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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, November 30, 1999

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 30, 1999

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present in both official languages the first report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. Pursuant to the order of reference of Thursday, October 14, 1999, your committee has considered Bill C-202, an act to amend the Criminal Code, and your committee has agreed to report it with amendments.

* * *

[*Translation*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

SUPPLY DAY—ORGANIZED CRIME

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ) moved:

That this House instruct the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to conduct a study of organized crime, to analyse the options available to Parliament to combat the activities of criminal groups and to report to the House no later than October 31, 2000.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I would simply like to draw to your attention that my hon. colleague from Berthier—Montcalm will be sharing his time with our colleague from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, and thereafter all members of the Bloc Québécois will be doing the same, for the rest of the debate.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, the debate we are going to have in this House today is an extremely important one. Members will agree that on an opposition day the matter debated is usually the one the opposition feels is most important at that time.

We could easily have discussed the constitution today, with all the things that are going on across the floor of this House and with the Prime Minister's desire to pass legislation that will provide a framework for Quebec, a framework for certain things that fall under its exclusive jurisdiction, and which the people of Quebec alone can decide in connection with its future. We could have discussed the constitution, but the Bloc Québécois preferred to address another matter which is, without a doubt, the most important one, not only today but probably in the next century.

It is truly important that today people become aware of the existence of a major problem in Canada and in Quebec: organized crime.

• (1010)

Our motion is one of open-mindedness. With this motion, the Bloc Québécois is reaching out not just to the government

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opposite, but to all parties in this House. We are asking all the parties in this House to conduct a serious and non-partisan study, as we are capable of doing and as we have done in the past, of important issues such as organized crime, with the sole objective of finding a solution to a serious problem.

What is the problem? Why does the Bloc Québécois think the problem is important enough to take a day in the business of the House? Why does it want to try to convince the government and the other opposition parties to join it and adopt a motion asking this House to instruct the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to conduct a study of organized crime and to make proposals, if necessary, after listening to witnesses?

Why? Because in recent years, and particularly since 1995, a number of events show the magnitude of the problem and the urgent need to take action. Since I only have 10 minutes, let me briefly remind the House that in 1995 young Daniel Desrochers died following the explosion of a bomb. I am sure the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve will talk about that incident, because it happened in his riding. The explosion was related to a biker gang war.

In 1997, two prison guards were gunned down in cold blood. It would appear from the information we have that the shooting was related directly to organized crime.

Very recently, as if that were not enough, colleagues in this House have received death threats. The member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot is one, because he dared to criticize the growing of marijuana among corn plants, a practice going on in his riding, and to defend the farmers in his riding. He strongly criticized unacceptable activities and received death threats.

I was looking at statistics before coming here. Between 1994 and 1998, there were 79 murders and 89 attempted murders connected with battles among biker gangs in Quebec alone. However, this problem is not unique to Quebec. It occurs in all the other provinces as well, but I did not have statistics for them this morning.

We talk of murder and attempted murder, but there are also arson and bombings. Over the same period, there were 129 cases of arson and 82 bombings. This is from RCMP sources, which are no doubt reliable.

In terms of drugs, what is the value of the illegal drug trade at the moment in Canada? This is a little more difficult, because the calculation is based on drug seizures. Naturally, seizures account for only a part, and we have to extrapolate to get a total value. They say illicit drugs in Canada are worth between \$200 billion U.S. and \$500 billion U.S. That is a bit of money.

This is why I am saying the subject is very important. Probably the most important issue in the next millennium will be an effective

response to organized crime, because at the rate of \$200 to \$500 billion U.S. annually, it will not be long before it controls almost everything in Canada. We must therefore give thought to whether the legislation before us will do the job.

The Bloc Québécois began a broad consultation in June, which it stepped up in September. We have met with many stakeholders: police officers, judges and law enforcement officials. It is clear that our present tools may not be up to the task.

- (1015)

The purpose of the motion we are introducing this morning is to ensure that all parties become aware of how extensive a problem organized crime is and of the shortcomings of our current legislative tools, as we have come to realize.

The police will say they need bigger budgets. And in fact, when we look at the last few years, we see that, despite its protests to the contrary, the government has cut, or is getting ready to cut, police budgets and the budgets of certain RCMP offices.

Mr. Yvan Loubier: Even in Saint-Hyacinthe.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: My colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot will certainly talk about it in his speech. There may be a lack of funds, but the issue goes beyond that and we must take a serious look at all the legislative tools available.

Speaking of legislative tools, the issue of witness and jury protection immediately comes to mind. Are jury members adequately protected, since they must decide whether an accused is guilty or not while all his friends are sitting in the front rows, staring at them throughout the trial? This is very intimidating. It is not surprising that we have difficulties finding people willing to sit on a jury and follow the rules.

Then there are the witnesses. Do we provide adequate protection to witnesses? We should check to see if we do.

Building a case is one of the major problems faced by police officers. They have techniques to infiltrate crime gangs, but is it enough? Should we not review certain provisions in the Criminal Code to allow undercover officers, as they are commonly called, to commit criminal acts to be on the criminals' good books and eventually be in a position to testify? This is an extremely complex area, but we must take a look at the whole issue.

We must improve the exchange of information between the RCMP, the Sûreté du Québec and various departments, because police forces complain that communications are very bad.

I could spend another hour discussing this issue, but my time is almost up, so I know I have to wrap up. I will conclude by urging all members of this House to forget about the fact that this is a motion from the opposition, from the sovereignists in this House,

because we are simply asking that the committee conduct a serious study of the whole issue of organized crime.

I am asking members to overlook that fact and to vote with the Bloc Québécois so that a serious, non-partisan study of the whole issue of organized crime can take place, and that a report be submitted to the House no later than October 31, 2000. This would allow us to begin the new millennium with good tools to fight organized crime effectively.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating the hon. Bloc Québécois member on this motion. It is very important for Quebec, for the country, and for each and every Canadian.

• (1020)

[*English*]

The hon. member has identified many of the problems we are facing. He has laid out quite accurately the level at which organized crime has crept into many Canadian communities and many different levels of society.

The threat is so real for our law enforcement agents. They are particularly vulnerable because of the cutbacks they have undergone. Their salaries are not on par with some other sectors of society and they themselves in essence can be bought. The member talked about how law enforcement agents themselves may be infiltrated. Could the member expand on that element of his remarks?

He quite rightly says this is a non-partisan issue. I certainly assure him he will get the support from the Conservative Party of Canada.

What particular elements of funding does he see as being the way to address the issue? What elements will help bolster our law enforcement agents and help address the problem of infiltration by organized crime which is buying off our officers, or at least posing that threat to officers in Canada today?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Progressive Conservative Party for his question and take note of the fact that it will probably support this morning's motion.

His question is an extremely complex one and a response would take more than the time available to me this morning. As far as infiltration is concerned, with \$200 billion to \$500 billion U.S. yearly, organized crime can certainly buy people off, including members of parliament and ministers, not just police officers. I do not think that any individual or group is protected from organized crime trying to buy them off at some point in time.

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I have as much confidence in the political system as I do in the justice and law enforcement system. Both Quebecers and Canadians have certain values, and cannot be bought off as easily as that. It must be realized, however, that this is a risk in Quebec and Canada at this time, and we need to see whether the legislation is sufficient protection.

When I spoke of infiltration, one of the useful tools in law enforcement is infiltration of criminal groups. At present, with the legislation available to us, it is extremely complicated and difficult for police officers to infiltrate such groups. For one thing, they need years to move up in the ranks of organized crime until they reach the decision makers, the kingpins.

I am saying this morning I hope that, if the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights considers this question, it will look very carefully at legislation enabling the police to infiltrate criminal groups in order to discover whether there is a way to help them do so. In this case, would society agree to an amendment of the Criminal Code to enable those infiltrating, the undercover officers, to commit acts that are illegal under the Criminal Code so criminal groups will consider them criminals?

The police tell me they have "officer-sources" within certain criminal groups. When a gang leader has doubts about the loyalty of one member, do members know what this person is asked to do? He asks them to go and kill someone. Under the Criminal Code, this person is a criminal, at the moment. There is no way this person can be exempted from the application of the Code.

In addition, this person is in a tough position. If he does not kill anyone, his days are likely numbered. If he does, his days are likely numbered as well, because he will be treated as a criminal under the Criminal Code.

Has society reached a point where we will authorize an undercover officer, with all the proper authority, to go so far as to commit a crime, to go so far as to commit murder in an effort to protect society and save tens or hundreds of people, perhaps? I think we have reached this point, and we must examine the issue in committee.

• (1025)

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this motion by the Bloc Québécois to the effect that the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights should study organized crime in Canada, an issue I am deeply interested in, and which the Bloc Québécois has entrusted to my colleague from Berthier—Montcalm and myself.

It seems obvious to us that organized crime is on the rise in Canada and the rest of the world. These organizations are said to be octopus-like for good reason. With tentacles extending into all

Supply

segments of society, they have no problem finding people to carry out their dirty jobs.

We know that many are lured into crime by the temptation of easy money. To maximize their efficiency, criminal organizations impose the law of silence, and any transgression means death, immediately and unconditionally, for the informers.

We should acknowledge that the various levels of government have taken steps to deal with organized crime. The Carcajou squad in Quebec comes to mind, as well as the new sections in our criminal law that make it illegal for five people and more to associate when two of them have already been convicted for crimes that are punishable by five years in prison or more. These initiatives have some merit, but the question that begged to be asked when they were taken and still today is whether they are enough. The only possible answer is no.

The problems remain, and I will mention some hurdles that still exist: gang leaders often have only minor offences on their record. The judge has then to be convinced of the danger that these people represent for society.

The effectiveness of orders issued under Bill C-95 to prevent a gang member from associating with other gang members is questionable.

Belonging to a bikers group is not a criminal offence per se. Also, it is not easy to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the accused has accumulated his fortune through a series of very specific and identified criminal offences.

There is also the law of silence governing all relationships in the underworld; search warrants that are restrictive because of the courts interpretation of the provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights; small police budgets compared to resources available to criminal groups; the difficulty to assert that, simply by associating with them, a person is really involved with other individuals for a criminal purpose, since organized crime is not considered a crime, and only individual actions are; the banking secret of tax havens, which protects against the laundering of proceeds of crime. All in all, organized crime does not know any boundaries.

The necessary measures should be taken by our economic and commercial partners, otherwise all attempts made to solve the organized crime problem will fail.

Moreover, all legislative or other measures should have an impact on every organized crime group, from the Russian mafia to the Chinese triads, the Italian mafia and biker gangs. All measures taken against any of these groups would only create a vacuum that would immediately be filled by the other criminalized groups.

This is why our recommendations must take into account what is done outside Canada.

Generally, anti-gang laws seek to improve the tools law enforcement and judicial authorities are provided with to fight organized crime. I will give a few examples.

In Hong Kong and Russia, access to proof is made easier. In the United States, laws were enacted on specific infractions committed by organized crime. It should be noted that, in the case of the recycling of products of crime, the Canadian law is more efficient than the American law since it allows confiscation after the first designated offence instead of two, as is the case in the United States.

It is important, in comparing Canadians laws to those of other countries, to remember that Canada draws inspiration largely from the British common law, which makes its judiciary system quite different from those of other countries.

● (1030)

We can question the effectiveness of the legislation passed by all these countries in light of the fact that organized crime continues to operate.

Little data is available on the actual impact of such legislation on organized crime. In any event, I want to talk briefly about a legislation whose effectiveness and limits have been demonstrated, namely the "Racketeer Influences and Corrupt Act", also called RICO, which was passed in 1970 and which creates four offences covered under two definitions.

The first offence, called "racketeering activity", is a criminal offence that covers 50 crimes, such as extortion, robbery, arson, kidnapping, fraud, counterfeiting, and so on.

The second one is the "pattern of racketeering activity", which consists of at least two of the criminal offences covered, one having been committed after the enactment of the RICO, and the other one over the preceding 10 years.

Here is a short description of the four offences I previously mentioned and whose purpose is to prevent the infiltration of companies by criminal groups. It has to do with the investment or the acquisition of an interest in a company that is doing business in another country or another American state, through capital derived directly or indirectly from criminal activities or from the collection of an illegal debt.

It could also be the participation in or the management of, through a series of criminal activities or the collection of an illegal debt, of a company doing business overseas or in more than one American state by an individual who is either employed by or associated with the company, or a conspiracy to commit one or the other of these offences.

The maximum jail sentence for these offences is from 20 years to life and there are also monetary fines.

There is no need for a criminal conviction to launch legal proceedings under RICO. The state needs only prove that crimes were committed. Once the suspect has been convicted, he or she can be sued under RICO's provisions.

RICO allows for the confiscation of goods obtained through the illegal activity and of all interests in the business concerned. There is also a protection and redress mechanism for third parties affected by the confiscation of goods.

RICO also allows for two types of civil remedy: one for the government and the other for individuals. It enables the US District Courts to issue orders at the request of the Attorney General. For the government, these remedies are: dispossession of all direct or indirect interests of the individual in a business; restriction of future activities or investments by the individual; dissolution or reorganization of the business, except that in that case, the court must take into account the interests of third parties.

The Racketeer Influences and Corrupt Act provides individuals with the following redresses: damages amounting to three times the victim's loss and the right to be reimbursed for all the court and lawyers' fees.

In spite of its huge shortcomings and of the fact that it is far from perfect, the RICO Act is an illustration of a jurisdiction that used exceptional means to achieve its aims. The committee members could build on the positive results of the RICO Act and avoid its drawbacks and shortcomings to give Canada the appropriate legal instruments.

To conclude, I want to mention that it is important to make the public in Quebec and Canada, the lobbies and the government aware of this problem so that nobody can slip through the dragnet and the fight against organized crime can be effective. This is why I ask all members of this House to support this motion today so that the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and parliament can contribute in a constructive way to the debate and give the government a clear indication of the way to fight this scourge in our society.

Finally I move:

That the motion be amended by inserting before the word "combat", the following: "effectively".

• (1035)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Debate is now on the amendment.

[*English*]

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Bloc for this motion. It is an excellent motion and one that we should be

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debating in the House. My party will be supporting the motion tonight when the vote is held.

I have travelled around the country as the chief justice critic for the Reform Party. I have talked to municipal police, the RCMP, provincial police forces and people in our armed forces. One of the great concerns they have is that we do not have a national police force dedicated to organized crime. Would the Bloc support looking at setting up a national force dedicated only to organized crime? It would work at the municipal level, the provincial level and the federal level to get to the bottom of what is happening in the country on this very serious problem of organized crime.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the Reform Party will be supporting our motion this evening. The way things are going, I have the feeling that a vote will not even be necessary, given that the entire House seems to agree with us.

As to whether we would support a national force dedicated exclusively to organized crime, here again, it all depends on our understanding of the word national, and on whether national standards would be imposed on police forces across Canada.

I think that there are differences throughout the country, even in organized crime. There are differences in each province, each region. I also think that, so far, police forces have helped each other out. We saw this in Quebec with the marijuana raids. RCMP and Sûreté officers have worked together to eradicate marijuana. This co-operation is of several years' standing and should be continued.

[*English*]

Ms. Louise Hardy (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, could the member from the Bloc talk a little more on the effects of organized crime on women? It is an aspect that is often overlooked.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne: Mr. Speaker, if I understood correctly, the hon. member is wondering about the effects of organized crime on women.

We know that most, if not all, pimps are part of organized crime. It is therefore directly related to prostitution, of course. I think that all of Canadian society suffers the effects of this scourge, which unfortunately keeps on growing.

Yes, there are side effects. Women are affected by organized crime. Families are destroyed, couples break up because one has to put up with what the other is doing.

Something must be done and today gives us an opportunity to debate the issue and to decide that we, as parliamentarians, will make it our business to do that something, and instruct the Standing

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Committee on Justice and Human Rights to examine the problem and to submit a report with effective and timely recommendations.

• (1040)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague, who is also a member of the justice committee.

She has made several remarks about information sharing, or perhaps in some instances the lack of information that sometimes is shared between law enforcement agencies. Would she agree that what is needed most at this time is some leadership within the solicitor general's department to get these two agencies working closer together, that is, CSIS and the RCMP?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from the Progressive Conservative Party is absolutely right, since members of these two organizations have already said themselves that they were competing with each other. Surely they were often asked for a much closer involvement and co-operation.

I think the solicitor general, who is here at present, will certainly be able to approve what we are asking for and what I believe he himself supports.

I once again thank our Progressive Conservative colleague, who also mentioned that he would be voting for this motion tonight.

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform you that I also intend to share my time.

The motion before the House today is one of great importance. It touches each and every Canadian, in fact it involves everyone around the world. The problem of organized crime is one that has no borders. Organized criminal groups do not even have to operate in Canada to have victims here. Simply put, organized crime is a global problem.

The government has made great strides in the fight against organized crime. We recognize it as the government's number one law enforcement priority. We have worked with other jurisdictions to provide enforcement agencies with more and better tools to fight organized crime.

In the recent Speech from the Throne the government repeated its commitment to fighting organized crime to make our communities safer places to live. The RCMP plays a key role in the fight against organized crime. In fact, for the first time ever, the RCMP recently created the new position of deputy commissioner in charge of organized crime investigations.

The government also recognizes that in the war on organized crime no level of government can act alone. Many levels of law enforcement and government are involved in protecting public safety. That is why fighting organized crime in a co-ordinated way is the key priority, indeed it is essential. In recent years the federal government has taken many steps in partnership with the provinces and territories to help the police in its fight against organized crime.

Canadians know that this government has a longstanding commitment to provide safe communities. Our efforts to fight organized crime have been and continue to be comprehensive and wide ranging. I would like to outline some of the examples of the initiatives we have taken since 1993.

The anti-smuggling initiative introduced in 1994 provides resources for the RCMP, Justice Canada and Revenue Canada. It targets smuggling and distribution networks at the border, in our ports and across the country. This initiative has led to 17,000 smuggling related charges and fines totalling over \$113 million. This year the federal government injected another \$78 million over four years to fight smuggling.

Money laundering is another major part of organized crime. That is why we created 13 integrated proceeds of crime units in 1997. These units bring together police, government and outside experts to target organized criminal groups and seize their ill-gotten gains. Over \$110 million has been collected so far. Simply put, these units are designed to take the profit out of organized crime.

• (1045)

In April 1997 the government put forward a strong anti-gang bill. These changes to the criminal code make participating in criminal organizations an indictable offence punishable by up to 14 years in prison. Also, amendments made to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act prevent people convicted of organized crime offences from getting accelerated parole review.

In May 1997 this government passed legislation to control illicit drugs. We modernized our approach to drug control with innovative police techniques for money laundering and drug investigations. These developments toughened Canada's enforcement efforts and in particular, undercover investigations directed at high level drug traffickers.

The Criminal Law Improvement Act adopted in 1997 established new provisions in the criminal code to allow police to conduct undercover anti money laundering operations.

New telemarketing fraud offences were created by the amendments to the Competition Act last March. These offences are now considered enterprise crimes. This means that they are within the scope of the criminal code scheme for seizure and forfeiture of proceeds of crime.

Supply

As the House will recall, DNA data bank legislation was given royal assent last December. Since then the RCMP, working with partners, has been busy setting up the system. They expect to have it up and running by June 2000. Canada is breaking new ground in establishing this national data bank. It will have great implications for law enforcement in the new millennium.

The national DNA data bank will help to identify suspects more quickly and speed up criminal investigations. It will shorten trials and lead to more guilty pleas. One important application of this technology is to clear innocent people who have been wrongly convicted.

Last April I announced \$115 million to rebuild the Canadian Police Information Centre, known as CPIC, with modern computer technology. A crucial improvement will be in the ability to share information more widely in a more timely manner among police, prosecutors, courts, corrections and parole. It complements the work of the provinces and territories which are themselves investing in improved information sharing.

CPIC will be replaced with a modern computer system for improving information sharing with other law enforcement agencies, provincial and federal databases. This translates into more crime prevented or solved, or a better co-ordination of action against organized crime.

Five months ago I announced approximately \$15 million for the RCMP to fight organized crime at Canada's three largest airports, Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto. As a result, there are now 100 more RCMP members to increase federal policing pressure to target organized criminals who use these airports to get into Canada.

In September 1996 the Solicitor General and the Minister of Justice hosted a national forum on organized crime that brought together the police, federal and provincial governments, the private sector, the legal community and academics. At that time it was clear that Canada needed a more co-ordinated approach to fight organized crime.

It is precisely with this in mind that this week in Vancouver the Minister of Justice and I will meet with our provincial and territorial colleagues. We will be discussing the challenges posed by organized crime and what more we can do collectively to deal with the problem. It is only by continuing to work effectively in partnership with other levels of government, the law enforcement community and others that we can put in place the arrangement needed to protect Canadians.

There is no easy solution to this problem. That is why I am pleased to support this motion before the House. As I have said, this government has identified organized crime as its top law enforcement priority.

• (1050)

We have brought together provincial and municipal governments. We have discussed possible solutions with our international partners. We have sought the views of those in the law enforcement community across Canada and around the world. We recognize that in the fight against organized crime we must gather our forces and involve as many people as possible to find the solution. That includes bringing the matter before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

Organized criminals target the most vulnerable in our society and they make victims of us all. We owe it to Canadians to bring our resources together to fight organized crime.

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the government supports this motion. I look forward to getting it to committee.

The solicitor general covered a lot of things the government is doing including the new organized crime directorate. One of the problems is that the directorate is sitting there with no staff and bodies. As the solicitor general knows, the RCMP is not meeting its par levels in most of the major detachments in Canada, which is a serious problem. Where is he going to get the money to put the bodies in charge to work with this organized crime directorate to alleviate that situation?

I will mention one case from the early nineties. There was a great operation called Green Ice which was a co-operation of eight countries around the world on drug enforcement. It targeted the Columbian cartel and it was very successful. It seized \$47 million U.S., 140 bank accounts and a lot of arrests were made. There was a lot of publicity about how good that was. The Columbian cartel's profits are estimated at \$30 billion U.S. a year. That whole operation got two-tenths of 1% of what the Columbian cartel does.

That was one good operation but it only touched two-tenths. To solve this problem we not only need the organized crime directorate but we need a national police force dedicated to organized crime. Would the solicitor general be prepared to talk with the provincial premiers, justice ministers and solicitors general across the country to put together a national police force on organized crime? It would be dedicated to this one issue and would work with municipalities, provinces, all police forces and the armed forces to get to the bottom of the organized crime problem in Canada.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concern of my hon. colleague from Vancouver.

The deputy commissioner in charge of organized crime and investigation is an important initiative to co-ordinate our efforts. My hon. colleague is also aware there is a review before treasury board and the RCMP to evaluate all the resources for the RCMP.

Supply

That will be dealt with in co-operation with the RCMP, treasury board and my department.

My hon. colleague is also well aware that the Speech from the Throne indicated that this government is certainly aware and has indicated it is a priority to support the RCMP more.

As I indicated, we have made many moves to put many initiatives in place. The 13 proceeds of crime units are so important because they take the profits out of organized crime. My hon. colleague is right that we do not get it all, but we are organizing in a proper fashion to make sure we have a co-ordinated effort in order to fight organized crime.

The government is fully aware that we do not fight organized crime just with this government. We must fight organized crime with provincial and municipal governments. That is why I will be meeting with people in Vancouver. I will have the input of provincial and municipal leaders from across the country which is very important.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the solicitor general.

He is going to Vancouver. I want to appeal to the minister not just to go to Vancouver but to go to Burnaby as well. I represent a group of constituents in the Metrotown area of Burnaby who are absolutely fed up with the failure of this government to respond seriously to a very significant problem, a crisis in that community.

Drug dealers are openly defying the law in the Metrotown Skytrain area. People are abusing immigration laws and the criminal code.

• (1055)

The minister says he is studying the situation, that he is looking into it, that he is going to treasury board. This is not good enough.

My colleague from Kamloops previously pointed out that an organized crime investigation was shut down because a couple in his constituency were told that the RCMP did not have the resources to deal with it.

When the minister goes to Vancouver, will he meet with people from Burnaby? The Burnaby RCMP have identified this as a very serious problem. There is a total lack of resources. Will the minister take his responsibility seriously and respond to this crisis?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is wrong. I did not say we were just studying this. In fact, if he had listened to what I had to say, I indicated a large number of initiatives that the government has taken.

What I did indicate on the resource review was that my department, along with the RCMP and treasury board, conducted a study to make sure that the dollars that will be spent, our tax dollars, British Columbia tax dollars, Canadian tax dollars are spent in a co-ordinated fashion. This will enable us to fight organized crime in the most efficient manner possible.

That is why the proceeds of crime unit, the DNA data bank, the \$115 million for CPIC were established, so that we would have in place the best technology possible enabling us to share information with police forces across the country. These are very important initiatives which have been taken by the government. We are not just studying; we are taking action and have taken action.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Before we resume debate, I want to make an explanation on questions and comments. I can see there is a lot of interest and there is some consternation.

This is a Bloc supply motion. If there are members of the Bloc who wish to ask other members questions, the Speaker would normally see the party whose motion is on the floor more often. If there are members who have been in the Chamber all day wishing to ask a question, the Speaker will very often see those members. I will ask for the questions and responses to be short because there is a lot of interest. Very often the Speaker will see critics or people whose portfolios are specific to this issue.

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to congratulate my colleague on the justice committee, the member from the Bloc who has brought forward this excellent motion.

The motion we are discussing this morning is one that deserves all of our attention. Organized crime is not a new problem in Canada but has been recognized as a growing one. It affects Canadians from coast to coast and it affects people in countries throughout the world. Whether it is a fraudulent telemarketing scheme preying on seniors in Montreal or a large shipment of narcotics through the port of Vancouver, organized crime manifests itself in many ways.

The word globalization has been used more and more frequently as the millennium draws to a close. The development of computers and network technologies is creating a global revolution in human communication and commerce, but it is also creating new opportunities for crime that we must now address. In Canada, developing effective measures to deal with computer related crime has raised numerous challenges. It has required us to meet these challenges in ways that previous generations could never have imagined possible.

More and more we find ourselves looking outward to the international community in our search for solutions. We look to our

neighbours because we can learn from their ideas, from their successes and from their failures. But there is more to it than that. In a new environment of high speed low cost communications, we need policies and legislation and practical solutions that are compatible with those of our neighbours. In the high tech environment, the list of neighbours with whom we must co-operate is much longer than it ever was in the past.

We share crime control problems, not just with those countries with whom we share physical borders and trade links and with whom we share political and social beliefs, but also with those who are distant from us geographically and philosophically.

• (1100)

Any country in the world with an airport, telephones, fax machines or Internet access may be a base for offenders targeting Canadians or a source of victims for Canadian offenders. They could also serve as a haven for the concealment of evidence or illegally gained proceeds of crime.

Developments in the world of high technology create many challenges that we must now address if we are to maximize the benefits of globalization for our citizens, but at the same time protecting them from these risks that we are discussing here in the House today.

I will discuss four specific challenges facing Canada and its international partners in this area of high tech crime. First, the challenge that arises from the time pressures imposed by the rapid and highly volatile nature of computer communication. Those who investigate cases of high tech crime must be able to successfully locate the source of attacks and seize electronic evidence or proceeds of crime in an environment where these can be erased completely at the touch of a finger or moved cross national borders without detection or scrutiny. The challenges of law enforcement is to ensure that they are technically able and sufficiently resourced to locate criminals and preserve that data. The government has made it perfectly clear that we intend to provide the RCMP with the tools it needs to do the job in the fight against organized crime.

Our challenge as legislators is more difficult. It is the problem of creating laws that will ensure that national borders do not provide offenders with increased opportunities to hide their identity or location, or to conceal or destroy evidence so as to evade detection.

Another challenge relates to the creation of new rules. Traditionally the development of policy in the international community has taken place incrementally at a slow pace as measures are thoroughly examined and discussed until consensus is reached. Consensus of course is still an essential ingredient in our approach, but we will find ourselves faced with a need to achieve it more quickly than ever before as we are able to successfully keep up with the rapidly changing technology while protecting our citizens and fostering a healthy climate for the traffic of information and commerce into the next millennium

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The third challenge that I will discuss arises from the costs associated with law enforcement in this new global electronic environment. Many of the obvious costs in detecting and investigating transnational crime are currently borne by national governments and agencies. The governments' challenge, one which we share with industries and the private sector, is that of creating rules and practices which address all of the challenges that I have mentioned, but which also minimize the cost that governments must bear and maximize the degree of crime control that we can hope to achieve with our limited resources.

There are further cost factors to be considered. Many of the options open to us, such as requiring service providers to use particular types of technology or retain data for extended periods of time, offer effective law enforcement but at significant cost.

Until relatively recently, cost implications would have been purely domestic policy questions, but in the present era of globalization it has become one of international trade as well.

We must establish rules and practices to fight transnational crime that are economically fair and maintain a level playing field for communication industries that now operate already in a very competitive global milieu. Imposing undue burdens on certain industries may well result in their relocating outside of our country and by so doing they will create safe havens for criminals who wish to abuse new communication and information networks.

We have undertaken a dialogue here in Canada with the private sector and we find it very willing to co-operate in preventing criminal abuse.

We are engaged, we are committed and we welcome the opportunity that this motion has brought to have this matter brought before the House Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, of which I am a member.

• (1105)

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I too agree with the Bloc motion. It is way overdue. It is 1999 and the government came to office over six years ago.

The member opposite, more or less, talked about the issue of dialogue, consensus and going to committees about it. Where I live, we are sick and tired of politicians saying that we need consensus, dialogue, studies and committees to review this issue. It is upon us and has been for well over a decade. My community, which was a little farming community, now has prostitution and drugs like cocaine, heroine and so on.

I am curious as to what length of time the member opposite feels is appropriate to have dialogue, consensus, committee meetings and so on. There are people on the streets today, I can assure her because I have been there many times, who are hurting and have

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been hurting for years. They are sick and tired of this House saying that we need consensus, time and dialogue.

Ms. Aileen Carroll: Mr. Speaker, I do not think we ought to interpret from my explanation of the need for consensus that this necessarily entails a slowing of a process. It does not.

In my view, and I very strongly believe this, we create the very best laws for this country by thoroughly vetting the issues that have brought us to the process of wanting to create a new law. Consensus building is rooted in common law and common law is the tradition of the country. It is not the tradition of the country to go shooting out with little study, little analysis and little comprehension of the essential issues with a response that creates a weak law.

We are talking about an information era that we are only beginning to grasp on many fronts. As it impacts on the issue of organized crime, we too in this area have to make sure that we have all of the information that is requisite in order to effectively defeat the very problems and the crimes that the hon. member from across the House wishes us to address. We will do an excellent job. We have an excellent justice committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the hon. member who just spoke that the purpose of the motion put forward by the Bloc this morning is specifically to ask that a committee look into the matter so that all her concerns and fears can be discussed.

I do not understand her point. I would like her to be more explicit, because what we are proposing this morning is that, all partisanship set aside, we meet in committee and consider the issue. We have proposed a deadline of the end of October 2000, next year, one year from now, to do it. I wonder what part of the motion disturbs the hon. member.

[*English*]

Ms. Aileen Carroll: Mr. Speaker, I am not disturbed. I have no difficulties at all. I did not want to imply a sense of being worried.

[*Translation*]

I am not disturbed. I am happy that we have time enough to address this issue and the other issues we mentioned this morning.

[*English*]

We have a justice committee at this time. Having completed second reading in the House of the young offenders legislation, I know that on all sides of the House there is considerable concern that we take our time and adequately address those issues. I know this is a major issue to the Bloc. I would be most surprised to hear that the Bloc would wish us to drop that from the agenda in order to move on to another important matter.

All of these things must be considered. All of these issues and laws impact very much on our communities.

[*Translation*]

There are impacts on communities in Quebec and in Ontario. However it is necessary to address those issues step by step. We have to think and we have to consider. Of course, I am not disturbed, I am delighted.

• (1110)

[*English*]

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support the motion before the House today.

I do want to clarify a couple of things. I find it interesting that the member opposite says that we do not want to go ahead with too little study on this issue. I can assure her that this issue has been studied and studied to death. I have reams of information if she would like to have it on drugs in this country, on trafficking, on organized crime and on the effects of heroin and cocaine on our lives and on our people.

That is what is so disappointing about the House of Commons. We get into this place and someone says that we have to do a study, we have to take our time, we have to look at it and we have too little information. The fact is, we have an abundance of information. It is a matter for all parties in the House to act.

I see it from two different levels. I wish the hon. solicitor general could hear some of these things. He mentioned \$50 million to fight organized crime in airports. At the same time, this is the government that disbanded the ports police. Just exactly where does the government think drugs come into Canada on the west coast? They come in through our ports. Since the ports police have been disbanded the situation has become much worse.

In order to fix the problem, the reaction by the government is to say, "We'll throw \$50 million into fighting organized crime at airports". On the other hand, it disbands the ports police. That is not consistent at all.

There is \$78 million to fight smuggling. That is nice, but on the lower mainland between Vancouver and Hope there are numerous open trails. One in particular is called the Ho Chi Minh trail which I was on the week before last. It is a smuggling trail. The police know about it. I was with the police when we were on it. I have been on it a number of times. There are a number of trails, beaten down and four feet wide between Canada and the United States on which illegals come across, guns come across, money is laundered across, marijuana goes south and heroin and cocaine come north. Seventy-eight million dollars would not even touch that area because we have a maximum of six RCMP officers, and one is an administrator, working on it. It is just not enough.

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The minister talked about proceeds from crime legislation. However, the proceeds from crime are not effective. The solicitor general talked about how effective anti-gang legislation is but has refused to acknowledge, because I have talked to his people and the solicitor general himself, the drug cartels in prison. The commissioner of corrections refused to even acknowledge it, but it exists.

If we look at the national drug strategy that was put out by the PCs in the eighties, not too much was done as a result of that. Then we look at the national drug strategy that was developed last year by the Liberals and compare them, which I have. They are virtually an overlay of one over the other. Nothing has changed in their opinion. The problem is that a great deal has changed.

In one outlet alone in downtown eastside Vancouver last year, 1.5 million needles were issued to over 6,000 addicted people. Yet we are still talking in the House of Commons about a committee, about talking and about researching. No damn wonder it is so frustrating in this place.

Yesterday I asked the solicitor general why he was building a research facility in his riding for \$2.5 million to study drugs in prison. He said "You can study it anywhere". But he missed the point. That \$2.5 million building has a life expectancy of 25 to 50 years. Will he study the issue for 25 to 50 years? If he has to study the thing, which has been studied so often, why can it not be done in one of the many government buildings that have been vacated? Chilliwack, British Columbia, has a whole military base right smack dab in the middle of all the prison problems, drugs, cartels and organized crime. He could use the Aldergrove base, which has been closed.

