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(HANSARD)

Friday, October 23, 1998

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 23, 1998

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*English*]

FOREIGN PUBLISHERS ADVERTISING SERVICES ACT

The House resumed from October 22 consideration of the motion that Bill C-55, an act respecting advertising services supplied by foreign periodical publishers, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): In my opinion the nays have it.

Hon. Don Boudria: Madam Speaker, I recognize that five members did not stand. However, there was an understanding that we would have a recorded vote. I think the House would agree that a fifth member was deemed to have stood.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday.

• (1005)

Mr. Bob Kilger: Madam Speaker, on the same matter, there have been discussions with representatives of all parties that the division on the amendment brought forward by the Reform member would take place on Tuesday, October 27, at the end of Government Orders.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this manner?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Pursuant to the Standing Orders, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, October 27, 1998, at the end of Government Orders.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MINT ACT

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.) moved that Bill C-41, an act to amend the Royal Canadian Mint Act and the Currency Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, 10 years ago the legislation governing the mint was amended to allow it to become a full commercial crown corporation. It is now time to review the legislation to bring it up to date, to reflect market realities and to provide the mint with the power to meet the challenges of the future.

Its mandate is to provide Canadians with high quality, cost effective circulation coins while operating profitably. It also manufactures and markets high quality collector coins and foreign circulation coinage.

Indeed, Canadians can be proud of the fact that last year the mint produced one billion coins for 16 different countries. By the end of this year the total will rise to an awesome two billions coins.

This global business, which on average accounts for 70% of the mint's revenue, works to reduce the overall cost of Canadian circulation coinage.

Government Orders

The mint not only covers its costs, but returns a profit to its shareholder, the Government of Canada. Last year that profit reached an admirable \$4.1 million.

I trust that hon. members will agree with me that the Royal Canadian Mint is a source of national pride, providing an essential service to the Canadian economy while creating the beautiful coins that help celebrate proud symbols of our nationhood.

The mint's strategic vision is to be a world leader in minting through people, innovation and quality. The proposed changes to the Royal Canadian Mint Act that we are discussing today are essential for the mint's achievement of this strategic vision.

[Translation]

Let us get into these amendments a little more. To modernize the act, we propose that the process for approving coins be simplified so that the Royal Canadian Mint can meet market needs more quickly. The markets for these coins are extremely competitive and constantly changing.

Investors buy coins of various denominations and degrees of purity. Collectors and people shopping for a gift expect to have a large selection of models, denominations and metals to choose from. In order to keep generating revenues for Canadians, the mint requires a legislative framework allowing it to respond quickly and efficiently, to take advantage of opportunities on the market for coins not intended for circulation.

● (1010)

These are in large part coins made of precious metals to celebrate or commemorate major national events and sold to coin collectors and enthusiasts across Canada and around the world.

Our proposed amendments would give the mint the power to set and change any of the coins' features except their design. It would still be up to the minister responsible for the mint to approve coin design. These amendments would streamline the mint's decision-making process, so that it can stay attuned to the market and continue to be client centred while at the same time retaining control over coin design.

Indeed, coin design would continue to be decided by an elected representative. As I said previously, the mint's mandate is to supply Canadians with circulating coins that are of high quality, cost effective and delivered on time.

The proposed amendments will rationalize the approval process, thus improving the mint's capacity to fulfil its mandate.

I want to assure the House that, with respect to the coins Canadians use on an everyday basis, elected representatives and the minister responsible before this House will continue to have the last word.

[English]

Therefore, I would encourage my colleagues to support this legislation and send it to committee where we can look at it clause by clause and hear witnesses. After a good debate in committee we can come back to the House for a final debate and accelerate the process so the mint can make the necessary decisions in order that Canadians and the rest of the world will continue to enjoy the high quality of the coinage produced by the Royal Canadian Mint.

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise to debate this bill. The hon. minister alluded to the pride that Canadians have in the various minted coins we use and in those coins that are collected by investors and coin collectors. We are all proud of the Canadian coins.

I will address certain aspects of the bill. I will first look at the object of the Canadian mint. Then I will look at the present legislation and the provisions that currently exist for the operation of the mint. Then I will compare those provisions with what the bill is proposing to change.

I draw the attention of the House, for review purposes, to the object of the mint. According to the act that established the Royal Canadian Mint, the object of the mint is "to mint coins in anticipation of profit and other related activities". The act goes on to detail rather specifically exactly what the mint is to do. Its legislative powers are as indicated in the object.

It continues:

In order to carry out this mandate, the Mint may exercise any or all of the following powers:—

We need to look specifically at these powers because they are quite different when the proposed legislative changes are taken into consideration.

They are:

To produce and arrange for the production and the supply of coins of the currency of Canada; to produce coins of the currency of countries other than Canada; to melt, assay and refine gold, silver and other precious metals; to buy and sell gold, silver and other metals; to assay, refine, store and otherwise deal with gold, silver and other metals for the account of Her Majesty and others; to prepare and store shipments of coin, gold, silver and other metals and to move such shipments to or from the Mint; to make medals, plaques and other devices; to borrow or lease precious metals that it requires for the purpose of its operations; to acquire, hold and alienate real property or any interest therein; to make grants in lieu of taxes to any municipality in Canada in amounts not exceeding the taxes that might be levied by that municipality in respect of real property under the administration and control of the Mint if the Mint were not an agent of Her Majesty; and to do all other things that are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objects and the exercise of the power of the Mint.

● (1015)

That is a pretty comprehensive list. The mint has in its corporate plan 1996-2000 indicated rather clearly how it has translated those particular powers into its operation. I would like to read into the record exactly what the mint has said in that report:

Canada's national mint, the Royal Canadian Mint, is one of the world's foremost producers of circulation, collector and bullion investment coinage. It is one of the largest gold refiners in the world. The mint is highly respected, in Canada and internationally, for the high quality and variety of its products and services. Its numismatic and precious metal investment coins, all promoting Canada, are sold in over 60,000 retail outlets worldwide.

Some might wonder what this numismatic business is. Numismatic has to do with coins and with people who collect coins or who invest in coins. It has to do with precious metals that are not in general circulation but that are there for a very special commemorative purpose or some other reason. They are made of special metals and have a value.

The report goes on:

The Royal Canadian Mint is designated a Schedule III-II crown corporation under the Financial Administration Act. The mint reports to parliament through the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

The mint manufactures all of the circulation coinage used in Canada and manages the supporting distribution systems for the Minister of Finance. It also carries out research on coinage demand.

I draw attention to that sentence because what has happened here is going to come up a little later in my speech.

Furthermore, the mint develops proposals to introduce high quality, less costly metals or metal alloys in Canadian coinage in order to reduce costs and improve seigniorage for the Government.

This has to do with the circulation of coins that actually have an intrinsic value lower than their face value, the penny for example. We go on to the nickel, the dime and so on.

The mint is also concerned about the security of supply and price competitiveness of coinage metals used in Canadian coinage.

In recent years the mint's commercial activities have been impacted by intensive international competition, changing investment markets, economic slowdowns and recessions. After consistently producing profits annually from the time of its incorporation in 1969, the mint experienced an operating loss of \$3.475 million in 1994.

The minister told us that in the last year it had a profit. That is good.

In order to address this situation they produced this plan, the turnaround plan. That plan is now operating and, according to the minister's numbers, apparently is working all right.

That is a very interesting development. We now look into exactly what has happened in that turnaround plan and what the government is proposing to do in introducing this new legislation.

The minister told us the purpose of the legislation and as far as the statement went, it was accurate and complete. I think we need to commend the minister for some of the aspects of that statement.

Government Orders

I would now like to read the summary contained in the bill itself:

This enactment amends the Royal Canadian Mint Act to update the terminology for coins in order to reflect the markets served rather than the metals of which the coins are composed.

The amendments simplify the process for issuing coins by giving additional powers to the mint and to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

This is the core of this bill. The mint is given the capacity of a natural person and the power to incorporate subsidiaries and to acquire and dispose of interests in other entities. Other amendments of an administrative nature are also enacted.

It is that central part that we want to draw some attention to right now. As the mint has gone along and looked at the existing legislation, its current interpretation and application of that legislation, it has issued a mission statement.

That mission statement has three parts. First, to provide quality coinage at a reasonable cost to enable the Government of Canada to meet the needs of Canadians.

• (1020)

Second, to manufacture and market on a worldwide basis high quality collector circulation coinage and precious metal investment products and market refinery services.

It is pretty clear that in the coinage part of this operation we are not in a growth industry. It is a mature stable industry. That comment will become a little clearer as to its significance as we move along into examining this bill.

I would now like to look at the provisions of the new bill and read into the record the new powers that are being given to the mint under this act. We are dealing here with section 4(1). Remember what we said the powers of the mint were before. Here are the new powers:

In carrying out its objects, the mint has the rights, powers and privileges and the capacity of a natural person and may in particular

- (a) procure the incorporation, dissolution or amalgamation of subsidiaries and acquire or dispose of any shares in them;
- (b) acquire and dispose of any interest in any entity by any means; and
- (c) generally do all the things that are incidental or conducive to the exercise of its powers with respect to
 - (i) coins of the currency of Canada,
 - (ii) coins of the currency of countries other than Canada,
 - (iii) gold, silver and other metals and,
 - (iv) medals, plaques, tokens and other objects made or partially made of metal.

I do not think it takes a rocket scientist to understand that the powers of the mint have now been expanded very dramatically. We need to ask ourselves questions such as what are these activities

Government Orders

that are incidental to, or that are conducive to the mint's carrying out its activities.

One thing is very clear already. The mint is in the refining business. It is my understanding that the Canadian mint refines more gold than any other refinery in Canada. It is clearly in the business of refining gold.

We need to ask ourselves is it also in the business then of buying and selling metals. Clearly it is. The act is very clear that it may buy and sell metals. But very closely allied to this is the full commodities market. The futures market is a very volatile market. There are people in the business who tend to hedge their positions in order to protect certain prices.

But it also means that the mint has the power, according to this act, to get not only into the business of hedging itself against future price fluctuations but to actually get into the act of participation in that market. Can it now buy or sell futures contracts, for example, not necessarily only to look after its own interests but also to actually declare a profit in simply buying and selling contracts on the futures market?

I do not believe that is the intention but the point is the act allows this kind of activity on the part of the mint. I think that is far too much power because whose money is at risk here? Ultimately it is our money that is at risk.

Let me indicate how significant the hedging program can be. Canada's largest gold producer is Barrick, a Toronto based corporation. This is a report in the *Globe and Mail* October 22. There is a lot of information in here but I will read just one paragraph:

As a result of its gold hedging program, Barrick was able to sell its gold during the third quarter at an average of \$400 an ounce, compared with the market price of \$290 an ounce. During the third quarter of 1997, Barrick sold its gold for \$420 an ounce, compared with the market price of \$324 an ounce.

Barrick has sold forward 10.4 million ounces of gold at an average price of \$400 an ounce.

There is a good example of what the mining corporations are doing in the marketplace and what the hedging program has to do with the futures commodities market. While there are some very positive things for the investors in a company like Barrick there are also advantages to the mint's buying gold on the futures market at a lower price and to guarantee a particular price in the future. There is a speculative element in here as well.

• (1025)

Will the mint be circumscribed in its activities so it does not get into this speculative market?

Why is this significant? It is significant because of the subsequent amendment that happens later in the act. The subsequent amendment is section 20(1):

The mint may, for the attainment of its objects, borrow money from the consolidated revenue fund or any other source, but the total amount outstanding at any time may not exceed 75 million dollars or such greater amount as may be specified in an appropriation act.

We have to be thankful I guess for small mercies. At least it is limited to \$75 million. It was \$50 million. It has now increased by \$25 million which really means that the public treasury of Canada can be attached to the tune of \$75 million. That is our money. That is taxpayer money.

When that is allowed to take place and if the mint can borrow money to get into the buying and selling of precious metals, and it clearly says it may, and if it gets into the futures market it can get into some serious trouble. I would hope the management will not ever do that but the point is the act does not protect the Canadian public from that activity and I think it should do so. It is our money at risk.

