly begin tackling the issue of what constitutes proper wholesale prices, profit margins and marketing expenses of firms. Quite simply it could not be done. We would be creating another level of bureaucracy, an extra burden of government, an enormous enforcement cost.

I am concerned about another implication of the bill. If a vertically integrated company sells only a small portion of its product to independent outlets, what would happen? Will it submit to the burdensome review process it is required to go through in order to change its prices? I suspect it would not. In fact it would be my guess that it would cease selling to competitors at all. This would lead to a very negative impact on the independent retailers that my hon. colleague seeks to champion.

Fundamentally this comes down to whether or not governments should be trying to interfere in those affected industries or allowing market forces to prevail. The fact is that price regulations work well when prices are on the rise, but they do not work well when they are coming down. We would in effect be artificially skewering the marketplace to favour small independent companies over the interest of consumers.

I would like to address something that was raised the last time the bill came before the House on May 27 of this year. At that time the hon. member for Palliser rose to give his support to the bill. In so doing the spectre was raised of the Irving Oil Company. It was as if the mere mention of this bogeyman should be enough to rally support for the bill. While I understand the rabid hatred the NDP harbours toward successful Canadian companies, Irving Oil Company Limited does not sell gasoline to its competitors so it would not be affected by this legislation. That is why facts get in the way of good speeches.

I realize the bill is generic in its wording, but it is clear that it will have a great impact on the retail gas industry. The result would be to abandon market based forces as the proper determinate of gasoline prices and instead move to a cost based formula.

The hon. member who sponsored the bill is well known for his tendency to do battle with oil companies. Motivations aside, I am fearful that the implications to other industries have not been fully thought through. He would not want to inadvertently undermine another industry out of some sort of zealous drive to take on the oil companies.

• (1855)

The final issue I wish to discuss is that of alternatives to the bill. During the last session of debate it was mentioned over and over again that many of the provisions of Bill C-235 already exist in the present Competition Act. They are sections of the Competition Act which relate to abusive dominance and price maintenance. Sections 50.1(c) and 78 on their own without any amendments are currently drafted in a manner which addresses the issues raised by Bill C-235.

Predatory pricing, which is defined as selling products at prices unreasonably low, has the effect of substantially lessening competition or pricing aimed at eliminating or impeding the expansion of a competitor, is a criminal offence under the act as it now stands.

In addition, abusive dominance in situations where substantial lessening of competition results is a civil provision. One of the subsections of that provision deals specifically with the issue of dominance of vertically integrated firms squeezing the profit margin available to non-integrated customers and competing with the suppliers for the purpose of impeding or preventing the customers' entry into or expansion in the market.

*Private Members' Business*

Even without the reassurance that comes from these provisions my hon. colleague should take comfort in the M. J. Ervin report which shows that since 1994 Canada has enjoyed retail gasoline prices that on a pre-tax basis are among the lowest in the world. Whereas the pump price of gasoline is made up of more than 50% excise taxes, maybe the member's time would be better spent lobbying his own government to reduce these if he wants to see a real benefit.

I do not wish to appear to be advocating a laissez-faire approach to industry. However, I prefer to see legislation that creates an environment where businesses can operate and flourish under normal marketing conditions. This is not a component of Bill C-235. In effect it would be shackling the marketplace with a central command approach to economic questions.

The reality is that the Competition Act must be above all else focused on achieving desirable results for our consumers. It should not be used to undermine the legitimate outcome of competition such as low prices.

**Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to make mention of a point for my hon. colleague from Markham. Unless I am wrong or unless he wants to prove me wrong, absolutely no part of the Competition Act addresses the definition or standard of what constitutes predation or predatory activity. Therefore the act is deficient. That is what we are trying to address in the debate and with the bill.

I also want to congratulate the member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge. I suggest again to the member for Markham that he is not known for fighting oil companies. He is known for fighting for consumers. I think his track record in that regard is extremely admirable.

During the last sitting I had the very informative experience of participating in the Liberal caucus committee on gasoline pricing. Members will notice a lot of the speakers from this side shared that experience. Many of the opinions that I have in support of the bill were developed through that process. It was a long and laborious process.

In fact the focus of the bill would seem to be the petroleum industry. I must say that one of the most emotional components of the gasoline pricing committee was the testimonials from independents who were at the brink of collapse or who had collapsed because of declining margins.

