



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, June 7, 1999**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 7, 1999

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[*English*]

### CRIMINAL CODE

**Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-251, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (cumulative sentences), be read the third time and passed.

• (1105)

She said: Madam Speaker, last week, for the second time, this House resoundingly supported changes to the Canadian justice system that would give judges the ability to set fair and proportionate sentences for multiple murderers, finally putting an end to Canada's automatic bulk rate for murder.

Since that vote, many of the more than 500 Canadian families who have been devastated by multiple murderers have seen fit to write to me, call in to talk shows, or otherwise let Canadians understand the truth about our current system. They have never been able to understand why anyone would insist that the murder of their child, spouse or parent should continue to be meaningless to the courts. Fortunately, they have found new faith in parliament by last week's decision by this House and many have written to express their thanks to members for recognizing the value of the precious lives they have lost and the need for justice.

Another all too common message was that of victims' families being told by a sentencing judge that he wished he could give a

more meaningful sentence for the murder of their child, but that the law simply would not allow it. That is the message that we are hearing from the judiciary in open court, a clear message that judges need more latitude to set fair and proportionate sentences for these most horrific of crimes.

That is exactly what Bill C-251 is designated to deliver. It would allow a judge to look at the facts of a case where a murderer has been convicted of the murder of not just one, but at least two human beings. The judge could look at those facts and make an assessment of the intent of the offender, the brutality of the crimes and any mitigating circumstances that may be relevant.

Having considered all of the evidence, a judge would determine first whether it is warranted to impose a consecutive sentence or grant a concurrent sentence. If the judge determines that fairness and proportionality require a consecutive sentence, he has the further discretion to determine the length of that additional term of parole ineligibility, anywhere from one day to 25 years. I call that double discretion.

For years I have heard colleagues insist that judicial discretion was necessary and essential even in cases of multiple first degree murder. I have listened and I have learned from their advice. Now judicial discretion is the cornerstone of the multiple murder and multiple sexual assault provisions of this bill.

By passing Bill C-251, parliament will be declaring that every victim of murder or sexual assault should matter to the court. At the same time it will provide judges the latitude to account for the specific circumstances of an individual case. As always, we will be entrusting the judiciary with the responsibility to render fair and proportionate sentences within the parameters of the law.

During the past week I have heard that for some members judicial discretion is not enough. Some hold the view that a multiple murderer who kills his victims in quick succession should be immune from additional consequences arising from the second, third or fourteenth murder. The next Mark Lepine, Denis Lortie or George Lovie should all be guaranteed concurrent, meaningless sentences for all but their first murder, according to this argument.

I say that there should be no such guarantee. There should be no automatic benefit to planning to kill several victims in the same event. Instead, I propose that a judge is best placed to determine what is fair and proportionate based on the facts. Let the judges do their job.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1110)

Another argument back from the slag heap this week is the potential cost of keeping multiple murderers in jail longer. I had thought this argument had long since been put to rest, but back it comes when all else fails.

Let me be clear once again. There can be no cost implications of the multiple murder provisions of Bill C-251 for at least 10 years as the bill is not retroactive and all multiple murderers serve at least 10 years anyway. We know that it will not cost one cent for ten years. Moreover, multiple murderers currently account for about 2% of the prison population and it will take 30 years for a new generation of multiple murderers to replace them. By the year 2030 the total prison population may well be 1% to 2% larger than it would be otherwise. That is the price of justice insofar as multiple murderers are concerned.

One reservation put forward over the last days was particularly curious, that being that the bill has moved through parliament too quickly. One even described it as having whistled through parliament. Today is the sixth time the Chamber has debated this bill over the last three years. It was introduced three times before being made votable. Second reading occurred not yesterday, but seven months ago. It was held in committee for over four months and there was yet another debate at report stage. More debate is yet to come in the Senate. Parliament has had much time to debate this issue and render a well considered decision. The House has decisively, on two occasions, voted in support of Bill C-251. It is a decision that should be respected.

For months I have been asked to put a label on Bill C-251. Is it liberal to initiate this kind of change? I decided to find out whether it was liberal and to find out whether people of different political stripes had different views about consecutive versus concurrent sentences for murder and sexual assault. I commissioned a professional polling company, often regarded as the Liberal Party pollster, to find out how Canadians broadly viewed this issue. What they found did not surprise me.

Intuitively, I have always felt that the Canadian sense of justice was non-partisan. That is the message I got at the door in my riding. I got the same message in Quebec, the maritimes and the west. All people, of every political stripe, from every region of this country, have seen the injustice of concurrent sentencing in their communities. Their outrage is not political; it arises from the people's sense of justice.

Pollara found that 90% of Canadians support consecutive sentencing for rapists and murderers on a mandatory basis. With judicial discretion, that number would surely increase to an even higher level. What the numbers show is very interesting when we examine the political parties that respondents support. Ninety-two per cent of Liberals polled support consecutive sentencing. Support in the other five political parties was similarly overwhelming, with no party showing less than 83% support for consecutive sentenc-

ing. Just as striking was the fact that women were the strongest supporters of consecutive sentencing, with only 5% opposed to mandatory back-to-back sentences.

• (1115)

Consecutive sentencing for murderers and rapists defies the labels. It is as non-partisan as the justice that victims in this country require.

In amending the bill, I took into account more than just the criticisms that some had offered. I also wished to address legitimate concerns over the image given by certain potential sentences. In particular, there seems to be some discomfort with the notion of even a Clifford Olson being sentenced to a fully consecutive term which could reach 275 years. In response, I agreed to yet another amendment that would cap any additional sentence at 25 years. Hence, sentences will not be imposed which go far beyond the life expectancy of most multiple murderers.

We have before us today a bill I believe reflects the input of many members of the House, including some who sadly continue to oppose it. It achieves the core objective of eliminating the automatic bulk rate for murder that disregarded the second, third or eleventh victim. It makes this progress with all the safeguards of complete judicial discretion.

I urge all members to look upon Bill C-251 as a bill that responds to their advice and builds on the common ground that we have found over the past three years. It is a bill that will contribute to justice by providing greater proportionality and fairness, and by recognizing that every victim deserves a measure of justice.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-251. It has been ongoing in the House for some time and, I must say, with a fair bit of acrimony. I am not sure if the debate has gotten into the rights or wrongs of the bill. It seems to be more that it did not come from one particular source or that it was not sanctioned by the cabinet, for instance, and therefore it is not going to go.

This particular bill deals with a pretty basic issue in the country, which is whether or not multiple murderers and rapists are getting the right amount of prison time for their crimes. I, too, have a private member's bill in the House on consecutive versus concurrent sentences, but it does not deal murderers and rapists. It deals with individuals who are already in prison and who unlawfully go at large. At a facility in my community there have been 23 unlawfully at large prisoners in the last six months. That is only one facility out of the seven in the area.

What happens is that they go and commit a crime or whatever and get a concurrent sentence. In other words, there is no extra time. A guy goes into prison thinking he can escape on a dump truck or something else in order to get out. Once he is out he robs a bank. He just goes back to prison and the courts say that he was a bad boy and that he should not do it again. He receives the same amount of time.

At the moment, I am not going to deal with that particular issue, even though I think it is important, because this particular issue on Bill C-251 is much more important. This is about people who commit severe crimes, multiple crimes, multiple murders and rapes.

This frequently happens in my community in the lower mainland of British Columbia. Victims enter the courtroom thinking that the individual will get life and they will never see him again. What happens most of the time is that the faint hope clause, section 745 of the Criminal Code, will take light and give opportunity for an individual to get out of prison after 15 years.

• (1120)

The terrible tragedy of all that is that those parents, families and victims from way back when the original crime was committed think the person is away for life and they can put the terrible tragedy in their past history and get on with life. However, after 15 years the person can apply under the faint hope clause and the battle starts all over again.

I am already in a situation with Colin Thatcher who is about to apply for a section 745 hearing. All of the victims will once again have to relive the tragedy of 15 years ago. His wife was bludgeoned to death 20 times and shot in the back of the head. They will have to relive this all over again. They are asking whether the punishment fits the crime. In this case we have serious rape offences and multiple murders. Very few people today are satisfied with the fact that an individual gets life because life does not mean life in Canada.

Way back, when the Liberal government did away with the death penalty, it said that it would bring in life as a penalty. Little unknown to most of us, the Liberals said that life is 25 years but it could be reduced by 10 years by applying under the faint hope clause to get an early release. We did not know much about that because by the time it started it was 1992, some 16 years later.

We have seen some terrible situations of individuals who were originally up for life, and where families thought they were in prison for life, but who were in fact out on the street 16 and 17 years later.

What we have to deal with is whether Bill C-251 is an appropriate bill. I sincerely believe it is. The second issue is how we get it through the House of Commons. We know that cabinet, by and large, is not in favour of this, but this is not a cabinet bill. It is not a piece of government legislation. It comes from an individual, an individual with the support of a majority of the members in the House.

Just because it is not government legislation, it does not come from cabinet and it does not have the support of those in cabinet does not mean the bill should not be carried. It means that maybe the individual who brought the bill forward to the House is a lot

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closer to the grassroots of the country than the cabinet may like to think. This is one of the difficulties with private members' bills in the House. Cabinet thinks private members' legislation interferes with an agenda.

I have had considerable experience with private members' legislation being a member of a subcommittee that looks at it. This legislation is a lot closer to the grassroots of the country than much of the legislation put forward and tabled by cabinet.

It can be said that overnight success usually takes about 10 years in the House of Commons. We have been at this long enough to recognize that this issue is not going to go away. It is time for those of us who really believe in this to stand up and be accounted for and not to stay home because we were told to stay home by government members or a whip. It is time to stand up and be counted.

It is interesting that in the bill, as the member who sponsored it has said, judges have complete discretion as to whether to use it or not. That in and of itself should be enough to waylay the fears or concerns of anybody on the other side that here we go down the slope of always issuing consecutive sentences.

• (1125)

I wish it could be said that judges in the country issue the maximums. However, in my experience judges are often implementing and imposing sentences that are minimums, not maximums. We see it all the time under the Young Offenders Act and when they deal with drugs, they give minimum not maximum sentences.

What is important here, although it says "using complete judicial discretion", the next stage for me would be to try to convince some of these judges to use some of that discretion rather than the minimum sentences that they give.

If an individual is sentenced to two consecutive sentences, to a maximum of 50 years, is that so bad? I am not going to repeat the names of those who should have it, but I am going to say that any individual in the country perpetrating multiple murders should serve an appropriate amount time for that crime. When we get into two, three and four multiple murders, we should not be saying that one 25 year sentence is adequate. It is not for the victims of the crime.

In view of the bill, which is significant to the House of Commons and to Canadians, I move:

That the question be now put.

**Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the bill before the House has had substantial movement over a number a years culminating today in the vote before the House.

The original bill came before the justice committee, on which I was a member. We examined the bill and eventually it came

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forward in the following manner with amendments that have been moved and have substantially changed the bill.

I am going to address three things. First, I am going to address the changes in the legislation that occurred last week, to which the mover of the bill referred. Second, as this is a private member's bill, I will be addressing my own views on the bill. Third, I will also be addressing some of the comments made by the earlier speakers.

I will say that the drafter and mover of the bill has substantially changed the original legislation. One of my criticisms of the original legislation was the lack of judicial discretion. I believe the member has gone to some lengths to address that. However, to some extent I think that was also done in an effort to get the matter back before the House of Commons. I do not blame her for that because it is a matter she feels quite passionately about.

In the haste to move those amendments, I have some concerns about the drafting. People should know that members of Parliament only received these amendments a week ago today.

• (1130)

There has not been time to adequately review them in the way we normally would. Normally they should be vetted through the justice committee to ensure that there are no charter challenge objections or that they do not conflict with other sections of the code. That causes me concern and I will come back to it before I am finished.

Having provided for judicial discretion the member has narrowed the focus of the bill. I ask that we have a respectful debate on a piece of legislation upon which members of the Chamber have very differing opinions. I have listened respectfully to those with whom I disagree and I expect the same courtesy. We need that kind of debate.

The issue has now been narrowed to what kind of society we see Canada becoming, what kind of society we want to build. Is it a society where justice is vengeful, or is it a society that sees redemption in the spirit of mankind? Not just to be critical, I say that because there are those who believe that justice should be vengeful. There are those who believe in an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life sentence for a life.

Having redrafted the bill, the member caused me to think carefully about this when I was home in my constituency. I had a discussion with a young woman who is not sophisticated in the way bills come before parliament. I explained to her what we were talking about, how there was a motion that would allow a murderer who commits horrendous murders—and I do not think anyone would say they are not—to be sentenced to two consecutive life sentences in the justice system.

This young 11 year old woman looked at me and said “But you only have one life to serve. How can offenders serve more than

their life?” That is the question to ask. How can we sentence offenders to more than God has given them? How can we sentence them to more than their life?

There is some confusion around this question. I think the member for Langley—Abbotsford mentioned it when referring to these sentences as 25 year sentences. There are members of the House who think that conviction for multiple murders is a 25 year sentence. It is not. It is a life sentence with eligibility to ask for parole at 25 years. Some prisoners have been released at 25 years and some have not. The sentence is not 25 years. The sentence is an entire life in prison with the opportunity to ask for parole at 25 years.

**An hon. member:** No, it is not.

**Mr. Peter Mancini:** A member of the Reform Party is yelling at me, saying that is not it. I ask the mover of the bill, then, why we have changed it from 25 years to 50 years. It is eligibility to apply for parole at 50 years. That is what we are extending. We are adding two or three life sentences.

In nations with the death penalty would murderer be hanged three times? Is that the direction in which to go? If we say there should be multiple life sentences then I ask that question. Maybe there are those who believe that if offenders take three lives they should pay three times.

I am sympathetic to the case made by the mover of the bill who says that many people and many victims ask if the death of their spouse, their child or their friend is meaningless. I respect and believe this comment. Yet surely we cannot say that by adding another life sentence to what is an impossible situation we bring justice to that family. Surely by saying someone will serve 200 years when it is not a possibility only mocks the justice system. I respect those who feel differently in this regard, but to me there is an illogical aspect to it that plays into the question of whether or not we are a vengeful society.

• (1135)

We are also asking the judge to look at the offender and determine whether or not the offender can be rehabilitated in 50 years. The burden we put on the judge is to look at the offender and say “I believe that you are so heinous a human being that you cannot be redeemed for 50 years and will make that judgment now”.

What other legislation would we pass in the House and say no one can change it for 50 years? I ask members to think about that. Would we say a piece of environmental legislation could not be touched for 50 years because we as members of parliament have the foresight to know what will happen in the next five decades?

Can we give a judge the power to sentence someone to two life sentences and not be eligible for parole for five decades? We can,

and there are members who will vote for that. I disagree and I have asked for a respectful debate on it.

My opinion is that I cannot entrust any other human being with 50 years of foresight. I say that there are all kinds of prisoners, all kinds of horrendous human beings who have found redemption, maybe not at 25 years but maybe at 35 years, maybe at 15 years or maybe at 5 years. Can I judge that? If I cannot, can I ask the judiciary to do it? I object to the bill on those terms.

I will turn to the comments made by the mover. Again I say I respect her opinion. She referred to the Pollara poll. Many people in that poll believed that a life sentence was 25 years and the opinions were therefore skewed.

Let me end by saying that in a way we have perhaps increased the life sentence. Perhaps we have taken more from the offender. If we sentence someone without eligibility for parole for 50 years, we take away hope and in so doing perhaps we take away not only their life but their soul.

I have to vote against the bill because my conscience tells me that justice is redeemable and not vengeful.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise again to speak in support of Bill C-251. I am pleased to follow the comments of my colleague from Nova Scotia, the hon. member for Sydney—Victoria. He raised some very soul searching and gut wrenching questions in his commentary.

Obviously today's debate and throughout the time that we have seen this issue arise in the House and in committee it invokes a very emotional response, as do victimization and violence in most instances.

I pay tribute again to the member for Mississauga East for her tireless work on the issue and for bringing it forward. Today's vote will be a testament to that hard work and determination. It is because of this perseverance and persistence that we will have an opportunity to bring about a law that will in my opinion more accurately reflect the conscience of the country and the need to protect individuals from violent offenders.

The basic and just principle of consecutive sentences has proved to be too much for some soft on crime members of the Liberal government. As many members know and as has been previously stated, previous polls have been conducted which seem to suggest that Canadians overwhelmingly support the principle of stiffer sentences when it comes to the issue of high end violence, the violation of people and their lives.

While some members of the Liberal government defend rehabilitation and parole for multiple murderers and rapist, Bill C-251 calls for the House to defend the rights of victims of multiple

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offenders such as Mr. Olson's victims numbered one through eleven. The bill would given individualized recognition to those victims and give their families some much deserved justice for the atrocities that were committed against them and their loved ones.

● (1140)

It would also send a strong message to potential criminals that the Canadian justice system would no longer ignore the number of innocent lives that are shattered. I urge the House to take action and follow the lead of the hon. member for Mississauga East to stop the volume discount for crime spree, for serial rape and murder.

Perhaps our actions today will impact on the future of some loved ones. This current incarnation of Bill C-251 reflects a compromise, an improvement and an explanation of many of the clauses that previously existed in a bill which the Progressive Conservatives also supported.

While the current proposal cannot address the concerns of every member in the House or every member of society, it is a concrete shift in the right direction. It will not be retroactive. There have been many arguments about discretion and the imposition of judicial discretion on an issue such as this one. It has been used on both sides of the argument quite ironically. I suggest in this instance that it allows a judge increased discretion to reflect the applicable laws upon the conscience of the community.

No one is suggesting for a moment that we remove all other sentencing principles, the protection of the public and the need for rehabilitation and general or specific deterrents, considerations with which my hon. colleague for Sydney—Victoria would be familiar.

It certainly does not remove the situation where a person can in fact be rehabilitated. I am of the personal belief, and I have read extensively on this issue, that there are some in society who simply are not amenable to rehabilitation. They simply cannot be rehabilitated. They are those who are at the very high end of the violence inflicted upon individuals.

It is extremely unfortunate. It is not something that a person wants to admit quite readily, but if we are to believe that the protection of society is the primary responsibility of legislators and the primary responsibility of our justice system then we must recognize that a very small minority of criminals in the country are simply beyond that rehabilitative scope.

The hon. member for Sydney—Victoria spoke of a 50 year foresight, that he did not believe there could be such a thing. I suggest quite the opposite. I would rather have an attempt at a 50 year foresight than a one year after the fact contemplation of what could have been done when a person was released for whatever reasons or whatever criteria and went out to rape and kill again.

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Bill C-251 was previously introduced and dealt with in the justice committee. It has had intense scrutiny. There has been an opportunity for members of that committee and members of the House to look at the issue in depth. There has been a concerted effort on the part of some members of the justice committee to undermine and completely dismiss or remove the issue from public debate. That is very unfortunate because there are significant number of members in this place and an overwhelming number of Canadians who support the initiative of the hon. member.

The fact that this is a tough, philosophic issue, as are many issues that we often find ourselves debating and facing in the House, is not justification for turning a blind eye or refusing to deal with each.

The current language in the bill shifts sentencing for multiple crimes of rape and murder from concurrent to consecutive but the discretion still exists. There is no mandatory minimum or maximum reflected in this change.

The current bill and its amendments do not guarantee consecutive sentences in any way. It grants judicial discretion for cases where consecutive sentence would not be in line with our fundamental principles of justice.

The bill does not change the status quo from mandatory concurrent sentences to consecutive, barring any judicial discretion on behalf of defendants. When justice chooses not to enforce these consecutive sentences, however, the bill has amendments that would require that justice explains to the victims and their families why these sentences would not be served concurrently or would be served concurrently as opposed to consecutively.

• (1145)

If this legislation is enacted, judges will be given the opportunity to mete out an appropriate sentence for animals like Bernardo, Olson and Roby. I want to put these cases forward because it is important in the context of the debate.

After being found guilty of the savage sadistic murders of two teenage girls in the 1990s, Paul Bernardo received two concurrent life sentences. He can apply for judicial review of his sentence in 2008 and is eligible for day release in 2015.

Clifford Olson is serving 11 concurrent life sentences. His sentence is not all that more serious than if he only took one life. That is to say all of his sentences together reflect the same sentence that a person would receive for taking one life.

Pedophile John Roby was convicted of 35 counts of sexually abusing children. The victims' families were shocked to learn that after being convicted of 27 accounts of these assaults, Mr. Roby received a two year prison term. After several other victims came forward, the Ontario Court of Appeal increased the sentence just to five years.

In 1995 serial killer John Martin Crawford was charged with three counts of first degree murder. After being convicted he will be eligible for early parole in just 15 years under the faint hope clause.

They are just some examples, some of the more extreme high end examples, but nonetheless they are examples for the need of this legislation. It would be a shift in the right direction. It is my hope that this bill will also mark an important shift in the mindset and the philosophy of the government.

It is also a welcome example of what can occur with co-operation. In tribute to a member of the government, a backbench parliamentarian, without the support of her party leaders and without the support of a logical explanation as to why that support does not exist, she has persevered. Under the current government, the debate let alone the passage of this bill has been opposed by a number of party members, her colleagues. This is a rare occasion where a vote will take place that would allow a very logical and very worthwhile piece of legislation to pass.

Much semantics and rhetoric accompany the debate but it is important to point out again that life in this country does not equal life imprisonment. That attachment does not occur. Parole eligibility in 25 years is not the equivalent of life imprisonment.

Very few high end criminals make it to that 25 year point before they apply and are indeed accepted for parole. Fifty years ineligibility would be a more reflective response. It would be a move in the right direction if judges were permitted to mete out a sentence that was more reflective of the public sentiment. Rehabilitation and other principles of sentencing will not be overridden.

This greater discretion should be encouraged and embraced by members of the House. Democratic principles should be respected as they were when previous occasions allowed members of the House to vote in favour of this bill. I encourage all members present to support Bill C-251.

**Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, much has been said this morning about this debate being a battle of the backbench against the government. There are many members on the backbench who are not in government and have extreme difficulty with this bill and with the fact that it has not been voted through the committee system.

The amendments that are the subject of today's vote were negotiated while the debate at report stage was carried on. There are many issues that should be studied. Certainly many of us feel that this bill should be sent to committee.

There are some factual errors. For instance, what is a sentence for first degree murder? It is life without eligibility for parole for 25 years. In fact, the average sentence served in Canada is 28.4 years. Some members disputed or denied that, but those facts and figures are available from Corrections Canada.



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We had those amendments reviewed by Professor Allan Manson, who is a professor of law at Queens University. He said that in his opinion "Bill C-251 in its present form is unsound constitutionally, an example of regressive, inconsistent and unjustified penal policy and the product of an irresponsible process of legislating penal reform".

• (1150)

In those circumstances certainly because of the timeframes that were imposed upon the House and the lack of the bill being referred to committee there has not an opportunity to properly study this bill.

The motives for this bill are certainly commendable. Everyone empathizes with the plight of victims. In our penal system life does mean life, but there is the opportunity for rehabilitation. I think that is very significant and should be retained.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** It being 11.50 a.m., the time provided for debate has expired.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Call in the members.

• (1215)

*Before the taking of the vote:*

[English]

**The Speaker:** This is a private member's bill and the question is on the motion of the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford that the question be now put.

[Translation]

The first to vote will be the mover of the motion. Accordingly, we will begin at my left with the rows at the back and work forward.

• (1220)

[English]

*During the taking of the vote:*

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi:** Mr. Speaker, I want to vote in favour of the motion.

**The Speaker:** Were you here when the voting began?

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi:** Yes.

**The Speaker:** You will be recorded.

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** I am addressing the hon. member for Charlesbourg. How do you want to vote?

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** Mr. Speaker, I am voting for the motion.

[English]

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

(Division No. 544)

## YEAS

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Assad
Assadourian	Asselin
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Baker	Beaumier
Bélair	Bellemare
Bergeron	Bevilacqua
Bigras	Bonin
Brien	Brison
Bryden	Cadman
Calder	Cannis
Cardin	Casey
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Comuzzi
Crête	Cullen
Dalphond-Guiral	Debien
Desrochers	Doyle
Drouin	Duceppe
Dumas	Easter
Epp	Fontana
Gagnon	Galloway
Gauthier	Gilmour
Girard-Bujold	Gouk
Grewal	Grey (Edmonton North)
Guarnieri	Guay
Hanger	Harb
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner	Ianno
Jaffer	Jennings
Jones	Jordan
Keddy (South Shore)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde	Lastewka
Leung	Longfield
Lowther	Lunn
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Marceau	Marchand
Matthews	Mayfield
McCormick	McGuire
McTeague	McWhinney
Meredith	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mills (Red Deer)	Mitchell
Morrison	Muise
Murray	Myers
Nault	Obhrai
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Penson	Peric
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Proud	Provenzano
Redman	Reed
Reynolds	Richardson

*Private Members' Business*

Sauvageau	Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)	Serré
Solberg	Speller
St. Denis	St-Hilaire
Stinson	Stoffer
Strahl	Szabo
Thibeault	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Turp	Ur
Venne	Volpe
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	White (North Vancouver)—122

**The Speaker:** We will take this vote in the same fashion as we took the last vote, with the mover of the motion being first to vote, in this case to my right. Then we will start with the fifth row and come forward.

● (1230)

## NAYS

## Members

Bakopanos	Bélanger
Bertrand	Boudria
Bulte	Caccia
Carroll	DeVillers
Dromisky	Earle
Finestone	Finlay
Godfrey	Grose
Harvard	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Kraft Sloan	Laliberte
Mancini	Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	McDonough
McKay (Scarborough East)	Paradis
Phinney	Riis
Scott (Fredericton)	Solomon
St-Julien	Vanclief
Wasylycia-Leis—31	

## PAIRED MEMBERS

Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Barnes
Canuel	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Clouthier
de Savoye	Folco
Guimond	Laurin
Lefebvre	Ménard
Mifflin	Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. The next question is on the main motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

● (1225)

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

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

(Division No. 545)

## YEAS

## Members

Abbott	Abлонczy
Anders	Assad
Assadourian	Asselin
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Baker
Beaumier	Bélair
Bellemare	Bevilacqua
Bonin	Boudria
Brison	Bryden
Cadman	Calder
Cannis	Cardin
Casey	Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
Comuzzi	Cullen
Debien	Doyle
Dumas	Easter
Epp	Fontana
Gagnon	Galloway
Gilmour	Girard-Bujold
Gouk	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Guarnieri
Guay	Hanger
Harb	Hill (MacLeod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoepfner
Ianno	Jaffer
Jennings	Jones
Jordan	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Lastewka	Leung
Longfield	Lowther
Lunn	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Marchand
Marleau	Matthews
Mayfield	McCormick
McGuire	McTeague
McWhinney	Mercier
Meredith	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mills (Red Deer)	Mitchell
Morrison	Muise
Murray	Myers
Nault	Obhrai
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Penson	Peric
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Proud	Provenzano
Redman	Reed
Reynolds	Richardson
Riis	Sauvageau
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
Serré	Solberg
Solomon	Speller
St. Denis	Stinson
Stoffer	Strahl
Szabo	Thibeault
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Turp
Ur	Vanclief
Venne	Volpe
Whelan	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver)—117	

*Supply*

## NAYS

## Members

Bachand (Saint-Jean)  
Bélangier  
Bertrand  
Brien  
Caccia  
Catterall  
Dalphond-Guiral  
De Villers  
Drouin  
Earle  
Finlay  
Godfrey  
Harvard  
Kraft Sloan  
Lalonde  
Marceau  
McDonough  
Paradis  
Scott (Fredericton)  
St-Julien

Bakopanos  
Bergeron  
Bigras  
Bulte  
Carroll  
Crête  
Desrochers  
Dromisky  
Duceppe  
Finestone  
Gauthier  
Grose  
Knutson  
Laliberte  
Mancini  
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
McKay (Scarborough East)  
Phinney  
St-Hilaire  
Wasylcia-Leis—40

## PAIRED MEMBERS

Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)  
Canuel  
Charbonneau  
de Savoye  
Guimond  
Lefebvre  
Mifflin

Barnes  
Chamberlain  
Cloutier  
Folco  
Laurin  
Ménard  
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

**SUPPLY**

## ALLOTTED DAY—AMATEUR SPORT

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ)** moved:

That, since the government ignored most of the recommendations by the Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada, a Sub-Committee of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, the House demand that the government place amateur athletes at the heart of its concerns and make a commitment to placing their interests before the interests of professional sport.

She said: Mr. Speaker, before beginning, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that I will be sharing my time with my

colleague from Témiscamingue. This will be the case with all Bloc Quebecois members throughout the day.

I must first say that I am delighted to be able to debate amateur sport in this House today, and I trust that our debate will have the attentive ear of the other side of the House.

The Bloc Quebecois is introducing the following motion on its opposition day:

That, since the government ignored most of the recommendations by the Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada, a Sub-Committee of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, the House demand that the government place amateur athletes at the heart of its concerns and make a commitment to placing their interests before the interests of professional sport.