• (1115)

That is what tells me the government is not sincere about the issue. One of its ministers says that he is building a building in his riding to study it, when we know darned well that it is basically patronage. There is more interest in looking after the riding than in solving the drug problem.

The opinion across the country is that not enough is being done. An article in the *Ottawa Citizen* stated:

Organized crime in Canada is now so pervasive that police have been reduced to putting out isolated fires in a blazing underworld economy.

That is true and the government knows it.

An opposition party raised the issue and said it should go to committee. The government thought that was a good idea. Another government member said that we should study it and that we need dialogue and consensus.

I want leadership, and I want it now, not later. The problem is here. I have dealt with enough people who are addicted to know

they have all but given up hope of getting anything from the federal government. Those people who are working with young teenagers who are addicted have all but given up hope of this place doing anything.

A government minister, the solicitor general in particular, said that the government gave \$78 million or \$50 million to fight organized crime. Is he kidding? That is petty cash in Vancouver. Lots of dealers have \$50 million. Lots of them in my community have that much in assets.

I am splitting my time and I note that I have two minutes left.

Members might sense that I am a bit frustrated with the government on this issue. I worked with an organization that is trying to get a rehabilitation centre for young teenage girls who are addicted. I went to the Minister of Health to tell him they need some help. I was put off to a bureaucrat in Vancouver who did absolutely nothing, and yet we have more teenage girls who are addicted in our little community than we can handle.

I dare say that Vancouver, Burnaby, Coquitlam and all of these other places have more than we do in the Fraser Valley, and yet an opposition party has to tell the government to get off its butt, take this issue to committee and do something about it. It is terrible.

All I can say is that I do not believe the government is sincere. If it was sincere something would be done. While I applaud the Bloc for bringing this up, I equally say to the Liberals, shame. There are a lot of people across the country who are depending on 300 members of the House to take some action, to stand together and deal with this issue. It is lack of leadership that is the problem. If the government said "We will go to committee and we will come up with a national drug strategy that will really work at the street level", I would be the first one applauding it. I have taken the government's national drug strategy, and everywhere from Sydney, Nova Scotia, right through to Vancouver, British Columbia, when people looked at it they said "This is meaningless. This is not helping us here. We are issuing needles. We see drug addicts every day. Take your document and go away".

• (1120)

I do not have confidence that the government will do anything. I applaud members of the Bloc for bringing it up, but good luck trying to get some help from those folks.

Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not often that the previous speaker and I agree on many things, but he raised some interesting points today and I applaud some of them.

I am particularly interested in his discussion about the building of a new facility in Prince Edward Island to study the effects of drugs in jails. He said that there are existing facilities that might be

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used. I think of that because my own riding, and he mentioned Sydney in his comments, has a severe unemployment crisis because of the closure of some of the traditional industries. I am wondering if he would like to take that a little further and support the establishment of that kind of centre in areas in the country which suffer a high unemployment rate. If the government is going to establish this kind of facility and there is no need to build a new building and spend government revenue—and I will not confine it to my riding—would that not be a more sensible kind of decentralization of government offices that would enhance those communities and provide some revenue generation?

Mr. Randy White: Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, I am not very interested in creating employment through researching the issue of drugs in prisons. This issue has been researched time and time again. What is lacking in the system is the will of the correctional service to implement its own procedures. The commissioner's directives state that there is zero tolerance in prisons, and yet they issue bleach to sterilize cocaine needles. What kind of contradiction is that? The problem is not the research. The difficulty is in the implementation.

I am just sick about the solicitor general wanting to build a building with a 50 year lifespan to study something that should not be studied but acted upon. If they are going to do some work on drugs, it should be in a prison or close to a prison, in a post-secondary institution where research takes place, anything but building a building. It is not a matter of job creation, it is a matter of saving lives. That is the problem. They have the wrong emphasis.

Hon. David Kilgour (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford knows I share his concern about the drug situation in Vancouver and elsewhere in the country.

Could he tell us how we could stop approximately one young person a day from dying of an overdose in East Vancouver and many other places in the country? What could we do to combat that more effectively?

Mr. Randy White: Mr. Speaker, the big problem is the supply of drugs. We need programs to cut it off.

The demand for drugs is only going to decrease by fewer people being on them. Unfortunately, in Vancouver we are not going to be able to stop people from dying because of drugs. It will be unstoppable until we stop the drug trade. Until we stop organized crime, until we cut off the supply, someone will die today, tomorrow and the next day.

• (1125)

We only have to go into some of the hotels in the downtown east side to see what a terrible scene it is. I invite every Canadian

watching to take the time to do that. The police will take people to the downtown east side of Vancouver. It is like a war zone. I am not kidding. I have seen young girls and young boys shooting up between their toes because there is no other place to do it. All their marks have been used.

I really do not think it will be stopped until all members of parliament take action to cut off the supply. That means boarding the ships that are anchored off Vancouver, getting the drugs, seizing the ships, selling the ships and telling the lawyers that they have to stop defending the bad guys and start prosecuting those people with everything they have.

There is no easy answer, but somehow we have to wake up the House, and particularly the government.

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, no other issue threatens the sovereignty of Canada, or for that matter other nations, like organized crime. Organized crime is operating in Canada with impunity. The extent of organized crime is epidemic.

Allow me to read a statement from the Canadian Police Association: "Recent threats against the Bloc MP should be a wake up call for all politicians" says the executive officer of the 30,000 member Canadian Police Association, David Griffin. "The frightening reality is that organized criminals are flourishing in epidemic proportions and police feel frustrated by the lack of tools and resources to fight back. Canada has gained third world status as a haven for organized criminals and money laundering", said Griffin. "Even our institutions are being threatened by the influence of global criminals. Two Quebec prison guards were murdered. A member of parliament and his family are now under police protection and players in the National Hockey League have become the targets of Russian gangsters".

I am told by police officers that there is too much politics and infighting regarding who is in charge of fighting organized crime in Canada. I am told it is foolish to have provincial law enforcement agencies take on this issue. We are in dire need of a national organized crime agency to deal with this issue. We must tie all of the different agencies together.

Recently the solicitor general announced the formation of an organized crime directorate, headed by an individual of deputy minister status in the RCMP. I was told last night by a crime fighter that this initiative is nothing but smoke and mirrors. The individual put in charge has no foot soldier to carry out the task, no resources and is wondering what to do. He is in a void.

Every August a report on organized crime is tabled by the Criminal Intelligence Service of Canada. Every year is a litany of

the proliferation of organized crime. Every year it offers, according to my crime fighting friend, no plan of action, simply recognition of everything every police officer already knows but does not have the power to change.

Let us get serious. If Canada were really intent on fighting organized crime we would get away from the rhetoric and deal with such obvious issues as RCMP understaffing in British Columbia due to budgetary cuts. There have been millions of dollars in cuts and the RCMP detachment is not meeting its own standards. Yet, we expect police officers to do their jobs. One would think there is some complicity with organized crime to allow these staffing issues in the RCMP.

If we were serious we would deal with the illegal entry of Chinese migrants. We all know that organized crime is being paid to get them into Canada. If we were serious we would not be playing the patsy for the triads in Vancouver. If we were serious we would take a look at the kinds of companies we allow to do business in Canada, particularly those like COSCO, which is allowed to use the Vancouver waterfront but has been banned from U.S. ports because of nefarious or suspect criminal activity. It imported AK-47s into the United States for criminal purposes. It is banned from U.S. ports, yet it looks after the Vancouver ports now. Is it not interesting that this government allowed the port police to disappear just when it took over? Why are we so naive?

If we were serious we would never have allowed a known triad leader, Tong Sang Lai, to enter Canada. He was rejected in Hong Kong but allowed into our Los Angeles office. He is known and on a Canadian list of high ranking triad leaders. If we were serious we would not have whitewashed how he eluded scrutiny by conducting a phoney inquiry at immigration. Many who know the Lai story know of the drive-by shooting that took place at his residence in Vancouver, a settling of a score. He is still around. Is there is nothing we can do but turn a blind eye to the existence of known triads in Vancouver?

• (1130)

If we were serious, we would question and investigate the existence of crooked Hong Kong police officers who retired, so called, in Canada. These officers made medium salaries in Hong Kong, yet live in million dollar homes in Vancouver. How did they get that kind of money? Are they doing it here on the take? What is the government doing?

At least 44 former Royal Hong Kong Constabulary police officers who fled a corruption crackdown in the former British colony have established themselves in Canada with their ill-gotten gains, police studies show. Dubbed the millionaire cops, the ex-Hong Kong officers, their wives and concubines are believed to have invested tens of millions of dollars in businesses and real estate in Canada, mostly in British Columbia and Ontario.

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A covert study by the Asian organized crime investigators, with the help of Immigration Canada officials, found that 30 of the police officers have invested in at least 13 B.C. companies and bought about 50 pieces of property in the Vancouver area. This included large homes in West Vancouver, commercial buildings, a shopping mall and vacant acreage. Others invested in restaurants and bought shares in a private hospital.

The study also found that four of them whose average salary had been about \$30,000 Hong Kong a year, a pittance by North American standards, have built a two tower, 600 room hotel in Toronto valued at more than \$20 million. Police sources said the B.C. study into the cops with strong connections to triads in the Chinese mob began in the late 1970s and was updated in the 1980s, but it was kept under wraps.

Last night I was told by a crime fighter that he thinks the Canadian embassy in Hong Kong has been bought and paid for by organized crime. He feels our system of security has been penetrated and he has a point. Allow me to explain.

Project Sidewinder, a joint CSIS-RCMP venture, was launched in the mid-1990s to look into the influence of Chinese tycoons in Canada and their political connections. The investigation was going along merrily, perhaps too well. Names were being amassed and the information was being assembled on Chinese espionage activities and triad-linked businesses in Canada. After a couple of years the probe was abruptly shut down, and following that CSIS destroyed documents pertaining to the investigation. Why? Two people involved in it know and stepped forward. One was an immigration official at the Hong Kong embassy, Brian McAdam, an expert on Chinese criminals. He knows the immigration computer, and files and codes were accessed by those who should not have had access.

Another Canadian, Corporal Robert Read of the RCMP, agreed and talked about the project sidewinder and was suspended. In a series of compelling and investigative stories by Fabian Dawson of the Vancouver *Province*, the project sidewinder story has been revealed. SIRC has been called in to get to the bottom of the issue. Many important names are surfacing in its investigation and many of these names are those of individuals with investments and interests in Canada.

Frankly, the government is ignoring the proliferation of organized Chinese crime figures in Canada. One asks the question where the direction is coming from when it comes to shutting down investigations like Project Sidewinder.

If the Canadian government was serious about organized crime, this would not happen. Is our sovereignty being sold? It is a good reason this is going to committee. It is sad for instance that questionable and suspect organizations of our Hong Kong immigration office are surfacing. As well, one has to question the wisdom of our federal court in this entry of triad leaders into

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Canada. I will quote one instance, a triad leader turned down by immigration a number of times. His name was Lam Chum-wai, a member of a very notorious triad. Yet the federal court overturned those rejections and he was allowed to stay in Canada. A known criminal should not be in this country, a triad leader by all reports, and yet a federal court judge allowed him to stay in Canada. Nobody questioned that issue of a judge and we should be. We should be asking why this is happening.

In October I had the pleasure of attending the ministerial conference of the G-8 countries on combating transitional organized crime held in Moscow. I knew organized crime was proliferating, but I did not know to what extent and in what high-tech way. Clearly, the bad news guys have the upper hand.

There was a communique issued at that conference that said:

The G-8 are committed to fight against the dark side of globalization—transnational organized crime which threatens to damage our societies and our economies.

We have agreed that transnational organized crime can only be successfully combated by combining preventative and enforcement measures.

We have agreed that all G-8 members who have not yet done so should consider the possibility of accession to the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of proceeds from Crime. We also agreed on the importance of an outreach to the media and non-governmental organizations because they have important roles to play in fighting against organized crime and corruption.

8. Today, we have endorsed the Guiding Principles and Plan of Action to Combat the Smuggling of and Trafficking in Human Beings, which was prepared by the G-8's Lyon Group under guidance provided at the G-8 Summit in Birmingham in 1998. . .

10. We have agreed to co-operate against an immediate threat—the possible use of Y2K as a cover for high-tech transnational organized crime frauds. We have agreed to support the continuing work of our Lyon Group subgroup on high-tech crime. We must explore new options for locating and identifying criminals who use networked communications for illegal purposes.

• (1135)

This debate could go on and on. I certainly have a lot more to say but I know my time is just about up.

I congratulate the Bloc members for what they are doing today and I congratulate the government for allowing this to go to committee. I think it is time we got into some very serious discussions in committee as to how do we really stop organized crime in Canada. Let us get the facts on the table. Let us call the Corporal Reads, the Mr. MacAdams and people like that to the committee and get their stories under oath to a bunch of members of parliament who can finally take the tough stand and take some action against organized crime in Canada.

Hon. David Kilgour (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member tell us a little

more about how he thinks we could make it more difficult for criminals, particularly the organized career type of criminal, to get into Canada?

Mr. John Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, certainly there are a number of ways and a standard basis of just criminals getting in.

There is the situation of the triad leader I mentioned who was turned down in Hong Kong and got in through the L.A. office. There is no question in my mind, even though there was a report written by a former ambassador, that there were cover-ups in that area. There is very strong evidence and I think we should call these people to the committee. Mr. MacAdam who has gone public and Corporal Read when talking about Sidewinder have some answers in that area as to why these people are getting in. We have to get them before that committee and talk about it.

We have to stop the payoffs and the fraud outside the country. We all know the RCMP has numerous investigations at embassies right now into people who are paid off at the local level to get people to the front of the line. We have to stop that.

One might ask, why did a federal judge with evidence from the RCMP and worldwide police organizations of a well-known triad leader allow that man to stay in Canada? There should be no reason for that whatsoever and yet a judge did that in this country and it was a federal judge. That is what disturbs me the most because most federal judges come by political appointment, as we all know. I just start to wonder.

I have been in this business for a long time. I sat in a committee of this House in the seventies on penitentiaries. It was unanimous from all members of the House, yet I know the government did darned near nothing about it when it came in. I hope that if we make this public enough, we can get some answers, get them out before the public and make sure that things change so that people do not laugh at Canada because it is such an easy place to get into by organized crime.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have in hand a copy of a criminal intelligence brief dated June 15. I brought it to the attention of the House in a statement last week. I would just like the hon. member's comments on this.

This is an RCMP criminal intelligence brief on computer crime and national security. It states:

The likelihood of a serious, deliberate and targeted attack to a Canadian critical infrastructure program has increased from low to medium and the impact of such an attack remains at high.

Several government departments dealing with an increasing number of sophisticated attacks, are seeking guidance, support and assistance from law enforcement, only to find there is a lack of skilled and trained resources.

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Interestingly, when a reporter asked the RCMP to comment on the release we did of this criminal intelligence brief, it said it was going to move some resources around.

I do not think that is quite the way to do it and I think the hon. member would probably agree with me. Just moving resources around is not the answer. Coming up with new resources and more of a determination on the part of this government is the answer, I believe.

Mr. John Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that just moving the resources that we have around is not going to solve any problems. As we mentioned to the Solicitor General earlier, we have RCMP shortages right across Canada and we need money for that. Organized crime is costing Canadians about \$18 billion a year. On top of that there are the profits the criminals make and the billions a year on drugs and other issues.

• (1140)

With regard to the new computer data and all of those problems across Canada and across the world, that was one of the issues discussed at the G-8 conference in Moscow. It was interesting that all the countries agreed except for Germany, so they could not come to an agreement. They just agreed to study it for one more year which is much of what we get here. Politics around the world is not much different than what it is right here. At a conference like that everybody wanted to get in.

Now with encryption, criminals can talk to each other quite openly. Wire taps cannot be put on like what can be done with telephones to investigate. So it is not just resources. There has to be a will to say to people that we have to do something about organized crime in Canada, that we can do something about it, that we have not done things about. I hope the committee will make recommendations the government will listen to and act on in a very quick manner.

Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I too will be dividing my time and I too, like every member who has risen so far to address this resolution, want to congratulate the members of the Bloc Québécois for bringing it forward. It is an important resolution and I can indicate that my party will be supporting it.

The only real concern I have is that unfortunately the government of the day does not always respond well to reports from committees, and we can name the committees to which the government has either watered down recommendations or dismissed them outright. I can think of recommendations from the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, both of which at different points in this government's lifetime brought forward important recommendations which were then diluted after consideration by cabinet.

It is my hope that the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights will take this issue as is recommended in the resolution, that it will investigate it, hear witnesses and bring forward the kind of report I know we can. I sit on the committee on justice. We have brought forward unanimous reports in terms of important measures for the House to consider. It is my hope that the government will then adopt those measures.

There has been some discussion here about frustration, about how long it has taken the government to recognize that organized crime is something that has to be dealt with in this country. I share that frustration.

Today is November 30, 1999. I have here my comments from almost a year ago when the solicitor general brought forward his statement on organized crime. My comments are dated December 3, 1998, almost a year ago to the day. At that time we were talking about the need to take action on organized crime in this country. Much of what we have heard from the government today was said at the same time almost 12 months earlier. It has taken an opposition party, the Bloc Québécois, to bring forward this motion, and it will take the justice committee I suppose to get some action by this government.

Organized crime affects every single ministry in this government and every single geographic part of the country. When I say that it touches on every ministry, it touches on transportation. I will go back. The member for Langley—Abbotsford began talking about the ports police. We are a nation bordered by three oceans and yet when I first came to parliament two years ago, the Minister of Transport was eliminating the ports police, one of the real safeguards against the importation of drugs, weapons and illegal contraband into this country.

It is no small irony that we stand here today debating organized crime at the same time as the talks are taking place at the World Trade Organization because there is a World Trade Organization. It trades in ammunition. The single greatest item that is traded and sold is arms from one nation to another, illegal arms. It is a billion dollar trade around the globe. My colleague has correctly called them implements of destruction, and we trade them in billions of dollars.

The second largest item traded is drugs. Although I do not have the figures, I would suspect the third is trade in humans, in immigrants, people who are seeking some kind of better life. If we look at what is being traded around the globe today we find that it is arms, drugs and humans. It is about time that we began to address the issue here.

• (1145)

One protection we had were the ports police. I argued in the House passionately with the Minister of Transport that we ought not to disband the ports police. The government went ahead and did

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it anyway and privatized the ports. It is in the process of privatizing airports. The role of government is diminished at the points of entry where illegal activity takes place.

I have said that it cuts across ministries. It is not the concern of a particular minister. I mentioned the fact that there is trade in human beings. Because of the situation in Vancouver with the boatloads of immigrants that arrived there, the general public is now aware of the snakeheads, the people who traffic in individuals seeking a better life.

It touches on health and justice. We know the cost of young people who are addicted to crack cocaine. We know the cost of people who take drugs. We know the cost to the country of prisons. We know the cost of trying to treat people who have been the victims of organized crime.

Organized crime touches on finance and international trade. Let us not forget white collar crime. When we talk about organized crime there is a temptation to think that everyone involved in it looks like a stereotypical biker. In reality many people in very expensive suits, shirts and ties are laundering money. They are shifting the proceeds of crime from one country to the other and are robbing us with a fountain pen. With one stroke they create criminal activity.

It touches on finance. It touches on international trade. It touches on Canada customs. It also touches on defence because in many cases we rely on the men and women who serve the country in the military to fill the void created because of cutbacks to the RCMP and because of the elimination of the ports police.

The issue of organized crime is the responsibility of every member of cabinet. The fact that there has been little or no action taken on it is a shame shared by every member of cabinet. There are no geographical boundaries in terms of organized crime. No one area of the country suffers more than another. In small towns across Canada there are concerns about organized crime.

In Halifax, Nova Scotia, we have a sad spectacle of two rival gangs, the Hell's Angels and another gang. One is located in Dartmouth and the other is located in Halifax. The people in that community live under the ever present threat that maybe the situation will turn into the same situation that has been complained about and highlighted by my colleagues in the Bloc Quebecois as happening in the province of Quebec.

In cities in Ontario there is a real danger and fear of trafficking in everything from tobacco and alcohol to drugs across the border. In cities like Winnipeg there are real concerns. The new government in Manitoba is beginning to take real action against inner city crime and inner city organized crime.

British Columbia, as my colleagues have highlighted, has seen a dramatic increase in drug trade. To the people who live in those

communities it appears that the government is powerless to stop it because of the funding cuts to the RCMP. It is also an issue that requires international co-operation.

I will end on perhaps a more positive note. I congratulate the government on taking some steps to work with the international community. It was my pleasure and privilege to accompany the minister to the United Nations in New York where we shared some ideas with attorneys general from other countries on how to fight organized crime.

I congratulate members of the Bloc for bringing forward this motion and will support it.

• (1150)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am always very buoyed and entertained to a degree by the commentary from my learned friend from Sydney—Victoria in the province of Nova Scotia.

He always gives a very insightful view. I want to ask him a question specifically with respect to the problem of organized crime in the maritimes. We face a very unique situation, not unlike that of the coast of British Columbia, where we have large bodies of water that make our coastline vulnerable, in particular for the importation of drugs, contraband material, pornography and weapons coming from large urban centres like Boston and New York.

I am wondering, particularly in reference to his area in Cape Breton or Nova Scotia generally, if the hon. member could talk to that and the increased vulnerability of our coastline because of the disbandment of the ports police. I know that Halifax, which was very much vying for superport designation, dealt with that in a very timely way. It may have factored into the decision ultimately as to whether Halifax would receive that designation.

Could the member expand on that thought and tell us what he feels we could do to address the situation in Nova Scotia? Specifically, what advice might he have for the solicitor general in this regard?

Mr. Peter Mancini: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question from my colleague. I am glad to entertain him whenever I can. On this issue he is correct. The ports police played an important role but not only by themselves. I think this is an important point. The customs officers who worked at the ports in Nova Scotia relied heavily on the partnership with the ports police to assist them in ensuring there was no importation of stolen items, whether they be automobiles, drugs or whatever.

My advice would be to reinstate the ports police. There was some interesting discussion the justice committee could look at in

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terms of a national police force which might incorporate some of the work the ports police did if they were not reinstated.

He talked about the vulnerability of the Atlantic region. It is true. The coastline is full of coves, full of areas where ships can land. We need additional protection in that part of the country. We used to be able to rely to some extent on a partnership between fishermen and the RCMP. There were programs where fishermen could report if they saw suspicious activity. Again, with the downsizing of the RCMP that becomes more and more difficult.

We are talking about the sea coast. I noticed in his remarks the solicitor general talked about funding for airports. Halifax is not one of the airports that has been mentioned. As the government enacts policies that cause rural areas to lose population and to congregate in large urban centres, we also lose the ability to protect those coasts as small villages and small towns lose their population.

I know the member will understand, coming from Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, that as Halifax becomes a concentrated centre, because that is where the government has decided economic activity will take place, we lose some of the resources along the coastline and in other communities that are assets in the fight against organized crime and make those communities more vulnerable.

Mr. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I again thank the member for his commentary. I know that his heart is very much in the right place when it comes to the province of Nova Scotia. In fact there is a great deal of pressure on him to spend more time in his home province.

My question for him is with respect to airports because he raised a very interesting point. There has been a lot of discussion in the policing community about privatization of policing, that is security guards. The thought is that we might remove RCMP presence in airports. This is very much a great concern because of the vulnerability of airports and because of being the flash point in terms of importation of contraband materials. Halifax is certainly an international airport with that designation.

Could the member expand on his party's position and his own personal approach to privatization of policing? Standards are lowered and I believe police officers themselves do not receive the same level of training they would get as members of the RCMP or municipal police forces.

• (1155)

Mr. Peter Mancini: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member again that the privatization of the police force is not the way to go. We need professionally trained police officers with the benefits of good pay and good training to protect communities.

He is correct when he says that I am under pressure to spend more time in the province. He is under the same pressure sometimes himself.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to take part in this debate. I want to start by expressing appreciation to members of the Bloc Québécois who brought forward this very timely, topical and relevant subject for us to debate today. Special thanks go to the member for Berthier—Montcalm for bringing forward the particular motion.

I come from the riding of Winnipeg Centre, the core area of Winnipeg. In that neighbourhood, I am not proud to say, we are no strangers to the problems of organized crime albeit on a small scale. I am speaking specifically of urban street gangs, often wrongly called aboriginal youth gangs. It is a misnomer to call our problem an aboriginal youth problem. These urban street gangs are run and orchestrated by adults, often using young people or abusing young people, to bring about their own goals. I want to make perfectly clear that when I talk about the gang problem in Winnipeg it is an urban street gang problem and not an aboriginal youth problem.

Much of our problem in the inner city of Winnipeg is a very predictable consequence of a disastrous social policy or the absence of any social policy. This is a predictable consequence that anybody could have told us would be the outcome of years of neglect. Years and years and years of letting the inner city of Winnipeg rot has had a very predictable outcome and consequence in the form of a permanent underclass. Quelle surprise. Starve people for a couple of decades and we will develop an underclass which will become organized. When we shut people out of the mainstream economy where do they go to find a standard of living?

When we talk about organized crime everybody thinks of the Mafia. It is almost a cliché. Where do we think it came from? In the 1900s in New York City people were shut out of the mainstream economy. People would not hire a swarthy Mediterranean type. They were shut out of the economy and they created their own economy. Yes, it was illegal. Given the choice between my children starving and doing something a bit off colour, I have often said it is frankly an easy choice to make. They loved their children too and they were forced into the situation of doing something illegal in order to survive.

That is the situation with the urban street gangs we have in the city of Winnipeg. A whole generation of people were shut out of the mainstream economy and created its own illegal mini economy. Some people think that illegal is just a sick bird because frankly when it is survival or illegal they choose survival.

The whole social problem faced in the core area of the city of Winnipeg recently manifested itself in arson. There is an epidemic of arson. It is like Watts in 1965. It is burn baby burn. People are

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expressing their frustration by torching the miserable neighbourhood they live in. They are levelling it. They are taking the law into their own hands. They are expressing themselves and their frustration by burning down the neighbourhood they live in, maybe in the hopes that something will rise from the ashes that will be a better world.

It is very predictable. Any student of the human experience could have told us that this would happen. We are playing with fire here and now we are experiencing fire. It boils down to year after year after year of fundamental neglect in the inner city.

Thankfully we have now elected a progressive mayor and a progressive provincial government. Maybe those two could actually work together and start to turn the issue around. Let us call it what it is. Organized crime and street crime are predictable consequences of chronic long term poverty that we should have known about.

My colleague talked about an issue in which I am very interested: human bondage, human slavery, the advent of slavery again.

• (1200)

I see the member from the Tories gets a kick out of that. I agree that human bondage can have many meanings. The particular meaning I am dealing with now is the terrible spectacle of desperate people, looking for a better life, who are washing up on the shores of British Columbia's west coast. They are getting put into a pipeline that is in fact organized crime. The whole network of people who are taking advantage of these desperate individuals is organized crime in its truest sense. They are very well connected. They have a network all over North America that takes these people from the ships and puts them into illegal and abusive situations where they have to pay off the debt they owe for getting themselves smuggled into the country.

More sensitive people are looking at this issue and trying to understand how it comes about. People from the Fujian province in China, desperate enough to leave their situation, are willing to get on some death trap of a boat and owe some criminal \$40,000 to come here to build a better life for themselves and their children. Let us try and understand their motivation. What kind of circumstances are they leaving that they would risk life and limb to undertake a journey like that?

In doing a bit of research, I have learned a bit about the Fujian province where these desperate people come from. That is the first place in China where they had these free economic trade zones, that great bastion of capitalism called free economic trade zones. It is a fenced compound where labour legislation does not apply and no laws apply. People work making Barbie dolls, The Gap jeans and Liz Claiborne sweaters. A lot of our western products are developed in these trade zones in the Fujian province of China.

The ILO, the International Labour Organization, did some research. It found that they need to make about 85 cents an hour to

make a reasonable standard of living in China. To live like a Chinese peasant, they need to make 85 cents an hour. This is \$6 or \$7 a day. The wage in these free economic trade zones is 18 cents an hour, one-fifth of what it costs to survive as peasant. The Gap jeans, Liz Claiborne and all these outfits are paying these people 18 cents an hour for making western goods. These people are not stupid. They put two and two together. They know there is another world out there that lives a hell of a lot better than they do. To better themselves and their families, they will do anything to get here and maybe have some hope and optimism that they will enjoy a better standard of living.

I believe we have only seen the tip of iceberg in this situation. I think we will face a day of reckoning. As a western developed nation, we cannot keep those people down forever. They know that we are here enjoying the good life and they are there living a life of misery and desperation. We have this bizarre spectacle of people living in a grass hut with a mud floor watching *Mary Tyler Moore* reruns on a colour TV and wondering why it is not them and why they cannot have a piece of that good life. So they become desperate.

A lot of less sensitive people or people who have not thought this through are saying "Why should these people be able to jump the queue and wind up on the shores of Canada and become landed immigrants in this country? What about all those good people who are waiting patiently in line?"

Let me tell the House something. There is no way to get here from there. China has 1.2 billion people and we have one Canadian immigration officer in China who is in Beijing, which is a heck of a long way from the Fujian province. How does a person making 18 cents an hour save up enough money to get themselves to Beijing, to then stand in line for months sometimes and literally sleep outside the door of the embassy to get a visa to come to Canada?

I asked the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration why we could not set up a little satellite office. If there is such a great demand from the Fujian province to come to Canada, we could set up a little office in the Fujian province for 18 months. There would be no market for snakeheads. We would pull the rug out from underneath them if we gave people conventional access to this country. Well, the minister said that there was no budget for promoting Canada, et cetera. It is all a budgetary issue. Now we are facing the consequences of these people who are desperate enough to come to our shores and become victims of this terrible criminal pipeline.

The last thing I will say about this is that I am very critical of the way the government is handling the issue. We know some of the problem people in that criminal pipeline. We know some individuals, and I know some by name, in Vancouver, Toronto and New York City. However, for some reason the government is hoping to wait until it can do one big sting, like a TV cop show where in the

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last five minutes of the show they will round everybody up and bust them so they can look like heroes.

Why are the police not harassing the people that it knows already? By the word harass, I mean within the context of the law. Why are the police not picking these people up and questioning them? Why are they not doing everything they can to stop this and send a message back to the Fujian province that Canada will not tolerate the smuggling of human cargo and human bondage in our community. That is one issue I am very critical of.

• (1205)

The other thing that my colleague from Sydney—Victoria raised is the RCMP's inability to enforce the laws and put an end to some of the terrible organized crime we have in the country.

Our party gets letters from RCMP officers telling us that they are unable to investigate crimes they know are being committed because they do not have the budget or personnel to do it. It is sending a green light to organized crime, especially on complicated issues of white collar crime, et cetera. It is a terrible thing when we do not have the money to bust criminals who we know are operating in our community and exploiting Canadians. It is all budgetary. It is strictly a matter of finance. Balancing the budget seems to have priority over protecting Canadians from organized criminals, and I think that is scandalous.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, could the hon. member table the letters from the RCMP officers that he spoke about earlier? I would appreciate seeing them.

Mr. Pat Martin: Madam Speaker, I think they are a matter of public record. The member from Kamloops stood up and made not only statements on that issue but questioned the government on that issue. He quoted chapter and verse, and the name of a senior RCMP officer from British Columbia who wrote letters to us in response to a white collar scam that was going on in the riding of Kamloops.

Seniors were being cheated out of hundreds of thousands of dollars by some kind of a scam. The RCMP knew it was going on, knew the details, the amount and the people involved, but they wrote back saying, "We're sorry, but at this time we can't possibly investigate this. We don't have the resources, the staff or the manpower to investigate". In other words, they said that there was no money to protect the interests of the victims.

We would be happy to give those letters to the member because we want this publicized as much as the member obviously does.

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member, who was just asking the

question, points out the problem we have between east and west where these stories are quite well known.

I have written the solicitor general and the head of the RCMP about the shortage of officers on the Sunshine Coast where they are supposed to have 52 officers for a population of 46,000. We are about 10 short, which is well above the 10% the commissioner sometimes talks about. Because of that, RCMP officers are sometimes quoted as saying that they cannot cover certain crimes overnight, like break-ins, because they do not have the staff. One officer was quoted as saying that they have been told by Ottawa not to go up to Pender Harbour from Sechelt to cover things at night, and yet there are a few thousand people who live there. We know it is a serious problem.

A comparison with that is West Vancouver which has 40,000 people, its own police force and 77 policemen on staff. It is an area bordered by water on two sides and a very compact area compared with the Sunshine Coast. We have a real shortage.

The member made a comment about the Fujian province. I agree with a lot of the things he said about that, but he also said that we only have one office in Beijing and at 18 cents an hour how can they afford to get there. That may or may not be true, but how can they afford to pay the \$40,000 to the guys to get on the boat? It leads to the fact that organized crime is behind it.

I have been told by an overwhelming number of people in the Chinese community in Vancouver that if we do not turn the boats around, or at least send the people back by airplane immediately, the people in that province will not get the message that human smuggling is not the way we do immigration in Canada.

There is a difference here to start with. Yes, they cannot afford it, but they can afford to raise \$30,000 or \$40,000 and/or pay it off in ware when they get here. How does the member rationalize that statement?

Mr. Pat Martin: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member answered his own question. No one pays it up front. No one from that area has that kind of money. They sign a chit or whatever that they owe that money when they get here.

My brother is a lawyer in Toronto and has one of these people as a client. This person was chained to a bed in the basement of a home and forced to work 16 to 18 hour days in servitude, in bondage. This is bonded labour. This is a return to the bad old days of slavery. People are desperate enough to undertake the obligation of owing \$40,000. If they do not pay it back, they are under great threat of coercion or of having damage done to their families back home. Many of them probably still have loved ones back in the Fujian province.

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• (1210)

This is the kind of coercion and manipulation that goes on in the minds of desperate people. Can anyone imagine how desperate people would have to be? The 18 cents an hour is not my figure. It was the International Labour Organization that just recently did the study of the free economic trade zones in the Fujian province where a lot of our products are made, such as children's toys, furniture and electronics. Maybe the clothes that I am wearing right now were stitched together in that particular area of China. There are 200 free economic trade zones in China now, many of them in the Fujian province, where western goods are made. I did not invent that figure. The International Labour Organization's estimate was that 85 cents an hour would be a reasonable living wage for a person in that area of China. They make 18 cents an hour. Beijing is a heck of a long way from the Fujian province. I do not know how they would even get there to file an application for a visa. I do not think it can be done. Legally, they cannot get here from there.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise and take part in this debate on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party.