It can be argued that it has been able to do that in the past. There is some indication that the mint has borrowed money in the past. The most recent expansion of the stamping plant being added to the mint in Winnipeg is being done with financing to the tune of about \$30 million outside of the Canadian consolidated treasury. While that may be true, and I think it is true because there is an indication that it is so, the fact remains the mint has an indebtedness of \$30 million. If it will need more money it can go to the consolidated treasury fund for whatever money it needs up to \$75 million given the new provisions of the act.

Could the mint get into the mining business itself, in other words buy mining stock? Somebody would say that is a stretch. It is in one sense with the operation of the mint but go back to the powers of the mint and it has all the powers of a natural person.

The interesting thing is that it may acquire and dispose of any interest in any entity by any means, any means as broad as the imagination. One has to be really careful about looking at that and asking what it can get involved in.

I hope that is not the intent. I am sure it is not but nevertheless I think we have to write the act in such a way that there are protections against that kind of thing.

I want to go to the heart of the issue which really has to do with the business of the powers there. I just read a few of them and I want to ask the people of Canada should the Government of Canada be in direct competition or get into an area that private enterprise has demonstrated it can do. There is no doubt that the Canadian mint has to have the exclusive authority to stamp the actual coin with the currency in circulation. It must have that because that is the government's control of the currency operating in Canada. But that has nothing to say with the production of the plating of coins or of stamping coins in the first place. We have at least one

Government Orders

corporation in Canada that has been doing this for a lot longer than the mint.

Should the government own a corporation that can be in direct competition with private enterprise? I am unalterably opposed to anything that the government does that the people can do as well or better. There is clear evidence that they can do so. What is some of the evidence?

First, right now before the courts of Canada there is a suit charging the mint with infringing on the patents that are held by the corporation we mentioned, Westaim. That suit is currently alive and unfortunately I am unable to go into the details of the suit. The fact remains there is a patent that is being infringed upon, at least that is what the contest is, by the mint which is owned by private enterprise.

● (1030)

If we look at that sort of suit that is going on in the courts, we look at the balance of powers that exist in this court case now. All the power of the government and all the resources of the government are now pitted against one little corporation. It is not fair. It is an unbalanced situation. Why should government or a corporation of the government ever get into the position of stealing something from another company that is protected by a patent, by the legislation that the government itself has.

Canada can be proud of the number of innovative ideas that have come from scientists. The National Research Council for example has all kinds of patents which have developed and have advanced the technology and have advanced the science of the world. We can be proud of those kinds of things.

Now one of these companies has developed one of those patents and lo and behold one of the crown corporations says "That is mine now". It is not fair. It should not happen. We will go no further on this but it is very important that we recognize these things.

The second issue is whether there is a need for more coin stamping capacity in Canada. As I stand here today there is reason to believe with considerable confidence that there is right now a 30% overcapacity in the generation of coins to be engraved officially by governments. That includes the current demand of the Eurocoin.

When the Eurocoin demand comes out, and we know what the problem is, that causes an upward spike in the demand. When that disappears that overcapacity will increase beyond the 30% that exists at the present time. Yet the mint is expanding in a market that is adequately served at the present time. Why? The argument is that it is a business decision.

It may be a business decision but it looks to me that it is a lousy business decision because something is going to happen. Either the

mint is going to have trouble or this other company is going to be in trouble or they are both going to be in trouble.

We cannot expect a company to succeed and profit when in fact there is an overcapacity. Somewhere along the line there has to be a balance between the supply and the demand that is out there. In fact we get to the point where we ask ourselves, who is in charge here? Is the minister in charge? Is the government in charge? Or is it the mint that is in charge?

Who made the decision to build this plant and add to the capacity of the mint in Winnipeg? Was that done by the minister? Was it done by the government? Was it done by the finance minister? Or was it done by the bureaucrats at the mint? We do not know. It is not clear at this point. These are the kinds of questions that must be answered before we agree to this particular change in the legislation.

It is clear that as the powers of the mint are expanded, and I have just indicated how much they are being expanded, that the mint can indeed thumb its nose so to speak at the government or at the minister and say "This is what we are going to do because we have the powers of a natural person".

We need to go beyond this. We need to ask ourselves how successful crown corporations have been.

We cannot help but look at Petrofina and now Petro-Canada and the cost that was to the taxpayer and how efficiently that was run. Canadian National Railways became a private corporation recently. It is now starting to make money. It did not before. It was a drain on the public treasury. Canada Post has had a lot of difficulty in its labour relations which still are not completely settled. I have to commend the minister on what is happening now with the dispute with the franchises and Canada Post. There is progress being made, but it is not complete.

We really have to ask ourselves what is the best relationship. We need to move ahead with positive aggression. We need to move ahead with balance and we need to move ahead with fairness.

There are specific concerns in this bill which I have illustrated.

● (1035)

In conclusion I would simply remind members that the powers granted to the mint are too broad. The exposure to risk by the expanded powers to the Canadian taxpayer and to the Canadian treasury should be circumscribed at least. It is to \$75 million but it is too high. The government should never do things that individuals can do as well or better themselves. The people can do it and we should not be in that kind of business to provide competition for them.

The bill needs to be amended. There are some housekeeping elements in the bill that the minister has alluded to which I think

Government Orders

we need to support. In fact they need to go ahead. However, there are other aspects of the bill that should be looked at very seriously and amended to come into focus so we can have strong private enterprise in the country and at the same time within a framework that is clearly guided by government principles and rules which make it possible for private enterprise to be strong, profitable and which reward innovation and entrepreneurship.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my intervention on Bill C-41, the purpose of which is to amend the Royal Canadian Mint Act and the Currency Act, by stating that my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois and myself do not disapprove of its ultimate objective, which is to update and enhance the flexibility of the Royal Canadian Mint Act. This is a legitimate objective, and one that is hard to oppose.

We must, however, ensure that amending the act to that end does not create conditions which might bring with them other problems that are far more serious than those we wish to solve. On reading the bill as introduced, one is justified in having concerns about certain proposed amendments to the Royal Canadian Mint Act and the Currency Act.

When we speak of money, whether its issue or its circulation, confidence between the partners is essential. That confidence is born out of the assurance that each partner has of the total honesty of the other.

The very mission of the Royal Canadian Mint requires this institution to have a spotless image and reputation, both in fact and in appearance. That is why the present legislation contains some very clear provisions requiring the administrators of the Royal Canadian Mint not to place themselves in a position of real or apparent conflict of interest.

These strict prohibitions are normal and necessary, because the very image and interests of the Royal Canadian Mint, and of Canada as well, depend on it. They have certainly proven useful, because the Royal Canadian Mint has, until now, always enjoyed a solid reputation for integrity. Unfortunately, I believe most sincerely that, if we do not amend some of the clauses of Bill C-41, we are putting that reputation at risk.

As it now stands, Bill C-41 weakens the legal framework that is in place to prevent any conflict of interest at the Mint. By authorizing the Mint to create subsidiaries, the administrators of which would not be held to the same arm's length requirements, we are allowing it to circumvent the law and we are creating a dangerous opening.

Unless it is amended, the bill is nothing short of an open invitation to patronage and dubious operations. Indeed, clause 2 amends the Royal Canadian Mint Act in a significant way, by

allowing the Mint, in carrying out its objects, to procure the incorporation, dissolution or amalgamation of subsidiaries and acquire or dispose of any shares in them; to acquire and dispose of any interest in any entity by any means; and generally do all things that are incidental or conducive to the exercise of its powers with respect to coins of the currency of Canada, coins of the currency of countries other than Canada, gold, silver and other metals, and medals, plaques, tokens and other objects made or partially made of metal.

• (1040)

My colleagues from the Bloc Québécois and myself support the government's will to modernize the Royal Canadian Mint Act to make this institution more functional. However, it is obvious that some changes must be made to Bill C-41, otherwise its current wording could lead to illicit operations, which is definitely not the objective pursued.

Clause 2 is a fundamental provision of the bill, since it allows the Royal Canadian Mint, in carrying out its objects, to create subsidiaries, to sell any shares in them to anyone, and to buy back such shares from anyone.

Another power the Mint will acquire, still under the heading of carrying out its objectives, is that of buying or selling shares or interests in listed and unlisted companies, anywhere in the world. Finally, this bill will give the Royal Canadian Mint the power to amalgamate its own subsidiaries with each other or with other companies.

Clearly, clause 2 as written is an invitation to patronage and dubious dealings and its scope must be reined in.

The real danger lies in the expression "in carrying out its objects" in clause 4 of the bill, referring to the Mint's power to buy, sell, borrow, lease, store and refine gold, silver and other precious and non-precious metals.

If Bill C-41 is passed, it would mean that each of these operations could be performed by one company, a subsidiary, some, a majority or all of whose shares would not be owned by the Royal Canadian Mint.

Clearly, this government institution would have the power to offload an important part of its responsibilities, to the benefit of a private company over which Canada's elected representatives, and therefore the public, would have no control. The creation of such private subsidiaries, with power to buy, sell and transform assets, presenting a highly speculative dimension that would be very profitable in the wrong hands, makes no sense whatsoever.

The opening provided by Bill C-41 provides too many opportunities for criminals specialized in bribery and patronage, so many that there is no doubt whatsoever, unless clause 2 is modified to

limit its scope, that there will be a scandal, sooner or later, which will cast a shadow on the credibility of the Royal Canadian Mint.

If we pass clause 2 of Bill C-41 without adding the necessary limitations, the Parliament of Canada is merely paving the way for certain criminals who specialize in dodgy economic dealings. Let me tell you today that, sooner or later, this government will live to regret it.

There is absolutely no way we can empower the Royal Canadian Mint to hand over to whomever it wishes such important responsibilities as the purchase, sale, borrowing, leasing, storage and refining of gold or other precious metals, because the possibilities of conflict of interest and corruption are so obvious.

Let us take the example of the Mint's frequent mandate of striking gold coinage for other countries.

• (1045)

In carrying out its objects and under clause 2 of Bill C-41, the Royal Mint, required to buy the gold necessary to strike coins ordered by other countries, may incorporate a private subsidiary anywhere in the world to do so.

In all likelihood, this subsidiary would want to find gold at the lowest possible price before making its purchase. It would then strike the coins requested and sell them while the value of the gold market is on the rise and therefore very profitable for the private company and all the more so for the shareholders.

We can continue with this example by imagining that the private subsidiary buys the gold at \$200 an ounce in 2001, reselling it transformed into collectors' coins in 2003 when the value of gold has risen to \$300 an ounce. The company would therefore record significant profits, thereby increasing the value of the stock of the subsidiary created with the blessing of the Royal Canadian Mint and so much profit for the subsidiary shareholders.

Who would the shareholders be? What private or corporate individuals would benefit from this measure and this manna? The answers to this question are particularly important, since Bill C-41, we must not forget, empowers the mint to sell shares in its subsidiary to those it wishes and at a price of its choosing.

Ultimately, there is nothing to prevent the mint from selling shares in its subsidiary to friends or friends of friends through numbered companies or not. If this is not a path to patronage or other dubious activities, I would like to know what it is.

Far be it from me to suggest that such a door be opened voluntarily. However, consciously or unconsciously, the end is the same. My colleagues will not doubt agree with me that, in this areas as in many others, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Prevention will necessitate limiting the scope of clause 2 of Bill C-41 to prevent conflicts of interest and the unjustified and undue

Government Orders

enrichment of individuals in latent or apparent conflict of interest because of the mint's power to create private subsidiaries.

To do so, we must abandon the idea of giving the Royal Mint the power to create private subsidiaries afforded it in Bill C-41. If indeed it were worthwhile for the Royal Canadian Mint to assign some of its responsibilities to its subsidiaries, we should make sure these subsidiaries are above suspicion.

The best way to do this is by amending Bill C-41 to exclude any possibility that a subsidiary be established by private interests. The legislation must provide that any new subsidiary of the Royal Canadian Mint should be a legally incorporated, recognized national or international body such as a chartered bank.

If we want the Royal Canadian Mint to remain highly credible and reputable and prevent its reputation from being tarnished by second-rate subsidiaries, it goes without saying that potential contenders should be subject to certain restrictions.