If hon. members find this motion long, I must point out that every word has a meaning and a reason to be there. I would even say that each problem I shall address today could easily have been a motion onto itself, for the problems to be addressed throughout this day by my colleagues are but the tip of the iceberg. In fact, my impression in researching this matter was that it was like opening Pandora's box. Members will, I am sure, get that same impression.

I would like hon. members to know before I go any further that I too was part of the wonderful world of amateur sport. Yes, I was a competitive figure skater. I loved the sport and dreamed of taking part in international competitions, but I had to make a choice. That choice was to give up skating because my parents and I could no longer afford the skates, the costumes and the coaching.

I focused on my studies and then went into politics. Some might say I am still skating, but around issues. On this one, I will say right out that I want nothing to do with the kind of society that does not encourage its athletes, that politicizes sport and prefers to subsidize professional sport to the detriment of amateur sport.

Do members know what is serious here? Nothing has changed in the past 15 years. Nothing. Since the Liberals were elected in 1993 transfer payments for amateur sport have dropped from \$76 million to \$57 million. We are far from an improvement. In fact, I would call it a backslide.

For a moment we could have believed that the Liberals wanted to redeem themselves when the matter of striking a subcommittee on amateur sport came up, but no.

In passing, I would like to congratulate my colleague, the member for Rimouski—Mitis, who worked very hard on this issue and is undoubtedly following the debate today.

Although the Bloc Quebecois participated in good faith on this subcommittee, we have always felt that it was just an excuse to support professional sport and ensure the visibility of the maple leaf. We are still wondering if it was not a way to include the member for Bourassa.

*Supply*

The facts would certainly seem to bear us out. It is now clear that the subcommittee's report accomplished nothing because the minister did not implement any of the recommendations that might have helped athletes.

Although we were promised that this report would be the answer to all the problems encountered by athletes, the government is giving professional sport the nod over amateur sport.

What a sad comment on society, at a time when life is not easy for these promising athletes. Every year they face the same financial constraints and must struggle to find the necessary resources. The government should do more for these athletes, who do us proud and who give us a window on the world. It should match the commitment of the private sector.

The assistance now provided by Sport Canada falls badly short. Additional funding for our athletes should be made available immediately. Athletes cannot wait for the 2001 symposium and the resultant visibility for the government and its flag. If professional sport is in urgent straits, amateur sport is even more so.

As recently as May 1, 1999 one of our very well known athletes, Jean-Luc Brassard, asked whether athletes would have to walk behind their sponsors' flags. This is not a good sign.

Despite all the remarkable achievements of our athletes, of whom we are proud and who deserve greater assistance, the Liberal government's record on sport is a disgrace and I denounce it.

• (1240)

Since the tabling of the Mills report I have had the opportunity to speak to our athletes. There are many financial problems and they must be dealt with immediately.

As I said before, the issue of funding is among the most serious issues. Ten minutes are not enough to list all the problems that exist in amateur sport, but I will try to give an overview of the situation.

Let us be very clear. I want everyone to clearly understand that the Bloc Quebecois is not opposed to professional sport. We just want to make sure that the interests of millionaires are not given priority over those of amateur sport.

I also want the government to clearly understand that before funding professional sport millionaires there are questions that need to be answered. We should first determine the exact costs involved, know the spinoffs for Quebecers and Canadians, and control skyrocketing salaries.

No independent study has yet shown the economic impact of a professional franchise, and no professional team has made a commitment to remain in its host city in exchange for taxpayers' support. There are still many unanswered questions regarding

professional sport, and if I had more than 10 minutes I would mention many more.

Sport Canada only gives 8.3% of its financial resources to amateur athletes. Every study conclusively shows that athletes often live below the poverty line. Even the hon. member for Bourassa agrees with me on that issue. Coaches are not required to be bilingual and there is no training program to help them learn to speak French. Francophones are subject to serious discrimination. I could definitely use another 10 minutes.

There is a shift toward centres such as Calgary and Toronto. For example, the synchronized swimming federation transferred the team's training location to Toronto, in spite of the fact that the majority of its athletes are from Quebec.

Also, athletes cannot engage in politics; otherwise they could be expelled from the Canadian Olympic Association. They must, however, promote Canadian unity and prominently display the Canadian flag. If the athletes forget, the minister makes sure to take flags along with her and constantly reminds athletes that integration of Sport Canada with Canadian Heritage has focused attention on the contribution high level sport makes to Canadian pride and to national unity.

Amateur sport is so important to the minister that she rejects all measures that could really help athletes; such consistency, once again, from the minister.

Would hon. members like another example, just for the fun of it, since they are beyond counting? In her letter to the head of the committee, the minister wrote:

The committee has made a convincing demonstration of the necessity of solid assistance from the federal government to amateur sport.

Such a convincing demonstration that the minister is going to wait a while yet. She is not too sure. Stay tuned for further developments.

As I said, amateur sport is full of problems. Did hon. members know that there is no system to monitor the federations, and no assurance that taxpayers' money will be properly managed and our athletes respected?

I will give one example: the skaters Isabelle and Paul Duchesnay. They were forced to go to France to train and to compete for France, and now have had to go to Florida to teach figure skating because the Canadian skating federation refuses to allow them to coach here. And the government is doing nothing to resolve the situation.

When there are problems within a federation, athletes have to go elsewhere if they want to continue or have simply to give up. This simply makes no sense.

If I had more than 10 minutes I could also speak about another problem, that of francophone athletes who are often discouraged because they have to go elsewhere and learn English because

*Supply*

national centres offer few services in French. As Sports Québec indicated to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission barely eight years ago:

Unilingual francophone athletes must overcome an additional obstacle in Canadian selections when they are unable to fully communicate in their own language with their trainers and those responsible for selection. . . They have less opportunity. . . because the majority of professionals and volunteers responsible for the selection and training of athletes are unilingual anglophones.

If I had more than 10 minutes I would also talk about the problems within the Canadian Olympic Association, but once again 10 minutes is not very long.

The third recommendation in the Mills report on the matter of funding for the drug program is another hot topic. Clearly, the minister's response to the Mills report is a vast disappointment.

What has to be understood is that there are problems in sports at the upper echelons, and the government was elected for everyone, not just for the millionaires contributing to election coffers.

• (1245)

The government must become a decisive player and correct things now. In this case, why not let Quebec have its own banner? Quebec could do sports as it understands them. We could manage our federations properly and really give priority to our athletes.

This is the sort of society I want. Who knows, perhaps Quebec might beat Canada at the Olympic Games.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in this question and comment period I say to the member for Longueuil, a member from the Bloc Québécois, that this motion is a great initiative.

As the chair of the House of Commons committee that tabled the report, it is only fair and proper for me to acknowledge on the floor of this House of Commons the fantastic contribution the member for Rimouski—Mitis made to the committee. The member, Suzanne Tremblay, was with us—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** The hon. member surely knows that we do not name members in this House.

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills:** Madam Speaker, I know what the rules are but I also know that my friend, the member for Rimouski—Mitis, is not with us today. She was unable to be here. I know her spirit and her heart are totally behind the work we are doing in the House of Commons today. She is caring and compassionate.

I must say the only problem I had with the member for Rimouski—Mitis was that I could never figure out why she was part of the Bloc. I sensed in her a real passion for young amateur athletes from coast to coast. As we debate this report today I hope we in the House of Commons can do justice to all the good

work she did on behalf of young people, amateur athletes, not just from the province of Quebec, but from every region of our country. I had to put those remarks on the floor of the House of Commons.

I also have to say that the government is passionately committed to amateur sport. When the Minister for Canadian Heritage responded some three weeks ago, she tabled a report wherein 53 of the 69 recommendations were accepted by the government. It is an unprecedented response.

The most important thing that should be put forward once and for all is that in the report "Sport in Canada: Leadership, Partnership and Accountability, Everybody's Business" there were 69 recommendations and 68 of them were dedicated to amateur sport. Only one recommendation dealt with the fact that we have small market professional teams which need to be dealt with in a serious and constructive way.

As we launch this unprecedented debate in the House of Commons, and I realize it is only questions and comments right now, let us make sure that our focus is on amateur sport. Let us not get sidetracked by the professionals. Let us not let the media sidetrack us.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I in turn thank my colleague for his able participation on the committee. I think he made a substantial contribution to amateur sport. His heart was in the right place, and I do not fault him personally, but rather the government, and the response of the Minister of Canadian Heritage in particular.

I also wish to concur in the kind words addressed to my colleague, the member for Rimouski—Mitis. I am sure that she is here with us today in heart and in spirit.

I would like to tell my colleague, who mentioned 69 recommendations, 68 of them having to do with amateur sport, that I fully agree with him. I would like to ask him whether he finds it reassuring that his colleague, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, has rejected all of the amateur sport recommendations, or at least those that have a positive impact and would help athletes.

• (1250)

Right off the bat she approved the recommendation for professional sport, invested money and delegated the Minister of Industry—

**An hon. member:** That is not true.

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire:** —to meet with people in the sector. She wants to invest money, but does nothing for amateur sport.

I do not find this in the least reassuring, and I know that neither do the athletes of Quebec and of Canada. If the member wants to do something, I urge him to join the Bloc Québécois, because he

*Supply*

does indeed tend to think like us when he says that there has to be investment in amateur sport. He is welcome at any time.

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in today's debate on amateur sport, in the wake of the report tabled by the Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada on the needs of amateur athletes.

I want to point out that sport is an integral part of our culture, both in Canada and in Quebec. Everyone has, at one time or another, taken up one or several sports, or closely followed family members or friends who were actively involved in sports. Every community has an arena, a gymnasium and other sport facilities.

In fact, economic spinoffs from sports are obvious in every community. Most municipalities have facilities that were built by people and that provided permanent work for others.

The problem right now is that a great deal of attention and energy are focused on what must be done to help professional sport. The Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada is no stranger to the problem. Even though most of the subcommittee's recommendations concern amateur sport, what got people's attention was the future of professional sport and some government members were quick to take a stand in that regard. Yet the future of professional sport is not so—

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills:** Is was only one recommendation.

**Mr. Pierre Brien:** —promising. It will never be what it once was. With the Americanization of professional sport, several of our professional sport clubs are being threatened, and it will be very hard to save some of them.

The positive effect of this is that our sports reports, of which there are many—one need only read a morning paper to be convinced of that—may give more attention to amateur sport in future.

As for sports broadcasts, some radio stations have five hours of phone-ins every day. Perhaps they would give more time to covering amateur sports. This would focus more attention on the unprecedented success stories.

I recently attended a boxing match. What goes on there can very easily happen in amateur sport. It is a very good illustration of how things are. A fighter's career can be over in a matter of seconds. An athlete may have spent his whole youth training, but a few moments of vulnerability can stop him from attaining his desired goal.

That said, there are other values to sport: team work, aiming for success, pushing one's limits, which can impact on our daily lives. Athletes devote a great deal of effort and energy to their passion, and the values stay with them for their entire lives, as they do with those of us who participated in various sports when we were young.

Do we give them enough support? I think not. A goodly number of our athletes lack financial support. Of course the best of them, that tiny minority of athletes who manage to win medals in amateur sport, or an international or Olympic medal, manage to gain sponsorship from a company like McDonald's. Yet few have sufficient sponsor support to be able to increase training time and perform at the level they would like.

The government also has a great deal of trouble monitoring Canadian amateur sport associations because its financial contribution is insufficient. The more room left for other financial partners—and partnerships are not a bad thing—the more the government plays a minor role and the less it can impose its views on choices and strategy decisions.

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

• (1255)

**Mr. Pierre Brien:** Despite what some whiners on the other side of the House are saying, I have heard a member of the Liberal Party, whom I will quote in a few minutes, say some really bad things about the Canadian Olympic Association with respect to the Calgary clique, which had some cleaning up to do. We certainly agree with that.

I have no doubt that members of the Liberal Party must also support the principle that the government must invest more if it wants to play a greater role, and I challenge Liberal members interested in amateur sport to tell me otherwise. I am not talking about the gang that looks after professional sports, but rather those interested in amateur sport.

Some things have to be settled: the language problems in Canadian federations, location problems and strategic choices. There is a strong pull from Calgary in amateur sport. They deprived Quebec of a number of sports facilities. They even sent athletes to train there when most of them were from Quebec.

There have been a lot of dubious decisions such as these, and I am not talking about the place French occupies in events. Even in events where they are trying to make a public show French is forgotten. Imagine what is going on in the wings.

There are places in the world that are more open to Quebec's having its own delegations at certain sporting events, and I would like to see Canada being more open. Would it not be just fine to see Canada and Quebec competing in the finals of an international hockey tournament? It would be extraordinary and something else.

When these same professionals were on strike and organized hockey tournaments before the start of the season, they established regional groups very different from our Canadian political groups. There was a team from Quebec, and it was great to see the game. It was also great for once to watch our professionals not play for

money, because they were on strike at that point. The competition was really interesting.

The government should, among other things, increase its financial involvement with all the federations. There are currently a number of sport federations that are not even funded. How can they be expected to develop and to help athletes? There should be a review of all of them.

The selection of those federations that are currently getting help is highly questionable. Several need support but are not getting it. The government should quickly look at this issue. This was in fact one of the subcommittee's recommendations, but the government did not follow up on it.

I congratulate the hon. member for Longueuil for raising this issue today, as the hon. member for Rimouski—Mitis did before. I hope this debate will at least have the effect of reviving the report of the Subcommittee on the Study of Sport in Canada, which had been shelved. When I say that it was shelved I am being positive. Indeed, for all I know, it may well have been thrown into the garbage. Let us hope for the best, that the government will dig it out and implement a number of recommendations included in it.

Many people are actively involved in amateur sport and are expecting positive developments and signals. At a time when professional sport is becoming less appealing to many people who enjoy watching sport, this is a good opportunity to promote amateur sport.

It is somewhat disconcerting to ordinary people to see professional sport millionaires sometimes drag their feet and not perform as well as expected.

Amateur athletes do not have that luxury. When we attend a baseball game we may see a player earning \$4 million or \$5 million a year performing poorly. An amateur athlete cannot afford not to turn in a good performance during a competition because, unless he meets the very high standards he needs to qualify, he may lose the little support he has from sponsors, as well as from the government. He cannot afford to make any mistakes if he wants to survive in his sport.

I have a much greater respect for amateur athletes than for some professional athletes. We are all proud of Gaétan Boucher, Myriam Bédard and Sylvie Fréchette. Canadians of whom we are proud include swimmers Alex Bauman and Victor Davis, who projected a positive image and did Quebec and Canada proud.

One danger is that the government will simply see this debate as an opportunity for political visibility. It would be just like the Minister of Canadian Heritage to want to tattoo a maple leaf on the best athletes' foreheads to make sure that Canada is visible at competitions.

That is not the goal. The goal is to support athletes. Instead of conducting propaganda campaigns, as she did with the flag, the

### *Supply*

minister should provide funding for the daily expenses of these people so that they have a decent income while they are training, so that their passion for what they do will not be fettered. Let us agree: what we need is not a flag campaign, not money for visibility, not money for the government, but money that will go to athletes. If we keep that as a goal we will be on the right track.

• (1300)

In conclusion, I would like to move an amendment to the main motion moved by the member for Longueuil. I move:

That the motion be amended by adding after the word "and" the following: "immediately".

We are moving this amendment because we want action now, not commitments in principle saying that the government will study 50 or so proposals at some distant date. We want action now and that is why we are adding the word immediately to the main motion.

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague from Témiscamingue, who made a fine presentation.

However, with the little time he had at his disposal, I would have liked for him to speak more about the impact that Quebec having its own banner might have. Where did he get this idea and what would be the effect?

**Mr. Pierre Brien:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

Only yesterday I was involved in public events. We were discussing various subjects of concern to people, who are increasingly interested in what happens internationally, whether it involves the economy, various subjects or different variables.

A number expressed the desire to see us on the international stage soon, whether it be in the Olympics or other events. It was not just the sovereignists saying so. There were federalists as well who would like to have Quebec with its own group, its own team in certain international competitions.

For example, this is already possible in the Francophonie games. But here again, we could have a debate on the selection of athletes, how it is done, whether the Canadian or the Quebec teams have precedence in the selection of the people taking part.

I would like to add one thing that I did not have time to develop in my remarks. We have extremely capable athletes. Where I come from we have Denise Julien, in badminton, who is a great athlete. At the moment, however, Canada sets its own standards for athletes going to the Olympic Games. In theory, it wants to send the people most likely to be among the best. While she is among the top 20 in the world, she may not be able to meet the standards Canada sets in order to go to the Olympic Games.

*Supply*

There is the whole business as well of elitism or of the visibility that the federal government is aiming for with its athletes. These are participatory sports, and our best athletes in Quebec and in Canada should be able to go. If Canada does not want to send them under its banner, it should let us send them under our own.

[English]

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is very important that our listeners and viewers today understand that the motion on the floor of the House of Commons is essentially about amateur programs in Canada.

They would be a little confused if they did not understand that currently we have a Canada games system where each and every province goes to the games and has its own flag. That condition already exists for the Quebec teams, the Prince Edward Island teams and the Ontario teams. It is called the Canada Games.

• (1305)

It is very important to remind the Bloc Quebecois that there has never been a player from the province of Quebec, who put a Team Canada jersey on his or her body to represent Canada on the world stage, who has said that he or she did not think it was one of the greatest experiences in his or her life.

Let us not bastardize the great work we have done in the House of Commons, as the member from Rimouski has done in talking about amateur sport, by trying to bring in the notion of separatism for athletes. There is not an athlete who espouses that theory who has put on a Team Canada jersey.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Brien:** Madam Speaker, I cannot help but smile at the hon. member's grandstanding.

First of all, we have all heard about the Canada Games. We were not talking about the Canada Games, but about Quebec having its own delegation. Of course, our athletes are in a difficult situation and I am not asking them their point of view. However, when athletes start wondering if they will have to wear their sponsors' trademarks at the next Olympic Games, there is indeed a problem with the level of funding for amateur sport and our athletes do not feel they are getting the support they need from the federal government that is sending them to compete at the international level.

Private corporations are making up for the lack of funding and commitment from the government and soon enough they will have our athletes covered with their trademarks from head to toe and defending their interests instead of those of the country these athletes should be representing.

The hon. member should reflect upon this and go after his own colleagues, who choose to close their eyes or to worry only about

professional teams, without lifting a finger to help amateur sport. They have not done a single thing to help the people in amateur sport.

**Mr. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I find it regrettable that members of the Bloc are trying to get some credibility at our athletes' expense. Not only that, but we saw from their speeches that they do not have the depth, passion and credibility of the member for Rimouski—Mitis, whom we miss.

I have been working on this issue for two years. Contrary to those who are trying to score political points because they have yet to make a breakthrough in this House, I have met individually with each and every Canadian and Quebec federation, and when we are able to meet them all together, I challenge those members who are trying to score political points to find out who those people want as representatives.

Last week I was at the general meeting of the Fédération du patinage de vitesse du Québec, which took place at the Auberge des Gouverneurs in Sainte-Foy. Some people there told me "Mr. Coderre, you don't want to get involved in flag flaps. You really work for athletes and we acknowledge the fact that your government has already given its support to 53 recommendations out of 69". This is an important point.

While some members are trying to make political hay at the expense of professional sports, athletes will be judge and jury and will understand. The Bloc is taking a position against professional sport. One individual, by the name of Lucien Bouchard, got involved in the Expos situation. The first thing he said was "I will never invest in professional sport. I will never invest in Montreal's Expos. This is inhuman. This does not make sense".

Several months later, the head office—I am not talking about the valets—said "Okay, we will give between \$7 million and \$8 million a year for 20 years". Not a tax abatement but a direct contribution amounting to some \$160 million, because the head office understood that professional sport is an industry which generates revenues of \$300 million and represents 35,000 jobs.

I will stop talking about professional sport, because they have understood nothing.

• (1310)

The hon. member for Témiscamingue mentioned sports fans and open lines. However, when there is a serious problem in sport issues, do experienced sports columnists, people who gave their life for amateur sport or for sports in general, ask themselves "What will the Bloc do about it?" People would be more inclined to say: "All the Bloc wants is to create winning conditions for a new referendum".

People want to talk to the hon. member for Bourassa, to my friend, the chairman of the Sub-committee on the Study of Sport in Canada, and to my friend, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.



What does that mean? That means a very precise thing: the Bloc tried once again to make some political hay on sports. The hon. member for Témiscamingue predicted that the report would die after only 48 hours, but we are still talking about it. Then the Bloc Québécois decided to raise the issue of sports in the hope of scoring a few points.

I want to talk about specific and important issues. I will not talk about the Bloc, but about amateur sport and especially about athletes. It is true that opposition parties did not support all of the report. They would have liked to go further on some recommendations. However, one thing is certain. Those who predicted that the subcommittee's report would be stillborn, who today are trying to make some political hay with it, failed to grasp one thing, that the subcommittee's report is the first one in 30 years to examine the whole future of sports in Canada. That is my first point.

The second point is that the report on sport is the beginning of a process. This means it will take some time. This means we will be talking about the sport issue. The separatists tried to produce a minority report and to throw their venom at us. We decided to take a stand on amateur sport. We decided to take a stand for athletes, because it is true there are problems.

It is because this government followed through with our demands that we demonstrated once and for all that we, on this side of the House, want to work in the interests of athletes.

Some things must be done about taxation. Instead of making personal attacks, as does the hon. member for Longueuil, who is trying to score points because she has not yet made a breakthrough in the House, Bloc members should have suggested some alternatives. In this report, which they have rejected outright, there are things that are extremely important; so much so that the finance minister decided to follow up by planning consultations at the prebudget committee level for the next budget.

While they are trying to wage flag wars to campaign for the referendum and to create the winning conditions, we have decided to see the associations. Do we think people at Sports Québec will fall in love with this gang on the other side? Who do they come to talk to when there is a problem and when they want not only to send a message but also to find a solution? It is not to the gang on the other side. Let us be serious. They talk to my colleague, they talk to me, they talk to the minister and to the parliamentary secretary.

If we have proven to be sensitive to this issue, and if we have established our credibility and our intellectual honesty, it is because we have decided to take a stand on certain issues. We heard remarks a while ago about the Canadian Olympic Association. I am one of the instigators of the boycott of the last movie, which was in English only and was produced by Americans. Guess what? Not a

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single senator, not a single member of Parliament on this side went to see this movie, because we all know this is a bilingual country and there is problem here that needs to be dealt with.

If this does not demonstrate our sensitivity and our concern for both official languages in amateur sport, I fail to see what could do it.

Secondly, it is obvious that we need to bring forward a new approach to our tax system. This excellent report presents a blueprint for our society to improve the social, economic, political and environmental quality of life.

This report makes suggestions that cannot all be implemented overnight. We have suggested alternatives. We have decided, for example, to have a tax credit per child for parents with a household income of \$75,000 and less. These things are important, but they have been set aside. The finance minister has decided to go ahead with prebudget consultations.

#### • (1315)

The other point, and I think it is important to mention it, is that, while they make a fuss in an attempt at flag wars, in an attempt to score points because servility is the order of the day, we came up with a very important recommendation. This recommendation provides for a sports summit.

We will recall that two years ago there was a health summit. What happened with it? In the latest budget, the most important item, the cornerstone, was health.

Therefore, if we create not only a sport summit, but one that is chaired by our Prime Minister, there is no better decision making than that. Give us time. We will work, we will send a positive message and, from that, things will certainly start moving.

I want to launch an appeal to the associations, to the federations and to the athletes. I do not care what the other side may think. What I know, for example, is that people have given us this credibility. I invite federations and athletes to tell their viewpoint and to take an active part, like the president of Sports Québec, Jean-Guy Ouellet. I want all federations to be involved in this process. It is not a matter of trying to make the referendum the cornerstone, as they are doing the other side, but they should provide the solutions, approaches and, especially, show us their importance in this matter.

We can do things together. I have no interest in swapping a maple leaf for the fleur de lys on team jerseys. That is of no interest.

This is what was said last week—and members can check it—when the Fédération de patinage de vitesse unanimously gave me its support. Its representatives said “Finally, here are politicians not involved in the flag flurry, who want to work actively for

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our welfare. They want to help athletes. They want to help parents”.

I invite all those who are really interested in athletes and sports, not those interested in making political points at their expense, to become fully involved in this process and to work so that together we may find a solution that is viable and meaningful, because our goal, their goal, is to work for the well-being of society.

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I hope that simply rising in this House will not make the member for Bourassa feel persecuted.

I would like to remind him that he is the king of personal attacks. He has not stopped talking about members of the Bloc Québécois. Maybe he has not heard my speech, so I will remind him that I said clearly that the Bloc Québécois is not against professional sport. Far from it. We just want to remind the government opposite that it must place amateur sport at the heart of its concerns. I too made a little tour, as did the member for Bourassa. I know there is determination on the part of the athletes.

There is one thing I would like the member for Bourassa to explain to us. During the subcommittee hearings on October 29 the member for Bourassa expressed his indignation. Here is what he said “I will ask him (the Commissioner of Official Languages) to investigate and make sure that any problem of accessibility is settled, whether it has to do with documents, translation or services”. Can the member for Bourassa tell us if he followed through on that commitment made at the subcommittee hearings? He was talking about Jean-Guy Ouellet. Can he say a few good words about him?

I would also like to remind him that the colleague who worked with him for a year is from the riding of Broadview—Greenwood. It would be good for him to keep that in mind.

**Mr. Denis Coderre:** Madam Speaker, it is extremely easy for me to praise someone like Jean-Guy Ouellet, who dedicated his whole life to amateur sport and who worked tirelessly including—and this is for the information of the member for Longueuil—in university volleyball. He was also a referee.

We discussed these issues. Instead of going on tours, I deal with the issue. When we worked together, including at the Canadian university volleyball championship, we discussed this sort of thing.

I did indeed apply pressure regarding official languages. These are issues. However, contrary to members opposite, I looked for solutions and alternatives.

By contrast, what members across the floor decided to do—

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

**Mr. Denis Coderre:** The poor martyrs opposite are whining. If only they listened, it would help them.

What I have to say is helpful to me also, because it will help Canadians see who is serious about this issue. I will simply say that yes, we do think there is a language issue here.

● (1320)

Yes, we also think there are all manner of problems, but that is no reason to throw the baby out with the bath water.

We are aware of what they are up to as compared to what we are trying to do. We really want to work toward solutions and solve problems. From the start they have tried to use personal attacks and demagoguery. They have tried to say that the sport millionaires contribute to slush funds. I do not know what funds they are referring to, or which sport millionaires. Answers to those questions are needed.

For us on this side of the House, what is important is to work together and to continue the good work. Of the 69 recommendations, 53 have been accepted. Looking at all of the parliamentary committees, this was a relatively inexpensive one, costing only \$15,000, yet it attracted a great many people and triggered a public debate. That is what is important to us.

There are some people over there who have been carrying on about this, like the hon. member for Témiscamingue, who has been at it for some time now, telling us that we do nothing but speak of professional sport. Unlike the people on the other side, I have no need to backtrack on what I have said. Right from the start I said that we needed to focus on amateur and professional sport, because this is an industry that brings in \$9 billion and is responsible for 260,000 jobs and 1.1% of the gross domestic product.

We are not going to put our heads in the sand, not like Lucien Bouchard. At one point he said “It is unthinkable that we would help the Expos, but, on the other hand, maybe it is a good thing because now the federal election is over. So, when it comes down to it, we will put in \$160 million”. People will be in a position to judge who has the greater credibility in this matter.

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, usually the member for Bourassa makes me laugh. What he says often has to be taken with a grain of salt. Today, however, I do not find it funny at all. Amateur sport is a very important issue and the member for Bourassa is trying to give the debate a type of levity I do not really care for.

First of all, things have to be said in all honesty. If the member for Bourassa really complained to the official languages commissioner—we have checked and it does not seem to be the case—then I would ask him to table his letter of complaint.

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**Mr. Denis Coderre:** Madam Speaker, it is not the first time that I complain. Way back when I talked to the commissioner. If the files do not reflect that, that is another matter, but I will check.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to debate this particular topic. I would like to completely change the tone of where we have been.

I would first like to recognize the dedication of the member for Broadview—Greenwood to this particular topic and commend him for having made the effort to bring focus to the issue, which is indeed a very important issue here in Canada.

The member made an intervention earlier and he is correct when he states that the report does examine all aspects of sport. He will also recall that as the heritage critic for the Reform Party at the time, I chose to boycott the hearings. Unfortunately, the reason I chose to boycott the hearings, has been borne out. I say this in all sincerity, but I never believed there was a commitment on the part of the Liberal government to do anything with the report.

The report itself is an excellent report. The work of the people involved in generating the report is good. The determination of the member to make this happen was also good. Unfortunately, there never was a commitment on the part of the heritage minister or on the part of the government to ever do anything with the report.