I will begin by commending the Bloc for the impetus to bring this debate before the House. It is certainly very useful and instructional in terms of the commentary that we will be hearing throughout the day. I commend the Bloc's foresight on the use of this opposition day.

With the issues of options and priorities that we have when it comes to the decision that an opposition party must make with respect to the debate that will take place, I find it very interesting that the Bloc decided to choose this matter. It shows that it obviously recognizes the importance and the priority this issue has in Canada.

Yet, at the same time, the Prime Minister has chosen to provoke the Bloc and prefers a self-edifying folly into the minefield of separation. Canadians are very fatigued with the never-ending debate. Obviously he is looking for a pedestal or a way to rehabilitate his abysmal performance in 1995 when he disappeared from the debate and left it to the then leader of the Progressive Conservative Party to try and carry his baggage.

We all recognize that organized crime is a threat to all that we hold dear: peace, order and good government. The Bloc Quebecois has chosen to make this a priority and it deserves praise for that. It is something that is very close to home within the province of Quebec because of the competing biker gangs that are playing out their dangerous warfare on the streets of Montreal. We also know that Lennoxville is home to the largest organized crime unit in the country. There is a chapter of the Hell's Angels that operates from Lennoxville. It is very timely that this motion comes before the House.

Before I get into the substance of my remarks, I also want to remind the House about the supply day motion itself and the process that brings us here today, which will culminate next week when the government will be asked for the authority to spend over \$4 billion belonging to the people of Canada.

Supplementary estimates are referred to various committees for examination. To date, the government has not produced a single minister at committee to answer questions or offer attempts to speak to the reasoning for this request for supply. It is truly an offence to democracy. It offends people's sensibilities. I suggest that the smallest municipality in the country would not treat its taxpayers and citizens in such a cavalier fashion. This is \$4 billion without a single word of explanation.

I will cite only one example of what is at stake when it comes to these types of estimates. The National Capital Commission is asking for \$40 million for projects on Sparks Street, only one block away from the Chamber. The National Capital Commission meets in secret. The only public scrutiny of this agency would take place at a committee and it probably will not happen.

Another request is for \$35 million for the firearms control program that is presently in chaos and making a black hole out of public money. The minister and officials have been unable to defend in any way their stewardship of this program.

• (1215)

The government has shut down the scrutiny process when it comes to estimates. The Liberals take the position that it is inconvenient for ministers to attend before committees. The ministers have a duty, I suggest, to attend and to give the public and members of the House an accounting.

It is not for the ministers to tell the committees of the House when they can appear. It is a duty they have to parliament to be here and answer questions about supply. Too many people in Canada, and in fact too many people in the House, have forgotten that cabinet ministers in particular are servants of the Canadian people.

I raise this point in the proceedings to give the government fair warning that it is completely dissatisfying the people of the country and the members of the House with its arrogant treatment of committees. To ask the House to approve public spending without an opportunity to question the government is highly unacceptable and inappropriate to everyone in this place. It is time for the committees to do their work. It is time for us as opposition members to hold the government to a greater level of account.

I want to turn now specifically to the motion before the House. It is appropriate to begin my remarks by congratulating the men and women who work on the frontlines of law enforcement. Whether it

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be police officers, peace officers, customs agents or crown prosecutors, those working at all levels of law enforcement need our support. They need our increased attention and they need resources very quickly. Increasing the law enforcement budget is the only true way to address the problems pointed out very clearly in the Bloc motion.

In essence, what is occurring at this time in this area is that law enforcement agents are simply being asked to do more with less. They have been ravished by government cutbacks and like a tired animal they are asking for assistance instead of having more heaped on to their backs. Unfortunately government cutbacks and slashes over the years have led Canadians to question the commitment and the priority level the government places on this sector of our country.

This ultimately leads to vulnerability to organized crime and increased levels of organized criminal activity. I am talking of Mafia type associations, criminal gangs and street gangs. Whether they be of any origin or national descent they are popping up at a shocking rate in communities around the country.

They are having a field day in the area of white collar high tech crime such as fraud, telemarketing scams, money laundering, drug importation and exportation, particularly on the west coast. They are dealing in pornography and contraband materials such as firearms, trafficking, loan sharking, and influence peddling, another area where organized crime is very active.

It is coming from international and multicultural groups within the country in the form of eastern European gangs specializing in counterfeiting, biker gangs that are mainly Caucasian, guns and explosives being smuggled in, Russian, Italian and Asian gangs, extortion, aboriginal gangs, pornography and firearms trafficking. All these groups are actively involved in criminal activity. However, the highest threat is drug importation and drug trafficking, the most lucrative area of organized criminal activity.

Intimidation of witnesses has been touched upon by a number of previous speakers. Intimidation of juries, officials and law enforcement agents very much undercuts and undermines the pinnings and the very cornerstones of our criminal justice system. If those working within the system are feeling hard done by and put upon by members of the organized community, they will not be able to do their jobs effectively. Insidious efforts to permeate and pervert our justice system are happening as we speak. Many of these threats to the justice system have come as a direct result of negligent underfunding on the part of the current government.

We know that many coming from outside the country are from very tumultuous and sometimes war-torn backgrounds. When they come to Canada they are overjoyed, if they are involved in criminal activity, at the lax approach that is sometimes taken and the blind eye that is sometimes turned to organized crime.

These criminals are professionals. They come to Canada often-times with quite a knowledgeable background of how to circumvent the law. There is no code of conduct or unwritten rules of conduct among the criminal element in this country. It is not like the old Hollywood movies and the gangsters who sometimes had a code of thieves. That does not happen.

• (1220)

Gangs are growing at an astonishing rate. I spoke recently with an undercover officer from the city of Montreal. He gave me some statistics and spoke of personal accounts of how gangs were cropping up in different parts of the city of Montreal and around the country at an astonishing rate.

In 1999 a CSIS annual report stated that Asian based criminal organizations would continue to pose challenges for police and agencies across the country because of their abilities to function as tightly knit units. The agencies we have in place to fight organized crime are aware of the syndicates that are cropping up. Yet they are increasingly frustrated because they do not have the resources to react.

The same report stated that the Hell's Angels had almost doubled in size in the province of Alberta in the last two years since coming to that province. In 1997 there were 26 members. In 1999 there are 46 members. As I have said, we have seen the numbers of chapters in and around the city of Montreal double in the last number of years.

To combat this new form of organized crime, police officers and CSIS agents need to be high tech. They need to be on at least a level playing field and working together with a common goal to try to stop the expansion of organized crime. In order to protect the public they need at least the equivalent tools and at least the equivalent resources.

Instead we hear that the RCMP is unable to investigate fraud cases in the province of British Columbia because of lack of resources. We know that in British Columbia close to 400 RCMP officers are needed to fill vacancies as we speak. The closing of government RCMP training academies in the last year even temporarily was a severe blow to the police. The elimination of ports police increased drug and human smuggling in our coastal communities. The Quebec Mounties have been ordered to stop recruiting. There are paid informants to help investigations. Real problems are happening out there.

In particular, organized crime involving drug importation is on the rise because the force is simply running out of money. It is not able to get people involved because it cannot pay them. Sadly one of the most effective tools the police have to infiltrate organized crime is to pay informants or the informants are not willing to inform. Similarly they are not getting the same level of protection under the Canadian witness protection program because of a lack of

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funding. Many investigators are unable to use wiretaps because the force cannot afford the computer time and the cost of transcribing tapes.

The solicitor general refuses to take responsibility for his department's actions when it falls down and documents go missing, but we know from the same internal reports put out by CSIS and the RCMP that it is not co-operating. It is not exercising the discretion to share information for a common goal because it is competing for resources. This should be very alarming. This rivalry is actually costing investigators and potentially putting lives at risk.

Groups like the Asian triads involved in the smuggling of individuals, of human bodies into the country, is on the rise due to the poor situation at our borders. There is a suggestion that many criminal gangs in Canada have links to the Chinese military. I was about to say Canadian military, and there is some suggestion of that too.

We know of the sidewinder investigation that took place and exposed a far-reaching, insidious plot to set up more organized crime in the country. Yet, because of a lack of resources among other problems, the sidewinder investigation was put aside. We will be hearing more about this issue. I suggest there will be shock-waves throughout our entire political and justice systems when it comes to the sidewinder investigation being brought to the forefront.

Gangs in Quebec have been growing marijuana in farmers' fields, intimidating farmers to remain silent, intimidating families and intimidating members of parliament. I congratulate the member who was threatened for his courage in continuing to fight for activity that will lead to the breaking of these types of crime syndicates.

It is not the fault of our law enforcement agents. The hardworking men and women involved in this battle continue to put their lives on the line. They continue to risk their own safety even in the face of this lack of government support. They need greater funding. They need greater support. They need greater surveillance. They need equipment, helicopters, patrol boats to monitor and actively take part in the effort to stem the tide of criminal activity.

• (1225)

Some may argue that it is too costly. The Liberals and the solicitor general himself can say that it is too costly. However, we know that they do not have enough money on occasion to fix patrol cars. They do not have enough money in some instances to provide adequate firearms for our officers. A shocking situation is developing.

Internationally we are increasingly vulnerable because of the erosion of policing agencies. Other countries have recognized this point. CIA and FBI reports have said that the United States of

America is increasingly vulnerable because of the breakdown of law enforcement agencies in Canada. This is something that we should all be ashamed of, quite frankly.

I need not go into detail about the morale that exists within law enforcement agencies. That is at the point where it is bottoming out as well to match the funding. In April 1999 the chairman of the U.S. judicial subcommittee, Republican Lamar Smith, said that Canada was being used as a launch pad for middle eastern terrorists, biker gangs and crime families that use Canada's borders to sneak persons into that country.

Earlier this year the government put a little money back into fighting organized crime. In government terms it was \$15 million per year for the RCMP to target organized crime at three international airports: Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. As was previously mentioned Halifax was left out of the equation. It also put \$19.5 million per year into Canada's anti-smuggling initiative.

I commend the government for recognizing the need to put in the money, but oftentimes we see that it puts in money over a long period of time. It makes a great deal out of the announcement, just like we saw in the throne speech and the red book before it. There were all kinds of promises about commitment but in the short term we need to stop the bleeding. We need to put in the money now.

This recognition by government is only the first step. We know that law enforcement officers need that money now. The DNA databank and the reopening of the RCMP training facility are great moves. We commend the government for them.

The solicitor general spoke in his remarks about changes in legislation to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and changes to the court system which would enable police officers to get witnesses before the court and provide them with greater protection to encourage them to testify.

There is one glaring omission. I can sum it up in a very simple phrase. We cannot keep people in prison longer and we cannot get them to court with greater ability unless police officers are able to catch them in the crime, bring them forward and get them into the system. That simply is not happening.

The Canadian police information system was recently upgraded by the solicitor general. With great pomp and ceremony he said that \$150 million were being put into the upgrade. We know, and RCMP officers themselves have stated it, that \$280 million were needed for the upgrade to be effective. Less than half the money required was put in by the solicitor general.

In the face of making these announcements about government spending, it is very apparent it has been spread far too thin over far too long a period. The solicitor general always says that fighting crimes is their number one priority. We on this side of the House

are questioning that statement because it appears a lot of number one priorities are fighting for attention.

We hear a plethora of platitudes from the solicitor general denouncing criminal activity and talking about changes in organized crime strategy, but all we are seeing are increased levels of bureaucracy and ossification from the solicitor general. I truly question his grasp of his own department.

We see that there is not a co-ordinated effort. Our agencies are not working together at the level that they should be because they are not getting leadership from the top. They are not receiving leadership from this department. They are not receiving leadership from various agents at the top like the director of CSIS who completely abdicated his responsibility with respect to lost documents. Recently a CSIS agent was actually brought to task, but the CSIS director was completely untouched and, it appears, was complicit in the act itself and in the cover-up.

Although the solicitor general has made promises to modernize the department and do everything he can to increase the funding, it is not happening quickly enough.

• (1230)

The member spoke of the anti-gang bill and the CCRA review. Again these are pale in comparison to the priority when it comes to the need to inject real resources, real quick. Opposition parties, and I would suggest, provincial governments recognize this, and it is high time the government recognized it.

I want to commend the Bloc Quebecois as well. I want to commend the member for Charlesbourg who sponsored a private member's bill to get rid of thousand dollar bills, which are very popular among the drug trade. As well, I again reference the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot who stood up to real threats from drug producers in his part of the country. I commend the member for his courage.

There are various elements of the criminal justice system that have to continue to work together, such as information sharing. Earlier in questions and comments I spoke about the privatization scheme which may be coming forward. I hope that is not the case. The Liberals continue to pat themselves on the back for creating initiatives, but this self-aggrandizing and plagiarising of policy is the trademark of the Liberal government. We have witnessed the GST, free trade and others. It was the Conservative Party which actually kick-started many of the initiatives dealing with organized crime.

In 1989 and again in 1993 a former Progressive Conservative government passed four major pieces of legislation to assist our law enforcement community. In 1989 the Conservatives passed proceeds of crime legislation, which was a first in Canadian

Supply

criminal law history. They passed legislation to help officers trace the flow of money diverted from criminal activities. The former government passed the Proceeds of Crime Act in 1991.

The Progressive Conservative Party also brought in legislation which dealt with the seizing of property. A final initiative that I would reference is that of the organized crime bill, which had far-reaching implications and modified our Customs Act.

There is no doubt that this government has a high standard to live up to. The solicitor general needs to recognize that more can be done by his department. I hope he will do so.

I again cry out for the solicitor general to bring more tools, better and adequate legislation to address many of the problems. I thank the Bloc Quebecois and commend it for recognizing the need to discuss this matter now, ahead of an onerous, divisive debate which the Prime Minister would have had had he been able to provoke the Bloc in the way he tried.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I think the people reading *Hansard* or viewing this debate will note the collegiality which exists. From time to time in the House we come up with a common objective, a common agenda, and clearly the issue of organized crime in Canada is one that every member of the House should be very serious about.

The member touched on the issue of the lost CSIS briefcase. I think he may agree with me that the problem with respect to the action or inaction on the part of the government is probably best shown by what is or is not going on at CSIS.

In the period of time the government has been in power, in addition to the lost briefcase, there was also the loss of a computer disk which was left in a telephone booth. The solicitor general told us there was a review going on at CSIS by SIRC. We then found out from the same paper that the chair of the SIRC committee, the overseeing committee, was informed of the loss of the briefcase through the newspaper, not by the solicitor general, not by anything kicking in, which should be kicking in, at the department. But then we are told that the computer disk, in the so-called review—

Ms. Paddy Torsney: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Is the questioner opposite going to get to organized crime?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I would think the question is relevant.

• (1235)

Mr. Jim Abbott: Mr. Speaker, it just shows that the Liberal member does not understand the connection, CSIS being able to uncover organized crime.

Supply

The point I am driving at is that the person who discovered the disk in the telephone booth said that SIRC had not even inquired of them as to the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Would the hon. member agree with me that the government did not even have people at SIRC who were in the position of overseeing CSIS? It was not until September 1999 that it finally appointed Bob Rae, Ray Speaker and Frank McKenna to three of the five positions. It was not until November 15 that it finally got around to appointing, after years of the position being vacant, the inspector general of SIRC.

Would the hon. member agree that it really belies this kind of inaction and the importance of CSIS relative to combating organized crime and getting intelligence?

Mr. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question and I certainly agree that it is completely symptomatic of the breakdown in communication and the breakdown in terms of government recognition of the need for resource allocation in this area. CSIS is very much involved in the front line battle against organized crime.

The examples that the hon. member has referred to were bad enough. The bumbling type of activity that led to this lost information, which increased the vulnerability of some of the operations that CSIS was pursuing, was bad enough, but then to have that error exaggerated further by the CSIS watchdog, SIRC, not receiving the information, to use the phraseology of the Minister of Justice, “in a timely fashion”, but to read about it in the *Globe and Mail*, was absolutely abysmal. Then the government does nothing about it or it waits weeks and weeks to do anything about it.

This watchdog, SIRC, which was unmanned in many ways, or unpersoned in many ways—

Ms. Paddy Torsney: Unstaffed?

Mr. Peter MacKay: Unstaffed. Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her politically correct question. No substance, but political correctness has become the order of the day.

The point is, that watchdog cannot bite or bark unless somebody warns it that there is a problem, and that was not happening here. In fact I would suggest there is ample evidence that there was a wilful effort to not let SIRC know that this blunder had occurred. That is extremely problematic and the government is not reacting to this issue in a very responsible fashion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise with some emotion to address the motion introduced by the Bloc Québécois concerning organized crime.

A few weeks ago, I hired a helicopter and was flown over my riding. This proved to be a strange but enlightening adventure, as I now realize the scope of the phenomenon, just how much the gangs have taken over in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada.

In viewing my riding from the air, and in talking with colleagues afterward, I became aware that some 25% to 50% of fields in Quebec, and the same percentage in Ontario, have been commandeered by organized crime for the production of one of the best grades of cannabis in the world. It has nothing in common with the pot of the 1970s, as it contains 7 to 30 times more hallucinogens.

My flight, coupled with the discussions afterward, also opened my eyes to a very serious situation: the thousands of farm families terrorized year after year by organized crime, families prevented from enjoying their property in peace, from even going into their fields on pain of death. Their lives and their children's lives are threatened, and they do not dare set foot in their fields because they have been booby-trapped and there could be an explosion. These people have had enough, and they are appealing to us.

I have also seen that the problem in our cities is becoming more and more serious. My colleagues referred this morning to the situation in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. We are all aware that criminals are growing cannabis by hydroponics in a greenhouse or basement, or right out in the open in the middle of a city, and that there are shooting galleries all over the place. This is becoming more prevalent in the city as well as in the country.

• (1240)

I also realized something even more serious. The cannabis produced here is of such a high quality that it is often—and in fact increasingly so—traded for the same quantity of cocaine or heroin, for example on American markets. This means that the fields in Quebec, like those in Ontario and in other regions across Canada, are being used to smuggle huge shipments of cocaine and heroin on the Quebec and Canadian markets.

Since these drugs are smuggled in huge quantities, prices are low, which allows organized crime to sell it to children in the polyvalentes or high schools. Not only cannabis, but also cocaine and heroin, are found in the polyvalentes.

It is no surprise that, every year, there is an increase in the numbers of 12 and 13-year olds who use these hard drugs, and the children of anyone here could be among them. We should be very aware of this issue and its long term impact on our society.

We have to realize that organized crime makes money primarily from drug trafficking and production. The Canadian market alone generates \$10 billion U.S. annually. The international market, which is controlled in part by some biker gangs in Canada, could reach \$500 billion U.S. annually.

Supply

Moreover, drugs and organized crime are also the cause of several acts of violence in our society. For example, biker gangs are engaged in wars to control the drug market.

In Montreal, in 1995, an 11-year old child died because of these biker gangs and their turf war for a share of the drug market. It is not surprising, because it is worth \$10 billion for Canada and \$500 billion U.S. for the world.

Our inaction also involves social costs. For Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia alone, the costs related to the consumption of drugs are estimated at some \$4 billion. Our children, at the age of 12 or 13, are hooked on cocaine or heroin. We have a big responsibility.

Since 1994, no fewer than 79 murders have been committed in Quebec alone for the purpose of gaining control of the drug markets. There have been 89 attempted murders, 129 cases of arson and 82 bombings. In 1998, there were 450 acts of violence related to control of the drug market.

Each time such things occur, innocent people can die, just like the Desrocher child in 1995. We cannot let it go on.

I have started this fight and will continue it to the end first and foremost for my little Rosalie, but I do it as well for all children in Quebec and Canada. I do not want them to be the next victims of these criminals whom we welcome here with our permissive laws and whose trade flourishes year after year because of our inaction.

I have got to know the RCMP a bit better recently, everyone will understand why, but all police forces are doing an admirable job. They are competent and determined people. Very few people would go to work with a smile if they faced the same environment as the police forces in Quebec and Canada.

This is their environment. They do not have the resources they need to go up against organized crime and the billions of dollars it can call up year after year to expand its operations. The RCMP budget shows \$77 million under the heading of anti-drug activities, and \$40 million under the heading of money laundering. This is ridiculous, particularly since the budget has shrunk by 12% since 1994, while organized crime is increasing exponentially. However great a job they do, their budget is in no way adequate.

It is the same with respect to the agreement between the RCMP and the armed forces for the loan of equipment, including helicopters. In the fight against drug traffickers, it is vital that there be hours of helicopter time available year after year. For all of Quebec, there are 150 available hours. Ten or twenty times that is needed.

Furthermore, the Canadian judicial system is not helping. Once again, these are competent, experienced people I have had occasion

to deal with recently. They have pointed out certain weaknesses in the judicial system. By the way, I thank them for this information, for this wonderful contribution.

• (1245)

I have identified five weaknesses in the legislation, but it will be up to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to identify many more and to find solutions.

First, the sentences handed down are ridiculous. Sometimes, they are shorter than the time it took to find people guilty and conduct an investigation. This is becoming ridiculous, and the ringleaders are never charged, because it is not possible to make the charges stick.

Sentences in Canada are so lenient, compared to sentences elsewhere in the world, that the country attracts criminals. Drug traffickers like to operate in Canada; I can see why, with sentences like that, which are much lighter than in the United States. They have a market in which their activities can flourish, unimpeded.

Gang membership is not a crime under the Criminal Code, as it is almost anywhere else in the world. It should be. Belonging to a crime gang, or a gang recognized as such, is a crime and we ought to identify all 38 gangs operating in Canada, whether they are involved in drugs or something else, as such.

My response to the rights activists is this: the charter of rights and freedoms contains a notwithstanding clause, and I trust that the charter was put in place not to help criminals, but to help honest folk.

It must also be proven that the property of criminals has been obtained through criminal activity. Why do we not follow the example of the United States, where the onus is on the criminal to prove that his possessions, the fancy house, the boats and so on, that he owns although having no visible source of income, are not the proceeds of crime.

I could have spoken of electronic surveillance, of the weakness of the clauses relating to money laundering. I call upon my colleagues to support our motion. The same thing could happen to them as happened to me and to the thousands of terrorized people living in fear of organized crime throughout Quebec and Canada.

I call upon them to support the Bloc Québécois motion and to set themselves promptly to the task of fighting organized crime to ensure that families in Quebec and Canada can live in peace and quiet and in safety, and that they can enjoy their lives without having to deal with criminals who are out to get them or who are commandeering their property to produce the drugs that will eventually kill our children.

*Supply**[English]*

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief so that my colleagues can also get in a question.

I commend this member. He has faced just a horrific situation personally and at his family level. I wish him and his family all of the best.

In light of the difficulties that he and his family have come up against because of the actions and the aggressiveness of organized crime against him, I wonder if he would agree with me that the government also has to take a look at the whole issue of protecting citizens who are going to come forward and be part of solving the problem with respect to organized crime and that in fact we should really be looking at beefing up the whole issue of our witness protection legislation and witness protection activities.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague. I mentioned a number of problems with Canada's laws and the Criminal Code, but there are many others.

This is why our motion calls on the House to instruct the justice committee to seriously consider the situation and the state and strengthening of these laws to make them really effective.

I said earlier that Canadian laws do not consider membership in a crime gang a criminal act, yet everyone knows how the organizations run and who is at the head of them. However, because we are sticklers for rules, because we have a charter of rights and freedoms—which I respect—and because there are do-gooders in our society who say that we must be careful and apply the charter, we do nothing. The charter is not meant for criminals.

The same applies to warrants for wiretapping. At one point, we have to stop being so soft. Some wiretapping warrants, which are for six months or a year, require extraordinary action, even action that discourages all police forces.

• (1250)

It is extraordinary, because I have seen determined, experienced and highly competent police dealing with equipment that is of no help to them. Most of all, there is the legal system, which allows criminals to laugh in everyone's face, because it is very permissive and full of loopholes. It even attracts criminals from other countries to come here to carry on their activities, because Canada is more permissive and Canada is a better place to do business, at least their kind of business.

We as parliamentarians have got to put a stop to this. We have a huge responsibility, and we must take this responsibility seriously.

[English]

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted an opportunity, like my colleague, to congratulate the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for what he is doing. I think we could just about call him a Canadian hero. The member may jump at that and think it is an exaggeration, but I do not because when we take on organized crime, we have a serious problem, as the member is finding out.

I see the hon. member up in the gym and he is tailed by the RCMP. I would not want that in my life and I do not think any Canadian believes that should be happening in Canada. This should be too free a country for that.

I hope the government, in accepting this motion, will also accept witnesses recommended by the opposition parties and be prepared to go to cities like Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, Vancouver for committee hearings so we can get to the root of the problem in each of those cities and solve these problems.

I could not let the chance go by to say that it is astounding in a country like this that organized crime is so deep it can get right up to the level of the House of Commons where it can make threats against a person and his or her family. We should all take that seriously and make sure that does not happen again. Organized crime has to know the government and the people in this building are serious about ending organized crime in Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier: Mr. Speaker, we should stop making this debate personal. I am no Canadian hero, but I would like us to think of the thousands of people who, because they are not parliamentarians, do not benefit from the protection of the RCMP or other police forces. We have to think of these people first.

That is what I found out. There are people who have been living in terror for years. A few weeks of terror is already difficult to bear, but nobody should have to live in terror for years.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): There is time for a very short question from the hon. member for Quebec.

[Translation]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what I want to know, because it is often suggested, is this: regarding the control of marijuana fields by criminal gangs, if marijuana were made legal, would this not put criminals out of business? Could that be a solution?

I would like my colleague to comment on that.

Supply

Mr. Yvan Loubier: Mr. Speaker, I am far from convinced that legalizing so-called soft drugs is the solution, and I will explain why.

Legalizing them would probably get organized crime out of the fields of Quebec and the rest of Canada. There are, however, products that are substituted for this very high quality cannabis, and I am talking about cocaine and heroin. Lowering the price of top quality Canadian cannabis would bring down the price of substitute drugs as well, possibly resulting in a situation where organized crime would go after a greater share of the market, because the price of hard drugs had dropped.

What is lost in terms of profits, because some drugs have been legalized, could be made up for in increased numbers of hard drug users.

So I think this bears looking at. But I am personally coming around to the idea that it would not be the solution, far from it, and it might make matters worse. I think it is too easy to say that we are unable to do anything, because we are not putting in the necessary financial and legal resources, and to say that we will legalize what we cannot control

It is the thin edge of the wedge to take everything we are unable to control and, when we are unable to find a solution, legalize it.

I think this is something we should avoid doing.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think it is extremely important to participate in this debate, as it deals with what will certainly be one of the most important issues in the next millennium. The Bloc Québécois motion reads as follows:

That this House instruct the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to conduct a study of organized crime, to analyse the options available to Parliament to combat the activities of criminal groups and to report to the House no later than October 31, 2000.

• (1255)

This debate is all the more important that it affects me as an elected member of parliament representing a riding located in central Quebec, where drug dealers have used agricultural land to grow the illicit substance.

I would like to congratulate my colleague, the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, for his courage. In spite of death threats on him and his family, he chose to continue his crusade against what he calls a real scourge. It does take courage, but it was also his duty as member of parliament to protect the interests of his fellow citizens.

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot is the one who received death threats in this case, but other members of this House may also have received threats relating to their work, because they

took their responsibilities and did their job as parliamentarians, as elected representatives of their fellow citizens. Now, they have become victims of violence. This is unacceptable.

As I mentioned earlier, in Quebec's central region and in the Montérégie, more than 50% of farmland is contaminated by the presence of cannabis producers who take advantage of corn crops to grow a very high quality product, which ranks among the best in the world. My colleague explained why it is important to act and to provide the necessary tools to police forces, in addition to strengthening our legislation.

I want to take a brief moment to urge the solicitor general, who is responsible for the RCMP, to keep regional RCMP offices open. There is a threat hovering over our regions. A study was conducted and a report was produced, which indicates that regional RCMP offices, whose staff has great expertise in dealing with organized crime locally, might be slated for closure and their staff relocated.

At present, everyone in the community, including municipal councils and chambers of commerce, is opposed to such a change. It just does not make sense. At a time when there is already a shortage of tools and resources to fight this scourge in our regions, the government lowers the boom by saying "We are closing your RCMP offices".

Moreover, these officers are working in close co-operation with other police forces, such as the Sûreté du Québec or the municipal police forces. Municipal police officers insist that the RCMP officers, who have expertise in this area, have to be kept in our regions.

Parliament has to deal seriously with this issue and realize that organized crime is rampant in Canada and around the world. We have to ask ourselves whether enforcement of current measures is enough. In the light of everything we heard this morning, I think not. Current measures are not enough.

The Bloc Québécois did an extensive study and sounded out several stakeholders, people responsible for enforcing current legislation. They are unanimous in saying that it is not enough.

• (1300)

The Canadian Police Association, in a release dated October 8, stated that "The dreadful reality is that organized crime has reached epidemic proportions and police forces feel frustrated because they lack the tools and resources to fight against it".

I would like to recall here what the Parliament of Canada has done in terms of legislation. I feel it is important to mention it.

The Witness Protection Act now makes it possible for police to better protect people who co-operate to obtain evidence against criminal organizations.

Supply

As a result of the Criminal Law Improvement Act, police can more easily be involved in activities used as a front.

The anti-gang legislation, Bill C-95, which was enacted in April 1997, includes the definition of gang in the Criminal Code.

The Controlled Drugs and Substances Act gives police the power to conduct controlled drug sale and delivery operations through undercover agents.

Despite all these legislative provisions, enforcement authorities seem to be unable to put a stop to criminal gang activities.

Drug trafficking is still the main source of revenue for most organized crime groups. Of all the activities related to organized crime, it is the illegal drug trade that has the worst consequences for Canada, given its social and economic effects and the violence that stems from it.

In studies that try to give a dollar figure for the cost of the illegal drug trade in Canada, this cost ranges from a conservative estimate of \$1.4 billion a year to almost \$4 billion a year for Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia.

I would also like to mention the main difficulties encountered by enforcement authorities and crown prosecutors.

On top of limited budgets, police organizations complain about the inability of the justice system to support their efforts: sentences are often shorter than the length of the investigation; the infiltration of criminal organizations by enforcement officers, which is very difficult because belonging to such organizations entails having committed criminal acts; the difficulty of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused became rich by committing a series of specific and identifiable criminal acts, a difficulty that could be eliminated by a reversal of the onus of proof; in some cases, the difficulty in exchanges of information between police forces and various departments, such as Immigration Canada and Revenue Canada; the inadequacy of provisions for the protection of witnesses and jurors.

Finally, in light of this brief overview of organized crime in Canada, it is important to take stock of these instruments to see which could be improved or complemented by new legislative, administrative, or financial measures.

I conclude by appealing to all members of parliament to vote in favour of this motion by the Bloc Québécois, so that we can finally put a stop to this scourge.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned earlier that some RCMP detachments could be dismantled in her riding of Drummond. We have heard the same thing about the RCMP detachment in the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe for the last year and a half. The government keeps

saying that these are only rumours. Maybe, but these rumours are getting persistent.

Does my hon. colleague have any additional information about the dismantling of RCMP detachments? I just want to say, by the way, that this would be a major mistake, because we need these RCMP detachments to fight against organized crime for three main reasons.

First, the RCMP officers working at these detachments are highly skilled. They have developed a bond with the residents and forged links of trust that are very important to the continuing fight against organized crime.

Second, their mere presence is a deterrent.

• (1305)

Third, this is like a game of chess. If a bikers gang builds a bunker somewhere, we need to have a police station nearby as a deterrent.

So, I want to know if the hon. member has heard any additional persistent rumours about the dismantling of RCMP detachments.

Mrs. Pauline Picard: Mr. Speaker, rumours are based on a report that is hard to get, and which may have been handed out to just a few people who have told us about its recommendations.

The report did recommend that RCMP detachments be closed in the areas of Drummond and Saint-Hyacinthe and in part of the Eastern Townships, near the border.

The RCMP detachment in my area was set up about 15 years ago, and officers are posted for good reason. They do an excellent job. Everybody, the chamber of commerce and the municipalities included, has passed a resolution asking the federal government to maintain this detachment, because the officers there have a close working relationship with the other police forces.

The situation is similar in the Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot area and in other communities near the American border, in the ridings of our PC colleagues.

There had been rumours that there would be closures, but we have now learned that these rumours were based on an actual report. We are now being told that the Saint-Hyacinthe and Drummond detachments could be maintained, but, for the time being, there is no guarantee to that effect.

Mr. Jacques Saada (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you right away that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Ahuntsic.

I will begin my speech with something that is rather unusual in the House, but I will do it anyway. I want to congratulate the Bloc Québécois for putting forward this motion today.

The motion reads as follows:

That this House instruct the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to conduct a study of organized crime, to analyse the options available to Parliament to combat the activities of criminal groups and to report to the House no later than October 31, 2000.

In the French version, I would have preferred the word “choix” instead of “avenues” and the word “criminels” instead of “criminalisés”, but this is just a minor detail of a linguistic nature.

I could talk about all the initiatives our government has taken. I could also talk, for example, about the proceeds of crime control units, 13 of which were established across the country, one in each large urban centre. I visited the one in Montreal. A multidisciplinary team made up of lawyers, accountants and police officers works in that unit. It is an example of co-operation to fight organized crime.

I could talk about the bill we have introduced to fight money laundering. We are the only G-7 country not to have done so, so far. I am glad we finally did it.

I could talk about Canada’s leadership role in a pan-American group called MEM, chaired by the deputy minister of the solicitor general, Jean Fournier. This group’s mission is to fight organized crime, particularly drug trafficking.

I could talk about Canada’s participation in NORAD, the North American Air Defence, and the support of this organization for drug enforcement.

• (1310)

Members are no doubt aware that I am the chair of the Canada—United States Standing Committee on Defence and that NORAD issues are of great concern to that committee. In this capacity, I had the opportunity to visit the NORAD facilities at Mount Cheyenne, in Colorado Springs. This is a technological marvel, especially the drug enforcement service.

I might mention Operation Cisaille, which is so important in my region. Other members already mentioned it. In the Montérégie, this operation is highly important. The UPA, the stakeholders, the Quebec government, the Canadian government, members of this House, everybody agrees that this operation is a marvel of co-operation and efficiency.

Another example is the drug strategy developed by the Canadian government to combat drug supply, in other words the people who produce and sell drugs, and to limit the access to drugs. I am thus talking of prevention and of protection against supply.

The reason I support this motion is that I do not accept that my colleague for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot be threatened for doing his job. What threatens my colleague also threatens the 301 members of this House and the 104 senators in this parliament. This threat

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affects all of parliament. The life of the hon. member is torn apart. Such actions concern us all, and I reject them.

The reason I support this motion is that I do not accept that senior citizens have their savings stolen as a part of a fraudulent telemarketing operation.