The probity of the Royal Canadian Mint is beyond price and, in order to preserve it, Bill C-41 must be amended to ensure that the executives of any potential subsidiary care as much about the probity of their own organization.

• (1050)

Following the same logic, it appears essential to me that Bill C-41 be amended to have the provisions dealing with real or apparent conflict of interest for mint directors also apply to the directors of its subsidiaries, which is unfortunately not the case at present.

I will conclude by reminding the House that my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois and I do not disagree with the objective of modernizing the Royal Canadian Mint Act and making it more functional. But unless the necessary amendments are made to Bill C-41 to remedy a number of obvious flaws mentioned earlier, we will not be able to support it because the loopholes we have identified in the legislation would have far too serious consequences.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the NDP I would like to make a few comments about Bill C-41. I will begin by saying, somewhat in the same vein as the spokesperson for the Bloc Québécois, that we are not opposed to the bill in a certain sense but we have some concerns which I would like to put on record.

Before I do so, having listened to the hon. member from the Reform Party speak to the bill, I would like to say that whatever concerns we have about the bill we certainly do not share the general critique and opposition of the Reform Party to the very existence of crown corporations that I heard coming from the hon. member from the Reform Party.

S. O. 31

It was unfortunate to hear the member from the Reform Party cite the privatization of CN as a good thing. I wonder whether the 3,000 people who were just laid off by CN to increase CN shareholder value share the views of the hon. member from the Reform Party that the privatization of CN and the behaviour that comes from privatization, for example the fixation with increasing and maintaining shareholder value at the expense of employees, at the expense of communities and at the expense of the country's transportation infrastructure. I wonder if they share the hon. member's approval of that kind of behaviour on the part of CN.

It would seem to me that at one point when CN was a crown corporation it was not tearing up rail lines through western Canada, the very rail lines that some of the member's colleagues come to the defence of and say "Please don't tear up those rail lines. Our community needs those rail lines". One of the reasons they are being torn up is that CN no longer feels it has a mandate or a responsibility to do things in the interest of prairie communities or the infrastructure in western Canada. I would certainly ask the hon. member from the Reform Party to rethink his position about the value of privatization.

With respect to Bill C-41, there are elements of the bill which have to do with modernizing the role of the mint. There are elements of the bill which are purely of a housekeeping nature. We have some concerns, some of which have already been mentioned.

On the whole notion that the mint would be able to create these subsidiaries, I think the member from the Bloc, and perhaps the Reform Party member, rightly pointed out that this merits more examination in committee as to what would be the limits to these subsidiaries, what parameters would they be instructed to operate within, and what would be their nature.

How could we amend the legislation so as to prevent, as the member from the Bloc rightly pointed out, any opportunity being created for temptation to corrupt, patronage or any other activity that might bring into disrepute the reputation of the mint which has a sterling, no pun intended, reputation and certainly one which my colleagues and I would like to preserve.

• (1055)

The question of the subsidiaries needs to be looked at. Perhaps some helpful amendments to clause 2 would be in order. The whole question of conflict of interest has already been raised. How can the bill either be amended or extended, have things added to it which would deal with the possibilities of conflict of interest in the new regime the government is setting up?

The question of the 15 day notice period should be looked at if the mint is about to do something different. I believe it is only with circulating coins. I do not think 15 days is adequate. Fifteen days is like a blink of an eye in terms of the ability of the public to know what is going on, to have discussions within and among political

parties, and to get feedback from the business community as to what the effect of any change in a circulated coin might be.

It is very inadequate to say that parliament only requires a 15 day notice and then the government could proceed through order in council. It is certainly something the committee should look at. It is just not enough time. We all know, from being around here, that if we want the people who are to be affected by any such change to have an opportunity for input that 15 days is simply not enough.

I would like to say that we certainly do not share the aversion of my Reform Party colleagues for the expansion of the mint in Winnipeg. We do not see the expansion of the mint and of this activity in the public sector as the kind of evil thing the Reform Party seems to behold it as.

I am familiar with the work of the mint in Winnipeg. It is not in my riding but it is close by. The locating of the new coin plating plant there and the expansion of that facility is not something we are opposed to, but we want all this to be done in a way that does not create opportunities for scandals and mistakes down the line which might eventually call into question either the reputation or the existence of the mint. At the same time as we do not share the Reform Party objection to crown corporations, we do not want to see the activities of this crown corporation privatized in a different way through the creation of these subsidiaries.

There is more than one way to privatize. I want to say to the minister that we are not exactly convinced there is no hidden agenda. Let us get the bill into committee and have a look at these things to see if we can improve it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): We will now proceed to Statements by Members. The hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona will have about 12 minutes in debate plus questions and comments after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

EMILY STOWE

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October is Women's History Month. This year's theme is entrepreneurship and unpaid work. In honour of this celebration my constituents and I want to recognize the achievements of Emily Stowe, an entrepreneur pioneer who played a landmark role in our history.

She was born in Upper Canada in 1831. Although it was a time when employment opportunities for women were very limited, she became a teacher, a doctor, a wife, a mother and a leader.

In 1863 her husband contracted tuberculosis and she sought medical training. The Toronto School of Medicine did not accept women so Emily had to attend a medical school in the U.S.A. When she returned to Toronto, Dr. Stowe became the first woman in Canada to openly practise medicine.

She was committed to equality, was an advocate for women and a founding member of the Canadian Women's Suffragette Association. Her remarkable achievements are recognized in Scarborough at the Emily Stowe Shelter for Women, which provides a home for women and children at risk.

● (1100)

Emily Stowe was indeed a pioneer and entrepreneur and an inspiration in the movement for women's equality which continues to this day.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, victims of sexual abuse frequently suffer for the rest of their lives as a result of the insidious, despicable acts perpetrated on them by their attackers. The last thing victims want to do is to shed public light on their darkest of experiences.

This week I had the honour of once again meeting Sheldon Kennedy. Sheldon has demonstrated an extraordinary amount of courage in speaking out against his attacker and this cancerous criminal activity which impacts on our youngsters.

At the October 21 parole hearing the government let Sheldon Kennedy and every other victim of sexual abuse down. Instead of punishing the pedophile who attacked Sheldon the government chose to grant him parole after a mere 20 months in jail.

Sheldon will carry the scars of the abuse for the rest of his life. His attacker will be a free man in six months. There is, however, a positive side to this story. Sheldon can hold his head high knowing he did the right thing. He has taken a stand against this terrible crime so others do not have to suffer. Canada can be proud of Sheldon Kennedy.

* * *

NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WEEK

Mr. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is in the middle of celebrating National Science and Technology Week. I point out that Canada has made a commitment to become the world's smartest natural resources

developer, the most high tech, the most environmentally friendly, the most socially responsible and indeed the most productive.

Natural Resources Canada provides the scientific knowledge to position Canada as a world leader in wise management of our natural resources. With industrial, university and government partners it also carries out research to exploit new technologies, products and services.

During National Science and Technology Week, Natural Resources Canada makes a special effort to open its doors to the community, particularly to students to communicate the importance of science and technology in the natural resources sector.

More and more Canadians look to science and technology to improve their lives and to address important issues such as climate change.

* * *

SPACE

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in these days of technological achievement countries are racing to open new frontiers. The sky is no longer the limit. Thousands of satellites circulate around our planet and thousands of others are lost in space. Since the 1960s there have been many space missions, some of which were not completed.

Members may remember in 1978 when a Russian spy satellite containing 100 pounds of uranium plunged through the atmosphere over the Northwest Territories. Members may also remember in 1996 when part of a Russian space probe plunged into the Pacific ocean. At this very moment thousands of pieces of broken space equipment are circulating above us with many more to come.

With 434 days to the new millennium Canada should take the lead and co-ordinate efforts with other interested countries to clean up space. We have over 5,000 intelligent experts who work in space and related industries. These men and women are the best in the world. With their support I am confident we can pass on to our children an even better future.

* * *

GASOLINE

Mr. Ian Murray (Lanark—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today in Toronto the federal government announced it will introduce regulations to reduce the level of sulphur in the gasoline sold in Canada. Scientists agree that sulphur causes emissions which contribute to air pollution.

In a report released last summer the Ontario Medical Association revealed that 1,800 people die prematurely in Ontario each year as a result of air pollution. Many more get sick and require hospitalization.

S. O. 31

Over a period of 20 years it is estimated that low sulphur gasoline would prevent 2,100 premature deaths, 93,000 cases of bronchitis in children, 5 million other health related incidents such as asthma attacks and 11 million acute respiratory symptoms such as severe coughs and new cases of pneumonia and croup.

The facts are in. The evidence is clear. The initiative that was announced today will improve the quality of the air Canadians breathe and will help Canadians enjoy healthier lives.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if the finance minister needed any more evidence that there exists a desperate need for tax relief in this country, it was delivered by the Centre for Social Justice.

The recently released study highlighted some very interesting points. One wonders how the minister responds to the fact that working class Canadian families are working harder than they did 10 years ago but have less to show for their extra efforts.

What about the fact that between 1989 and 1996 the average Canadian family saw its income decline by over \$4,000. Is this the type of society we want to live in and pass on to our children? A tax break for middle and lower income Canadians is needed immediately.

• (1105)

This would be an important first step toward reducing the poverty which currently exists.

My advice to the finance minister is to read the report and go back to the drawing board.

* * *

[Translation]

FRANCOPHONE GAMES

Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the 14th to the 24th of July 2001, Canada will welcome more than 3,000 international performers and athletes to the Ottawa-Hull region, for the IV Francophone Games.

The Francophone Games are a unique international sports and cultural event open to the citizens of the 49 countries that are part of La Francophonie. Athletes from several nations representing various cultures and speaking different languages will get together in a friendly spirit of competition and will have an opportunity to display their artistic and athletic talents.

[English]

I encourage all members of the House to share in this excitement. When crossing the interprovincial bridge connecting Ottawa to Hull look up and see the countdown panel. As of today it is 996 days away.

[Translation]

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in early September, the United Nations Development Program submitted its world report on human development. This report, which used to serve as a political smoke screen to hide a country's social reality, will now have to be viewed as an indispensable tool to expose false political claims.

Indeed, the report indicates that the gap between rich and poor is a contemporary reality. It clearly states that, in the industrialized countries, it remains necessary to eradicate poverty and meet the basic needs of everyone. In fact, it is a shame that these objectives have still not been achieved in the richest countries.

Incidentally, the UN tells us that, when it comes to human poverty, Canada ranks 10th out of the 17 OECD members. There are more people living below the poverty line in Canada than in the Scandinavian countries, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, France and Italy.

A study released this week confirms that this trend is continuing, in spite of the government's rhetoric. It is high time the government increased social transfers and improved the employment insurance program.

* * *

THE LATE JEAN RAFA

Mr. Jacques Saada (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the singer Jean Rafa, of *Nuits de Montréal* fame, died yesterday at the age of 88. An artist and entertainer, Mr. Rafa had hosted many variety broadcasts since coming to Quebec in 1948.

Quebeckers adopted him as one of their own, and it was he who was responsible for popularizing pétanque in the province. But he was best known for his infectious joie de vivre and as a popular host on numerous television shows. He also went on many tours of Quebec.

In short, we will treasure wonderful memories of this artist and singer, who enchanted almost everyone with his zest for life and his love of Quebec, a love that I share.

* * *

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food appeared before the standing committee yesterday. This was an opportunity for him to begin to address the serious concerns of farmers today. He failed to do so.

The minister could offer no assurances to farmers that he will immediately deal with the current farm income crisis. Further-

more, he offered no guarantees to producers of grain or livestock that he has a plan to address our competitors' unfair subsidies.

The minister is looking the other way as the Europeans and Americans increase their subsidies. New subsidies further drive down world prices while ensuring that our competitors' farmers will survive the commodity price collapse.

The next budget must contain provisions that will help our farmers through the crisis. It is very disturbing that the minister has not offered assurances that he will stand up for them within cabinet. All the minister has to offer is more meetings and more talk.