At the time, I called it the hockey report because I predicted, unfortunately correctly, that it would deteriorate into a discussion about the NHL and about hockey. It has deteriorated into a worthy discussion about taxes, particularly taxes as compared to U.S. jurisdictions. Indeed, all Canadians and all businesses are looking for relief from the government at some future point in time for at least a recognition of how the Canadian tax level puts us at such a severe disadvantage against the U.S.

• (1325)

I note that the Minister of Industry is going to be proceeding with a summit of the mayors and all the people involved with the NHL teams in Canada, I believe in the next couple of weeks. Certainly that side of the issue has received the high priority that I predicted it would receive.

There have been some good suggestions. Ron Bremner, the president of the Calgary Flames, has suggested that there are lotteries that relate to the scores that happen in the NHL. He wonders why the NHL cannot get some proceeds from those lotteries. That is worthy of consideration.

I note that when the Edmonton franchise was in deep trouble it ended up giving \$2 million of concession fees; that is, earnings from concession sales in the Northlands Coliseum to the new

group. That, by the way, was just fine by me because the Edmonton Ice, the junior team that was there at the time, was looking for a home. They ended up in my home in Cranbrook, B.C. and are now the Kootenay Ice. So there was a concession there.

One of the things that was not covered, which was because it was an all-encompassing report, was that it would have been helpful to have noted that the NHL Players' Association also gains great revenue with tens of millions of dollars of merchandise sales that goes into the players' association pocket. There is a lot of money within the system as it presently sits.

I also note that the issue of taxation is not just a federal taxation issue. The Molson Centre, as I understand it, is hit with a bill of some \$12 million annually in municipal taxes. That is more than all the other franchises pay in all of the United States.

Finally, there is the Canadian exchange rate which, of course, is another function of how the government continues to mismanage the Canadian economy vis-à-vis the U.S. economy.

The point is that this was, unfortunately, all predictable. Hockey is a high profile issue. It is, after all, our Canadian sport. I cannot think of another country where there is as much attention paid to any individual sport as there is here in Canada as far as ice hockey and the NHL are concerned.

What is missed and what is essential in the report is the whole issue of a discussion moving toward a commitment by the government to coaching programs and to facilities. I look at the Canada Games as being a good thing that the government is continuing to carry on. If the Reform Party was government, we would carry on the whole idea of the Canada Games because that is where we are involved with facilities, national organizations and national coaching programs.

An unfortunate fact of life and politics is that all these things end up leading inexorably toward things like the Olympics and very high profile issues like that which again become a financial commitment from the government. There seems to be a lack of understanding on the part of the government that it is the amateurs and amateur sport that ultimately feed into the Olympic program and, for that matter, even into the NHL.

I believe, and I know my party believes, that it is very important for kids to be active in amateur sport. This is a way in which kids can be focused. This is a way in which we can build our society. This is a very healthy outlet for young people today.

We have to re-establish our priorities for amateur sports without a doubt and I have indicated the two areas. Number one, because of the high profile of the NHL, we knew that it was going to fall off the track and become a hockey report. Number two, because of the

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high profile of international sports like the Olympics, again we end up focusing on events like that.

There does not seem to be any recognition of the travel expenses or any kind of tax relief for people who are involved in making sure that their kids have an opportunity to take part in sports or, for that matter, in cultural events. There is just a total lack of recognition, a complete void of any attention to the many, many dollars and hours that parents, guardians and team adults put into amateur sports.

• (1330)

In that respect I agree with the motion of the Bloc. I agree that there has to be more attention. As I said at the outset, I have already commended the member for Broadview—Greenwood for having brought forward this report, but where is the commitment of the government to the report? Where is the commitment of the government to enact the necessary things that are required in the report?

Unfortunately, we may have to re-invent the wheel. In other words, at a time when the government finally gets serious about amateur sport, about seeing tax relief and support for parents and guardians, and the community, who are attempting to support children who are involved in sports or in cultural events, at that point, unfortunately, although this report will act as an excellent template, an excellent starting point, I would see it probably being done all over again. That is really unfortunate considering the amount of hard work that the member and the committee put into it.

Canada is a compilation of all of us, all of us in the House and the people watching this debate; all Canadians. Part of who we are is how we interact with and react to each other. Amateur sport plays a very important part in how we relate to each other. It brings us together in good, healthy competition and camaraderie around events. I would commend to the government of the day that it take another look at this whole issue and finally get serious about enhancing amateur sport in Canada.

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have a very brief question for the Reform member for Kootenay—Columbia with respect to tax breaks. He has talked about tax breaks for Canadians. In the recent federal budget we saw a tax break for the very wealthy individuals in this country. For example, if a person is making \$1 million a year in the current fiscal calendar year, he or she will receive a tax break of about \$8,000 for that million dollars earned.

As a matter of fact, there are 650 hockey players in the NHL who are paid, on average, \$1.187 million U.S. per year, which translates into about \$1.8 million Canadian. I am wondering whether my Reform colleague would agree with the Liberal tax break for these very wealthy hockey players who, in this calendar year, on the basis of those wages, will receive a \$13,000 to \$14,000 tax break, when

in effect those in the middle and lower income groups will receive maybe \$150. What does he think about that? Does he support that? How would he rectify the situation if he does not support it?

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Madam Speaker, that is certainly a very thought provoking question. The reality is that as a percentage of their income the people at the high end of the income scale receive a significantly smaller proportion as a percentage of their income.

The problem that we are faced with and the problem that is an immovable object is the fact that if I am playing hockey for the Calgary Flames or the Vancouver Canucks or the Toronto Maple Leafs, the tax scale against me in Canada is significantly greater than it is if I am earning that money in the United States.

I happen to think that \$1.8 million is a grotesque amount of money. I cannot imagine earning that kind of money in the first place. I really seriously question, as do many Canadians, that level of income for professional athletes. Nonetheless, it does bring us to the point that the difference in the tax rate for people in Canada versus the tax rate for people in the United States is a good 10 to 15 percentage points. That is too big a difference.

• (1335)

**An hon. member:** Do you support the tax cuts?

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Yes, I do support the tax cuts.

If nothing else, the point that has been drawn out is the fact that we have to have more of a level playing field between ourselves and the United States, which shares our markets and is our biggest competitor.

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member stated in his comments that he boycotted the committee. However, because he spoke today he obviously read the report. He knows that 68 of the 69 recommendations in this report dealt with the amateur sport fabric of the country. He knows that 53 of those 69 recommendations were accepted almost immediately when the minister announced the response to the report three weeks ago.

Why does the member persist in saying that this report is only about hockey? Why does he not acknowledge the 53 decisions that the government supported and that only one of the 69 recommendations concerned hockey? The House is about dealing in hope. Why does the member repeatedly say things that he knows are not factually correct?

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Madam Speaker, very briefly I will say exactly what I said in my speech. Yes, 68 of the 69 recommendations in the

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report had nothing to do with the NHL. My prediction was that, unfortunately, this report would end up dealing with NHL issues.

The industry minister is not having a meeting about amateur sport with people across Canada. The industry minister is having a high level meeting with mayors and people involved with the hockey industry. The member for Broadview—Greenwood makes my point, which is, what was the point of preparing the report if it is simply going to receive lip service from the heritage minister?

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to join in the debate this afternoon. I support the Bloc motion, which states:

That, since the government ignored most of the recommendations by the Subcommittee on the Study of Sport in Canada, a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, the House demand that the government place amateur athletes at the heart of its concerns and make a commitment to placing their interests before the interests of professional sport.

I would like to congratulate my colleague, the member for Broadview—Greenwood, for having chaired this committee. I was a member of the committee for the last three months. My colleague in the New Democratic Party caucus, the member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, sat on the committee on behalf of our caucus for a number of months prior to my arrival. Both the member for Broadview—Greenwood and my colleague from Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys did a fair amount of work, particularly in promoting the growth and development of amateur sport in this country. I wanted to acknowledge that because it is very important.

As a citizen of Canada I have participated in a number of amateur sport activities. I have coached soccer, T-ball, hockey and curling, which most members know is a big sport in Saskatchewan. In essence, what I am saying is that athletics and amateur sport are very important cultural activities in our country. In particular, amateur sport promotes a very positive mental attitude and physical well-being. It promotes physical fitness. It provides skills in personal achievement and motor skill development. It is a very healthy focus for competition. It also teaches young people and adults the very significant value of co-operation and working with each other to achieve a common goal. It provides a sense of belonging and camaraderie. It enhances communication and interpersonal development for our youth. That is why I support initiatives with respect to the amateur sport recommendations in this report.

● (1340)

As an aside, I want to say that I co-sponsored a bill in the House of Commons, which was passed, which made hockey our national sport. The member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys moved the bill. I co-sponsored the bill and I am very proud of that because it is an indication, in my view, that I represent a number of members of parliament in terms of saying that sport is a very

important activity and a very important value in which we all can participate.

There are many positive things in the report that I want to briefly touch on because my time is limited. I support, as does the New Democratic Party caucus, a number of issues. For example, we support the Government of Canada undertaking a sports facility infrastructure program which would improve and increase the number of facilities, in particular in communities that do not have adequate facilities. We support the eligibility for charitable tax deductions to be extended to qualified provincial and territorial level not for profit sport organizations.

I might add that in Saskatchewan we have gone one step further. About 20 years ago we turned over the lottery proceeds for Lotto 649 and other lottery revenues to the sports organizations in Saskatchewan so that they can fund amateur sport, and they do that very well. They are in charge of marketing and selling the tickets and gathering the revenue, as well as paying their share of the taxes to the provincial and federal governments. They also play a very important role in developing the sports organizations in our province.

We are also very supportive—and this is something that I personally recommended—of examining the possibility of creating a non-refundable tax credit for annual fees that parents pay for their children taking coaching, officiating or first aid courses, as well as deducting some of their fees for sports, up to about \$1,000, because it becomes very expensive when there is more than one child. I know people who have three and four children who all want to get involved in sports. That costs money. How do we facilitate these youngsters getting more experience in the sport world? Perhaps we could provide tax deductions for them.

The member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys recommended a millennium sport bond. He called it a sport bond, but the committee enhanced it by calling it the millennium sport bond. This would be a mechanism which would allow individuals in this country to invest in bonds, and the revenues and interest from those bonds would be shared with the investor and with those sports organizations which issue the bonds. We think that would be a good opportunity to broaden financing for the sports world.

As the New Democratic member on the subcommittee I issued a minority report. I did not agree with all of the recommendations because there were some which I felt I was unable to support. For example, one of the recommendations was to look at further tax considerations for professional sport.

Let us take hockey, for example. There are 650 professional hockey players in the NHL. The average income is \$1,187,000 U.S. or \$1,800,000 Canadian. That is the average income of the 650 players. This is an example of perhaps going the other way in terms of expenditures for hockey. Prior to issuing salaries, the owners received money which was for their benefit and that of their families. Now it is being spread out to the hockey players and their

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families. It has gone the other way in the sense that some salaries are \$4 million, \$5 million and \$6 million U.S. per year for particular hockey players.

That is competition, but it is hurting Canadian hockey teams. Our concern with respect to the subcommittee report is that we are looking at providing them with additional tax breaks before they deal with their own problem.

For example, in the Canadian Football League there is a pooling arrangement. All cities pool their revenues and the weaker markets are subsidized by the wealthier markets. For example, the Saskatchewan Rough Riders, which play out of Regina, which has a population of 200,000, subsidize the Montreal Alouettes, the Toronto Argonauts and the B.C. Lions. We are a small community, but we make money in our community with our football team and we pool with the bigger communities. We do not have a problem with that.

• (1345)

The NHL does not do that. For example, before they sell one ticket, the New York Rangers get about \$50 million U.S. off the top from American Cable Systems Corporation, the company that owns them. That is cash they have to play with in terms of paying for expenses and salaries. That drives up the salaries of players like the great Wayne Gretzky and others which is good as they deserve to be paid well, but it is a disadvantage for every other hockey team market.

In Canada it is the same time situation. The Montreal Canadiens pay \$11.2 million a year in property taxes. Should this be a responsibility of those provinces and cities that do not have an NHL team or should it be the responsibility of the the Montreal urban governments? They are the ones charging the taxes. If they have a problem and the Montreal Canadiens cannot pay the taxes, maybe they should reduce their taxes. I would support that.

Why should Saskatchewan, Manitoba or the Atlantic provinces support additional tax breaks for these franchises when their municipalities are jacking them around in terms of high taxes? I say let the municipalities address the issue. The Montreal Canadiens pay more in property taxes than 21 U.S. franchises combined. Do we want the Canadian taxpayers to subsidize Montreal further? I and other Canadians think not.

We have a few other issues here. Should they get tax breaks? In the budget the Liberal government which is so supportive as it says of low income people, gave the millionaire hockey players on average \$14,000 a year in tax cuts. People making \$50,000 a year got \$200 in tax cuts. What a fair system that is. It is unfair and we should look at this situation.

The subcommittee on sport has made some very positive recommendations with regard to amateur sport. The Liberal government has failed to act on those recommendations. I urge the government to revisit those particular recommendations in the report, those issues that will support our young people and will support the development of amateur sport in this country. Because farmers in western Canada are facing a financial disaster, the lowest income since the depression, because health care is being cut back at the federal level, because our social safety net is being butchered by the Liberal government opposite, maybe the government should look at those as priorities before it looks at the wealthy hockey players and the wealthy owners of the hockey teams.

I support the motion of the Bloc. I seek unanimous consent to make the motion votable.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** The hon. member seeks unanimous consent to make this a votable item. Is there consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre for his great contribution to the subcommittee. His insight and his own family experience in terms of working with young people and bringing that knowledge to the subcommittee were sincerely appreciated by all members on all sides.

I have to go back to the member's comments on the professional side of this debate. We will repeat this many times today. In our report there was only one recommendation called the sports pact which dealt with the professional sports systems. It would have been very easy for us to say let us forget about the professional stuff because it is going to create too much controversy and criticism because all Canadians will do is focus on the salaries of the multimillionaire players.

It is very important for us to let the House and Canadians know the reason we took on that very tough decision of signalling to Canadians that we have a problem on the professional side. The NHL alone over a five year period contributes \$1.35 billion to all levels of government. That money goes into the treasuries.

• (1350)

These NHL teams are not being subsidized. They are sending huge sums of the money to the various treasuries in Canada, those of the municipal and provincial governments and even the national government. Canadians in the end will decide. I think it is very important that as we criticize the high salaries of the players, we should also be well aware of what the treasuries in Canada are receiving from the professional sports industry. I think \$1.35 billion over five years is a substantial amount.

*Supply*

We know that our smaller market teams are facing difficulties. We know there is a strain because of the exchange rate of the dollar and the disadvantage to our tax system. We did not say the government should absolutely deal with tax fairness, but we did we have a problem and it is a debate for all Canadians. When we have this debate, let us not refuse to acknowledge the great contribution made to the treasuries by the professional teams.

**Mr. John Solomon:** Madam Speaker, the member makes an interesting point.

It is one of the issues I did not raise because I ran out of time. I am glad he has raised this point and I can raise it now. We obtain revenues from the professional franchises. However, a \$120,000 box in a hockey arena costs the taxpayers of Canada between \$27,000 and \$30,000 a year. That is the amount the company gets to write off against its income and that is a loss of revenue to the federal treasury. I do not know what it is provincially but we can add another 30% or 40% to that. Tens of millions of dollars subsidize the hockey teams now through subsidizing the boxes. If a business buys a set of hockey tickets at \$5,000 or \$6,000 a ticket, \$10,000 for a few tickets for the business and public relations, guess who subsidizes that.

I am not saying it is wrong. I am just saying we should put the facts on the table and make sure that Canadians know how many millions of dollars are subsidizing professional sports already so we can have a fair debate.

We did not have an opportunity to obtain that information from Revenue Canada. I hope at some point the minister will table that information so we can see exactly how many millions of dollars subsidize these hockey teams to the tune of taxpayers' loss to tax expenditures.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like some clarification about the question that was asked by the member. The only member who answered no was not in his seat and popped out from behind the curtains like a Jack-in-the-box.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I have to say to the hon. member that I heard more than one no.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak in support of the Bloc motion.

It is my pleasure to say that I was part of this debate from the beginning with respect to the subcommittee that was headed by the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood. I congratulate him on

the effort and passion he brought to that subcommittee. I know the work of all the members was appreciated.

Members of the subcommittee on sport heard hours of testimony. We heard a passionate debate on both sides of the divide. We read hundreds of pages of documents which spoke of the benefits of active and well funded amateur sport organizations.

The most contentious issue was obvious. It is the same contentious issue which is before the House today, the issue of some form of subsidy for professional sport. Hockey is the sport that has been singled out most often, but it is fair to say other sports are being jeopardized as well. Here locally the Ottawa Lynx are under a very crucial time period with respect to their funding. The Montreal Expos have experienced problems. The CFL time and time again has been struggling to make budgets and payrolls.

I want to state quite clearly on the record that the Progressive Conservative Party supports all of the recommendations with respect to amateur sport in Canada. We are strongly in favour of the recommendations that encourage Canadians to engage in a more active and healthy lifestyle as well as those that promote the idea of ethics in sport, the integration of disabled persons into sports and their governing bodies and the support of parents and coaches in Canada.

• (1355)

Canada urgently needs an overall improvement to amateur sport. It bears mentioning that if we do not make those recognitions and contributions financially there will be a price to pay at the other end. I am talking about the criminal justice system.

I was raised in a small community in rural Nova Scotia. I participated in amateur sport, rugby, hockey, baseball and most sports on the go at high school and at the amateur level. I was constantly reminded by parents and coaches that I would stay out of trouble if I hung around ballparks and rinks as opposed to standing on a street corner and getting involved with drugs and criminal activity. Those are real facts and challenges faced by Canadians, parents and children alike.

I refer to some of the correspondence I received in regard to the issue before the House. I received a letter from Dal Bryant on January 14 which I will quote in part: "I am a parent of three athletes. My observation however was that unless you were very well off, your children would not even be provincially competitive and just plain forget the national and international levels". This comes from a parent.

Charles Schafer wrote on January 7: "Amateur sport is a benefit to all communities at the grassroots level. These sports and athletes have been underfunded and often ignored by the media and politicians alike. This is where I would like to see my tax dollars directed".

The final reference is to the Nova Scotia director of the Federation of Canadian Archers. Eric Mott wrote the following

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words: "Our national athletes receive zero dollars. We presently have several athletes who are in training at the National Archery Centre in Quebec, one of which trains eight hours a day and has to pay for her training to represent her country internationally. Imagine having to pay to train to represent your country".

It is obviously not just professional hockey. It is not just any one sport we are talking about in the broader context of this debate.

I state again quite clearly that the Progressive Conservative Party does not endorse recommendations that would hand over subsidies outright to professional sports. This would be a failure to account for the actual overall costs of the subsidies and the effects they might have on those franchises.

Before the recommendations can be truly debated, there is a need for a full and proper examination of the concept of income sharing among professional organizations such as the NHL and a concrete plan for how any form of subsidy would benefit the greater overall community and promote greater community involvement.

No real assurances have been given from the league, the players, the owners, the associations. Mr. Wayne Gretzky has a bit of spare time on his hands now. Perhaps we could get some of his wisdom and insight because it is the wisdom of Solomon, and I am not talking about the previous speaker, that is required here. We need a real debate on how the effects of subsidizing sports ahead of important issues like health—

**The Speaker:** My colleague, I will interrupt you now. You still have half of your time left and you will have the floor when we return to debate if you so seek it.

[Translation]

It being nearly 2 p.m., we shall move on to Statements by Members.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF OLDER PERSONS

**Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to send a special greeting to everyone involved in a celebration of seniors at an International Year of Older Persons wine and cheese party taking place at the Heidehof Home for the Aged in my riding of St. Catharines.

The United Nations has designated 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons. This special year for seniors recognizes the world's aging population. For Canada the year holds special meaning because we have one of the fastest growing seniors

populations in the world. Our national theme for 1999 is "Canada, a society for all ages".

In this special year for seniors I join with the seniors and the organizers of the St. Catharines wine and cheese to promote and enhance understanding, harmony and mutual support across generations. Working together we can truly make Canada a society for all ages.

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### CARIBOO—CHILCOTIN

**Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this summer I invite all Canadians to come and meet the friendly people of beautiful Cariboo—Chilcotin in central British Columbia.

Why not follow the Cariboo gold rush train up the Fraser Canyon and then head west through the Chilcotin for the ferry ride past dolphins and whales to Vancouver Island? While driving through this spectacular part of Canada, you will be looking for something to do. Drop in and see the good people of Lillooet. Then check out the Bo Beep Ladies Golf Tournament as well as the Only in Lillooet Days, the Begbie Revue and the Lillooet Gold Trail Triathlon. Then mosey into Ashcroft for the Ashcroft Hog Run or the 12th Annual B.C. Old Time Drags and Rod Run.

● (1400)

Stop by 100 Mile House and check out the Bridge Lake Cattle Drive and Rodeo and the Square Dance Jamboree or take part in the Magoo Memorial Funball Tournament.

While in Quesnel take in the B.C. Old Time Fiddling Contest, the Quesnel Club Horseshow and the Bill Barker Days Festival and then go into the historic Barkerville gold rush town site.

On the way to Bella Coola for the ferry, make sure to squeeze in the Williams Lake and Anahim Lake rodeos.

Once you have tasted Cariboo hospitality I promise you will be back for more. See you in the Cariboo.

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### D-DAY

**Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the wee hours of June 6, 1944, while 450 Canadian paratroopers rained down on France behind German defences, 109 vessels of the Royal Canadian Navy sailed for France as part of the massive allied armada.

Canadian aircraft engaged the enemy in the sky and on the ground. That was 55 years ago. By the evening 14,000 Canadians had landed in Normandy and had gained more ground than any of our allies. The liberation of Europe was under way.



Between the morning and the evening there was the heroic but bloody story of D-Day, of troops striking mines hidden by high tides, of others landing in plain view of enemy strong points and of house to house combat with the enemy. On that day 340 Canadians died, 547 were wounded and 47 were taken prisoner.

The Canadians who helped smash German defences did so with unflinching courage and unflagging energy, a kind of spirit and commitment that few of us could even fathom.

We must not allow time to diminish this magnitude of sacrifice, nor complacency to fade the importance of the day.

\* \* \*

### GOVERNOR GENERAL'S FOOT GUARDS

**Mrs. Judi Longfield (Whitby—Ajax, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Monday marks the anniversary of one of Canada's oldest and most well known Canadian forces militia units. The Governor General's Foot Guards is celebrating 127 years serving Canada and Canadians.

It is one of the two units that provides soldiers to the Canadian forces ceremonial guards on Parliament Hill. The red uniforms and bearskin hats these soldiers wear are symbols of Canada known throughout the world.

The changing of the guard ceremony performed every day in the summer is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Ottawa, but the Governor General's Foot Guards is more than a ceremonial presence on Parliament Hill. It is a well trained militia unit whose members have served Canada since the early years of Confederation.

Members of the Governor General's Foot Guards helped their fellow Canadians during the Manitoba flood and the 1998 ice storm. They serve the cause of international peace in wartorn places like Cyprus, Somalia and Bosnia.

I am sure all members of the House will join me in congratulating the Governor General's Foot Guards on its anniversary and wishing its members every success in the years to come.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### QUEBEC NURSES

**Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week there will be two one-hour strikes by hospital nurses in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Quebec City regions, respectively.

The purpose of this pressure tactic is to show their dissatisfaction with the slowness of negotiations with the Parti Québécois government of Lucien Bouchard.

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In 1982-83 that same Lucien Bouchard was the chief negotiator for the Parti Québécois government with the nurses of Quebec.

In addition to the fee paid to his Chicoutimi law practice, Lucien Bouchard received a \$250,000 bonus from the Parti Québécois government for cutting the salaries of Quebec nurses by 20%.

The nurses of Quebec deserve an increase of more than 15% for their loyal services to the people of Abitibi-Témiscamingue, particularly since they have not had a raise for some years.

Despite their mistreatment at the hands of the Parti Québécois government, we are very well looked after by the nurses in our hospitals, who provide excellent patient care.

\* \* \*

### ASTRONAUT JULIE PAYETTE

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to salute Julie Payette, our Canadian member of the Discovery mission.

[English]

Julie Payette is an astronaut, engineer, pilot and musician who speaks six languages. Her life of tremendous achievement is testimony to the unlimited possibilities for excellence that can be found in all of us.

We can only hope that her life becomes a model for all young people who aspire to greatness in science and engineering.

[Translation]

Julie's eyes may be on the sky, but we all know that her heart is right here in Canada. On behalf of the Reform caucus, I am pleased that Julie has returned to earth safe and sound after an excellent mission.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

### THE LATE LÉON LAJOIE

**Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Léon Lajoie, a Jesuit who was the priest in Kahnawake for 39 years, died on May 14, and the whole community is in mourning.

The Mohawk honoured Léon Lajoie for his lifelong dedication, openness and receptiveness by giving him the name sakohá..wi, which means "the one who leads and shoulders the burden". "Our captain is gone", commented parishioners as they were coming out of church.

Everyone trusted Léon Lajoie. His church was always open, and secrets, however serious they were, remained secrets.

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As a show of respect, an eagle feather, the symbols of the bear, turtle and wolf clans, and a flower representing Katéri Tékakwitha were laid in his coffin.

“The one who leads and shoulders the burden” played a major role during the difficult events that took place, even though that role was a quiet one and was overlooked. In fact, Léon Lajoie maintained a quiet but effective link between all the Mohawk and other Quebecers.

Léon Lajoie, is worthy of all our admiration. Let us hope we can learn from his example.

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[*English*]**CANADIAN SKILLS COMPETITION**

**Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this past weekend Kitchener—Waterloo welcomed 600 young people from across Canada who have proven they have skills of the future. They were participants in the fifth annual Canadian skills competition which ran from last Wednesday until yesterday.

This national competition offers young Canadians the opportunity to showcase their skills and abilities in trades and disciplines ranging from architecture and cabinet making to fashion and culinary arts, computer animation and auto mechanics.

In addition, some 100 young Canadians competed to determine who will be part of team Canada at the upcoming 35th world skills competition to be held this November in Montreal.

I am proud that the Government of Canada is a major sponsor of the Canadian skills competition through Canada’s youth employment strategy. This event celebrates the excellence of Canada’s young people.

These young people know the economic opportunities of tomorrow will be available to people with the skills and dedication they are showing in Kitchener—Waterloo today. Congratulations to all the weekend’s participants.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]**ASTRONAUT JULIE PAYETTE**

**Mr. Claude Drouin (Beauce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what can we say to mark the return of Julie and all the other members of the space shuttle? Hear, hear.

Not only did Quebecer Julie Payette represent us brilliantly, but she is also an example of determination and patience for young people looking for a dream.

All Canadians followed her throughout a complex mission during which Julie had to perform a series of risky manoeuvres that were essential for the space shuttle’s crew.

We are now hoping that Julie will share her experience with us, and we are convinced that she will have given many young Canadians the desire to follow in her footsteps, with the same spirit of determination, risk taking and adventure.

We welcome Julie back. We are all proud to say with her “Mission accomplished”.

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[*English*]**NEW BRUNSWICK ELECTION**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is decision day in New Brunswick. We encourage the people of that great province to get out en masse and vote for the political parties, the policies and the candidates of their choice.

It has turned into a proverbial political horse race between a standing champion and a young challenger. Reigning Camille Red, trained and nourished on McKenna oats, burst out of the gate with a big lead but as we all know early leads do not guarantee late wins.

Old political warhorses in Fredericton, Ottawa and everywhere else eventually realize that the jockeying of the backroom boys, the punditry of the press and the betting of the crowd are not enough to win today or tomorrow. New ideas, new energy and fresh blood are what it takes to win in the future.

In New Brunswick, Lord Blue has tracked brilliantly to the inside lane of lower taxes and a brighter economic future for children. He has pulled ahead in this race with the finish line in sight. There is a message here for the old warhorse in Ottawa: “You can’t win in the future by running forever on your past”.

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[*Translation*]**FORCES OF LIBERATION**

**Mr. Paul Mercier (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on June 5, 1944, just 55 years ago, millions of Europeans in occupied countries who were anxiously listening to the BBC, as they did every evening, heard, as I did, despite the jamming by the Germans, a mysterious phrase that translated roughly as: The drawn out sobs of fall’s violins soothe my heart with their monotonous languor.

The next day they understood. Deliverance was at hand. The landing had just begun. The mysterious coded message was a warning to the French resistance.

That day 20,000 Canadians and Quebecers launched an attack on Juno beach and 359 of them died for the liberation of Europe. Let us never forget.

Today, obviously on a smaller scale, the same countries have again mobilized to liberate another people from an occupation they oppose; the Kosovars.

