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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, May 3, 2000

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 3, 2000

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

The Speaker: As is our practice on Wednesday we will now sing O Canada, and the choir of mixed parties will be led by the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam.

[Editor's Note: Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

FRIENDLY GIANT

Hon. Christine Stewart (Northumberland, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all Canadians I wish to offer my condolences to the family and friends of Mr. Bob Homme, Canada's Friendly Giant, who passed away yesterday at his home in Grafton, Ontario in my constituency of Northumberland.

For almost 30 years, beginning in 1958 and extending into the mid-1980s, the *Friendly Giant* was a fixture on CBC television. Mr. Homme was not only the star of the show but also its creative force. Over this period, during which more than 3,000 episodes were produced, Mr. Homme's character along with his trusty companions, Jerome the Giraffe and Rusty the Rooster, established an enduring bond with generations of Canadian children. Enchanting them with the wonder of books and music, my own three children, Doug, John and Cathy, like so many others, considered the *Friendly Giant* their favourite TV entertainment.

In 1998 the Order of Canada was awarded to Mr. Homme in recognition of these unique and significant accomplishments. He will be sadly missed but always fondly remembered.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, over the years billions—that is right, billions—of taxpayers' dollars have been wasted subsidizing VIA Rail.

Given these billions squandered by VIA, let me ask this not of the minister but of the taxpayers: What benefit have they, their families, their towns or their regions ever received from these billions of dollars in spending, or more important, how could this money have been better spent?

The minister claims that the private sector is not interested in VIA so the subsidies are necessary. I believe the private sector is interested and I offer this challenge to the minister. If I can get expressions of interest from the private sector operators to take over VIA Rail without taxpayer subsidies, will he commit to direct the transport committee to review the potential of their interest?

Millions of Canadians who have just sent in their tax returns want to know if the government is spending their money responsibly.

If the minister continues to subsidize VIA by almost \$750,000 a day when it can be run by the private sector without cost to the taxpayer, Canadians will have their answer.

* * *

WALTER F. COOK

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness and regret that I inform the members of the House that Walter F. Cook of New Hamburg, Ontario passed away suddenly at his residence on April 27, 2000.

A community leader, Mr. Cook devoted himself to his local business, his church and his government. He owned and operated Cook's Pharmacy in New Hamburg and Wellesley. He committed himself to the Trinity Lutheran Church and represented New Hamburg on the Wilmot Township Council. Mr. Cook was also a veteran serving Canada in World War II.

Mr. Cook is remembered by his beloved wife, Audrey E. Cook, his children and his grandchildren and will be dearly missed by all members of our community.

S. O. 31

[*Translation*]

RESERVISTS

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to our country's devoted reservists.

Today, reservists across Canada are setting aside their usual cover of anonymity and wearing their uniform to work or school in order to show their pride in serving their country. Their employers, their teachers and the public will also have an opportunity to show their support in return.

These men and women are essential to the vitality of these illustrious Canadian units. They have served and continue to serve their country with distinction.

Members of the Primary Reserve, who wear the uniform of the army, the navy and the air force, can be proud of the services they have rendered, both in Canada and abroad, as well as in relief operations in disaster areas.

• (1405)

Other reservists are cadet instructors and work with young Canadians in over 1,100 communities. And the Canadian Rangers ensure an essential military presence in our remote northern regions.

On behalf of all members, I thank Canada's reservists, who serve our country with distinction, devotion and pride.

* * *

[*English*]

LITERACY

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to pay tribute to the 20 Corrections Canada teachers from British Columbia who are visiting the House this afternoon. These teachers play a vital role in the important work being done by Corrections Canada every day.

These dedicated professionals are here in Ottawa for the Literacy 2000 conference which is co-sponsored by Corrections Canada and U.S. Corrections.

The success of literacy programs is best illustrated by the success of learners. The many people who have taken advantage of the opportunities provided to improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills have taken advantage of an opportunity to dramatically change their lives.

The ability to read and write is essential in our own personal development. I applaud these Corrections Canada teachers and their efforts to meet the needs of undereducated adults and to encourage them to strive to meet their goals.

WILLIAM HEAD INSTITUTE

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am in favour of inmates learning a trade but the learning at William Head Institute in Victoria has been taken a little too far.

Inmates at the facility are encouraged to learn carving, wood-working and even a little welding. However, some inmates have decided to combine these activities and become boat builders. This would not be a bad thing if it were a prairie prison surrounded by only seas of blowing wheat but the institute is surrounded on three sides by water. This makes a boat building enterprise a very practical decision for an inmate with a little ingenuity.

Now I am no Mark Twain and this is not the story of Huck Finn, but believe it or not, it is true. A career criminal went on a crime spree after sailing away from William Head Institute. Even the court judge who sentenced the recaptured inmate to an additional 10 years was curious how an inmate could be allowed to build a raft.

To be fair to the warden, I believe him when he says they do not have a boat building program at the institute. That would be foolhardy and we all know that Corrections Canada would never do anything that is foolhardy.

Maybe the warden should take a walk down to the shop to make sure the inmates are not making speedboats for an even faster getaway.

* * *

POLISH CONSTITUTION DAY

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate constitution day with the people of Poland and Polish Canadians.

May 3 marks the 209th anniversary of Poland's constitution. The constitution of 1791 was the first liberal constitution in Europe and the second in the world.

The philosophies of humanitarianism and tolerance are present throughout the constitution. These include the right to rule by majority, secret ballots at all elections, as well as religious freedom and liberty for all people. This constitution founded a government called the guardian of laws, established a constitutional monarchy and introduced the principle of ministerial responsibility to the parliament. In terms of democratic precepts, this constitution is a landmark in the history of central and eastern Europe.

Solidarity honoured the memory of the bill on government following the parliamentary elections of June 1989. On April 6, 1990, the parliament re-established the May 3rd constitution day which is celebrated today around the world.

[Translation]

SALON DU LIVRE DE TROIS-RIVIÈRES

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last weekend marked the Mauricie region's 12th Salon du livre de Trois-Rivières, another remarkable literary and cultural success.

The event, which this year attracted more than 225 authors and writers, some of them even coming from other countries, is making a name for itself throughout Quebec as a prestigious showcase for local and international literary talent.

The Salon was the perfect opportunity to organize a Semaine du livre in some 25 schools in the Mauricie and central Quebec regions and, during the first part of the Salon, the spotlight was on 3,000 young people to whom the organizers had issued invitations.

This is an event which quite rightly enjoys broad public support and, on behalf of the community, I wish to offer Johanne Gaudreau's entire team of volunteers my sincerest—

The Speaker: The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

* * *

• (1410)

[English]

RESERVE FORCE UNIFORM DAY

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Fanshawe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is Reserve Force Uniform Day. Reservists throughout the country are wearing their uniforms with pride to their places of civilian work or study.

Our reservists come from virtually every segment of Canadian society. Although from different backgrounds, they have one thing in common: their love of Canada and commitment to military service.

Canada's reserve units are located throughout the nation and foster national unity. In my city of London, Ontario we have four units, the 1st Hussars, the 4th Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment, the 22nd Service Battalion and HMCS *Prevost*.

Reservists have played a vital role in the defence of Canada. From pre-Confederation to today, reservists have served with courage and distinction. Today our reserve forces are participating in peacekeeping missions throughout the world and have recently provided assistance during national emergencies here in Canada.

Please join with me in saluting Canada's outstanding citizen soldiers.

S. O. 31

FRIENDLY GIANT

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise in the House today to pay tribute to a Canadian cultural institution. Canadians were saddened at the news of the passing of the Friendly Giant. I express my appreciation and admiration for a man who meant so much to the lives of young Canadians.

Bob Homme created the *Friendly Giant* in 1953 for American radio. The show was quickly brought to Canada by the CBC and began an amazing run beginning in 1958, ending when Homme retired in 1985.

Who could forget the characters that meshed with the Friendly Giant: Rusty the Rooster and Jerome the Giraffe. We all recall being asked to enter the giant's castle with the infamous series of chairs including the rocking chair in the middle.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the drawbridge has long been raised on a program that encouraged kids across the land to read, to think and to dream. To quote Bob Homme, the Friendly Giant, I ask members of the House to look up, look way, way up, and say thank you and God bless.

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STUDENT EXCHANGE

Mrs. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome to Ottawa a group of students from Attaguttaaluk High School, Igloolik, Nunavut.

These students from my riding are on their way to Winnipeg to visit the Manitoba students who visited Igloolik recently where they learned how to build igloos, travelled by dog team and visited the floe edge seal hunting.

I would like to congratulate these young students for their extensive fundraising activities which helped to make their trip occur.

I would also like to thank the YMCA Visions Youth Exchange Program which is funded by Open House Canada under Heritage Canada for helping to make such an exchange trip possible.

I believe that visiting other regions of Canada helps us to understand the uniqueness of other areas and brings us all closer together from sea to sea to sea.

Mutna. Thank you.

* * *

HOLLAND

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand on behalf of my deceased father, my mother, my oldest brother and

Oral Questions

the rest of us who were born in Holland as the celebrations for the 55th anniversary of the liberation of Holland are happening now.

Many of our war veterans and their families, and the currently serving military as well as the reserves, are over in Holland right now celebrating with the Dutch people the great victory of the allied forces and that of the Canadian liberators.

Again, it comes from the heart when I say as a Dutch-born Canadian how truly proud I am that my father chose Canada. He once said to me, "If they have a military like that, imagine what kind of country they have".

On behalf of all Dutch Canadians, the New Democratic Party would like to say to all veterans, their families, the current military, the reserves and the Parliament of Canada, thank you once again for the liberation of our country and God bless each and every one of you.

* * *

[Translation]

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on this World Press Freedom Day, the Bloc Québécois wants to stress the crucial importance of this fundamental freedom for the preservation of democracy.

The freedom of the press is an essential rampart against abuse of all kinds. The press is the public's guiding light and a vital source of information that influences society's choices. Therefore, no one can question the freedom of the press.

Today, the Bloc Québécois wants to acknowledge the work of the members of the press gallery who report daily on what goes on in parliament, in a difficult context. Working in both official languages, they must read reports in record time and, on any given day, their schedule may be disrupted one, twice or even three times.

Given the complexity of their role and deadlines that are seldom conducive to producing the rigorous work that is required of them, and in spite of the fact that we sometimes have our differences, the Bloc Québécois wants to express its appreciation for the work and efforts of the press gallery members.

* * *

• (1415)

[English]

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today Canadian Journalists for Free Expression is celebrating World Press Freedom Day. One of the hallmarks of a civilized society is the encouragement of public debate. As we all know and sometimes take for granted, an essential agent in this democratic process

is the free press. In countries in turmoil where a free press is most needed many journalists are forced to put their lives in jeopardy.

To mark World Press Freedom Day, the first National Press Club press freedom award will be presented to a journalist who has contributed to the cause of press freedom. Also today Journalists in Exile, a group of journalists from Burundi, Iran, Serbia, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, is gathering at Ryerson University to share its experiences and promote this worthy cause.

On behalf of members of the House I offer my gratitude as well as my personal admiration to those individuals who fight to maintain freedom of the press, especially where it is most threatened. We owe them a great debt.

* * *

[Translation]

JEAN-NOËL GROLEAU FARM

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC): Mr. Speaker, today, I am pleased to congratulate Diane Beaulieu and Jean-Noël Groleau, whose farm operation in Compton received ISO 14001 certification.

This farm is at the top when it comes to protecting the environment. It uses a unique technique in milk production, which takes into account current environmental concerns, while maintaining above average production levels.

I also want to mention the success of La Framboisière de l'Estrie. This organization also showed environmental management leadership in the agricultural sector. I am proud to have people in my riding who are innovative and resourceful, and who are not afraid to take action.

Jean-Noël Groleau's farm makes a concrete contribution to the promotion of safe farming operations.

Again, congratulations to the farm operated by Mrs. Beaulieu and Mr. Groleau.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, when the \$1 billion bungle was discovered over at HRD the minister crowed about how her little six point plan would save the day. It turns out that her plan went six points to no place according to her own independent appraisers.

Deloitte & Touche reviewed that plan and gave it a failing grade. Why did she pretend that this plan would work when she was told by the experts that it would fail?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it turns out that the hon. member is at least a day late. If she had been here yesterday, as we made clear, Deloitte & Touche received the audit plan in the first draft. We paid them to look at it, to make recommendations, and they did.

If she had been here or maybe at the committee yesterday, she would have heard what they actually said, which was and I quote—

The Speaker: Order, please. We should not mention whether a member was here or is here.

Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I was around enough to know that Deloitte & Touche made a recommendation on February 2 and there were no substantive changes in the minister's six point plan.

The report was dated February 2. They said they had serious concerns about it. On February 8 she stood in the House after no substantive changes to the six point plan and said "I am going to save the day".

That simply is not true and I would like to repeat my question to the minister. Why did she brag about this when the very company she hired showed that it had serious concerns?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I bragged about it because indeed we took the recommendations of this company and implemented them. Yesterday in committee, and I quote, Deloitte & Touche stated:

—subsequent to our report. . . my understanding is the department has taken our advice, the advice of others and revised the action plan.

Again let us remember that the auditor general said this was an extraordinary response to an extraordinary circumstance.

Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this minister knows she created those extraordinary circumstances. She just said that Deloitte & Touche said "my understanding is that the minister has taken the recommendation". She never even gave them the decency of giving it back to them to read and make any recommendations on.

It is just great to sit there and laugh it off, but this was \$1 billion that Canadian taxpayers are pretty darned concerned about. The minister has had the gall to stand in the House and say that everything is fine. How can she stand here and tell the House that the plan is working when people across the country know that it is a doomed failure?

• (1420)

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, quite the opposite. In fact, Deloitte & Touche said that we had a good short term plan and Deloitte &

Touche gave us recommendations on how to make it better for the longer term.

We implemented those plans. We have added aspects of training and we have added aspects focusing on accountability. We have ensured that senior management know what their roles are and what accountable role they will have to play.