* * *

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my absolute disbelief of the actions of the leader of the Reform Party during the 1995 referendum.

It has been revealed that while the federal government along with ordinary Canadians from across our country were fighting tooth and nail to keep our country together, the Reform leader was scheming to take advantage of a separatist win.

United States Ambassador James Blanchard recently revealed that the Reform leader approached him and other foreign governments with a plan to dismantle Canada after supposedly a separatist victory. This is inexcusable.

It was the Reform Party that was so indignant when it learned of the former Bloc Québécois member's letter campaign to solicit Canadian armed forces to join a new Quebec. What a hypocrisy. In front of the cameras it denounces a separatist cause but behind the scenes it works to undermine the federal government's effort to keep the country together.

The Reform leader's thirst for power seems to have no boundaries, not even the boundaries called Canada. Shame on him.

* * *

• (1110)

AIR ATLANTIC

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow will be a sad day in aviation history in Canada as Air Atlantic shuts its doors and 525 of the finest people working in the airline industry from Atlantic Canada will lose their jobs.

These employees provided superb customer service and are responsible for Air Atlantic's impeccable safety record. What is the response from this federal government? The Minister of Labour turns himself into the minister of business and grants International Marine Products a waiver from the Canada Labour Code. This is

S. O. 31

the Liberal government's slap in the face to hardworking and dedicated employees.

As a former airline employee for over 18 years, and behalf of all New Democrats across this country, I would like to wish the outstanding employees and all their families all the best in their future endeavours.

* * *

[Translation]

ELECTION IN QUEBEC

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we recently learned that the Minister of Finance was going to campaign door-to-door to help out Jean Charest during the next election campaign in Quebec.

That is all very fine and well, but the Minister of Finance probably now feels he must explain to the public why the same Quebecers he advised not to elect a Charest government at the federal level last year should now elect one today. Unless the answer can be found on last Monday's political satire program *La fin du monde est à 7 heures*.

That was how we found out the Liberal Party of Quebec is looking for greenery to decorate its convention hall. The Liberal Party of Quebec even paid for the travel and meals of so-called supporters willing to cheer loudly for Mr. Charest in front of the television cameras. Perhaps the Minister of Finance would like his own Liberalmobile with unlimited mileage to make the trip to Old Orchard Beach to meet the production team of *La fin du monde*, which is enjoying the Liberal Party's generosity.

The only distressing thing for the minister in all this is that the Liberal Party of Quebec now seems to prefer canvassing with Mike Harris's Conservatives, rather than with members of the federal Liberal Party.

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[English]

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October is Women's History Month, an opportunity for Canadians from coast to coast to honour women whose efforts have made a difference in our society.

One of my constituents, Mrs. Claire Heggveit of Nepean, is a woman who has dedicated her life and work to the principle of equality.

Earlier this week Mrs. Heggveit was one of five women honoured with the 1998 Persons Case Award which recognizes outstanding contributions toward promoting equality for women in Canada.

Oral Questions

As an economist, she was vital in developing a statistical framework during the 1960s and 1970s which aided the federal government in assessing the quality of women's health and socioeconomic status. She also completed a Canadian survey for the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the first national focus on family planning, abortion and divorce.

All Canadians owe a debt of gratitude to women like Mrs. Heggveit who have helped move this country along the road to true equality.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, an emergency debate was held this week in the Nova Scotia legislature to debate the crisis faced by Nova Scotia farmers who have suffered their second consecutive severe summer drought.

The summer of 1997 was the driest growing season in nearly 40 years and 1998 has been even worse. The effects of the drought are extensive, including reduced milk production, reduced apple, vegetable, berry and potato crops. Higher feed crops are now threatening our beef industry.

The economic hardship for farmers is extraordinarily serious. Many will soon be on the verge of bankruptcy. Federal support programs like NISA are simply not meeting the needs of Atlantic Canadian farmers in crisis. Immediate financial assistance is essential to prevent many from going out of business.

This is no time for finger pointing between federal and provincial governments. Both levels of government must respond immediately to the crisis facing the Nova Scotia agricultural industry.

I urge this government to immediately assist these farmers in crisis.

* * *

KICK DRUGS OUT OF CANADA

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today it is my pleasure to inform colleagues about a truly good news story.

Patterned after and with the approval of a successful program in the United States, a pilot project has been launched in my hometown. Kick Drugs Out of America was the brainchild of Hollywood legend and martial arts superstar Chuck Norris. His dream was to create a drug prevention foundation aimed at America's youth. That dream became a reality eight years ago and now Darrell Marsh from Fort St. John has brought the vision north.

By teaching respect for others, instilling self-discipline and motivation, setting and achieving goals, building self-esteem and

developing courage, Kick Drugs Out of Canada will better equip students to make the right choices.

Those children identified at risk and enrolled in this community sponsored initiative will develop the values and skills necessary to combat the peer pressure which all too often would push them into a life of drugs, crime and violence, and it will not cost the government one red cent.

* * *

● (1115)

SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, five years ago the baby daughter of John and Cory Rossiter went to sleep in her crib and never woke up. Thirty years ago Cathy Loucks also lost her baby to sudden infant death syndrome. These three have now re-established the Ottawa-Carleton chapter of the Canadian SIDS Foundation.

At their fundraiser last night we were able to celebrate that the Back to Sleep campaign of the foundation has cut infant deaths from SIDS by over 40% in Canada. But much more needs to be done to increase awareness and knowledge about this silent killer that takes the lives of more than 200 well cared for, healthy children every year.

I congratulate and thank these brave parents for turning their pain into the hope for other parents that they may avoid the tragedy of SIDS.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

APEC INQUIRY

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today a Vancouver newspaper reported that APEC commission chairman Gerald Morin was overheard in a Prince Albert casino saying that the RCMP would take the fall for APEC. Apparently he made his judgment even before the commission hearings started.

Will the Prime Minister end this fiasco and strike a new independent judicial inquiry to look into the entire APEC affair, including the Prime Minister's own personal involvement?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that at 8.30 a.m. Vancouver time, which is 11.30 a.m. our time, the commission will make a statement about the matter which has been touched on in the Vancouver *Sun* article. I think we should wait and see what that statement is.

In the meantime I want to reiterate that the commission has been set up by legislation passed by this parliament. This government has no authority under that legislation to direct the internal

Oral Questions

management of the commission or how it carries out its work. It is up to the commission to hold its hearings and decide how to carry them out.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, that is utter nonsense and the Deputy Prime Minister knows it.

The Prime Minister has tried to scuttle the APEC investigation from day one. He refuses to answer questions in parliament. He refuses to testify before the commission. His gossipy solicitor general publicly said that the RCMP would take the fall for the Liberals. He paid for his lawyers but not the students' lawyers. He is withholding key evidence, including police audiotapes. And now reportedly, the commission chairman himself has scuttled things yet again.

We do not need to wait. When will he strike a new independent judicial inquiry?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the premise of the hon. member's question is totally wrong. The Prime Minister has not withheld any audiotapes. The Prime Minister has not tried to scuttle the commission.

We want to see the commission do its work. Senior representatives of the Prime Minister's office are ready to testify before the commission. The commission is an independent body as set up by this parliament.

Why does the hon. member not want to let the commission do its work?

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the so-called independent commission is not going to be able to do its work. It is not going to be able to get to the bottom of this.

It is unbelievable to see the lengths to which this government will go to cover up this embarrassing situation. The Prime Minister's office directed the pepper spraying of innocent students and then he tried to cover it up. Then he tried to cover up the cover-up with this toothless RCMP commission. Since that did not work, now he is trying to cover everything up.

Reform asked for an independent inquiry as long ago as September 23, exactly one month ago. I ask again, will this government restore public trust and strike—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to reject the unwarranted and inaccurate premises of the hon. member's question.

This commission as set up by this parliament is independent of the government. It is at arm's length from it. In fact if a commission was set up as demanded by the hon. member, it would be set up by this government which would set its terms of reference and

appoint its members. Whereas the commission is set up for a permanent period and it decides whether to hold its inquiry and its own terms of reference.

Why does the hon. member not accept the independence of the commission and let it do its work and not try to sabotage that work through unwarranted—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The hon. member for Dewdney—Alouette.

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the independence of this inquiry was put in jeopardy a long time ago by the solicitor general and by the Prime Minister's office.

Gerald Morin was overheard prejudging the APEC inquiry and the government has filed a complaint about bias. The solicitor general was heard doing exactly the same thing and it was business as usual.

Why the double standard? With the solicitor general's loose lips nothing happens, and then with Gerald Morin's everything grinds to a halt. Why the double standard?

• (1120)

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no double standard here. The solicitor general is not a member of the commission. He is not a member of the panel. He has no authority under the act passed by this parliament to direct the commission. He is at arm's length from it.

Concerning the allegations about Mr. Morin, we will know more about that once the commission makes its statement at 11:30 a.m. Why do we not wait to see what is said and whether the hon. member has some basis for his claims. He has no basis for them now.

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the process is in jeopardy and has been from the start because of the solicitor general's comments. Now we hear the commissioner saying exactly the same kinds of things.

It was business as usual when the solicitor general, the boss of this whole inquiry, went forward and said those damaging things. Now the process has ground to a halt. There is a double standard. Why the double standard?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, why can the hon. member not at least amend his question in the light of my answer?

There is no double standard. The solicitor general is not a member of the commission. He is not part of the inquiry. He cannot direct the inquiry.

As far as the allegations about Mr. Morin in the press today are concerned, let us hear whether or not they are substantiated once we have the statement of the commission later this morning.

Oral Questions

In any event, whatever the statement is, it does not change the fact that this government has not been given the authority by parliament to direct the work of the commission. It is independent. It is at arm's length from the government.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

We learn that the chair of the "Peppergate" commission has apparently turned out to be as chatty as the Solicitor General and has also prejudged the outcome of his own investigation even before it has begun. In this case, it was not on a plane, but in a casino.

Could the Deputy Prime Minister confirm that the government learned in October that Mr. Morin was blabbing last March?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we will have to await the statement by the commission, which will be made within half an hour. Once the statement has been made public, it will be easier to comment on the matter in detail.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this really feels like a circus.

What is behind these sudden revelations of Mr. Morin's blabbing.

Are we to understand that the government is preparing to use Mr. Morin as a scapegoat to mask the mistakes made by the Prime Minister and his Solicitor General?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not our intention to hide the facts in this matter. The circus atmosphere is the hon. member's creation and she should be criticized for creating this atmosphere, which is hindering the work of the commission.

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government is turning itself into an object of ridicule.

After the Solicitor General's blabbing, the Prime Minister's sophisticated remarks on the respective merits of baseball bats and pepper spray, and the government's refusal to pay the students' legal fees, it would now appear that the commission's chair is as chatty as the Solicitor General. This is turning into a farce.

When will the government finally admit that no one believes it any more when it says that the commission has all the means and the credibility necessary to shed light on what really happened in Vancouver?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for me to comment on the hon. member's allegations before the commission issues its statement.

Once this statement is released, it will be easier for us, on both sides of the House, to make comments.

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the Deputy Prime Minister agree that it is high time a different approach was used and the whole matter put into the hands of a proper public commission of inquiry with full powers, so we can finally get to the bottom of the Liberal Peppergate scandal?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of the hon. member's question. There is no Liberal scandal. We want to do things properly in this matter.

I must add that, while criticizing the government, the member is asking the same government to set up a commission, appoint its members and determine its mandate. That is a double standard.

• (1125)

[*English*]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the chair of the RCMP Public Complaints Commission has apparently prejudged the outcome of the APEC inquiry. If confirmed, he has no choice but to resign. In the case of the solicitor general he has clearly prejudged the inquiry outcome and he has no choice but to resign.

When will the Prime Minister do the right thing? When will he fire the solicitor general?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I suggest the leader of the NDP not just read her scripted question but pay attention to my answer.

The solicitor general is not part of the commission. He is not a member of the commission. He did not create the commission. He has no authority under the law passed by this parliament to direct it.