Let us be proud to belong to the free world, to the western world, which knows how to mobilize not just to defend its own freedom, but the freedom of others, even when its own material interest is not threatened.

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• (1410)

[English]

### JULIE PAYETTE

**Ms. Susan Whelan (Essex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, all Canadians welcome astronaut Julie Payette who returned to earth yesterday after a successful mission aboard the space shuttle *Discovery* to deliver two tonnes of supplies, including tools, clothes, water and other supplies to the new international space station.

When *Discovery* emerged from the night sky at 2:03 a.m. above the Kennedy Space Centre, it was only the 11th time that a space shuttle had landed in darkness. Mission Control waited until almost the last minute before giving the seven astronauts approval to fire the breaking engines and come home.

Astronaut Payette worked gruelling 15 hour days to prepare to go into the space station on the way to fulfilling her dream. As Julie has said herself, there is no miracle recipe or magic road to follow, but one of the keys is to maintain a positive attitude and to be true to oneself”.

We are proud of Julie and welcome her home.

\* \* \*

### HEALTH

**Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are becoming increasingly concerned about their food safety and increasingly frustrated with a government that appears more concerned with pleasing corporations than with protecting their health.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has proven itself incapable of taking decisive action to protect our health. When imported raspberries poisoned hundreds of Canadians last year, it refused to step in to ban the imports because of liability concerns. When salmonella tainted alfalfa sprouts poisoned nearly 200 people, the CFIA backed away from reporting the industry responsible.

The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada that represents the scientists and food inspectors charged with safeguarding our food supply has said the agency has totalled aban-

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doned its mandate. It has cut hundreds of field inspector jobs and stopped conducting annual safety audits of meat establishments.

Today a scientist said the government uses wrong procedures when it comes to assessing the environmental and food safety risks posed by genetically engineered foods. Today scientists said that when it comes to soy based infant formula Health Canada chooses to ignore the scientific evidence.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### JEAN-FRANÇOIS LEGAULT

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on July 27, 1997, Jean-François Legault, a 14 year old resident of the municipality of Mascouche, saved his father from certain death, an action for which he recently received the Governor General's medal of bravery and the Quebec National Assembly's citation for citizenship.

When an explosion threw his father into his garage, Jean-François risked his life to extinguish the flames enveloping the man and drag him out of the inferno, despite the intense heat and smoke.

Mr. Legault hovered between life and death for 48 hours and was kept in the burn ward of Montreal's Hôtel-Dieu hospital for six months. Today he is continuing his rehabilitation.

I say “Bravo” to Jean-François and thanks for that example of courage.

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### QUEBEC MODEL

**Mr. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Lucien Bouchard has decided to play tough in recent days. Now he is usurping the notion of the Quebec model in the name of his political party. Worse still, he is also appropriating the definition of Quebec's identity.

The Quebec model was not established by the separatists. It was established by Quebecers themselves. They are also the ones who toiled away in recent decades to build a modern Quebec within Canada.

The Quebec model is not that proposed by the separatists, who are now sending patients to the United States for care. The Quebec model is not the one proposed by the separatists, where groups of individuals they do not want in the definition of a Quebecer are excluded.

The Quebec model is the one Quebecers want for themselves; the means they want to put in place to develop and improve their regions, their country, Canada and their outlook on the world. This is the model people want.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the government's complete and total disregard for the personal safety of Canada's emergency rescue personnel has reduced morale to an all time low.

We are all well aware of the inherent dangers involved with flying one of our Sea King helicopters. Each day our military personnel risk their lives by flying these outdated military aircraft. In recent months our Labrador helicopters have experienced their own problems, culminating with the tragic deaths of six search and rescue officers.

Despite that tragedy and subsequent problems with burnt wiring, the government continues to risk the lives of our airmen. The government cancelled the EH-101 helicopter deal for purely political reasons, putting at risk the lives of our military personnel.

Why will the government not quit putting Canadian lives at risk by immediately providing our personnel with the necessary equipment they need to fulfil the mandate the government has given them?

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• (1415)

**FUTURISTIC SCIENCE PROJECT**

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we congratulate Robyn Massel, Katie Mogan, Olivia Maginley and Patricia Lau, four grade nine students from Point Grey Mini-school in my riding of Vancouver Quadra. They have been awarded first prize in the prestigious Toshiba/NSTA Explora Vision Awards program. Their science project is intended to combat osteoporosis. Last week they travelled to Washington, D.C. with each one to receive \$10,000 U.S. for post-secondary studies.

The federal government's commitment for funding research in the basic sciences will ensure that imaginative cures for debilitating diseases like osteoporosis will one day become a reality for all Canadians.

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**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

**KOSOVO**

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the peace deal in Kosovo suffered a setback last night forcing NATO to step up air attacks on Serb military positions.

In spite of the expressed support of the Serb parliament for the G-8 peace proposal, the Serb military leaders continue to resist the G-8 peace plan.

Does the government view the objections of the Serb military to the G-8 peace plan as a temporary setback, or does this constitute an outright rejection of the G-8 peace deal?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our position is clear. The Yugoslav government must follow through with its commitments to the G-8 peace plan which it agreed to last week.

Certainly the NATO military people are ready to resume discussions. Until there is a resolution consistent with the G-8 peace plan of the military discussions, the bombings will continue.

While the leader of the opposition speaks of a setback, I would like to think that the discussions will resume and the agreement in question will be carried out.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the G-8 foreign ministers are meeting in Bonn today to discuss how to get the G-8 agreement back on track.

The House has been concerned about the lack of strong and specific Canadian input into both the defence ministers meetings at NATO and the G-8 deliberations on Kosovo.

What specific instructions did the Prime Minister give to Canada's foreign minister to take to today's meetings in Bonn?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our Minister of Foreign Affairs is meeting with his G-8 counterparts. The purpose is to develop a resolution to be placed before the United Nations which would authorize the military and civilian aspects of a peace settlement.

Those are our foreign minister's instructions on behalf of the government. I am sure he is carrying them out with great skill and with great vigour.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, 400 more Canadian forces troops leave Edmonton today for the former Yugoslavia. They are heading for Yugoslavia at a time when the outcome of these peace negotiations is still uncertain.

We owe it to both the troops and their families to tell them the circumstances under which NATO will deploy them.

Is it intended that our troops will enter Kosovo only as peacekeepers, or could they be used as part of a NATO ground force to drive unco-operative Serb forces out?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it has been said over and over again, and this position has not changed, that our troops are going to that area of the world to take part in peacekeeping operations. No decision has been made to

*Oral Questions*

change that position. If it does, certainly the House will be informed and there will be opportunities for further debate.

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**GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister refuses to admit his blatant conflict of interest. For the sake of seeing whether we really know what a conflict of interest is and whether he has any idea, I would like to consider the following: First, a businessman receives a multimillion dollar government contract; and second, that same businessman donates \$10,000 to a particular politician's campaign and subsequently buys a half million dollars worth of land from that particular politician's company.

Does the Prime Minister see that this is a conflict of interest, or does he think that this is just business as usual?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no conflict of interest. The contract in question went to a company to carry out work in Mali. This contract was decided on not by the Prime Minister but by an arm's length committee of whom a majority of voting members represented the Mali government.

• (1420)

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, those arms get pretty short.

The Prime Minister owns shares in a golf course that not only stands to benefit from government contracts and grants, its value was then boosted by a half million dollar land deal from a friend who happened to, just as luck would have it I am sure, get a \$6 million CIDA contract.

The truth is that the Prime Minister knows full well that he is in a conflict of interest. He just thinks that there is nothing wrong with it.

I would like to ask, I would like to demand as Canadians would like to know, why the Prime Minister will not just clear the air and clear his name.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is wrong again. She has been wrong every time she has got up on this subject. The Prime Minister does not own the shares in question. They were sold before he became Prime Minister. The Prime Minister does not need to clear his name. His name stands unblemished, as one of the leading and most dignified persons full of integrity in the country.

There is no conflict of interest. The hon. member should be ashamed of herself by repeating over and over again, misusing the process of the House, to make these unwarranted charges without any shred of evidence to back them up.

[Translation]

**KOSOVO**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, one of the arguments of the Serbian generals to delay or block the Kosovo peace accord is the fact that the accord is not based, at the moment, on a United Nations security council resolution.

Could the Deputy Prime Minister indicate whether Canada will in fact put the peace plan proposed by the G-8 to the security council so a resolution may be adopted by it, thus eliminating one of the arguments of the Serbian generals?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our Minister of Foreign Affairs is working with his G-8 counterparts to draft a resolution that will be put before the United Nations. Obviously the terms of this resolution will be in keeping with the position of NATO and the G-8 countries.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the other important argument is the fact that the Serbs are saying they are unable to evacuate Kosovo because of the damage done to roads, bridges, infrastructure and even to their trucks and weapons.

Could the Deputy Prime Minister tell us whether these arguments advanced by the Serbian generals are valid and, if that is the case, could Canada not contemplate having the peace plan apply over a somewhat longer period?

[English]

**Mr. Julian Reed (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that those details are all being discussed today in Bonn. As a matter of fact, at the present time we are waiting for a report at the end of that meeting. I will do my best to try to convey to the House anything that comes out of that meeting before three o'clock.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this weekend technical discussions were held between Yugoslav and NATO military commanders on implementation of the peace plan approved by the parliament in Belgrade last week. These negotiations appear to be hung up on details, on technical issues.

In light of the impasse, does the Canadian government believe that more negotiating time is needed in order to work out these details, and just how much time?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this House is not the right place for negotiating with the Serbs. The negotiating must be left to our military spokespersons and the military spokespersons of NATO.

*Oral Questions*

They are prepared to resume these discussions but, if no agreement is forthcoming, the air attacks will continue because our position is clear, as is the position of NATO: the Yugoslav government must honour its commitment to accept the G-8 peace plan.

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if we have understood correctly, if we give more time to the Milosevic regime, we also want to continue, and even step up, the air strikes.

I would like to know whether the government is in agreement with both maintaining and stepping up the air strikes during this period of negotiations.

• (1425)

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, these steps will represent the consensus of the G-8 and NATO countries, and we are part of that consensus.

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[English]

**HOMELESSNESS**

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities met in Halifax on the weekend and once again urged the federal government to do something about our homelessness crisis.

We used to have a minister of housing with a budget. Now we have a minister of homelessness with no budget. As one mayor said, "all Ottawa did was send us a nice minister with no money".

When can Canadians look forward to having an effective minister with the budget to get the job done?

**Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the hon. member that I am not the minister for homelessness. I am the Minister of Labour. I was asked to co-ordinate homelessness.

I was at the FCM meeting. I met with the FCM executive. The hon. member for Oak Ridges will continue to meet with the FCM. We are going to take its report and look at its recommendations. I want to assure every Canadian that something will be done on homelessness.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, to date not one homeless person has been helped by this minister.

The municipalities have made homelessness a priority. They have done their homework and produced a detailed plan of action.

When will the federal government accept its responsibility, do its homework and play its part in developing an effective housing strategy? When will the government show some leadership?

**Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government started when it appointed me as a conciliator. It appointed 19 different departments that we are now working with. We have done something.

We want to make sure that this time when we come with recommendations for homelessness that it is sustainable, that we fix it and that we never see the problem happening again in the country.

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**KOSOVO**

**Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of National Defence stated that the KLA needs to disarm. General Shelton, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, said yesterday "We never said we were going to disarm the KLA". Not everyone is on the same page here.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Are NATO and NATO peacekeepers going to disarm the KLA or not?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the answer is contained in the agreement that was reached between the Serbian government and parliament and the G-8 countries. That is where the answer lies to the hon. member's question.

**Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that is far from it.

We do not need another Somalia. Soldiers must know and understand the rules of engagement because it is very likely that our troops will find themselves in Serb areas defending Serbs from the KLA.

What are Canada's rules of engagement for dealing with armed members of the KLA? Are they to be disarmed or not?

**Mr. Robert Bertrand (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister has stated that the rules are contained in the agreement. If the hon. member would like to check them, I am sure he would find his answer.

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**GOVERNMENT GRANTS**

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Grand-Mère golf course stands to benefit from government grants and loans given to a neighbouring hotel. It also benefited financially by selling \$500,000 worth of land to the recipient of a government contract.

The Prime Minister called the ethics counsellor in January 1996 to warn him that the sale of his shares in the Grand-Mère golf course had fallen through. In other words, he admitted that he was now in a conflict of interest and he asked the ethics counsellor what he should do.

*Oral Questions*

Well, if he saw that it was a conflict of interest in 1996, why can he not see that it is still a conflict of interest today?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the ethics counsellor did not find a conflict of interest. There was no conflict of interest. There is no conflict of interest.

• (1430)

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, maybe we should take a crack at what is a conflict of interest. An interest is when two parties have a common stake in something. In this case it is the Prime Minister and the taxpayers.

The conflict comes in when there is a direct opposition to those two interests. In this case it is the Prime Minister's personal financial interest and that of the taxpayers. They are in conflict. Everyone can see that they are in conflict.

The Prime Minister admitted in 1996 that he was in conflict. Why will he not admit today he was in conflict of interest and make this bad situation right?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the premise of the hon. member's question is wrong. The Prime Minister made no such admission.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister has no financial interest in the golf course in question, so the hon. member is wrong again, as was his colleague in her previous question.

They are wrong, wrong, wrong, and they are taking up the time of the House just to hide the fact that the united alternative policy is destroying their party. Why do they not admit that and let us get on with some serious business for the people of Canada?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

**Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we read in the Ottawa *Citizen* that the law firm of Roy Heenan, a lawyer sitting on the CBC's board of directors, has been awarded generous contracts by the CBC, with the blessing of the government's ethics counsellor.

My question is for the Prime Minister. In the case of Mr. Heenan, is the government's ethics counsellor not demonstrating that he is merely a pawn of the Prime Minister by magically declaring ethical that which is not?

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is well established in Canadian law that the director of a crown or other corporation may have interests in the corporation in question, provided those interests are declared, that they are recorded in the corporation's

minutes, and that the individual in question does not take part in discussions or votes on the contract in question.

**Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would have liked to hear what the Prime Minister had to say.

By offering an accommodating ruling in the Heenan case the ethics counsellor loses a lot of credibility. Does the Prime Minister realize that his own defence in the Auberge Grand-Mère case is consequently seriously weakened, involving as it does the judgment of this same ethics counsellor?

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is not an accommodating ruling; it is an established and accepted principle in Canadian law.

When someone sits on the board of directors of a crown or other corporation, that person may have interests, provided that he declares them and that he takes no part in discussions or votes, and Mr. Heenan meets both conditions.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### PRIME MINISTER

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister keeps telling this House that he sold his shares in the Grand-Mère golf course in 1993, but his lawyer says that she has been trying to sell those shares for three years. Who is telling the truth?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I question the veracity of the hon. member because her misleading assertion relied on what she said the Prime Minister's trustee said in a newspaper article.

The article did not say that she owned the shares on behalf of the Prime Minister. The article quoted her as saying that Mr. Prince still owns the shares. In the process of trying to facilitate the repayment of the amounts owed to the Prime Minister's trust, the trustee notes that she had been working with Mr. Prince to identify a potential buyer for the shares.

The hon. member did not accurately state what Madam Weinstein said in her interview. She should admit that and apologize for it.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I realize that the Prime Minister is in full damage control mode, but the fact of the matter is that these shares are for sale.

Is the Prime Minister telling the country that he is offering shares for sale that he does not even own?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, through his trustee, is not offering the shares

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for sale. It is Mr. Prince who has to sell the shares, and to help Mr. Prince the Prime Minister's trustee is taking some steps in that regard.

• (1435)

The hon. member was wrong when she cited the *National Post* as saying that the trustee of the Prime Minister was trying to sell shares, implying that he owned them. She was wrong, wrong last week and she is wrong, wrong, wrong today.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the more time passes, the harder it is to figure out what exactly is the Prime Minister's interest in the transaction involving Auberge Grand-Mère and all the related issues.

Do the government, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Prime Minister himself not agree that, to put an end, once and for all, to this whole issue involving him, the Prime Minister should, in all conscience, simply table in the House the agreement confirming the sale of his shares in that company?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister repeatedly provided accurate and clear information to this House to the effect that he has no shares in that venture.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, members opposite may rise in this House and use every possible defence, there is only one thing the Prime Minister can do to unequivocally clear himself. It is quite simple, and it is clear to those who are listening to us: Why does the Prime Minister not table the agreement confirming the sale of his shares? Then, we will stop asking questions on this issue, but first we want to see the bill of sale.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to try to put the Prime Minister in a conflict of interest situation is bewildering, especially since all these matters are in the hands of his trustee. They concern his trust. It is not up to the Prime Minister to provide the document mentioned by the Bloc Québécois House leader.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, after the second world war Canada's navy was the third largest in the world. Look how far we have sunk.

*Jane's Fighting Ships*, a respected military publication, found the capabilities of the Canadian navy to be so lacking that it ranked us along with Mexico and Chile. That is shameful.

When is the Minister of National Defence going to present to parliament a realistic plan to renew the beleaguered Canadian forces?

[Translation]

**Mr. Robert Bertrand (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me first say that I totally disagree with the hon. member's preamble.

The Canadian navy currently has 12 new frigates. It has 12 new maritime coastal defence vessels. We are waiting to take delivery of four new Upholder class submarines. We are working on a procurement plan to replace our Sea King helicopters.

The Canadian navy served in the gulf war and it continues to do so.

[English]

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, of course the Liberal government is going to disagree. It cut 25% of the budget to the military. It cut all clothing, the military is working with outmoded equipment, it lacks personnel and the defence minister really does not care about the military at all. *Jane's* says this: "Other western countries—should watch (Canada) carefully to see what may happen if and when servicemen finally lose their hearts because of political indifference".

What is the Minister of National Defence going to do to correct this deficiency?

**Mr. Robert Bertrand (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in addition to what I mentioned a while ago, the Canadian navy has the Tribal Class Update and Modernization Project for the four destroyers, which has been delivered. As well, towed-array sonar systems for the two destroyers and our 12 frigates, and the maritime environmental protection program, which includes nuclear, biological, chemical and damage control equipment that allows maritime operations and training to be conducted in an environmentally responsible manner, have all been delivered.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### IMMIGRATION

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has finally realized that her government made a mistake in 1995 when it introduced a \$975 head tax on refugees, a measure denounced by the Bloc Québécois.

• (1440)

Is the minister really planning to withdraw this unfair measure in next fall's reform, as mentioned in *La Presse*?



*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out that there is no head tax on immigrants or refugees entering Canada.

Anyone wishing to become a permanent resident of this country may apply for landed immigrant status.

Clearly, the government regularly reviews its policies, and that is what it will do when immigration is reviewed.

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with the advent of summer, its hot hazy days and the increased use of automobiles, there will be an increased use of fossil fuels. These fossil fuels interact with sunshine, creating a temperature inversion and the resultant pollutants to the atmosphere. This creates a lot of problems for Canadians.

What is the Minister of the Environment doing today to improve the quality of the air which Canadians breathe?

**Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question because just a little while ago I announced the final regulations to reduce sulphur in gasoline. We have implemented a regulation that was proposed last year. I have listened to the comments and I am following through on the proposal. We will reduce sulphur to 30 parts per million by January 1, 2005. We are the leading country on this continent with regard to these reductions. This will mean 2,100 less premature deaths over the next 20 years and millions of fewer asthma cases, pneumonia and acute lung problems.

\* \* \*

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, Wing Construction, an old and established Manitoba company, is more than \$2 million in debt and on the verge of bankruptcy because of fraudulent actions by former Sagkeeng band chief Jerry Fontaine. This would be the same Jerry Fontaine who ran for the leadership of the Manitoba Liberal Party. This would be the same Jerry Fontaine who has four close family members working directly or indirectly for the minister.

Does the minister not see the conflict of interest that is generated by the close ties between her department and the Fontaine family?

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said last week, there was a contractual relationship between the first nation and this construction company. That contractual relationship has dissolved.

The first nation and the construction company proceeded with a capital project outside the accountability regime of my department, so moneys from my department have been forwarded to that project. Surely the hon. member would not ask me to do otherwise.

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister promised Wing Construction over a year ago that she would do something to straighten out this mess. Does the minister not understand that members of the Fontaine family working in her department, some of whom are working on this file, have a huge conflict of interest? Can she spell conflict of interest? Would she tell us what is the extent of the relationship between the Fontaine family and her and her department?

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question is completely inappropriate and wrong. An arrangement has been made with KPMG to look at the work undertaken by the construction company. I would suggest that the two private interests in this contractual relationship sit down, deal with that undertaking and make sure there is a fair and quick resolution to this challenge.

\* \* \*

**FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Pacific salmon treaty has obviously contravened the law of the land. In 1997 the Delgamuukw decision stated clearly that all aboriginal first nations people must be consulted prior to having any of their rights or treaties affected by any treaties signed by the Government of Canada. The United States brought its tribal councils to the table and its state governors. We know that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans ignored the wishes of the B.C. government and B.C. industry. More importantly, it ignored the wishes of the first nations people of British Columbia.

If this deal is so good for B.C and Canada, why did the Government of Canada ignore the first nations people of British Columbia and break the law?

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite feels an obligation to defend the actions of the B.C. government, which were indefensible in terms of this situation.

There have been many processes over the years. There was government to government negotiation. There was an all-stakeholders process.

● (1445)

There was a multi-stakeholders process in which all people were brought in. It would always end up in deadlock. Strangway-Ruckle-shaus recommended the government negotiations. We undertook

*Oral Questions*

those negotiations. We moved fish to Canada and now we have a deal that is good—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we know that the minister signed a 10 year deal. The \$209 million the minister is bragging about is only money that goes into an endowment fund. Only the money gained on interest from that money will be spent on any habitat programs over a four year period. Four of the jurisdictions are American and one is Canadian.

I ask the parliamentary secretary, why did you sell out thousands of jobs and get rid of millions of pounds of fish for American pennies?

**The Speaker:** All questions must be addressed to the Chair.

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this was not a sell-out, it was a gain for Canada. The endowment fund helps science and helps habitat. We have moved fish to Canada. In terms of Fraser River sockeye they have been in place for the last number of years. There have been 4.1 million more fish for Canadians.

There is an article which sums it up best on the steelhead and salmon issue said:

Now the 20th century closes with the courageous actions of David Anderson, proud Canadian to the core, determined to do right by his country's rivers and oceans and the wild salmon they nurture.

\* \* \*

**CANADIAN COAST GUARD**

**Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC):** Mr. Speaker, a few years ago the federal government attempted to cut costs by removing West Nova's emergency helicopter service. Only stiff opposition from local residents prevented the government from cancelling this vital service.

The Canadian Coast Guard is presently reviewing all of its operations to identify possible cost cutting measures. Will the minister assure the people of West Nova that their emergency helicopter service will not be sacrificed as a result of this review?

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has made it very clear many times in the House that safety is and will remain a priority with the coast guard. When the various reviews are done, that information will be provided.

**Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the fishing industry is the cornerstone of West Nova's economy. Our fishers need to know that Yarmouth's coast guard helicopter service will be there to help them in the event of an emergency.

Can the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans explain to these fishers why he would even consider removing the service from Yarmouth and putting their lives at risk?

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has made it very clear many times. We are not in terms of our program review and cost cutting exercise putting lives at risk. We are finding a more efficient and better way of doing things and ensuring that all the safety factors are in place so that fishermen can fish. On top of that, we are providing better management plans so that the fishermen will have the fisheries in the future in order to gain a decent livelihood.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**OWENS CORNING PLANT**

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Employees of Owens Corning in Candiac have been without work for close to 15 months, and this is a community with over 10% unemployment. Canadians expect their governments to work together to help them when they are in need.

I would like to know what the minister is planning to do to help these workers. The situation is urgent.

**Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Government of Canada will contribute \$1 million to help Owens Corning reopen its doors. I thank and congratulate the member for Brossard—La Prairie for his excellent work on this issue.

In partnership with the Government of Quebec and the Fonds de solidarité des travailleurs, we have helped Owens Corning put 102 people back to work, which means that the Government of Canada, with its partners in the provinces and with economic agencies, has put 35,000 people back to work thanks to Canada's transitional job creation fund.

\* \* \*

[English]

**NAV CANADA**

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. On Friday I asked the government a very specific question with respect to the looming strike action of air traffic controllers. I did not get an answer, so I will ask the question again.

*Oral Questions*

● (1450)

In order to avoid heavy-handed essential services designation or back to work legislation, will the minister publicly endorse final offer selection arbitration, a civilized bargaining tool in which the controllers have expressed interest?

**Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, both parties are at a crucial time right now. My staff is working both with NavCan and CATCA. It would jeopardize the situation if I commented any further. We are in crucial negotiations. I hope to see and end to this dispute soon.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this morning I met with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, which is extremely disappointed and distressed by the government's lack of action in all areas of concern to women.

For months now they have been asking the government to reinstate funds in support of programs promoting women.

When will the Secretary of State for the Status of Women take a positive step in support of women's groups by asking the Minister of Finance for the money necessary to fund this program?

[English]

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism)(Status of Women), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this government has worked with women's groups in an unprecedented way for the last five years. The issue of women's equality has been at the top of our agenda. We continue to fund women's organizations. There is no women's organization that had been funded five years ago or four years ago that is not funded today.

We will continue to work with women to achieve the gains that we have made and continue them into the next millennium.

\* \* \*

**PRIME MINISTER**

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when someone sells shares, the transaction is not finally completed until something of value has been received for the shares.

The Prime Minister's lawyer is still arranging the sale of the shares six years after the Prime Minister says he sold them to Mr. Prince who denies ownership because he never paid for the shares. The Prime Minister is not sued for default or breach of contract. Therefore he may still own them.

Will the Prime Minister clear the air today for Canadians and table the share transaction agreements and related correspondence to prove his innocence?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said he does not own the shares. They were sold before he became Prime Minister. The shares belong to a Mr. Prince. The Prime Minister's trustee is helping Mr. Prince to find a buyer. That does not mean that the Prime Minister owns the shares.

I am shocked to hear the NDP say that someone has to prove their innocence. This is not consistent with Canadian and British traditions of justice. The NDP should be ashamed of themselves for abandoning this basic principle.

\* \* \*

**TANCOOK ISLAND FERRY WHARF**

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Public Works Canada and ACOA are involved in a parking project at the Tancook Island ferry wharf in Chester, Nova Scotia.

This government set funds aside to help finance 48 permanent parking spaces. Now the 250 residents of big and little Tancook Island find they have only 26 temporary parking spaces on and adjacent to the ferry wharf.

Can the Minister of Public Works explain how federal moneys could be spent reducing service to Tancook residents when the original plan they supported guaranteed Tancook residents the 40 to 50 spaces they traditionally had?

**Mr. Walt Lastewka (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's question. I will take note of his question and report back to him as soon as possible.

\* \* \*

**INFORMATION HIGHWAY**

**Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

Canadians often hear the words knowledge based economy. My constituents and all Canadians need to be reassured that their hard earned tax dollars are well spent by the government. What are the real benefits of the government's investment in knowledge based programs such as smart communities?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to a knowledge based economy, the member for Cambridge represents a community where some of our best academic institutions are based. He will know how important it is that we advance the cause of learning and innovation.

That is one of the reasons we have made a goal of connecting all of Canada to the information highway, literally making us the most connected nation in the world. We were the first G-7 country in

### Oral Questions

March of this year to have successfully connected 100% of our schools and public libraries to the information highway.

This weekend I had the opportunity to introduce the national call for proposals to the smart community demonstration project. Communities across the country need the opportunity—

• (1455)

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

\* \* \*

### PRISONS AND PENITENTIARIES

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the solicitor general about the critical state of drugs in Canada's prisons with the overdoses there are today and the pressure put on prisoners.

He has indicated that there will be a national review of the drug situation. I would like to know when the review will start, when it will end and what its scope is. I would also like to know whether or not the solicitor general intends to have people other than Corrections Canada employees on that review.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, indeed I am pleased my hon. colleague found out last week there was a drug problem in our federal institutions. I have instructed my officials to evaluate the programs we are now using and to put programs together that will fit the offender and make sure that we address the drug problem in our federal institutions.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CANADA DAY

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in the matter of federal expenditures for Canada Day, even when the budget for the events in Ottawa paid for by the National Capital Commission is taken into account, Quebec still had more than 54% of all money spent by the federal government in 1998 for Canada Day.

Since the Minister of Finance—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The member for Laval Centre.

**Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral:** Since the Minister of Finance did not hesitate to cut health care in Quebec in order to comply with the reality of demographics, how does the Minister of Canadian Heritage explain that the argument no longer holds in the

case of Canada Day and that Quebec ends up with more than half of the money spent?

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it really takes someone from the Bloc to object to the fact that there is more money in Quebec, first, and to object that Canada Day is being celebrated when the subject is the Year of the Francophonie, second.