I support this motion because I cannot accept that children be robbed of their future by pushers who often are themselves the victims of organized crime.

We deplore child poverty and we know that, all too often, children go to school on an empty stomach, which is not the best way to start the school day. It is not conducive to learning either. The same can be said of drugs. A child who is under the influence cannot learn.

This is why, as my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot said just a moment ago, I believe we cannot skirt our responsibilities. Legalizing marijuana is out of the question; instead we should go after those who are responsible for that scourge that affects us all as a society.

I support this motion because I sincerely believe that we, as a government, while we are doing great things—and I do know we are doing a lot—must do even better. We must do more to fight organized crime, to deal with the globalization of organized crime.

We have heard a lot about the Canadian initiative on human security. Canada is truly a leader in this respect. These are no idle words, it is true, Canada has taken the lead internationally in terms of promoting a new concept called human security. It is in that context that we are intervening abroad, that we are changing the definition of what a border is, and that we are questioning the very principle of non interference in the affairs of a foreign state. If human security is threatened, we avail ourselves of the right to interfere.

It is in the name of this same humanism that we must intensify our fight against organized crime. It is in the name of this same humanism that every effort must be made to fight organized crime.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General, I consider this a very important issue and have worked a lot on it. I am delighted at the prospect of this motion, if it is adopted, giving me the opportunity to take even greater part as a member of the Standing Committee on Justice in formulating suggestions that, in my opinion, are fundamental at the dawn of the new millennium.

I invite all my colleagues on this side of the House and the House as a whole to support this motion.

• (1315)

[*English*]

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John’s East, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member.

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In my province of Newfoundland, and in Atlantic Canada in general, we have hundreds of miles of coastline that is essentially unprotected and unpatrolled. That coastline is very vulnerable to the importation of drugs, guns and all kinds of illegal activity. Because of government cutbacks ports police have been eliminated. It is a wide open invitation to the drug trade.

What is government going to do to protect that kind of coastline when it has cut out the ports police and reduced the ability of the RCMP to do its job?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Saada: Mr. Speaker, I must say that protecting our coasts also means protecting air approaches to them. In this regard, I referred in my presentation to the work we are doing, within NORAD in particular, to have support to block flights that could arrive here with drug shipments.

I would remind my colleague that we did indeed announce in the throne speech our intention to strengthen and support the public security initiative and, of course, the fight against organized crime is an integral part of this fight for public security.

Third, I think that if my colleague has specific recommendations to make, he will understand that I am not in a position to give an answer now, when in fact I look forward to the working committee coming up with appropriate answers, but at the same time I would really like, once this motion has been adopted and the committee has begun its work, for him to take that opportunity to make them.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and I would like to ask him these three questions.

Could he not make a commitment, while the Standing Committee on Justice is preparing its recommendations on legislative changes among other things, to not close any RCMP detachments in Quebec, starting with the one in Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot? I agree with my colleague from Drummond that they are doing an excellent and much needed job.

Second, can he assure us that his government is aware of the lack of police resources and is committed to putting a great effort into strengthening them? This will let the criminals know that, when planting season starts in May, the fun is over and things will never be the same; they will no longer be the ones calling the shots?

Third, can he—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Unfortunately, there is not enough time left for the third question.

Mr. Jacques Saada: Mr. Speaker, I heard the same rumors as everybody else, but I must say that they are only rumors.

My colleague is asking me to take a stand on these rumors. It is absolutely impossible for me to do, and it is understandable.

However, it seems to me that the second question he asked me is extremely important. He alluded to the lack of resources available to the RCMP. Treasury Board asked an independent organization to make a study on the RCMP's levels of financing. This study will show us what we must do to help the RCMP fulfill its mandate, which is getting larger every day.

Let us not forget that the DNA bank and gun control, for example, were added to its responsibilities. Many functions are being added to the RCMP's responsibilities. Consequently, we should perhaps ask if its resources are adequate.

When the report is made public, and considering what was said in the throne speech, I believe it would be advisable to give the RCMP what it needs to fulfill its mandate.

Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Ahuntsic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, I would like to congratulate the Bloc Québécois for this motion, and I will say that I support it wholeheartedly. It really is an excellent initiative, and I thank the Bloc for having given us the opportunity to address an issue which affects our children and their future in our country.

I would like to deal more fully with the activities of organized crime groups involved in drug trafficking.

• (1320)

This is a subject for which I have a keen interest. Just recently, there were reports in the newspaper about a police operation in the riding of Ahuntsic, in the northern part of Montreal. The operation, called Operation Embryo, led to 205 charges being laid against two youth gangs. These young criminals between 19 and 25 years of age had been active for about two years in my riding and the neighbouring ridings, where through intimidation and harassment they sold drugs in elementary schools. They did not become gang members at 19. They had been recruited at a younger age by organized crime.

This is exactly the kind of situation I want to avoid. This is why I approve of the opposition motion for an in-depth study. It will not go on too long, and I think it is a good idea not to give too much time to the justice committee. Even though I am no longer a member of that committee I can say that I keep an eye on justice issues and particularly this one.

I personally want to congratulate the various police forces of my area and of Montreal North for this operation, which was a big success and helped to ensure the security of the population of my riding of Ahuntsic.

This government is keenly aware that most organized crime groups are very actively involved in drug trafficking. I just gave an

example of the fact that they are recruit school children everywhere.

In its recently published report on organized crime in Canada, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics found that nine out of ten organized crime groups are involved in drug trafficking. Moreover, drug trafficking is for these groups the primary source of revenue, a very lucrative source. According to the federal government's best estimate, the size of the Canadian market for illicit drugs would be between \$7 billion and \$10 billion.

Recently, an study of the impact of organized crime published by the Department of the Solicitor General confirmed to what extent members of organized crime are involved in and help support illegal drug trafficking. Again, I want to support what was said by my hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary, about what happened to our colleague from the Bloc Quebecois because he spoke out against criminal activities. He is faced with a terrible situation and I want to tell him that we all support his actions. We want to ensure that he will prevail against this organized crime group that has threatened his family. It is really deplorable.

Of all the activities associated with organized crime, it is illegal drug trafficking, as I said, that has the worst consequences for Canada, because of its social and economic impacts and the violence associated with it.

Studies to put a dollar figure on the cost for Canada of illegal drug trafficking estimate it at between a conservative \$1.4 billion a year and nearly \$4 billion a year for the three provinces in Canada with the largest populations, namely Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia.

If we also take into account the fact that more than 93% of these groups resort to violence and other forms of intimidation, we get an increasingly threatening picture of the impact drug trafficking has on our society and, particularly, on our children.

The costs to Canada are huge, if we also take into account lost productivity, illness, death, violence, crimes against property and robbery that can occur as a result of drug trafficking or use.

Drug dependency has dramatic consequences on the life of people, and particularly on the future of our children. Trade and economic indicators cannot adequately measure the lives that are destroyed and the unrealized potential due to drug use nor the losses sustained as a result by society. The individual is not the only one that loses out. There is an impact on families, children, friends and society as a whole.

• (1325)

When all is said and done, these intangible consequences could well be the worst damage caused by the illicit drug trade to our country and our communities.

Supply

Illicit drug use, we know, occurs mostly among children and have-nots. Street kids are particularly vulnerable.

Cannabis is the most popular illicit drug in Canada. Cannabis consumption is said to have increased considerably in the last few years, and production of cannabis in Canada also seems to be on the rise.

In 1985, Canadian marijuana represented 10% of the total supply on the Canadian market. In 1995, it had reached 50%. We have grown from cannabis consumers to producers and exporters in the last few years.

[*English*]

It is absolutely horrible. I am one of the members in the House of Commons who supports what the health minister has initiated in terms of doing studies to see whether the consumption of marijuana for health purposes should be decriminalized. I support the Minister of Health in this study. I hope that the conclusions will lead to the beginning of the decriminalization of marijuana in our society. That is a personal opinion that I am giving on that issue.

[*Translation*]

The federal government is fully aware of how bad the situation is. This is why it has adopted a series of measures to try and solve the problem.

We are encouraged by the co-operation between federal, provincial and municipal police forces to fight the illicit cultivation of marijuana. I believe that if marijuana consumption were decriminalized, we might see less crime related to its sale and purchase.

[*English*]

The government has taken a number of initiatives in order to ensure that there are tools that are needed by our crime enforcement forces across the country in order to fight organized crime. I believe that other speakers before me have listed some, but I would like to list them again, because this question keeps coming up from the opposition.

We have invested \$150 million for the RCMP to upgrade and enhance a national police information system. We have invested \$18 million for the national DNA data bank initiative, giving police a powerful tool against serious violent criminals, an additional \$78 million to the national anti-smuggling initiative, which will combat illicit drug trade and an additional \$15 million annually to put more RCMP officers in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal airports to ensure that the drug trade does not come in freely through our borders.

The government approved \$13.8 million for the RCMP, to be used for workload increases in 1999 and 2000. We established 13 proceeds of crime units across the country in the RCMP. The RCMP has recently created the new position of deputy commissioner of organized crime to oversee and co-ordinate the force's efforts at the national and international level.

Supply

I would like to say once again that I support this motion 100%, and I encourage all members of the House to give unanimous support to the great initiative taken by the Bloc Québécois.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I spoke just a couple of minutes ago about the feeling of camaraderie we have, but I cannot stay away from thinking about some of the comments a couple of government members, people who are in responsible parliamentary secretary positions, have made. For example, the preceding speaker to the last one talked about the proceeds of crime. He must know that for every dollar collected, it is currently costing the government \$1.40. In other words, there is no net gain there.

The other thing is, why has the government been so long, long, long in finally bringing forward a money laundering bill? The government was talking about the Pan-American group and the NORAD group on combating drug trafficking while at the same time there were severe cutbacks to the enforcement capability of the RCMP in the lower mainland of Vancouver, where police cars could not roll, where the RCMP officers could not even use their cellphones.

• (1330)

It just goes on and on. The question is simple and straightforward. I believe everybody in the House is in agreement that this is an excellent initiative. However, I have to ask a government representative, a government member, a parliamentary secretary, if this is such an excellent initiative, and it is, why it took the opposition to bring this initiative to the government for the government to finally get on the stick and start to do something.

Ms. Eleni Bakopanos: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I believe he was not listening very closely to the comments of my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, who in fact stated all the different initiatives we have taken over the years. As former parliamentary secretary to the minister of justice I can also mention our crime prevention initiative of \$31 million and all sorts of other initiatives we have taken and will continue to take.

I agree with the member that we need more money. That is exactly what we stated in the throne speech. When the Minister of Finance brings forth his budget I believe there will be initiatives, although I will wait to hear what the minister has to say, that stem from our pronouncement in the throne speech of what we would like to do. I encourage the hon. member to support the Minister of Finance and the government to ensure that there will be more funds to combat organized crime and the illicit drug trade.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Bloc Québécois for bringing this very serious motion to the attention of the House.

I should thank the previous speaker from the Liberal Party for her remarks but unfortunately rhetoric is cheap. The hon. member should refer to a news release done by the Minister of National Revenue. He referred to Bill C-18 which provides customs officers with the power to arrest and detain individuals suspected of having committed offences under the criminal code. Unfortunately the minister forgot to include Halifax and Halifax airport and harbour. That is a piecemeal approach.

The government made Clair, St. Stephen and Woodstock in Atlantic Canada part of this initiative but ignored the most important airport in Atlantic Canada and the most important harbour on the seaboard in terms of giving our customs officers the tools and the training with which to work and with which to protect themselves.

Unfortunately a while back the government got rid of the ports police as a cost cutting measure and gave the ports over to local police authorities. The hon. member from Cape Breton said quite clearly that was a mistake. RCMP and law enforcement officers across the country have been cut severely in terms of their resources. Because of that organized crime has had more or less a free hand in the country.

Although the hon. member's rhetoric is very important and although I appreciate her comments, will she be able to convince her government, especially in light of Bill C-18, that there are some serious flaws? Will she encourage the revenue minister to include Halifax airport and the Halifax port in this very important initiative?

Ms. Eleni Bakopanos: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I understand how committed he is to ensuring that his constituents have the necessary services.

As I said in my speech and as the parliamentary secretary said, we are committed to ensuring that there are more funds. As I stated, we have given more money to Vancouver. I do not believe it was rhetoric. I truly believe what I said and what was said by the parliamentary secretary.

The government is committed. We said that in the throne speech. I encourage all members to support the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Revenue in the ongoing program to combat the illicit drug trade and to ensure that police forces across the country have the money to do their jobs properly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the government members who are working with us today. I think all members of the House want this issue to be referred to the appropriate committee, because we all know too

well that nowadays there are few problems more urgent and more serious than organized crime.

• (1335)

I have been following this issue very closely for several years now, because I was the member of parliament for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve in 1995 when, for the first time ever, a car bombing killed an innocent bystander, 11-year old Daniel Desrochers, who had the misfortune of being at the wrong place at the wrong time.

That was when I realized that we, as parliamentarians, have to fight organized crime. Organized crime does not come out of the blue. Not every society has to deal with this problem. There are certain conditions that foster organized crime. First, it happens in a wealthy society that has communications networks, airports and various means of transportation, because organized crime is interested in globalization and needs to do business and to connect with people on other continents.

Organized crime is also rampant in bureaucratic societies. In that regard, we must acknowledge, even though our democratic rights are very dear to us, that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the legal guarantees stipulated in sections 7 to 14 do sometimes undermine investigations.

We are facing a far from trivial paradox, since, as members of parliament and as members of Canadian society, we are dealing here with only about 200 individuals. As we know, there are in Canada 38 criminal biker gangs, one of which in particular, the Hell's Angels, is made up of less than 200 individuals in Canada, but has fifteen chapters, six of which are in Quebec. These individuals and this highly criminal group have managed to beat the most clever strategies and to infiltrate all spheres of society.

One must never forget that organized crime operates in stages. First, organized crime fights for a territory. This happened in Montreal in the early 1990s.

Then, organized crime turns to money laundering. One example of this stage is the Hell's Angels and the criminal biker gangs. In Canada we are now at this second stage. The Italian Mafia has mastered the third one. Once control over a territory has been gained and money laundering activities are going on, we move on to the third stage, to investments in both legal and illegal activities.

I believe that we must all recognize that this situation allows organized crime to go on from generation to generation. The Hell's Angels have been around for 50 years and obviously they have an interface with lawyers, accountants and businesses.

In Montreal, for example, 83% of licensed beverage establishments are controlled by people with connections to the underworld. We must not imagine that the police do not know all this. Police officers are dedicated people; just like us, they want to fight

Supply

organized crime effectively, but they do not have the resources they need.

I recently met a police officer, whose name I will keep to myself, who told me that tailing just one individual—for example when they know a person is a member of one criminal gang or another—can cost taxpayers from \$400,000 to \$600,000. Do members really know how deep and widespread the problem is?

The interesting part in the motion of our colleague, the member for Berthier—Montcalm, is that it is not partisan; let me repeat how very grateful I am to all members in this House who supported the motion.

• (1340)

Organized crime can be found in Hochelaga—Maisonneuve. It can be found in the Montérégie, in Alberta and in regions right across the country. The only way to win against the modern version of organized crime is to work together, to create a common front made up of all members of parliament, an unbeatable common front because we will all stand united and determined in our fight against crime.

I hope the justice committee will examine what they have done in Japan. Naturally, the political context is not the same here as in Japan. I will say right away that there is no charter of rights and freedoms there. In Japan, groups similar to the Hell's Angels are not allowed to wear crests. Any public reference to this type of organization is prohibited. I think this is an interesting idea.

Again, a police officer was telling me “You are quietly driving along highway 20, on your way to Quebec City. You know there are members of organized crime behind you going 40 kilometres an hour. Nobody is going to pass them. Nobody is going to dare pass them, because they are seen as something strong and invincible”. We do not have legislation to prohibit the wearing of crests.

There is a myth surrounding the rise of these gangs. Never has a member of the Hell's Angels ever been kicked out of the gang, because of the incredible solidarity that exists within the gang.

Japan, which has had its share of problems with organized crime, has taken steps that have helped, I would not say to eradicate the problem—because it is not true and I would not want to imply that it is—but to control the progression of biker gangs.

I think the idea of prohibiting any public reference to these organizations and the wearing of crests should be considered by the parliamentary committee.

I was in the House at the time and I believe I was the first MP in 1995 to introduce a private member's bill following what happened to young Daniel Desrochers. We were truly convinced, all of us, the Liberals as well as people on this side of the House, that we needed anti-gang legislation.

Supply

There was a problem though. We could not make it an offence to belong to a criminal organization because, under common law, one cannot be found guilty by association. One can only be found guilty by virtue of one's acts, one's behaviour.

We could not directly declare a member of a group like the Hell's Angels a criminal. So we created a new offence called an organized crime offence. Today, we must recognize that in spite of all our good faith—and I am convinced everybody acted in good faith—the legislation has not produced the expected results.

The reason for this is twofold: first, the offence itself is far too serious. An offence under the Criminal Code or any federal act is punishable by a five year jail term. Then the organization, whether formal or informal, must have a membership of at least five, and the individuals accused of the organized crime offence must have had a criminal record over the past five years.

This is the theory of the three fives. The result of this is that unfortunately, in spite of the fact that police officers have solid evidence to present a test case before common law courts, we cannot at this point benefit from the work done on Bill C-95.

I would have a lot more to say about organized crime, because it is an issue which deeply concerns me. My hope is that we will spare no effort and not give in to blackmail and intimidation. We should follow the example of some of our colleagues. What they did has shown us what we must learn on this issue.

I am convinced that all the parliamentarians who take part in the work of the justice committee will do so in a spirit of good faith, determination and open-mindedness.

If we work together, in a non-partisan fashion, we will win the fight against organized crime.

• (1345)

[*English*]

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I had a question for the previous speaker from the Liberal side but the question, in a little different form, is just as valid for the Bloc.

One of the problems we have in Canada is the severe cutbacks to the RCMP. Some detachments are short 40 members and money is a problem. At the same time, one of the initiatives the government claims it has taken to combat crime is the national gun registry with in the neighbourhood of \$300 million already being put in up front.

Hopefully the member for the Bloc has informed himself as to the usefulness of the gun registry. In fact, the papers in Quebec today had some excellent articles on the national gun registry and its ineffectiveness. I recommend that he reads some of those papers. They are in French so it is difficult for me to get all of the

different nuances. However, it becomes clear that there are some huge problems.

Would he agree with the solicitor general of Ontario who two weeks ago said that the government should scrap the national gun registry and put more police on the street to fight organized crime and some of these other things? Would he agree that should be the tact of the government, to save those hundreds of millions of dollars, put it into fighting organized crime and putting more police on the street?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard: Mr. Speaker, I do not agree that we should abolish the national firearms registry, because I think it is important, whether we are a politician in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Montreal or Winnipeg, to know whether there are firearms at a crime scene or any other place. I think the registry was one of the bill's good points.

As for the operation of the registry, some members of our caucus have told us that there may be some technical problems. But this in no way detracts from the merits of a bill such as the one we supported, Bill C-68. I agree with the principle of the bill and I think that all parliamentarians who are interested in helping to reduce violence in our society have a responsibility to support it.

I caution the hon. member against jumping to a facile conclusion. Yes, more police resources are needed. This is clear, and all members of the community who meet police officers are well aware of the problem.

But organized crime is not just about police resources—it is also about evaluating evidence. Since the Stinchcombe ruling in 1994, the crown is now obliged to disclose all evidence. This includes notes taken by police officers as well as all recordings.

What does it mean when evidence is disclosed? It obviously means that it cannot be used in a subsequent investigation, and this makes the work of the police singularly difficult.

I suppose it is the price of a full and comprehensive defence. I would say in closing that organized crime is not about police resources, but about evaluating evidence and legislation, as members on this side have realized.

Hon. Denis Coderre (Secretary of State (Amateur Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like initially to applaud the initiative by the Bloc Québécois on today's motion.

I think, however, the debate should go a little deeper. I find regrettable the remarks made by my friends in the Reform Party on the Firearms Control Act. We should applaud the passing of this legislation, especially in light of the massacre at the école Polytechnique a few years ago. I find such remarks rather regrettable.

I would like my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve to tell me whether we should restrict the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Second, in his own view of things, would legislation on marijuana, for example, also have an impact on organized crime?

Mr. Réal Ménard: Mr. Speaker, the question is relevant. I think we have to consider this issue as parliamentarians.

If I were left to my own devices and had to decide only on the basis of what would best serve the interests of Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, I would not hesitate to say that we should use the notwithstanding clause and declare, for five years—this is what the notwithstanding clause provides; we can use it or not—but if we use it, we can declare the 38 existing motorcycle gangs outside the law for five years.

• (1350)

Yes, I think this is something that must be used and considered.

On the subject of the legalization of marijuana, the link may not be so direct, because it is in hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine that organized crime deals. I think we have to look at this. Our colleague will recall the excellent work done by the member for Rosemont to have marijuana legalized for therapeutic purposes.

I have not decided whether we need go further. First off, I do not tend to think we need to. But I think the parliamentary committee will give us all the latitude we need to hear people whose expertise is probably broader and more defined than mine.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to take part in an important debate, as my hon. colleague from Berthier—Montcalm put it, given the expansion of organized crime in Canada and in Quebec.

I want to stress how important the issue of organized crime is to the Bloc Québécois. I am thinking of that the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve who, in 1995, introduced an anti-gang bill, the hon. member for Charlesbourg, who put forward a bill on money laundering and \$1,000 bank notes, and the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, who was not afraid to expose what farmers were going through and to stand up for them. I also want to commend the hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert as well as my hon. colleague from Berthier—Montcalm for the contribution they have made on the motion before the House.

The Bloc Québécois has been worrying about this important issue for a number of years, and I am also worried about it, because in my riding of Quebec, several gangs are fighting to gain control over the territory.

Today's debate is also about the quality of life and the security of the people. I want to remind those who are listening of Daniel

Supply

Desrochers, the young boy who was the innocent victim of a car bombing in 1997. This most unfortunate incident prompted us to question the effectiveness of the tools at our disposal.

In today's motion, we ask that the Standing Committee on Justice examine the various aspects of organized crime and recommend solutions to this problem. We know that organized crime is on the rise. Its control extends beyond alcohol and drug trafficking, to such things as the theft of luxury cars. Recently, we heard about a stolen luxury car ring. Is this related to organized crime? This must be investigated. Other things are stolen too such as trucks, luxury items, offensive weapons and counterfeit money.

This problem exists throughout Canada. We know there are 38 gangs across the country. That is why we are calling for more effective laws so we have the tools we need to fight organized crime. The tools we have now are not effective enough. Police officers also share that view. Several speeches were made this morning in which the issues of lack of funding or inadequate legislation were raised.

Right now, several units have joined forces. I am referring to the Carcajou unit. There is also the anti-gang legislation that was passed, Bill C-95. It seems that we may have the necessary tools to meet the needs, but these tools must be re-evaluated or improved through increased funding.

Under Bill C-95, the anti-gang bill, a criminal organization means any group, association or other body consisting of five or more persons having as its primary activity the commission of an indictable offence for which the maximum punishment is imprisonment for five years or more. The bill created a new offence.

• (1355)

Those who belong to criminal organizations must be judged the same way as those who commit criminal acts.

We also want improved tools to fight money laundering. The \$1,000 bills in circulation largely favour organized crime. There could be some improvements in that regard.

As regards the dubious transactions conducted through the banks or investments made in the various casinos, the police could be informed in the event of a reasonable doubt—not in the case of an honest individual who invests or purchases with \$10,000, but when there is doubt about the source of the money—so they may be equipped to pursue the individuals or at least investigate the source of those assets.

They say the police are impotent when it comes to alcohol and tobacco smuggling. *La Presse* had an article on this in fact. That does not mean that they do not do an excellent job, but if we could give them a hand through certain legislation in doing their work and improving what they are doing, it would be great, since we

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know that the heart of the issue are people's quality of life and security.

They even say that at the federal department of justice they did not know how to remedy the failings in the law that prevent the police in their investigations from buying smuggled items such as cigarettes and alcohol. When the police infiltrate a band involved in organized crime and cannot buy the alcohol or cigarettes, there is doubt within the band—

The Speaker: Unfortunately, I must interrupt. You have at least four minutes left in your speech and five minutes for questions and comments following oral question period.

* * *

[English]

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons, Volume 2, for September and November 1999.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(e), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

KIYOSHI TAKAHASHI

Mr. Lou Sekora (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to announce the accomplishments of Mr. Kiyoshi Takahashi who is one of my constituents.

Mr. Takahashi has recently returned from working for 16 weeks in Bangkok, Thailand for an organization called the Canadian Volunteer Advisers to Business.

He provided technical assistance and introduced new techniques for quality control as well as new products for development in the field of mineral compounds.

* * *

CULTURE

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, as the World Trade Organization meets in Seattle, we once again hear the calls that Canada has to protect our culture.

But precisely what do these people want to protect? Are they upset that last year four of the top ten female singers in the United

States were Canadians Céline Dion, Shania Twain, Sarah McLachlan and Alanis Morissette?

Are they upset that last week both Céline Dion and Shania Twain had their specials carried by American television networks in prime time during the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday?

The only thing our talented Canadian performers need to be protected from is the inferiority complex that the government perpetuates. It is an insult to Canadian performers to suggest that the only way they can compete on the world stage is with the government's protection.

If these cultural protectionists are truly interested in the well-being of Canadian performers, they would be out there promoting them, not trying to isolate them.

* * *

• (1400)

CANADA SPORTS FRIENDSHIP EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what a fantastic experience for 30 young hockey players from the town of Wallaceburg in my riding. They are taking part this week in the Canada Sports Friendship Exchange Program with a team from Gatineau, Quebec.

Funded in part by the Department of Canadian Heritage, the principal aim of this hockey exchange for these 14 to 16 year olds is to foster friendship and a better understanding between our Canadian francophone and anglophone youths and their families.

It will also enhance their knowledge of our great nation's history and geography. The big highlight for the kids was a visit to the Corel Centre today to watch the Ottawa Senators practise, followed by a friendly non-competitive game on the NHL ice with free tickets to tonight's game with the Chicago Blackhawks.

The team from Quebec will go to southwestern Ontario in the near future. It also shows that on or off the ice our Canadian youth, French and English, are united in friendship.

* * *

[Translation]

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thanks to his website on gasoline prices, René Goyette is becoming known throughout Quebec and Canada. His www.abacom.com/essence website has become one of the sites with the most hits in the Province of Quebec.

According to Mr. Goyette, it all started when there was a sudden gas price hike a while ago. Mr. Goyette, along with myself and many other drivers, is fed up with high gas prices.

Surfers are invited to input the gasoline price in their region. All they have to do is click on a map of the province to find out where the best price can be found in their vicinity. Every region of Quebec is included. This site has become a means of defence against the gasoline companies.

I invite people to participate in the vote that is part of this web site.

* * *

DRUMMOND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the gala evening of the Drummond chamber of commerce and industry, recognition was given to a number of people who contributed to the development and visibility of Drummond in 1999.

The young actress Karine Vanasse was named personality of the Year, jointly with a couple, Marielle and Pierre Tremblay, who were named Quebec's jewellers of the year.

The Distinction award was given to Jacques and Louis-Jacques Laferté for their business.

André Jean, president of the Caisse populaire de Drummondville, was named 1999 builder of the year. Napoléon awards were given out to a number of other people in a number of other categories.

On behalf of all the people in my riding of Drummond, I wish to extend my congratulations to these personalities and entrepreneurs who have distinguished themselves over the past year.

* * *

QUEBEC WING OF LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Ahuntsic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like the Prime Minister of Canada, I wish to congratulate the 1,400 party members, 40% of them youth delegates, who attended the convention of the Quebec wing of the Liberal Party of Canada.

Those present, including delegates from my riding of Ahuntsic, submitted and proposed resolutions indicative of their desire to improve the quality of life of Canadians.

I would especially like to congratulate a young delegate from Rosemont, Naomi Arpin, who submitted a resolution about incest. She was a victim of incest and introduced specific resolutions for the improvement of the Criminal Code.

Let us not forget that the work done by the volunteers of the Liberal Party of Canada is of capital importance. It helps develop a blueprint for society that is adapted to the realities of today and tomorrow.

My congratulations to all delegates who attended.

[English]

S. O. 31

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on February 2, 1999, the Minister of Justice said this about child pornography: "We are acting immediately. We will not wait for this case to reach the supreme court".

Since she made those statements, a 300,000 signature petition has been tabled calling for the reinstatement of the possession of child pornography as a criminal offence. Numerous individuals have used the Sharpe decision as a defence to avoid prosecution. Sixty-three Liberal MPs and six Liberal senators have called on the Prime Minister to invoke the notwithstanding clause and further the petitions that have been circulated.

The result of this is the Minister of Justice has received 6,500 signatures on a cruelty to animals petition. The minister has decreed this issue as pre-eminent in the legislative sweepstakes.

It is regrettable that this minister has her priorities so wrong.

* * *

[Translation]

MONTFORT HOSPITAL

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Ontario divisional court handed down its ruling on the reduction of services at the Montfort Hospital. In a unanimous decision, the court ruled that the Health Services Restructuring Commission's decision ignored the principle of protecting and respecting minority rights entrenched in the Canadian Constitution.

• (1405)

It is a great victory for all Franco-Ontarians and for all official language communities in Canada. It will serve as a precedent in future court cases, and sends a signal to those who are constantly trying to limit the strength and vitality of our communities.

I hope that the Government of Ontario will take action accordingly and look for ways of improving services to francophones in this issue and others. The survival of the official languages is what a united Canada is all about.

* * *

MONTFORT HOSPITAL

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a court once again sided with Franco-Ontarians when it ruled that the Montfort Hospital would remain open because it is essential to the development of francophone communities.

S. O. 31

With this ruling, the Ontario divisional court taught a great lesson to all of Canada. A fundamental distinction must be made between token bilingual services that have no impact on the erosion of communities and a linguistic duality that requires the existence of French language institutions to ensure the development of francophone communities.

The Bloc Québécois congratulates the whole S.O.S. Montfort team for this great victory, and particularly Gisèle Lalonde.

The Bloc Québécois hopes that predominantly English speaking provinces will get the message and will immediately take action to provide their French speaking communities with the institutions that they need. If Canada is a country where the expression linguistic duality means something, then predominantly English speaking provinces will act quickly and will spare their francophone communities costly legal battles that they will lose in any case.

* * *

[*English*]**AGRICULTURE**

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, despite Liberal proclamations to the contrary, the crisis in agriculture is growing. Input costs are up, commodity prices are down and unfair international trade actions are increasing.

For over six years the Liberals have promised to negotiate reductions in agricultural subsidies with no result. Even if they are successful, it will take years before the impact is felt at the farm gate. Many producers are on the edge of bankruptcy, not because of poor management, as the Liberal's think, but because of the government's failure to take a strong stand in international trade negotiations.

Canada's trade minister appears more concerned about protecting everything other than farmers against the kinds of trade harassment that threatens millions of dollars in Canadian agricultural production. Where is the long range plan to stabilize farm incomes?

Farmers have suffered long enough because of this government's misguided priorities. They need a government that is prepared for the future instead of one that is mired in the past. How many farmers must go broke before the government wakes up?

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Gary Pillitteri (Niagara Falls, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the first week of December we remember an act of violence against women.

This year on the 10th anniversary of the massacre at the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, we remember with sadness and horror.

While we remember those women struck down in the prime of their promising lives, we encourage all Canadians to think about other women in our society who have to endure violence in their daily lives.

Violence not only affects and indelibly scars the lives of the victims but also the lives of their children, their families and consequently our entire society. Violence against women has many faces and eliminating every form of violence from our society requires a real commitment from everyone, be they the legislators, lawmakers or social and religious organizations.

We must unite, work and be vigilant so as to eradicate this insidious form of cancer that is ruining so many promising lives.

* * *

[*Translation*]**LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the convention held last weekend by the Quebec wing of the Liberal Party of Canada, the grassroots people paid particular attention to social issues in Canada.

They urged the federal government to raise family allowances. They also proposed that the government give higher tax credits to retirees, based on their income and their age.

Another resolution passed by Liberal militants urges the government to initiate new programs that would have a direct impact on the improvement of our education system and the fight against poverty.

This is the kind of concern that women and men from all regions of Quebec discussed at our last convention.

* * *

[*English*]**RIGHTS OF YOUTH**

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week in Canada 14,000 students in schools across the country voted in the national election for the rights of youth. The students had a variety of ten subjects to vote upon although it was noted that the environment was unfortunately off the ballot.

● (1410)

This election, organized by Elections Canada and UNICEF Canada, gave children across the country the ability to participate in democracy.

I would like to thank Miss Ramona Joseph and the staff and students at Waverley Memorial and L.C. Skerry school in Waverley, Nova Scotia, as well as Mr. Fred Hull, the staff and students of

Millwood High School in Lower Sackville in Nova Scotia, plus all other students and teachers across the country for their active participation.

The number one choice for students across the country was that of a stable and loving family home environment.

I trust that all parliamentarians will take this result very seriously and work toward providing our children and their families from coast to coast to coast with the programs and services to provide a stable and loving home environment.

* * *

[Translation]

REFERENDUMS

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister reminded us, with all of the vision that is his alone, of why he rejects the rule of 50% plus one: the plus one is perhaps the person who left their glasses at home.

He and his minister of constitutional obsession should draw a lesson from the writings of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who said the following on the subject of democracy: Since, if all men and women are equal, and each is the seat of superior thought, it follows inevitably that the happiness of 51 persons is more important than that of 49; it is therefore reasonable, and with the rights of the minority taken into account, for the decisions made by the 51 persons to prevail.

Rather than reflect on the percentage of persons who might forget their glasses in the next vote on the future of Quebec, the Prime Minister would be better advised to draw on the writings of the man whose heir he claims to be.

* * *

REFERENDUMS

Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc still claims that it is the only political party in the House of Commons to listen to Quebecers, the only political party to represent the desires and will of the people of Quebec.

When 72% of Quebecers do not want either a referendum or independence and when our Prime Minister has held out his hand in a truce to Mr. Bouchard, I have one question for the Bloc Quebecois members: why does the leader of the Bloc and member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie not ask Mr. Bouchard to agree to the truce and to promise not to hold a referendum during his mandate?

Why have the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot and the member for Repentigny—in fact why have no Bloc Quebecois

members publicly asked Mr. Bouchard to agree not to hold a referendum? Why?

Perhaps because they do not listen to Quebecers.

* * *

[English]

FISHERIES

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, the lobster season only opened yesterday for lobster fishing areas 33 and 34 in Nova Scotia and already the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has shown how unprepared he and his department are.