We have a plan that will work. Men and women across the country are implementing this plan day and night because they believe in providing good service to the taxpayer. We will do it.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, here is what happened. In January the minister was caught in a billion dollar boondoggle. Instead of resigning, she waved around a six point plan that was supposed to fix everything.

She used words in the House to imply that Deloitte & Touche had endorsed her plan. Now we find out that Deloitte & Touche actually gave the minister's plan a failing grade. Why did the minister hide the fact that Deloitte & Touche had advised her that her plan was inadequate?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me try again.

An hon. member: Slowly, slowly.

Hon. Jane Stewart: Very slowly, as my colleague suggests. We put together a plan. What we felt was appropriate to do was to test this plan with outside experts, the auditor general, Deloitte & Touche, and the advisory committee to treasury board. They all gave us recommendations and we implemented those recommendations to tighten our plan.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, right from day one in January the minister pretended that her plan was the right plan, a good plan, no problems with her plan.

She never once told Canadians or the House "oops, this plan wasn't so good. We actually had to come up with a better one later". She has never ever said that. Instead she chose to hide the Deloitte & Touche report and maintain all along that her plan was just great from day one. Why was safeguarding her own image more important to her than really safeguarding taxpayer money?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I presented to the standing committee the six point plan back in February. I suggested to all members if they had advice to give us to strengthen that plan that they do so.

I have not had one recommendation from that party to strengthen the plan because it is amended and it is working. We are making and taking corrective action in my department.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Placeteco is a good example of everything that ought not to be done in a case when public funds are invested.

The minister says that the mistakes made were honest ones. I am willing to believe her, and the proof that the funds were really awarded properly and in accordance with the rules is that she has the invoices.

I am asking her this: Why will she not make the invoices public? It would be easy and we might then understand. Can she make public the invoices establishing that the funds were really awarded properly and in accordance with the rules?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes reference to mistakes. I would like to clarify something from yesterday.

Yesterday this member said that he had received on Monday documentation on this company from the ATIP section of my department. I would like to clarify that my officials have advised me that in fact no such documentation was issued yesterday, the day before that, the week before that, or even the month before that. Was that a mistake?

[Translation]

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

An hon. member: Jane is in trouble.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I, for one, can admit that I made a mistake.

We had the documents the day before yesterday. We have the complete file. We got it through access to information, as she should know, with the numbers and the vouchers but there are no invoices in it. We submitted another request asking specifically for the invoices and we have been waiting over a month. She should be aware of that too.

• (1425)

I wonder why invoices were missing when we got the file from access to information. The Méribec file came from her department and is in the Prime Minister's riding. Is it because there are none?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is talking about a

particular access to information request. If he would like to bring that forward we will look at it more, but I can tell him that there has been no information on this particular file that has gone out through access to information yesterday or the day before.

Let us be clear about access to information. This is an act of this House, as is the Privacy Act. I make no decisions on the information that is conveyed to requesters. The hon. member knows that. I would suggest to him that it is and does remain the responsible way to provide information on private paperwork of citizens in this country, using the acts that have been passed by the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we will shortly be releasing to journalists the entire Placeteco file obtained through access to information and we will see who is right. Perhaps she should ask her officials to get down to work like everyone else.

If she wants the application we made on March 23 to access to information, there is another one concerning the invoices.

Could she tell us whether she has the infamous invoices? Instead of playing cat and mouse, she should table the invoices, because everything indicates that there are none and that we are not exactly being told the truth here.

The Speaker: I think we are getting close to words that are unparliamentary.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. I ask all members to be very careful in their choice of words.

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with requesters responding to access requests, as I have made clear to the House, my department has been deluged by those requests. We have more this year than we had in the whole of last year. We have issued 115,000 pages of information, and we will respond to that particular request.

Again I say that when we are talking about information on companies here in the country or on individuals in the country, the responsible and appropriate way to make that information public is through the access to information process. As the member knows, I have no decision making authority in what information is conveyed. What can be conveyed will be conveyed.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a bit surprising that in 10,000 pages, when we have

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been after the invoices for a year, there are no invoices to be found in the case of Placeteco, and yet they appear in other files.

I will chose my words carefully, Mr. Speaker, but I would ask that she not select the invoices. She should give us the ones for Placeteco, not the ones for Globax or Technipaint. What we want from her are the ones from Placeteco, because Placeteco got a grant. That seems clear to me.

This is being discussed everywhere. If she is still not aware of the fact, she has a lot of problems, this minister.

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker. I feel very comfortable in this particular file. We have reviewed it. We have identified that we have invoices. That is confirmed and are appropriate under the terms and conditions of the program.

I feel very comfortable in our six point plan and the work of my department to build a modern system of comptrollership that will respond to the taxpayer in an appropriate way.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the members to lower their voices when a minister or someone else is answering questions or when questions are being put.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Yesterday in the House the Prime Minister cited the five principles of medicare. I want to give the Prime Minister a chance to exceed expectations. Could the Prime Minister stand in his place and name the five principles of medicare?

• (1430)

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the hon. member opposite, this Prime Minister was in this House when those five principles were put into law. Unlike that member, this Prime Minister does not just talk about the five principles of medicare, he acts to protect them. This is the first government in the history of this country that has used the power under the Canada Health Act—

The Speaker: The hon. leader of the New Democratic Party.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I guess we will never know for sure if he can name them but we do know he is not standing up for them.

Recently the health minister stated in the House that Alberta's bill to Americanize health care should be withdrawn. Along with most Canadians, I agree with that point of view. However, the reality is that bill 11 is being rammed through anyway.

Health care is the number one public policy concern in this country yet this government has rendered itself utterly impotent to stand up to it.

Now that we know exactly what is in bill 11, has the government prepared a response and, if so, is it ready to share it with Canadians?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I suppose we can explain the NDP leader's interest with the five principles of the Canada Health Act because that is five more principles than the NDP has on this issue.

As to bill 11, let me say to the House that we have made it clear from the beginning that we intend to respect the principles of the Canada Health Act. If bill 11 does not comply with the principles of the Canada Health Act, we will do what is required to exercise the federal response in such a situation.

* * *

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, Transelec, a Laval company, gave \$5,000 to the Prime Minister's election campaign in 1993 and another \$10,000 in 1997. It also gave \$28,000 to the Liberal Party; a total of \$43,000.

Shortly after the 1997 election, Transelec received untendered public contracts for \$27,000 and a CIDA contract worth \$6.3 million. Since the election the company has evaporated. It has no listed phone number for the company or its owner Claude Gauthier.

Will the government call in the auditor general to investigate this highly questionable use of taxpayer money?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously under Canada's election laws all contributions made to political parties, including the hon. member's party across, if there are still people giving to that party, or to any other political party represented in the House or not represented in the House, are a matter of public record if the transaction in question is over and above \$100 in any calendar year. That is not a secret. It is public information.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, once again a complete non-answer from the government side.

In 1997 the former public works minister and defeated Liberal candidate, David Dingwall, raised \$20,300 in donations from companies that received public works contracts; one-third of his campaign budget. These same companies turned around and re-

Oral Questions

ceived a total of \$1.5 million in untendered contracts. That is a pretty good return.

Will the minister call in the auditor general, which he can do under section 11, to investigate these untendered contracts? First there was HRDC and now we have the same shenanigans going on in public works.

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe I should remind the hon. member that when his party was in power only 50% of the contracts were tendered. Before he stands up he should look at himself in the mirror.

* * *

• (1435)

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, a February 2 analysis by Deloitte & Touche said that there were flaws all through the minister's six point plan. That was the last time that they commented on the plan according to their appearance before the parliamentary committee yesterday.

Yet on February 8 the minister gave a prepared speech in the House that was clearly calculated to leave people with the impression that Deloitte & Touche had actually endorsed the plan. That was simply not the case, and the minister knew it. She repeated the same thing yesterday.

Why did the minister stand up in parliament and imply that Deloitte & Touche had endorsed her six point plan when she knew that was not true?

The Speaker: My colleagues, I wish that you would stay away from things being true or untrue. I ask you to be very judicious in your choice of words.

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Deloitte & Touche suggested was that we needed to have greater cohesiveness in our program in order to orchestrate the various actions of the program.

What did we do? We actually put together a grants and contributions team, a team focused on this. They asked us to make an assurance that the funds being transferred were transferred in accordance with program requirements. We made sure that senior executives were making the final sign-off on those transfer terms.

What did they say we should do? They said that we should make sure we address the root causes of the audit findings. We are doing a number of things in that regard, making sure employees have training and we are—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Medicine Hat.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is getting to the point where we have to pull apart every word that this minister utters to see if there is not some kind of

double meaning to it. Being straight with people is always the best policy, something she should have learned when she was a little girl.

The fact is that Deloitte & Touche found gaping holes in her six point plan, and she knows that. Why did the minister try to hide that fact from Canadians?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be straight with the Canadian public. Let us be straight with the facts, that on this side of the House we take administration very seriously.

We are going to have an administration of grants and contributions that will be second to none. As well as being straight with the Canadian public, on this side of the House we believe that the Government of Canada has a role to play in ensuring that those in need, Canadians with disabilities, young people who cannot get jobs and communities that have not been able to engage in our great economy, get the help they need because that is the right thing to do.

* * *

[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, given that air transportation in Canada is dominated by Air Canada, the small regional carriers are finding it impossible to compete with Air Canada's affiliates.

Does the minister feel that Bill C-26 provides enough protection to the small regional carriers, given the difficulties they are currently facing?

[English]

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have consistently said that the faster we get Bill C-26 passed by the House and the Senate the better it is for the protection of all Canadian consumers who use the air mode of travel. I believe that Bill C-26 does give those guarantees.

However, the hon. member is a member of the Standing Committee on Transport. If he has concrete suggestions on how we can improve that protection, then he should bring forward amendments and we will consider them.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the same vein, is the minister prepared to include in his bill the amendments required to oblige Air Canada to provide basic service to the small carriers operating in the regions of Quebec?

Is he prepared to support such amendments?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the agreement negotiated between the commissioner of competition and Air Canada gives guarantees to Canadians to be served from coast to coast, those communities that were formerly served by Canadian Airlines. The spirit of that particular agreement is contained in the bill and that is that Air Canada has to be fair and cannot abuse its dominant position. This government will make sure it does not.

* * *

● (1440)

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Wanuskewin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, here is some more criticism from the Deloitte & Touche report which did not endorse the six point plan. It said "The leadership, responsibility and accountability needs to be identified". According to the HRDC audit, the \$1 billion was bungled in the first place precisely because of a lack of leadership, responsibility and accountability.

Why did the minister learn nothing from her own department's audit?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leadership that my department has shown in this regard is absolutely clear. First and foremost, it was an internal audit that identified the problems.

Second, it was because of myself and the department that the audit became public.

Third, a plan of action has been written up and is now being implemented. The men and women across this country, even in the riding of the hon. member, are working day and night to implement these changes.

From our point of view, the grants and contributions of this government and the contributions it makes to improving the lives of Canadians is worth every effort that we are making and we will continue to make.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Wanuskewin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, here is a section of the Deloitte & Touche report which fell short of endorsing that six point plan. I think this should frighten taxpayers. It says "The draft plan does not clearly assign leadership and responsibility, does not clearly assign to specific individuals the actions they are responsible for, does not establish time lines, deliverables and milestones, does not identify the systems and practices needed to monitor progress". In other words, the six point plan does exactly the same thing as what bungled the \$1 billion in the first place. If she cannot convince Deloitte & Touche, how can she—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Resources Development.

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe if the hon. member would quit reading the draft and read what is actually the final product, he would see that we did indeed address and assign authorities and responsibilities.

The department, at the most senior levels, has engaged in this process. Senior executives know exactly what their role and responsibility is. The men and women of the department know where they need to make changes and they are doing so.

Again I point out that on this side of the House we know how important these grants and contributions are and that is why we are making every effort to improve—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Portneuf.

* * *

*[Translation]***COUNCIL ON CANADIAN UNITY**

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage told us that the minister had changed her mind and had decided to order an audit of grants by her department to the Council on Canadian Unity.

Could the minister tell us what programs and what period will be covered by the audit, and when the House will have access to the report?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, programs are audited every year. I have with me a copy of an audit of the Council on Canadian Unity made by Ernst & Young this year, and the same was done last year, the year before and so on. These audits go back to 1988, when Lucien Bouchard was the minister. Nothing has changed.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that allegations of fraud have led the Ottawa-Carleton police to investigate the Council on Canadian Unity. She also knows that \$4.8 million disappeared, through the council, right in the middle of the referendum campaign.

Will these issues be covered by the minister's investigation?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to stress the work done by the Council on Canadian Unity. I have with me a letter dated October 11, 1988, which refers to a new program.

[English]

Mr. Michael Meighen also wrote to me about the council's work in this area, as well as your new national program to raise public awareness of our identity as a nation.

I appreciate the council's support for a strong national vision and look forward to hearing more about your plans.

Yours sincerely,

Lucien Bouchard

Oral Questions

• (1445)

HEALTH

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Health proposed funding programs not covered by the Canada Health Act. This obviously encroaches on provincial jurisdiction for the delivery of services.

The health minister just does not get it. How can he justify this blatant attack on the provinces when the government does not even cover its share of basic core service funding?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member and his party are obviously afraid of discussing new ideas. That is a pity. We will continue to talk about new ideas over here to improve access to health care for Canadians.

I guess there are some ideas over there. One of his colleagues in that party is running for the leadership of the Alliance and he says that we should go to the American style of two-tiered medicine. That is one idea we will never buy over here.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we already have a destroyed Canada Health Act, so I do not know how the minister can stand and say that he is the defender of health care in this country.

The fact really is that in the last federal budget there was \$2.5 billion over four years for CHST funding. Ontario alone has added \$5.3 billion to health care.