We might now wonder whether the next objection from the Bloc will be that French Canadians not living in Quebec cannot celebrate Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day. Frankly, this is beyond comprehension. These people have but one objective in mind, and that is to break up the country, and this clearly despite even the wishes of the people of Quebec.

\* \* \*

[English]

### STATUS OF WOMEN

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a few moments ago the Secretary of State for the Status of Women said that women's equality was at the top of the agenda. I have to say that the evidence from NAC and from women is very different, whether it is massive cuts to EI, federal stalling on pay equity, federal abandonment of social housing or no action on early childhood education. We have to question where the Liberal commitment for equality for women is.

I ask the minister, what concrete steps have been taken on the national early childhood education program?

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism)(Status of Women), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can speak about support for the women's equality movement. That is what I can speak about.

I can also tell the hon. member that at this point in time the government is spending \$10 billion on children in Canada. We are continuing to work on refining a children's agenda to deal with issues of child development, which is what the member is talking about in terms of early childhood education.

The government has implemented something very important known as gender based analysis in which every department, not just Status of Women Canada, has committed itself to looking at how it affects the issues of women's equality within its own department.

\* \* \*

### TANCOOK ISLAND FERRY WHARF

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the Chester ferry debacle gets worse and worse. In 1931 the then federal government expropriated land in Chester. It paid for the land in 1936. Tancook Island residents have parked on this federal property since that time.

My question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. How could his department take land that had been used for ferry parking since the 1930s and give it to private interests, to a private person? How could that be done?

• (1500)

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a moment ago the parliamentary secretary answered basically the same question, that we would take this question under advisement and get back to him with an answer on the specifics of it.

\* \* \*

### PRIVILEGE

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, on the question of privilege raised last Friday I would like to state that it was my intention to speak in an honourable way and only to reflect my personal opinion. In no way did I wish to jeopardize the work of the committee.

Upon reflection on what was reported in the media, I accept responsibility for communicating in a way which could be construed as that of the report of the committee. For that I would like to apologize to the House and to the members of the committee.

**The Speaker:** This question of privilege was raised. The hon. member has apologized to the House and we accept his apology. The matter is closed.

[*Translation*]

I have received notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member for Sherbrooke. Is it a question the hon. member has already raised, or is it a new one?

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, not the one of today. It concerns the member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges and the Finance subcommittee.

In the past three years it has become a common, even systematic, occurrence for reports of the House standing committees and the contents of in camera meetings to be leaked by Liberal members to the media before they are officially tabled in the House of Commons.

These leaks betray the spirit and the letter of our guidelines for the procedure of tabling reports by the Liberal majority, accompanied by dissenting opinions by the opposition parties, in the House of Commons.

Last Thursday the Toronto *Star* disclosed the contents of the report from the subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Finance, which was to address the issue of tax equity for Canadian families with dependent children. This report ought to have remained confidential because it is due to be tabled in the House later this week.

• (1505)

In reading the newspaper article, it can be seen that the chairman of the subcommittee and member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges duly performed his duties, and there are several quotes from him.

*Maingot* states in chapter 2 at page 229:

Any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any Member or officer of such House in the discharge of his parliamentary duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly to produce such results may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent for the offence.

Disclosure of a report of a committee or of the contents of in camera discussions among members of this committee before the dissenting opposition opinions are produced and the entire report tabled in the House of Commons is a contempt of—

[*English*]

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe this is the same question of privilege that was raised by my colleague from Medicine Hat last Thursday.

The individual concerned was not in the House. We have been waiting to address it and I did not think we would address it until he was in the House.

**The Speaker:** I asked whether this was a new question of privilege and I was listening to the question of privilege.

[*Translation*]

If the hon. member for Medicine Hat also named the hon. member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges, then I would ask that the hon. member wait until the hon. member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges is in the House to answer this question of privilege, which was already raised by another member. I will ask all members to hold off until we have had a chance to hear the hon. member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges.

I will let this matter rest for the time being, and once the hon. member is back with us in the House, he will be able to explain himself.

*Routine Proceedings*

[English]

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent of the House for the following motion.

That this House supports maintaining the reference to God in all constitutional, legal and government documents.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member have permission to put the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to seven petitions.

\* \* \*

[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### SCRUTINY OF REGULATIONS

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 123(1) I have the honour to present the sixth report of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations concerning SOR/82-171, relating to the Stuart-Trembleur Lake Band.

Your committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

\* \* \*

• (1510)

### CRIMINAL CODE

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-82, an act to amend the Criminal Code (impaired driving and related matters).

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

\* \* \*

### CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-83, an act

respecting the election of members to the House of Commons, repealing other acts relating to elections and making consequential amendments to other acts.

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

**Mr. Nelson Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not know if this is an appropriate point of order, but since the government House leader is here and he has just tabled the changes to the Elections Act, does it include lowering the voting age to 16?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I know the hon. member for Kamloops is knowledgeable of procedures in the House. He cannot ask questions about bills under the guise of a point of order.

I suggest he have a look at the draft bill when it is printed. I suspect he might find a copy in the lobby now and perhaps he could consult with the minister.

\* \* \*

### MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-84, an act to correct certain anomalies, inconsistencies and errors and to deal with other matters of a non-controversial and uncomplicated nature in the Statutes of Canada and to repeal certain acts that have ceased to have effect.

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

\* \* \*

### PETITIONS

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I would like to present a petition signed by over 800 of my constituents.

The petitioners ask that moneys received by low income senior citizens, namely CPP and OAS, be tax free and that for those individuals the basic personal exemption be raised to \$10,000.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to present yet another petition from more Canadians concerned about our health care system.

The petitioners come from all parts of the country and want to register with the government their concern about the impact of government policies and its failure to reinvest significantly in this field and what it has meant for themselves and their families.

They point out to the government that its policies have resulted in families facing huge waiting lists, crowded emergency rooms, badly overworked health care workers, nurse shortages, lack of access to diagnostic tests and services, two tier American style

health care, and other threats to the integrity of Canada's health care system.

They call upon the government to reinvest in the health care field, to guarantee stable funding for health care and to ensure the enforcement of the five principles of the Canada Health Act.

• (1515)

[Translation]

#### CANADA POST CORPORATION

**Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition signed by a number of Quebecers and dealing with the Canada Post Corporation Act.

The petitioners call upon parliament to repeal subsection 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act, which prohibits rural route mail carriers from having collective bargaining rights.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively are among the fundamental freedoms of every person. To deny such freedom is discriminatory against rural workers.

Therefore, parliament must repeal subsection 13(5) as quickly as possible, to comply with its own charter and to respect the right to organize and to collective bargaining.

#### FIREARMS

**Mr. Claude Drouin (Beauce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I wish to table two petitions in the House. The first is from Claude Gilbert and concerns the Firearms Act. This petition was signed by 25 residents of the riding of Beauce.

#### GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

**Mr. Claude Drouin (Beauce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition, which I am tabling on behalf of the Hon. Martin Cauchon, calls for mandatory labelling and comprehensive inspection of genetically modified foods, and was signed by many residents of the riding of Outremont.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I wish to inform the hon. member that he must not use the name of another member in his presentation, just the name of the riding or the title.

[English]

#### IRAQ

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today signed by people who are desperately concerned about the impact of the sanctions against Iraq.

They point out in their petition that four million people, or one-fifth of the population, are currently starving to death in Iraq,

#### Routine Proceedings

and that there have been 650,000 Iraqi children who have died as a result of embargo related causes. This is from a UNICEF report.

The petitioners call on parliament to use all possible diplomatic pressures to urge the UN to end the sanctions against Iraq based on humanitarian compassion and the need to keep children alive.

#### NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to present a petition voicing the concerns of a group of British Columbians.

The petitioners are asking parliament to follow through with action concerning nuclear disarmament.

Canada is a member of the non-proliferation treaty and has made pro-disarmament statements in the past.

The petition calls for Canada to support those steps toward disarmament with action.

#### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Bill Gilmour (Nanaimo—Alberni, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present the following petition which comes from my riding of Nanaimo—Alberni.

The undersigned believe that citizens of B.C. deserve a referendum on the Nisga'a treaty and request that parliament reject the Nisga'a treaty on constitutional grounds.

[Translation]

#### GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to present one petition.

[English]

The petition concerns mandatory labelling and thorough testing of all genetically engineered foods. It is signed by a number of constituents right across the country.

The petitioners are calling on parliament to legislate clear labelling of all genetically engineered foods and their byproducts available in Canada; and furthermore, to ensure that these products are banned from the market until they have been rigorously tested to prove their safety when consumed by humans.

#### CANADA PENSION PLAN

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and indeed a privilege to present a number of petitions pursuant to Standing Order 36.

The first petition points out a whole number of concerns that the petitioners have about the security of their pension system. They are asking the national government to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the CPP remains a viable pension system.

*Routine Proceedings*

## CIVIL SERVICE PENSION PLAN

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the second petition, the petitioners are very concerned that the federal government is appropriating the pension funds belonging to the 670,000 current and future retirees from federal departments, crown corporations, agencies, the military and the RCMP.

The petitioners are asking parliament to take some kind of action. It is a little late to take action, because the action has already been taken, but nevertheless, that is their petition and their position.

• (1520)

## CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on another topic, the petitioners throughout western Canada are concerned about the issue of child pornography, recognizing that child pornography hurts children and thus could never be justified, and that the possession of child pornography perpetuates the production of child pornography.

Therefore, the petitioners are calling on parliament to recognize the fact that Canadians reject the legalization of possession of child pornography and ask the government to intervene in this matter to establish and strengthen laws relating to the possession of child pornography to ensure that it will never be legalized.

## HOUSING

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on a final topic, the petitioners are dreadfully concerned about the federal government's decision to offload the development of social housing onto provincial governments, particularly when we look at the pathetic efforts that most provincial governments have taken, with the exception of Quebec and British Columbia.

The petitioners are concerned that this will have a major impact on native housing throughout the country. They are asking parliament to smarten up and take some action.

## YUGOSLAVIA

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from citizens of the Peterborough area concerned about the bombing in Yugoslavia. They believe that it violates international law and undermines the United Nations.

The petitioners call on parliament to advocate that the Government of Canada withdraw its political and military support for the bombing in Yugoslavia, and ask for the bombing to be stopped immediately; and, that the government use its influence with the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation

in Europe to establish a process of genuine negotiations intended to seek a fair and balanced solution to the crisis in Kosovo.

**Mr. Peter Adams:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask that you seek unanimous consent to return to Tabling of Documents.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to revert to Tabling of Documents?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

## GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I asked for this because I understand I inadvertently said that we were tabling the responses to seven petitions. It should in fact have been no less than 20.

**Mr. John Solomon:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I was wondering if I could have unanimous consent to revert to question period.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Question No. 238 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 238—**Mr. Rob Anders:**

How many full time equivalent positions is ACOA directly and indirectly responsible for creating during each of the following fiscal years: 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998?

**Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.):** The following table outlines the number of direct and indirect jobs that ACOA, along with its provincial and private sector partners, has helped to create and maintain during the fiscal years 1995, 1996 and 1997 as reported in the agency's five year report to parliament, 1993-1998, as well as for fiscal 1998.

Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Direct Jobs	7,000	7,500	10,000	9,700
Indirect Jobs	2,800	3,000	4,000	3,900
Total Jobs	9,800	10,500	14,000	13,600

Please note that total jobs figures represent the total number of jobs created and jobs maintained. All jobs are calculated in full time, long term equivalent.



*Supply**[English]*

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Shall the remaining questions stand?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***SUPPLY**

## ALLOTTED DAY—AMATEUR SPORT

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** When the debate was interrupted, the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough had the floor. He has five minutes remaining for his remarks.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to finishing my remarks as they pertain to the Bloc motion before the House for debate.

I was at a point in my remarks where I was emphasizing the importance of recognizing not only the contribution that sports make in terms of the effect it has on providing children and youth with an activity, but the downside of not putting financial resources into that aspect of Canadian culture and the effect it will have on the other end. If there is not sufficient emphasis put on activities such as this there is a social cost to pay with respect to our criminal justice system.

I think the report highlights the importance of putting emphasis on Canadian sport. Another aspect that is somewhat intangible and somewhat difficult to quantify in terms of how much money should go in is the aspect of Canadian culture and the sense of pride it gives to Canadians in having competitive sporting teams, not only at the professional level but at the amateur level as well.

I also believe that the report, under the guidance of the Chair, highlighted the cultural aspect and importance of sport in the country to give Canadians a sense of pride and to give them something to unify them and cheer for collectively at times of international competition, such as the Olympics, and regionally at the Canada Games.

• (1525)

I have a constituent in Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough named John Brother MacDonald who has been a fierce competitor,

a tireless supporter of amateur sport and, later in his years, a coach and referee. He epitomized this concept and this psychology that sport makes many contributions at many levels. He used to say, sometimes jokingly, “f you cannot be a good sport, you can at least be an athletic supporter”.

The debate taking place today is certainly one of great importance. It should not just be focusing on whether we give tax breaks to the NHL. That is an obvious issue of great consternation and it is an issue that will continue to plague the national hockey league in the country because of the economic issues that surround it.

It also comes down to priorities. Do we as a country, specifically as a government, decide to allow an industry, which professional hockey has become, to be subsidized when we know there is a huge surplus in the players’ fund that is untouchable and untaxable? We also know there are markets, particularly in New York and in Florida, where Canadian hockey clubs cannot be competitive, cannot return the revenues and do not have the market to accumulate revenues like those teams? Sadly, we have seen, and it has been noted, the loss of teams in Winnipeg and Quebec and some of our clubs are currently in jeopardy of moving south of the border.

I congratulate the Bloc for having the foresight to bring the matter forward again. I would suggest, on the specific issue of subsidies for professional teams, that it comes down to one of priorities. Canadians, for the most part, have said quite clearly that it is not palatable at this time to offer tax breaks when we still have huge problems with unemployment, health care, and other sectors of our economy. It is simply a matter of choosing priorities and singling out where the money is most needed and will be best received.

I again put forward that the Progressive Conservative Party’s position is in support of the motion. I would suggest that we have an opportunity here to single out and look separately at the issue of professional franchises and their subsidization, but we should be encouraging and implementing the other very important recommendations.

I wish we had time to expound on one other aspect, that of gambling and the huge revenues that are generated both legally and illegally. We know that the provincial and federal governments have stepped into this area with respect to professional and sometimes amateur sport. However, I suggest there is more we can do in terms of having a return from the aspect of gambling that stems from sport.

We have to develop sound fiscal policy that is consistent with the development of amateur sport and the preservation of professional sport in Canada. With this in mind, I and the Conservative Party support wholeheartedly the motion put forward by the Bloc. I would once more put forward a request for unanimous consent to we make this a votable item.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent that the item be made votable?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Supply*

**An hon. member:** No.

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to what the member had to say. I know he was on the subcommittee and has studied this matter in great detail. I regret to say that although I have had a lifelong interest in sports, being actively involved in sports, chairing the Ontario Summer Games and things of this type, I am not as well informed as he is.

I cannot help but notice that the Bloc motion mentions something about an emphasis on professionalism as distinct from the support of amateurism. It is my understanding that the federal government spends roughly \$60 million a year on sports. I know about the seven national sports centres. I know about the Canada Games. I have been involved with those. It is a wonderful device for bringing on young people and for encouraging sports in the regions.

I know that a great deal of the money goes directly to our international athletes and that they get support of various types. I also know there are special initiatives for women athletes, for athletes with disabilities and for first nations and Inuit people.

• (1530)

I have a question concerning the motion. Could the member give me some idea as someone who was not on the subcommittee how much of this expenditure is going to the professional sport mentioned in the motion?

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I have always felt that he was a very good sport.

My understanding of the intent and the spirit of the Bloc motion is one of setting a priority between any commitment of fiscal responsibility on the part of the government toward professional sport coming subsequent to the issue of a firm commitment to amateur sport and the development of our programs on an amateur level. That is my reading of it.

As for any concrete dollars or any figures that permanently attach, I am afraid I am not familiar with them, even having sat as a member of the committee. The chair of the committee might be able to provide that information. As far as the dollars go, I know one figure that was mentioned here. That was \$1.3 billion in terms of revenue returned to the economy as a result of the contribution of professional sport in Canada.

The crux of the matter, as the member is aware, centres around the issue of offering some form of subsidy or financial incentive to our current franchises. This is what we are at a sticking point on.

Do we put that priority ahead of the other priorities that were set out quite clearly in this report, that we should be putting money

into amateur sport, the development of Olympic programs, the development of community sport and all the very positive benefits the member has pointed out which flow from that level of sport as opposed to professionalism?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate on the motion moved by the member for Longueuil.

The motion reads as follows:

That, since the government ignored most of the recommendations by the Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada, a Sub-Committee of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, the House demand that the government place amateur athletes at the heart of its concerns and make a commitment to placing their interests before the interests of professional sport.

I am delighted at my colleague's initiative because, since the report of the Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada was tabled, there has been no initiative from members opposite except the April 28 announcement by the Minister of Industry, who said he was calling the first meeting of all professional sports stakeholders to try to find out the status of hockey club franchises and Canadian teams here.

What does the report say? It says no to any additional funding for amateur sport, but yes to any activity that will ensure the federal government's visibility, and maybe to professional sports demands.

Let us take a look at professional sports, particularly the hockey millionaires who are doing nothing to help their teams survive. These millionaires play well one year and gather impressive personal statistics and then they completely forget about their teammates.

We can take, for example, the most arrogant of all players, the star of Colorado, who hit pay dirt and recently criticized his teammates following a defeat. For most of these millionaire hockey players, there is no loyalty to their team or to their fans, no commitment to the community, except for some rare players, —and we all remember the unfortunate incident with the Ottawa Senators' No. 19. The owners give in to their players' every whim. They build huge sportsplexes and then come to Ottawa to complain about being broke.

Let us talk about the wages. In 1970 the earnings of a hockey player were four times those of an ordinary worker; in 1980 they were eight times; in 1990 ten times; and in 1996 38 times those of ordinary people. No serious business granting these kinds of salaries to its employees would stand a chance of surviving. It would be doomed to bankruptcy.

We all know what is going on in Pittsburgh. Tampa Bay is short \$20 million. Most of the handful of Canadian teams, including the Sainte-Flanelle, otherwise known as the Montreal Canadiens, are losing money.

*Supply*

• (1535)

These people come to Ottawa to complain about their situation. Then, we have to listen to the hon. member for Bourassa, who buys the principles of this false crusade. In fact, the hon. member for Bourassa takes part in numerous radio sports hotlines in Montreal and Quebec City, where he only talks about professional sports and completely ignores amateur sport. His behaviour is unacceptable.

**Mr. Denis Coderre:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have no problem debating ideas in this House, but we have heard too many personal attacks and falsehoods since the beginning of this debate.

Yes, it is true that I often talk publicly about professional sport, but I always talk about amateur sport as well. I ask the member to withdraw his remarks because he said that I only talk about professional sport.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It seems to me that this is a matter of debate and not a point of order, but a representation has already been made. The hon. member for Lotbinière may address the representation made by the hon. member for Bourassa in his remarks.

**Mr. Odina Desrochers:** Mr. Speaker, I think these are points for debate, and if the member for Bourassa is uncomfortable with what he told sportscasters, it is not my problem.

A few moments ago, the member for Bourassa—and this is true since he was in the House—bragged about having met with each of the federations, but he forgot to mention that he has also met with the majority of hockey club owners in Canada.

In fact, the member for Bourassa feels a lot more at home in the front rows of professional hockey club arenas than in the front rows of those who defend amateur sport. This is understandable since two hockey clubs contributed directly to the Liberal Party of Canada's election fund in 1996-97: the Calgary Flames contributed \$4,433, and the Ottawa Senators contributed \$6,235. And at the Molson Centre—

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

**Mr. Denis Coderre:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a question of privilege. The member for Lotbinière has insinuated that certain people contribute to campaign funds and this reflects on me. This is a question of honour and I ask that the member withdraw what he said.

If we had to start looking at all the money spent by the Bloc Québécois, we would have plenty to say. I raise the question of privilege because it is unacceptable to say things like that. They are not only indulging in petty politics at the expense of athletes, but they do not even know the issues they are talking about.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I did not hear the remarks attributed to the hon. member for Lotbinière. I heard him referring to numbers

which were not about contributions, election campaigns or anything of that kind.

The hon. member for Bourassa will have the opportunity, during questions and comments, to make clarifications. We can wait until then.

**Mr. Odina Desrochers:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to say that it is the member for Bourassa himself who made the connection and who asked us for evidence. I brought this evidence here this afternoon. Two hockey clubs have contributed to the electoral fund of his party, the Liberal Party of Canada. I do not understand why he does not feel concerned about the situation, because he is a member of the Liberal Party of Canada.

Now, let us talk about the Molson Centre, which received half a million dollars to put the maple leaf on the ice. This is another nice gift from the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Under the circumstances, it is really degrading to see how these people are defending amateur sport.

I can imagine the disappointment of the chairman of the subcommittee when he saw his report put aside, after having worked for weeks and weeks on the issue of amateur sport. Unfortunately, the heritage minister did not listen to him.

• (1540)

The only thing he has learned is that while the Canadian heritage minister was abroad her parliamentary secretary tabled, on April 28, 1999, the government response of the report and forgot all about the contents of the subcommittee's report.

I know a lot of members opposite cringe when they are told the truth. It rubs them the wrong way. Maybe they will have more to say to sports fans tonight, but I do not need these fans to speak my mind in the House.

When the heritage minister asked the Canadian Olympic Association to postpone the announcement of the city that would be the Canadian candidate for the Olympic games in 2010 so as not to hurt Mr. Charest's chances in the last Quebec election, she broke the Olympic charter. And I know what I am talking about, having worked with the organizing committee of Quebec City for the 2002 Olympic Games.

The Liberal Party and the hon. member for Bourassa have become experts in political and media manipulation, in propaganda campaigns and misinformation every day, every month. They are at it again today.

In conclusion, I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to make the motion of my colleague from Longueuil votable.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to make the motion votable?

**Some hon. members:** No.

*Supply*

**Mr. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see the true face of the Bloc. People will notice that, apart from personal attacks, no solution was brought here. Besides exchanging the flag of Canada for a fleur de lys, not much was said since the beginning.

I have a question to ask based on a quotation. In the Saturday, March 13 edition of *Le Soleil* there was a report entitled "Quebec Games, a Flag Flap. Quebec prefers to pay rather than accept Ottawa's partnership". Apparently, the Government of Quebec had paid the tidy sum of \$200,000 to prevent the federal government's presence during the Quebec Games in Trois-Rivières.

This was not revealed by a politician but by the games' director general, Mr. Réjean Tremblay.

These lackeys are playing holier than thou and claiming that members on this side are big bad wolves, but from the beginning they have been levelling personal attacks against us.

I would like the very famous member for Lotbinière—who perhaps this time will know what he is talking about—to comment on the statement made by the Jeux du Québec's director general, Mr. Réjean Tremblay.

Does he agree? Is he happy to know that the mother house in Quebec City decided to buy off the games in order to keep out the maple leaf?

Is he in agreement with this decision?

**Mr. Odina Desrochers:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am not familiar with the memorandum of understanding that was in place between Quebec and the Jeux du Québec organizers. However, knowing the honesty and objectivity of the Government of Quebec, it certainly did not propose a propaganda protocol of the type the other party has become a specialist in.

A maple festival was held in my riding. Plessisville had a Canada Place tent imposed upon them. That is propaganda.

The government is a propaganda specialist. That is all I have to say to those on the other side of this House. They are not familiar with the issue. They do not know what was in the memorandum of understanding between Quebec and the Jeux du Québec organizers. Before they rise to speak they ought to get their facts straight.

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a preliminary comment in order to set things straight after the speech by the member for Bourassa.

A number of my colleagues have risen to speak, and one of the very concrete things suggested to this government was to put more money into the various federations. Some are not getting a cent at the present time. That was even one of the recommendations of the subcommittee. If the member for Bourassa has amnesia, that is not our problem.

I would like to ask a question of my colleague from the greater Quebec City region.

• (1545)

How did they make the choice of candidate cities for the Olympics when some ministers in the Liberal government openly supported Vancouver and the supposed staunch defenders of Quebec in cabinet remained totally silent? How did this lack of support go over in the Quebec City region?

**Mr. Denis Coderre:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would remind this House that the Quebec caucus, yours truly among them, supported Quebec's candidacy. I did so publicly on CHRC.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Once again, I do not believe this is a point of order.

**Mr. Odina Desrochers:** Mr. Speaker, I must say that Quebec City was very disappointed. However, given the operating style of the government, which does not honour its objectives and which meddles in Olympic matters, it was not surprised to lose its candidacy.

What proved that it would be lost was the intervention by the Minister of Canadian Heritage a few days before the ballot to prevent the release of the results. This was the definitive proof that they already knew Vancouver would be the candidate and it was out of fear of losing votes in elections in Quebec—Quebecers are very proud—that she hid this information. This is the way the government works.

Quebecers are not fools. They know the government. They accept the decision, but they know where the Liberals come from.

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, seeing the behavior in this House, I am not sure I am pleased to rise this afternoon.

I wanted to speak about the Mills report, which was very well done, a job the member should be proud of. However, it was with regret that I noted that the Minister of Canadian Heritage trashed the recommendations of the report on amateur sport in Canada.

In fact, on April 28 the Minister of Canadian Heritage turned down all of the recommendations calling for additional money for amateur sport. She said yes to every activity that would ensure the visibility of the Canadian flag. With the help of the Prime Minister, she passed the recommendation concerning professional sports on to her friend the Minister of Industry.

Amateur athletes were horrified. I would like to quote at least three statements by athletes and by directors of federations on the Mills report and what the minister said on April 28.

First, here is what John Thresher, head of Athletics Canada, said, as reported in the *Globe and Mail* on April 29, 1999:

*Supply*

From the standpoint of G-7 countries, our Canadian athletes are second class citizens.

Quebecer Jean-Luc Brassard raised the following question:

Should we perhaps in the future march behind our sponsor's flag?

And, finally, here is the most bitter, which comes from Lane MacAdam, president of the Canada Games Council:

It is a black day for amateur sport. It would appear that the government has chosen hockey millionaires over the 1.3 million poor children who have no access to sports. Amateur sport has been cheated.

• (1550)

That same day, April 28, the Minister of National Revenue held a meeting with the mayors of the cities that have the main franchises in professional sport to find ways to help professional sport.

At that meeting, I believe the minister called another meeting, scheduled for mid-June, where he will ask mayors and provincial officials to provide means such as tax breaks, tax holidays, sales tax reductions or others to help NHL teams to the tune of at least \$10 million. These NHL teams are playing in a small market.

However, we are still waiting for a definition of small market. Does it apply to cities such as Ottawa, Calgary or Edmonton, or does it also include Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver, when compared to an American market such as New York?

If the six NHL Canadian teams play in small markets, this means that the municipal, provincial and federal governments will have to provide \$60 million annually to these teams, through all sorts of schemes. Over a five-year period, we are talking \$300 million.

I am not saying that these teams do not need the money. However, the government's priority should be to put money into amateur sport, because it is amateur sport that is really suffering in Canada.

I have a few suggestions for the Minister of Industry. Before deciding to help professional sport, particularly hockey, as he said, the minister should ask himself the following question: Do Canadian taxpayers help fund professional hockey teams?

They do through tax deductions given to companies for entertainment expenses, meal expenses and the purchasing of tickets. Such deductions amount to tens of millions of dollars.

Before making a decision, the minister should ask himself another question: Should he give priority to the funding of professional or amateur sport? Personally, I think amateur sport should have priority over professional sport, which is experiencing serious problems.

Professional sport should first solve the problems it is facing, the first and most serious one being skyrocketing salaries. What gets professional clubs into trouble is players' salaries.

In fact, on February 16, 1999—not so very long ago—in an address to the Canadian Club in Toronto, Mr. Aubut, former president of the Quebec Nordiques said “The worst threat to professional sports teams in Canada, and you all know it, is the meteoric rise in players' salaries”. That is what Mr. Aubut said and I think he is right.

• (1555)

The other problem plaguing our professional sports is the presence of the average spectator at games. In 1977 the average cost of a hockey ticket was \$7.89. In 1994 it had jumped to \$33.66. The increase in the consumer price index for the same period was 245%, while the price of tickets jumped 430%.

I could go on for hours about the national league's problems. Like my Bloc Québécois colleagues, I think the government's first priority should be to fund amateur sport. Our millionaires in hockey and other professional sports are truly spoiled. According to a Southam News poll, the government should watch out because 71% of Canadians are not in favour of using tax dollars to help professional teams.

If assistance is provided for hockey, what about other professional sports, such as soccer, baseball, and football, which all have the same money problems?

Once again, I beg this government to spend money on amateur sport rather than professional sport.