In all fairness we are seeing the downside of consolidation in a number of retail sectors. The corner hardware store comes to mind. I honestly felt at the time, as I do now, that something was not working in the case of gasoline retailing. Although this bill has its roots in the petroleum industry, it is a timely debate to have as the forces of globalization and centralization begin to impact virtually

any economic sector with high levels of vertical integration combined with oligopolistic market structure, which what we have in the gasoline-petroleum industry in Canada. We are not only talking about the petroleum industry because deregulation will cause us to have similar concerns and similar debates in the telecommunications industry, the information technology industry, the travel industry, utilities and the financial services sector, just to name a few.

My hon. colleagues talk about the role that taxes have in reducing margins. Taxes in this country are based on per litre, not price. They are a fixed cost. The debate over taxes may be valid but it is not a reason or it is not a contributing factor to forcing independents out of business.

● (1900 )

On the surface this discussion obviously seems to be a classic debate between those who advocate free market and those who advocate government regulation. There are larger issues here that need to be examined.

As hon. members across the way point out, the current federal Competition Act provides for criminal sanctions against persons involved in agreements or actions that unduly lessen competition. The burden of proof in the Competition Act is that predatory pricing and price discrimination must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. In large part because of this burden of proof, very few cases make it through the courts.

The paradox is that although we recognize the seriousness of anti-competitive behaviour by enshrining the offence in the Criminal Code, that high standard as opposed to, as was suggested, a civil code standard make enforcement of the regulations very difficult. It is not always easy to distinguish competitive from anti-competitive practices. There is nothing wrong with tough competition even from a dominant firm, but when its intention is to eliminate competition or prevent entry into or expansion in a market, there could be an abuse of that dominant position.

Why is this bill necessary? Traditional approaches to defining predatory pricing use costs as a measure of intent. In most cases pricing above total average costs results in non-predatory practices. Pricing below average variable cost is likely to be treated as predatory in the absence of some clear justification. If a company is selling off inventory that is perishable, then it is justified in doing that. But it is prices between average variable and average total costs that are the grey area. They do not even get looked at because of the high standard in the Competition Act.

The problem with vertically integrated companies is that the seamless nature of their operations, the womb to tomb continuum that they enjoy makes it very difficult to clearly define and allocate costs at specific points.

*Private Members' Business*

What this amendment does is it takes the focus away from the allusive and historically futile endeavour of trying to prove predation based on costs and puts it on price, the wholesale and retail prices of the supplier in relation to an independent that purchases product from that supplier. What could be clearer? My hon. colleague says that would be impossible. It is hanging on the street. Price we know; price is public.

Why the focus on the petroleum industry? First of all gasoline is not a discretionary purchase for most Canadians. It is a cost of living. We all know that. When the price spikes up, we get the calls. There are few substitutes for gasoline powered automobiles in the market today. Putting my environmental sentiments aside for a moment, the price of gas is an economic issue to most Canadians.

Apart from octane level and a few product variations such as ethanol, there is little if any opportunity for independent retailers to differentiate the product once they purchase it wholesale. They are at the mercy of low brand loyalty. And there are significant barriers to entry.

The notion that the loss of an independent gas retailer is only a slight temporary adjustment and that any attempts by the dominant firms to increase margins will be offset by new entrants, classical economic theory, goes out the window here. The classic self-policing concept of competition does not apply. The current players are simply too big. We need to recognize this concentration and ensure that we protect fair competition at the retail level.

Other countries are also trying to come to grips with these changing market forces. The French government amended its law in 1996 to make predatory pricing an infringement on its own regardless of any issue of dominance. The Americans, the keepers of the capitalist faith, have recognized this risk and have put in place statutory variations of divorce legislation that limit the percentage of retail operations a vertically integrated supplier can own. It is not because they see this as an intervention of the government into a free and competitive market, but as a necessary action to ensure the long term viability of a free and competitive market.

As the pressures of globalization put pressure on companies to grow through mergers, the accompanying concentration makes vertical integration a viable and sensible strategy. In order to protect consumers and promote effective competition, federal legislation must not simply prevent companies from pursuing growth strategies. That growth must come from the effective implementation of a solid marketing strategy and not simply disadvantaging competitors by exploiting proprietary control over essential components of the distribution channel.

In conclusion, this bill will allow the intent of the Competition Act to be enforced by setting a benchmark for predatory practices that is both public and workable.

• (1905 )

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Resuming debate. The hon. member for Cambridge will have six minutes and will be able to carry over another four minutes, but he has six minutes at this time.

**Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to have the opportunity to debate this important bill which was introduced by the member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge.

The Competition Act was designed to promote competition and efficiency in the Canadian marketplace. It sets out a basic code of conduct for businesses in this country and covers criminal offences such as conspiracy, discriminatory and predatory pricing, price maintenance, misleading advertising and deceptive marketing practices.