We do not know exactly what Mr. Morin is supposed to have done. We have not heard the statement of the commission. Let us wait and hear what is said. Then it will be easier to comment on this important matter in the way that it deserves.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Deputy Prime Minister was reading from the news reports. Today he is trying to reject them or to ridicule them.

Forget the double-talk. Forget the double standards. Just fire the solicitor general. When will the Prime Minister do that?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not criticizing the news reports. All I say is that rather than the news reports, in this case we are going to have a statement from the commission very soon at which time it will be easier to comment on this matter.

Oral Questions

When it comes to double-talk and double standards, the hon. member sets a good standard herself here.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, we all know in this House things must not only be right, they must appear to be right.

Today in the Vancouver *Sun* there are allegations that Gerald Morin, the chair of the public complaints commission, a Liberal government appointee, prejudged the outcome of the APEC inquiry. This comes after similar allegations of the solicitor general and we all know that is true.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister will the government remove this truth seeking exercise from the hands of the Liberal appointees and put it in the hands of an impartial, apolitical—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, because of the law passed by this parliament the commission has full authority to look into any complaints brought before it and to set the way it does so by public hearing or otherwise. Parliament has not given the government any authority to withdraw this matter from the commission. That is a fact.

As far as setting up another kind of inquiry, the hon. member as I said in a previous answer, is asking the very government she is criticizing to take this step, to set up the inquiry, to appoint a commissioner to set its terms of reference. Thanks for the vote of confidence in the government.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, for weeks the opposition has been saying that the public complaints commission does not have the mandate or the moral authority to investigate political interference. For weeks the Liberals have done everything to hide behind this flawed process, from the solicitor general's loose lips to the government's refusal to fund the students.

Now that the commission itself is becoming discredited, the outcome flawed, will the government commit to openness and appoint a judicial inquiry?

This smacks of cover-up. What is the government hiding?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is hiding nothing in this matter.

We do not know yet exactly what the commission is going to say about the allegations. Surely it makes sense to hear what the commission has to say about this matter.

Again I want to thank the hon. member for his vote of confidence, as is the case with his interim leader, in the government. If any commission is going to be set up other than the work being done by the public complaints commission, that commission would

be set up by this very same government under the relevant statute. Again, thanks for the vote of confidence.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, to restore public faith in the government and to get to the bottom of the APEC cover-up, the person looking into this whole affair should be completely independent and free from any possible manipulations.

The new investigation has to have proper rules of evidence and the right to subpoena any evidence and any person, including the Prime Minister himself.

Will the Prime Minister strike an independent judicial inquiry to look into this whole affair?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under the law passed by this parliament, the public complaints commission is a permanent body. It has wide authority and wide powers to carry out investigations in the way it sees fit. I think one should recognize these wide powers and not try to undermine the work of the commission as it is barely getting underway.

• (1130)

Once again, I thank the Reform Party for its vote of confidence in the government. It is asking for something that this very government it is criticizing would have to do. Thanks again for the vote of confidence.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister is stonewalling again. An independent judicial inquiry is desperately needed to clear the poisoned air surrounding the APEC inquiry.

Canadians have lost faith in an inquiry due to loose lips, inappropriate comments by the Prime Minister and alleged government interference. Canadians are tired of this comedy of errors.

Will the government strike a new independent judicial inquiry? Yes or no.

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I object to the premise of the hon. member's question. Instead of stonewalling, I always try to be helpful to the House in answering questions.

Once again we have a confirmation of the Reform Party of its faith in the government. It criticized the government for its role in this matter and yet it wants it to set up a commission.

[Translation]

Once again, I thank the Reform Party for its vote of confidence.

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HEALTH CARE

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Oral Questions

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance said that if the money is available, health care will definitely be a priority. Now, five months into the current fiscal year, the surplus has already reached \$8 billion.

Since money is available, and considering there are pressing needs in the health sector right across the country, what excuse will the Minister of Health make up to avoid asking the Minister of Finance to immediately allocate the available money to health?

[English]

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad this question was asked. Both the finance minister and the Prime Minister have made it very clear that health care in Canada is one of the priorities that will be considered at the time of the next budget. We look forward to the support of the opposition for the measures that we bring forth.

[Translation]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about the next budget; we are talking about taking action today, with today's surpluses, to care for the sick today.

Can the Minister of Health give us the assurance that any federal reinvestment in health will be done through transfer payments and not through new high visibility programs such as the millennium scholarship fund?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to accept the hon. member's suggestions but, as I just mentioned, health care for all Canadians is a priority of this government, and we will address the situation in the next budget, as is our custom.

I should point out to the hon. member that we have already increased transfers to the provinces for health care by \$1.5 billion.

* * *

[English]

APEC INQUIRY

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I assure the Deputy Prime Minister that the Reform Party has no confidence in how this commission is operating or in the government's interference into that commission's work.

According to the solicitor general, the RCMP will take the fall for the APEC fiasco. Now the commission chairman states the same thing, that the RCMP will take the fall for the APEC fiasco.

Canadians, on the other hand, know better. The blame lies at the Prime Minister's feet—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I had not realized that the hon. member had actually asked a question.

I want to say that the government has not interfered in the work of the commission; just the opposite. We have tried to ensure in our comments in the House that the independence of the commission is recognized, especially by the opposition parties.

While the hon. member has no confidence in the government, his colleagues on his behalf have expressed that confidence by asking the very government he criticizes to set up another commission of inquiry.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister says that we are not listening to his answers over here. He says that the government has no control over this independent public complaints commission. His government appointed these people to the commission. If they are not doing their job, if they are prejudiced, it is up to him to get rid of these people and set up another inquiry.

• (1135)

The next commission will be headed by a judge and a judge cannot be fired once he is appointed. That is a person we want to have on the inquiry.

Will you now commit to bringing us an inquiry that is independent, headed by a judge of the Superior Court of Canada?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I ask members to direct their questions through the Chair.

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has tied himself up in such a pretzel type twisting arrangement of knots it is hard to see the sense in his question.

I want to say that on the one hand the hon. member wants political interference in the public complaints commission. The people are appointed for a term. They are at arm's length from the government. Yet he wants another commission set up and, whoever is on it, the length of the life of that commission would be set by the government.

The hon. member as I said has turned himself, through his question, into a human pretzel.

* * *

[Translation]

ICEBREAKING ON ST. LAWRENCE

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The minister wants to charge ships using the St. Lawrence River for 80% of icebreaking fees when they are responsible for only 50% of the total costs of commercial icebreaking. Does the

minister realize that he will be making private shipping on the St. Lawrence pay for its maritime competitors?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we are attempting to do is to have those using icebreaking services pay 17.5% of the cost. That is not a lot to ask.

Let us not forget that transport ships must travel through the waters off Newfoundland to reach the St. Lawrence River. Obviously, it is fair that the ships themselves must pay the fees, up to a maximum of 17.5%.

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, he thinks it is fair to make them pay 80% when the normal rate should be 50%.

The shipping industry agrees with recovering 17% of costs. Is the minister aware that the unequal distribution of the bill among regions is completely unfair to Quebec?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I told the member that we want the people and businesses using the services and the shipping industry to pay only 17.5% of the cost.

The Bloc Québécois' suggestion of an increase in rates for ships using the St. Lawrence River will mean that those travelling to the Port of Quebec City will pay dearly indeed.

* * *

[English]

APEC INQUIRY

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister says that the solicitor general has nothing to do with this public inquiry. As a former solicitor general he knows better than to say that, because the solicitor general did decide to go with the commission and not hold a full judicial inquiry where all actors in this fiasco would have their say.

Will the Prime Minister end this fiasco and strike a new independent judicial inquiry to look into this entire APEC affair, including the Prime Minister's and the solicitor general's involvement?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is in part because I was solicitor general that I think I can speak about this matter with respect to the work of the commission on a more factual basis than the Reform member.

The solicitor general today did not set up this inquiry. The inquiry was set up by the arm's length permanent independent public complaints commission. It set up the inquiry. It set the terms of reference. It is up to it and not the solicitor general or the government to say how it carries out the inquiry and how long it will last. Surely this is an indication of independence that the hon.

Oral Questions

member should support instead of in an unwarranted way criticizing the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the APEC issue is about the constitutional rights of Canadians: the right to speak out against injustice, the right not to be arrested for only political purposes, and the right to fair process before a tribunal. These things have all been suspended by the government.

Now the fix appears to be in and the commission has been adjourned to November 16. We do not know where this is going to go. We need a judicial inquiry to clean up this mess.

• (1140)

What will the government do to restore the constitutional rights of Canadians that it has tossed aside?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member mentioned constitutional rights.

I thought he would have added to his question praise for the Prime Minister for his work in establishing the charter of rights and freedoms. It is there. It is in force. It protects Canadians. The Prime Minister should be praised by the hon. member when he asks his questions for his work in establishing, protecting, maintaining and upholding that very charter of rights.

* * *

[Translation]

PROGRAM FOR OLDER WORKERS ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the answer the Minister of Human Resources Development gave yesterday to my question on POWA was totally unacceptable.

On the one hand, the minister claims to be concerned about the older workers who have been laid off, while on the other hand he is asking them to settle for active measures he feels are more equitable.

Will the minister admit that these active measures are inadequate, indeed totally unsuited to the realities of the labour market for older workers who have been laid off, and that they require special income support measures, to which his government committed in 1996?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear here.

First of all, it must be pointed out that the majority of older workers are holding their own very well in today's economy. The jobless rate for workers over the age of 55 has dropped from 9% to 6.3%.

Oral Questions

It is extremely important to consider the reality that the majority of older workers are managing very well. For the others, it is clear that our government is concerned about their situation and is seeking to work with them to help them back into the work force.

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[English]

LABOUR

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, construction trade labour groups are anxiously awaiting the government to deliver on its commitment to implement the fair wage schedule.

On behalf of the Minister of Labour could the government House leader tell the House what is the status of this important government initiative and when it will be implemented?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on August 5 the Minister of Labour appointed Mr. Douglas Stanley to conduct a comprehensive review of this issue. We expect to receive Mr. Stanley's finding and recommendations shortly, possibly as early as next week.

Once we receive these recommendations my colleague, the Minister of Labour, intends to act as expeditiously as he always does.

* * *

APEC INQUIRY

Mr. Derrek Konrad (Prince Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we just heard a few moments ago that the chair of the public complaints commission denied the allegation against him and he is staying on as chair. We also heard that they are adjourning the commission meetings until November 16.

Justice delayed is justice denied. When will the government bring forth justice for these people and establish an independent judicial inquiry? Will the government do it right away, now?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think a correction should be made. I have just been told that it is not the chair of the public complaints commission. It is the chair of the panel who has denied categorically the allegations made against him.

I have also been told that the issues arising out of the allegations according to the chair of the panel, Mr. Morin, will be referred to the federal court. The panel has been recessed until November 16.

I have just had this information conveyed to me. It is public information as the hon. member has in part conveyed to the House. I have not had a chance to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The hon. member for Wanuskewin.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Wanuskewin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Gerald Morin was overheard in a casino prejudging the outcomes. The solicitor general did exactly the same thing. Loose lips. I would say what is good for the goose is good for the gander.

In view of the prejudging of the solicitor general and Gerald Morin, which is serious enough that the chair even acknowledged it was that kind of comment, would the solicitor general strike immediately an independent judicial inquiry, or is he still saying that he has confidence in the present inquiry?

• (1145)

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this whole process has been created through an act passed by this parliament. If the hon. member wants to reflect on an act of parliament he is entitled to do so. I do not intend to make that reflection.

I would also add that I have been advised that Mr. Morin has categorically rejected the allegations against him, as confirmed by his colleague who asked the previous question. Why does he not listen to his hon. friend's question? He will learn something.

Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of question period the Deputy Prime Minister said "Pay attention to my answer". We did. He said "We will wait for a statement from the commission and when we know what is happening we will make a judgment".

We know what is happening. Justice has been denied to the students who sought answers. The commission is mired in distrust. It is adjourned until November 16. The matter has been referred to the federal court.

When will he set up a judicial inquiry?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it could be argued that there is some sense in waiting to hear what the federal court says about this matter. If he wants some independent comment, surely it comes from the federal court.