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles who just spoke that the motion he was supposed to speak to reads as follows:

That . . .the House demand that the government place amateur athletes at the heart of its concerns and make a commitment to placing their interests before the interests of professional sport.

The member spoke for 10 minutes and he used 85% of his time to talk about professional sport. He says he is very concerned about amateur sport and he wants the government to give priority to amateur sport, which it already does. As a matter of fact, the \$57 million spent yearly by the Department of Canadian Heritage on sport in Canada goes entirely to amateur sport. Professional sport gets nothing. I do not know if he would like our priorities to be geared even more toward amateur sport. I personally hope that, in the future, we will be able to increase our support for amateur sport, but amateur sport already gets 100% of our funding for sport,

*Supply*

so what more does the member want? How could we give amateur sport greater priority?

How can the hon. member explain the fact that his party has expressed its opposition to a recommendation—it is opposed to several recommendations, but I am talking about one in particular—regarding the creation of a department of sports and youth? Since the member himself wants everything to be done to help amateur sport, how can he explain the Bloc's position against the creation of such a department?

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to tell my hon. colleague on the other side, who will have a seat for life since he hails from a Liberal area, in Ottawa.

If he believes so much in amateur sport, why does he not want the Bloc Quebecois motion to be made votable?

• (1600)

It is true that in my speech I dealt mostly with professional sport, but I have always maintained that, before giving one penny to professional sport, we should do everything in our power to support amateur sport.

The chairman of the subcommittee who gave his name to the Mills report has done a remarkable job. The section of the report relating to amateur sport proposes many solutions to the problems, including the creation of a sport department. But what good would that do? We had a sport department when the Conservatives were in office. Patronage was rampant, as it is today. Friends were appointed to head the various federations. Things would be the same as they were then.

[*English*]

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with one of my colleagues.

It is a pleasure to take a few minutes this afternoon to talk about the importance of supporting our athletes in Canada, Canada's amateur athletes in particular.

I want to take a moment to brag about the Belleville Bulls who this year were the champions of the Ontario Hockey League. They had a tremendous showing in the Memorial Cup. I know, Mr. Speaker, that they took out the team from your city of Kingston very early.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member does not want to go out of order in his remarks.

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief:** Mr. Speaker, I am just making a valid point. The Belleville Bulls had a very successful year.

We see the success that amateur athletes bring not only to their own team but to the economic activity and the spirit in their

community. It takes nothing away from the pride the other amateur athletes in the riding of Prince Edward—Hastings and across Canada bring to us.

I want to congratulate the member for Broadview—Greenwood and his subcommittee for bringing to the attention of all Canadians the importance of sport right across our country.

I want to take a few minutes to talk about how the Government of Canada shows its strong support for amateur sport through a number of important programs, particularly through the direct funding provided to athletes under the athlete assistance program.

This program has provided outstanding benefits to Canadian athletes for many years. It clearly demonstrates that the Government of Canada has placed athletes at the centre of the support structure for amateur sport in Canada.

As a branch of the Government of Canada, Sport Canada supports the achievement of high performance excellence by Canadian athletes in international sport. By doing so it strengthens the contribution sport makes to Canadian pride, to Canadian identity and to our society in general.

One of the key components of this program is the provision of direct financial support to Canada's international calibre athletes. This support is provided through Sport Canada's athlete assistance program. The program was initiated in 1976 and since that time has provided a focal point for the government's support to amateur sport. The support contributes to the accomplishments of our athletes who in turn become heroes and role models for Canadian youth. It contributes to the strengthening of national pride and unity.

The program has evolved over the past 23 years to a point where now on an annual basis about 1,200 Canadian athletes, including those in such games as the Paralympics are financially supported through the program. These athletes represent Canada at international competitions on an ongoing basis in over 50 different sports.

In 1998-99 the government through the athlete assistance program provided over \$7 million in direct financial support to these athletes to assist in their living and training costs. As well it provided over \$1 million in tuition support to assist Canadian athletes in completing their post-secondary education.

• (1605)

The main goal of the program is to contribute to improved Canadian performances at major international sporting events such as the Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games, the Pan American Games, the Paralympic Games and World Championships. To this end the assistance program identifies and supports athletes already at or having the potential to be in the top 16 in the world. Eligibility for program support is subject to the athletes' availability to represent Canada in these major international com-

petitions and their participation in national team preparatory and annual training programs.

In addition to providing direct financial support to Canada's international calibre athletes, Sports Canada also provides financial support to Athletes Can. This is a program of services and leadership which benefits our current and retired national team athletes and works with others in the sporting community to ensure a fair, responsive support system for all athletes. Athletes Can was provided with a contribution of \$200,000 in 1998-99. Similar funding will be provided in 1999-2000.

All of this support contributes toward the creation of role models and sports heroes for Canadian youth. Canadians can recognize and feel the sense of pride in the accomplishments of so many of our athletes. I could take the time to list a number of them but I know other speakers will refer to them, whether they be hockey players, track athletes, kayakers, paralympians, all of our athletes.

These are just a few examples of how we support and recognize the excellence of our amateur athletes in Canada. The government places the interests of amateur athletes at the heart of our concern.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for taking part in this debate on our opposition motion. It is good to hear a minister talk about amateur and professional sport.

The minister talks a lot about the money the federal government gives athletes through Sport Canada, but I would like him to put that in perspective, considering the fact that the money given to athletes by Sport Canada accounts for 8.3% of its total budget.

First, is the minister aware of the fact that this is not enough? Second, our athletes—and I will not get into the technicalities, but they have to be among the top eight in the world—receive about \$800 a month. Is he aware of the fact that athletes are the poorest of the poor in our country?

I would like to hear what he has to say on another point. His colleague, the member for Bourassa, made an announcement last Friday, saying that the government would do the same for amateur sport and mass sport and would transfer some of its lands and parks to the provinces and municipalities so they would become accessible to all those who want to engage in sporting activities. This followed on the rumour that the federal government wanted to give some land to the Montreal Expos. What does the minister think of all that? Does he agree, yes or no?

[*English*]

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her comments but I think the hon. member needs to get her facts

### *Supply*

straight. I believe if she looks at the contribution from the budget she referred to, it is about twice what she referred to. Fifteen per cent of the budget is used to support amateur athletes and amateur sport along with a considerable amount of indirect support for our athletes in Canada.

All of us in the House would like to have more money to spend in a lot of places. What we need to do and what we try to do to the best of our endeavours is make the best investment we possibly can with the money. We are proud of our level of support to amateur sport and recognize the importance of it for our athletes.

• (1610)

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, quite frankly I wish I had a little more than 10 minutes. To spend a year of parliamentary life on an issue and to summarize it in 10 minutes will be a challenge. I will deal with a couple of issues I feel passionately about in terms of my commitment to their being implemented.

I have to say to the hon. member for Longueuil, I celebrate her initiative in putting this debate on the floor of the House of Commons. I salute again the hon. member for Rimouski—Mitis who I know is with us here in spirit. Her contribution throughout the whole year and a half as we listened to hundreds of witnesses and read hundreds of briefs will be around for a long time in this Parliament of Canada.

My passionate interest in amateur sport stems from an educational background during my formative years in high school. I had the privilege and pleasure of going to a Catholic private high school in Toronto, St. Michael's College School. The school was run by the Basilian Fathers, an order of priests who believed that the whole person could not be developed unless sport was an integral part of their development. They believed that the key to a young person developing academically, spiritually and obviously physically was to make sure that sport was an integral part of their program.

I had the privilege of knowing men like Father Henry Carr, CSB, Father Mat Sheedy, CSB, Father Art Holmes, CSB, Father Brian Higgins, CSB, Father Tom Mohan, CSB, Father Jim Enright, CSB, Father Cecil Zinger, CSB, Father Norman Fitzpatrick, CSB, and lay teachers Jack Fenn, Dan Prendergast and Mike Lavelle, men who believed that coaching and working with young people was a vocation. These men believed that there was a theology of sport. In other words we were not there just to develop the body but it was part of developing and maturing the soul as well. That is something that has slipped today.

We heard witnesses. The Coaching Association of Canada told us that hundreds of schools across Canada no longer had coaching staff to look after their representative teams. It is almost unbeliev-

*Supply*

able in a country like Canada that there are high schools without coaches.

We need to get back to pressing the nerve of Canadians that developing the fabric of this community and country must have a sport component attached to it.

A few years ago Cardinal George Flahiff, CSB wrote a paper on the theology of sports. He gave a lecture in 1955 to a group of coach educators. I only want to read two paragraphs from it but it is very important:

The immediate or proximate end of sports, as well as of gymnastics, physical education and similar activities, is not hard to define; it is the training, development and strengthening of the human body from both the static and dynamic points of view (i.e., from the point of view of its physiological development and from the point of view of its use in action). But there are higher ends, too, towards which all sports must tend if they are not to fall short of the function they are meant to fulfil as truly human activities. The body is not an end in itself; along with the soul, which animates it, it makes up the unity that is a human person. The soul has the higher function; it directs the body and, so to speak, uses it for the purposes of the human person as a whole. As a result, sports and all physical education can serve higher and more remote ends than the one mentioned; for, the more developed and better trained the body is, the more readily and effectively can it be used to further the development, interior as well as exterior, of the whole man. This is to suggest that sports have a very real role to play in the perfecting of a human person and, common with all human activities, they must have as their ultimate aim to bring man closer to God.

• (1615)

That was a quote from Cardinal George Flahiff, CSB, from this paper in 1955.

I believe this is a part of the report that we are not focusing on. When people ask me which recommendation in the report I am most committed to, I tell them that it is the recommendation that deals with the 1,300,000 young people under 16 who are living in poverty and do not have access to organized sports. That is the essence of the report.

We talk in the House about fiscal priorities. We have been obsessed with the fiscal priorities here over the last eight to ten years. We heard witnesses, doctors with qualifications, who came to us from the section of Health Canada that deals with physical fitness. Those doctors told us that if we could mobilize, motivate and energize another 10% of Canadians to spend half an hour a day on physical fitness, the treasury of Canada could save approximately \$5 billion a year just in health care.

Here we are scratching our head over \$60 million to look after young kids who do not have access, when we have been told by the best in the Government of Canada that if we mobilize Canadians to become more physically fit we will save billions.

The report is not about professional athletes. It is not about sucking up to millionaire hockey players. The essence of the report, the 68 out of 69 recommendations, as we said when we tabled it, are like a seamless piece of fabric.

The professional system in the country depends entirely on the amateur development system. We cannot have a good professional system if the amateur system is not sound. I am saying something on top of that point. Forget their commitment. Only one in 250,000 young kids becomes a professional athlete. What we need is a society where people have the dignity and the confidence to feel that their potential has been fully developed.

I go back to my Basilian mentors: the Father David Bauers, the Father Ted McLeans, the Henry Carrs, the Tom Mohans and the Cardinal Flahiffs who have convinced me that one cannot develop a whole person academically and spiritually unless sport is an integral part of their life.

• (1620)

I want to say to all members in the House that I salute my colleague, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, who after 90 days tabled 53 of the 69 recommendations in a positive way.

I know the spirit of the Liberal Party and especially the vision and spirit of the Prime Minister. I believe in the not too distant future that every single recommendation in the report will be implemented in some way, shape or form. I thank all members who worked on the committee for their co-operation. We will continue to move forward.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I wish to thank my colleague from Broadview—Greenwood. I also wish to acknowledge the work he has done throughout the entire subcommittee process. I feel that he has shown his interest in, and his passion for, amateur sport and he deserves praise for this. I share some of his points of view.

He has a lot to say about the recommendation on professional sport. I would like to point out to him that this recommendation, which the government has adopted, is going to cost more than \$500 million, contrary to the measures on amateur sport, for which there is nothing.

There are some good recommendations on amateur sport, although there could be plenty more, but there is nothing new on the concrete measures to be undertaken shortly to help our athletes involved in amateur sport in Quebec and in Canada.

I have done a fair amount of research recently and have had many contacts with athletes and federations. I would like him to tell us a bit about how we as parliamentarians can help these sports federations and associations. There are a number of problems of discrimination, as well as those relating to language, to French, and to internal administration.



Sports Canada does not have control over these associations, yet there is a lot of money at Sports Canada. How can parliamentarians give a bit of help to these associations and these athletes?

[English]

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills:** Mr. Speaker, I have to humbly say that we never advocated \$500 million to the professional sports realm. That was never part of the deal.

Our commitment to the developmental part of the amateur sport fabric in the country, including the physical fitness component, was somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$60 million a year for the next five years, which was \$300 million.

We also put on the table some areas where we thought moneys could be generated. Currently, all the lottery moneys in the country, which the then Prime Minister Joe Clark gave away to the provinces in 1979 in exchange for support for his leadership, or a payoff for his leadership, are going directly to the provinces.

I believe there is an opportunity for getting together with the premiers and saying that a portion of those moneys should come back into the amateur sport fabric, especially those gaming systems where they use the professional sports' logos. I see great hope for that in the future. The Minister of Industry for Canada has currently set up a system where all those things are being explored.

As far as interfering with the operations of the amateur federations on a day to day basis, I really do not think as parliamentarians we should interfere with the way they operate other than the fact that I think we should make sure that all of the facilities and all the opportunities across the country are there in both official languages.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the member for his work on this committee and for this report that he has put out.

I am also a very strong advocate for and supporter of amateur sports. In fact, I have spent a good majority of my life promoting it and coaching at different levels in high schools throughout both the United States and Canada.

• (1625 )

There is one thing I need to be refreshed on, because the report was rather lengthy. I cannot recall whether there were any recommendations regarding the funding or the promoting of what I used to refer to as good sport, in other words, getting good qualified people who are going to run these various programs and work with young people to make them understand that there is more to this whole episode than just the sporting activity itself, that it goes far

*Supply*

beyond that. What recommendations are we addressing regarding the qualifications of the providers?

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills:** Mr. Speaker, we have a coaching crisis in the country today. The Coaching Association of Canada appeared in front of our committee and went into fine detail about the lack of support for coaching and the need for more certified coaches.

We have appealed to the Minister of Human Resources Development Canada. One of our recommendations was to have the whole area of coaching put into human resources development in the same way we classify information technology people, the construction industry or any other sector of the economy.

I believe that if the private sector through industry and government work together to top up some support for properly qualified coaches, we could quickly re-invigorate the coaching system in Canada. It seems to me that the teaching realm no longer has the same type of commitment to coaching that it had 25 and 30 years ago.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Halifax West, Public Service Pension Plan; the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, Health.

**Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have the great pleasure of rising today to speak to the motion put forward by our colleague, the member for Longueuil.

To talk about sports is to take a look at society. At the moment, I think that our societies are going through difficult times and facing great change and I believe that sports are also undergoing considerable upheaval.

Sport can at times reflect our society; therefore analyzing sports is somewhat like trying to understand where our society is headed.

Like events of today, sports sometimes take us to extremes, which makes me think it is difficult to understand the tangents and directions intended with certain decisions.

The debate today concerns the difference between amateur and professional sports. We have to look at the values held by the public and society in general in order to give priority to sports or set it aside. Naturally, there is a difference to be made between the two types of sport.

Earlier I heard my colleague opposite speaking of the benefits of amateur sport, and I think the remarks were excellent. Throughout my youth I was involved in sports and competitions. Sport becomes a passion and it is good for both physical and mental well-being. It

*Supply*

promotes a team spirit, a taste for challenge, enjoyment of competition and the feeling of belonging, sometimes to a region. When we represent our region, it is interesting to do and very praiseworthy, but it is also interesting for the people of an area, of a region or of a country to identify with a sports team.

I sincerely believe that sport has many virtues on a human level, but direction is important. I was speaking earlier about identification with teams. We need only look at professional sport, hockey teams such as the Montreal Canadiens, for example, which is part of the Quebec culture, and I would even say Canadian culture, because the Canadiens hockey team has made a name for itself throughout North America.

• (1630)

As I said earlier, changes and disruptions in our society lead to certain inconsistencies. It is currently the case with sport, and this in many respects. I am very interested in anything that has to do with the growing gap between the rich and the poor. Earlier I said that hockey could be an interesting reflection of today's society, and I think it is absolutely true.

The report of the Subcommittee on the Study of Sport in Canada includes some very fine suggestions for amateur sport, but the government will take taxpayers' money to invest it in professional sport. I will not necessarily criticize this decision today, because I did not sit on the committee. However, I am convinced that my comments reflect the views of a large segment of the public, which finds it regrettable that we would now be making such decisions in our society. We are not alone. In the United States they invest billions of dollars in sport stadiums, while cutting funds for education and health care. I happen to believe that education is absolutely critical for future generations.

These are aberrations in a society that claims it has to tighten its belt. We are investing in sport teams that pay incredible salaries to their employees. I will not mention any figures, since everyone here is aware of the huge salaries paid to professional athletes. I think everybody is familiar with this issue.

Such a societal issue cannot be resolved in 10 minutes. Still, I am concerned and I wonder where it will stop. If this trend continues, and it is clear that it will, players' salaries will keep going up. I cannot see a cap being put on players' salaries because they are currently determined by the market. When the market is totally left to its own devices this can lead to some aberrations. I think that professional sport is a prime example of that.

Today, in spite of all the kind words of the member opposite regarding amateur sport, we are still faced with a government initiative in support of professional sport. Obviously, I did not review all the direct consequences of promoting or not promoting professional sport. From an economic standpoint, we know that professional sport creates jobs, but when we take a look outside the stadium and see that our society is getting poorer and we are

having to pay already ridiculous salaries, I must admit that I am in a quandary.

Earlier I mentioned education, as did the member opposite. I think there can be a very direct link between sports and education because very often we learn a sport at school. This has benefits for the body and the mind. It is good for our young people to be able to take part in sports at school, and they should be encouraged to try to beat their own records.

Earlier in the debate some members mentioned that it was a disgrace that a country such as ours lacked sports trainers. This is also a worrisome phenomenon. I could mention other worrisome phenomena, such as the invasion of Nintendo games. As a young boy—and that was not so long ago, no more than 10 years—it was normal for me to be outside playing hockey. Today, many young people routinely stay cooped up indoors playing Nintendo.

To sum up, we could study all facets of amateur sport and their benefits today, but I think that the initial debate is more about the government's decision to invest less in amateur sport and more in professional sports. There is food for thought here, more than I can cover in 10 minutes. However, I am pleased to have taken part in the debate.

• (1635)

[*English*]

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot let the assertion by the member that the government has made a commitment to professional sport and not to amateur sport stand. There are ongoing discussions with the smaller market teams in Canada which are struggling, but no decision has been taken. If the member would read the sport pact section of the report he would see that it is all quid pro quo. In other words, not 10 cents would be spent on the professional side of things unless there was an equal or proportionate amount for the amateur sport fabric in Canada.

When I say the amateur sport fabric I am not just talking about hockey. We have over 550,000 registered soccer participants, boys and girls, in this country. Even though hockey is our national sport and even though we are going to work very hard to figure out a way to keep the smaller market teams in Canada, make no mistake about it, nothing will be done unless the amateur fabric is also on the table.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphan Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, if the government took good measures today, if it were in line with the Mills report and if money went fairly and justly to amateur sport, I would be delighted.

If this opposition day—which I do not like to call an opposition day, but rather a debate day—influences the government opposite

so that it puts greater emphasis on amateur sport priorities, I would be delighted and I would not feel that I have wasted my time today.

[English]

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a quick comment drawn from the hon. member of the government benches who just spoke. He stated the quid pro quo, that there would be equal funding for professional and amateur sport. Although I am not an expert on this issue, I know a bit about sports. It seems there is a bunch of sportsmen on the government benches, but I think they are mostly jugglers. They are trying to juggle truth and fiction.

Surely Canadians and parliamentarians would not spend a penny to support professional athletes in this country. They already have all of the tax deductions. They have all of the potential to make a profit that any other business in Canada has. They already have all of those breaks. Surely we would not spend one penny, not one penny, to support professional sports in this country.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the member who has just spoken in order to find out how he reconciles his party's position with what he wrote in the report we are debating today, in part, the Mills report, as the dissenting report, and I quote:

We recommend and encourage greater study of the issues of subsidies to professional sport franchises with a mind to ensuring their presence in Canada is balanced with the best economic interests of all Canadians.

The report was signed by the House leader of his party and critic, a member of the subcommittee.

How does he reconcile his remarks with those of the dissenting report prepared by his party?

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think that the member for Ottawa—Vanier is a bit confused. He has just put a question concerning a comment addressed to the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

• (1640)

The member for Lac-Saint-Jean had time left to complete his remarks and to finish his response. Subsequently, if the member has intelligent questions to ask, he may do so. However, I invite him to follow the debate, because he is not even following it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is the questions and comments period. The member for South Shore asked a question that was directed really toward the government, I believe, and not to the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, who made his speech.

**Some hon. members:** It was not up to him to answer.

*Supply*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Afterward, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean did not rise, so I recognized the hon. parliamentary secretary.

It is now the turn of the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean. If he wishes to respond, he has 30 seconds to do so during the period for questions and comments.

**Mr. Stéphan Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, I am unable to answer the question from the member opposite because it was directed at the member behind me, who is from a different party. It is directed at him, and I have nothing to say.

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in today's debate, and to congratulate my colleague, the member for Longueuil, on her initiative for this opposition day.

I also congratulate the member for Rimouski—Mitis for her work on the subcommittee, where she contributed a number of rather interesting clarifications on the study of sport in Canada.

My colleague's motion reads as follows:

That, since the government ignored most of the recommendations by the Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada, a Sub-Committee of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, the House demand that the government place amateur athletes at the heart of its concerns and make a commitment to placing their interests before the interests of professional sport.

I think that the most pressing problem of this government's present policy on sport is the priorities and the mandate adopted by the Department of Canadian Heritage with respect to sport. The priority is to promote national unity, which is a propaganda mandate. We are strongly opposed to using sport to promote national unity.

The sole objective of amateur sport in Canada should be to promote excellence, and not to use athletes to serve a political ideology.

While the Minister of Industry will be following up on the mandate given him by the Prime Minister to save professional hockey in Canada, and calling a meeting in mid-June at which the provinces and the municipalities concerned will have to help fund sports millionaires, this same Liberal government is dismissing out of hand any additional funding for amateur sport.

I would like to point out that a few weeks ago I tabled a petition in the House signed by over 1,000 people in my riding deploring the fact that this government wants to subsidize sports millionaires.

It is clear once again that the federal government is choosing the rich over the poor. The federal government is in urgent need of re-examining its priorities.

In November 1998 the Subcommittee on the Study of Sport in Canada submitted its report to the government. Most of the report's recommendations dealt with the increased support that ought to be

*Supply*

given to amateur sport, but recommendation No. 36 proposed that the government invest millions of dollars in professional sport.

This is what all members of the public are opposed to. When asked, everyone in Canada, and everyone in Quebec calls for no more investing millions of dollars in professional sport, for no more support to be given to what are termed the millionaires of sport.

• (1645)

If this government had any gumption it would understand that if there is any money to invest it could go into amateur sport, to the athletes who are often from poor backgrounds, whose parents have had to do without things that would have contributed to their well-being in order to support their children and encourage their top performance.

On April 28, 1999, while the Minister of Canadian Heritage was out of the country, her parliamentary secretary tabled the government response on her behalf. This government said no to any additional funding for amateur sport; yes to activities that will enhance the visibility of the federal government, such as the holding of a symposium on sport to be chaired by the Prime Minister; and probably yes to professional sport.

The Bloc Québécois has always said that the subcommittee on sport was nothing but an excuse to support professional sports. Once again, the facts seem to bear this out.

There is considerable consternation in the world of amateur sport at this time. To quote Lane MacAdam, President of the Canada Games Council, as reported in the *Globe and Mail* of April 29, 1999:

This is a black day for amateur sport. It would appear that the government has chosen hockey millionaires over the 1.3 million poor children who have no access to sports. Amateur sport has been cheated.

The head of Athletics Canada, John Thresher, said this in the *Globe and Mail* the same day:

Compared to other G-7 countries, our athletes are second class citizens.

Here is what Jean-Luc Brassard had to say, as reported by Pierre Bourgault in the May 1, 1999 issue of the *Journal de Montréal*:

Will we have to parade behind our sponsors' flags in the future?

Since they took office in 1993, Liberals have done everything except support the development of Canadian amateur sport. They have made it a political issue more than ever before. Members will certainly remember that the heritage minister asked the Canadian Olympic Association to delay the announcement that Quebec City had lost its bid to host the 2010 Winter Games.

They have reduced their financial support for amateur sport by more than 35%. The envelope went from \$76 million to \$57 million, including the recent addition of \$50 million over 5 years announced by the heritage minister in 1998. The predictable result

is that, since 1993, 22 national sports associations no longer receive funding from Heritage Canada.

I hope all those watching understood what I just said. Since 1993, 22 national sports associations have stopped receiving any funding from Heritage Canada.

Finally, the Liberals rejected the recommendations made in the report of the Sub-committee on the Study of Sport in Canada, accepting only those that will not cost anything, that will ensure government visibility, or that will allow the funding of professional sport.

I would have a lot more to say about such an important issue, but I will conclude by responding to the member for Bourassa, who does not seem to understand the concrete proposals made by the Bloc Québécois to support our athletes.

• (1650)

Our recommendations are: to provide adequate funding for the INRS-Santé laboratory, in Pointe-Claire, which remains without a contract for the current year and which may not even get all the money pledged for 1998-99; to fund the upgrading of its facilities, at a cost of some \$500,000; to fund all sport associations; to review the criteria used to deliver certificates to amateur athletes to promote excellence in Quebec and Canada; and, finally, to exclude politics from sport.

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the more I read on the issue, the more I am surprised by the silence of some Liberal Party members. They may well crow and say they invest a lot of money and work for amateur sport, but when we examine the figures, we see quite the opposite.

I ask the member if she finds it normal that since Liberals were elected in 1993, that is six years ago, money invested in amateur sport has dropped from \$76 million to \$57 million. Moreover, our dollar is worth less today than in 1993 and there is a huge difference in the amounts invested, almost \$20 million between 1993 and 1999.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage may well want to spend \$10 million a year of what she says is new money for five years, but we will still be under the amount spent in 1993. Everyone in this House claim that amateur sport is important and says we have to invest in that area.

In fact, the opposite is happening. These budgets were slashed. I know that some Liberal members agree with me, namely the chairman of the subcommittee which studied the issue and tabled a report. I know very well that the chairman who tabled this report shares my opinion, but in actual fact nothing is being done.

The member for Bourassa boasts about working a lot for amateur sport. I believe he is actually working much more for professional

sport. Does the member find it normal that between words and reality there is a discrepancy of more than \$20 million?

**Mrs. Pauline Picard:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Berthier—Montcalm for his question.

No, it is not normal. The cuts to amateur sport mean that the 22 national organizations I mentioned earlier are subject to a new funding framework. They are doomed to oblivion because their funding was abolished.

This is why we maintain that the federal government has once again chosen to help the rich instead of the poor. This is also why the government must rethink its priorities where amateur sport is concerned. It should encourage and support our amateur athletes.

I want to give another example. When the issue of propaganda was addressed earlier, it was said that out of the \$1.3 million allocated to arenas, \$900,000 was handed to the Corel Centre and the Molson Centre to ensure high visibility for the maple leaf. This is very upsetting to us.

We have athletes living in poverty and getting very low wages, while the government chooses to subsidize sports millionaires. These people earn \$3 million to \$4 million every year, while our athletes, who truly need to be supported and from whom we expect excellence, only get between \$189 and \$800 a month.

• (1655)

This is unacceptable and we are firmly opposed to sport being used to promote Canadian unity, national unity. The only goal of amateur sport in Canada should be to promote excellence and not to display flags to promote national unity.

[*English*]

**Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey.

It is a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to this motion. I want to congratulate the mover of the motion. Allow me to inform the House of the hard work that the Subcommittee on the Study of Sport in Canada has done and to say that I was honoured to be a member of that committee. I also want to talk about the government's continued commitment to sport in Canada.

This afternoon I would like to emphasize the value of sport in Canadian society and to look at the government's role in sport, all that we must do as we approach the 21st century and all that we have done.

The Subcommittee on the Study of Sport in Canada put the interests of Canadian culture and health on the discussion table. It

### *Supply*

was interesting to deal with policy that affects both health and culture. I do not think there is any other issue that connects health issues with cultural issues.

Sport is culture and sport promotes healthy lives. Sport is the point at which the game and fitness merge. It is where health, through increased fitness, meets tradition. We as Canadians have a long tradition of sport.

That is why I consider this subcommittee and its mandate to be so important. We investigated the potential scope of and rationale for federal involvement in the promotion of amateur sport in Canada and we determined that we must give amateur sport a push.

I have a true appreciation for amateur sport. I think that is a result of being from a maritime province. In my home province of Prince Edward Island sporting events provide a place where we can get together socially, catch up on the latest news, tell stories and see friends.