If the government is serious about supporting reforms to the health care system, why will it not at least respect the jurisdiction of the provinces and—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in each of the last four budgets the federal government has increased transfers to the provinces.

Last year the largest single expenditure of the government in its history was for health care. We have increased transfers for health care by over 25% in the last two years.

The bulk of the increase in funding provided by the Ontario government for health care came from the federal government.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the day before yesterday, the Minister of Labour said she was prepared to sit down with her Quebec counterpart and discuss the issue of preventive withdrawal from the workplace for pregnant workers.

In 1993, the Bloc Québécois introduced a motion to correct a situation arising from the provisions of the Canada Labour Code that was unfair to pregnant workers and the Liberal Party, then in opposition, unanimously supported the motion.

Is the minister prepared to take up this motion herself, move it and have it agreed to as soon as possible, so that this unfair situation becomes a thing of the past?

Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, I am prepared to meet with any of Canada's provincial labour ministers, and do so regularly.

In response to the hon. member's question, part II of the Canada Labour Code has passed second reading and is expected to become law before the summer. There is also an agreement to meet with employees and employers with respect to part III.

The Liberal Party wants to ensure that all Canadians are protected by the Canada Labour Code.

* * *

[English]

TRADE

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade has stated that Canada's benefits from increased trade have been the best in the G-7 and that more trade will be good for Canada.

Some think otherwise, however, believing that our exports are mainly raw materials. Can the minister please set the record straight and provide some clear indicators that export trade expansion has been very good for Canada?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and for a very successful trade outreach mission in Mississauga last week.

The fact is that commodities as a percentage of our exports have fallen from 60% in 1988 to just 32% in 1998. All in all, we Canadians export 43% of what we produce, up from 25% just ten years ago.

• (1450)

Canada exports high technology, manufactured goods, services and value added products. Trade is vital for Canada.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Richard M. Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in sharp contrast to this Liberal tax and spend government, the Mike Harris government has just introduced a massive 67 point tax cut for Ontarians. At the same

Oral Questions

time it is ploughing \$1.4 billion back into health care and \$1 billion more into education in the province.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Richard M. Harris: Mr. Speaker, it is amazing how the very mention of Mike Harris and his performance record puts fear into the hearts of these Liberals.

Here is the formula: lower taxes equal a buoyant economy. Mike Harris got it and Ralph Klein got it. The question is, why can this Liberal finance minister not get it?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will tell the party opposite the formula. Follow the federal government and introduce indexation of the tax system. Follow the federal government and reduce taxes for middle and low income Canadians. Follow the federal government and eliminate the deficit.

Do not follow the Reform Party. Do not introduce a flat tax. If they cannot convince Mike Harris, who in heaven's name will they convince that it makes any sense?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Richard M. Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, let us be really clear. The reason the economies of the province of Ontario and the province of Alberta are doing so well is because they did not follow the lead of the federal government.

As a matter of fact, the provinces of Alberta and Ontario are responsible for the biggest part of the overall economic growth in Canada because they did not follow the federal government.

Why is the finance minister so afraid of lowering taxes for Canadians?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. I think we had better quit while we are ahead.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the best form of flattery is when a government copies another government, as the Minister of Finance said.

We told them that the best thing to do was to balance the books. It took them four years to do that. We have balanced the books for four years. As I said to the Minister of Finance, on every score they are just copying us.

• (1455)

I hope the Reform Party will understand that we have a good economy because we have a federal government that lowered taxes, created jobs and balanced the books long before Ontario.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada must loudly and proudly say no to the U.S. proposed national missile defence system.

The foreign affairs minister says the missile system is dangerous. The defence minister says Canada may support the missile system.

Will the Prime Minister make a public statement on Canada's opposition to the U.S. government's plan to crank up the arms race and threaten peace and stability with this national missile system? Will he say no?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated before in the House, the government has not taken a position on this matter. Indeed, the Government of the United States has not taken a position on the matter.

The missile system has not been perfected yet in terms of the technology. Further tests are coming.

After that is done the United States will make a decision. The United States may well make representation to us as to whether there is an involvement for us through NORAD. At that point in time the government will make a decision with respect to the matter, as I had indicated before.

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it seems that the military generals are taking a position.

It has now come to light that military officials knew about the harmful effects of depleted uranium before the gulf war. Why then does the government still try to suggest that DU is safe? The defence minister has made it clear that he supports testing those suffering from exposure to DU. Why has he not taken action on an insulting and intimidating force's memo distributed to those Canadians suffering, basically telling them that the problem may be all in their heads?

Also, recently Canadians in the Halifax area suffering from exposure to this toxin have been told there is no directive for the forces to provide testing for depleted uranium. What does the minister have to say about this?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the scientific studies to this point in time do not indicate that any Canadians have suffered from depleted uranium.

Oral Questions

Notwithstanding that, I have offered veterans of the gulf war an opportunity for independent testing, and a number of them have taken us up on that offer. I want to make sure, because this is the bottom line: if any of our troops went over to the gulf or anywhere else in the world for Canada, and if they went over well and came back sick, we will look after them.

* * *

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC): Mr. Speaker, over \$1.2 million has been raised by the governing party from companies that received CIDA contracts, TJF grants and public works contracts. Over half of the public works contracts that went to Liberal donors were untendered.

Section 11 of the Auditor General Act allows the cabinet to launch an investigation into companies that have received government contracts.

Will the minister invite the auditor general to fully investigate these untendered contracts awarded since 1997?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will say this very slowly so the hon. member can understand. Since we have been in government, 94% of Public Works and Government Services contracts have been posted in MERX, the electronic procurement system, so that everybody can participate.

This is an open system, not like the system the previous Conservative government had where only 50% were tendered.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC): Mr. Speaker, more than 3,000 contracts have slipped through the cracks.

When was the last time the Minister of Public Works and Government Services ordered an independent audit of untendered contracts? I do not recall.

Is the minister prepared to call for an independent audit of all untendered contracts awarded by his department since January 1, 1997? And if not, why not?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, four times a year, the auditor general tables his report in the House.

In November 1999, there was a report on this and, as I have just said, 94% of contracts awarded by my department are posted in the MERX electronic procurement system.

• (1500)

[*English*]

SIERRA LEONE

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa.

There are reports that United Nations peacekeepers have been abducted and killed earlier today in Sierra Leone. Can the minister tell the House how Canada intends to respond to this very serious situation, especially since we have five military observers as well as relief and development personnel in that country?

Hon. David Kilgour (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

To our knowledge no Canadian has been abducted or hurt in the matter he refers to. Canada condemns in the strongest possible terms the violence that is occurring in Sierra Leone. We call on the rebel leaders there to comply with the Lomé accord.

Yesterday in London the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, including our own Minister of Foreign Affairs, called on the RUF to disarm in accordance with the Lomé accord. We earnestly hope they will do so.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago Canada's ambassador to the U.S., the Prime Minister's own nephew, told me that Canada would be foolish not to participate in the national missile defence system. He said that it would be harmful for Canada-U.S. relations.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister directly, does the Prime Minister support the national missile defence system, yes or no?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence spoke for the government on this issue. When the time comes to make a decision, we will welcome the views of everybody, including the views of my own nephew.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AMATEUR SPORT

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for Amateur Sport.

Despite the announcement he made recently of support for trainers and preparations for the Olympic Games and despite the

commitment made to me by the Minister of Canadian Heritage last July, there is still no federal program to enable high performance sports trainers to learn French.

Will the Secretary of State for Amateur Sport promise today to help francophone athletes by establishing a program as soon as possible to help trainers learn French?

Hon. Denis Coderre (Secretary of State (Amateur Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question.

Obviously, not only since the Minister of Canadian Heritage has been looking after sport but since yours truly has been doing so as well, we have worked extremely hard to ensure that sport in this country functions in both official languages.

I am currently establishing a national policy on sport, and I think that the sport community must be so pleased with the work we have done because we are being congratulated daily on it.

* * *

[English]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

The premier of P.E.I. and the legislatures of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have called on her to save CBC local supper hour news programs. Even the Liberal House of Assembly led by her good friend Brian Tobin has called for more federal money to save their local news show *Here and Now*.

Will the minister admit that the decades of cuts begun by Mulroney have gone too far? Will she listen to the unanimous will of Newfoundland and Labrador and find the money to give *Here and Now* a future?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I want to underscore that over the past five years the Government of Canada has given \$4.682 billion directly to the CBC. I think that is a significant indication of the commitment that it has for the organization.

I will also underscore the comments that were made by the president of the CBC, to which I expect he will adhere, when he appeared before the standing committee earlier this month. He spoke about the Broadcasting Act in terms of our responsibility to work on introducing and explaining one region to the other. I know we will honour that. We believe it is very important.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

VIETNAM

Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC): Mr. Speaker, nine days ago, a Canadian citizen of Vietnamese origin, proclaiming her innocence, was tied to a post and shot.

• (1505)

My question is for the Prime Minister. On the eve of considering CIDA's estimates, what sort of excuses, what sort of statement is required from the Vietnamese government for relations between Canada and Vietnam to return to normal?

[English]

Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, the actions of the Vietnamese government have been abhorrent to us and I have indefinitely postponed all discussions on existing and future programming. The only programs we are running in Vietnam are poverty reduction programs.

I will be meeting with my colleague the Minister of Foreign Affairs when he gets back to Canada. We will be looking at further action.

At this point, I have no plans to resume consultations with the Government of Vietnam.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[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 10 petitions.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 28th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding its order of reference of Friday, April 7, 2000, in relation to Bill C-445, an act to change the name of the electoral district of Rimouski—Mitis.

The committee studied Bill C-445 and is reporting it with amendments.

Routine Proceedings

• (1510)

[English]

PETITIONS

MARRIAGE

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by 45 residents of British Columbia and Alberta and duly certified by the clerk of petitions on the subject of marriage.

The petitioners ask parliament to affirm the opposite sex definition of marriage in legislation and to ensure that marriage is recognized as a unique institution.

UNITED NATIONS

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure also to present a petition signed by some 2,400 people from across Canada concerning the payment of assessed annual dues to the United Nations organization.

The petitioners express concern about the financial health of the United Nations. As of March 31, 2000 nearly \$3 billion U.S. were owed to the UN by member states.

The petitioners call on the Canadian government to urge states to pay their dues in full and on time. They also ask that the Canadian government give consideration to proposals that would establish alternative revenue sources for the United Nations.

VOYAGE OF LEIF ERICSSON

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present two petitions. The first petition is one which calls on the government to recognize that based on the historical fact that this year 2000 we celebrate the arrival of Leif Ericsson to Canada 1,000 years ago. It calls for the attention to recognize the 1,000th anniversary of this voyage from Europe to North America. Having a designated day to remember and celebrate the importance of this occasion, the petitioners note, will be a great opportunity and benefit for our children to learn more about it in schools and libraries and for the rest of us who appreciate such events in our country's history.

Therefore, the petitioners call on parliament to consider the designation of such a day starting this year 2000. It will be quite a loss in the history of Canada to go through the year 2000 without recognizing such an important occasion as Leif Ericsson's voyage to Canada. I note that the petition has over 100 signatures mainly from the Scandinavian Centre in Burnaby collected by Celeste Wiberg.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition which was sponsored by the Muslim Students' Association at the University of British Columbia. It notes that the atrocities taking place against the innocent people of Chechnya are a campaign of brutal and unjust terror that violates the human rights code of justice and freedom. Therefore the petitioners request that parliament intervene immediately and take action by condemning the attacks on civilians forcing Russia to stop her aggression and brutality of unarmed civilians and also to suspend economic aid to Russia.

MARRIAGE

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I would like to present three petitions. Two petitions affirm the opposite sex definition of marriage in legislation and ensure that marriage is recognized as a unique institution.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): The third petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by a number of my constituents who are opposed to child pornography.

TAXATION

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions. The first one is from residents who believe that the family is the essential building block of a healthy society. The petitioners want the government to amend the tax code so that it does not discriminate against single income families with children.

CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition the petitioners pray and request parliament to oppose any amendments to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms or any other federal legislation which will provide for the exclusion of reference to the supremacy of God in our constitution and laws.

[Translation]

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present to the House a petition signed by 123 people. The petitioners call upon parliament to quickly pass legislation making it mandatory to label all foods that are totally or partially genetically modified.

Once again, the residents of Lotbinière are showing their support for the efforts by the hon. member for Louis-Hébert on this issue.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

GASOLINE ADDITIVES

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I am honoured to present a petition signed by residents of the Grand Bend and Dashwood areas of southern Ontario. They urge the government to recognize the adverse health and environmental effects of the fuel additive MMT with a mind to banning the substance as many other nations have done.

• (1515)

BILL C-23

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by citizens of Quesnel, Williams Lake and Lillooet, British Columbia, calling upon the government to withdraw Bill C-23 as an inappropriate intrusion and discriminatory in extending benefits based upon a person's private sexual activity, while excluding other types of dependency relationships.

While this bill is still before the Senate, I regret that this petition has just come to my hand after passage through the House of Commons.

[Translation]

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition bearing 179 signatures.

The petitioners call upon parliament to take all necessary steps to develop alternative sources of energy at affordable prices, to deal with the excessive price hikes for petroleum products, and for permanently regularizing pricing.

[English]

MAMMOGRAPHY

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition on behalf of a number of Canadians, including from my own riding of Mississauga South.

The petitioners want to draw to the attention of the House that Canada has the second highest rate of breast cancer in the world, and that the incidence of breast cancer has increased by 36.6% since 1969.

The petitioners therefore call upon parliament to enact legislation to establish an independent governing body to develop, implement and enforce uniform, mandatory mammography quality assurance and quality control standards in Canada.

TAXATION

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I want to present a petition signed by a number of my constituents in

the riding of Red Deer. These individuals believe that Canadians are overtaxed and demand that the Department of Human Resources Development account for the gross mismanagement of \$3.2 billion annually.