However based on what I have been hearing from my constituents in Cambridge, the Competition Act is not protecting consumers in the case of the gas industry. A very real concern remains about what has been happening in this sector. In fact these concerns have been growing. There has been much debate over the issue of gasoline pricing. Independent gas retailers and many consumers believe that the major oil companies are using their dominant position in the marketplace to set out prices which adversely affect competition.

During a town hall meeting in my riding of Cambridge, consumers, trucking companies and independent retailers all expressed frustration over fluctuating gas prices. We know that across the country gas prices prior to long weekends and during summer vacations go up and in midweek they go down. Sometimes retail outlets owned by the major companies charge less for their gas than the independent retailers purchase it for but the price mysteriously goes up again.

The major companies say that this practice is because of the low supply of gasoline, production problems and of course the refinery shutdowns. I do not believe that Canadians, including myself, buy that argument. When there is a frost in Florida, we know that the price of oranges does not go up over the weekend.

I was a member of the Liberal committee on gasoline pricing which travelled throughout Canada. Time and time again we heard from independent gasoline retailers how truly difficult it is to stay in business when the supplier they are competing against is the same person who sets the cost at which they are going to receive the supply.

Mr. Speaker, if a supplier wants to increase his market share at your expense or the Canadian taxpayers' expense, it is not hard to believe that the independent retailer will be out of business in a very short time. This is the story of the bully on the block who is bigger and stronger.

*Adjournment Debate*

Many complaints have been filed with the Competition Bureau about unfair practices. Unfortunately we hear from the Competition Bureau that it does not have the tools to resolve these ongoing complaints. We must give the bureau those tools that we can and this bill is doing exactly that.

The holes in the Competition Act have been identified by others. We know that in 1986 the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission recommended that the federal government take steps to determine the limits of appropriate pricing in the specific dual distribution context of the petroleum industry.

The New Brunswick all-party committee also looked into the operation of the petroleum industry. In 1997 it issued a report which stated that the Competition Act has little effect in preventing discriminatory pricing or predatory pricing.

We know from the committee when it was travelling that consumers and independents in New Brunswick and Newfoundland have been squeezed out. Surprise, surprise.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that I have another minute but I could go on and on.

I would urge all members of the House to support this bill.

• (1910)

Again I congratulate the member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge for his tireless work in this area. I urge the House and members to be responsible to their constituents.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

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

### DISABILITY PENSIONS

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on March 27, 1998, I rose in my place to ask the government to review its practices concerning disability benefits. In Bill C-2 introduced at the beginning of this Parliament, the Liberals turned their backs on those living with a disability.

In their program-slashing frenzy, this government attacked our society's most vulnerable members, those living with a disability. The government expects to cut \$1 billion in disability benefits between now and 2005.

I would like to address the appeal process. It takes three to four months for the first-level appeal to be heard. The second stage, the appeal to the review tribunal, takes six months. The third level of appeal, to the appeal board, takes one year.

Let us take the example of one of my constituents, Jean-Marie Doiron. An accident when he was 21 left him in a wheelchair. That was 40 years ago. Jean-Marie worked throughout this period. He did what he could. During the last 14 years, he repaired school textbooks. On turning 60, Jean-Marie decided to apply for the Canada Pension Plan. His doctor decided he should leave the work force because of his handicap eight months after his 60th birthday.

But, because more than six months had elapsed since he had applied to the CPP for disability benefits, he was turned down. Jean-Marie took his appeal to the first level and won. But the government told him it would go to the appeal board.

Jean-Marie has already been waiting one year, and will have to wait one more before his case is heard. There are already several cases like his in the works. It is unbelievable that people are treated this way by the Government of Canada. It is unbelievable that the government goes after the most vulnerable citizens, those who have worked for our country, people like Jean-Marie Doiron, who has been in a wheelchair for the last 40 years and who cannot get CPP benefits, despite all the legislation governing the plan.

I call on the Government of Canada to amend the disability benefit eligibility criteria. In addition, this government should do something about the appeal process so that it does not take Canadians three years to get disability benefits. It is high time that this government demonstrated its commitment to those living with a handicap.

• (1915)

Not content with robbing workers of over \$20 billion, now the federal government is going after the disabled. I would like the government to amend the Canada Pension Plan.

[English]

**Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is very concerned about all issues involving persons with disabilities. We are equally concerned about client service because timely service is one of the fundamental responsibilities of Human Resources Development Canada.

With regard to the length of time to process CPP disability applications, it is important to point out that over the last decade there has been a dramatic increase in the number of applications.