Also, if there is an atmosphere of distrust, I have to say that this was created in an unfair and unwarranted way by the kinds of questions asked by the hon. member.

Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the allegations about the comments the commissioner made came from the government's lawyer.

If that is the situation, when did the government know about these allegations and why did it not deal with them initially?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the lawyers for the government acted in a perfectly responsible way in this matter, bringing the allegations to the attention of the commission counsel.

This is the proper step to have taken. I am surprised the hon. member has not risen to praise the government's lawyers for their responsible actions.

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TRANSPORT

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

The New Brunswick government has just revealed that its new toll highway through the province will generate a profit of \$321 million at the expense of other provinces. This creates a major interprovincial trade barrier. It means that New Brunswick will be exploiting Nova Scotia, P.E.I. and Newfoundland.

In committee the minister said that he has the authority to regulate all interprovincial trade when that trade extends from one province to another. Will the minister clarify the source of his authority and does that authority apply to interprovincial highways?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member should know, and I am sure he does, that the designing, building, financing and operating of highways is within the provincial jurisdiction.

It is true that federal-provincial highway agreements have not contemplated the use of tolls. The hon. member has raised this in the House a number of times before and I have said that he raised a good public policy question that should be examined. Perhaps the Standing Committee on Transport could examine it. It is being examined by a council of deputy ministers from across the country and their report should be made public very soon.

We are sorry about the dispute in Atlantic Canada, but hopefully it can be resolved in an amicable way.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I say to the minister that there is some urgency to the situation because the provinces of Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland are now preparing lawsuits against New Brunswick for forcing trucks bound for their provinces through the toll booths.

The lawsuit will pit three provinces against each other in a region that needs total co-operation, not division and confrontation.

Considering the regulatory authority that the minister holds over these interprovincial trade links, will the minister take a leadership role, bring the four provinces involved together to find a political solution, rather than go through a costly, protracted, painful legal battle?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows there is an agreement on internal trade that has been reached between the federal government and the provincial governments. My interpretation of the transportation provisions of that particular agreement is that what

Oral Questions

is happening on the east coast is fully within the ambit of that agreement.

Is the Conservative Party asking the Government of Canada to walk away from that agreement on internal trade and use its constitutional powers, which would cause quite a fuss across the country? Is the Tory party asking us to do that?

* * *

• (1150)

INDUSTRY

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently the Minister of Industry opened a new \$6.4 million industry partnership facility at the National Research Council in Ottawa to support the start-up of the high tech industry.

What is the government doing to ensure that the work of the National Research Council of Canada is of direct benefit to communities across Canada?

Mr. Walt Lastewka (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, within its national vision and role, the National Research Council has become recognized as one of the leading advocates of new research facilities. Special programs and collaborations across this country have resulted in additional prime examples of NRC's work in the regions, such as the Biotechnology Research Institute's impact on the bio-pharmaceutical industry in Montreal, the Plant Biotechnology Institute in Saskatoon and the role of the Institute for Marine Dynamics in St. John's, Newfoundland, which have all had a positive effect on Canadians across Canada.

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APEC INQUIRY

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister has charged some people here as being pretzel-like. I will tell this House where the pretzel is. The pretzel is over on that side where truth and integrity have been put into jeopardy. We now have the commissioner saying "Look, I have to be investigated because I deny that I ever said anything wrong". Canadians are waiting for truth and justice to take place.

When will the Deputy Prime Minister appoint an independent judicial inquiry to look into things, get the truth on the table, establish integrity and get fairness and justice into this inquiry?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this commission and its work is independent, pursuant to the law passed by this parliament.

A situation has arisen which the commission has asked the federal court to examine. Let us hear what the federal court has to say about this. Certainly we want to see this looked into thoroughly so that any appropriate action that is necessary can be taken. Let

Oral Questions

us wait to hear what the federal court has to say about the statement made today.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, now there is a new refrain we are going to have to get used to: “Wait for the court”. Before that, it was “Wait for the commission”.

It is obvious that the commission is an annoyance to the government. Based on mere allegations not made under oath, the chair of the commission has just suspended proceedings until November 16, a date which coincides with the Prime Minister’s departure on a long trip out of the country.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister guarantee that there has been no governmental pressure or intervention of any kind?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Yes. Mr. Speaker.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the recent Labrador helicopter crash killed six Canadian crew, 12 Sea King crashes killed 7 Canadians and Chinooks were sold to the Netherlands at a loss of millions.

Instead of gambling with more Canadian lives in proven unsafe Sea Kings over one-third of a century old, will this government now provide safer options for our military and civilians that come to terms with this government’s fatal mismanagement of the search and rescue helicopters?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do not gamble with people’s lives. Safety is our utmost concern; safety for our crews and safety for those Canadians who require the search and rescue operations that we will continue to operate using safe equipment.

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APEC INQUIRY

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, denials, delays and police fall guys are becoming this government’s trademark.

The chair of the panel, Gerald Morin, has just publicly denied these allegations, saying that he did not speak publicly about APEC and prejudice the inquiry. We heard similar denials from the solicitor general in response to his prejudicial remarks.

When will we see some shred of accountability and respect for a credible process like a judicial inquiry from this government? Let us get on with it.

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the House leader for the Conservative Party for endorsing the vote of confidence his leader gave to this government because if there is another inquiry the only authority this government has is under the Inquiries Act which means that the government would set up the inquiry, the government would appoint the commissioner, the government would set out the terms of reference and the government would establish the length of the life of the commission.

I do not see how the hon. member can be on the one hand criticizing the government for its alleged role in this matter and on the other hand asking the government to take the action he wants.

Thanks again for the vote of confidence. I hope it is recorded on the record.

* * *

● (1155)

UNITED NATIONS DAY

Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Defence. I ask the minister if he could tell this House what the department has planned for United Nations Day to honour the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces who served on UN missions?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is United Nations Day and I cannot think of a more appropriate way to commemorate it than to honour our peacekeepers, those Canadian men and women who have served in UN missions abroad, some 107 of them who have lost their lives.

I invite all members of the House to join us tomorrow morning at the peacekeeping monument on Sussex Drive at 9 a.m. for a commemorative service as we honour those who have worn the blue beret.

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APEC INQUIRY

Mr. Jake E. Hooppner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Gerald Morin’s denials are not enough. All we have heard in this House are denials, denials and more denials from the solicitor general to the Prime Minister. Canadians have lost confidence in the RCMP Public Complaints Commission.

Will Canadians also have to lose confidence in this government, or is this government going to appoint a public judicial inquiry and do the right thing for Canadians?

Oral Questions

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I question the premise of the hon. member's question. The answers of the ministers on this side of the House have been informative and factual, and certainly not only denials.

Secondly, I question the premise that Canadians have lost confidence in the independent Public Complaints Commission.

I do want to thank the member again for confirming the vote of confidence of the Reform Party in the government when again he asked the government to set up an inquiry.

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[Translation]

CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Paul Mercier (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Because it runs a public service, Aéroports de Montréal is accountable to no one. It is the same with Nav Canada and the millennium scholarships. The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency would also be almost completely free of parliamentary control and unaccountable.

Does the Deputy Prime Minister think it is acceptable to limit Parliament's control when it comes to issues so important to the public interest?

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is referring to Aéroports de Montréal and other corporations throughout the country.

A bill was passed here in the House of Commons creating a non-profit corporation to run airports. This corporation is subject to an act of Parliament. I therefore think there is accountability in this case.

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[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Louise Hardy (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. The Marwell tar pit is located in the centre of the city of Whitehorse, Yukon and it has been designated a contaminated site. For decades it has been draining toxins, including PCBs, into the water system. A man was trapped and died in the tar pit.

Under these conditions I would like the minister to make a commitment to clean up this tar pit.

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will undertake to take the

information from the hon. member, to look into the situation and to take whatever appropriate action is necessary. I would like to thank the hon. member for her question.

* * *

APEC INQUIRY

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, for two months we have heard in this House the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister dancing their fancy legal footwork trying to hide the Prime Minister's involvement in the APEC inquiry.

The developments today are the last straw. Canadians have absolutely no confidence in this inquiry. Canadians have no confidence in this Liberal government on this issue. When are we going to have a full-fledged judicial inquiry to get to the truth?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of the hon. member's question. Do I look like someone capable of fancy footwork?

I would say to the hon. member, please get real. I am trying to give straightforward, useful answers and in that context I want to say to the hon. member thanks again for the vote of confidence in this government when he calls upon it to set up an independent inquiry.

● (1200)

We have an independent body created by this parliament in the form of the public complaints commission. Please remember that.

* * *

KOSOVO

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been following the recent crisis in Kosovo with great concern. It is important to remember the tremendous human costs caused by such conflicts. There are currently 200,000 refugees who have fled to avoid the conflict. What steps have been taken to provide for these people?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the refugees of Kosovo are facing a very difficult winter. As a result of that, yesterday I announced we would send \$2 million in humanitarian assistance through such NGOs as CARE Canada, the International Red Cross and the world food program. This is in addition to \$1 million in humanitarian assistance we sent over the spring and summer.

All of us should be very concerned and continue to support these refugees as they face a terrible time.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

DIVORCE ACT

[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.

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[English]

PETITIONS

MARRIAGE

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present to the House a petition signed by residents primarily from the area of Williams Lake. These petitioners request that parliament amend the Marriage Act so as to define in statute that a marriage can only be entered into between a single male and a single female.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from citizens of the general Peterborough area. They are concerned about the fact that 4.5 Canadians are killed every day as a result of alcohol related vehicular crashes. They humbly pray that parliament immediately amend the Criminal Code so that any crash resulting in injury constitutes reasonable and probable grounds for blood or breath testing of drivers and that law enforcement agencies are able to use the latest technologies for roadside testing.

They urge the federal government to strongly support and provide encouragement to jurisdictions to continue to introduce administrative sanctions against drinking and driving.

REPRODUCTIVE AND GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition which is from petitioners in the Peterborough area who are concerned that Bill C-47 that bans human cloning and prohibits some activities surrounding new reproductive and genetic technologies in Canada has lapsed.

● (1205)

The petitioners call upon parliament to enact legislation regarding a ban on human cloning. They point to the need to legislate in the area of reproductive and genetic technologies to ensure the health and safety of those affected by such practices.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by many constituents here in the national capital region who are calling on parliament to amend the Divorce Act to include the provision as supported in Bill C-340 regarding the right of spouses, parents and grandparents for access to or custody of the children or the child.

INDONESIA

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition today that has been signed by individuals in my riding and many individuals outside my riding. It simply asks parliament to appeal to the president and the entire Government of Indonesia basically to protect the human rights of the ethnic Chinese in that country and to call an end to racial and religious discrimination in Indonesia.

MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INVESTMENT

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions here concerning the MAI, which we all know is dead. Nevertheless these petitioners would want to note, as they do in their petitions, that the government should reject the current framework of MAI negotiations and instruct the government to seek an entirely different agreement by which the world might achieve a rules based global trading regime that protects workers, the environment and the ability of governments to act in the public interest, instead of looking for other venues such as the World Trade Organization or the FTAA to replicate NAFTA.

The government should be rethinking NAFTA and particularly those elements of it that the rest of the industrialized world was so reluctant to adopt. Why should Canada be one of the few nations in the world to be exposed to such unacceptable provisions?

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three brief petitions for the House today. The first has to do with human rights.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that this year is the 50th anniversary of universal human rights. Whereas Canada is an internationally recognized leader promoting human rights around the world, the petitioners call on Canada to appeal for action by leaders of countries where human rights are not being protected and to seek to bring to justice those responsible for the violation of internationally recognized human rights.

CRTC

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): The second petition, Mr. Speaker, has to do with the CRTC. The petitioners want to bring to the attention of the House that the CRTC has refused a licence for religious television broadcasters but did license the

Routine Proceedings

Playboy channel. They want to bring to the attention of the House that parliament should review the mandate of the CRTC and direct the CRTC to administer a new policy which will encourage the licensing of religious broadcasters.