Therefore, my constituents request the immediate resignation of the Minister of Human Resources Development and ask that the auditor general conduct a full and independent inquiry into the HRDC management and accounting practices.

[Translation]

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have in my hand a petition bearing 467 signatures expressing concern about the currently optional labelling of GMOs.

These people would like the federal government to change its legislation to make labelling mandatory. Some foods, as we know, are used in the preparation of others, such as soya and canola for example.

People are saying they would like to be able to choose to buy or not buy products containing GMOs. They would like to know the ingredients used in the food products through mandatory labelling. I am pleased to table a petition on their behalf.

[English]

BILL C-23

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here from my constituents calling on parliament to immediately defeat Bill C-23 and reaffirm the traditional family relationship as the core of Canada's social fabric.

As we know, it is too late for the House of Commons but I certainly hope the Senate will listen to these petitioners.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Earlier in Routine Proceedings when I called for motions I did not see the hon. member for South Shore standing and therefore did not recognize him.

What I need to do is to have the unanimous consent of the House to revert back to motions. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will be answering Question No. 94 today.

Government Orders

[Text]

Question No. 94—**Mr. Ted White:**

With respect to the motion adopted in the House with all-party agreement on February 4, 1998, calling upon the Canadian government to renew its commitment to British pensioners living in Canada and to vigorously pursue an agreement with the British government for the indexing of pensions: (a) what steps has the government taken since February 1999 to act upon this directive of the House of Commons, including details about any meetings which have taken place with representatives of the British government; and (b) what is the present status of a proposed challenge to the present British policy before the European Court of Human Rights?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): (a) Steps the Government has taken since February 1999:

At the six countries social security meeting held in New Zealand in March 1999, the deputy minister of Human Resources Development expressed Canada's serious concern about the issue of frozen British pensions to the permanent secretary of the United Kingdom department of social security.

In October 1999 and again in March 2000, the Minister of Foreign Affairs re-iterated Canada's position on the issue of frozen British pensions at meetings with the British minister responsible for North American and Caribbean relations.

On at least five occasions during 1998-1999, at meetings of the International Social Security Association, senior officials of Human Resources Development Canada re-emphasized the need to resolve the issue of frozen British pensions in discussions with the head of International and European Union relations of the United Kingdom department of social security.

(b) Status of challenge before the European Court of Human Rights:

Officials of Human Resources Development, with the assistance of the Department of Justice, have given extensive study to a possible legal challenge to the British legislation on frozen pensions before the European Court of Human Rights. There are complex legal issues involved and Canada has no precedents for such an action. A decision is expected soon.

[Translation]

Mr. Derek Lee: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all other questions stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-14 in the name of the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

Motion P-14

That an Order of the House do issue for copies all the budget documents, financial reports, cost and revenue projections, related to the implementation and maintenance of the new gun control legislation and regulations resulting from the passage of Bill C-68 (assented to on December 5, 1995), now known as Chapter 39, Statutes of Canada 1995.

Mr. Derek Lee: Mr. Speaker, it has not been the practice of the House to order: cabinet documents which include a privy council confidence; papers the release of which might be detrimental to the future conduct of federal-provincial relations or the relations of provinces among themselves, the release of papers received from provinces would be subject to the consent of the originating province; papers of a voluminous character or which would require an inordinate cost or length of time to prepare.

• (1520)

I therefore ask the hon. member to withdraw his motion.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: Mr. Speaker, I believe I have the option of moving it for debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The motion is transferred for debate pursuant to Standing Order 97(1).

Mr. Derek Lee: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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[Translation]

PROCEEDS OF CRIME (MONEY LAUNDERING) ACT

The House proceeded to consideration of Bill C-22, an act to facilitate combatting the laundering of proceeds of crime, to establish the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada and to amend and repeal certain acts in consequence, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): There are 11 motions in amendment on the notice paper for the report stage of Bill C-22.

[*English*]

The motions will be grouped for debate as follows.

[*Translation*]

Group No. 1: Motion No. 1.

Group No. 2: Motions Nos. 2 to 7.

[*English*]

Group No. 3, Motions Nos. 8 to 11.

[*Translation*]

The voting pattern is available at the table. The Chair will inform the House of the details with each vote.

I will now put Motion No. 1 to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-22 be amended by adding after line 10 on page 3 the following new clause:

“3.1 The persons and entities to which this Act applies shall not transfer to their clients, either directly or indirectly, any costs incurred by them in carrying out their obligations under this Act.”

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-22 which seeks to deter money laundering.

Most people agree with the objective of this bill. Indeed, who could support regulations and laws that are too lax in the area of money laundering?

• (1525)

That being said, we think some amendments are required not to change the bill's thrust but rather to improve the bill. It is in that spirit of co-operation and with a view to improving the legislation that we participated in all the various stages.

I want to mention that the time allocated to us between the end of the testimonies at the Standing Committee on Finance and the beginning of the review, particularly the clause by clause review, was much too short.

I ask that this House and all its committees ensure that, next time, more time be provided between the end of the testimonies and the beginning of the clause by clause review of a bill. Otherwise, what is the use of these testimonies, of all the efforts, money and time expended by witnesses to come and express their

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views, if we do not have time afterwards to digest this new information?

I want to explain what Motion No. 1 is all about. Bill C-22 imposes new obligations to various organizations and entities, such as banks, casinos and caisses populaires. We know that bank charges for most Quebec and Canadian consumers are already very high.

The bill imposes new obligations to these entities to help fight money laundering. The purpose of Motion No. 1 is to ensure that the costs resulting from the new obligations imposed by Bill C-22 on these various institutions are not passed on to clients.

In the fight against money laundering, this amendment obliges these institutions to be good corporate citizens. In the battle that all elements of society must wage against money laundering, we want to ensure that financial institutions become good corporate citizens and do not transfer to their clients the costs incurred in carrying out these new obligations. Finally, they must do their part so that everyone helps carry the load in the fight against money laundering; these institutions will have to absorb these costs, which are minor for them.

We know that the banks make profits in the billions. The idea is to prevent them from passing on the costs of these obligations to their clients. In my view, this would be a big improvement to the bill.

People say “Another obligation for the banks. They will pass on the bill to us. Our fees will go up again. This is crazy, we are already paying plenty”. The purpose of this amendment is to avoid all this and ensure that clients do not suffer because of these obligations.

[*English*]

Mr. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the support we have had from all members of the House on this important money laundering bill which went straight to committee on division. We are trying to see if we can agree on some arrangements with respect to one of the motions that the member from the Bloc has submitted.

• (1530)

I would like to speak very briefly about the process. Members know the way standing committees work. Many of them have set up a separate steering committee or planning committee. That committee meets and charts out the plan of the committee for a period of time.

I should say in the case of the House of Commons finance committee there is a steering committee. It met and there was a work plan established. Within that work plan there were two or three days of hearings and consultations with respect to the money

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laundering bill. Also within the plan there was a period the next day or the following day when there would be a clause by clause debate of the money laundering bill.

Admittedly it was tight program, but given the importance of the money laundering bill and the support in principle for the bill that schedule was agreed to by all parties on the steering committee and presented to the full committee for approval where it was approved.

When we make these commitments we know that the schedule is tight but we all try within our very busy schedules to deal with that timetable the very best way we can.

I would like to turn to Motion No. 1 by the Bloc. In principle we can understand why the hon. member might propose motion. Basically the proposition is that financial institutions will be required to report suspicious transactions. If they are required to report certain amounts to the centre that will be defined by regulation and through the guidelines, this will put some burden on financial institutions to report these transactions to the centre.

I should point out that there is already a voluntary regime in place. Many of the financial institutions are already complying. Not as many as we would like, and in fact that is why the bill calls for mandatory reporting.

The motion calls for the government to regulate the prices that institutions and professionals charge for their services. That is the bottom line. If a financial institution is burdened with some additional costs of reporting then the hon. member is saying that those costs should be borne by the financial institution or the financial intermediary and not by Canadian consumers. That is a laudable goal, but generally the government does not regulate the prices that federally regulated financial institutions charge for their services.

The motion would have to go beyond these institutions by regulating the prices of provincially regulated institutions, unregulated companies, casinos, and professionals covered by the bill. Even if we thought that it would be a good idea to regulate these prices, the task of monitoring compliance would be monumental, if not impossible.

As the government indicated at committee, the provisions in the bill will be implemented after close consultation with the institutions and professionals affected. Every attempt will be made to minimize the cost of complying with the bill. I do not think the compliance costs will be that significant. It will be up to every business and profession to determine how best to deal with the modest compliance costs that may result. I cannot support the motion and I would encourage hon. members not to support it.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be the third speaker to mention the whole issue of the compression of time. As I pointed out at second reading, the

bill is long overdue. The government has been dragging its feet on it, and all of a sudden we are going at warp speed to try to get it through the procedure of the House of Commons.

I resent that very deeply on behalf of Canadian people because it is a vitally important bill. It has the potential to impact many hundreds of thousands if not millions of people in their financial transactions not only with respect to costs but also with respect to privacy issues and with respect to enforcement issues.

For that reason I have to concur with the hon. member from the Bloc Quebecois, although I do acknowledge on the part of the Liberal speaker before me that there had been an all party agreement to a work schedule. When the work schedule became unworkable it was incumbent in my judgment on the government to revisit that work schedule.

• (1535)

I will be raising this issue in some depth when we get to third reading. Even as we speak there are ongoing negotiations on a bill and on clauses to a bill that have international ramifications, if not individual and national ramifications. I find the process to be completely unacceptable. It is a bill that is vital. Because of the urgency to get the bill through, in part because of the delay of the Liberals in bringing it to the House of Commons, we will support it. However I want the people of Canada to know that this is a seriously flawed process.

With respect to Motion No. 1, as has been noted by the government there is a problem which very simply is how in the world would we ever get institutions, individuals, professionals or casinos to comply with the particular bill. I believe it is in Never-Never Land. It is kind of a fairy tale, something like the tooth fairy, that the costs to institutions or individuals providing services to people will not somehow find their way into the service charges. Of course they will.

To try to regulate something that is totally unregulatable is pie in the sky. As a consequence, although I have the greatest respect for the mover of the motion, I could never recommend to my colleagues that we support it.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as we mentioned earlier and as the other members have said, money laundering is a worldwide problem and, because of its nature, is difficult to quantify.

According to the federal government, some \$7 billion to \$10 billion is laundered in Canada. John Walker, an Australian criminologist and mathematician, has developed a global model at the request of the Australian government to determine the scope of money laundering worldwide. The United States and the UN are interested in his model.

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This Australian estimates the money laundering worldwide to be worth about \$3 trillion annually. He does not paint a glowing picture of Canada. According to his model, Canada ranks ninth worldwide as a country generating illicit money and eighth worldwide as a favoured destination for money laundering. According to this study, \$64 billion in illicit funds from outside the country are laundered in Canada and \$21 billion in criminal profits are generated.

Canada is a clearing house for the laundering of money and this news is not good. Canada is the only G-7 country that does not have legislation to fight money laundering. This is why Bill C-22 is welcomed favourably by the Bloc Québécois. It is another step in the fight against organized crime. The fight against this international scourge must begin at home first. For this reason, the Bloc Québécois supports this bill.

There are in Canada measures against money laundering. For example, there are provisions in the criminal code that make it a criminal offence to launder money and provide for the confiscation—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member.

[*English*]

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask for unanimous consent to concur in private member's Motion No. 308.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne: Mr. Speaker, since I was interrupted right in the middle of a sentence, I will repeat it so that all those who are listening to us can understand it.

As I was saying, there are in Canada measures against money laundering. For example, there are provisions in the criminal code that make it a criminal offence to launder money and provide for the confiscation of the proceeds and property derived from various organized crime drug trafficking activities. Under these provisions, the burden of proof is heavy for crown attorneys. They must prove beyond any reasonable doubt that a crime was committed and then that the seized goods were bought with dirty money. These investigations are extremely lengthy and few lead to prosecution.

In 1991, Canada passed the Proceeds of Crime (Monetary Laundering) Act, which requires several institutions to keep records. Indeed, financial institutions, foreign exchange offices, stockbrokers, life insurance companies and casinos are required to keep a record of transactions over \$10,000. However, there is no accountability requirement. This reduces the possibility of investigating and laying charges, since the information collected is not in the hands of the police. If it is passed, Bill C-22 will replace the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) Act.

These measures are clearly inadequate and do not seem to be effective enough. That is why the Bloc Québécois views Bill C-22 as an improvement on the existing money laundering legislation. However, Bill C-22 provides for the gathering of information about the movement of money. This will now be obligatory. A number of institutions and individuals will be required to make certain reports on the movement of money, as we mentioned. In addition, this information will be collected and analyzed in order to determine whether investigations or charges are warranted.

Financial institutions, exchange offices, casinos, life insurance companies and stockbrokers, among others, will now be required to report financial transactions that they suspect may be linked to an offence having to do with the laundering of the proceeds of crime. In addition, these institutions will be required to report certain categories of financial transactions described in the regulations and valued at more than C\$10,000.

Persons importing or exporting cash or goods valued at more than \$10,000 and those crossing the Canadian border with such items will be required to report these amounts to a Canada Customs official.

That concludes my remarks on Bill C-22 for now. We will certainly have an opportunity to continue the debate with the amendments that will be introduced in the course of the afternoon.

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Pankiw: Mr. Speaker, I believe we do not have a quorum.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt has called for a quorum count. Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): We now have a quorum.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague, the member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, on her speech.

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I also want to congratulate my colleague, the member for Charlesbourg. He worked very hard during consideration of this bill. I am very proud to have worked with him.

[*English*]

It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak to Bill C-22, the proceeds of crime bill. This legislation will, for all intents and purposes, create a new agency that will oversee and very much attach itself to the effort to prevent money laundering, a very serious problem in our country.

Again, I congratulate my colleague from Charlesbourg who has worked very hard on this bill and is very conscientious as a member, a previous member of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, and in his current capacity as he works equally hard for his constituents.