For example, the first thing many families do when they relocate is to seek out a sports club. They join these clubs because they already know and like the activity and want to socialize with others who share common values. Sport encourages social interaction. It also increases a healthy society, both mentally and physically.

Sport involvement is vital in improving the chances of youth at risk. These young people are not only at risk because of a passive health risk posed by an inactive lifestyle, but the lifestyle also drives them toward actively destructive or self-destructive activities such as substance abuse, anxiety, depression and violence.

Sport and physical activity offer an inherent sense of direction as well as a safe and constructive outlet for youth energy. In addition, the regular physical activity which sport provides naturally makes young people physically, mentally and emotionally healthier. Ask a friend whose son or daughter is involved in amateur sport and more often than not they will tell us that their child does not smoke, does well in school, is motivated, is energetic and is going to or has already enrolled in some form of post-secondary education.

It is interesting how physical activity is less prevalent today than it was 30 or 40 years ago. It is obvious that as our society becomes more technological we as a nation are becoming more inactive. I have often wondered where our inactivity comes from. One possible explanation is that when Canada was formed as a nation people had to be active in order to function in their daily lives.

Up until the post-war period people relied much more on manual labour to make a living. Technology has now made it possible for us to choose to lead less active lives. Street hockey has been replaced by video games. The Internet is making us more insular. Television is becoming a leisure activity, taking a huge chunk out of our recreation time, from 17 to 19 hours a week for children between the ages of 2 and 17. Ironically, much of it is spent watching sports events.

*Supply*

As we approach the 21st century and information technology, the Internet and computers become more common, the tendency of people to be inactive will increase. We will be able to shop from home, talk to our friends and play recreational games over phone lines. It all points to a more insular and less active society. Frankly, this scares me.

This sort of inactivity is deadly. Inactivity is a primary factor for cardiac disease, affecting one in five Canadians. Often an inactive adult was an inactive child and that is why we as a committee recognized the need for continued support for amateur sport and for children.

Obesity is also a result of inactivity, which in turn increases the likelihood of stroke, hypertension and diabetes.

• (1700)

These diseases cost the Canadian health system millions of dollars each year. It has also been proven that girls who participate in physical activity will be less susceptible to osteoporosis as adults. According to the Canadian Olympic Association, Canadian children are 40% less active than their parents were at the same age. A survey of grade two students found that one in four children cannot touch their toes.

As I mentioned earlier, sport is one avenue of achieving a physically and mentally healthy population. Promoting physical activity is an investment that increases the well-being of Canadians while reducing health care costs. As the chairman of the committee just said a few minutes ago, according to the committee's report reducing the number of inactive Canadians by just 10% would result in an additional saving of \$5 billion in health care costs. There are very clear benefits to increasing the number of Canadians actively involved in physical activities.

How do we increase the number of active Canadians? We must guarantee that sport and fitness are accessible to all Canadians. I have spoken on my occasions in my constituency on the value of sport and fitness and what it means to be active. I often refer to Canada as having a system of amateur sport that is truly accessible, a system where anyone can play as long as he or she has the interest and the talent.

Increasingly this is not the case. Our system looks more like it did when class distinction determined if one was involved in sports. Some families have children registered in sports organizations. Some families do not. Some teams have sponsorship. Some teams do not. The government understands the benefit of increased participation.

Accessibility is key to increasing the participation of Canadians in physical activities. Our committee recognized this and recommended that an incentive for individuals to donate to not for profit

sports organizations was needed. We suggested that eligibility for charitable tax deductions be given to provincial sports organizations. Imagine if we could give a donation to a sport club and receive a tax receipt. This would make it an awful lot easier to donate money. The donator would be happy. The government would be happy. Most important, the sport club would be happy.

Special tax treatment allowing provincial non-profit organizations to issue tax receipts is a clever idea. The government has decided that this proposal will be put into existing government efforts through a joint government-voluntary sector round table process.

When the committee looked at all the issues facing Canada as a whole we found that certain segments of society were underrepresented and we recommended that something be done. In January 1998 the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced a program called the new funding for sport. This program would inject \$10 million per year for three different initiatives.

One initiative set targets to ensure that underrepresented groups have fair access to opportunities to participate in sport. A system of accountability has been developed that will track funding to ensure that opportunities for underrepresented groups are increased. These groups include aboriginals, women and athletes with disabilities.

The government has responded so that the playing field will be level, so that the values which result from involvement in sport are offered to everyone, not just the financially secure, and so that all teams young and old have a chance to thrive.

Another part of guaranteeing this is making sure that coaches and volunteers are looked after, that sponsors are given incentives so they can fund local amateur sports, and that we formally acknowledge the importance of amateur sport as a positive influence in the community and the country.

The Government of Canada will continue its policy and funding support of sport in Canada. For example, Sport Canada has been awarded an additional \$10 million per year for new funding for sport programs as outlined in a red book commitment.

Our commitment to sport is demonstrated through our annual contributions through Sport Canada. It has been said many times today that over \$57.8 million in total are allocated for Sport Canada contribution programs, \$26 million of which are contributed to national amateur sports organizations.

As we suggested in our committee work, national coaching institutes are very much a part of Sports Canada's ongoing interest. A portion of the \$2 million in annual support to the Coaching Association of Canada goes toward national coaching institutes across Canada. This is not enough but it is what is there today and much more is needed. In 1999-2000 the government will spend an

additional \$3.5 million specifically targeted for coaching support as part of the new funding for sport initiatives.

In the area of coaching support our objective is to provide increased support to high performances coaching and to create new full time positions for high performance coaches in order to enhance international athlete development and improve athlete development programs.

Like coaching, the government is also committed to creating competitive venues for amateur athletes. Canada's amateur sport is celebrated when the Canada Games convene. The Canada Games with its motto "Unity Through Sport" has been a mainstay of the Canadian amateur sport system since its inception in Quebec City in 1967.

• (1705 )

Since that time successive federal, provincial and municipal governments working together with the corporate sector have supported the Canada Games. The government is a partner in this undertaking and currently provides approximately \$4 million annually in contributions for team travel and for each host city for capital development and operations.

I represent an Atlantic constituency that has a great deal of amateur sports clubs and events within it. My home province of Prince Edward Island has its own culture and its own values. A lot of what we as Islanders do socially has to do with sport, amateur sport. Whether it is junior hockey, sailing, golf, whatever it is, sport in P.E.I. is a form of social interaction.

I understand the value of sport—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I am sorry but the hon. member's time has expired.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question will be a short one.

The hon. member seems to have really followed the debate, read the report, and followed everything that was said when the subcommittee on sport examined the question.

I would like his comment on what Sports Québec said eight years ago at the time of the last study.

What it said was as follows:

Only rarely are national associations able to deliver services properly in French, whether providing documentation or delivering programs. Moreover, the development of national training centres in cities offering little if any services in French also constitutes a demotivating factor for a number of francophones in the field.

### *Supply*

Since then we have had many examples of this, including Nagano where everything was in English. French appears not to be used, or banished from amateur sport even at fairly high levels.

Since the hon. member has experience and appears to be abreast of the issues, I would like to ask him whether he finds it acceptable that everything, or practically everything, is in English, and that all francophone amateur sports people and all the people working in amateur sport are at a disadvantage compared to the anglophones.

[*English*]

**Mr. George Proud:** Mr. Speaker, Canada is a bilingual country. Anyone can have the sport of choice in the language of choice.

On the international scene English is the international language. We did make recommendations that all these sporting events be made bilingual.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member made reference to the fact that only a small proportion of Canadians can touch their toes. I just want to point out to him that if God wanted us to touch our toes, He would have put them where our knees are. Then I would be able to do that too.

Seriously, though, my question has to do with federal support of amateur sports. The greatest contribution the federal government can make toward amateur sports is to enable families to have enough money left in their pockets to look after the needs of their families.

The way it is right now we are taxed to death at every turn. Governments at all three levels spend 50% of our earnings. After we pay for our rent, our transportation, our clothing, our food and our utilities, there is no money left.

There are many families, and I have spoken to some, who would like to have their youngsters enrolled in some amateur sports but they cannot afford the money. It costs quite a bit to enrol them and to pay for their share of the rental of the facility and so on. Why do we not just simply give families a tax break, leave more money in their pockets so that they can do that, and let them participate?

The idea of taxing everybody to death and then trying to pick out some groups to give grants to is insane.

• (1710 )

**Mr. George Proud:** Mr. Speaker, many of the recommendations in our report deal with tax breaks to individual families. We all know how Reform views amateur sport funding as a waste of money. We just have to look at the May 1998 edition of the waste report produced by Reform member for St. Albert in which he listed all the examples the Reform Party considered to be wasteful government spending. He included the \$9,720 grant that our government provided to a particular athlete in 1996.

*Supply*

Yes, I believe there has to be more tax breaks for people to get their children involved in amateur sport. We put that in our report. I think we will see it come to fruition in the days to come.

**Mr. Murray Calder (Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the government's response to the recommendations of the subcommittee. I am pleased that the government has taken action on over 75% of them.

The hon. member's question implies that athletes are not currently at the heart of the concerns of the government. Nothing could be further from the truth. I am pleased to be able to speak about the government's commitments to athletes in our new funding both to the athletes directly and to the systems which support them.

I would also like to speak about a commitment the government made to athletes during the last election campaign. We promised an additional \$10 million per year for five years. We have kept that promise.

On January 22, 1998, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced the new funding for sports: \$10 million per year starting in the 1998-99 fiscal year for five years. At that time the minister said that when one of our athletes succeeds on the world stage all Canadians from every walk of life and every corner of our nation shares in that victory.

That is what this announcement is all about. Indeed that is what Canada is all about. This announcement was about providing additional support to athletes in three areas: training, competition opportunities for athletes, support for coaches of athletes and direct assistance to athletes.

At the same time the new initiatives would enhance the government's efforts related to access and equity for traditionally under-represented groups including women, athletes with a disability and aboriginal people.

Seeing Canadian athletes represent Canada on the world stage provides Canadians with a strong sense of national pride. Canada's high performance athletes are excellent role models for all Canadians, particularly our youth. Their achievements instil pride and inspire youth to pursue excellence in sports and other endeavours. Our athletes also serve as international ambassadors, reflecting Canadian values in the world at large.

Sports provide Canadian youth with important opportunities for personal development as well employment skills through specialized training and experiences. With the new funding for sports the federal government's budget for sports is about \$60 million per year. Of that \$8.8 million go directly to athletes, \$35.4 million to sports organizations and programs, and \$15.5 million to games hostings. The athletes are at the centre of our expenditures whether directly or indirectly.

I will give a few more details about the new funding for sports and how it is being used to directly benefit Canada's high performance athletes. In the area of athlete support, the purpose of these new funds is to support more high performance athletes who are in the developmental stage. This support is important for young developing athletes because of full time training on a year round basis which is necessary for athletes to be competitive at the international level.

Before the new funding for sports the number of athletes receiving assistance was quite frankly insufficient to ensure continued development. We needed to provide additional support to developing athletes and we have done that. In addition, we wanted to support more female athletes and to provide more support for athletes with disabilities.

• (1715)

Our objective with the new funding for sports in this area is to provide direct financial support for living and training expenses and tuition support for an additional 300 high performance athletes each year. We are providing additional assistance to an increased number of senior level national team athletes and an increased number of junior and developing athletes and an increased number of athletes with a disability.

**An hon. member:** Good.

**Mr. Murray Calder:** I agree with the hon. member behind me, it is good.

The second area of the new funding is coaching. Access to qualified coaches is a key ingredient for athletic success. In the area of coaching support, our objective is to provide increased support to high performance coaching and to create new full time positions for high performance coaches in order to enhance international athlete development and to improve athlete development programs.

An increased number of qualified and full time coaches is widely recognized as essential to Canadian athletes achieving their potential in international competition. Also critical to achieving this objective is the creation of stable employment positions, including adequate compensation and professional development opportunities.

Through the new funding initiative we will increase the number of federally funded high performance coaches; increase the number of coaches working with athletes with disabilities; supplement existing salaries and honoraria for current high performance coaches; support professional development and training opportunities for coaches; provide apprenticeship and mentoring initiatives to increase the number of women in career track coaching positions; provide coaching development opportunities for aboriginal coaches. Our overall objective is to double the number of high



performance coaches currently funded by the Government of Canada over the five year period of the new funding for sports.

The third area of investment with the new funding for sports relates to increasing access to high performance training and competition opportunities. Access to top calibre international competition is necessary for our athletes to achieve their objectives in the international competitions, including world championships, the Olympics and Paralympic Games. It is not enough to simply train without testing skills and abilities against world level competition. Our objective with this new funding is to provide high performance athletes with increased access to world class training programs and services and to high calibre competitions in order to improve results at world championships and the Olympics and Paralympic Games.

Specifically the new funding has provided more opportunities for high quality training, improved the training environment through the provision of enhanced services for athletes, and provided more opportunities for athletes to compete at international events. In addition, the funding has been made available to develop programming for aboriginal athletes who have demonstrated a high performance potential.

In the short term the new initiatives to be undertaken for athletes through the new funding for sports should result in enhanced performance by athletes at the Olympics and Paralympic Games in 2000 and 2002 and at other world championships. In the long term they will also provide much needed support to develop top level high performance coaches and nurture the development of the next tier of athletes.

We are very proud of our commitment to high performance athletes through our ongoing financial support and in particular the new funding for sports. We are proud of the many young Canadians who compete for Canada on the international stage.

• (1720)

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I agree that sports and amateur sports in particular is very important. It is a very essential part of our society and something which certainly builds character in our young people.

There is one thing I would like some clarification on by the hon. member. He spoke quite a bit about investment in high performance athletes, high performance coaching, high performance training and so forth, about the top level. While that is important, sometimes there is tremendous pressure for our young people to always be on top. People have gotten past the stage where they can enjoy sports, have fun, relax and build character that way. Sometimes there is so much pressure on young people to always be at the

### *Supply*

top, to be at a high level and of top quality. It creates more stress and concern for them than if they could just enjoy the sport.

The member talked about the funding that has been provided and the investment being made in our young people. What form of funding or investment is available for families? Perhaps the children are in one parent families and they cannot afford the latest high quality equipment that would make them look professional. They would like to just go out, have fun and be encouraged in sports in that way. What is the government doing in that regard?

**Mr. Murray Calder:** Mr. Speaker, in my own community I have been a Kinsmen dealing with service clubs for 25 years. We have worked with minor sports in our area. I agree with what the member is saying, that sports is to have fun but there are also role models in sports. That is what we see the government committing money to right now, the role models on the international stage whom we try to emulate in the small sports we have fun with.

The member asked what is available for families. There are a number of initiatives the government is working on right now in terms of single wage earner families and so on. There are tax issues where we are working for low income Canadians. These all fit into giving Canadians extra money so they can spend that money where they see fit. If it happens to be sports, then that is what they do.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, earlier today I put a question on budgets to my colleague from Drummond. I will put the same question to an hon. member of the government party to see if he thinks the situation is normal.

During the years of drastic cuts, the budget for amateur sports was reduced to less than \$50 million a year, while the government gave more than \$20 million to the infamous Canada Information Office and about twice the budget of amateur sports to propaganda, including the million flags project of the Minister of Canadian Heritage. During the same period, funds given to amateur sports were dangerously reduced. Even with the funds that the Minister of Canadian Heritage calls new, the budget for amateur sports remains at about \$57 million when, in 1993, before the Liberals came to power, it was \$76 million.

The government member says that the government is very proud of our amateur athletes and our coaches when they win medals, but the amounts invested and the cuts made since the Liberals came to power do not necessarily reflect that pride. Could we not say that there is a contradiction between what the Liberals say and what they do?

[*English*]

**Mr. Murray Calder:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across the way talks about contradiction. Let us go back six years to 1993 and

*Supply*

look at where the finances of the country were at that time. We were running a \$42.5 billion deficit. We had close to \$600 billion of accumulated public debt. Our government came in and got the financial house of the government back in order. He is right. Cuts were made to amateur sports. Cuts were made to everything to get the government's books back in line. We have done that.

• (1725)

We also promised in the 1997 election that when we started generating surpluses we would start putting the money back in in a strategic fashion. That is exactly what we are doing right now. We are living up to that commitment.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to this motion which I support. It has a lot of good things in it. I will also comment on the Mills report on sport in terms of the positive things and of course some negative things that have come out of that.

I caution all committees, or whomever will be responsible for putting these kinds of things together, that we be careful with regard to creating another federal department. It brings in another bureaucracy which we have a tough time funding now. We are bureaucracy crazy. Everything is run by bureaucracies. I would really be cautious with this idea of setting up a separate federal department.

Instead of suggesting a study be done on the feasibility of legalized betting on sport, I would suggest we forget the study. The Liberal government seems to be study crazy. It has more studies for this and that and committees looking at this and that, studies on seniors and sexuality and all these idiotic committees. Another one is legalized betting on sport. Legalized betting is not what sport is all about. Forget the committee. Just scrap that whole idea.

I have spent many years of my life educating and coaching our youth. I recognize the vital role that participation in organized sports can play in the upbringing of Canadian children. I had many years of experience in coaching both as a professional coach in the United States and as a volunteer coach in Canada. I have seen firsthand over and over again the very positive contribution of participation in sport by our youth.

There can be little doubt in anybody's mind that this is a good idea. To promote sport is an excellent means of preventing crime by our young people. It is an excellent way to provide opportunities for those who have the talent to excel in their abilities. One thing in the last member's message I kept hearing over and over again was high quality this, high quality that, high quality here and high quality there.

I always have felt that one major thing in any sporting department or purpose was to provide the opportunity for persons such as those in grade 1 and grade 6 who had the desire to participate but because of where they lived or commitments required by their parents for the high cost of equipping them to play hockey or to buy a baseball glove it would be totally unaffordable. Over and over again I have seen in my years of experience that these kinds of things are not available to everybody as they ought to be.

I get concerned about seeing \$800 million put into a program where \$100 million of it will be for infrastructure without any qualifications of what that really means.

What we need is the ability for our young people to have the opportunity to participate and be part of a program that teaches life skills other than the high quality of skill of a particular sport. The program needs to teach good citizenship and good health. It needs to teach a number of things that will have long term benefits for them particularly when they get to an age where they can participate in activities in their communities as an adult.

• (1730)

I was always a firm believer that team competitive sports such as hockey, football, basketball and so on were very good. However, along with them we need support for sport that will provide skills to individuals so that when they become adults and part of a family they can participate in other sports that are not competitive.

Having been in the United States and having coached professionally, there are some real advantages to having a program in place that will provide the avenue to work with young people and provide some high quality coaches that will train and teach them the best way to deal with particular programs.

Unfortunately when I was in the United States the philosophy of playing to win and having fun turned out to be winning is not everything; it is the only thing. When that kind of attitude begins to exist problems start to develop.

I have seen young people in amateur sports who had participated in a competition and won a division or zone competition. After their team had participated and worked together to win a particular title and had fun doing it, they advanced to the next level of competition.

It is at that point throughout the country where there seems to be an attitude that it has to be really competitive. They pick all-stars from other teams within the division instead of using the same dozen or twenty young people who managed to make this accomplishment. There is an attitude that exists in Canada that we need the all-stars from the other teams. Consequently the young people who helped the team to get to where it was were heartbroken and

were staying at home while the better players went on to higher competition.

Those are the things that are disheartening, the very basic type of ideas. Unfortunately the report fails to get to the heart of the matter of what affects young people. What do we expect of our athletes and sport people when they are in schools? I cannot help but think about that terrible tragedy in Littleton, Colorado, where two people stated that the targets for their activities would be jocks, athletes.

I remember some very stringent rules in some of the schools I worked in. Not only did we do our best to encourage others to participate in whatever sport we were in, but for those people who were not inclined or did not have the desire to go into sport, the athletes in turn would show great respect for their desire to go into music, drama or whatever it was. They had a mutual respect for one another.

Because of an attitude that began down in the United States that the captain of the football team, a macho sort of athlete, is the king-pin of the school, they tend to tread on the other people who have other things in their hearts.

We do not address those things in our sporting areas. One of the problems is when we start throwing money without good ideas into a project. Money is not the answer to sports. Availability is, making it possible for all to participate. That can be handled best at the local level in our communities and not by a magic bureaucratic department creation, not by a government that will look after everybody's best interest.

• (1735)

We spent a lot of our time during my years in amateur and volunteer coaching in Canada selling chocolate bars, selling light bulbs and selling magazines. We did everything we could to raise funds to buy a few bats or a dozen baseballs or to buy T-shirts or caps so the young people would look like a uniformed group.

We are missing the boat when we forget about the spirit of sport at that age of young people and start concentrating on pouring money in so everyone can excel at great lengths. That acceleration will happen in spite of what goes on. We always felt that if we looked after everybody the great ones would come out of the crop, but not because of tons of money being spent to see it happen and a concentration at that level.

I encourage the committee to continue to look at this report. I would like it to involve even more people who could come up with some ideas to enhance sport and to provide an opportunity for young people. Sport is a very important part of our lives for the development of citizenship, good health and a sense of belonging. Let us not ruin it by creating big bureaucracies which are no solution.

### *Supply*

**Mr. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to what the member had to say. He is right. We should never be in a situation where high performance sport is the only objective of the system, the only objective of our young people. I think of sport as having to do with far more than simply training the body. It has to do with training the mind and many of the points made by the member.

I do not know if the member has looked at that part of the government's sports program which deals with the Canada Games. I use the Canada Games as simply one example. The federal government commits \$60 million to sports. We are missing a great deal if we forget the volunteer activity which the member describes and the activity and roles of the provinces and the schools. This is not the be all and end all of sports in Canada.

A part of the budget goes toward supporting the Canada Games. My understanding is that 45,000 young people between the ages of 18 and 22 or 23 have participated in the Canada Games in the last few decades. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of young people have tried out for the Canada Games.

I have attended two or three of them and they are far more than sports events. They are festivals at which students from all over the country, young athletes of different standards, come together and participate. For some of these athletes it is the peak of their sporting career and often the peak of their career as young Canadians.

The Canada Games which come out of federal funding is part of a pyramid. I was chair of the Ontario Summer Games which is for younger athletes. We had in our community 2,000 to 3,000 young people, younger than those in the Canada Games. Tens of thousands tried out for the Ontario Summer Games. I am sure the same applies in Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec and other provinces across the country. Those games were funded in part by the provincial governments and lead toward the Canada Games, the national festival of sports.

Has the member been to any Canada Games? Is he familiar with the sort of festival of sport it is for young people, not simply for high performance athletes?

**Mr. Myron Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I understand what the member is stating.

Back in 1983 in my area I had the pleasure of serving on the committee which was putting on the Alberta provincial summer games. Two years later we had the Alberta provincial winter games. A tremendous amount of work and effort went into providing opportunity for young people. There were great celebrations. It was phenomenal.

*Supply*

• (1740)

All the trials and competitions prior to qualifying to come to the provincial festival were every bit as big in the minds and hearts of the young people who were trying at the lower level. The province and the communities made certain that young people were shown some appreciation for their efforts, whatever they could be.

To go from a provincial level to a national level can only be a dream for a lot of young people. I reiterate the need for maximum participation before getting to those levels, or the more people involved the better the whole system will be. I do not want to see tons of money targeted for one area without making absolutely certain that we cover as much as possible.

I am certainly proud of the Canadian amateur games. I cheer for our athletes as loudly as anybody. It gives me a good feeling when one of them achieves. If we are to talk about amateur sport, let us not narrow the scope. Let us keep it broad and available to Canadian children everywhere.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Wild Rose for letting me share his time with him. I also congratulate the member for Longueuil for her fine intervention today.

This is a very important motion. As an Olympicophile and one who had a long time dream of participating in some form but had no chance whatsoever of doing so, it is a great pleasure to speak to the motion.

From Donavoan Bailey to Norris Bowden, Greg Joy, Sue Holloway, Debbie Van Kiekebelt, Kathleen Heddle and so many more, the Canadian Olympic amateur athletes and indeed professional and other athletes who have worn the Canadian flag so proudly on their shoulders have done us proud for many decades. They have embodied the finest elements of being Canadian and in many instances have shown us what it is like to be the best of being human.

The motion goes to the heart of something that is very important and very dear to Canadians: sport, particularly amateur sport. We have seen much excellence and heroism among our Olympic athletes. We have also seen them as superb role models for not only the young but also the old. I would argue that the cherished dream of Baron Pierre de Coubertin lives on in the hearts of many athletes in the country today.

Many Canadian athletes, particularly those who have competed in the Olympics, have succeeded not as a direct result of what we have managed to do for them in an organizational capacity but what they have managed to do for themselves. Many amateur athletes have lived lives of poverty, indeed below the welfare level, in order to compete in a sport that they love and do Canada proud.

The root of this debate is how we can improve the situation for our amateur athletes. I would argue there are things we can do. We can make sure that money gets directly to the athletes. The money should not be invested in a bloated bureaucracy.

We invest a sizeable amount of money. It is understandably limited because there are so many priorities. More of the money rather than going into bureaucracy must be focused directly on the athletes who need it most, on the hard edge of sport in Canada; not on the organizational capacity but into the pockets of the athletes to enable them to eat, travel and survive.

Therefore I would argue that we need to downsize the bureaucracy in many amateur athletic sports and focus the funding on successful sports. We currently fund over 70 sports in the country, which I would argue is too many. We have to make choices. We need to decide which sports are more important for Canada's identity and fund those selectively.

• (1745)

This is not to say that we should ignore the other ones, but there are ways of getting funding for them. For example, when a particular sport becomes very successful, then a percentage of those funds can be poured into general revenues for sports that do not make much money. Successful sports, such as track and field, rowing and sports that generate funds, can be used to pour into sports that are less attractive from a funding perspective.

We can also try to develop some innovative private-public partnerships. We have talked about tax incentives for investment from the private sector. We should consider using an adopt an athlete or adopt a sport for the private sector. The quid pro quo is that the particular advertising group can get money from advertising at the specific sports venues and generate something for them in that way. Those are the things that can be done.

I also want to draw to the attention of the House something the Canadian Olympic Association has been doing to address a very important problem and one that is largely going undiagnosed and unrecognized in our society; that is the inactivity among our youth.

If we are going to have an important and profound impact on the health of Canadians, in particular among the youth, we need to make sure that the youth get into healthy practices. One of the healthiest things they can do is engage in a sport. Sports are good for our health. The earlier we begin engaging in regular physical activity, the easier it will be to keep up with that physical activity when we are older.

In other words, starting early will give youths good habits that will enable them to carry on with healthy sports habits later in life. This will give us a health dividend. We know that regular activity and exercise is healthy for us. It lowers the risk of cardiovascular problems, other health problems and increases longevity.

The Canadian Olympic Association has tried to push forward an innovative program of using Canadian Olympic athletes as ambassadors for sport, using them as role models to push sport among youth, not necessarily at a high level but at the grassroots.

If the federal government chooses to take a leadership role with the provinces and is willing to approach the ministries of education to work with the Canadian Olympic Association, I think that would be a fantastic partnership. We would be able to use these Canadian heroes, who have competed nationally and internationally for us, as ambassadors for sport and to really have an aggressive campaign to convince our youth that competing in sports early on is very important.

We not only must convince the youth, but we must convince their parents. I have had many parents come into offices that I have worked in as a physician asking that their child be excused from physical education. It is very unfortunate that in many of those cases the request was not for good medical grounds, but because the child did not want to participate for various reasons. Sport can be made an integral part of people's lives and it is important that it be started early.

I also want to address the aspect of professional sports. Much has been said recently about whether we should or should not fund professional sports to keep them in the country. In a word, the answer, in my view, is absolutely not. How can we justify giving money to professional sports where people are making millions of dollars a year, when we have people on the street who might be making \$17,000 or \$20,000 a year? How can we justify taking their hard earned tax dollars to pay for professional sporting groups to stay in the country? We cannot and we should not.

The problem of professional sports in the country and why they are leaving is an indicator of a much larger problem that is affecting Canadians from coast to coast. It is taxes. Taxes are driving Canadians, Canadian companies and the best of what we have south of the border because the tax structure is so skewed. A family of two makes at least 44% more in the United States than they do here.

• (1750)

Similarly, the professional teams in the country are unable to compete with those teams south of the border because their taxes are high. The province of Ontario has an 10% entertainment tax on tickets for these sports. In the case of the Corel Centre in Ottawa, its property taxes have gone from \$1.1 million to a proposed \$7 million in less than seven years. That is ridiculous. We also have the only publicly funded and publicly owned highway.

What we need to do is lower taxes not just for professional sports but for Canadians from coast to coast. I am glad the problem was brought up by the professional sporting groups. It shows that not

### *Supply*

only are they labouring under high tax rates but so is the rest of Canada. They are also having a problem because the Canadian dollar is so low.