The Acadia first nation threatens to fish with 15 boats instead of the six boats that were supposed to be agreed upon on the imposed limit. Yet, Chief Debra Robinson says that the first nation never agreed to any limit on lobster boats in southwestern Nova Scotia.

That begs the question: What have the minister and his negotiator been doing in the months since the Marshall decision?

The November 17 ruling stated that the responsibility is placed squarely on the minister and not on the aboriginal or non-aboriginal users of the resource, yet the minister has done nothing to show the resource should be shared. Instead, he is asking for suggestions from the Conservative Party. It was our party that advised the minister to negotiate with all stakeholders and introduce an implementation plan with conservation as the first priority. It was our party that told him to apply one rule for all fishers.

The lobster fishers are beginning—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DIABETES MONTH

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November is International Diabetes Month. Throughout history, diabetes has been a leading cause of death. It is estimated that at least 500,000 North Americans die as a result of diabetes and its complications each year.

In Canada more than two million people have diabetes. In addition to the health and social implications of diabetes, there is also the enormous economic strain the disease places on our health care system. The economic burden of diabetes has been put at over \$9 billion per year.

It is essential that we, in the House of Commons, address the growing impact of diabetes on Canadians and consider giving diabetes research a much needed shot in the arm.

Oral Questions

• (1415)

GRAIN TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, Ind. Ref.): Mr. Speaker, sales of at least 100,000 tonnes of canola to China have been lost because of Canadian transportation problems. Seventy per cent of recent unloads at Vancouver were wheat board grains. Meanwhile, one vessel has been waiting since November 9 for 50,000 tonnes of canola. The railways have 24,500 cars. Why were only 14,000 under load last week?

A recent wheat board poll apparently reveals that farmer support for single desk selling has dropped to approximately 20%. Why does the government not realize that if farmers are smart enough to grow the grain they are also smart enough to sell it and ship it?

and the Charlottetown accord, 50% plus one. We have said that for years. The Prime Minister says that 50% plus one is not enough, but he will not say what it is. In the name of clarity, why does the Prime Minister not say what constitutes an acceptable majority?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is because I am looking at the constitution of the Reform Party. I would like to know why it needs two-thirds of the votes of the Reform Party to change a rule in the constitution.

To break the country, one vote will be enough, but to change a regulation in this very disunited alternative, two-thirds is needed to be able to do it properly. It is clear to me, and I have said it over and over again, that 50% plus one is a rule that is unacceptable for breaking up the country.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, another illuminating response.

The Prime Minister knows that anything more than a simple majority on a secession issue will be impossible to enforce. The Prime Minister hints at requiring a 60% threshold on a secession negotiation, but 59% support on a clear question in favour of separation would not settle the issue, it would only make matters worse. The federal government would find itself in a constitutional and democratic no man's land.

Since the Prime Minister wants to raise the bar, in the name of clarity, what contingency plan does he have to deal with a more than 50% vote?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I say that the people of Quebec and the people of Canada do not want to hear about a third referendum. Seventy-two per cent of the people of Quebec say regularly that they do not want to have another referendum. I am appealing to the Quebec government to come to its senses, to listen to the will of the people of Quebec and to agree with me to stop discussing this issue. I think that I reflect the wishes of all Quebecers and all Canadians.

• (1420)

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, what a paradox. The Prime Minister says that nobody in Quebec wants to talk about a referendum. Who started the talk? Goodness gracious, can you believe it?

The throne speech promised a new type of frankness and clarity. My question is for the Prime Minister. If 50% plus one is not sufficient for a majority, exactly what is?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how can Reform claim that 50% plus one is sufficient when, as the Prime Minister has said, it is not enough to amend its constitution? In order to amend the constitution of the Reform Party, what is needed is a resolution amending the constitution,

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD*[English]***NATIONAL UNITY**

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's newfound referendum strategy is as clear as a foggy night. He declared that he would make the rules for the next referendum clear, but he cannot say what he means by a clear majority, he cannot say what would constitute a clear question and, worst of all, he has never put forward any clear position on how to reform and improve the federation itself.

Four years ago we published clear positions on all of these matters. In the name of clarity, where is the Prime Minister's clear position?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the master of flip-flop is asking me to decide this question, and it is not the time.

On Sunday I offered Mr. Bouchard an occasion to respect the will of the people of Quebec. Seventy-two per cent of the people of Quebec do not want a referendum at all. I just want the premier of Quebec to reflect again so that nobody will have to have a debate on this issue. If he were to declare that there would be no referendum, we would not spend five minutes on it and we would deal with the other business of the nation.

Mr. Preston Manning (Leader of the Opposition, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it was the Prime Minister who resurrected this issue over a week ago and he has yet to make a single aspect of it clear. Let us go back to basics again.

The Prime Minister says that he wants a clear majority, but our idea of a majority is the same as it was in the last two referendums

Oral Questions

including the principles of the party, which to be carried must receive not only a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, but must also receive a majority vote of the delegates from a majority of the provinces.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has a brand new word in his vocabulary. The word is clarity. He goes around everywhere talking about it, but does he not understand that the word clarity means putting his position out on paper so that everybody can see what it is?

I ask again, for the sake of clarity, if 50% plus one is not sufficient, what exactly is a clear majority for the Prime Minister? What is it?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these are the people who last week were telling me not to say anything. They are the same people who, less than a week ago, were asking me to say nothing. I think that we will let them relax a bit because flip-flops like that cause problems to their physical and mental fitness. Maybe before Christmas they will come to their senses and say that we were absolutely right in doing what we are doing at this time.

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[Translation]

REFERENDUMS

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has made a sad spectacle of himself by suggesting that he would stop talking about the constitution if Quebec did the same.

Having called on the supreme court for help in defining the rules of the referendum process, now he is threatening to use the House to question Quebec's right to decide its own future. He is fooling no one.

Does the Prime Minister realize that his plan, which is apparently to introduce a bill, is nothing other than base political blackmail that once again seeks to thwart Quebec's most legitimate aspirations?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I said, and I repeat: the National Assembly can ask whatever question it wishes. We are not preventing it from asking a question. It can ask any question it wants.

My responsibility is to respect the supreme court ruling that there must be a clear question and a clear majority before there can be any negotiations.

That is precisely what I am doing. I am respecting the supreme court decision. Mr. Bouchard himself said a year ago August that it was a good decision. If it was good then, it is still good today.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with this truce, the Prime Minister is trying to buy time to

do what he wants, the way he wants, and when he wants, as he has done from the beginning of his career.

When all is said and done, is the Prime Minister's truce not really a request for permission to once again shove Quebec around, as he has been doing for 35 years?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the economy will be going up in one sector in Quebec, because a lot of shirts are being torn over not much of anything lately.

As I said, Quebec can ask whatever question it wants. But, as Prime Minister of Canada, I would hope that the Parti Québécois understands that the public does not want a referendum, that the economy of the Province of Quebec needs stability.

Every week, the Bloc Québécois and the Parti Québécois talk about winning conditions, while what we want to do is address the real problems of Quebecers and other Canadians.

• (1425)

Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister went at it again with his phoney offer of a constitutional truce.

How can we take seriously this offer made by a man whose political career is characterized by his determination to put Quebec in its place?

How could the Prime Minister think we would take his offer seriously, considering that he is the one who imposed the 1982 Constitution, the one who killed Meech, the one who, through his social union, infringes on Quebec's constitutional jurisdictions, and the one who now wants to change the 50% plus one rule?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Really, Mr. Speaker, I was not even a member of parliament when the Meech Lake accord was signed. The hon. member is giving me great powers.

But I clearly remember that the Parti Québécois voted against the Meech Lake accord. At the time, the member for Roberval was an MNA and he voted against the Meech Lake accord.

Why do they not assume their responsibilities? Why do members of the Parti Québécois not admit that they are the ones responsible for the defeat of the Meech Lake accord, since they voted against that accord?

Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in Quebec we know who is responsible for the failure of Meech, and the Prime Minister is one of these people.

During the weekend, the Prime Minister spoke like a statesman and said he was offering a truce to Mr. Bouchard. However, he behaves like a Liberal Party leader who wants to denigrate Quebec, who wants to please the rest of Canada in anticipation of the next election.

Oral Questions

Was the truce proposed to Mr. Bouchard by the Prime Minister just a trap?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will leave the lobster traps to others. That being said, it is really unworthy of the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry to give in to cheap partisan rhetoric, as he just did.

This is an important issue, because we Quebecers could find ourselves in a situation where we would lose the right to be Canadians without ever having clearly wanted that. The answer to the question is never.

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[English]

TRADE

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister told the House that increasing trade, without regard to the human cost, is the best way to serve the citizens of the world.

Canadians want their government to take a more balanced approach. Canadians recognize, for example, the importance of worker safety and environmental protection.

Why then does the Prime Minister ignore workers' rights and ignore environmental standards when he speaks of trade and the WTO?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader of the fourth party should know that when we formed the government we worked very hard to improve the NAFTA deal.

What were the considerations at that time? We said that we had to improve the deal for the protection of workers' rights, for the protection of the environment, and for the protection of water because there was a problem between Canada and the United States. We made these improvements to satisfy exactly the point that the hon member is making. Our record is quite clear on that.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is a sham. No wonder the Prime Minister does not want to talk about the WTO.

The Prime Minister knows that the enforcement mechanisms of the WTO are much stronger. When it comes to defending Canadian product abroad, and that is very important, the government goes to the WTO. Why? Because it has teeth.

When it comes to people needing health and safety protection, and environmental protection, the government shunts them off to some subcommittee of a subcommittee of a working group because it knows that nothing will happen.

Why is Canada's position at Seattle so lacking in balance?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party should know that we refer problems on labour to the ILO. She will be the first one. She just made a great concession to us. She said that we should use the WTO to make sure we sell our products abroad. Well I know the workers are the ones who benefit the most when we sell Canadian products abroad and these workers are in unions that give money to the hon. member's party.

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NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is apparent from his comments at noon that the Prime Minister just cannot take no for an answer. He has decided to practise the divisive politics of Reform and has made yet another tactical error on the Quebec strategy.

Premier Bouchard has said that there will not be a referendum in the near future. Now the Prime Minister is desperately backtracking. He is not tough. He is tilting windmills.

Will the Prime Minister admit that, as in 1995, he has once again bungled the unity file?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we would like to know the position of the Conservative Party on that. I would like to know the position of the leader of the Conservative Party who said some time ago that 50 plus one was enough. He has said nothing since last Tuesday. In his own case, 66% of the vote was not enough to give him a mandate to remain the leader of the Conservative Party, but 50 plus one is enough to break Canada. They should get serious.

[Translation]

Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC): Mr. Speaker, if one thing is clear, it is that the Conservative Party has not changed its position. It has always worked to build this country in unity and tried to find a way—

Some hon. members: oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Mr. André Bachand: Quebec is part of Canada. It is distinct. It is different. Never has the Conservative Party tried to do what the

Oral Questions

Prime Minister did with the Meech Lake accord and what he did in 1995.

If the Prime Minister is not backing up, could he listen to what the Quebec premier said about there being no referendum in the future and to what the premier of New Brunswick said, to the effect that the Prime Minister's timing is unnecessary and dangerous.

Otherwise, what can he propose? A federal referendum election?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, he has just said the Conservatives are in favour of a distinct society. We had a vote here in December 1995, and the members of the Conservative Party at the time did not even vote. He should look into that.

Second, if 50% plus one is enough for him, he should do as the Reformers have done and explain how it is that it takes a two thirds majority of the voting members of the Conservative Party to change their constitution under clause 14.6 of the Conservative Party of Canada's constitution. To change party bylaws, a two thirds majority is necessary, but to break up Canada—

The Speaker: The hon. member for St. Albert.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General in his report today has pointed the finger at poor and incompetent management by the DND brass again. They ignored a gas scam where military personnel were accepting cash kickbacks when they purchased diesel fuel. Military police investigated. They said that there was not a problem and closed the file. Now the Auditor General says that it has been costing us millions of dollars a year.

Why did the bureaucrats under the direction of the Minister of National Defence ignore the gas scam and close the file on this case where corruption was staring them in the face?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious and disturbing matter. It is under investigation. The hon. member has it all wrong. This matter is being fully investigated right now.

• (1435)

Our people in the Department of National Defence, whether civilian or military, are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards, and we are going to ensure that happens.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, let me say that it is the minister who has it all wrong.

The military police closed the file and said that there was nothing there. It was not until the auditor general alerted his

department that they reopened the case. The point we are trying to get out is that there is no accountability in the senior management of his department.

I ask the minister once again, why did his staff close the file on a serious issue, which he acknowledges, instead of investigating the case properly?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the file has not been closed. Perhaps the hon. member is mixing this up with something else where insufficient evidence may have existed. In this particular case, the matter is fully under investigation.

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[Translation]

MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are some very serious allegations hanging over the head of the Minister of International Trade relating to non-compliance with the Canada Elections Act.

In a similar situation, former Conservative minister Marcel Masse resigned in 1985, so that the integrity of his government would not be affected.

Why does the Prime Minister now accept having the Minister of International Trade keep his portfolio? Has the government's level of tolerance been raised so high that only a guilty verdict would warrant his resignation?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Very much the contrary, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of International Trade made the following statement yesterday "I categorically deny having received a \$10,000 contribution either directly or indirectly, as indicated in the *National Post* article. What is more, my senior campaign manager in 1997 states categorically that the only contribution received from the individual in question is included in my report to Elections Canada".

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Marcel Masse also denied it. He was even exonerated. But during the investigation, he withdrew from Cabinet. That was the honourable thing to do.

In response to the hon. government House leader, I would indicate to him that a complaint against the Minister of International Trade has been filed with the commissioner of Canada Elections in this connection.

Given the precedent set by Marcel Masse, and for the sake of his government's integrity, should the Prime Minister not require his minister to step down, until the matter has been clarified once and for all?

Oral Questions

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): First of all, Mr. Speaker, in the case to which the hon. member is referring, an RCMP investigation was conducted. There is no investigation of any type whatsoever involved in this matter, as far as I know.

Second, the hon. member opposite must be aware that what is involved here is not a complaint against an MP or minister, or indeed anyone in this House, but rather a divorce-related dispute. The hon. member is very well aware of this.

[English]

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, because these clouds and allegations are hanging over his head, perhaps the wisest thing for the international trade minister to do would be to absolutely clear his name. I am sure he is sleepless in Seattle and it is probably not the trade talks that are bothering him.

If the trade minister categorically denies, as this minister just said that he has, why in the world would the government not have an investigation as soon as possible and clear his good name?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to repeat what I answered awhile ago and for the benefit of the hon. member, the allegations in question are based on an unsubstantiated claim made in a divorce case. The members will know what kind of case we are talking about.

Furthermore, the minister issued a statement yesterday in which he said "According to the information provided by my official agent from the 1997 federal election, the Canada Elections Act was respected by the campaign".

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the official agent giving reports is not exactly unbiased information either.

The minister talks about "for the benefit of the minister". For the benefit of the country, I think this needs to be brought—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Edmonton North.

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, there are serious allegations that the international trade minister has broken the law under the Canada Elections Act. It would seem to me that the wisest thing to do would be to have an investigation, clear it up and prove the minister's innocence.

• (1440)

I will ask my question again. Regardless of what the *National Post* or a convicted murderer said, when will the government have an investigation to clear this mess up?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear about what the hon. member said. She called into question the work of the official agent, a sworn statement that he made audited by duly accredited auditors and submitted to Elections Canada. She can spread blame around the House, but is it absolutely necessary to tarnish the reputation of everybody?

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the case of Marcel Masse, in 1985, services provided by the firm Lavallin had not been included in the election expenses. Minister Masse claimed he was innocent and he was indeed found not guilty.

In the case before us, someone is accusing the Minister for International Trade of having received services that were not recorded. A complaint has been filed. The situation is exactly the same; the minister claims he is innocent.

Why should, in this case, the minister not be required to resign when, under the ethics rules of the previous government, Marcel Masse had to resign?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, and contrary to what is being alleged today, no accusations have been made against the minister, his campaign committee or, to my knowledge, his official agent. There are no accusations.

Second, this is a dispute having to do with a divorce in which one party is accusing the other, a dispute set in a specific context, as we know.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us be serious here for a minute. We are talking about very serious allegations made in a formal complaint, which is now before the Commissioner of Canada Elections.

My question is: What is the new level beyond which a minister can no longer sit in cabinet? Do we have to wait until the minister is found guilty, or is a simple complaint with serious allegations enough to have him temporarily removed from cabinet, as has always been the case under such circumstances?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is trying to get some mileage out of the complaint that he is referring to.

First, as far as we know, no official complaint has been filed. If the hon. member is aware of a complaint having been filed by someone he knows, he should tell us about it.

Second, no accusations have been made against anyone. Third, in a statement made yesterday, the minister categorically denied having received, directly or indirectly, the said contribution. That is clear.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when we brought to the attention of the government the serious allegations of electoral wrongdoing by the international trade minister, the government House leader urged me to bring these allegations to the attention of the commissioner of Elections Canada, and I have done so. Unfortunately, the commissioner cannot prosecute because two years have passed since these events occurred.

The government House leader knows about this problem between the passage of time and the alleged incidence. What will he do to make sure that this tarnished reputation is restored to the minister and an investigation takes place?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reputation of the minister in question is not tarnished. Perhaps there are attempts to do so on the part of some, but the minister's reputation is untarnished and it will remain untarnished.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, he can wish the problem was not there. He can wish the allegations were not in the press and being circulated amongst Canadians but they are there and that is a fact. I wish it was as easy as the Government House Leader would have us believe.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, if the government side would listen, the allegations are a fact of life. They are out there. They are in the media. They are being circulated.

The government House leader knows that section 279 of the elections act clearly prohibits the commissioner from prosecuting any offence that happened during the last election. He is prohibited from prosecuting. He cannot do it.

The government House leader's advice to the House yesterday is not useful. An investigation should take place. It should be designed, I hope, to clear the minister's name. Does he not realize that we should immediately start an investigation to get to the bottom of these allegations?

• (1445)

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can see that clearing the minister's name is right at the top of the agenda of what the hon. member wants.

He just stated moments before that these allegations were facts. No, they are not facts. They are, with respect, factually incorrect.

*[Translation]***AIRLINE INDUSTRY**

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, InterCanadian, a regional carrier in Quebec, is in great difficulty. But the Minister of Transport is still not ruling out the possibility of granting a licence to a new regional carrier based in Hamilton.

Could the minister just this once do his job and make a formal commitment not to add another regional carrier to Canada until the case of InterCanadian is satisfactorily resolved?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about this regrettable situation, but I have been informed that other airlines have the capacity to serve all InterCanadian's passengers.

It is common knowledge that InterCanadian was in trouble before August, when we began the process of restructuring the airline industry. I find it odd that the president of InterCanadian has placed the blame on Air Canada, Canadian Airlines, Onex corporation and the federal government, but not on the shoulders of InterCanadian's management team.

* * *

*[English]***NATIONAL FILM BOARD**

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

The Museum of Modern Art in New York City and the Academy of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles have hosted celebrations honouring the 60th anniversary of the National Film Board of Canada.

What is Canada doing to celebrate an organization that gave us Norman McLaren, Donald Brittain and 11 academy awards?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the support of the Reform Party and all other parties in opposition I think we want especially to salute the 60th anniversary of the National Film Board of Canada.

This organization in its 60 years of existence has garnered almost 4,000 awards for excellence. This year it launched Ciné-Route, a new project to put 1,000 movies on the web for every Canadian to be able to watch.

[Translation]

I think that the history of the National Film—

Oral Questions

[English]

The Speaker: Order, please. The noise level is getting a bit too high. The hon. minister of heritage was giving an answer.

[Translation]

Hon. Sheila Copps: I would just like to say again how proud we have been of the National Film Board over the past 60 years. I am certain that, with the support of all members, it will continue to do an excellent job in Canada's film industry.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, even some Liberals can no longer stomach the corruption in the jobs fund. Today a Liberal member blew the cover on how the HRD minister broke the rules to use a cool million of other people's money to lure a business to her riding away from a higher unemployment area next door.

Does the minister think that she has the right to rip off the jobs fund and thumb her nose at the unemployed in Sarnia just because she holds a cabinet post?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find the tone of the question absolutely deplorable. The hon. member should just get her facts straight.

● (1450)

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, at the minister's invitation let us look at her track record. There were huge jobs fund grants that her riding did not qualify for, half a million dollars from the secret minister's reserve, and jobs moved from Hamilton so she could claim job creation in Brantford.

Now we have \$1 million refused to Sarnia but wrongfully spent in her riding next door. It is incredible that a minister in a position of high trust could get away with such serious pork barrelling. Is this just another symptom of widespread Liberal corruption?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. The language is getting just a little too strong. I will permit the Right Hon. Prime Minister to respond.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to stand to defend my minister because she is a very good minister and a very honest member.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien: I have a list of ridings in exactly the same position as the riding of the hon. minister that have received money from the same fund. The ridings include Kootenay—Co-

lumbia, Nanaimo—Alberni, Nanaimo—Cowichan, Okanagan—Shuswap, West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Lethbridge, St. Albert, et cetera.

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HEALTH

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think we have a better idea today why the health minister's response to the Alberta privatization initiative has been so pathetically weak and timid.

Today the auditor general reports that the government has no idea whether or not the provinces are complying with the Canada Health Act. The health minister has no idea and no way of knowing if the provinces are playing within the rules governing health care. He does not know how much money is going to the provinces, where it is going and what impact it is having.

Is it not time for the minister to seize control over his department so that he can get on with his full time job of protecting health care for Canadians?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the auditor general has made some very helpful suggestions, all of which we accept and many of which we are already implementing to ensure that the best information possible is given to parliament annually from the Minister of Health with respect to the status of the Canada Health Act throughout the country.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the auditor general also issued a scathing criticism today about how the government handled an outbreak of food borne disease. It is a troubling report and it is not as if the government has really learned anything and changed its ways from the spring of 1998 when it happened.

Yesterday we learned about a potentially dangerous outbreak of botulism in cattle in New Brunswick. Today we see that the government has again risked safety by fast tracking approvals for Monsanto on genetically altered foods.

In light of these events, how could the minister expect Canadians to believe that the minister is capable of protecting their health?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in terms of approving products, whether they are medical devices, pharmaceutical products or bio-engineered foods, for Health Canada public safety is the bottom line.

● (1455)

I can tell the member that the report which appeared today about the Monsanto product is absolutely false. That product was subjected to the usual careful evaluation.

*Oral Questions***EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, PC): Mr. Speaker, in 1997 the EI surplus was \$7.5 billion and now it is almost \$25 billion. Today the auditor general criticized the handling of that fund.

I think it is time for the government to realize that this surplus is not for its own use. It is an insurance fund that belongs to the employees and employers, and they are entitled to it.

How high will this surplus have to get before the government takes real action and reinvests in our communities to give back hope and dignity to the unemployed of the country?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, since we have taken office we have cut the premiums to \$2.40. They were at \$3.70 when we took office.

At the same time, as was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, the Minister of Human Resources Development is bringing forth a major initiative in terms of parental leave, an initiative that will do an enormous amount for the capacity of parents to raise their children.

Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, PC): Mr. Speaker, if the fund is so great and if they are doing so well with it, why do we have such a surplus and so many people who do not qualify or go with no income for so long? I do not understand how the government can justify doing to this fund what it is doing.

Could someone on the government side explain to Canadians why we have such a surplus and why we have so many people going with nothing?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we took office there was a deficit of some \$6 billion. In 11 of the last 17 years there has been a deficit in the fund. The reason for the accounting treatment is that it was recommended by the auditor general in 1986 and we are following that policy.

The hon. member asks why there is a surplus. The reason is, as we have seen today, that we are firing at all cylinders in our economy. There are 1.7 million Canadians back at work, 700,000 in the last year. Young Canadians are back at work. We have one of the strongest economies of any of the G-7 countries.

* * *

SPORTS

Mrs. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as an avid supporter of amateur sport, I would like to ask the Secretary of State for Amateur Sport the following question.

Has the minister done an analysis of how much amateur sport funding goes to girls and women? What measures is he taking to ensure that female athletes get a fair share of government funding?

Mr. Denis Coderre (Secretary of State (Amateur Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is surely one of the most important questions today.

Support to women in sports is a priority of the federal government. Sports Canada's goal is to attain equality for women in sports, ensuring that females have the same opportunities in sports as males.

[*Translation*]

In order to qualify for federal funding, national sports organizations and national sports centres must have an official policy showing that they are committed to fairness for all female athletes and must undertake to introduce appropriate initiatives. That is what the Liberals are doing.

* * *

[*English*]

RCMP

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, according to the auditor general's report tabled today the RCMP fast tracked the sole source contract, broke all bidding rules and claimed it was an emergency to get a \$362,000 contract for an ex-RCMP officer.

This was after it sat on the bid for four months. Some emergency. Why does the solicitor general allow the force, which is supposed to uphold the law, to break the law?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I assure my hon. colleague that the RCMP did not break the law.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a private agreement was apparently reached last March between senior officials of the Department of Health and Monsanto for approval of two new types of genetically modified potato seed.

● (1500)

Would the minister confirm that this agreement provides a way around the usual approval process of the Department of Health, despite the fact that Monsanto refused to provide the scientific information vital to the evaluation of its product?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the usual approval process was followed in this case. We have received all the necessary information, and the products have been assessed.

Supply

[English]

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in April a young man was killed on the job in Nova Scotia's offshore petroleum industry. The Nova Scotia department of labour recommended that the case be prosecuted, but jurisdiction fell to the federal-provincial, Canada-Nova Scotia offshore petroleum board, which failed to hold the company responsible. The board has no enforceable health and safety regulations and is charged as both the industry promoter and the safety regulator, which is a clear conflict and which conflicts with the recommendations of the Westray inquiry. The government has been asked by the province of Nova Scotia to deal with this.

When will it deal with the conflict—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. gentleman that I take this matter of health and safety in the offshore just as seriously as he does. This matter is under active consideration now between the two governments and the relevant regulatory authorities. I will take every step within my power to assure that those regulations are in place at the earliest possible date so that Canadians can have the necessary assurance about health and safety.

* * *

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Just a little while before InterCanadian closed its doors on Saturday it faxed a letter to the Minister of Transport. The letter was from the president to the minister and it said: "The simple fact is that InterCanadian simply cannot continue to withstand the continuously changing position of the government".

If the minister who created this four months of aviation chaos will not now step in to help InterCanadian, will he step aside and let someone else bring some common sense to this chaos?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the financial problems of InterCanadian were well known long before we started the restructuring in August of this year, but it was in response to the airline industry, in particular Canadian Airlines, that we started the restructuring process. It is now working its way through the system. There are discussions among various parties and companies and I hope there will be a resolution to it.

In the meantime, I am very sorry for those people who have lost their jobs at InterCanadian, but there is more than enough capacity in the province of Quebec and the Atlantic provinces to take care of all of the passengers and to make sure disruptions are kept to a minimum.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1505)

[Translation]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—ORGANIZED CRIME

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

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, earlier, I mentioned the contribution made by a number of Bloc Québécois colleagues during this debate. I mentioned the initiative by the member for Berthier—Montcalm and by my colleague from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, who took part in presenting the motion.

A number of Bloc members contributed to the process related to consideration of what has to be done about organized crime. There is my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonnette, who was directly affected in his riding by the death of a young person, young Daniel Desrochers, who died as the result of a bomb explosion.

I also mentioned my colleague from Charlesbourg, who introduced a private member's bill on the withdrawal from circulation of \$1,000 bills to thwart money laundering.

A number of Bloc Québécois members really contributed so that real thought is going into the eradication of organized crime. We know that there have been a number of turf wars over control of the market, including the drug market. We read in our newspapers of fires, bombings and murders. We must look after people's security.

We have some idea of the scope of drug trafficking. Judging by seizures, the extrapolation can be made that there may be profits in the order of \$500 billion. That is a huge amount of money in the hands of the various organized crime gangs. It is easy to imagine how they can control, and buy the silence of, many people.

We know how hard it is to get through the wall of silence that surrounds them. Numerous people have received death threats, even organized crime gang insiders. It is hard to get any testimony out of them that might help with a conviction.

Supply

A number of colleagues from all parties in this House are going to support the motion. We are asking that a study committee be struck to address the problem of organized crime. This would make it possible to look at the various pieces of legislation, the various tools, and the funding of law enforcement agencies. We are thinking of the RCMP and of the police forces in the various communities.

We know that it is very hard, for instance, to infiltrate these groups. Is the legislation adequate? Could all legislation not be reviewed in order to make it less unwieldy?

We know very well that there are victims of organized crime in our society, and those victims include not always gang members, but ordinary citizens as well. Someone in my riding was hit by a bullet during a turf war.

• (1510)

I feel that I must get involved, in large part because I am aware of the various gangs involved in turf wars in the riding of Québec, and in the Quebec City area.

If I can do anything to contribute to the committee study, I will be very pleased to do so, particularly since safety is involved, the public's safety and the very lives of our children, and since drug trafficking wreaks such a terrible toll on the health of our young people.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate the member for Québec. I believe she has a very good grasp of the whole issue of organized crime in Quebec.

The member for Québec has often condemned this situation in caucus and, more importantly, asked that something be done in the House to fight organized crime. I understand full well her concern and the approach she advocated in her speech. She made an excellent speech, by the way, and I believe she has a very good grasp of the whole issue.

My question for the member is rather simple. As we know, she is very much involved in the issue of poverty and she fights for people living in poverty. Here is the question I would like to ask her: Does organized crime not take advantage of poor people or does it not exploit people in need, for instance with its loan sharks or any other example the member is aware of? I would like to hear her thoughts on the issue of poverty as opposed to crime.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Indeed, we all know that there are a good number of loan shark networks in poor communities and we also know that interest on such loans can go as high as 250%.

I also deplore the illicit drug trade. We are well aware that often, in poor neighbourhoods where there is high unemployment, this

trade is very much oriented toward a clientele for whom this can be an escape from the problems of daily life.

We also know that the organized crime cannot function without drugs pushers. People become pushers because it is an easy to make money. But we also know that the social impact is enormous. I feel particularly concerned because, I know that this is a scourge that has major consequences on people's lives, on their quality of life and on their health, as well as on the living conditions of families and children who make a living dealing in drugs and those who are led to use drugs.

It seems to me that society has better things to do and to say that to deal with drug trafficking.

[English]

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Waterloo—Wellington.

I want to begin by offering congratulations to the Bloc and to the member for Berthier—Montcalm for putting forward a motion which finally, on an opposition day, the government can support. What a treat. This has been done in a responsible way, which uses the parliamentary system to its best effect.

The motion asks that the House instruct the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to conduct an investigation. There might be some concern about committee members being instructed, but I am quite sure they will look at this as the will of parliament to conduct a study and report by the end of October 2000. That is a reasonable timeframe, which will give the better part of a year to hear witnesses, to perhaps travel on the issue, to conduct the investigation and to report.

• (1515)

I wonder what this motion would look like if it was put by the Reform Party. I strongly suspect it would be framed in such a way that it would make it impossible for any of us to support it. They would use terms like the government has abdicated its responsibility and so on and, therefore, we should do this study.

I want to give credit where credit is due because I have stood in the House and been somewhat critical of members of the Bloc in the past. I think what they are putting forward is a responsible position. I know that they come to this issue with some serious deep seated concern in the province of Quebec.

We have all heard stories of the biker gang wars in Quebec. There have been murders. There is drug trafficking. They take over homes and destroy neighbourhoods. They threaten people going to the corner store, for goodness sake, to get a jug of milk. Women and children do not feel safe in communities when that type of local terrorism, which is really what that amounts to, is allowed.

Supply

I think the Bloc comes to this issue with a point of view of perhaps some negative experience in this area and the problems around organized crime.

I want to come at this a little differently, though. I believe that the long term, big picture way for us to attack organized crime, frankly, is to deal with our kids, our education system and our families. We have to work harder at eradicating poverty. I know there will be some who will say that we have not done enough. However, as we on this side of the House know, the government is committed to coming in with some programs that will deal with child poverty in the upcoming February budget. I am confident that there will be programs.

The reason I think one fights something as insidious as organized crime by dealing with our young people is because the very nature of an organized criminal group is they look for people who are vulnerable. They look for people who are impressionable. They look for people, whether it is in illegal gambling, whether it is in drugs, whether they get young girls who are impressionable and lead them astray and get them involved in prostitution with promises of great money and beautiful clothes and things of that nature, or they get young people out of schools involved in selling drugs in the community, they encourage them through establishing a mindset that says it is cool to be part of an organized group.

One thinks about the gangs and the problems that we see. We had a terrible tragedy in the greater Toronto area a couple of weeks ago when a young boy was kicked to death by a gang of young people. It is incomprehensible. What could possibly make these young people react like that? Tragically, we have seen it in the past. A young girl was kicked, bludgeoned and beaten to death by other young girls. Violence in the female education system for young girls, in my opinion, is becoming a crisis.

We can put in place all the RCMP and all the police assistance that we want in communities, but we must address the basic fundamental attitudes of young people and tell them that they have to respect one another.

Yesterday, I was at Ploughman's school in Mississauga speaking to four grade five classrooms. They got together in the library. I was amazed to hear the questions coming from these young kids in grades 4 and 5, asking me about the problems of violence in the schools and what the government can do to combat it. They do not feel safe in their own community; a community full of families, young people raising their families. Kids at that tender age worry about this. I am sure they hear their moms and dads talking about it around the kitchen table. They do not understand how somebody who is perhaps 10 years older than them can actually go to the extreme of kicking someone to death.

• (1520)

We can put something in place. In fact this government has done a number of things which I would share with the House from a crime fighting standpoint.

I want to stress that I do not think that this debate is about the government standing up and strutting its stuff, saying "We're really tough on this issue". Nor is it about the opposition standing up and saying "You're not tough enough". What this debate should be about, in my respectful submission, is how we build and create a safer community. How do we get the drug lords? How do we get the smugglers, whether they are smuggling cigarettes or guns? I know it is a controversial issue with some members on the other side, but it is about issues such as gun control.

What is the basic, fundamental principle in the values of Canada and Canadians? Do we simply want to be like the Americans? Do we simply want to pander to the gun lobby group, or do we want to put in place laws? Yes, they will be difficult to enforce. Do we want to put in place a registry? Yes, and it will be difficult. The criminals obviously are not going to register their guns. We understand that, but we have seen so many tragedies in this country.

I believe that the insidiousness of organized crime just sits there and stirs the pot. The way for us to combat that, in addition to the many programs that have already been announced, is to get to the hearts of our young people. I hope that members opposite will see this as I do, and as many Canadians do, as an issue that we all need to work on together.