This amendment would add to a new clause to the bill. It would read:

3.1 The persons and entities to which this Act applies shall not transfer to their clients, either directly or indirectly, any costs incurred by them in carrying out their obligations under this Act.

This is a very positive, common sense amendment and one that the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada will be supporting wholeheartedly. The main purpose of the amendment is obvious. It would protect the average citizen from the various organizations concerned effectively passing the buck on to them, that is, using citizens very much as a dupe for some organized crime unit.

For example, in the banking sector consumers are already faced with relatively high service charges and further increases would not be desirable. As we all know, money laundering is a process by which revenues derived from criminal activity are converted into assets that cannot easily be traced back to their origins. It is something that is happening at an alarming rate in Canada.

Bill C-22 would bring Canada up to date with the standards of our G-7 trading partners. It does not take us beyond the minimum standard, but it does take us at least to the standard that G-7 countries have set.

In the United States I had the pleasure recently of visiting with an organized crime unit in the state of Massachusetts where they are doing a great deal to address this problem, and they are putting resources into it. That is the number one problem facing this government and this country. We are not arming our policing agencies, our internal security agencies, with sufficient resources to combat what is a very sophisticated and very well armed organized crime syndicate operating in Canada.

The saying that crime does not pay could not be further from the truth with regard to money laundering. It is estimated that between \$5 billion and \$17 billion in criminal proceeds are laundered in

Canada each year. It has become a very lucrative and profitable business.

Canada has long had a reputation of being one of the easiest jurisdictions in which to legitimize the proceeds of illegal pursuits.

The latest report of the Crime Intelligence Service of Canada indicates that money laundering has allowed, for example, the Sicilian mafia to continue to infiltrate legitimate business. Asian based groups are heavily involved in Canadian heroin and drug trafficking. We also know that the Russian mafia has become very prevalent inside Canada.

There has been discussion in the Chamber recently about the situation, particularly on the west coast, of the smuggling of humans. We know that the sidewinder project has received a great deal of attention in the media of late. This again demonstrates, sadly, our lack of resources when it comes to law enforcement, our internal security services, and their ability to combat organized crime.

Money laundering is but one aspect of this growing concern we have about protecting the integrity of our citizens and our money system. Money laundering poses to law enforcement personnel one of their greatest challenges in the battle against organized crime. To fight organized crime effectively, law enforcement agencies and we, as legislators, must address the challenges posed by current trends in money laundering and adopt a strategy to respond to those challenges. This bill moves in that direction.

For example, several months ago United States officials uncovered the biggest money laundering operation ever inside their country. Federal investigators believe that Russian gangsters had channelled up to \$10 billion through the Bank of New York, the 15th largest bank in the United States. This news sent shock waves throughout the entire financial services sector and proved that money laundering can affect even the biggest banks, those big commercial banks who would have us believe they are impenetrable.

• (1550)

The United States has moved ahead very quickly with its own tough, new money laundering legislation. It is very concerned, and we have seen it time and again, because the American economy and law enforcement agencies are very much tied, and therefore vulnerable, to our weaker internal security services. The U.S. has expressed concern repeatedly about the situation.

Since the Liberals took power in 1993 our internal security has diminished and has continued to be weakened. The Liberal government has given the United States much evidence to validate its concerns. In December 1999 U.S. customs officers discovered an Algerian Canadian, with Algerian terrorist connections, attempting to enter the United States through Seattle with a carload of explosives. This touched off a very serious concern within the United States and it continues to this day.

On February 25, 2000 the U.S. government suspended firearm and ammunition sales to Canada, which was done at the request of the Canadian government, and legal import licences were being used to import large quantities of handguns, rifles and ammunition. Firearms were then smuggled back into other countries. Many of them went back to the United States. This was very much an embarrassment for Canada. The soft approach on crime is highlighted by these inadequacies. It was another blow to our good relationship with the United States, because of our open, undefended border.

Since 1993 the Liberals have talked repeatedly about increasing penalties for money laundering in a manner that would be consistent with public safety, yet the RCMP still lacks the proper budget to deal with today's very sophisticated crime. For example, we saw that only \$810 million had been set aside over the next three years. Much of that has been earmarked to fight organized crime.

Unfortunately, the usual sleight of hand has to be uncovered, and that is that 62% of this new money will not be available until the year 2001-02. This will be added to the RCMP base budget of about \$2.1 million. That is still not enough, given the level of the problem and the years that the RCMP, CSIS and other services have been underfunded.

The mounties have already had to curtail their activities with respect to undercover operations which targeted organized crime. Reduction in training and the inability to conduct fraud investigations in British Columbia and undercover operations seriously jeopardizes the RCMP's ability to effectively do its job.

To correct these problems it is proposed that 5,000 new RCMP officers would be needed. Also lacking is staff at the forensic laboratory, the need for DNA databanks and the need to update the CPIC system. Police forces need this type of technology, and yet the government cannot even afford and will not commit the money that is needed to deal with these very serious inadequacies.

The government gave \$115 million to the CPIC program when it was stated quite clearly that what was needed was \$283 million. Once again, a pittance. It is an insult to our brave men and women who are in the mounties and in the secret service to have to work under these conditions.

British Columbia mounties alone may shift away from organized crime to deal with more pressing needs of fulfilling police vacancies and paying their officers. Basic policing needs have to be attended to and, therefore, organized crime needs are being neglected. In rural areas there is a very serious problem of losing RCMP documents and losing municipal police forces in small communities.

The riding of Shefford, represented by the Progressive Conservative member from Granby, is dealing with the very serious threat of losing its detachment. Biker gangs are terrorizing farmers and forcing them to grow marijuana in their fields.

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There is a Bloc member who is currently being threatened by members of biker gangs and organized crime.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada supports the broad purpose and principles of this bill, that is, to remedy the shortcomings in Canada's anti-money laundering legislation as identified by the G-7 financial action task force on money laundering. We support this amendment and we will be very supportive of this bill as it proceeds through the House and the various committee stages.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

• (1555)

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 nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

The motions in Group No. 2, at the request of the hon. member for Charlesbourg, the mover of the motions, will be withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Marceau: Mr. Speaker, following ongoing negotiations with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, I have decided not to withdraw these amendments. I will ask to speak in order to introduce them.

Some will be amended by the parliamentary secretary. As they are my motions, I cannot amend them myself, if I am not mistaken.

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[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I understand that the motions in Group No. 2, standing in the name of the hon. member for Charlesbourg, will be introduced at this time.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-22 be amended by adding after line 47 on page 10 the following new clause:

“19.1 If an officer decides, on grounds that the officer believes to be reasonable, to exercise any of the powers or perform any of the duties or functions under subsections 15(1) and (3), 16(1) and (2), 17(1) and 18(1), the officer shall record in writing the reasons for the decision.”

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-22, in Clause 36, be amended by adding after line 22 on page 17 the following:

“(3.1) If an officer decides, on grounds that the officer believes to be reasonable, to disclose information under subsection (2) or (3), the officer shall record in writing the reasons for the decision.”

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-22, in Clause 55, be amended by adding after line 5 on page 26 the following:

“(5.1) The Centre shall record in writing the reasons for all decisions to disclose information made under subsection (3) or paragraph (4)(a) or (5)(a).”

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-22, in Clause 56, be amended by adding after line 18 on page 27 the following:

“(4) In every agreement or arrangement entered into under subsection (1) or (2), there shall be inserted an express condition that each party shall comply with the provisions of this Act dealing with the confidentiality and the collection and use of information.”

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-22, in Clause 62, be amended by adding after line 3 on page 33 the following:

“(1.1) If an authorized person decides, on grounds that the person believes to be reasonable, to enter premises under paragraph (1)(a), the person shall record in writing the reasons for the decision.”

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-22, in Clause 63, be amended by replacing line 41 on page 33 with the following:

“business, profession or activity, and shall record in writing the reasons for the person's belief.”

• (1600)

He said: Mr. Speaker, before I go any further, I seek unanimous consent to withdraw Motion No. 5.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The hon. member for Charlesbourg has asked for the unanimous consent of the House to remove Motion No. 5 standing in his name. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion No. 5 withdrawn)

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Marceau: Mr. Speaker, again, I am pleased to address this bill, even though I am a little out of breath.

The purpose of Motions Nos. 2, 3 and 4 is very simple. If we want the privacy commissioner and the information access commissioner to be able to get all the information they need, the reasons for which the officer of the centre wanted to investigate further must be recorded in writing, otherwise it will be difficult to know what happened and why the decision to investigate further and to disclose the information was made.

This is the reason why I proposed these motions. I know that these provisions will be amended by the parliamentary secretary and I will be waiting for his amendments.

In that same spirit of continued co-operation to speed up the process, I ask that Motions Nos. 6 and 7 also be withdrawn, with the unanimous consent of the House.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Just to be clear, is it the intention of the member for Charlesbourg to ask that Motions Nos. 6 and 7 standing in his name be withdrawn?

Mr. Richard Marceau: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Does the House give unanimous consent to withdraw Motions Nos. 6 and 7 standing in the name of the hon. member for Charlesbourg?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motions Nos. 6 and 7 withdrawn)

Mr. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the various members for their co-operation in trying to reach some conclusion to these amendments.

Motion No. 2 would impose a legal requirement on customs officers to do what in certain circumstances is done as a matter of good administrative practice. My concern with the motion is that it would create a procedural burden for routine actions, such as a

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request of a customs officer to look inside the trunk of a car which is crossing the border.

The procedures proposed in Bill C-22 to deal with cross-border movements of large amounts of currency and monetary instruments are intended to dovetail with similar procedures dealing with the movement of goods. Introducing a requirement to create a written record for routine actions by customs officers at the border would add bureaucracy and cause unnecessary delays for the travelling public.

I therefore would like to propose the suggestion that officers be required to record in writing their reasons for decisions under this bill not apply to routine actions but be limited instead to the exercise of the powers under subsection 18(1) which deal with the seizure of currency or monetary instruments. Therefore the amended motion would read as follows:

That Bill C-22 be amended by adding after line 47 on page 10 the following new clause:

“19.1 If an officer decides to exercise powers under subsection 18(1), the officer shall record in writing reasons for the decision”.

• (1605)

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

Mr. Roy Cullen: Mr. Speaker, could I now proceed to Motion No. 3?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): We are on Group No. 2. We have to stay on Group No. 2 but you can speak to any of the motions in that group.

Mr. Roy Cullen: Mr. Speaker, with respect to Motion No. 3, we have no objection to the intent of the motion but we would suggest that it be redrafted to make it clear that the decision would be made by the officer on the basis of the criteria set out in the appropriate subsections rather than “on grounds that the officer believes to be reasonable”. The amended motion would read:

That Bill C-22, in clause 36, be amended by adding after line 22 on page 17 the following new clause:

“(3.1) If an officer decides to disclose information under subsection (2) or (3), the officer shall record in writing the reasons for the decision.”

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The debate is on the amendment. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Roy Cullen: Mr. Speaker, moving now to Motion No. 4, the centre’s decision to disclose information in accordance with section 55 of the bill is an extremely important one. It will be necessary for the centre to fully document the reasons for doing so in each and every case. It was always intended that the centre would do this and therefore I am prepared to support the amendment proposed by my colleague.

• (1610)

Mr. Darrel Stinson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Normally in a speech an amendment is moved just once. There were several amendments created during the speech. I would like to know what the protocol is.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The protocol is when it is a report stage motion it is the responsibility of the Chair, where there is a recognition between parties that they are working toward resolving a bill, not to stand in the way of that. The Chair’s responsibility is to make sure that what is being done is being done in a parliamentary sound fashion. That is why we are taking the time now to make sure that what is being done is being done appropriately.

I think behind the hon. member’s question is the fact that generally if an amendment to a motion is moved, it is done at the end of an intervention and that terminates the intervention. In this case I recognized the hon. parliamentary secretary on a different motion within the context of that group recognizing that there had been negotiations between opposition and government members on this particular bill.

Again it was not my intention to involve the Chair in the debate, but it is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that if opposition and government are working toward resolution of differences on a bill, to facilitate the ability of members to work together in common cause.

As members know, they cannot through amendment change a bill. All they can do is amend something that is already there; they cannot change the format or the intent. This is what is being considered by the clerks.

• (1615)

As this is the first time this has come before me, I will need the attention of all members present to make sure that it is done correctly.

The amendments as presented by the hon. parliamentary secretary are not in order because they are amendments to change the bill. What is before the House now are the amendments. For an amendment to be in order it must amend a motion. Therefore, the amendments as presented by the parliamentary secretary are not in order. This leaves the Chair in the position of saying that if there is the will for the motion to be amended it is not up to the Chair to negotiate this. It must be done by the parties.

The way we could do this is to continue with the debate on the motions that are before the House. If there is no further debate on motions before the House, with the indulgence and with the unanimous consent of the House, we could move to Group No. 3 and then come back again to Group No. 2. However, that would require the unanimous consent of the House. Other than that, we will stay on the motions in Group No. 2 as they are presented.

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[Translation]

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that if the government had listened to the Canadian Alliance member who was sitting on the parliamentary committee at the time, if it had agreed to allow more time between the end of evidence and the beginning of the clause by clause review in committee, we would not find ourselves in this situation.

I can only deplore it. I think the Canadian Alliance member will agree with me. This is deplorable, because normally this exercise should be done in committee.

That being said, I want to make sure I clearly understood what you said. I proposed Motions Nos. 2 and 3, which were amended by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance. These are amendments to my motions with which I can live. I wonder if we could go the unanimous consent route.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The third option would be to ask for the unanimous consent of the House to receive the amendments as presented by the parliamentary secretary. If a member would like to make that motion, we will get on with it. That is a good way to do it.

• (1620)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the process that we are currently involved in is egregiously flawed. We are talking about a bill that will interdict hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars of currency. It is an international agreement with vast ranging, international implications for not only G-7 nations but indeed nations throughout the entire world.