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS COMPENSATION FUND

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): The final petition, Mr. Speaker, has to do with our police officers and firefighters. The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that our police officers and firefighters are required to place their lives at risk on a daily basis as they discharge their duties and that the employment benefits of police officers and firefighters who are killed in the line of duty are often not sufficient to care for their surviving families.

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

GRANDPARENTS RIGHTS

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. These petitions are signed by grandparents who following the death, separation or divorce of their children no longer have access to their grandchildren. They request parliament to amend the Divorce Act so that they will therefore from now on have access to or custody of their grandchildren.

* * *

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. 110 and 127.

[Text]

Question No. 110—**Mr. Chris Axworthy:**

With regards to the four recently acquired British submarines, what are the precise figures for: (a) the installation of the Air Independent Propulsion (A.I.P.) refit; (b) the new communications systems; (c) shore facilities; (d) modifications to meet Canadian standards; and (e) the total overall cost of the submarines?

The Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): The UPHOLDER project was recently approved by the Treasury Board at a total of \$750 million current year 1998-99. The project consist of \$610 million current year 1998-99, for the U.K. package—submarines, trainers, technical data, crew training, and initial spares and \$140 million current year 1998-99 for other project costs—essential Canadian modifications, infrastructure, including the repatriation of the trainers, project management and contingency.

The cost of the new communications systems, shore facilities—trainers—and modifications to meet Canadian standards are budgeted for within the \$140 million, current year 1998-99, envelope for other project costs. Precise costs for these requirements will not be known until detailed definition and contract negotiations are completed.

The installation of an air independent propulsion system is not part of the UPHOLDER project. AIP is currently at the “proof of concept” stage at Ballard Power Systems in Vancouver. To date, the Department of National Defence’s investment in the research and development amounts to approximately \$8 million.

The full development of a submarine AIP system, including its installation in the four submarines, is estimated at potentially several hundred million dollars over an 18-year period. As the estimate is for planning purposes only, and will have to be carefully evaluated for affordability within the defence services program, the estimate cannot be released publicly at this time.

Question No. 127—**Mr. Lee Morrison:**

How much money was collected for each of the user fees levied by Transport Canada and its agencies for fiscal years 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98?

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.):

	1995-96 \$000's	1996-97 \$000's	1997-98 \$000's
Transport Canada			
Harbour dues wharfage, berthage	15,649	14,754	19,068
Ship safety fees as per the Canada Shipping Act	5,480	7,070	7,448
Airports, Landing fees	91,901	84,783	32,629
Airports, general terminal fees	54,834	45,068	18,538
Airports, other fees	11,491	6,890	510
Aviation, international en route fees (North Atlantic route)	43,259	27,109	—
Aviation, regulatory services	7,775	7,020	6,330
Aviation, air transportation tax	682,723	737,241	741,834
Air Navigation System (ANS) overflight fee	24,676	152,628	—
Total	937,788	1,082,563	826,357
Canadian Transportation Agency	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Publication Fees*	\$22,809	\$18,147	\$19,340

*The Canadian Transportation Agency does not have a user fee program. However, it will invoice those organizations that wish to receive copies of its decisions and orders.

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Civil Aviation Tribunal	Nil	Nil	Nil

*Government Orders**[English]*

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1210)

*[English]***ROYAL CANADIAN MINT ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-41, an act to amend the Royal Canadian Mint Act and the Currency Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, I particularly like the emphasis on the hon. member. I appreciate being back in the House and having you in the chair. I know you so enjoy the opportunity of listening to the position of the Progressive Conservative Party on any piece of legislation, but particularly on Bill C-41 which is an act to amend the Royal Canadian Mint Act and the Currency Act.

I find it interesting to follow the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona. It shows the diverse views in the House of Commons. Obviously it also shows that philosophically there are many differences in positions put forward.

The hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona indicated earlier it would be much better to have many more public services and public organizations and he talked about CN and its privatization. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona would prefer to nationalize Coca-Cola and have all such services provided by government as opposed to private sector corporations.

Bill C-41 was introduced in the House on May 7, 1998. From the beginning our party has opposed the bill and we will continue to oppose the bill. The bill would allow the construction of the Royal Canadian Mint's new plant to manufacture coin blanks to compete with a plant that is already in the private sector. We believe that the mint has not been forthcoming with Canadians on the new facility.

The member for Winnipeg—Transcona spoke glowingly about the potential opportunities for the new plant. It is interesting that the plant is adjacent to the member's riding. It is also interesting that the plant is located in the riding of a minister of the crown, a member of the government, the foreign affairs minister.

Let us talk about the bill just a little bit. The minister mentioned that we have great pride in our Canadian currency and our mint. That is true. I suggest that this can still be maintained without having to put forward a capital expenditure of some \$30 million to compete with the private sector. The private sector company mentioned by the Reform Party was Westaim which I will get to a little bit later.

I would say philosophically, and the government has said so itself in previous comments, that what the private sector can provide should be provided by the private sector and not by government. There should not be direct competition between the government and the private sector.

The bill will go back to committee. The minister also said let us take it to committee, discuss it, look at it, make the necessary changes and bring it back to the House. I would appreciate that that happened, but unfortunately I have lost a bit of my confidence and faith in the committee process. When members of the opposition put forward amendments to legislation that will make the legislation better for all Canadians, it seems that the committee does not bring forward those amendments.

In this case I wish beyond hope the committee would listen to what I consider to be very logical amendments that would be brought forward and amend the bill to improve it. As mentioned by a number of other previous speakers there are very serious areas of concern with respect to Bill C-41. I will review some of the facts and arguments members of my party have discussed in this case.

Through Bill C-41 the Liberal government has moved to increase the borrowing authority of the Royal Canadian Mint allowing it to build a coin plating plant, another patronage plum in the backyard of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. This facility would put the mint into direct competition with Westaim of Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta.

• (1215)

Because the world market for coin blanks is shrinking, either Westaim will be forced out of business and 110 employees will be in jeopardy or else the Royal Canadian Mint's new venture will go down in flames. Taxpayers will be on the hook for those additional operating costs as well as debt servicing costs of an additional \$30 million for a plant.

We have a corporation right now that provides the service to the Royal Canadian Mint. That corporation will be in jeopardy. Why is it put in jeopardy? Because a \$30 million expenditure of indirect Canadian taxpayer dollars will go to compete against the private sector corporation. It is not a level playing field.

Westaim is a legitimate successful Canadian business that has supplied the Royal Canadian Mint with coin blanks for 35 years. I wish the members from the NDP would listen. There are 110 employees in this corporation who may well be in jeopardy if this plan of the Royal Canadian Mint goes ahead.

The entry of the Royal Canadian Mint into the industry would jeopardize this Westaim division and its employees. Industry experts agree that the market for coin blanks will experience a slight blip in demand for the Eurodollar, which is to come on in the next number of years, and then continue its steady decline as electronic transactions become more popular and the need for coinage and paper currency declines.

This is not some crystal ball gazing. This is reality. There is not going to be a need for the coin blanks, the currency, because of electronic transfers. We are now going to have overcapacity within the system with the Royal Canadian Mint having to compete with this private sector. The new coin plating plant will not only replace Westaim as the source of coin blanks but will compete in the world market.

The costs of getting the mint into the coin blank business are enormous. The \$30 million announcement is just to build the plant. Start-up costs are substantial for a new competitor in the mature to declining market.

The mint will have to compete against established, experienced well entrenched competition that has years to build expertise and economies of scale. Not only will the Royal Canadian Mint have to continue with a high cost structure but it will, like any brand new business, make mistakes.

We recognize that any time government gets into business, there are many inefficiencies and many mistakes. We expect that the mistakes will come at the cost to the Royal Canadian Mint and indirectly back to Canadian taxpayers.

The Reform member mentioned 30% overcapacity. That overcapacity in the industry right now is between 30% and 40%.

With the entry of the mint into this market, it will likely either drive Westaim and the 110 employees out of business or else go spectacularly down in an inefficient operation with capital losses and operating losses to the Canadian public.

Even though there is no direct subsidy being proposed in this venture because all moneys spent by a crown corporation reduce dividends paid back to the crown, ultimately the taxpayers are the ones who pay.

Westaim still has an unresolved lawsuit against the mint involving the softening process necessary to make the coin blanks. The mint cannot legally proceed with this venture unless it settles both these outstanding matters, yet construction started in March.

Government Orders

There was no funding available to the Royal Canadian Mint under law to start the construction of the plant. However, the construction of the plant began in March 1997.

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member should check his facts. I think what he just said is false.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): With respect, that is not a point of order; it is debate.

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the minister can debate that point when he gets the opportunity. I can also suggest that there is a lawsuit outstanding which is factual. There are infringements being suggested against Westaim at this point.

• (1220)

So let us listen again. A plant is being built yet it does not have the patent opportunity to develop the blanks it wants to produce for the world market. Yet the plant is being constructed as we speak right now. If this were a business it would have been bankrupt a long time ago, but it is a crown corporation.

Getting government right is a Liberal government policy that has been in place since 1993. Among other things it stipulates that where the private sector can provide a service equal or superior to a government department or agency, then government should not be in the business. This venture violates the Liberal government policy. This government has said on many occasions that if the private sector can provide the service then government should stay out of it. It is unfortunate that the government does not follow its own rules or its own policy in this situation.

The only reason this is being allowed to happen is that this is a patronage plum in Manitoba. I am from Manitoba and I would love to see as many things happen in Manitoba as possible. But I wish to see them happen only according to good business practice. This is not one of those. I suggest very strongly that this change to the legislation is simply trying to assist a business practice that should not have gone ahead in the first place.

One does not have to look any further than the fiasco the Liberal government created in the oil industry in the 1970s to know that it does not make any sense for the government to take over part of an existing industry and to compete with private companies. Back then the Liberals nationalized Petrofina and created the national energy program. This hurt the industry, cost jobs and taxpayers ended up paying out millions of dollars unnecessarily. To a lesser degree this same problem will happen with the Royal Canadian Mint competing against the private sector.

As I have indicated, every bit of information we have seen reinforces our view that this scheme of the mint will put Westaim and its employees out of business and cost Canadians millions of dollars. This bill would take away from parliament and by exten-

Government Orders

sion Canadians the opportunity for a full and public discussion on any proposed changes to Canada's coinage. It would be left up to cabinet to be approved in secret, behind closed doors. The bill would require that parliament be informed of the changes but it would not be the decision of the people or their representatives. The decision would be solely that of cabinet. Neither would there be any requirement that Canadians be consulted before any changes are implemented.

In the near future it is quite possible that parliament may be asked to consider replacing a five dollar bill with a five dollar coin. It is also possible that this House may be asked to remove the penny from circulation. Because we all use these coins, these changes would affect all Canadians. At the present time under the Royal Canadian Mint Act coins can only be introduced into or removed from circulation by an act of parliament. The minister said today in the House that it will be elected representatives, that it will be the ministers of the government, that it will be an order in council, that it will not be an act of this parliament. That is not only a shame, it is very dangerous in my opinion.

Under the Royal Canadian Mint Act coins can only be introduced or removed by parliament. That is the where that decision should remain. That will be one of the amendments when the bill goes before committee. The government will have to look at that amendment very seriously as it considers changing this proposed legislation.

Based on our experience with the introduction of the one dollar and two dollar coins in the last decade, we can expect that Canadians would want an opportunity for a full and public debate on any proposed changes to their money, not cabinet's money, not government's money, their money. By requiring that parliament pass a law to implement such changes, the present legislation process allows for this. Any bill to introduce or remove a coin would have to receive three readings in both the Commons and the Senate. It would have to pass through two committees that could interview witnesses or hold public hearings before they give approval. This would not be the case if this legislation were to pass.

I will give the government three reasons why this bill should not pass in the form in which it has been presented. It violates the existing government policy of getting government right. I hope the government is listening. That policy was first launched in 1994 by Treasury Board. That initiative examines how existing government services can best be delivered to Canadians.

• (1225)

Government services that can best be delivered by the provinces, by the private sectors or that no longer have public policy purpose are divested. Building a new plating facility would put the

Government of Canada in competition against its own current policy.