This is not just about giving the Mounties more money. In fact, in my own community at Pearson International Airport the GTAA has entered into an agreement with Peel Regional Police to provide policing services to Pearson airport so that the RCMP can free up more of its contingent to deal with the serious problems that occur at such a major international entry point to this country. That is a good, responsible, community partnership. That makes a lot of sense.

Peel Region is where the airport is located. The Peel Regional Police wind up with many of the problems once they leave the airport grounds. They wind up with the problems. Whether it is organized crime or crime of any kind, Peel Regional Police will have to deal with it. Why not have them at the point of entry dealing with it immediately and put in place the systems and understanding of the flow that occurs when criminals come in?

On the other side of that coin, at a time when all governments are facing great financial pressures, it frees up an opportunity for the RCMP to concentrate on crimes that are perhaps more of an international nature, such as smuggling.

Mr. Speaker, you are indicating that I have one minute remaining. I wanted to talk about the people smuggling that we have seen recently, but I am not going to have time to do that.

Let me just say that it is important that we focus our energies in the area where in a long term, big picture way we can actually eradicate organized crime. We can convince our young people in our schools and communities that it is not an acceptable way and that they must respect their colleagues, their friends and their

schoolmates. They must not turn to violence as a way of solving a problem. It is easy to say those things, but it is places like this, with responsible motions such as this one being put forward by the opposition with an opportunity to debate it, where this kind of issue can begin to be solved.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane St-Jacques (Shefford, PC): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank the Bloc Québécois for bringing forward this motion on organized crime.

As is the case for many of my colleagues, organized crime directly affects the riding of Shefford I represent. And like my colleagues from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot and Drummond, Shefford is part of the triangle of fertile agricultural land ideally suited for growing marijuana.

I have listened very carefully to today's speeches, especially those on the rumours regarding the closure of the RCMP detachments, because the one in Granby is included in the detachments that are to be closed, according to these rumours.

• (1525)

Since February 1999 we have been stepping up our efforts, our requests to the solicitor general. Also, in May, people in my riding sent a petition to parliament.

Earlier, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada said in answer to a question by a Bloc Québécois member that he did not comment on rumours. I would like to point out that these are no longer rumours, as I saw the report on the proposed organizational restructuring of division C, which is dated August 16.

It recommends the closure of seven RCMP detachments in Quebec including Granby, St-Hyacinthe, Valleyfield, the Magdalen Islands, Roberval, Baie-Comeau and Joliette. I also happen to know that the rapport was favourably received by the solicitor general.

My question is for my colleague from the Liberal Party. Is he aware of this report and, if so, does he support these recommendations?

[*English*]

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, I was not sure if the member was going into a speech or was asking a question. I will try to answer if I can. I would have to look at those recommendations in some detail and would be pleased to do so.

She talked about the closing of police stations in her community and the impact that that can have. I understand that because we have gone through it as well. What our police force has done is gone to a more community based policing. We are trying to get

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officers into the communities, the malls, the plazas and the schools, which fits right in with the comments that I made.

Not having seen the report she is referring to, I may not have answered the member's question. I do think that policing is about the entire community working together and understanding the dynamics and the problems that occur when young people do not have an opportunity to interact properly with the police force and the community.

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today in support of the motion to ask the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to study the issue of organized crime and analyze the legislative avenues open to parliament to fight against activities of criminal organizations.

I have 10 years experience in police service. As the former chairman of the Waterloo Regional Police, I find this of particular interest. It is certainly one where all Canadians look for leadership from their federal government to ensure our communities, wherever they are in this great country, are safe and secure for themselves and their children.

Public concern over organized crime is not limited to any one part of Canada. The RCMP reports that there are biker gang activities and criminal enterprises in several parts of this country. Indeed, the gang problem goes far beyond outlaw biker groups. In addition to biker gangs, there is a host of organized crime groups that operate and prey upon the weak in their own communities and on Canadian society. That is unacceptable.

It is commonly known that organized crime is actively involved in trafficking in illegal drugs. Last summer all of Canada saw firsthand how organized criminal snakeheads were callously smuggling Chinese people on rusty old ships to our shores. This is unacceptable as well. It is perhaps less well known that they are also involved in environmental crime, like illicit waste treatment and disposal, trade in endangered species and ozone depleting substances. They are involved in economic crime like white collar crime, for example, such as security fraud and telemarketing fraud. We also know that they are involved in the sale of counterfeit products, in violation of intellectual property rights and software piracy, money laundering and motor vehicle theft for export or for parts.

There are those who claim that the police are powerless to fight organized crime. Some argue that the police need more money. Others argue that they need less. I think we should find out what the facts are in this case.

It has been two years since parliament considered and enacted any gang legislation. The provisions contained in Bill C-95 originated in discussions with the police community and other members of the justice system in September 1996 when the then minister of justice and the solicitor general held a national forum on organized crime. This event brought together representatives from the police

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community, the federal and a number of provincial governments, the legal community, private industry and academics to examine the increasingly complex problem of organized crime in Canada and to recommend integrated and effective measures to address it. Participants examined the feasibility of legislation that would provide new tools to the police, prosecutors and courts to combat organized crime.

• (1530)

We must recall another factor that led to the enactment of Bill C-95, and that is the public's revulsion at the violent events associated with a turf war between two rival biker gangs, the Hell's Angels and the Rock Machine in Quebec, in which not only members of the gang but also innocent bystanders were tragically affected.

The legislation that followed Bill C-95 enacted new powers in relation to the interception of private communication, proceeds of crime and property used to commit offences and other things. It also outlined for the first time in Canadian criminal law a definition of a criminal organization and created a new offence of participation in a criminal organization offence. This legislation has been in force now for two years.

This may seem like a long period of time to some, but I understand that a typically complex organized crime investigation takes several years to progress to the point where charges are laid. In fact, I know that to be the case.

Nevertheless, some of these investigations directed at criminal organizations using the tools provided in Bill C-95 have now been completed. Charges have been laid and prosecutions are proceeding. Indeed, there have been convictions. Reports have appeared in the media in recent weeks regarding some of these prosecutions, notably in the provinces of Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta.

It is important, however, to ensure that the provisions of Bill C-95 are well understood. Not every case is appropriately pursued as a criminal organization investigation or a prosecution. It is not intended to be the only tool used to combat organized crime. It is built on the tools already available in the criminal code and responded in particular to investigative and prosecutorial challenges posed by criminal organizations. These are specialized tools in that sense.

Justice officials have been working in co-operation with the solicitor general's department to provide training to police and prosecutors regarding the contents of the criminal organization legislation. Justice officials have provided full day and half day training sessions across the country to over 500 members of the provincial and federal police and prosecution services.

Law enforcement must be careful to ensure that powerful but integrate powers provided for in legislation are not used inappropriately or unnecessarily.

The committee may want to assess the extent to which the provisions are being used and their effectiveness. If there are ways to improve upon the manner in which the legislation is used, we should facilitate the sharing of these best practices. If there are improvements in the legislation that could be considered, we should assess them collectively.

In another area of organized crime, combating telemarketing fraud remains a priority for the Government of Canada, in particular within the context of its organized crime agenda.

Since the 1997 binational report, Canada in partnership with the United States has made significant strides in combating cross-border telemarketing fraud. The major legislative developments include Bill C-20, which recently added the new offence of deceptive telemarketing to the Competition Act.

It also includes Bill C-51, which amended the criminal code to link the new deceptive telemarketing offences in the Competition Act to the criminal code scheme authorizing the seizure and forfeiture of proceeds of crime for enterprise crime offences. This amendment now allows the significant proceeds generated by many telemarketing schemes to be captured.

Finally, Bill C-40, which amended the Canada Evidence Act and the Extradition Act to provide for the use of video linked testimony to be given at criminal trials and at extradition hearings.

We are building on our successes and will continue to combat telemarketing fraud through public education, information sharing and co-operative law enforcement using the new legislative tools that we have developed over the past year.

Before concluding, I would also like to address the issue of acts of intimidation directed against key players in the criminal justice system. My colleagues in the House will know that the concerns have been voiced with regard to this issue of intimidation directed against officials responsible for the investigation and prosecution of crimes: judges and persons responsible for the administration of sentences of convicted offenders, as well as members of the public who become involved in the criminal justice system as informants, witnesses or members of juries.

• (1535)

The intimidation of justice participants is purpose-driven. The purpose is either to interfere with the ability to secure a conviction against the accused or, in the case of an organization, against other members of the organization in the future, or to exact revenge. It is intended to destabilize the criminal justice system, particularly where the prosecution of organized crime is concerned.

The government is acting in this area and the Department of Justice is currently examining this issue. It is consulting with

representatives of federal, provincial and municipal police agencies, federal and provincial prosecutors, federal and provincial correctional officers and officials and judges in all parts of Canada. The object of this exercise is to determine the scope and severity of the problem of intimidation and to develop an appropriate legislative response. I applaud this initiative. It is important for all our communities in terms of making them safer and more secure.

I will conclude by observing that organized crime is a pressing problem which takes various and many forms. The international community has identified the fight against organized crime as a priority issue. The Canadian government has taken a similar position, and rightfully so. It is important for all Canadians to have us move in this very important area.

Let us see if the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights can identify legislative avenues that can be effectively pursued by parliament to win the fight against the activities of criminal organizations.

I think this motion is most in order. It is useful and we should get on with passing it to make sure it goes to the committee where we can examine these and all important issues relating to organized crime.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to ask my colleague a question because he is the chair of the Standing Committee on Health, of which I am a member. I know that he has shown a wonderful sense of fair play, and it is a great pleasure to work with him.

The last report of the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada described organized crime as making \$10 billion annually from drug trafficking, and an estimated \$400 million from the sale of jewellery on the black market. Every year, fraudulent credit card purchases total close to \$80 million.

As for economic crimes—the hon. member referred to telemarketing—losses are in the neighbourhood of \$4 billion. Fraudulent use of credit cards accounts for something like \$127 million. Between 8,000 and 16,000 people are smuggled into Canada illegally every year.

Car theft is still on the rise. And between \$5 billion and \$17 billion in illicit funds are laundered annually.

Would the hon. member agree with me that all options must be considered in our efforts to more effectively combat organized crime? It is not just a question of additional resources for the police, but all options must be considered, including—and this is something I think the committee will have to look at—the Japanese model, which prohibits the public display of crests and badges

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belonging to biker gangs, up to and including possible use of the notwithstanding clause.

Would the hon. member agree that all options must be considered and that the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights must not exclude any of them?

[*English*]

Mr. Lynn Myers: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. gentleman opposite for his question. It seems to me that what the motion today is saying is that by referring the motion to the justice and human rights committee we should analyze the legislative avenues open to parliament to fight against the activities of criminal organizations and then report back to the House.

If the question is, should we take a look at the variety of options available to the committee and ultimately to parliament and all parliamentarians, it seems to me that we should. We should take a look at the kinds of things that we as a society and we as parliamentarians should do in order to curtail criminal activity wherever it may be in this great land of ours.

• (1540)

As a former chairman of the Waterloo Regional Police, I can tell the House first hand that police services across our great country need parliament's assistance in this very important area. The government has done many things over the last number of years to enact the kinds of legislation that are necessary to give the police the kinds of measures they need in order to carry out their function in society, all of which enables us to live in more safe and secure communities wherever they may be in Canada.

I look forward to the report of the standing committee in this very important area. I know that under the leadership of the chairperson, who is a very capable individual, that is precisely what will be done. The committee will report back to the House in a very meaningful way and give parliament and, by extension, all Canadians the kinds of necessary analysis and tools that will help us to ensure that criminal activity is curtailed in Canada.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise on debate in the House. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to tell the people of Canada about the strength of the opposition in the House, because if it were not for the Bloc Québécois—and I give them full marks—if it were not for the pressure of the Conservatives and also of the Reform Party, this kind of motion would never have come to the House. This kind of action would never take place under the Liberal government.

It absolutely astounds me, with the encroachment of organized crime into every part of Canadian life, that the government just basically sits on its hands.

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I look at the fact that the speaker just immediately prior to me, in answer to a question from a Bloc member, said that under the auspices of the chair of the committee on justice that everything will go well. I remind the House that the chair who is presently in that seat is the former solicitor general. It was under that solicitor general that many of these pieces of inaction in fact continued to fester.

I draw the attention of the House to a specific case. Let us take a look at some specifics. As a result of coverage in the news media, I and members of the House have learned that in 1997 RCMP Corporal Robert Read reported a cover-up of incompetence, negligence and corruption within DFAIT and immigration and complained of criminal misconduct by his superiors. This related to activities that had happened in the very late eighties and early nineties in Canada's office in Hong Kong.

The RCMP did not acknowledge that complaint much less investigate it. In January 1998, Corporal Read took his documented complaint to the RCMP Public Complaints Commission. He was told it was the wrong venue, and indeed it was the wrong venue. The reality is that within the purview of the government, within the bureaucracy of the RCMP, there is no correct place for that complaint if the RCMP hierarchy will not act on allegations of this nature.

In January 1999, he took the same complaint and documentation to the auditor general. None of these investigative bodies are investigating this complaint, and Corporal Read is a veteran insider. None of them are investigating the complaint that a major cover-up is continuing today within the government's bureaucracy.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize, I have to parenthesize. I failed to mention that I am sharing my time with the member for Surrey Central.

I have personally questioned Corporal Read. He has confirmed and detailed his allegations to me. As a matter of fact, I have seen pages and pages and pages of documented evidence that clearly substantiates that there must be an investigation into his allegations of cover-up on the part of the RCMP.

• (1545)

The purpose of this cover-up is to protect the government from the public humiliation of being systematically deceived by its own employees. The effect has been damage to Canada's national security.

It is all very well and good for the government to say that a wonderful measure has been put forward by the opposition. It thinks the Bloc motion is a good one and that it should be proceeding with it. I want to know from the government in this debate today why the allegations about which I have just informed the House have not been acted on by the government. Why has the

government been sitting on its hands in the face of this stonewalling?

It started in 1997. After two years of bureaucratic stonewalling Corporal Read made his complaint public. What happened? He was suspended. Rather than the RCMP actually doing anything he was suspended. To the best of my knowledge there has never been any further action taken to investigate the allegations about Corporal Read to this date. Corporal Read's findings of negligence, incompetence and corruption have not been challenged. It appears no one will investigate even though the complaint is substantial and has been documented.

This is a first step. Thanks to the opposition, issues of this type will come before the standing committee. I can tell the House what I fully anticipate in committee. There will be further stonewalling by the majority representing the government in that committee. Furthermore, as I pointed out, the chair of the committee is a former solicitor general who in 1997, when these events were taking place, was the solicitor general.

Will the current solicitor general appoint an independent prosecutor to examine the evidence of Corporal Read? Not only the evidence of Corporal Read. A lot of the evidence is substantiated by pages and binders full of information, graphs and flowcharts on information compiled by Brian McAdam, a former immigration official in the Hong Kong office at the time of the alleged incidents.

I do not understand how we can end up in Canada with a professional bureaucracy that would allow this kind of situation to continue to fester. Why has this never been properly investigated? If the solicitor general will not act, will the Speaker of the House order the auditor general to report directly to the House?

These are serious allegations. I am fully aware of the seriousness of the allegations I am relating to the House. I am taking responsibility for that as a member of parliament. I will repeat. These allegations have been brought to the RCMP. These allegations are part of what led to the start-up of the investigation called sidewinder. We all know what happened with sidewinder.

Sidewinder was a two year investigation by a combined force of CSIS and the RCMP. They compiled information for a full two year period. They look into the kind of allegations that Brian McAdam brought forward. What did they do? At the end of two years someone at CSIS decided to terminate the sidewinder investigation.

That was not good enough. Instead of just terminating the investigation they terminated all the e-mails and all the written documentation. They made sure to the best of their ability that all information on electronic files was also terminated.

This was absolutely scandalous because it was going on at exactly the same time as the government was not appointing people to the Security Intelligence Review Committee. SIRC was set up

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under the legislation which established CSIS in the first place. Its purpose was to have civilian oversight of a top secret organization.

• (1550)

The government neglected, and I use that word in its strongest, most pejorative sense, to put people into positions of trust and responsibility in SIRC so that SIRC could continue to oversee CSIS.

As a result of the government leaving the SIRC position open, CSIS basically ran rampant. When it came upon some results, which it presumably did not like, it decided not only to terminate it but to destroy the whole thing. Guess what? SIRC found out about the destruction of sidewinder as a result of reading about it in the newspaper.

The government is completely out of control. It has no idea what we are looking at in the area of organized crime. The very least I can say is that I am thankful the government will support the motion put forward today by Canada's opposition which has embarrassed it into action.

Mr. Jacques Saada (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am quite impressed. My colleague across the floor recognizes the merit of the Bloc Quebecois initiative to bring the issue before us today. He claims that it is because of the opposition that the motion is on the floor.

I would agree with him if he were to be excluded from the definition of opposition. Many days have been devoted to issues put forth by the opposition, and the Reform Party never saw fit to put the issue before the House. How dare he say that the Reform is responsible for this issue?

Second, I heard my colleague speak about democracy and in the same sentence say that the government should interfere either with the launching of an investigation or with the suspension of an investigation. He is asking us to have the government interfere with the operation of a police body. I am saying there is a great danger to democracy if we do that. Apparently he does not understand this concept.

Third, I should remind him that Mrs. Paule Gauthier, the head of SIRC, has declared that she is fully satisfied with the co-operation she has with CSIS. Again we are reaching a point where in the Reform Party fearmongering, insinuation and innuendo have become a way of life. Is it surprising that it is losing so much popularity?

Mr. Jim Abbott: Mr. Speaker, if Madam Gauthier was aware of the theft of the briefcase after the Toronto Maple Leafs hockey game, how did she become aware of it? The solicitor general was informed by the director of CSIS that the briefcase had gone

missing. The solicitor general did not inform SIRC. SIRC is the body. They are the people who are responsible to us as Canadians.

These are people of name who we can trust. We can trust Ray Speaker. We can trust Bob Rae. We can trust Frank McKenna. We can trust people who have a long history of public service. These are people who are put into the trusted position of overseeing CSIS because of the kind of inept things that have been going on over there.

The solicitor general sat on that information. It took a report in the *Globe and Mail* to make the chair of SIRC aware that the briefcase had been stolen in the first place.

The piety that has been coming forward from the solicitor general's parliamentary secretary is a bit misplaced. If the Reform Party were the Government of Canada, we would take responsibility for the fact that we have not taken any action on organized crime. The Liberals are the Government of Canada and it is the Liberals that have not taken any action on organized crime. It is the Liberals who are deficient in protecting Canadians.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I find it incredible when we are talking about something as important to Canadians as their own safety and security that the parliamentary secretary would dare to rise and say that even speaking about this issue is just fearmongering. Shame on him. Shame on him that we had to have this debate. The government should have been on top of things so that this problem would not be a matter of debate in the House of Commons. There should have been procedures in place where we would be safe, but instead the government is asleep at the switch.

• (1555)

I find so dismaying that the government is prepared to ignore this issue and call people names who are trying to get it dealt with. It actually punished those who tried to bring forward the matter. The employee with the courage to raise the matter is now toast. What kind of a signal does this send to people who want to make sure that gross injustice and corruption in the country are dealt with properly?

Mr. Jim Abbott: Mr. Speaker, it sends a very bad signal because in the case of the particular corporal, if we can believe it, he has been restricted to staying within 100 kilometres of the city of Ottawa. There is no future idea of when that restriction will be lifted.

He is being punished for coming forward and being straight and trying to bring these allegations to the attention of his superiors. The only way he has been able to do that is to go public. More is the shame on the government.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the people of Surrey Central to speak to the Bloc

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supply day motion that calls on the House to order the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to study the issue of organized crime, to analyse avenues available to parliament to combat these criminals, and to report back to the House by October 31, 2000.

Today the government side of the House is being forced by the opposition to discuss organized crime. We will see how little it will do, if anything. The people of Surrey Central are anxious to do something about organized crime and its effect on our country, our cities, our region, our children, and many other aspects of our lives.

The weak Liberal government that has no vision and no political will keeps our criminal justice system weak. There are less and less resources, money and effort going to our law enforcement community. We can clearly see this in Surrey. We feel the effects of the scarce resources of the RCMP which is trying to preserve and protect our communities.

The immigration minister tells the Prime Minister to adopt a new slogan. The motto is that Canada is the place to be. The Prime Minister brags about that. There is no political will on Liberal benches to give B.C. and the rest of Canada the RCMP services that are needed. Because of this, international criminals know that Canada is the number one country and the place to be.

The Liberals already know that organized crime has a great effect on our country. There is no need to study it. Illegal migrants arrive at our airports and on our coasts. They are brought here by organized criminals, and the Liberals do nothing about it.

They do nothing about corruption in our embassies. When it comes to filtering out criminals our embassies are just like sieves. In Hong Kong 2,000 visas were stolen. Are gentle people stealing them and using them? No, it is organized crime. It is criminals who stole the visas and used them to bring over 2,000 criminals into Canada, and the Liberals do nothing about it.

I did something about it when my constituents told me about corruption at the embassies at New Delhi and Islamabad. Legitimate immigrants were harassed while criminals were buying their way into Canada.

• (1600)

I got results. Was I lucky? No. I did the work. I had the political will to get to the bottom of these allegations of crime and corruption on behalf of the people I was elected to represent.

I took action on their behalf. I went to the RCMP. They were glad to work with me and they did a good job. People were fired as a result of my efforts and the corruption was cleaned up, for a while at least.

The Liberals keep the RCMP starved of resources: money, equipment and personnel. The Liberals do it with our military as

well. They starve our emergency preparedness, too. The Liberals leave only four officers patrolling the B.C.-Washington border near my constituency. Our ports and docks are understaffed.

Perhaps only 5% of containers are inspected at the Vancouver port, but many of them contain drugs and other things being smuggled for organized crime. The Liberals are not serious about fighting organized crime. If they were they would dispatch the military on a special two-day mission to open the 95% of containers that have not been inspected. Let us get to work.

We know that there are refugee claimants on our streets selling drugs. We know they have been arrested, but the police tell us they are back on the street within hours, or at least the next day, after being slightly slapped on the wrist. Why does the government not do something about it? It is a shame.

Third world people are being enslaved into a life of crime. They are being sent to the U.S. via Canada. What do the Liberals do about it? Nothing. The CIA and the FBI in the U.S. are furious about what is happening in Canada. They are furious about our Prime Minister because he is cutting budgets, dragging his feet and not upholding Canada's part in fighting crime in North America.

The government knows about money laundering operations in our country. Organized crime has built a very large, multibillion dollar underground economy. The weak Liberal government has done nothing about it.

Last week the newspapers published 10 ways to launder money and those are the 10 ways the Liberals have refused to prevent money laundering.

As a former credit union director, I know that our federal government is not doing enough to help prevent fraud through our financial institutions. There are many areas where the government has dropped the ball on combating organized crime, including industrial espionage, white collar crime, national security risks and others.

The Liberal government should have introduced legislation to protect the rights of civil servants who come forward to expose corruption in government. It should have done this long ago. In other countries the legal rights of public servants who blow the whistle are protected. They are rewarded. In Canada we need at least to protect the public servants who report, in good faith, evidence of wrongdoing. They should not be subject to disciplinary action, as the government has shown in the last few years.

Canada needs a mechanism for our public servants to follow when they detect wrongdoing, including mismanagement, misleading information, cover-ups and other things like the issue we are debating today.

I will soon be putting forward a bill for the government to support that will protect and reward whistleblowers. The purpose

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of the act will be to establish a procedure and provide appropriate rewards and incentives for whistleblowing. Everyone knows about the work of Brian McAdam, who exposed corruption in our Hong Kong embassy.

The sidewinder investigation should certainly be of value and in the best interests of Canadians. My hon. colleague has already spoken about it. For three months Fabian Dawson, a Canadian journalist working out of B.C., has been publishing articles chronicling corruption in our federal government's overseas missions.

• (1605)

We commend these Canadians for their work, but where is the government? Where are the Liberals? Why do the Liberals not investigate what Fabian is writing about? Why do they not help him? Why will they not take action when our media uncovers things through good journalistic investigation?

Today we are looking for answers to the problem of organized crime. What can parliament do? It is easy. The people of Surrey and all Canadians know how easy it is. Contrary to the motion we are debating, there is no need to study this problem. We already know the answers. Parliament can legislate tougher penalties. Parliament can provide whistleblowers with protection and rewards so that they can come forward with the evidence of corruption, exposing the techniques and modus operandi of organized criminals and gangs like the triads.

Rather than this weak Liberal government listening to them and taking appropriate action, rewarding whistleblowers like Brian McAdam and Corporal Read, it tries to shut them up and muzzle them while intimidating and threatening them. This weak government should see to it that the laws which are already in our statute books are enforced. The government can do that by providing our law enforcement community with what it needs to get the job done.

In Surrey the RCMP is always short of staff, equipment, time and resources. There is no reason for that except that the Liberals are starving the force of what it needs. We are the fastest growing community in Canada and this government is starving our city of police protection from organized crime. It is a shame.

I ask this weak Liberal government to wake up. Rather than sitting on its hands, looking like an empty bag, it should get tough on organized crime and send a strong message to criminals around the world on behalf of the people of Surrey, B.C. and all Canadians. It should tell those criminals that Canada is not the place to be.

Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to rise today to speak to this matter. Certainly the debate in itself will send a message to organized criminal elements that their behaviour and activities will not be tolerated for the

reasons which have been elaborated and which I will continue to elaborate.

I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Scarborough East.

I would like to take a bit of a different tack in my address. I would like to address some of the key international activities of the federal government in addressing organized crime.

As members on both sides of the House will appreciate, international co-operation in combating organized crime is very vital. Canada, like other countries, is faced with responding to an increased movement of goods and people as our economy globalizes. At the same time, increased use of telecommunications and finance in everyday affairs shrinks our world.

To be sure, criminals are quick to try to capitalize on the opportunity that globalization and technological change present. Canadian ministers and officials are required regularly to attend meetings or conferences where key discussions and negotiations occur and where decisions are taken as to how to combat organized crime. It is a very complex issue. The objective is always to support a co-ordinated international approach to deal with this problem while recognizing that the sovereign interest of states must be respected.

An important recent meeting was the 1994 UN ministerial conference on organized transnational crime held in Naples. At that session a political declaration and global plan of action on organized crime was produced. This document has served as a framework for future multilateral activity in this area, some of which I will now describe.

At the Halifax summit of 1995, on the initiative of the Canadian government, the G-8 heads of state created an experts group on transnational organized crime, now called the Lyon Group. The Lyon Group has produced 40 recommendations on fostering closer co-operative legal assistance, law enforcement and other efforts to address the problem. This was followed by a meeting of G-8 justice and interior ministers on high tech crime in December 1997, a video conference of the G-8 ministers of justice and interior in December 1998, and most recently a meeting of G-8 ministers in Moscow on October 19 and 20 of this year where discussions focused on financial crime, high tech crime and illegal immigration.

• (1610)

The relationship between the Canadian and the United States governments and their agencies in combating organized crime is very important given the economic and cultural ties that we and our neighbours share. We share the same North American space and many of the same interests in combating transborder and transnational crime.

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In February 1997, on the initiative of the Solicitor General of Canada and the Attorney General of the United States, it was agreed that Canada and the United States would form the Canada-United States cross-border crime forum. This agreement was reinforced by the commitment of the Prime Minister and President Clinton in April 1997 to form a bi-national body on criminal justice issues.

The Canadian group is comprised of officials from the Department of the Solicitor General, which co-chairs the forum with the U.S. Justice Department, the RCMP, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Correctional Service Canada, Revenue Canada, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Citizenship and Immigration, Foreign Affairs, the Department of Finance, as well as representatives from provincial governments, including Quebec, and our police forces.

The U.S. group is comprised of U.S. attorneys, officials from the FBI, the DEA, the U.S. Marshalls Service, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Customs, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Secret Service, the Internal Revenue Service and regional and state officials.

The first full meeting of the cross-border crime forum took place in Ottawa in October 1997. The forum met again in Washington on May 21, 1998. The most recent meeting of the forum was in June of this year in Prince Edward Island.

The forum provides a regular opportunity for officials from Canada and the United States to discuss transnational crime problems and strategies to improve operational and policy co-operation and co-ordination. The work of officials through the forum's subgroups on intelligence, enforcement, prosecutions and telemarketing fraud is ongoing.

Bi-national strategies and threat assessments have been developed and continue to be refined. Officials are also evaluating current priorities and examining practices and legislation on both sides of the border to support co-operation at the national level, as well as regionally and locally in communities where border crime is a serious public safety concern.

The next meeting of the forum is to take place in May or June 2000 in the United States.

Still looking at the Americas, the Secretary of State for International Financial Institutions participated on behalf of the solicitor general at a ministerial level conference on money laundering held in Buenos Aires in December 1995. The conference produced an action plan on how to deal with money laundering in the Americas in terms of strengthening law enforcement, regulatory and legal measures. The action plan is an important marker for efforts in this hemisphere to combat organized crime.

I would also note Canada's activities in the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, or CICAD as it is known by its Spanish acronym, of the Organization of American States. The focus of the commission is to address drug abuse and trafficking within the Americas, as well as related activities such as money laundering.

The Deputy Solicitor General of Canada was elected chair of CICAD's multilateral evaluation and monitoring working group at the May 1998 meeting of CICAD in Washington, D.C. This working group has developed a framework to evaluate member states' anti-drug efforts, which was completed at a meeting held August 31 to September 2 of this year.

[*Translation*]

Canada, as a member of the G-7 countries, was a founding member of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering, the FATF. This task force was created at the G-7 summit held in Paris in 1989 to consider whatever measures were deemed necessary to eliminate money laundering and to develop international standards in this area.

The FATF released a report including 40 recommendations to fight money laundering, which are now considered model measures to be taken at the national and the international levels to put a stop to money laundering.

These recommendations were reviewed in 1996 to reflect the new patterns and the countermeasures taken in this area, like money laundering on the Internet.

The FATF now brings together 28 member states representing the main financial centres of the world.

Canada is also a collaborative and supportive member of the CFATF, the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, a sister organization of the FATF.

• (1615)

The group members are committed to promoting and implementing the 40 FATF recommendations.

[*English*]

I mentioned the United Nations in my earlier comments. Canada is an active participant on crime issues in the United Nations and its specialized commissions, in particular the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

A convention on transnational organized crime is being negotiated now in the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Commission. The work on this convention will have an impact on Canada's domestic policies and programs. Canada must be ready to meet its obligations and governments must take account of this.

Supply

At the same time, the convention will provide general tools for law enforcement and legal assistance among countries at the international level. It is expected that the convention will be adopted by the Millennium United Nations General Assembly in the year 2000.

A comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to combating organized crime nationally is essential to make Canada an effective international partner.

The main objectives of Canada's international activities are to promote Canadian values and policies while building a strong network for practical co-operation.

In this exercise, it is important that the federal government works in partnership with the provinces and territories, and with the communities across the country. We must ensure that our domestic arrangements and our international arrangements are compatible and support each other.

Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the motion reads:

That this House instruct the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to conduct a study of organized crime, to analyze the options available to parliament to combat the activities of criminal groups and to report to the House no later than October 31, 2000.

I say at the outset that I support the motion and look forward to the reference to the committee on which I sit and which I consider to be a very important committee to the House.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm for his initiative in this area. It is always appropriate that parliament oversees government initiatives and, in this particular instance, this is a valuable and worthwhile initiative.

I will speak to the irony underlying this discussion. This irony revolves around the rule of law. Canada prides itself as a nation subject to the rule of law, much to the chagrin sometimes of many of the members of the House, particularly when the rule of law comes in conflict with, for instance, the supremacy of parliament or when we have interpretations from the Supreme Court of Canada which conflict with the will of parliament. Fortunately, we all respect the rule of law and therefore are able to work out those conflicting points.

Governments are circumscribed by the rule of law. Institutions are circumscribed by the rule of law. Individuals are circumscribed by the rule of law. People in institutions cannot simply do what seems most advantageous to their self-interest, regardless of whether it be in the field of criminality or in the field of civil law.

Canadians live under the rule of law and see it as their most valuable tool to protect themselves, their families and their assets against arbitrary actions by governments, institutions, police and other individuals.

Organized crime on the other hand has no such limitations. Whether it is trafficking in people, drugs, liquor or stolen cars, organized crime challenges the very basis of our Canadian society as we know it and, therefore, it is a threat like no other threat to our civilization.

The irony is that while organized crime seeks to destroy the rule of law in order to gain its revenues, it simultaneously wishes to invest its revenues and its proceeds from its activities in the societies which have the highest standards of the rule of law, because there they provide safe and secure banking systems, safe and secure property registration systems and safe and secure judicial remedies.

The irony is resplendent that ill-gotten gains, regardless of where they come from, whether they be from North America or from other places, frequently end up here because of the rule of the law and because of the security of our various institutions.

• (1620)

I hope I am not naive, and there are some who might say otherwise, but I believe that organized crime will be with us forever, much like original sin, of which many of our members know a great deal. It has been around since the dawn of time and is not likely to go away soon.

Given that it is not likely to go away soon, we have to be realistic about what can or cannot be done in the area of organized crime. I believe we should support the efforts of the RCMP in their interdictions in Sri Lanka for people smuggling, or in Akwesasne for other kinds of smuggling. The question really is whether the government is approaching this in the best possible fashion. What are the initiatives that make the most sense?

To me, hitting at profitability is what makes a great deal of sense. What hits most at profitability? I think that will be the question that determines the direction of the committee. For instance, the principles enunciated by the ministers collective of justice for the country states that taking a profit out of organized is an effective way of putting these criminals out of business and efforts to seize their illegal proceeds should be vigorously pursued. I support that view.

Let us take a look at some of the initiatives that this government has taken on in the last few years. The first initiative is the \$115 million given to the RCMP to upgrade its CPIC facility. I had the good fortune of touring that facility in the last term and found it to be a useful tour. I encourage the other members to do so as well because the information held in those files is quite useful in fighting crime.

The next one was \$18 million to the data bank initiative. Many of these people have no compunction about any method in order to secure their profits.

Supply

An additional \$78 million to the national anti-smuggling initiative will fund 100 additional RCMP officers in major airports to help target organized criminals who use these airports as points of entry into Canada.

An additional \$15 million paid annually will put more RCMP officers in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, and \$13.8 million to the RCMP to use for workload increases. Thirteen proceeds of crime units have been created within the RCMP across Canada.

While all of these are laudable initiatives, I do not want to be circumscribing the work of the committee, assuming the motion goes forward, by simply listening to what the government says. To my mind, if those initiatives do not meet the profitability test as to cutting out the profitability of the activities of organized crime, then we probably have to ask ourselves whether that is well spent money. If the foregoing interrupts the profitability anywhere along a spectrum then, in my view, the initiative is doing a good job.