As has been pointed out by my colleague from the Progressive Conservative Party and also my colleague from the Bloc Québécois in debate this afternoon, we are talking about the core of international crime and the way in which we can track it. The member for Charlevoix, another member and myself have all pointed out that the haste with which this is going through the House is to treat the House with disrespect and as a rubber stamp.

The debacle we are currently involved in was as a result of discussion in good faith between the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois. As the representative of Her Majesty's Official Opposition, I was not involved in any of the discussion about the motions that you, Mr. Speaker, have ruled out of order. I find it completely unacceptable that Her Majesty's Official Opposition would not have been involved in the discussion.

Therefore, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

And more than five members have risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Call in the members.

• (1710)

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

(Division No. 1279)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bailey
Borotsik	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Cadman
Casey	Casson
Chatters	Cummins
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Keddy (South Shore)	Konrad
Lowther	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark	Mayfield
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Muise	Pankiw
Penson	Price
Ritz	Schmidt
Solberg	Stinson
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Vautour
Vellacott	Wayne
White (North Vancouver)	Williams—38

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alarie
Alcock	Anderson
Assad	Asselin
Augustine	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélanger
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bennett	Bergeron
Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)	Bergeron
Bertrand	Bigras

Government Orders

Blaikie
Bonin
Boudria
Brown
Bulte
Caccia
Cannis
Caplan
Carroll
Chan
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Coderre
Comuzzi
Cotler
Cullen
de Savoye
Desjarlais
DeVillers
Dion
Dromisky
Earle
Eggleton
Folco
Fournier
Gagliano
Galloway
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Gruending
Guimond
Harvard
Ianno
Jackson
Jordan
Keys
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Lalonde
Lee
Limoges
Mahoney
Mancini
Marceau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McWhinney
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Murray
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pagtakhan
Patry
Perron
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Pratt
Proulx
Reed
Robillard
Rocheleau
Saada
Scott (Fredericton)
Sgro
Speller
St-Hilaire
Stewart (Brant)
Stoffer
Telegdi
Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Ur
Venne
Whelan

Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Bryden
Byrne
Calder
Canuel
Cardin
Chamberlain
Charbonneau
Clouthier
Collenette
Copps
Crête
Dalphond-Guiral
Debien
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Dockrill
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Easter
Finlay
Fontana
Fry
Gagnon
Godfrey
Godin (Châteauguay)
Graham
Grose
Guarnieri
Hardy
Hubbard
Ifody
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Knutson
Lastewka
Lill
MacAulay
Maloney
Manley
Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Ménard
Mitchell
Nault
O'Reilly
Paradis
Peric
Peterson
Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Plamondon
Proud
Provenzano
Richardson
Robinson
Rock
Sauvageau
Sekora
Shepherd
St. Denis
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo
Thibeault
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Turp
Vanclief
Volpe
Wilfert—171

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

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. for Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, Human Resources Development; the hon. member for Halifax West, National Defence; the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Human Resources Development.

• (1715)

Mr. Joe McGuire (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I move:

That Motion No. 2 be amended by deleting all of the words after the words "19.1 If an officer decides," with the following:

"to exercise powers under subsection 18(1), the officer shall record in writing reasons for the decision".

I also move:

That Motion No. 3 be amended by deleting the following words:

" , on grounds that the officer believes to be reasonable,"

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The amendments are in order.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate. I thank again and recognize the efforts of the hon. member for Charlesbourg who moved Motions Nos. 2 to 7. These motions highlight a concern which I think we all have. Certainly we in the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada share the concerns with respect to this new agency passing on unrelated information that it might have about Revenue Canada.

For example, if the agency had reasonable grounds to pursue an individual case of money laundering, that much is fine, but money laundering has become a very serious issue and one that should be considered a threat to national security.

Globally experts estimate that between \$300 billion and \$500 billion in United States currency is criminally derived from international capital markets or funds that are derived from outside our borders. In Canada the federal government estimates that between \$5 billion and \$17 billion in criminal proceeds are laundered in this country each year. If this new agency does not have enough power and enough evidence to pursue the case of money laundering, it could determine that there is not enough evidence to get the person on tax evasion and could conceivably release information to Revenue Canada. It is crucial that we ensure on behalf of Canadian taxpayers that this new agency is not swallowed up by the Godzilla tax collector out there, also known as the department of revenue.

• (1720)

What we saw happen in the House just a short time ago epitomizes how the government is flying by the seat of its pants.

Government Orders

We saw a member on the government side try to amend an amendment. What was intended was to amend the act itself, which the Chair quite properly ruled out of order. The member rose and we had to delay the debate because of the fact that the government did not know what it was doing.

This shows there is no plan. The Liberals have lost the plot again with respect to a very important piece of legislation on which they should have taken the time to do their homework and prepare what they wanted to do instead of simply trying to hoodwink everybody that was in the House.

The Progressive Conservative Party supports the broad principles of the bill before us on debate. It is one of the most important efforts that we can all make with respect to law enforcement, with respect to the integrity of our country and with respect to the efforts of our law enforcement agencies to curtail and control a growing money laundering problem and criminal activity within our borders. The Conservative Party supports the broad principles.

When members of the RCMP call this legislation long overdue and say that it will make a significant difference, we have to take them at their word. The Canadian Bankers Association has spoken very favourably about the legislation. It similarly says that the legislation is long overdue and that organized crime will be much deterred by it.

International money capital markets annually are very much affected. We know that the bill is aimed at addressing fiscal problems that occur when money is funnelled through legitimate organizations like banks. We know as well that the amendments which have been introduced very much ameliorate and prop up some of the intended passages.

We feel the legislation will be an improvement upon the current situation in the country, but we have to hearken back to where some of the real problems lie. Where do the real problems stem from in terms of the ability of our law enforcement agencies to somehow control the situation?

We see a bill that is aimed at tightening up some of the legislative framework, but what we really need to do to improve the situation is to prop up the RCMP and CSIS by giving these law enforcement agencies the backup and resources they need to combat a very sophisticated organized crime syndicate in this country.

We know the government has a reputation for being laid back and very non-supportive of our law enforcement agencies when it comes to their ongoing uphill battle with existing crime syndicates, not only motorcycle gangs but the increasing presence of Asian gangs, Russian gangs and the traditional Mafia within Canada.

Compared to countries like the United States we pale in comparison in terms of the support that we give law enforcement agencies.

The other message that should be coming out in this debate is that it is not enough simply to put a legislative framework in place. We have to pony up to the bar and put dollars on the table so that the men and women who are very much dedicated to our law enforcement services are not only seen to be given support but are given actual support. We need to do this right away.

The Progressive Party of Canada has always been very much supportive of agencies in the country that are tasked with this very important task. They are the thin blue line between the Canadian public and those who choose a life of crime.

The bill is one of which our party is supportive. The amendments as well are supported by our party. The reaction from the community, from the banking community and from agencies across the land, seems to be one that has embraced the intention of the bill. One would hope that there will be rapid passage of the legislation when it reaches the committee and when it comes back to the House.

• (1725)

Money laundering is but one part of the equation when it comes to organized crime. We know that drug enforcement has been a huge problem from our law enforcement perspective. We know that guns and other contraband material are coming across our undefended borders.

We know as well that child pornography and people smuggling are very much a problem. We do not have impenetrable borders, and that will never happen. The dismantling of the ports police which the government orchestrated by having weak border patrols was highlighted recently by the fact that we had an international terrorist cross into Seattle from Canada. This alarmed American law enforcement officials. They have called upon Canada to tighten up, to try to pick up the slack, because they are feeling very vulnerable as a result of Canada letting down the side.

All the indicators are there. All the signs are speaking out to Canada to do something about it. The legislation at least indicates that we are moving in the right direction, but sadly as we have come to expect from the government it is a baby step as opposed to a giant step or even a significant step in doing the right thing by propping up the men and women who are tasked with protecting the country's integrity, not only with respect to illegal funds but with respect to the whole gamut of illegal activity that is taking place.

We know that gangs are very much rearing their ugly heads not only in cities like Montreal, Toronto and Calgary. They are now making their presence known in rural communities across the country.

Because of the huge boundaries of water we have and because of the lack of resources that we have for the coast guard and the lack of resources that we have for the RCMP to actually partake in patrols on docks and in major ports, once again we are being very

much left open to contraband materials entering the country. Money laundering is very much the focus of the bill, but we know that there are other very significant tasks, other very significant problems that are faced by law enforcement agents.

The government is letting down the side. It has not lived up to the billing. It has not responded to requests from the RCMP. It has not responded to requests to renew and bring back the ports police in this country. It is not listening, and we know it is not listening.

More and more we are getting the indicators that this is a tired, arrogant government. When the Prime Minister goes abroad and sticks his foot firmly in his mouth, it proves that time and time again. We knew that long before he went to the Middle East. He was doing the same thing in this country, but now he has demonstrated it to the whole world.

What we want to hear is that the government is listening. Canadians want to hear that the government is actually listening to them. This is an opportunity for the government to do so, but I do not think it is listening.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Peter MacKay: I hear hon. members opposite becoming a little alarmed by the fact that we are pointing this out, but Canadians know what is happening and those members can say what they want. The indicators are there. The ears are closed. The message is going out but they are not listening.

We will see a byelection in Newfoundland which will indicate that Canadians have had it with the Liberal government. When that happens, maybe that message will start to penetrate those ears. The Liberals have big earmuffs on when it comes to listening to what Canadians have to say.

With money laundering legislation that is aimed at a specific problem perhaps finally we will be able to get the attention of the government. We hear about things like this happening in the country. Unfortunately the national media are not always the most responsible in reporting exactly how it is, but we know that the particular problem has been broadcast across the country. It has been broadcast clearly as an issue that has to be addressed and addressed now.

We hope that side of the House will continue to support initiatives like this one. Unfortunately more and more the initiatives that matter most to Canadians, whether it be tax reduction, health care, something to do with student debt or initiatives to help our law enforcement agents, are coming from the opposition side because the Liberals are bankrupt on ideas. We know that when it comes to principle there is another party in here that can be very bankrupt.

Private Members' Business

I thank the House for its indulgence and for the time to speak to the legislation. I look forward to seeing it passed through the various stages and becoming law.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[*English*]

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF CANADA ACT

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.) moved that Bill C-451, an act to establish an oath of allegiance to the flag of Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to debate my private member's bill, Bill C-451, an act to establish an oath of allegiance to the flag of Canada.

I have been working on this bill for a very long time. It was originally introduced in 1996 but died on the order paper when the election was called the following year. I was not able to reintroduce it until this spring and was very happy when it was drawn in the draw for Private Members' Business.

The idea for this bill comes from a discussion I had with my constituent, Joyce Hammond. When we realized that there were several oaths of allegiance in use, but no one official oath, we both agreed that an official oath should be adopted.

An official oath of allegiance to the Canadian flag and all that it represents would be a wonderful gift now, at the dawn of a new millennium. The 19th century gave us nationhood. The 20th century gave us our flag. In the 21st century, Canada should have an oath of allegiance.

Some people have asked me why an oath of allegiance is important. We have a national anthem. Why would we need anything more? The answer is simple. An oath would give us an opportunity wherever the flag is present to show our commitment to and appreciation for Canada and all that our flag represents. When we look at the maple leaf, we see Canada, but reciting an

Private Members' Business

oath would encourage us to really think about what our flag and what our country stand for. All the values that we as a country hold dear are embodied in the maple leaf.

As you well know, Madam Speaker, our flag is very highly respected around the world. When people see a Canadian flag flying atop one of our embassies or sewn on a backpack, they immediately think of tolerance, diversity and peacekeeping. These are attributes we can and should all be proud of. An oath would reaffirm our commitment to these values.

Others have asked why we should pledge allegiance to a piece of cloth. To that I say that our flag is much more than just a piece of cloth. It represents not only our values but also our common history and our traditions. The flag represents millions of people coming to Canada to build a better life for their families. It represents two official languages working together. It represents democracy and freedom. Of course, to many it represents Mounties, beavers and snow.

The point is that if someone looks at the flag and only sees the flag, they are missing the point. This oath would help to make it clear that our flag means so much more to us as a nation.

Some people are concerned that an oath of allegiance to the flag of Canada is somehow too American. I would like to point out that the United States is not the only country to have an oath of allegiance. Besides, if our neighbour to the south has a good idea, why should we not steal it?

Many Canadians think that an oath of allegiance is a wonderful idea. This bill has been endorsed by 500 municipalities across Canada and by Canadians from more than 700 different communities. The letters, e-mails and phone calls of support continue to arrive.

Recently I received a letter from Les Peate, national secretary of the Korean Veterans Association of Canada. Mr. Peate wrote:

Perhaps the time has come for us to stand up and be counted, and have an officially-approved standard "Pledge of Allegiance", which need not be mandatory but should be available for schools, veterans' groups, service organizations and any other gatherings where we can still show pride in being Canadian.

• (1735)

I agree with Mr. Peate. I am not proposing a mandatory oath. Forcing patriotism tends to lead to dangerous consequences. However, I do feel strongly that Canadians should have an official oath as a means of showing their patriotism.

Mr. Peate also tells a story about a fellow veteran who visited an American legion post. After the American veterans recited their pledge of allegiance, the Canadians were invited to do the same. Mr. Peate's colleagues were embarrassed to admit that we do not

have an official oath. This is an embarrassment that could easily be alleviated with this bill.

Many veterans have written in support of Bill C-451. Whether they fought to defend the values that our flag represents or served on peacekeeping missions to uphold those same values, an official oath of allegiance holds a special significance for them. They are not alone in believing that they need to pay tribute to our flag and all that it represents.

Young Canadians have also shown a strong interest in this legislation. Either through the encouragement of their teachers or on their own, I have received sample oaths from students across Canada. Leanne Rutledge of Iron Bridge, Ontario suggested:

I pledge my loyalty to my country as the greatest country in the world to me.