Second, it exposes scarce tax dollars to needless risk. The venture would put the Canadian government into a start-up business in a sunset industry where there is already a substantial oversupply in the market. Take business risks but we do so in a planned, orderly fashion. Look at the marketplace. Look at the cost of operation. Look at the capital requirements. Then say can we make money at this or not. In this particular business it is our opinion that the Canadian mint will be hard pressed to make this a paying operation of the business.

Last and probably most important, and even my colleagues in the NDP would agree with me, this particular operation puts in jeopardy 110 to 120 jobs at Westaim. I suspect putting any job in jeopardy would not be supported by any party of this House.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, he mentioned that you had the honour of sitting in the big seat and listening to his diatribe. I get tired of listening to it. We all know he is going to vote for Joe Clark tomorrow. There are no new ideas coming from the Conservative Party, especially the member from Manitoba.

He falsely accused the most hon. member in the House, the member for Winnipeg—Transcona, about wanting to privatize Coca-Cola. The actual issue is that after CN was privatized and has made money, it just laid off another 3,000 employees and their families. Volvo, a profitable corporation, laid off 223 employees. Air Atlantic laid off 525. The list goes on and on.

He remarked about people being laid off from profitable corporations, and the list goes on about what these corporations do in Canada, with absolutely no respect for the employees and their families.

I would like his comment on the fact that he is against crown corporations and against any kind of government intervention in companies and for the decency and honour for the employees. What does he have to say about profitable corporations that make a lot of money but continue to lay off employees, disrupt their families and only pay interest to their shareholders?

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, as I said when I first stood up, philosophically the member for Winnipeg—Transcona and I are diametrically opposed in our beliefs with respect to privatization and nationalization of services.

I did not accuse the member for Winnipeg—Transcona of wanting to nationalize Coca-Cola. I suggested that corporations may well not be one of the finest words in the vocabulary of the NDP government. Corporations are a very important and necessary engine of our economy in Canada.

Government Orders

Not only philosophically do Progressive Conservatives and the NDP differ but the hon. member who posed the question may have some difficulty arguing with himself right now. Quite frankly what is going is going to jeopardize 110 jobs. These are jobs in the private sector. We talk about CN, we talk about Volvo, we talk about other corporations laying off people. Why is it the hon. member has no heart for the 110 people who are already employed in this industry? It is an industry that has overcapacity. When there is too much capacity in the marketplace there are going to be layoffs. These people are going to be jeopardized by that.

Why is the hon. member worried about other jobs and other corporations but in this particular case, where it is proven, he does not have any compassion for these 110 people?

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I simply cannot believe my ears.

I would like to ask the lone Tory from the west which candidate he is going to vote for tomorrow in the PC leadership campaign. I could not believe, quite frankly, that he would be voting for Joe Who. If he is, if that is indeed true, it really calls into question not only his opinion about leadership for his failing party but his opinion about everything, including the bill under discussion.

• (1230)

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, I was not going to, as a paid political announcement, mention at all that there will be a leadership vote for the Progressive Conservatives tomorrow night, October 24. I stand here very proudly and inform the members of the House that yes, I do support the Right Hon. Joe Clark as the next leader of the Progressive Conservatives.

The hon. member also suggested that as the lone Tory in western Canada I take some great pride in being that lone Tory. I would like to see where the members are for the Reform Party in Ontario. I see they are perhaps a little lacking in that area of the rest of Canada, including Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces.

On Monday there will hopefully be a new leader of the Progressive Conservatives. Our policy will remain Conservative policy. If it were our government in place, this piece of legislation would not be before the House right now.

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this is getting very interesting but maybe a little off topic. Just to prove how far off base the Conservatives are, we have a tremendous candidate running for the Conservatives with a new vision, with new ideas, who would probably make a tremendous prime minister, but the only Conservative from Brandon—Souris will not support this gentleman.

I would ask the hon. member if Mr. Pallister wins the leadership whether he will be prepared to resign his seat so that he can really become the leader of the Conservatives.

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, thank you for an opportunity to rebut. The hon. member said “we have a candidate running in the leadership”. I take it the hon. member has now taken back his Progressive Conservative membership, because he obviously includes himself in our party.

He also suggested that if Brian Pallister should win I should give up my seat. I seem to understand, now that the hon. member is so infatuated with this member, that he now calls himself one of us. He comes from that same riding. Perhaps it would be best if that member for Portage—Lisgar gave up his seat so that the new leader of the party could run.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the lone Tory in Manitoba that when it comes to anybody being laid off in this country, losing their job, the one party they can always count on for support is the New Democratic Party of Canada.

The hon. member mentioned the 110 jobs that are apparently going to be lost because of this bill. I would like him to clarify where exactly in the bill it states that and how does he come to his conclusions.

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, once again if the member was listening I said these 110 jobs are in jeopardy. The reason they are in jeopardy is unfair, unlevel playing field competition with government to private sector corporations. That is what I said and that is what is in the bill. Borrowing has now increased to \$75 million under the bill to the Royal Canadian Mint or to the Royal Canadian Mint Act. There are inequities with respect to government competition with the private sector. Yes, 110 jobs are in jeopardy because of this act.

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we put this issue to rest here. It is important that everyone understands that the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar defeated Brian Pallister in the last election. The member for Brandon—Souris should be the one to resign in the event that Mr. Pallister wins leadership, because the member for Portage—Lisgar, the Reform member, would again win in a byelection because he did win by 1,500 votes over the Conservative candidate. Unless the Conservative candidate wants to come back for a second defeat, so be it.

• (1235)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I think the hon. member for Brandon—Souris needs to work the mint into his response.

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, we are kind of getting off topic. However, I do enjoy the bit of banter between Reformers and Progressive Conservatives. It seems they have some concern that perhaps there may well be some more Progressive Conserva-

Government Orders

tives in western Canada to augment their strength in the other parts of this country.

As the member for Portage—Lisgar won by only 1,500 votes, I would suspect that he would want to make sure that if there is a new leader and Brian Pallister should be that leader he would take the opportunity of putting his seat on the line to ensure that the new leader, Brian Pallister, finds his seat in Portage—Lisgar.

I am sure the member for Portage—Lisgar would like to take the challenge because he is a man of integrity.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): All those in favour of the motion will please say nay.

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I had discussions with representatives of all the parties and I believe you would find consent to defer the recorded division requested on second reading of Bill C-41 to the expiry of Government Orders on Tuesday, October 27, 1998.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find the consent of the House to see the clock as being 2.30 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until Monday next at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12.37 p.m.)

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Bonnie Brown	Paul Crête	John Godfrey		

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Beth Phinney	to Minister of National Revenue
Jacques Saada	to Solicitor General of Canada

CONTENTS

Friday, October 23, 1998

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Foreign Publishers Advertising Services Act

Bill C-55. Second reading	9335
Mr. Boudria	9335
Division on amendment deferred	9335
Mr. Kilger	9335

Royal Canadian Mint Act

Bill C-41. Second reading	9335
Mr. Gagliano	9335
Mr. Schmidt	9336
Ms. Girard-Bujold	9340
Mr. Blaikie	9341

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Emily Stowe

Mr. Lee	9342
---------------	------

Justice

Mr. Hanger	9343
------------------	------

National Science and Technology Week

Mr. Byrne	9343
-----------------	------

Space

Mr. Harb	9343
----------------	------

Gasoline

Mr. Murray	9343
------------------	------

Taxation

Mr. Obhrai	9344
------------------	------

Francophone Games

Mr. DeVillers	9344
---------------------	------

United Nations Development Program

Mr. Tremblay	9344
--------------------	------

The Late Jean Rafa

Mr. Saada	9344
-----------------	------

Agriculture

Mr. Hilstrom	9344
--------------------	------

Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Cannis	9345
------------------	------

Air Atlantic

Mr. Stoffer	9345
-------------------	------

Election in Quebec

Mr. Bergeron	9345
--------------------	------

Women's History Month

Mr. Pratt	9345
-----------------	------

Agriculture

Mr. Brison	9346
------------------	------

Kick Drugs Out of Canada

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	9346
--------------------------------------------	------

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

Ms. Catterall	9346
---------------------	------

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

APEC Inquiry

Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	9346
Mr. Gray	9346
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	9347
Mr. Gray	9347
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	9347
Mr. Gray	9347
Mr. McNally	9347
Mr. Gray	9347
Mr. McNally	9347
Mr. Gray	9347
Mrs. Tremblay	9348
Mr. Gray	9348
Mrs. Tremblay	9348
Mr. Gray	9348
Mr. Marceau	9348
Mr. Gray	9348
Mr. Marceau	9348
Mr. Gray	9348
Ms. McDonough	9348
Mr. Gray	9348
Ms. McDonough	9348
Mr. Gray	9348
Mrs. Wayne	9349
Mr. Gray	9349
Mr. MacKay	9349
Mr. Gray	9349
Mr. Grewal	9349
Mr. Gray	9349
Mr. Obhrai	9349
Mr. Gray	9349

Health Care

Ms. Girard-Bujold	9349
Mr. Peterson	9350
Ms. Girard-Bujold	9350
Mr. Peterson	9350

APEC Inquiry

Mr. Hanger	9350
Mr. Gray	9350
Mr. Hilstrom	9350
Mr. Gray	9350

Icebreaking on St. Lawrence

Mr. Canuel	9350
Mr. Anderson	9351
Mr. Canuel	9351
Mr. Anderson	9351

APEC Inquiry

Mr. Mayfield	9351
Mr. Gray	9351
Mr. Forseth	9351
Mr. Gray	9351

Program for Older Workers Adjustment

Mr. Dumas	9351
Mr. Pettigrew	9351

Labour

Mr. Mahoney	9352
-------------------	------

Mr. Boudria	9352
APEC Inquiry	
Mr. Konrad	9352
Mr. Gray	9352
Mr. Vellacott	9352
Mr. Gray	9352
Mr. Mancini	9352
Mr. Gray	9352
Mr. Mancini	9352
Mr. Gray	9352
Transport	
Mr. Casey	9353
Mr. Collette	9353
Mr. Casey	9353
Mr. Collette	9353
Industry	
Mr. Bellemare	9353
Mr. Lastewka	9353
APEC Inquiry	
Mr. Schmidt	9353
Mr. Gray	9353
Mrs. Tremblay	9354
Mr. Gray	9354
National Defence	
Mr. Earle	9354
Mr. Eggleton	9354
APEC Inquiry	
Mr. MacKay	9354
Mr. Gray	9354
United Nations Day	
Mr. Richardson	9354
Mr. Eggleton	9354
APEC Inquiry	
Mr. Hoepfner	9354
Mr. Gray	9355
Canada Customs and Revenue Agency	
Mr. Mercier	9355
Mr. Collette	9355
The Environment	
Ms. Hardy	9355
Ms. Torsney	9355
APEC Inquiry	
Mr. Penson	9355
Mr. Gray	9355
Kosovo	
Mr. Proud	9355

Ms. Marleau	9355
-------------------	------

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Adams	9356
Petitions	
Marriage	
Mr. Mayfield	9356
Impaired Driving	
Mr. Adams	9356
Reproductive and Genetic Technologies	
Mr. Adams	9356
Divorce Act	
Mr. Harb	9356
Indonesia	
Mr. Cannis	9356
Multilateral Agreement on Investment	
Mr. Blaikie	9356
Human Rights	
Mr. Szabo	9356
CRTC	
Mr. Szabo	9356
Public Safety Officers Compensation Fund	
Mr. Szabo	9357
Grandparents Rights	
Mr. Bellemare	9357
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Adams	9357

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Royal Canadian Mint Act	
Bill C-41. Second reading	9358
Mr. Borotsik	9358
Mr. Gagliano	9359
Mr. Borotsik	9359
Mr. Stoffer	9360
Mr. Borotsik	9360
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	9361
Mr. Borotsik	9361
Mr. Hoepfner	9361
Mr. Borotsik	9361
Mr. Stoffer	9361
Mr. Borotsik	9361
Mr. Pankiw	9361
Mr. Borotsik	9361
Mr. Kilger	9362
Division on motion deferred	9362
Mr. Kilger	9362

Appendix

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