I look forward to the reference to the committee. I reflect on the last time that parliament referred an initiative to the justice committee which was in the area of drunk driving. We on the justice committee spent a great deal of time reviewing the evidence. As the evidence came before us, we started to see the patterns that were there and the gaps in the legislation. We were fortunate enough to not only be able to produce a unanimous report, but the justice committee also produced a bill which was referred back to the House and in turn proclaimed on July 1.

In my constituency, the work of the justice committee and the support that we received from the justice minister and the government in that area, and from all parties, was well received by my constituents. I look forward to this initiative also being dutifully undertaken by the committee and that it will produce a report that will not only be of use to the government but of use to the House.

• (1625)

Frankly, I will be interested at looking at anything that is effective. I will also be interested in looking at initiatives which are not effective. We live in a world of limited resources. We continue to live and will always live in a world of limited resources. We as a government will always be criticized that we never apply enough resources. If the resources that are being applied are not useful and are misdirected then that should also be part of the review of the committee.

While I appreciate that there is an irony going on here, that the rule of law is being abrogated by a certain subset of criminals, ironically, the work of the committee will, I hope, return us to the rule of law. I hope that ultimately, as we examine this issue, we will continue to move ourselves back to a rule of law and a society where all people can have security of person and property.

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 Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, gasoline pricing; the hon. member for Vancouver East, Trade.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to the Bloc Quebecois motion. It reads as follows:

That this House instruct the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to conduct a study of organized crime, to analyse the options available to Parliament to combat the activities of criminal groups and to report to the House no later than October 31, 2000.

I applaud my colleagues who have worked on these important issues, sometimes at their own personal risk, particularly the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm, who, with my colleague from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, is leading this debate, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot and the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve who, in a way, raised the red flag after the tragic death of the young Daniel Desrochers in his riding. This young boy died in a car bombing incident involving feuding criminal gangs.

I am very proud of the work my colleagues have done. We cannot tolerate in the Quebec society, or the Canadian society for that matter, any kind of ingrained violence as a way of determining markets. This is how it works in the underworld. Neither can we allow crime to become a way of becoming rich without being punished, because all our values could be compromised in the long run.

On a number of occasions, it was pointed out that, in Quebec, which we do not like to think of as a violent society, between 1994 and 1998, criminal organizations were responsible for 79 murders and 89 attempted murders, 129 cases of arson and 82 bombings.

This is a serious situation. We know that it is not all that serious in Quebec, but we are still concerned. However, this scourge also ties in very closely with what is happening internationally. Today we are looking at the globalization of organized crime. Global crime involves more than connections between Canada, Quebec and the United States, for example, with some ramifications in Mexico. It is much larger than that.

• (1630)

As I said before, we know that places that lend themselves to criminal activity become markets that are fought over internationally. We only have to look at the various gangs competing with one another with the means and the level of violence we know.

I just want to take a moment to mention that, in other countries, in European countries for example—and I have been made aware of that—one type of crime that is being dealt with is the exploitation of half a million women from developing countries who are brought to western Europe each year for profitable sex crimes.

We know that young women and women are kidnapped and disappear and that they end up being exploited somewhere. When you add up all these numbers, it looks like a modern-day white slave traffic.

Then there is the whole issue of the displacement of persons. According to the International Organization for Migration, those who are involved in the organized trafficking of human beings are responsible for the displacement of one million individuals at any given time, generating \$7 billion worth of business every year.

Putting an end to the trafficking of human beings was the primary goal of the European Union summit held in Finland. The aim was not to simply prevent the displacement of people. Displaced people who are charged \$20,000—in the case of those from China for example—are subject to a kind of slavery and control including threats against their person.

Several migrants from Europe landed illegally in western Canada. Recently, some of them were brought here by boat in the same unacceptable fashion.

Drugs are an international scourge. Numbers vary but, according to a document we produced, there is between \$100 and \$500 billion in trade every year. By comparison, drugs account for 8% of international trade, or approximately \$400 billion, roughly the same as oil and gas. This is a lot. Oil and gas represent an extremely important part of international trade. The drug trade is said to be of an equal value.

The stakes are enormous and profits from organized crime could be as high as one trillion dollars. I am not mistaken. I do not mean one thousand million in French, or one billion in English, I mean one trillion, which as far as I know is “un billion” in French.

This goes to show how extremely important these illicit, violent activities are with all their showy wealth. In Moscow I have seen the most sumptuous boutiques. There are 20 BMW dealerships in Moscow, and it would seem that very few are authorized dealers. There is world-wide trafficking in the resale of stolen automobiles.

Why mention this in connection with the death of the Desrochers boy? In order to indicate the extreme importance of the work my colleagues on both sides of the House will have to do. They will certainly need to know exactly what is going on, as far as international agreements are concerned, because the globalization of crime is such that it cannot be considered localized and therefore solvable locally. This is particularly the case now that there are new approaches, such as high tech crimes, cyber attacks and crimes committed by hackers.

• (1635)

Now there are brilliant hackers who are able to commit financial crimes by infiltrating computer systems and then, with a few

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keystrokes, hiding all evidence of their crime, or transferring the proceeds from it to another country.

This field is one of extraordinarily rapid change, and it is at the service of biker gangs as much as it is for any other group. Under these circumstances, the authorities face a major challenge, because the crime must first be located and then the data has to be obtained to prove it. There is considerable urgency here.

Some countries, we have heard, want to make encryption keys mandatory. Encryption uses extremely lengthy formulas that supposedly make it impossible to get into messages and therefore protect honest people from those who want to invade their privacy. They may, however, also afford protection to dishonest people by preventing the justice system from being able to find out what they have been doing. This is what happened in Japan, when a sect carried out its plans to poison subway travellers and Japan found itself with evidence that had to be decrypted. This was a very long and difficult task and it had to be done before the criminals could be tried, and they were not able to decipher it completely.

In closing, I wish to say that, as a society, we cannot allow these crimes to go unpunished, because the entire social balance is jeopardized. What is more, young people who are struggling to make it in the world may be attracted by this way to get rich quick.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech made by my colleague and I can see once again that the hon. member for Mercier has a very good grasp of the issue of organized crime and of its scope, in Quebec and in Canada.

Her calm and rational tone was a reflection of today's debate. Indeed, all the parties said they would support the Bloc Québécois' motion. We feel this is a very important issue which deserves to receive all our attention, and the other parties obviously think so too.

I have a question for the my colleague, the hon. member for Mercier. I know she is very interested in what goes on at the international level. I am sure she said something about this, but I missed the beginning of her speech. I would appreciate it if she could comment about what is being done at the international level, if she had not already done so in her speech.

I realize that we must first have good national legislation. Obviously, we must first clean up our own backyard, but my question to the hon. member is about what goes on at the international level. Does the hon. member think that, once we will have cleaned up our act, there are things that must be done at the international level? Is some form of co-operation desirable? Are there useful lessons that could be learned from European countries, as the hon. member has frequent contacts with them and comes back with good ideas? I know that she recently travelled

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with the Minister of Justice precisely to talk about organized crime at the international level.

I would like to hear the hon. member, because she has a unique experience. The Bloc Québécois is lucky to have her, because she increasingly brings her great expertise to us and to all Quebecers. I would like to hear her comments on this issue.

• (1640)

Mrs. Francine Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is making me blush.

Indeed, I have had the opportunity to join the justice minister at the G8 Summit. Having a government with a small majority can sometimes be useful to the opposition. I know about the collaborative work being done, and the secretary of state has mentioned the Lyon Group.

To be able to work together, countries have to agree on some rules. They have to know that if an offender is sent to another country, he will be treated the same way as he would be in his own country. Therefore, it is extremely important for countries to come to an agreement, and it is not always easy, because each and every state wants to run things.

I am glad to see that the committee is considering this issue as well as parliaments around the world, so that they can exchange information. Of course, in order to be able to exchange information and make a decision when the proceeds of some crime are located, we have to decide in advance how the proceeds of crime will be divided and who will try the alleged offender.

Will foreign countries agree with the way the trial will be run? We also have to think about the severity of the penalties provided. This has become crucial because it is so very easy for criminals to go from one country to another.

I want to thank my hon. colleague for his question. I think that, from now on, parliamentarians from countries around the world will have to talk about these things. I hope the committee will be the one to initiate these discussions. I also hope that the committee of a sovereign Quebec will be able to carry on and to discuss this issue with the committee of a sovereign Canada and the committees of other jurisdictions. It will be crucial to agree on some basic rules to ensure a minimum of justice.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate on the motion, which may be made votable, introduced by the Bloc Québécois on one of the opposition days provided for in the agreement between the parliamentary leaders of the various parties represented in the House.

The full motion reads as follows:

That this House instruct the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to conduct a study of organized crime, to analyse the options available to Parliament to effectively combat the activities of criminal groups and to report to the House no later than October 31, 2000.

In March 1998, Angus Reid conducted an omnibus survey containing questions about organized crime. The results of the survey said it all: 91% of the population described organized crime as a problem, and one Canadian out of two thought that it was a serious problem; 21% of the population thought that existing efforts to combat organized crime were adequate, and 77% wanted to see such efforts increased. Finally, the same survey showed that residents of Quebec and British Columbia were more anxious about organized crime than other Canadians.

For the Bloc Québécois to have set aside as a possible theme for this day a subject as important for our collective future as sovereignty and anti-democratic measures to control that process being dreamt up by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and the Prime Minister is a sign that the situation is critical with respect to organized crime.

Since our arrival in the House in 1993, a number of incidents have had a sobering impact on our existence as ordinary citizens wishing to live in peace and harmony. Let us recall briefly some of the more tragic among them.

• (1645)

In 1995, during a war between biker gangs for the control of a territory, Daniel Desrochers, an 11-year old boy, was killed by the explosion of a bomb in the Hochelaga—Maisonnette, in the east end of Montreal.

A few months later, a bomb went off in Saint-Nicolas, just south of Quebec City, and windows were shattered, including those in a baby's bedroom.

In 1997, Diane Lavigne and Pierre Rondeau, two prison guards, were killed in cold blood, presumably by bikers.

In a report by the Canadian Press published in *Le Soleil* of March 20, 1998, the then Quebec minister of public security, Pierre Bélanger, declared that the security and custody measures taken for the suspect had cost \$1 million. Moreover, the chief crown prosecutor in Montreal, André Vincent, said Hell's Angels hitmen killed the two prison guards at random, just to destabilize the justice system. He added that these criminals intended to attack crown prosecutors and judges too.

I will add that André Tousignant, one of the Hell's Angels hitmen, was murdered and his body found on February 27, 1998, in the woods near Bromont.

These terrible incidents add to the problems faced by, among others, the Sûreté du Québec in the fight against the so-called

forced plantings of marijuana in farmlands across Quebec. In this regard, the Canadian Police Association stated in a press release on October 8 that the awful reality was that organized crime had reached epidemic proportions and that the police were frustrated by the lack of tools and resources to fight it.

The statistics are very revealing in measuring the scope of the problem of organized crime, regardless of its source. For example, the RCMP advises that, between 1994 and 1998, in general terms, there were 79 murders and 89 attempted murders in connection with biker gang wars in Quebec. These wars are also behind 129 cases of arson and 82 bombings.

If we look at an impact study on organized crime commissioned by the Office of the Solicitor General and released in 1998, we learn that the illicit sale of drugs in Canada provides revenues of \$10 billion annually to those involved. Evaluations of the scope of the world market of illicit drugs vary between \$100 billion U.S. and \$500 billion U.S.

Le Devoir of January 8, 1999 reported that, in Canada, in 1998, smuggling, which concerns all criminal organizations, involved primarily tobacco, alcohol and jewellery. It even reported that, in jewellery alone, the Canadian black market was estimated to be worth \$400 million. All smuggling activities together are estimated to have cost the federal and provincial governments some \$1.4 billion.

Crimes of an economic nature are on the same scale. To list them quickly, these include fraudulent telemarketing, aimed particularly at the elderly, stock market fraud and the fraudulent use of credit cards. According to the same source, it would appear that economic crimes cost the people of Quebec and of Canada a minimum of \$5 billion annually.

This being the case, what has the Parliament of Canada done on the legislative, financial and international levels?

Let us look at the legislative aspect first of all. The government has passed four bills we feel it would be worthwhile to review briefly.

First there is the Witness Protection Act. Police forces are now in a position to provide better protection to those co-operating with them in obtaining evidence against criminal organizations.

Second, the Criminal Law Improvement Act enables the police to carry out storefront operations more easily. This enabled the RCMP to successfully carry out Operation Compote, resulting in charges against 50 people, one of them a Montreal lawyer.

The third is the anti-gang legislation passed in April 1997, the main thrust of which is inclusion in criminal law of the definition of gang.

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• (1650)

This bill makes it a crime to take part in the activities of a gang and provides heavier penalties for those who commit crimes for a gang. It also authorizes the seizure of goods used for gangs' criminal activities.

It should be noted that this legislation does not target the leaders of criminal gangs, since it is assumed that the individuals targeted are the ones who commit the crime. However, it is a well-known fact that in this type of criminal organization, the dirty jobs are often done by subordinates and that the leaders must be caught for these organizations to be broken up.

The fourth legislative measure is the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, which gives police the power to conduct reverse sting operations with undercover officers.

In spite of all these legislative provisions, police forces seem unable to put an end to the activities of criminal gangs. As for the financial resources earmarked by the governments of Canada and Quebec to fight organized crime, they seem clearly inadequate. However, it must be realized that it is difficult to get a precise breakdown of all the moneys spent on the issue that we are discussing today.

Finally, at the international level, during a conference held in Montreal in 1998, the deputy commissioner of the RCMP for investigations, René Charbonneau, proposed the establishment of an international criminal tribunal to deal with drug dealers.

In light of this brief overview of organized crime in Canada, we can see that the measures and the legislation in place and the amount of money spent at this time cannot eradicate this problem. That is why the Bloc Québécois believes it is important to examine the tools available to us to determine if they could be improved or if they could be complemented by new legislative, administrative and financial measures.

There seems to be a consensus on the urgency of passing new tougher and more explicit legislation to counter activities by criminal organizations.

Organized crime is certainly a national problem that threatens public safety. It is important that the efforts made by parliament to pass legislation that is suited to the reality faced by police match the efforts made by police in the field to uncover criminal organizations.

The federal government must show the political will to take action and must find ways to improve intelligence gathering by the police, to impose harsher sentences on members of criminal organizations and to give more teeth to its money laundering legislation.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Rimouski—Mitis

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for such an interesting speech, and on her knowledge of the international scene.

It is very often easier to obtain international consensus on a criminal reform project than to obtain federal and provincial consensus.

I recall that we managed to get three international treaties on the control of international terrorism passed in a matter of mere months, going beyond the ideological and conventional borders of the day.

Has the hon. member considered making suggestions to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the drafting of more detailed international conventions on this?

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: Judging by the performance of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the drafting of the treaty on anti-personnel mines, the crusade on which he set out in order to get the other countries on side, I feel he ought to again pick up his pilgrim's staff and set off on another crusade in connection with organized crime. This would lead to the ratification of a treaty that would, in a way, make the legislation more flexible.

• (1655)

It would enable the countries that were signatories of such a treaty to really deal with criminals, drug dealers for instance, without our having to resort to extradition because our country had sanctions against this crime and the other did not.

All the signatory states would have to be able to try these criminals and to impose upon them the penalties set out by a kind of international tribunal or the treaty itself.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my comment will be along the lines of those I have made in the course of the day. It must be understood that the motion tabled by the Bloc Québécois today, which will get hopefully a unanimous vote in the House of Commons this evening, is the product of considerable work.

The Bloc Québécois has long been discussing and working on it. I take this opportunity to thank the members for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, Hochelaga—Maison-neuve, Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, Québec and Drummond, and, for their support, the members for Roberval and Rimouski—Mitis, who, in the past few hours, have been negotiating with the other opposition parties to come up with a motion that would receive the unanimous approval of the House. Once and for all, we will study this issue seriously and with all assumptions on the table.

It is common knowledge that drug dollars are a huge problem. The Bloc Québécois has already tabled a bill on money laundering. Could we not in our study also look at the issue of money laundering and take the avenue proposed by the Bloc concerning,

among other things, \$1,000 bills and the deposit of large sums of money? Could the member respond to this question?

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I will respond quickly.

Indeed, I think we must study this issue. Our colleague from Charlesbourg has already introduced a bill to remove \$1,000 bills from circulation. We are probably the only major industrialized country to have such a large bill. It is easier to carry ten \$1000 bills in one's pockets than five hundred \$5 bills or two hundred \$10 bills, and so on. It makes for not such a thick wad with ten \$1,000 bills, and it is easier to launder them, in the casino, for example, some evening.

[English]

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for the motion currently before the House. I will share my time with the hon. member for Wentworth—Burlington.

Organized crime is a serious national and international problem that threatens public safety. It is now a multibillion dollar enterprise in Canada. It has a negative impact upon all Canadians.

Many of the problems Canadians see every day are linked to organized crime. Whether it be a drug related burglary, a carton of smuggled cigarettes, a telemarketing scam or juvenile prostitution, it is usually part of the larger problem of organized crime. That is why fighting organized crime is a major task for the government and a key priority of the RCMP.

The federal government has done much so far to hit hard at those criminals. The government is proud of what it has accomplished, but we all know there is more work to do. The government has undertaken a number of initiatives in its fight against organized crime. This government also recognizes that in the global war on organized crime, no one country or government can win by acting alone. Take the example of human smuggling and trafficking.

• (1700)

The government shares the concerns and frustrations of many Canadians in relation to the challenges posed by the arrival of illegal migrants. Canadians are proud of and deeply committed to our humanitarian traditions, but it is equally true that we have no tolerance for those who would abuse this generosity. Today criminally organized smuggling and trafficking operations are conducting an extensive international trade in lives and in the forced labour of human beings.

The United Nations estimates that international smuggling and trafficking operations have grown to a \$10 billion a year industry. Organized criminals are demanding as much as \$50,000 from their naive or misguided victims, exploiting their simple desire for a better life. We know that this debt is typically repaid over a short

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and brutal lifetime of illicit activity, sexual exploitation and forced labour.

This is a truly despicable set of circumstances but we must be clear about its source and direct our rightful anger and outrage toward the criminals who seek profit in human suffering rather than toward those victims who in search for a better life allow themselves to be put into such slavery.

Let us be clear about what has been happening with respect to our recent boatloads of arrivals from China. The boats were identified, intercepted, boarded and apprehended. Nine crew members have been charged. Their passengers have been detained. Organized crime has been denied access to the source of its profit. The economic incentive has been cut off. Those who have claimed refugee status are being given a fair hearing on an accelerated basis and in accordance with our charter, our international obligations and our proud humanitarian traditions.

Canadian government officials from the coast guard and national defence, the RCMP and Citizenship and Immigration Canada have all responded admirably under extremely stressful conditions, but the integrity of the system is something we take very seriously. Simply put, if we allow the rules to be abused and the rules are not respected, they cease to have meaning.

People smuggling and human trafficking are serious international problems. That is why we have initiated a serious international response. Canada has assumed a leading role in the development of United Nations protocols on transnational organized crime and migrant smuggling.

We have been working closely with our partners in the United States to improve our crime databases and on joint efforts to track and apprehend international criminals and terrorists. We are working along similar lines with law enforcement agencies in Australia, New Zealand and the European Union. It is worth noting that other countries are confronting similar problems, often on a significantly greater scale. This month alone Australia has seen the arrival of 10 migrant vessels carrying almost 900 people.

We are working with the People's Republic of China. Senior immigration officers along with members of the RCMP have recently returned from Beijing and the Fujian province where they met with representatives of the Chinese government, its enforcement officers and local police.

• (1705)

Last September I and two colleagues from the House went to China. We had discussions and negotiations with Chinese officials to work jointly to solve the human smuggling problem. This visit has helped us to advance our working relationship on human trafficking, people smuggling and the repatriation of Chinese nationals. The Chinese government has reported the recent seizure

of six migrant vessels, including up to four which are thought to have been destined for Canada.

Smuggling has been around for a while. It is a fee for service operation where smugglers are paid for simple passage across international borders. They provide this service through various means which include such things as false travel documents and undetected border crossings. Their customers are sometimes economic migrants, but sometimes they are legitimate refugees who resort to smugglers as the only way to escape the source of their persecution.

Human trafficking is more akin to human slavery. The goal of traffickers is to profit from indentured human slaves. Once their debts have been imposed, the victims of human trafficking are bound to a long term repayment plan involving forced labour, prostitution and other illicit activities. These victims often have reason to fear for their lives and the lives of their family members back home.

For human traffickers, the goal is not legal status. In the first instance it is to evade detection at our ports of entry in order to enter unnoticed and force their passengers underground and into slavery as soon as possible. We are opposed to both smuggling and trafficking. But above all, Canada will not tolerate the abuse of our system by organized criminals engaged in such deplorable human exploitation.

The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has travelled across the country speaking with her provincial counterparts, representatives of various non-governmental organizations and other concerned citizens. She has listened to a wide range of views on the matter in order to come up with a solution to this problem.

There is no easy solution to this problem. That is why I am pleased to support the motion that is before the House. I urge all members to do so.

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really a pleasure to rise in this debate because just yesterday I was saying that I felt that the Bloc Québécois, despite their agenda of sovereignty, contributes mightily to this parliament. I think this motion today is an example of a very positive contribution of the Bloc Québécois.

I do not have a lot of time, but I would like to take this debate in a particular direction. I would like to draw the Bloc's attention and this parliament's attention to the fact that organized crime has also entered the field of charities. I think this is something that should be of concern to the justice committee when it comes to act on the motion proposed by the Bloc Québécois.

Mr. Speaker, organized crime enters the field of voluntary service in a number of ways. One way is the proliferation of various telemarketing and direct mail scams. The commercial

Supply

crime squad of the RCMP has recently reported, in Montreal in fact, that there have been links to the biker gangs. They have established links to biker gangs of organizations that are engaged in soliciting funds by telemarketing.

• (1710)

These are the people, Mr. Speaker, who phone and chiefly prey on the senior citizens in our society, both in French and in English, I have to say. It very much is a Canadian thing because this type of activity occurs and all we Canadians, our elderly parents, actually are very vulnerable to it.

So this kind of thing is going on, Mr. Speaker. The other thing that is occurring that again I believe is the effect of organized crime, and this is the case of international organized crime where organizations take advantage of the ethnic makeup of Canada and perpetrate scams that basically involve making contact with individuals from whatever ethnic group and saying that a long lost relative has died in Africa, or Europe, or the former Yugoslavia, or the far east, and that they have been left an inheritance.

A lot of people have lost a lot of money through these scams which, again according to sources in the RCMP commercial crime squads, often are linked to international organized crime. Canada's ethnic community is very vulnerable to this kind of thing.

But, Mr. Speaker, probably the most significant penetration of organized crime into the charity field has to do with the fact that as the law stands now with respect to non-profit organizations, and especially charities, because there is so little scrutiny on the way charities operate, and so little scrutiny on the financial affairs of charities, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that charities have become a major conduit for the laundering of money.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to give you chapter and verse on which charities are engaged in this or which organizations are actually involved in it because, frankly, I do not know. I am not a policeman. I am not somebody who is involved in ferreting out criminal activity. I can tell you though, Mr. Speaker, based on my research, and you know, Mr. Speaker, I am very active in examining the charity sector, I can tell you that there is a lot of evidence, and recorded evidence, that charities have been used as fronts to finance overseas ethnic conflicts and terrorism.

That stands to reason, Mr. Speaker, because a charity can collect money. Under the current rules a charity can collect in loose change, shall we say, at bingos and lotteries and all that kind of thing, more than a million dollars and there is absolutely no way that that money can be audited as it stands now. On the other side with charitable organizations that have overseas branches, again there is no mechanism, Mr. Speaker, to be sure that when that money of that charity is transferred out of this country to its parent organization in another country, that that parent organization is not

using it to finance ethnic conflict or some very non-charitable activity.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what is good for international terrorism, I suggest to you, is good for international organized crime and I will say that the government has shown some interest in this area and we can hope that perhaps we will move with some kind of legislation, or some better regulations at the very least, to control charities which I point out to you, Mr. Speaker, is a \$90 billion industry that has run for years and years without any kind of meaningful oversight.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks. I am glad to put that on the record so that that can be part of what the justice committee considers when it follows through on the motion by the Bloc Quebecois, but I will end my remarks by saying that I think it is an excellent motion. I think it is the credit to my colleagues opposite and sometimes, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, you know they do so well, that sometimes I wish that they were the official opposition but then, what can I say, Mr. Speaker. They would have to change their politics for me to really believe that. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank them as well.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It being 5.15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt proceedings and put forthwith any question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

• (1715)

The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I declare the amendment carried.

The next question is on the main motion, as amended. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In view of the importance of this motion we ask for a recorded division on the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I must put the question first and then see if more than five members rise.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Call in the members.

• (1745)

[English]

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

(Division No. 59)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Adams
Anders
Assadourian
Augustine
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Baker
Beaumier
Bélangier
Bellemare
Bergeron
Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)
Bertrand
Bigras
Bonin
Boudria
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brisson
Bulte
Calder
Caplan
Carroll
Casson
Cauchon
Chan
Chatters
Clouthier
Collenette
Copp
Crête
Cummins
Davies
Debie
DeVillers
Dion
Dockrill
Dromisky
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Dumas
Earle
Eggleton
Epp
Folco
Forseth
Gagliano
Galloway

Ablonczy
Alcock
Assad
Asselin
Axworthy
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bakopanos
Béclair
Bellehumeur
Bennett
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bryden
Cadman
Cannis
Cardin
Casey
Catterall
Chamberlain
Charbonneau
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
Coderre
Comuzzi
Cotler
Cullen
Dalphond-Guiral
de Savoye
Desjarlais
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Doyle
Drouin
Duceppe
Duncan
Easter
Elley
Finlay
Fontana
Fry
Gagnon
Gauthier

Gilmour
Godfrey
Goldring
Gouk
Grewal
Grose
Guarnieri
Guimond
Hardy
Harvey
Hill (MacLeod)
Hoepfner
Ianno
Jackson
Jennings
Jones
Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)
Keys
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Konrad
Lalonde
Lavigne
Lee
Lill
Lincoln
Loubier
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Manley
Marchand
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews
McCormick
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague
Ménard
Meredith
Milliken
Minna
Morrison
Murray
Nault
Nunziata
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Paradis
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Pratt
Proud
Redman
Reynolds
Riis
Robinson
Rock
Sauvageau
Scott (Fredericton)
Sekora
Sgro
Solberg
Speller
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Stewart (Brant)
Stinson
Strahl
Telegdi
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Turp
Valeri
Vellacott
Wappel
Whelan
White (North Vancouver)
Williams—254

Supply

Girard-Bujold
Godin (Châteauguay)
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Edmonton North)
Gruending
Guay
Harb
Hart
Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hubbard
Iftody
Jaffer
Johnston
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Knutson
Kraft Sloan
Lastewka
Lebel
Leung
Limoges
Longfield
Lowther
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Malhi
Mancini
Manning
Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mayfield
McDonough
McKay (Scarborough East)
McNally
McWhinney
Mercier
Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Muise
Myers
Normand
Nystrom
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Penson
Perron
Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Piamondon
Proctor
Proulx
Reed
Richardson
Robillard
Rocheleau
Sada
Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)
Serré
Shepherd
Solomon
St. Denis
St-Jacques
Steele
Stewart (Northumberland)
Stoffer
Szabo
Thibeault
Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Ur
Vautour
Venne
Wasylycia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Wilfert

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

*Nil/aucun

PAIRED MEMBERS

Alarie
Brown
Canuel
Duhamel
Laurin
Pettigrew

Brien
Caccia
Desrochers
Harvard
Marceau
Vanclief

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

MUNICIPAL GRANTS ACT

The House resumed from November 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-10, an act to amend the Municipal Grants Act, be read a second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Pursuant to the order made on Thursday, November 25, 1999, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-10.

[Translation]

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent that those members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House. Liberal members will vote yes.

• (1750)

[English]

The Speaker: Is there agreement to proceed in such a fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, Reform Party members present vote no to this motion, unless instructed otherwise by their constituents.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Speaker, Bloc Québécois members will support the motion.

[English]

Mr. John Solomon: Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP present this evening vote yes to this motion.

[Translation]

Mr. André Harvey: Mr. Speaker, members of the Progressive Conservative Party will be voting in favour of the motion.

[English]

Mr. John Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, the good people of York South—Weston would want me to vote in favour of this motion.

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner: Mr. Speaker, Portage—Lisgar votes yea.

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 60)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Assad	Assadourian
Asselin	Augustine
Axworthy	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Baker
Bakopanos	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélanger
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bennett	Bergeron
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)	Bertrand
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Bigras
Bevilacqua	Bonin
Blondin-Andrew	Boudria
Bonwick	Brisson
Bradshaw	Bulte
Bryden	Cannis
Calder	Cardin
Caplan	Casey
Carroll	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Chan
Charbonneau	Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
Clouthier	Coderre
Collenette	Comuzzi
Copps	Cotler
Crête	Cullen
Dalphond-Guiral	Davies
de Savoye	Debieu
Desjarlais	De Villers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepola	Dockrill
Doyle	Dromisky
Drouin	Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Duceppe	Dumas
Earle	Easter
Eggleton	Finlay
Folco	Fontana
Fry	Gagliano
Gagnon	Galloway
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godfrey	Godin (Châteauguay)
Goodale	Gray (Windsor West)
Grose	Gruending
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Harb
Hardy	Harvey
Herron	Hoepfner
Hubbard	Ianno
Iftody	Jackson
Jennings	Jones
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keddy (South Shore)
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lalonde
Lastewka	Lavigne
Lebel	Lee
Leung	Lill
Limoges	Lincoln
Longfield	Loubier
MacAulay	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mahoney	Malhi

Private Members' Business

Maloney
Manley
Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McCormick
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McWhinney
Mercier
Milliken
Minna
Muise
Myers
Normand
Nystrom
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peric
Peterson
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Pratt
Proud
Redman
Richardson
Robillard
Rocheleau
Saada
Scott (Fredericton)
Serré
Shepherd
Speller
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Stewart (Brant)
Stoffer
Telegdi
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Turp
Valeri
Venne
Wasylcia-Leis
Wilfert—212

Mancini
Marchand
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews
McDonough
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Ménard
Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Murray
Nault
Nunziata
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Paradis
Patri
Perron
Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Plamondon
Proctor
Proulx
Reed
Riis
Robinson
Rock
Sauvageau
Sekora
Sgro
Solomon
St. Denis
St-Jacques
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo
Thibeault
Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Ur
Vautour
Wappel
Whelan

Duhamel
Laurin
Pettigrew

Harvard
Marceau
Vanclief

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Government Operations.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[English]

The Speaker: It being 5.50 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1755)

[English]

RECOGNITION OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY ACT

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.) moved that Bill C-224, an act to establish by the beginning of the 21st century an exhibit in the Canadian Museum of Civilization to recognize the crimes against humanity as defined by the United Nations that have been perpetrated during the 20th century, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-224 was originally introduced on February 15, 1999, as Bill C-479. The number was changed because the House prorogued and began a new session. The bill calls upon the government to establish an exhibit in the Canadian Museum of Civilization to recognize the crimes against humanity that occurred in the 20th century. In total about 90 million people have died in this century from crimes against humanity.

There are many different definitions of crimes against humanity. Some call it genocide. Some call it holocaust. Some call it murder or atrocities. I chose the UN definition so that nobody could argue about it because we signed the UN definition of crimes against humanity.

I did not use the word genocide because our government and many governments around the world recognize that over 90 million people died of genocide. For example, 35 million Chinese people died because of genocide. I have used the phrase crimes against humanity because it would be inclusive.

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Anders
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Casson
Cummins
Elley
Forsyth
Goldring
Grewal
Hart
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Johnston
Konrad
Manning
McNally
Morrison
Reynolds
Scott (Skeena)
Stinson
Vellacott
White (North Vancouver)

Ablonczy
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Cadman
Chatters
Duncan
Epp
Gilmour
Gouk
Grey (Edmonton North)
Hill (Macleod)
Jaffer
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lowther
Mayfield
Meredith
Penson
Schmidt
Solberg
Strahl
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Williams—42

PAIRED MEMBERS

Alarie
Brown
Canuel

Brien
Caccia
Desrochers

Private Members' Business

The second point I wish to make is that I did not ask to have a freestanding museum for genocide or crimes against humanity, simply because as backbenchers we are not allowed to ask the government to spend money. I hope those two reasons will be taken into consideration when we go forward in our discussions.

I also acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the representative of the Turkish government at the embassy here and the charge d'affaires of public affairs of the Republic of Armenia. I was successful at bringing these two nations together in the gallery to sit down and listen to the debate. I also believe there are some Canadians of various backgrounds who are very much concerned with this issue.

When I first introduced my bill on February 15 I said in the House:

The purpose of the bill is to mandate the establishment at the beginning of the 21st century of an exhibit in the Canadian Museum of Civilization recognizing all crimes against humanity that have been perpetrated during the 20th century.

Canadians from diverse backgrounds have been affected by crimes against humanity that have taken place throughout the 20th century. The suffering of any group of victims is no less significant than that of any other group.

In introducing the bill I hope to address the concern that the creation of a museum to recognize only one group of victims would severely diminish the significance of the millions of other lives that have been lost or ruined as victims of crimes against humanity.

How can we as a government support one group of victims and ignore the suffering of others?

That would be an insult to the other 90 million people who died during this century.

The Senate held hearings in May 1998 and came up with a report called "Guarding History". Recommendation No. 12 of that report called for the establishment of a museum for the genocide and/or the holocaust. My bill addresses the report given to us by the Senate.

We will recall also that the Prime Minister went to Auschwitz at the beginning of this year. I was hoping that he would make an announcement there that we would have an inclusive museum of genocide in the country. I regret that was not the case. Hopefully after the discussion today an inclusive museum will be established.

I visited Poland with the parliamentary delegation for NATO. I had a chance to visit Maidanek where I saw incredible scenes of atrocities. The number of nationalities involved in those atrocities was about 54. There were all victims of crimes against humanity.

When I presented my bill back in February I received, within two hours, endorsements from over 100 members of parliament. They wanted to see the bill come to the floor to be discussed. I will

take this opportunity to thank them for their support. It was very beneficial to me. Throughout the few months that I worked on this, I had enormous support from various cultural groups, the list of which I will read soon.