Given Canada's number one ranking by the United Nations for quality of life six years running, an oath like this is especially relevant.

Jocelyn Smid, a student from Cochrane, Alberta wrote the following:

I pledge allegiance to the flag of Canada and its people. I will try to keep our country free, peaceful and beautiful. I will obey the laws of the land and will protect our environment. I will respect all of Canada's people, regardless of race, colour or religion.

In fact, Canadians from all walks of life have provided suggestions for the oath of allegiance. Howard Scrimgeour, a veterinarian in my riding of Guelph—Wellington, has proposed the oath currently taken by members of the Canadian forces.

I do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second, her heirs and successors, according to law.

As members can see, different people have different ideas as to what the oath should say. That is why I am proposing that the oath be drafted by a parliamentary committee in consultation with Canadians. It is not only important that we have an official oath of allegiance, but that the oath is our oath. It is extremely important that Canadians be able to identify with the oath and that the oath is a source of inspiration to all of us. What better way to ensure the oath's relevance.

We, as Canadians, have so very much to be proud of and even more to be thankful for: freedom, equality, clean water and air, vast expanses, access to quality health care and education, all things that we may take for granted but that many people around the world are still fighting to achieve. An official oath of allegiance to our flag would serve as a reminder that we are among the privileged few. We fought to make Canada the best country in the world and we won.

An oath of allegiance would also serve as a reminder of all that it took to get to where we are today. It would give us time to reflect

on the duties we all share as citizens of this great nation. The swearing of an oath is done solemnly and respectfully. It is not something done lightly and would encourage greater understanding of what it takes to ensure that Canada remains the best country in the world in which to live.

I look forward to what my hon. colleagues have to say about Bill C-451. I want to thank them for taking part in this debate and sincerely hope that we can work together to make this bill a reality.

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I applaud the member for Guelph—Wellington on her private member's bill, Bill C-451, an act to establish an oath of allegiance to the flag of Canada.

I will begin by saying that I do support the bill. As Canadians we are all proud to live in this great country, a place where everyone from around the globe wants to come. Our flag is a national symbol, as are our institutions. The very parliament buildings that we are in today rival any in the world. Canadians who visit Ottawa always return home feeling more patriotic than when they first came.

• (1740)

National symbols are very important. Our national flag is respected around the world. As members of parliament, the lapel flag pins are in great demand by our constituents, especially to those Canadians who wish to travel abroad. They come back with stories telling us that wherever they travel this little flag gives them an identity. They are welcomed and very well treated when they are away from Canada.

Our exercise of patriotism in my opinion has certainly declined over the years. As a former school teacher for 26 years, I have seen many of these changes, certainly in the classroom. The House sings O Canada once a week. It is unfortunate that this practice has not been around very long. It is also sad that Canadians do not take more pride in the singing of our national anthem.

It is even more amazing that we do not begin each day in the House, the House that belongs to the people of Canada, by the singing of O Canada. Yes, we in the House are the model for this country. If we expect Canadians to be more expressive in their nationalism, we can certainly lead by example. If we do not wish to sing the anthem, perhaps we could invite Canadians from across the country to come here and sing our national anthem.

Today we are talking about an oath of allegiance to our flag. I find it rather ironic that since I have been here we have had a debate about displaying flags in this very room which was voted down. Again, this House is a model of behaviour for Canadians to follow. I believe Canadians want to show allegiance to this country by both song and word. That is why I support the bill.

Private Members' Business

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the desecration of our national flag. At this time the criminal code does not protect our flag. I know that the Canadian Legion is leading the charge to put more teeth into the law on the desecration of our national symbol, our flag. Government officials at this time, however, state that such legislation would contravene the charter of rights and freedoms and, in particular, section 2 which guarantees freedom of expression.

Research completed by the Library of Parliament indicates that the United States is the only country that has an oath of allegiance to the flag. Although its oath is official in law, the United States supreme court ruled that the oath is voluntary only. Countries like Japan, Germany, Italy, Russia, Great Britain and the European union do not have oaths of allegiance to the flag. Many have other oaths of allegiance, such as the oath of citizenship. In Canada, we also have such oaths for members of parliament upon taking office, privy councillors, senators and Canadian citizenship.

By definition, an oath of allegiance is a declaration of loyalty to a country that a citizen makes to safeguard the country's interest. There is a bond, whether it be emotional, coercive or legal, that binds the subject to the nation's sovereignty. Bill C-451 calls on the parliamentary committee to draft an oath to the flag of Canada. Oaths are not pious statements of goodwill. They are legally binding commitments with punishment for failure to live up to them. As a critic for the Canadian Alliance, I will support the bill.

In closing, our flag is a symbol of our great country. An oath of allegiance to the flag is just another way of showing our respect for our great country.

• (1745)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-451 introduced by the member for Guelph—Wellington proposes to establish an oath of allegiance to the Canadian flag. The Bloc Quebecois opposes this bill. I will explain why.

Do not misunderstand me. I am not questioning the relevance of national symbols. All countries in the world have distinctive symbols, such as coats of arms, an emblem in the form of a flower or an animal. The flag has always been an important symbol flown proudly by the various countries of the world.

For example, the flag of a nation is part of all official ceremonies, is flown from the flagstaffs of institutions, accompanies delegations and identifies the nationality of whomever is flying it. Indeed, a country's flag is a powerful symbol identifying the country, reflecting its values and affirming its culture, and I have a profound respect for the flag of all nations since each flag is being borne by a people. This is true of the Quebec flag and of the Canadian flag.

Private Members' Business

Recognizing and respecting a national flag is one thing. Making it the object of patriotic devotion is another. Yet, this is unfortunately what the hon. member for Guelph—Wellington seeks to do with her bill, which begins by saying that it is desirable to establish an oath of allegiance that would allow Canadian citizens to display their patriotism, and continues by saying that an oath of allegiance to the flag of Canada would recognize the importance of our flag in our lives.

That is not right. No one has yet demonstrated the desirability of an oath of allegiance that would allow Canadian citizens to display their patriotism, and I am not talking about Quebecers.

Patriotism is love for one's country and devotion to it. Patriotism is not about taking an oath. My motherland, which I love and for which I work hard, is Quebec. I work for it in a totally legitimate, legal and respectful way.

The member for Guelph—Wellington also contends that an oath of allegiance would recognize the importance of the Canadian flag in our lives. That seems to me to be not only exaggerated, but also completely foreign to Quebecers' feelings.

To respect the flag of a nation is one thing, but it is totally inappropriate to say that the Canadian flag deserves to be recognized in our daily lives through an oath. Indeed, in the daily lives of ordinary people, what is important is not to adore a flag, regardless of which one it is, but to earn a living, raise children, fulfil ambitions and look after one's health.

It seems to me that this House and its members have more pressing things to do than to spend time, energy and money to draft an oath of allegiance to the flag of Canada and to encourage and promote the taking of such an oath.

When it comes right down to it, what purpose would this oath of allegiance serve? When would it be used? Who would be authorized or encouraged to take it? And what exactly is the meaning of clause 5 of the bill, which reads "The Minister shall encourage and promote the giving of the oath".

When we see how, for too many years, the federal government has used Canada's flag and Canada Day for its own propaganda agenda, at a cost of tens of millions of dollars, in an attempt to destroy the identity of the Quebec people, I have the very strong feeling that, if ever this bill were to be passed, it too, unfortunately, would be used for the same base propaganda purposes in order to wipe out our identity as Quebecers.

As far as I know, Canada is not handicapped by the lack of an oath of allegiance to the flag. Many countries in the world do not have such an oath and they are none the worse off.

• (1750)

France is a good example. The absence of an oath of allegiance to the flag of France has never prevented the French, through numerous trying events, from demonstrating their vibrant patriotism when circumstances required it. The Americans, for their part, have chosen to have such an oath. That is their choice and it goes along with their mentality.

But we are neither the French nor the Americans. We are Canadians and Quebecers, and that is that. Although we share some values, there are others that set us apart.

A flag is the symbol of a nation's values. The bill of the member for Guelph—Wellington recognizes this by providing that a committee be struck to ensure that the wording of the oath of allegiance contains a statement of the principal values symbolized by the flag of Canada.

What are these values? Is it true that all Canadian and Quebec citizens share exactly the same values and accord them exactly the same importance?

Perhaps it is true that the people of British Columbia share the same values as the people of Newfoundland. Perhaps. But Quebecers attach far greater importance to community values, whereas the people in western Canada attach greater importance to values of individualism.

This is totally irreconcilable, as we can see in the handling of the Young Offenders Act, a bill everyone in Quebec opposes, and the Minister of Justice of Canada does not seem to care a whit.

Here in the House of Commons, we in the Bloc Québécois respect the great democratic value of 50% plus one, whereas it means nothing to the Liberals.

This bill is not appearing in isolation at this point. In fact, just last week, the Conservative government of Ontario announced that the national anthem of Canada and the oath of citizenship would be part of the daily routine of Ontario school children. The totalitarian regimes of the 20th century could not do better.

In fact, asking children in this the beginning of the 21st century to swear their loyalty to Queen Elizabeth II seems totally anachronistic to me. And to say that all this commotion serves to ensure better security—that is right, security—in the schools of Ontario. The outcry this announcement raised last week was not surprising.

The bill of the member for Guelph—Wellington is cut from the same cloth. It is a bill that, in the guise of patriotic virtue, attempts to force people to express their belief in moral values to be decided by a committee. This has nothing to do with patriotism, not even with the freedoms of thought and expression guaranteed by the charter of rights and freedoms.

Private Members' Business

As a Quebecer, I cannot swear allegiance when the values and patriotism expressed are not part of my own convictions, which I share with my fellow citizens of Quebec.

I have this freedom, we have the freedom to think as Quebecers and to act as Quebecers. This freedom can never be denied us by law. The Bloc Quebecois opposes this bill.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The hon. member for West Nova has indicated that he would like to speak to the subject. Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Madam Speaker, I wish to thank my colleagues for allowing me to say a few words on this subject.

[*English*]

I am pleased to participate in the debate over the possible establishment of an oath of allegiance to the flag of Canada.

I congratulate my hon. colleague from Guelph—Wellington for having introduced this private member's bill. It is a credit to her that she has persisted in her attempts to instil a greater sense of patriotism within this country by drawing attention to the significance of the Canadian flag and the symbolism it represents. I do not think enough Canadians, or at least enough young Canadians, recognize or appreciate the significance of the Canadian flag. It has been stated repeatedly through a number of studies that Canadians do not know enough about their own history. We must ask ourselves why this is the case.

• (1755)

At first glance we immediately point the finger at our educational system. Our education system is not focusing enough attention on teaching our young people about their own history. As a result they fail to develop proper appreciation for the struggles of their ancestors. Our education system must certainly bear some of the responsibility. However I think the problem goes much further than that.

For whatever reason, we Canadians do not believe in beating our own drum. Unlike our neighbours to the south who never miss an opportunity for self-promotion, we Canadians are much more reserved in displaying our own patriotism.

[*Translation*]

Sadly, most Canadians might find it easier to identify great names in American history than our very own Canadian heroes.

And yet, we do have a number of heroes in Canada. Our Canadian history is full of great people who gave a part of lives to build the best country in the world.

[*English*]

We have a proud history of very distinguished Canadians whose exploits not only helped change the face of this country but also had a positive influence on the history of the world.

We could begin with our fathers of confederation who shared a vision for a strong and united country, a country that could compete not only with our southern neighbours but also with the rest of the world. Their legacy continues today as Canadians take on a leading role in developing new partnerships with other foreign countries which ultimately help strengthen our competitive edge here at home.

There are perhaps no other events in our history that help define us as a country than our participation in the first world war. Canada came of age as the exploits of our brave soldiers drew the respect, admiration and appreciation of all peoples throughout the world.

Our victory at Vimy Ridge to this day continues to instil pride in all Canadians. Against unbelievable odds, our brave Canadian soldiers confronted the forces of evil in a battle that would forever change the course of the first world war.

[*Translation*]

Too many of our young people know nothing about the exploits of our Canadian soldiers during the first and the second world wars. I believe the federal government is to be blamed for such ignorance. It is a pity our veterans are only recognized once a year on Remembrance Day. Thanks to their suffering, today we can enjoy this symbol of our freedom, our very own Canadian flag which freely flaps in the wind.

It was only 35 years ago that our government adopted the Canadian flag as we know it today. It is here, in the city of Ottawa, in 1965, that the maple leaf was seen flying atop the parliament buildings for the first time.

[*English*]

Our Canadian flag is a symbol of a strong and compassionate society. It represents the struggle of millions of Canadians throughout our history who have devoted their lives toward making this a better country. It is more than just a flag; it is a reflection of who we are and what we stand for as a people and as a country.

The Canadian flag is one of the most recognized and appreciated symbols in the world. Our citizens can go anywhere throughout the world wearing the Canadian insignia and be recognized and greeted warmly by their hosts. We can do that because we have distin-

Private Members' Business

guished ourselves throughout the world as a peaceful and humane society. People throughout the world recognize Canada's flag as a symbol of a kind and gentle society where human rights are respected.

I think it is important that as a country we begin focusing greater attention on recognizing the many achievements of our great Canadians.

Last year from May 19 to June 19 the Dominion Institute and the Council for Canadian Unity conducted a survey asking Canadians to identify our top Canadian heroes. Among those selected were our fathers of confederation; our first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald; the architect of Canadian medicare, Mr. Tommy Douglas; World War I flying ace Mr. Billy Bishop; Laura Secord, who was credited with saving the British and Canadian forces at the battle of Beaver Dams during the war of 1812; and Nellie McClung, one of the famous five women who fought to have women recognized as persons under the law.

• (1800)

I have mentioned but a few of the many Canadian heroes who have influenced the growth of our great nation. The list goes on: Sir Frederick Banting, Dr. Norman Bethune, Lester B. Pearson, Tecumseh, Alexander Graham Bell and many others. The point I am trying to make is that our flag represents the tremendous accomplishments of all those Canadians.