This rise was due to a number of factors, including changes in eligibility rules, referral of cases to us by private insurance companies, as well as some provincial social service departments.

This put a tremendous strain on departmental resources as well as on the CPP review tribunal and the pensions appeals board.

In his 1996 report the auditor general raised concerns about the rapid increase in CPP disability expenditures. As a result, changes to the administration of disability benefits were introduced to ensure that the benefits were granted only to those for whom they were originally intended.

Let me be clear. We are attacking the problem. We have already taken action. We have recruited and trained new staff and we have taken staff from other areas to address the workload. We have moved the first level of appeal to regional centres. This will reduce the time required to obtain correct information from clients.

We are also working with the administration of the CPP review tribunal and the pensions appeals board to improve service. For example, we have increased the number of judges and panel members in order to enable us to hold more hearings and to use a better scheduling system.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** My apologies, but the time has expired for the response.

#### TOBACCO

**Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Thornhill, our new parliamentary secretary to the health minister. As a former minister of the crown in the province of Ontario, I am sure she will do a good job. I am glad to see her there.

There are a few points I want to make in relation to a question I asked the minister before the House rose in June. It had to deal with the 1994 decision by the Government of Canada to reduce taxes on cigarettes. This was the biggest capitulation by the Government of Canada in the history of Canada and led to the largest increase in the number of new smokers in the history of this country.

Why I am concerned about it is that 40,000 Canadians a year die as a direct result of smoking. That is a statistic that can be proven by any measure. It is not an exaggeration. We know 40,000 Canadians a year die from it.

What I suggested the government do, which it has not, is have a three pronged approach to attacking smoking, especially with young Canadians. It has to attack pricing, that is taxation. It has to attack advertising and, most important, there has to be education out there so that young smokers know what is happening.

#### *Adjournment Debate*

One of the interesting things happening and one of the most interesting bills introduced in parliament in recent history is a bill introduced by none other than Senator Colin Kenny, an example of how much the Senate can contribute to the Parliament of Canada when decides to do so.

• (1920 )

What he is suggesting is that we should have a levy of 50 cents per pack on cigarettes. He is calling this a levy because technically he cannot call it a taxation measure. Normally a senator cannot introduce a taxation measure. That 50 cent levy would bring in revenues to the tune of over \$100 million a year.

That \$100 million would be broken down to be spent in the following ways. Some would be used to assist farmers moving out of tobacco crop. Millions would be used to educate young Canadians as to why they should not start smoking. Some of it would be used for the arts and sports programs that now depend on funding from the cigarette manufacturers, which I think is absolutely wrong.

We are asking the government to do something and take some strong measures to combat smoking. It is a big problem. I would love to get into the details of Senator Kenny's bill but I do not have the time now to do that. However, I think it is a positive example of how the government can do something with no cost to the taxpayers.

We are talking about hepatitis C victims and the cost to the taxpayers because of mistakes by the government but here is an example of where the government can do something right at no cost to the taxpayers and it is time it acted and acted very quickly.

**Ms. Elinor Caplan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has had an enviable record in smoking cessation and in its smoking cessation policy. This government is committed to public education. We realize that public support is essential in a civil society if we are to make progress toward our goal of a smoke free society.

Specific to the member's point in question regarding the 1994 tobacco tax reduction, it is important to remember that at that time, as the Prime Minister explained on February 8, 1994, we were dealing with an enormous problem of law enforcement and organized crime.

The problem had become a deep rooted and far reaching national issue of smuggling of contraband tobacco. Action was necessary. The four point national action plan on smuggling was an enforcement crackdown, a reduction in consumer taxes on tobacco; a special surtax on tobacco manufacturer profits and, most significantly, the tobacco demand reduction strategy which was the most ambitious tobacco control initiative in Canada's history. It was designed to counter the impact of the tax reductions.

*Adjournment Debate*

Further, the reduction in Canadian tobacco taxes was clearly stated as a temporary measure. Because of the government's actions since that time in the area of anti-smuggling efforts, the contraband situation has improved.

The Minister of Finance in collaboration with the provinces has introduced three tax increases in provinces where taxes were cut in 1994. In addition, the 40% surtax on the profits of tobacco manufacturers was instituted in 1994 and will remain in place until March 2000.

These tax measures are consistent with the government's desire to increase taxes in a gradual manner to meet our health objectives without creating renewed contraband activity.

Yes, public education, particularly to our young, is important. Pricing is important. Advertising policy is also important. As the member opposite knows, we are moving toward an absolute ban on advertising tobacco products.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.24 p.m.)

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