● (1800)

We also had the chance to send about 85,000 pieces of literature: some post cards, some letters, some petitions and some just regular mail. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit some to you. I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table these two pages.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The member for Brampton Centre has asked the unanimous consent of the House to table some papers in connection with his private member's bill. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian: Mr. Speaker, earlier in my comments I said that I had enormous support from many Canadians. Twenty-three committees have supported me so far. For the record they are: Association for Learning and Preserving of the History of WWII in Asia, ALPHA; Belarusian Canadian Coordinating Committee; Buddhist Communities of Greater Toronto; Canadian Arab Federation; Canadian Islamic Congress; Canadian Ukrainian Immigrant Aid Society; Council of the Muslim Community of Canada; Cypriot Canadian Federation; Federation of Associations of Canadians Tamils; Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations; Hellenic Canadian Congress; Hellenic Committee for Human Rights and National Issues; Latvian National Federation of Canada; National Association of Canadians with Origins in India; National Federation of Pakistani Canadians; Palestine Heritage Canada; Pan African Movement of Canada; Serbian National Shield Society of Canada; Slovenian National Federation; Toronto Kurdish Community and Information Centre; Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association; Ukrainian Canadian Congress; Ukrainian National Federation of Canada; and Ukrainian Women's Organization of Canada.

Two weeks ago, I had the honour of enlisting the support of the Armenian General Benevolent Union headed Mr. Danny Boyajan, which made my support at 23.

I will read a couple of lines from a letter which I received from the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations. It reads:

The Federation urges the Canadian government to consider the establishment of a broadly based museum or exhibit on genocide that is inclusive of the realities of all ethnocultural communities.

It goes on to say:

Such a process should be publicly determined and accountable to the system.

Private Members' Business

I whole-heartedly agree with this.

I also have a general letter of support from a group of Canadians called Canadians for a Genocide Museum. They say that their 24-member association represents a wide multicultural group and that they whole-heartedly support the passing of Bill C-224, an act to establish by the beginning of the 21st century a museum exhibit to recognize crimes against humanity. As members can see, the support for this bill is enormous.

I had the chance to go to the Ukrainian church on the weekend for a commemoration. It was the 66th anniversary of the famine genocide on the Ukrainian population which took place in 1933. I was very moved to see young Canadians lighting candles for each of the nationalities I mentioned earlier that had suffered atrocities.

Further, on November 18 I asked a question in the House of Commons to the Minister of Canadian Heritage. In reply, she said:

Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the member for Brampton Centre who has done an incredible job getting together 22 organizations from across the country to work on this very important issue.

I hope that all members of the House will be here to speak in support of private member's bill, Bill C-224, which will be debated in the House on November 30.

I thank the minister for her support. I would like to save a few minutes at the end of the debate for my final comments.

● (1805)

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-224, the recognition of crimes against humanity act, sponsored by the hon. member for Brampton Centre. It is regrettable that the bill is not votable. It is hoped that the government will take serious note of this debate and act upon the sentiments that are expressed by myself and my hon. colleagues.

Under Bill C-224, the Canadian Museum of Civilization is directed by parliament to establish an exhibit that recognizes crimes against humanity perpetrated during the 20th century. The exhibit is to be located in the Canadian Museum of Civilization. The board of trustees is given two years from the time of the parliamentary direction to establish the exhibit "crimes against humanity" under the act defined by the United Nations. That definition is quite broad, encompassing specific acts committed as part of a widespread or systemic attack directed against any civilian population.

By using the United Nations crimes against humanity definition rather than the United Nations definition of genocide, the hon. member has broadened the categories of acts that would be depicted by the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Genocide is a crime against humanity, although not all crimes against humanity

are genocides. Genocide is an act committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

While the notorious rape of Nanking, China by the Japanese prior to the commencement of World War II would be categorized as a crime against humanity, it is not genocide. The rape of Nanking is a matter of particular horror to those Canadians with family ties to China, just as the Russian-induced Ukrainian famine of 1932-1933 is a matter of particular horror to those Canadians with ties to the Ukraine. If, by the hon. member's bill, the rape of Nanking were to be remembered in Canada, that would mean very much to many people.

I am supportive of the hon. member's bill, and in particular of his willingness to support parliamentary direction into how our federally funded museums shall utilize the public financial resources that are voted on by this House and to be used in accordance with the wishes of the House. Sometimes bureaucrats forget that the public funds that they are accountable for are in fact trust funds for the public's benefit, with the trust established through votes in the House.

In the past, we have seen a need for intervention by members of the House and the other place with respect to the administration of the Canadian War Museum and an ill-fated proposal to house a holocaust gallery in it. Many in the House and elsewhere commented that it would be preferable to address this dark side of humanity elsewhere than in the Canadian War Museum. They felt this way since so much of our Canadian war artifacts and war art have yet to be properly displayed in the war museum.

These people also recognize that while there is one historically recognized Holocaust, the holocaust is part of a much larger history of attempted genocides and related crimes against humanity. Humanity's dark side should be subject to a separate display that is not tied to Canada's proud war history. As one step, I have introduced a motion, M-18, calling for a separate, self-sustaining world genocide museum in Canada.

The bill of the hon. member for Brampton Centre is one step in the right direction. One reason that his bill is declaratory and does not go so far as to require the creation of a separate crimes against humanity museum is that, as a government backbencher, the hon. member cannot introduce legislation requiring government expenditures; in short, he cannot introduce a money bill.

The human race has witnessed acts of genocide throughout its history. Genocide is not solely the horrendous byproduct of certain wars. In fact many incidents of genocide are not war related at all. Genocide is always a failure of humanity; the dark side of a civilization run amok.

It is important to groups which have been decimated by genocidal acts that the world remember the particular atrocities in order to

Private Members' Business

learn and understand what happened. All groups affected by genocidal acts want only to be remembered equally. The genocides of world history cannot be distinguished on the basis of size or scope. All genocide is horror.

In my view, Canada should institutionalize remembrance to the construction of a world genocide museum. This would be a museum in Canada's capital depicting the madness and inhumanity of the decimation of so many. Such a museum would send a powerful message to visiting world leaders. It would speak clearly to all Canadians as to the duty to be advocates of a world peace that respects all persons.

• (1810)

As is commonly understood, our history has witnessed one Holocaust in World War II, and many attempted genocides. The Holocaust is a uniquely recognized attempt at genocide. Others are not so similarly recognized but should be clearly remembered.

In my view, genocide should be regarded more as a failure of civilization rather than a product of war, whether it be the Ukrainian famine, the Cambodian killing fields or the Holocaust. The dark side of humanity is a separate issue to be remembered quite apart from the honourable military histories. It is my hope that consideration will be given to examining the dark side of humanity throughout history by way of the establishment in Canada of a permanent world genocide museum.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maud Debieu (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the bill put forward by the hon. member for Brampton Centre gives me pause for reflection on a very serious issue. I am talking, of course, about genocide and other crimes against humanity that we should never forget, let alone pretend that they never happened.

As members know, these last few years, Bloc Quebecois members have supported every measure to underline and commemorate tragic events where men have shown how inhumane and violent they can be at times. We have stood up against those who tried to wipe out all memories of these tragedies.

Let me remind my hon. colleagues that, in this House, in 1996 to be exact, the Liberal government toned down a motion concerning the Armenian genocide by dropping the word genocide and replacing it with the term tragic event.

That same year, the Minister for International Cooperation pressured the mayor of Montreal to abandon his plans to erect a monument to the victims of the Armenian genocide. Again, the minister would have preferred tragic event instead of the term genocide.

At the time, I rose in the House to remind my colleagues that toning down wordings in such a context is tantamount to

confirming that the final step in a genocide is to attempt, after the fact, to deny its very existence, or at the very least to minimize its importance. That is what is called selective memory.

For the Bloc Quebecois, genocide and all other crimes against humanity must not be hushed up. There are lessons to be learned from them. Also, the words used to describe these barbaric acts must not be used as a pretext to trivialize unspeakable acts.

Let us not forget that our sense of history and our collective memory will keep alive the memory of humanity's past.

The contents of Bill C-224, which we are now debating, are pretty clearly defined in the title, an act to establish by the beginning of the twenty-first century an exhibit in the Canadian Museum of Civilization to recognize the crimes against humanity as defined by the United Nations that have been perpetrated during the twentieth century.

My colleagues in the Bloc Quebecois and myself will not oppose initiatives aimed at reminding people of past errors so they will ever occur again.

Having worked in education, I find it essential that our young people have a better knowledge of all these tragic mistakes and all these instances of genocide.

Therefore, we are interested in the idea of informing the public about genocide and other crimes against humanity through an exhibit in the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

• (1815)

It could be an interesting tool for teaching the young and the not so young.

But the teaching of history is also important, because not all Quebecers and Canadians have a chance to visit museums.

So that future generations recall these human tragedies, maybe they could be included in the curricula of our history courses. This would be another good way of ensuring that these events live on in our collective memory.

We therefore see the debate on the bill introduced by the member for Brampton Centre as a unique opportunity to recall the growing concerns of Quebecers and Canadians with respect to major crimes against humanity.

However, it is not for the Bloc Quebecois to impose themes or exhibit material on museums. It is not for politicians in this House to decide these matters.

We are here today to raise a concern that is important to the constituents we represent and to express a wish and support for a future exhibit. It is from this perspective that we feel that Bill

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C-224 is well-intentioned and that we support it in principle, but we feel that the Canadian Museum of Civilization should have full latitude to make any decisions.

As parliamentarians, our responsibility goes beyond supporting the idea of an exhibit on genocides and crimes against humanity. For example, we know that Canada was and still is a haven for too many people responsible for war crimes or crimes against humanity.

The Bloc Québécois has supported measures to amend the Criminal Code to allow the removal and expulsion of war criminals. We are still waiting for another amendment to the Criminal Code that would allow us to judge these people here.

This is a concrete measure that the government and parliamentarians will have to adopt some day if they are serious about learning from the past.

Unfortunately, many genocides and crimes against humanity were committed during the 20th century. We are most familiar with the plight of Armenians, the Holocaust and, more recently, the atrocities in Cambodia, Rwanda, Burundi, East Timor, Bosnia or Kosovo, to name but a few.

For people to remember, for our collective memory to remain intact, for reconciliation to be possible among people, society must remember its epic moments, but also its darkest ones.

It is in the recognition of the peoples' right to exist that justice and freedom take on their full meaning. Is justice not freedom in action?

[*English*]

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today and speak to this important Bill C-224, an act which would direct the creation of a genocide exhibit at the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

I would like to start my remarks by thanking the hon. member for Brampton Centre for bringing this important matter before the House. I would like to thank also the hundreds of Canadians who have expressed opinions to members of parliament through cards and especially through thoughtful letters which many of us have received from national organizations on this matter. It is clear that this matter has received a lot of thought from a lot of Canadians.

• (1820)

Among New Democrats there is no dispute that our society should honour the victims of all crimes against humanity, no matter when and where in the world this has occurred. We know we must increase our efforts to educate our children and to remember those who have fallen to genocide and encourage all of the national

institutions dedicated to providing such assistance to fulfil this important mandate.

I am proud to be part of a political movement which has always stood up for domestic and international human rights, even when such stands were not particularly popular. The CCF, the forerunner to the NDP, spoke out against the racist immigration policies of previous Canadian governments, such as the Chinese head tax and the confinement of Japanese Canadians in the second world war.

In 1970 the NDP was the only voice in the House of Commons to question the suspension of human rights by the government under the War Measures Act. NDP policy has always called for the respect of human rights as the primary consideration in our foreign policy. On the whole, and there are exceptions which I will not get into in this debate, Canada is now seen as a country which supports human rights and which fosters peace by most other countries and by most of the world's people.

Many associate the word genocide with places far from Canada. But we have our dark moments in our history, moments which many try to forget, moments when our forefathers and foremothers committed massive human rights abuses, which I would define as crimes against humanity. I specifically think of the shameful slave trade which took place 200 years ago in Halifax or of the barbaric actions taken by colonial powers against our aboriginal populations from coast to coast to coast.

We should never forget the practices of slaughtering the Beothuk in Newfoundland or the reallocation of the Inuit, the destruction of the Potlatch or the policy of residential schools. These practices were also a form of genocide.

These are things which we must recognize as part of our history and which Canadians should be educated about by our national institutions devoted to remembering the victims of crimes against humanity.

Sadly, it is easy to develop a list of all those who have been victims of genocide. Our century has been the most barbaric in history. As we have developed as a civilization with technological and scientific leaps, we have seen individuals, groups and whole societies use that technology to find better ways to kill their neighbours. The Holocaust and the famine in Ukraine are but two examples of how modern methods which were meant to raise our standard of living have been used to mass murder men, women and children.

I believe it would be of benefit to Canada to have a national institution which recognizes these facts. I believe that we need to educate our next generation on how these evils occur. We need a showcase which allows Canadians to confront our past both as Canadians and as citizens of the world. We need a place to mourn the millions who have died. We need a place where we can learn from our history and so that it cannot be repeated.

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Is Bill C-224 the best way to recognize the gravity of the subject? I want to raise two questions on this issue. First, should parliament dictate to a national museum the content of an exhibit? That issue has already been raised tonight in the House. Is a gallery at the current Museum of Civilization the most appropriate national forum for this subject?

On the first question, I would have to answer with a firm no. Politicians should not get directly involved in telling museum directors and especially curators how to do their business. Politicians have a responsibility to provide a framework for appropriate expressions of our heritage. The result has been the Museums Act which establishes our national museums and our national art gallery, and gives them arm's length government structures and states their goals in law. These institutions report back to parliament on how they are meeting their goals and account for their expenditures of public funds.

This is our tradition. That is the way it should work. But if parliament says to a museum "Above and beyond your current responsibilities you must have the following specific exhibit with specific content objectives and meeting the specific following time line", which is what clause 2 of Bill C-224 says, I have a real problem with that. If this passes, then the tradition of the arm's length relationship with a national heritage agency is broken, and I do have a problem with that. I do not want politicians telling cultural agencies what art is or what history is. That would be a danger.

• (1825)

I have a problem with the current bill based on the wording in clause 2 which breaks the arm's length relationship between parliament and the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

Is an exhibit at the museum of civilization the most appropriate forum? I am proposing an alternative approach. Why not ask the government to establish a genocide museum under the current structure of the Museums Act.

A separate institution would allow for the kind of meaningful discussion which I know would be required to have the best institution of this kind in the world. Many views exist on what form a museum dedicated to victims of genocide should take. I am aware that discussions have taken place between various parties, notably the groups proposing an institution, to remember the Holocaust and others in an appropriate forum.

I wish all concerned success since I know that no group is approaching this debate with an agenda of exclusion. The purpose of a stand-alone museum could be, as is set out in Bill C-224, to recognize the victims of crimes against humanity. A separate institution would have a permanence, something that an exhibit at the museum of civilization may not have.

A separate institution would allow for a special place for those who go not only to learn, but for those who go to remember and to mourn.

I am optimistic about this as a possibility, partly based on the work done by the member for Brampton Centre. Many of the groups which have expressed support for the gallery included in the bill have also expressed support for a separate institution. When the member for Brampton Centre asked the question of the Minister of Canadian Heritage about this matter on November 18 of this year, she stood in her place and encouraged all MPs to support the initiative.

To me this is a clear signal that the government is open to a proposal for a stand-alone institution. In the end, the success of an exhibit, gallery or separate institution would be based on adequate funding from the government.

Having a proposal from the government would guarantee that the resource question has been dealt with. I believe that having such an institution will not break the bank. I remind members that the total cost of all our national museums and galleries is less than \$4 per capita. I think it is a bargain, quite frankly.

It should be noted that more Canadians visit museums than attend professional sports events every year. The museum of civilization and its affiliate museum, the war museum, received over one and a half million visits last year alone. While all such institutions cost money, they are used and they are valued by Canadians.

In closing, I regret not being able to support Bill C-224 because of how it breaches the arm's length relationship which I believe parliament should maintain for our cultural institutions or agencies, but I am proud to add my voice to those calling on the government to create a museum which can deal with this important matter.

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Mr. Speaker, I consider it a privilege to rise before the House to debate the merits of Bill C-224, an act to establish an exhibit in the Canadian Museum of Civilization in recognition of the crimes against humanity, as defined by the United Nations, that have been perpetrated during the 20th century.

I congratulate my hon. colleague for Brampton Centre for having the courage to introduce such an important piece of legislation. I say courage because there remains considerable controversy, whether some of the killings that are being characterized as crimes against humanity were somehow justified as acts of war.

I suspect that all parliamentarians have received significant amounts of correspondence in response to the member for Brampton Centre's private member's bill.

I can honestly say that each day I receive a number of letters or postcards from fellow Canadians showing their strong views about the prospects of Canada establishing an all encompassing Canadian genocide museum.

I thank each and every one of those Canadians who have taken the time to share their personal experiences with me. Reading about some of their terrible experiences has helped me develop a greater understanding and deeper sense of appreciation for this wonderful country in which we live.

I suspect that most Canadians who have the good fortune of being born in a country such as Canada are guilty of taking our freedom for granted.

• (1830)

Our heroes who fought during the first and second world wars and those who participated in the Boer and Korean wars, along with the many peacekeepers who have represented us with honour throughout the hot spots in the world, would have a different perspective about what it means to live in a free and democratic society.

In an ideal world, all people are created equal and are free to live and work where they choose and free to practise their own religion without fear of persecution. Unfortunately, history has shown that this simply is not the case.

History is riddled with extraordinary acts of cruelty against mankind. Crimes against humanity have been chronicled almost since the beginning of time. It is because of this long history of treachery that I question whether an exhibition of crimes against humanity that is limited to the 20th century is sufficient.

There are many examples of genocides or crimes against humanity which have had a direct impact on the evolution of Canadian society. To ignore some of them by restricting the exhibit to events that happened in the 20th century would be committing a huge disservice to our young Canadians. Our youth should be exposed to the various interpretations of history so that they can develop a broader perspective and a better understanding of events that have shaped the social fabric of this country.

[*Translation*]

Most Canadians know about the deportation of the Acadians that occurred in 1755. This was a tragic event in Canadian history. During the deportation, most Acadians were put on boats and sent to the United States. A lot of them ended up in Louisiana.

Thousands of Acadians lost their lives in this tragedy. The survivors tried unsuccessfully to hook up again with their families. Many Acadians were able to flee to New-Brunswick and Quebec to avoid the fate of their fellow citizens.

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It took several centuries for Acadians to recover from this tragedy. Some would argue that we are still suffering.

Historians do not all agree about this deportation. Was it a war against the Acadians or an ethnic cleansing operation? This, I guess, depends on the viewpoint of the historian. Nevertheless, no one can deny that this tragedy happened and that the measures taken by Great-Britain had some serious consequences.

[*English*]

A better understanding of what happened to our Acadian people can help Canadians to understand the interesting dynamics that have helped to shape our individual communities. Surviving these crimes against humanity has created a special bond among our people. It has given us cause to unite and strengthen our unique cultural heritage. Understanding the tragedy of the 1755 deportation can help us better appreciate the human suffering of more recent examples of crimes against humanity.

On October 5, 1998 a redress monument was erected in the city of Montreal by the Armenian community. It erected this monument on behalf of all victims of genocide in the 20th century. This is a very significant achievement considering the extensive persecution that was carried out against the Armenian community. By recognizing not only its own tragedy but also the many acts of genocide committed in the world, the Armenian community has helped to focus our attention on this ongoing tragedy. In a sense this act of compassion may help with the healing process.

An all-encompassing genocide exhibit at the Canadian Museum of Civilization has been proposed by the hon. member for Brampton Centre. It could be a very useful tool in helping Canadians to learn more about the terrible acts of terror we perpetrated against our fellow human beings. Perhaps such exhibits might help the world come to grips with these atrocities.

I cannot stress strongly enough the notion that such an exhibit must be all-encompassing. Where disagreement threatens to blow up into full-fledged controversy, it is important that both sides of a conflict be allowed to present their different perspectives on events surrounding a charge of genocide.

Crimes against humanity are not a new phenomenon. Examples of genocide can be traced to a time before the birth of Jesus Christ. Sadly, history is saddled with examples of acts of genocide. Crimes against humanity have been committed on religious, racial and political grounds, yet the only common denominator continues to be the extermination of millions of innocent men, women and children.

• (1835)

I mentioned the Armenians earlier because they were the victims of persecution in the early 1900s when millions were reportedly massacred during the first world war. Although some argue that they were victims of war and not genocide, it is generally acknowl-

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edged by many historians that millions of Armenians were indeed the victims of genocide. Even to this day, the Armenian people continue to be the target of the repressive government of Saddam Hussein.

The Ukrainian people are another example of a people who suffered tremendous persecution, in particular during the early 1930s. Josef Stalin created a state-generated famine that resulted in the starvation deaths of millions of Ukrainians. These people died needlessly when there was food available to save them. They were also victims of Hitler's ethnic cleansing policies that most people associate mainly with the Jewish people.

I think most people are aware of the Holocaust and the notorious death camps of the second world war in which over six million Jews perished. These Jews were shipped from across Europe in order to be systematically slaughtered in those death camps. Perhaps ignored by history is the plight of the Gypsies and Ukrainians during this particular onslaught on humanity.

The world was said to be appalled by this unprecedented attack against humanity. At the time it was said that such a horror could never happen again. We all know that history has an unfortunate way of repeating itself. Many acts of genocide have occurred since the second world war and, unfortunately, many acts of genocide continue today.

We have examples of genocide in Cambodia where from 1975 to 1979, between two million and four million people were killed by the Khmer Rouge simply for disagreeing with the regime. More recently in 1994, we watched apathetically as the Hutus in Rwanda massacred hundreds of thousands of Tutsis. We have the ethnic cleansing that was carried out in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the wars of the former Yugoslavia. Even today, we are receiving word of crimes against humanity in Sudan.

I am standing here reciting atrocities as if they were score cards, yet we are talking about the death and destruction of millions of our fellow human beings. Is it not disgusting how mankind has persecuted their fellow human beings? Perhaps it is easier to talk about atrocities because we have not witnessed them ourselves. I am afraid to consider that we are being desensitized by the constant reports of atrocities.

If it is indeed the case, as I do fear, then I think it is important that we support the member for Brampton Centre, along with the millions of people who are victims of crime against humanity. Let us create this exhibit in the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Perhaps by seeing this horror for ourselves, we might be more supportive in our efforts to try and put an end to these atrocities worldwide.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): May I have some indication of how many members intend to speak on this motion? I

know there are two, the members for Lac-Saint-Louis and Vancouver Kingsway. We have five minutes for the sponsor of the bill. There are about 15 minutes left, so that if the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway would keep her remarks to about seven minutes, then we could do the same privilege for the member for Lac-Saint-Louis, and still get the finishing remarks in.

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Brampton Centre for introducing Bill C-224 as a recognition of crimes against humanity.

We all know that every murder destroys a measure of human dignity. Atrocities against humanity have a long and sad history. I will cite a few incidents of inhumanity.

One of the earliest examples are the horrors that were perpetrated by the ancient Romans when they fought and destroyed Carthage. In the 1930s Stalin began his collectivization programs in Ukraine. The result was mass starvation of untold numbers of Ukrainians, an atrocity that community even today is struggling to deal with.

• (1840)

In 1931 to 1945 historians estimate Japanese soldiers slaughtered 35 million Chinese during the Japanese invasion of China.

In 1975 the Cambodian people began a terrifying period of their history as the Khmer Rouge took over. The legacy of that regime is known as the killing fields. Over the subsequent four years, an estimated 1.5 to 2 million Cambodian people were murdered or died as the result of the reorganization implemented by the Khmer Rouge.

In 1994 attention slowly focused on Rwanda as news of a massacre emerged from the nation. Those atrocities left communities shattered, families broken and left thousands struggling for survival. According to statistics from the Rwandan Ministry of Home Affairs, obtained from the preliminary census of the vulnerable groups, the number of vulnerable because of genocide stood at 145,881 widows, 49,299 without shelter and 39,727 orphans. The physically and mentally handicapped totalled 4,619.

As recently as last week, stories from East Timor tell of the discovery of mass graves; priests, women and children shot or stabbed to death and buried in an effort to conceal the evidence.

We must stop those senseless crimes against humanity by recalling history so that our children may learn from our past mistakes.

I congratulate the hon. member for Brampton Centre. I fully support Bill C-224, the Recognition of Crimes Against Humanity Act. I would encourage other hon. members to do the same.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the hon. member, for expressing his views on the commemoration of crimes against humanity committed during this century.

There are a number of ways to commemorate such phenomenal violations of human rights and security. A museum exhibition would be one of them. There are certainly other ways.

[*Translation*]

We are about to enter the 21st century. The time has come to take a moment to reflect on the century that is coming to an end. As my colleague who presented this bill said so eloquently, the 20th century alone is enough to show, through too many examples, man's inhumanity to man.

I think there are lessons to be learned from the past. Canada stands as a role model for the rest of the world. Everybody here can find order and good government. People can co-exist in harmony with intercultural understanding and sharing and with respect for differences.

[*English*]

Individuals from diverse backgrounds make up our country and we have learned to respect one another's culture, religion, race and ethnic origin. We are, therefore, sensitive to the pain of those Canadians who may at one time have been victimized by the inhumanity of war, or by bigotry and oppression.

• (1845)

Our history records that we have made errors of our own. Canadians wish those moments had never happened. We wish we could rewrite history but unfortunately we cannot. However we can and must learn from the past.

If we are to learn from the past, if we are to hope that one day humankind can live together in peace and respect, we must always be mindful of the cruelty of tyranny, of the massacres of peoples, and of the incarceration, degradation and inhumanity that man has wrought on his fellow human beings.

[*Translation*]

We must all be aware of the extent of the atrocious crimes against humanity which have taken place through history. We will be better able to learn from the past if we remember the crimes against humanity which are still fresh in our memories and which are the sorry legacy of the 20th century.

The voice of Canada is a voice for peace. Canada was the first country to suggest the use of peace keeping forces and today we are keeping the peace in many countries around the world.

On the eve of the 21st century, Canada is well placed to show the way into a safer and more peaceful world. In the last throne speech, the government promised to put a greater emphasis on human security in its foreign policy, and help international bodies make progress on the global issue of human security.

One is better able to understand the significance of this promise when one is aware of the injustices which have threatened human security during this century and learns from these experiences.

[*English*]

We strongly believe that on the world stage we as Canadians can influence change. Protection from crimes against humanity can best be gained through ensuring that all countries and their peoples have a profound respect for and understanding of the universal declaration of human rights.

Human rights are intrinsic to a rich and fulfilled life. The recent 50th anniversary of the adoption of the universal declaration of human rights by the United Nations General Assembly gave Canadians a superb opportunity to reflect on how human rights contribute to the quality of life in Canada.

[*Translation*]

International and Canadian organizations keep on looking for solutions to the ongoing problems of human rights violations, and to problems that have just been identified as such.

The establishment of an International Criminal Tribunal is only one of the many current initiatives taken by Canada and the international community to deal with these problems.

[*English*]

Over the years Canada has established a legislative and policy framework that defines the rights as well as the responsibilities of its citizens. Every jurisdiction in Canada has enforceable human rights legislation designed to combat discrimination in areas such as employment, accommodation, and the provision of goods and services.

However legislation alone does not guarantee de facto civil and political rights in the country. It must be combined with the supportive infrastructure of good public policy and programs that seek partnership with and are informed by civil society through NGOs, the private sector and our institutions.

In conclusion, I emphasize the importance of learning about the tragedy of crimes against humanity in the 20th century and understanding the lessons of the past. By ensuring that the lessons are well understood, we will be able to build a better society for future generations of Canadians. Because of this I would like to thank my colleague for the opportunity he has given us today to debate the issue.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last parliament the House passed a unanimous resolution calling for the week of April 20 to April 27 every year to be recognized as the week of man's inhumanity to his fellow man. The motion was accepted on the occasion of the 81st anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

In the spirit of that co-operation, I would like to propose the following to the House. I ask for unanimous consent of the House that Bill C-224, the recognition of crimes against humanity act, be made a votable item.

• (1850)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The hon. member for Brampton Centre has requested unanimous consent of the House to make this motion a votable item. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to hear that. I ask for unanimous consent of the House to instruct the subcommittee on Private Members' Business of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to reconsider the votable status of Bill C-224, the recognition of crimes against humanity act, and that the bill remain on the order of precedence until the committee reports on the bill.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian: Mr. Speaker, I will try a third approach. I ask for unanimous consent of the House to refer the subject matter of Bill C-224, the recognition of crimes against humanity act, to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for review and report no later than April 14, 2000.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Does the House give its unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Derek Lee: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am assuming that along with the unanimous consent of the House we are acknowledging that the proceedings on this item have expired, or will shortly expire, and that the item will be dropped from the order paper in accordance with Standing Order 96(1). Then the House would have unanimously decided to refer the subject matter in the way expressed by the member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I will have to seek clarification. As I understand it we are referring it to committee, but let me do a bit of consultation.

We are referring the subject matter of the bill to committee and not the bill. The bill will die at the conclusion of these proceedings but the subject matter will be referred to the committee. Is everyone clear on that?

Some hon. members: Yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Is there unanimous consent to refer the subject matter to committee with the understanding that Bill C-224 will die today?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Because I happen to be the chair of that committee I want to make sure what we are talking about.

We have a very long agenda right through to well after the recess. I want to know the importance of this matter. Is it purely in principle so that we take whatever time is available? It could be many months before it ever comes up.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): That would be the purview of the committee. The subject matter would be referred to the committee and it would be at the pleasure of the committee, one would assume. Once again I will check.

• (1855)

It has been brought to my attention that I neglected to add a written addendum, so I will read the motion again because there is a time limit on it.

This is what we will be deciding. The hon. member for Brampton Centre has requested unanimous consent of the House to refer the subject matter of Bill C-224, the recognition of crimes against humanity act, to the Standing Committee on Heritage for review and report no later than April 14, 2000.

I see there is ongoing discussion so we will just stall for a minute.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln: Mr. Speaker, certainly I would like to try to accommodate my colleague if he would be more flexible. We have a huge amount of work before us. If he would say before the June recess or something like that, we certainly would try our best to see how we could do it. If he says April, I do not know. I would not like to commit myself in that there is so little time to handle matters right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It is highly unusual to have negotiations of this nature in the House. The sponsor of the bill has to be in his place to say anything.

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Derek Lee: Mr. Speaker, just to allow some time for animus revertendi to take place here, if the hon. member sponsoring the bill were to extend the date for return from the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to June 15, 2000, that would satisfy the hon. member who just spoke and might allow the House to adopt the unanimous consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The Speaker is not able to negotiate something of this nature.

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian: Mr. Speaker, I am quite happy to extend it to June 15, 2000. It will be a brand new beginning for the new century.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): We will start all over again because we need to be absolutely clear on what we are doing here.

The hon. member for Brampton Centre has requested unanimous consent of the House to refer the subject matter of Bill C-224, the recognition of crimes against humanity act, to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for review and report no later than June 15, 2000. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Wendy Lill: Mr. Speaker, when you say the subject matter being the crimes against humanity act, I understood the subject matter of the bill to be an exhibit of crimes against humanity. I need clarification on what exactly we are asking the committee to deal with.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): With respect, we will put the question and members will have the option to say either yes or no, but it is not appropriate to debate it any more.

• (1900)

By unanimous consent the order will be discharged and the subject matter referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for review and report by June 15, 2000. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

TRADE

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today thousands of demonstrators were tear-gassed and pepper sprayed in

Seattle in protest of the millennium round of the WTO and in defence of democracy. Thousands of students, seniors, trade unionists and concerned citizens travelled to Seattle from Vancouver to join the tens of thousands of people there to make it crystal clear to Canadian government representatives, including the Minister for International Trade, that Canada is not for sale.

The mobilization and opposition to globalization is widespread and more and more people are connecting and understanding how threatening the WTO agenda is to our democracy and public services.

If the Liberal government believes it can get away with quietly handing over control of our resources and services to the WTO it is absolutely mistaken. It is shameful that the Canadian government has supported and promoted the very narrow and anti-democratic definition of trade liberalization as envisaged in the WTO.

Whether it is the auto pact that protected Canadian jobs, farm income support or culture, Canada has already suffered from WTO rulings. We are threatened now with challenges to our drug patent laws that will force drug prices to go up even higher than they have been under NAFTA.

What is even scarier is that for the first time the federal government is looking to include health care and education as priorities for export. Any changes in the General Agreement on Trade in Services by reverting to a top down agreement will be devastating to our education and health care and allow them to become commodities for trade and subject to control by foreign corporations.

I cannot believe the Liberals are allowing this to happen. Who is serving whom? Surely the role of our federal government is to serve the public interest, meet the needs of Canadians and protect our valuable resources and services. All the evidence shows us that the Liberal government has gone on a wild binge of serving not ordinary Canadians but the corporate elites and the global market ideology.

Canadians who are at the battle in Seattle today and many more people who could not be there are saying to the government, "Stop the WTO sell out. We are opposed to the global hegemony. We are opposed to corporate rule. We are opposed to Canadian resources and public services being put on the WTO chopping block".

We need rules that protect our services and rules that make multinational corporations operate within the confines of the public interest. Why will the government not make that its goal? It is what Canadians want.

Mr. John Cannis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is our goal. The upcoming negotiations of the WTO, which will be launched in Seattle on November 30, have generated a lot of interest, and rightfully so. These talks are important to Canadians, as they should be.

Adjournment Debate

One of the agreements that will be discussed is the General Agreement on Trade in Services. This is an important agreement for Canada, as we were in 1998 the 10th largest exporter of services in the world. Currently over 60% of our GDP and 12% of our exports are in the service sector and service exports are growing at a rate of over 9% per year.

• (1905)

Our service industries are a critical component of our growing knowledge based economy. As well, with advances in technology, an ever-increasing amount of our goods exported depend on a service component either in the production process, distribution or after sales service.

Globalization is pushing Canada to grow and develop markets outside our borders. This is benefiting Canadians and is an important contributor to job creation. Because we are trading beyond our borders, it is important to have rules to protect our interests. These multilateral rules, agreed to by the 134 member countries of the WTO, helped to create an orderly marketplace. This is why we participate in the World Trade Organization.

Canada has world class service firms in sectors including engineering, telecommunications, environmental, computer, tour-

ism and financial services. In GATS negotiations, we will try to further open foreign markets for Canadian service exports. As in the case for goods, more exports of services means more jobs for Canadians.

At the same time, we are fully aware of domestic sensitivities in certain service sectors such as health, education and social services.

As has been stated already and stressed, in the WTO and under GATS, our universal health care and public education are not subject to any international trade rules unless Canada accepts such rules. This means that we will not be engaging in negotiations in these most important sectors. Canada's position is that our health care and public education system are not negotiable and will not be jeopardized in the current upcoming negotiations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.06 p.m.)

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