Swearing allegiance to the Canadian flag is more than simply a case of symbolism; it is a patriotic gesture in recognition of a great country and of the great Canadians who have had the courage to stand for what they believe in.

Somewhere along the line we Canadians have lost the sense of patriotism. I think it is time we worked together to bring it back.

I remember as a young student standing at attention every morning at my desk to sing the national anthem. Today when I have the opportunity to sing the national anthem in the House of Commons it reminds me of those days as a little boy in class and the same patriotism flows through me. We are missing that and it should be brought back.

The attempt by the member for Guelph—Wellington to instil a sense of patriotism in all Canadians should be commended. Supporting an act to establish an oath of allegiance to the flag of Canada will go a long way toward promoting Canadian values.

Having said that, it is important that Canadians have an opportunity to voice their opinions as to the proper wording of this oath so that the oath itself is representative of all Canadians from coast to coast.

[Translation]

I support Bill C-451 and I am pleased I had this opportunity to speak to it.

[English]

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to stand in reply to my bill. I want to thank the hon. member from the Reform Party for agreeing and for wanting this bill also.

He said that symbols are important. I agree. I want to point out to the hon. member that we do display flags in this Chamber, because he mentioned in his speech that we do not. There are two large Canadian flags right beside the Speaker's chair. I think it is important to point that out. In the seven years I have been here the flags have always been displayed in this honourable room.

Unfortunately, members of the Bloc are against this bill. I am not surprised, but I am sorry that is the way they feel. The Bloc member who spoke stated that the flag is a powerful symbol and that he has profound respect for it, but he does not see it as necessary. He felt that this perhaps would be propaganda against Quebec. That is most unfortunate.

I want to remind the hon. member that Quebec is a province of Canada. Quebecers are proud Canadians. I have had a number of them write to me on the flag issue. A number of councils in the province of Quebec have written to me to say that they endorse this bill. It is very important that we as Canadians be able to stand and be proud of who we are. Quebecers certainly are proud Canadians.

He asked what we would do with such an oath. I am proposing that it would not be mandatory, but that at places like scout meetings, Rotarian meetings, or wherever a flag would be present, there would be the opportunity to say an official oath.

• (1805)

Hundreds of people have written to me and phoned saying that they would like to have some sort of official oath of allegiance.

I want to thank the Conservative member, who also supported the bill. He talked about the significance of the flag for patriotism. He talked about our heroes, who we are as a country, our vision of a strong and united country. Our flag is recognized all over the world. We are looked at as a kind and gentle society, peaceful and caring. These are all things that the Conservative member recognizes. He also said that we should work together to bring patriotism back.

Any time that we as Canadians can show our love for our country it is very important to do so. I think the reason that some things have gone off track in Quebec is because that has not been allowed.

Adjournment Debate

Brian Mulroney ordered that the Canadian flag be taken down on federal buildings in the province of Quebec to appease some Quebecers. He thought that would be a good thing. This federal Liberal government decided that it would not be a good thing. We ordered all those Canadian flags to be put back up on those federal buildings.

I think we know in our heart of hearts that it is important to know who we are as a nation, what we stand for, what we care about and the pride that we feel from coast to coast to coast.

I implore the House to adopt the bill. It will show our love for Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Since the motion was not votable, the item is dropped from the order paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, NDP): Madam Speaker, in January a damning internal audit of the Department of Human Resources Development was released. Despite the best efforts by the government to play down the issues, the concerns over misuse of funds surrounding the department continue to multiply daily, with related RCMP investigations and further audits revealing some of the government's deepest and darkest secrets.

Since December of last year I have been trying to get information on a company in my riding which applied for further TJF funding just months before it went into receivership.

This company, Scotia Rainbow, has received almost \$20 million in public loans and grants, yet the government has been incapable of answering questions about the financial position of the company and the proof for how many jobs Scotia Rainbow actually created.

With the amount of public and private funding it received this company should have created many more jobs than it did, but why is there no proof being offered to Canadian taxpayers as to how

many jobs were actually created with their money? There is no doubt in my mind that most Canadians share our opinion in the New Democratic Party that good job creation initiatives are an essential part of government operations.

Does Scotia Rainbow represent a good return in the number of jobs proportionate to how much funding it received? Is Scotia Rainbow just another one of the government's deep, dark secrets? Why is it at a time when there appears to be no money for our health care system that is in crisis, no money to reduce the debt load for students, that money can be still found to finance a company to the tune of \$20 million in an approximate 18 month period which is now in receivership? We may never be repaid.

• (1810)

Can the government explain why neither it nor the company have any financial documents to back up their claims for the number of jobs created at Scotia Rainbow? If the government has the documentation, why will it not show it to Canadian taxpayers?

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite is throwing numbers around, which is leaving an inaccurate impression in the minds of those who are listening to or who will later read this debate. The \$20 million she referred to is the sum total of all the investment in this project. It is investment that came from this government, from the provincial government, from private investors and from a chartered bank. Our share was by far a minority share.

Having said that, I must say that our priority is to help Canadians get back to work. That is why we supported the creation of about 291 jobs in an area with a 20% unemployment rate. We did that along with the Government of Nova Scotia. This was a good use of taxpayer dollars.

Obviously it is very unfortunate that the company ran into financial difficulties and had to declare bankruptcy, despite nearly everyone's best efforts and best will. One has to ask why this company ended up going bankrupt when it was off to such a good start. Is it perhaps because the member opposite has spoken so negatively about this project on many occasions in this House that some investor pulled his investment, or is it because a bank closed down a line of credit? Could that be it? Surely not. Or, could it be that the member spoke negatively about this project because the ideology of her party is against aquaculture which this project represented? I do not know.

I do know what the local paper said about it. On February 22 the Port Hawkesbury *Reporter* observed: "When our elected representative—", that being the member opposite, "—openly condemns federal aid in this area, then it is time to ask that representative to

Adjournment Debate

step down. The families of those former fishermen are just as important as the families of miners. They do not deserve to have their representative trying to jeopardize their employment". Their representative was successful in that attempt because that company is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is crucial on many levels that Canada's forces reflect the ethnic diversity that makes up our country. That is why I am disheartened by the response of the Minister of National Defence to my question on April 13, which I asked in the House. I pointed out to the minister at that time that there were too few visible minorities and aboriginals in the senior ranks of Canada's land forces and regular navy to even register as a blip on the radar screen.

Just as bad are the targets, with a visible minority target of less than 10% for army and regular forces and less than 5% for aboriginals in the same category.

I asked the minister to commit to targets and dates to increase representation in all senior ranks, including using fast-tracking where appropriate and committing to fostering an environment promoting diversity, as recommended by his own advisory board.

The minister responded with vague motherhood generalities about ensuring that people from all parts of Canada can participate in the forces. The minister said that his own advisory board on this issue has made worthwhile recommendations. Which recommendations does he see as worthwhile? Which ones will he implement and in what timeframe?

The people of Canada deserve specific and concrete details and not just vague generalizations. As a Canadian of colour I have heard good words all too often and seen good action all too seldom.

In March of this year the minister's own advisory board on Canadian Forces Gender Integration and Employment Equity submitted its report to the minister. Women and aboriginals were determined to be less than half of their minimum potential representation in the forces and visible minorities were at less than one-quarter of the minimum potential. That is appalling.

I understand that targets have been set to increase the representation of visible minorities from 2% to 7% of the total army over 10 years. Why only 7%, and what specifically is being done to meet this target?

Canadians of colour are so scarce at the officer and non-commissioned member level to not even register in the advisory board's report.

How does this Liberal government expect to increase representation of visible minorities and aboriginal Canadians when role models from their communities are so scarce?

The minister's advisory board heard comments expressed by land forces personnel, such as: "We are not doing aboriginals and visible minorities a favour by allowing them to look so different by wearing turbans or braids. How can they possibly integrate when they stick out like a sore thumb?" A sore thumb indeed. How does the government seriously expect to foster diversity with an attitude like that?

• (1815)

The minister's advisory board noted the need to increase representation in the senior ranks of women, aboriginals and visible minorities. What is the minister's position on fast tracking qualified individuals?

I recognize the changes that occur only at the top tend to be short-lived. It is essential that the Liberal government learn that change must be throughout the ranks. Superficial treatment of this crisis will breed superficial results. Women, visible minorities and aboriginals deserve to know the government's plan in detail. We deserve to know that there is a comprehensive plan and to be able to see this plan.

Recommendations were also made in a similar vein to the same minister last year arising out of the Canadian forces debacle in Somalia. The Minister of National Defence agreed in 1999 to establish regular liaison with anti-racist groups to "obtain assistance in the conduct of appropriate cultural sensitivity training and to assist supervisors and commanders in identifying signs of racism and involvement with hate groups". Has this happened and if so, who was consulted and what were the results of these liaisons?

Last year the Canadian Human Rights Commission gave the Canadian forces a failing grade for its efforts to reflect Canada's cultural makeup. So far the pupil does not seem to be doing much better.

I trust the government will respond to my comments with a specific plan including dates, targets and measures to be taken at all levels within the forces. Anything less would be an insult.

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Canadian forces is an important national institution that does far more than defend Canada's territorial integrity. It also defends and reflects the values and principles that we as Canadians believe are important.

Achieving diversity in a large organization like the CF is a complex task but it is one that the minister and his department are committed to doing.

Adjournment Debate

The Canadian forces must reflect the mosaic that is Canada. That is why the Canadian forces is actively recruiting aboriginal people and other visible minorities.

The military is also fully complying with the federal government's employment equity legislation. Through a formal plan authorized by the chief of defence staff, CDS, the Canadian forces is actively identifying possible barriers to advancement that visible minorities and aboriginal people sometimes face. However, promotions are based on merit and will continue to be based on merit. Unlike civilian organizations, the Canadian forces cannot simply recruit people into senior positions. Its leaders must be grown within the organization and this takes time.

The military has taken many steps to address barriers to aboriginal people and other visible minorities including measures to accommodate religious and cultural differences that permit for example aboriginal people to wear braids; the integration of diversity training at all levels of core CF leadership training; where possible, the identification of qualified aboriginal and visible minority Canadian forces members to serve as course instructors; and the establishment of community contacts to support the cultural needs of Canadian forces members.

Canada is a diverse society and the Canadian forces must reflect the society it serves. Diversity within the Canadian forces is something that we truly value.

[*Translation*]

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, on February 18, I asked a question to the Minister of Human Resources Development regarding the scandal at Human Resources Development Canada.

The question—this is rather paradoxical today—was about the fact that the minister kept hiding behind her six point action plan. On February 18, we did not know that a professional opinion provided by a well known firm of chartered accountants, Deloitte & Touche, said that the six point plan is a good approach to settle short term issues, but it does not in any way respond to the in depth problems at Human Resources Development Canada.

Since then, we learned that the Deloitte & Touche report strongly criticized the government. We did not find, in the six point plan, adjustments that reflect these observations.

The department's website tells us that advice was received from the Treasury Board on the six point plan and that the recommendations were followed.

• (1820)

The government received the recommendations of the auditor general on the immediate changes required to the plan and followed them, but in the case of Deloitte & Touche, whose recommendations were that the plan would not resolve the substantial problems, the government does not indicate that it has followed them.

We are therefore looking at a situation where the question I asked on April 18 is even more relevant today. Faced with this situation, we can only wonder why HRDC continues to defend this six point plan, why it refuses that an independent public inquiry be held and why it does not make the connection between the deplorable situation, the lax approach and the scandal at HRDC and the use of public funds for partisan purposes.

Not only is there a major administrative problem but, if we look at the three years of the transitional job fund, during the 1997 electoral period, 54% of the money available during this period was spent in Quebec, and in ridings represented by Bloc Québécois members the figure even rose to 63%.

These important clues are telling us that the program was used for the Liberal Party of Canada's own benefit instead of helping citizens in Quebec and Canada who should be able to avail themselves of these programs.

It is quite sad because job creation programs per se are a good thing. The Bloc has always maintained that the government should use this money to level out discrepancies between areas with a low unemployment rate and the others. But the current behaviour of the government has harmed the operation of these programs to such a degree that they are now discredited and that their opponents are gathering support. In my view, this is unacceptable.

The current government is to be blamed entirely for this sad state of affairs. It is the Prime Minister who masterminded this system whereby public money is used for partisan purposes.

I would like to ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development why, three months after the HRDC scandal came to light, corrective measures are yet to be taken to remedy the situation and cure the cancer that is destroying HRDC.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I must say that if the member opposite questions why we are still talking about it, we are still talking about it because the opposition members seem to be obsessed with it. That is why we are still talking about it. In addition to their wanting to talk about it, their motivation is probably because the newspapers are covering what they are saying about it. That is why we are still talking about it.

Adjournment Debate

One journalist in particular has talked about the trivialization of the House of Commons with the persistence in talking about this single subject which the member insists on calling a scandal. Is it a scandal when in one of our programs we had 10,000 projects which probably interacted with about 100,000 people when we consider the boards of directors and other investors? In that particular project a year after the start-up of these businesses, 95% of them were still going ahead. That is a better rate than a bank. When a bank comes in with capital for a new business or an expansion, its success rate one year later is usually that only 77% of its projects are still alive.

I do not call it a scandal when the Government of Canada sponsors projects that have a better success rate than those sponsored by a bank. I think that is a darn good record.

As far as the Deloitte & Touche comment on the minister's six point plan to fix the problems at HRDC, one has to think about the order in which things happened. Officials of the department

developed a plan and they presented it to Deloitte & Touche. Deloitte & Touche was hired to comment on the first draft of the plan, as was the auditor general. All the various players made comments.

Deloitte & Touche has not seen the revised plan because it was not hired to come back and comment on it. The hon. member is quoting from the first set of comments and neither he nor Deloitte & Touche really know whether in fact those suggestions were incorporated or not.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Order, please. I must interrupt the hon. member at this point.

[Translation]

The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.24 p.m.)

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