The reason the Canadian dollar is so low is because the government has put its tail between its legs and lowered the Canadian dollar to increase productivity rather than trying to deal with the elements of productivity such as taxes, education and rules and regulations, amongst others. It does not address that. It just lowers the value of the Canadian dollar to make our exports more competitive. In the process, however, it damages and hurts many Canadian companies that have to deal in U.S. dollars.

When it comes to sports, Canadian athletes show some of the finest examples of what it is to be Canadian. In the words of Lord Alfred Tennyson, in his poem *Ulysses*, he said:

To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.

This is the motto of many Canadian athletes. I think sports are something that Canadians are all proud to participate in, to honour and to uphold.

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my friend in the Reform Party, the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, made some good points with respect to amateur sports. He also indicated that professional sports franchises should not receive any more tax breaks, but that he supports tax breaks for everybody.

There are a couple of points I want to make. The municipal governments in the country, for example, Ottawa, benefits directly as a community from the Ottawa Senators through jobs, other taxes, revenues and fees. It also charges the Ottawa Senators about \$4.2 million in property taxes, which is now burdening the Ottawa Senators and is pressuring them to move out of the country.

With respect to these municipal property taxes, which are extremely high, does the member think that all of Canada, including Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca constituents and those in Saskatchewan and Manitoba that have no pro hockey teams, should be asked to subsidize the municipality of Ottawa which is charging these pro teams exorbitant taxes and is driving them out of the country?

Does he support the current tax situation for professional hockey teams? Let us look at a company that buys a big box in an arena for about \$120,000. The taxpayers now support that box purchased by a business to the tune of \$27,000 to \$30,000 on the \$120,000 through lost tax expenditures. Does he support this continued multimillion dollar support of pro franchises?

Does he agree with his Reform colleague, the member for Kootenay—Columbia, who said this morning that he supports the tax breaks given to the wealthy hockey players? There are 650 NHL hockey players, averaging \$1.8 million a year in salaries,

*Supply*

who have just been given a Liberal tax break in this budget of about \$14,000 each on average. Does he agree with that?

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the whip of the NDP. He has a load of questions and I will do my best to answer as many of them as possible.

In response to his last question, which was the most obvious, I most definitely do not agree. I have absolutely no interest whatsoever in supporting tax breaks for people who are making millions of dollars. However, what we do support are across the board tax breaks for everybody. That is the issue here. I am glad my colleague brought up this issue. The problem which professional sporting groups are faced with, not only here in Ontario but across the country, is the fact that taxes are too high.

• (1755)

The Ottawa Senators and the Corel Centre pay taxes which exceed the revenues of their ticket sales. They have a 10% selective entertainment tax. Why is the provincial government doing that? It is only hurting the ability of these teams to stay in the country.

We have a fetish of engaging in taxes, whether we are talking about municipal, provincial or federal. The federal government has been offloading its tax burden to lower levels of government.

All we ask is that the federal government lower taxes across the country. We have seen the success of this being done in other parts of the world. We could look at Britain, we could look at northern Europe and we could look at the experience in Alberta, where the taxes are much lower and the economy is booming. That is what we need to do federally.

I thank my colleague for pursuing this initiative because it will be productive. Maybe some day the government will listen to us.

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is not quite a question, but a comment.

I would not want to encourage local discord between the city of Ottawa and the city of Kanata. I say to my colleague from Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre that it is the city of Kanata which receives the property tax. That is why in the recent outburst of enthusiasm the mayor of the city of Ottawa made sure that people were corrected. He was actually chastising them for distancing themselves from the Kanata Senators. Let us make sure we have the facts straight on the issue.

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to my hon. friend from the government pursuing with his caucus opportunities to lower taxes, not only for professional sports but, more important, for Canadians from coast to coast.

I look forward to him working with our side, the whole opposition, to make that a reality.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully throughout the day to the comments from all sides. At some points, it was very interesting and relevant, and at others, I must unfortunately admit that it was less so. This is the way things work.

I would take this opportunity to correct certain comments and errors of fact made during the debate.

I am happy to be able to speak to this motion on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Canadian Heritage. I am delighted to reaffirm, as this motion indicates, that amateur sport is at the heart of the concerns of the Government of Canada. The government made a commitment to record its concerns and those of its amateur athletes on its list of priorities and it fully intends to honour this commitment.

I am happy to be able to say, contrary to what has been repeated so far, that the government will act on more than 75% of the recommendations of the parliamentary subcommittee on sport in Canada. It is most encouraging to see committee work being given such enthusiastic support by the government.

I never tire of discussing the reasons Canadians from coast to coast are proud of their country. Amateur sport is one of the reasons we are proud to be Canadians. We feel nothing but pride when we think of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Nagano, of the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur, of the Arctic Winter Games in Yellowknife and of the Pan-American Games to be held very soon in Winnipeg.

There is also the young 13 year old, Alexandre Despatie, who won the gold medal in diving in Kuala Lumpur last year. He is the youngest gold medal winner at the Commonwealth Games.

Regardless of our preferences—skiing, skating, sailing or what-not—in any sport we can name, there are Canadian champions.

Canada has always gathered a team of exceptional athletes, regardless of the size of the competition or the place it is held.

• (1800)

These committed and dedicated athletes have everything they need to compete against the best athletes in the world. They proudly walk in the stadium and wave our flag high, as do athletes from all over the world incidentally, before the Bloc accuses our athletes of excessive national pride as it has, unfortunately, been doing all day by accusing everybody of trying to politicize the debate. How absurd.

When these athletes enter the stadium, we are walking with them, step by step, the Government of Canada included.

*Supply*

I know we should not always be criticizing, but I would like to take this opportunity to talk about the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, who did resist the temptation to politicize the debate. In my view, he has managed to pull away from the prattle offered to him. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for others.

Let us get back to the subject. They can also take part in exciting and unique competitions, like the Olympics or the Paralympics, the Pan-Am Games or the Francophonie Games that will be held here in the national capital region in 2001.

Every time we see our athletes compete we feel a sense of pride. In Canada we have very talented athletes who work hard to succeed. They have often proved it.

However, talent cannot bloom and flourish in a vacuum. It has to be developed, fed, supervised and encouraged until it reaches the highest level of perfection possible. This is how champions are born, and champions reflect well on Canada. They are a source of motivation for all Canadians. They need our support.

Sport Canada makes available to athletes a number of tools to fully develop their talent and skills, including direct financial assistance through the athletes assistance program in the form of benefits, and living and training allowances; support to 38 national sports organizations to set up a high performance program; support to 11 multi-sport/multi-service organizations such as the Coaching Association of Canada, the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activities; support to the hosting of high performance games, selected international sports events, and world championships held in Canada.

The Canada Games are a key element of the government's direct assistance to athletes. Since their inception in Quebec in 1967 these games have been one of the cornerstones of the Canadian amateur sports system.

Recognizing the importance of this great sports event in Canada we will continue to support it financially and politically.

The Government of Canada offers another kind of support to Canadian athletes by providing them with further assistance in investing in development, competition and training.

We have set up a national network of sports centres across Canada. These allow our high-performance athletes to aim for and reach excellence in an ethical and honest way, in a harassment free environment.

We now find national sport centres from coast to coast, as I said earlier, more specifically in Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and in the Atlantic region.

Canada is also making its mark on the international sport level. I am pleased to point out that Canada will host the next world conference on women and sport in 2002. This conference will be an opportunity to discuss one of our most important priorities for the advancement of sport in Canada.

Consistent with the commitment made by the Prime Minister in the red book, the Government of Canada has increased funding for high level sport by \$50 million over the next five years. In this regard, I think we should rectify the statements made by the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm. He said the government reduced by about \$20 to \$30 million, I believe, its contribution to amateur sport, starting in 1993.

What we must not forget to say, if we want to inform people properly, is that in that year the budget provided for an expenditure of \$26 million in connection with the Commonwealth Games in Victoria. This is not a recurring expenditure.

● (1805)

It is true there was a reduction in the annual operating budget and in funding for sport, as there was in most government agencies and departments. These members should present real numbers to people instead of trying to invent, as they did earlier today. The reduction in question was in the order of \$7 million, and not around \$30 million as they seemed to suggest earlier.

All these measures taken by the Canadian government result from discussions with the sport community in this country and from a national roundtable with athletes, coaches and national sport organizations. The result of these measures is the following.

Canada now provides financial assistance for living expenses and training to an additional 300 high level athletes so they can train to compete at the international level. This number includes 100 handicapped athletes and brings the total number of subsidized athletes to more than 1,200.

We also provide funding for 100 full time high level coaching positions and have improved opportunities for coaches to attend professional development programs. Moreover, those funds allow high level athletes to have better access to quality training and to compete in an increased number of international sporting events.

I want to mention the fact that this investment in our athletes and coaches also includes important measures in support of women, native and handicapped athletes.

As sport is every Canadian's business, we also encourage the private sector to do its part so that amateur sport can flourish in Canada.

*Supply*

As a matter of fact, at the national conference on sport and the business sector held last December, co-chaired by the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the participants came to the same conclusion as the Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada: it is essential to strengthen the relationship between sport and the business sector.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the chairman of the subcommittee, the member for Broadview—Greenwood, as well as all other members of the subcommittee for their thorough study of this issue, which helped to identify various measures that can be taken to support Canadian athletes. The subcommittee encouraged Canadians to focus more on the impact of sport on our economy, our culture, our national identity, our health, and rightly so. It also highlighted the need for the Canadian government to support amateur sport.

In its report the subcommittee insisted on the benefits of sport to our health and to young people at risk, as well as on the crucial role that sport must play in the development of native communities in Canada. I am proud to say once again that the government will follow up on 53 of the 69 recommendations contained in the subcommittee report, or 75%.

Some of these recommendations can already be implemented. For example, the authors of the report expressed concern about the fact that women, handicapped and native athletes are marginalized. This is the kind of concern that influenced the development of the sport funding and accountability framework in 1995. We are presently looking at ways to strengthen the accountability system so as to promote increased participation by Canadian athletes from underrepresented groups.

At the latest meeting of the national centres co-ordinating committee there were discussions about minimum requirements with regard to women, handicapped athletes, athletes who do not have access to the centres, as well as official languages. These requirements will be included in the accountability agreements with the centres.

On the issue of official languages, since the question was raised a few times, I would like to mention two very important points. In 1997 Sport Canada established, as a prerequisite for any contribution to national sport organizations, an accountability contract to be phased in between 1998 and 2001 which states the official languages requirements for national sport organizations. It requires, for example, an active offer of services in the preferred language of the applicant, including telephone services, the publication in both languages of all official and technical documents, policies and procedures, such as selection and appeal procedures, and the provision of bilingual services at all national and international events.

• (1810)

On that same point, I would also like to mention the Canada Games agreement which includes a complete section on official

languages, covering all obligations of the host society in the area of official languages before, during and after the games.

It mentions all the policy obligations and more. The 1997 Canada Games, held in Brandon, were recognized by the Commissioner of Official Languages for the excellent services provided in both official languages during the games. I thought it was important to mention this.

We must recognize that there are difficulties and problems, but there is also a will to correct them, to become better.

Thanks to Sport Canada, we will take a number of steps in response to the recommendations in the report. For example, we will continue to fund the Aboriginal Sport Circle as we have done since 1995.

We will also continue to work with our provincial and territorial counterparts to put in place a funding environment for the North American Indigenous Games. We will try to establish governmental partnerships in this regard.

Sport Canada will examine the issue and make recommendations on the basis of the legislation governing the Canadian government's commitment to sports.

We will again look at the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act to determine its appropriateness for the next century.

I would like to add that the government's responsibility to favour, promote and further sport in Canada is provided by the legislation constituting the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Very soon we will start planning a millennium conference on sport to be held during the first quarter of 2001.

Such an important symposium will necessitate the creation of partnerships with provincial and territorial governments, amateur sport organizations, athletes, coaches, the media and, naturally, the Canadian government.

Hopefully participants will be able to determine the evolution of sport in the next century, the influence it can have on society and the changes it can bring about.

These are examples of measures the government intends to take to promote amateur sport and implement the report of the subcommittee on sport.

However, even before tabling the report we clearly indicated that sport was at the top of our priority list.

This government has clearly shown, when it comes to supporting athletes and trainers, that it does the best where it is important to act. I remind my colleagues of the \$10 million a year increase made to the sport budget for the next five years. As soon as we succeeded in eliminating the deficit that was one of the first envelopes that was increased.



Members will be happy to learn also that at the same time we promised to increase the Canada Council's budget, and that was done.

Consequently, it is not true that we have ignored most of the recommendations in the subcommittee report, as certain members across the way are saying, because we have acted on 75% of them.

The government's decision to act on three-quarters of the subcommittee's recommendations is consistent with the efforts it has made until now to ensure that amateur sport plays an important part in Canada.

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have many questions for the parliamentary secretary, who is praising the minister's response and is proudly saying that the government will support 53 of the 69 recommendations.

I would like him to remind us how much the recommendations the minister agreed to implement will cost compared to the recommendation on professional sport. I would like him to tell us about it.

I would also like him to tell us what he knows about sport federations and associations. There are obvious and dangerous problems for athletes; discrimination and language problems, as well as coaching problems. Sport Canada has no training or incentive program to encourage coaches to speak French so that our athletes could at least understand what their coaches were saying.

• (1815)

What does the government intend to do in that regard? As far as the minister is concerned, in any case, it will be nothing at all. I would like to hear what the parliamentary secretary has to say about that. He says that all is fine and dandy in amateur sports and that the government believes in it, so much so that 22 sport federations no longer receive subsidies from the government. How can he explain that?

For my last question, it seems that the federal government is considering giving the Montreal Expos a piece of land in downtown Montreal for the sum of \$1. How can the parliamentary secretary justify this? Would he consider giving a similar piece of land or the same kind of help to amateur sport that would indeed be interested in such a large piece of land for such a modest sum? Is this conceivable for the parliamentary secretary?

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to one of the comments I made earlier following the speech of another member. I was mentioning that most of his speech dealt with professional sport, while the Bloc's resolution deals with the importance of placing the interests of amateur sport before the interests of professional sport.

### *Supply*

I might point out to the member for Longueuil that this is precisely what I have done in my presentation. I have placed the interests of amateur sport well before those of professional sport, because Sports Canada looks after amateur sport.

I wish to remind the member of what I said earlier about funding. The whole envelope of Sports Canada is used for amateur sport. I hope that the member will acknowledge that. Sports Canada does not support professional sport and I do hope the member recognizes that.

As for the coaching program, I found the suggestion made by the member for Longueuil interesting. She suggests we include an official language aspect in training programs or training support programs for coaches. I will remember that suggestion. It will be not only my duty but also my pleasure to pass it on to the minister and other people involved in Sports Canada and, if need be, improve the training program. We remain open to such suggestions, as we have been in the past.

I will leave the professional sport issue to others, in this case the Minister of Industry, since his department is responsible for professional sport.

I must underline, as others have done today, that no decision has really been taken on the issue of support for professional sport. I must admit that the debate will certainly be vigorous, depending on what is recommended, because public opinion is quite divided on the issue. Up to now everyone has an opinion, even those voters who have called me. People may not all have the same opinion, but everyone has one. So the debate promises to be interesting and I would be remiss if I did not leave it to those who should be dealing with it.

[English]

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier talk about amateur sport. He spoke about amateur sport throughout most of his dissertation.

The only conclusion one can draw from this is that here we have another Liberal example of words rather than action. We hear nothing but words from the government opposite when it comes to supporting a number of very key sectors in the economy.

When it comes to the farmers of Saskatchewan who are undergoing the worst agricultural period economically since the Depression, the government talks about helping them, but it does not help them financially. It is all words and no action.

We hear around the country about all the problems with health care. When \$6 billion is cut back every year for five years, some

*Supply*

\$30 billion, and most of that from health care in terms of its responsibility, that is an action I think Canadians can relate to very well. It has taken a very bad action.

Today in the House we are talking about amateur sport and the lack of support by the government, the lack of action in response to the Mills report on amateur sport in Canada.

• (1820)

The member for Ottawa—Vanier referred to the Kanata Senators. All of a sudden they are the Kanata Senators when it is a tax issue. The Ottawa region charges the Ottawa Senators \$4.2 million in property taxes and Montreal charges the Montreal Canadiens \$11.2 million a year in property taxes. The \$11.2 million is more than what all of the 21 U.S. based hockey teams pay collectively in property taxes. Even with the exchange rate it is more. We have a very serious municipal tax problem.

The member for Ottawa—Vanier has disowned the Ottawa Senators and has called them the Kanata Senators. Can he elaborate on the support the taxpayers of this country and the Liberal government are giving professional sports franchises now? Would he tell us how much it has cost us to give each of the 650 pro hockey players in this country a \$14,000 to \$15,000 a year tax cut in this year's budget? How much is that costing taxpayers?

How much is it costing taxpayers to subsidize the purchase of seasons tickets for all these pro sports franchises? For example, a sports box in the arena for the Ottawa Senators may cost \$100,000 to \$120,000. We are providing for the business that buys a box a tax subsidy of between \$23,000 and \$30,000 a year depending on the price of the box. In addition to the seasons tickets bought by businesses, how much are we subsidizing wealthy franchise owners, wealthy hockey players and players of other sports such as basketball players through the actions of the Liberal government?

Does he support the rollback of these exorbitant property taxes by the municipalities which benefit directly? Ottawa receives the benefits of tourism, jobs and all the economic activity that happens as a result of the Ottawa Senators being here. I like the Ottawa Senators. It is one of my favourite teams and I think it should do very well, but should all the taxpayers in this country continue to subsidize the municipalities that benefit from the property tax revenues?

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Speaker, I will try in the short time left to respond to some of the hon. member's comments.

I would be curious to know if the member voted for or against budgets where the deductibility of some of the expenses he referred to, be they boxes or tickets and so forth, was reduced by this government. I am saddened to hear him say that he voted against that. If he were consistent then he would have supported these

measures in the budgets we have introduced. On that basis alone, his question and his reaction to that are rather inconsistent.

On the matter of the Kanata Senators, I did mention that it was a quote from the mayor of Ottawa over which I am presumably getting into deep doo-doo right now. In defence of the mayor of Ottawa who said that, it was in jest in front of a crowd of about 1,000 people and was presented that way. Incidentally I thought it was a rather good way of instituting a debate.

Indeed, some comments have been made as to how far we go down that road and we are not going to go alone. The local municipalities, the players, the teams and so forth would have to be part of the package, if ever there were a package, but that is neither nor there. I wanted to make sure my friend, the mayor of the city of Ottawa would still be speaking with me.

On the matter of amateur sports, I have to remark on recent years. I am not from western Canada but the member is. I hope he appreciates the money the taxpayers of the country put into the Commonwealth Games in Victoria and the Olympic Games in Calgary and the money they are putting into the Pan Am Games in Manitoba coming up this summer and the myriad other events, international competitions and so forth. That is part and parcel of the contribution of Sports Canada to amateur athletes.

Yes, we do concrete things. I have highlighted three of them in the member's part of the country and we are happy that they were all successful. We wish the best of luck to the Pan Am Games in Manitoba.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate. As a trained recreation specialist who worked at the municipal level for 15 years, I am happy to see that the mover of the motion is a woman, namely the member for Longueuil. Too often in the past when open line shows dealt with sports it was mostly men who were interested in the topic.

• (1825)

I am happy that it is a woman who introduced the motion. The member for Drummond, with whom I sit on the Standing Committee on Health, also took part in the debate. I ask the following question: Why should we be involved in sports and physical activities? In my view, first and foremost for health reasons.

The provinces, the municipalities and also the federal government have a role to play in amateur sports. Decisions to compete in the Olympic Games or other international games are made at the federal level. It is too bad for Quebecers, because we would like to decide for ourselves, but in the present situation the federal government does it.

Is the present federal Liberal government really looking after our athletes? When we look at numbers we have to say no, it is not. It made many cuts and I have countless examples.

Two weeks ago I attended the Canadian handball championship at Laval University. There were women's teams and men's teams. There were also community teams. Quebecers are particularly good at this sport. I spent part of the weekend there. I was supposed to be there only one day, but I went back the next day because of the high level of competition. The performances were outstanding.

I talked to the athletes and coaches. They told me how the competition had been funded. Guess how much money the federal government put into those Canadian championships. Not a penny.

The Quebec government, through various departments and health and education programs, and with help from the Université Laval, some Bloc members and a bit of publicity, finally managed to hold this Canadian handball competition. It is an absolute disgrace.

We could also talk about a third of the sports organizations, 22 out of 60, that cannot perform at the international level because of a lack of funding.

One of the recommendations of the subcommittee on amateur sport was that at least \$100,000 a year be allocated to every association. What would that mean? It would mean an office, one regular employee, a knowledgeable professional in that sport who would be able to advise coaches and support volunteers. The proposal was turned down. It would have cost \$2.2 million.

The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, who told us that everything is fine, should take a look at this problem. When we have a third of all sports associations doomed to closing down because the federal government has decided to drop its support and the hon. member tells us that everything is fine, is this not extraordinary?

I do not have much time left—

**Mr. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

If the hon. member wants to put words in my mouth, he could at least quote me correctly. I have never said that everything is fine and I challenge him to find the passage in *Hansard* where I have said so.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is obviously a point of debate. I know we have different views about the things that are said in this House, but this is not a point of order.

**Mr. Antoine Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I understand why the member for Ottawa—Vanier would be annoyed when such things are said to him. With a third of the associations threatened, he has every reason to react.

### *Adjournment Debate*

In closing, I will read the text of the motion brought forward by the member for Longueuil. It reads as follows:

That, since the government ignored most of the recommendations by the Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada, a Sub-Committee of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, the House demand that the government place amateur athletes at the heart of its concerns and make a commitment to placing their interests before the interests of professional sport.

• (1830)

I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to make this motion votable.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to make this motion votable?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6.30 p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that proceedings on the motion have expired.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

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

### PUBLIC SERVICE PENSION PLAN

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's grab of the pension surplus was not only offensive but pathetic and embarrassing. The pension belongs to Canadian forces troops, public sector workers, the RCMP and others.

The Liberal government decided that cooking its own books was important enough to loot its employees' pension funds. This fund belongs to the members of the plan. Any surplus should be used for the benefit of the members and others affiliated with the plan such as retirees and widows.

Some 670,000 members of the pension plan are affected. The allocation of any surplus should address the contributions of those over half million Canadians.

Under the employees' pension benefits act a principle was established that surpluses do not belong to anyone and that allocation of surpluses need to be approved by a two-thirds majority of the plan members.

One legitimate reason exists. What reason exists to differentiate between a noble action and the simple cash grab we have seen by

*Adjournment Debate*

the Liberal government? What reason would the government have for not using the surplus to improve the benefits accruing to the members of the plan who created that surplus?

It seems to me as if the Liberal government has made a political decision to set a precedent for pension plan comptrollers to take the money and run. The government tried to use cheap political game playing to make it look as if the outcry against this near larceny was from a small fringe of one union. That cheap political trick was nonsense.

An advertisement placed in the Ottawa *Citizen* against this cash grab was signed by many, including Canadian Military College Faculty Association, Council of Graphic Artists, Canadian Merchant Service Guild, and the list goes on and on.

However the government wants to grab the money, put it in its coffers and say that it has wrestled down the debt, but it will have done so on the backs of those who need the plan, those who have contributed and worked hard. It will be done in the same way the EI fund was grabbed and taken away from those who are unemployed.

We realize over 670,000 members of the plan are affected. The allocation of the surplus needs to address the contribution of these members who have contributed to the plan.

We often hear the government say that the taxpayer owns this money and that it is the taxpayer it must protect. The people who contributed to the plan are also taxpayers. We must look at their benefits and their rights. This is a democratic principle. People should have the right to say what they feel should be done with the surpluses in their pension plans.

Who are we affecting with the legislation? We are affecting the Canadian military, the people who are fighting over in Kosovo. While they are away fighting the government is back here grabbing the surplus from their pension funds.

We are also affecting the RCMP, the people we entrust to keep law and order, to put their lives on the line fighting crime, and to do all kinds of things to protect society. While they are protecting society, who is protecting their pension fund? It is certainly not the government.

A grave injustice has been done. I am pleased to provide the government with this opportunity to apologize, to set the record straight and to ensure that every cent of funds dedicated to this plan is left in the pension fund or put to direct use to improve the benefits of the plan in a way that is acceptable to the plan's contributors.

**Mr. Tony Ianno (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Halifax West completely misses the point when he compares our commitment, as he did earlier in his question to the minister, to NATO and our willingness

to provide government employees with pension plans that are more in line with the realities of today.

I totally disagree with him when he says the government was bombarding the pension plan of our armed forces. That is quite a little play on words. We know the NDP is very strong in terms of its rhetoric. On the contrary, Bill C-78 sweeps the cobwebs out of plans that were designed more than 30 years ago and needed to be updated and improved.

I also have enormous difficulty understanding why the member persists in saying that the pension plan surpluses belong to members of the Canadian forces, the public service and the RCMP. The President of the Treasury Board has stated in the House on several occasions that government employees did not have to assume any financial risks associated with funding these plans.

• (1835)

Canadian taxpayers have taken all the risks. Canadians have funded all the deficits. Clearly and simply they deserve to enjoy the surplus that now exists.

If the member takes the trouble to read the bill carefully, he will see the proposals being introduced and passed in Bill C-78 and Bill C-71 will provide government employees with more benefits than they had before.

The hon. member for Halifax West should also keep himself better informed about everything the government is doing to improve the lot of Canadians, especially members of the RCMP, the Canadian forces and the public service.

I stress that the bill enhances and protects the benefits the public service, the RCMP and Canadian forces employees and pensioners receive and that the benefits as defined in their plans will continue to be theirs and guaranteed by the government.

HEALTH

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to pursue an issue I raised in the House regarding the reuse of disposable medical devices. This matter came to light in February of this year as the result of some excellent investigative work by a reporter with the Winnipeg *Free Press*.

It was revealed that disposable medical devices were being reused in hospitals in Winnipeg and elsewhere across Canada. Let us be clear. We are talking about medical devices licensed for single use only. We are talking about repeated use of catheters and other devices contrary to manufacturer warnings and despite the real possibility of disease transmission.

It should also be noted that since the time I raised this matter in the House a report has been released by Winnipeg microbiologist Dr. Michelle Alfa confirming there is a danger that surgical devices

reused against the advice of manufacturers might transmit infections between patients or break down inside the body.

What has the federal government's response been? The Minister of Health said he would consider calling a meeting of provincial health ministers in order to develop, possibly, a national policy on this issue. Does that not just blow us away? We are at a loss for words in terms of that response.

Here we have a problem of national proportions, a practice that is certainly risky and potentially lethal, and a matter that falls directly under the jurisdiction of the health protection branch. Where is the federal government? In essence nowhere. Even the spokesperson of the manufacturers of medical devices said surely Health Canada has some role as a protector of the public health of Canada.

It is a clear-cut case of federal government negligence and dereliction of duty, reinforced by the fact that the government has sat on a report for five years which warned of widespread concerns about the risk of reusing disposable medical devices.

For five years the government has known that reused disposable devices like catheters and tubes going into the stomach and intestines can cause the transmission of disease and even breakdown in the patient's body. To make matters even worse, for three years the government has had the benefit of a comprehensive set of guidelines done by the Canadian Health Care Association and provided to all health care facilities regarding the reuse of single use medical devices, and still nothing.

Other countries have taken action. France and Sweden forbid the use of disposable medical devices. In the rest of Europe equipment must be certified. Any kind of reused equipment must be clearly certified indicating it continues to meet standards.

Why not in Canada? Why has the government forsaken health protection? Why does it not act on a study that is five years old? Why does it not put in use the recommendations of the Canadian Health Care Association?

Doctors want national policies. Manufacturers want action. Patients clearly want to see the government uphold its responsibilities under the Health Protection Act. Why does the government not act and act now?

### *Adjournment Debate*

**Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond further to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre concerning the reuse of single use medical devices by hospitals.

The practice of resterilizing and reusing devices labelled by the manufacturer of single use devices has been common in Canada for some time. Since 1994 there have been a number of major conferences on the issue. At none of these conferences were serious fears expressed about the hazards of the practice.

• (1840)

*[Translation]*

Since 1991 the Quebec minister of health has published three guidelines in this regard: first, to endorse the practice, then to annul the first notice and, finally, to again amend it in order to permit reuse under certain conditions. All of this points to confusion regarding the dangers of this practice.

In 1994 and 1996 Health Canada provided funding and support for research to the Canadian Health Care Association for the development of two policy documents on reuse, which were largely accepted by Canadian hospitals and published in the United States by the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation.

Delivery of health care and the types and the use made of drugs and medical devices in hospitals are provincial and territorial matters.

*[English]*

Health Canada has demonstrated leadership in developing national guidelines on reuse. The department is willing to work with the provinces, the territories and the advisory committee on health services to continue that work.

*[Translation]*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.41 p.m.)



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