



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, September 27, 2000**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 27, 2000

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1400)

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** As is our practice on Wednesday, we will now sing O Canada, and we will be led by the Leader of the Official Opposition.

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

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

### TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

**Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to draw attention to the 25th birthday of the Toronto International Film Festival, which has just ended.

[*English*]

Canada has a long-standing tradition of celebrating homegrown and international talents in filmmaking in all parts of this country. In Toronto, Montreal, Halifax and Vancouver, in cities across the country, our film festivals not only celebrate cinema, but bring the eyes of the world to Canada and bring international audiences to Canadian films.

Founded in 1976, the Toronto International Film Festival has since become one of the most important film events in the world, featuring 329 films from 56 countries this year. It is also the largest showcase for Canadian films with 25 features and 40 shorts this year.

I would like to salute those who have made the festival the success that it is, the organizers, the artists and creators without whom there could be no festivals and the knowledgeable and enthusiastic audiences.

Please join me in wishing a happy 25th birthday to the Toronto International Film Festival.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, my son has joined the exodus of young professionals from Canada. A 40% increase in salary and a 30% decrease in income tax proved irresistible to him. I cannot fault him for his actions.

He would have liked to have maintained some ties here but if he does not sell his house and even close his bank account the Canadian tax collectors will regard him as legitimate prey no matter where he goes.

[*Translation*]

What the Prime Minister said, more or less, was “There is no place here for smart people with ambition. Go elsewhere. You are not welcome here”. The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency adds “And don’t come back.”

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[*English*]

### ROYAL LASER TECH CORPORATION

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am overjoyed to report that business activity continues to boom in my riding. There are lots of good news business stories in Brampton and Mississauga.

For instance, Royal Laser Tech Corporation recently completed construction of a 136,000 square foot building at Airport Road and Williams Parkway. It has invested \$20 million in the building and its equipment. The project currently employs between 50 and 60 people and that number is expected to rise up to 200 within the next year.

All this economic activity is due to the continued strength of the Canadian economy. It has created hundreds of high paying jobs for workers living in my riding of Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale and helps explain our very low unemployment rate.

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### UNDERWATER HOCKEY

**Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I advise you that Huron—Bruce is now home to the new Canadian Underwater Hockey Champions. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, you heard me correctly, “underwater hockey”. After

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producing so many individuals that dominated the game on the ice, Huron—Bruce is branching out to claim supremacy under the water.

From September 8 to 10, 12 players and 3 coaches from the Kincardine Poolsharks travelled to Quebec City to compete in the Canadian under 19 underwater hockey championships. After the 10 game round robin and best of three finals had concluded, this Kincardine team was left undefeated in all three medal games.

I would like to congratulate head coach Terry Brown and team captain Kyle Schilroth, along with all of the Poolsharks' coaches and players. Once again Huron—Bruce managed to score the winning goal.

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**CANADA'S OLYMPIC BASKETBALL TEAM**

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, British Columbia's Steve Nash has led the Canadian basketball team to the top of their section heading into the quarter-finals at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. In their last game, Canada upset the defending world champions, Yugoslavia, 83 to 75. Nash once again was the catalyst in that game, scoring 26 points with 8 rebounds and 8 assists.

We congratulate Canada's Olympic basketball team on their inspired performance at the Sydney Olympics as they approach a first Olympic medal in basketball since the 1936 Berlin Olympics where we won the silver medal.

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• (1405)

**SEBASTIEN LAREAU AND DANIEL NESTOR**

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure and pride to stand here today to celebrate that Canada has won another gold medal at the Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

Sebastien Lareau of Boucherville, Quebec and Daniel Nestor of Toronto, Ontario, have performed the deed. They have become our dragon slayers by defeating the Australian doubles Woodbridge and Woodforde, the woodies.

This team of dedicated athletes who came together this year to represent Canada at the Olympic games defeated the Australians in very hard fought matches. Both are accomplished tennis players. Daniel Nestor reached the finals at the world doubles championships in 1998. Sebastien Lareau won the 1999 world doubles championship, a gold at the Pan-Am games in 1999 and the U.S. Open last year. After losing to this same pair of Australians earlier

this year at Wimbledon, they felt they had a score to settle, and settle it they did.

I am sure members will join with me in congratulating these fine gentlemen for this great victory and thank them for the honour this gold medal brings to Canada.

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**IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, today's news confirms that our record high population is due to immigration.

Six years ago the government voted down one of the Canadian Alliance's motions to test all immigrants for HIV. The government has now had a change of heart. Ironically the number of physicians needed to check for infectious disease has been reduced over the last five years from 44 to 22. The auditor general has been hounding the department for the past 10 years.

How can the minister even assure Canadians that her testing plan will achieve results given the workload departmental physicians currently face? Six years after our motion the government has finally realized that Canadian health and safety must be a priority of immigration policy.

The last time medical standards were looked at was in 1978. Protecting the health of Canadians would be the first priority of a Canadian Alliance government.

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[Translation]

**SÉBASTIEN LAREAU**

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, once again, a young Quebecer of great promise has made a name for himself at the Sydney Olympics.

Last night, while the rest of us were comfortably asleep in our beds, a young man from Boucherville was sweating mightily as he realized a dream, and a source of pride for the rest of us at the same time.

Sébastien Lareau and his partner from Ontario, Daniel Nestor, have just gone down in history. With their win in men's tennis doubles, they have earned Canada's first Olympic medal in that sport.

They did so with considerable panache, as they were victorious in the finals over the reigning champions, the number one in doubles in the world, and Australians to boot, Mark Woodforde and Todd Woodbridge, dubbed "the Woodies".

This is not the first major victory for Sébastien. About a year ago, he won the U.S. Open. After many years of hard work, today he is seeing the results. He is proud of the community he comes from, and it is equally proud of him.

Congratulations and thank you, Sébastien, for this great Olympic first and for all the other successes yet to come.

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[English]

### THE HOLOCAUST

**Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to 55 survivors of the Holocaust who are here on Parliament Hill today, survivors of the worst genocide of the 20th century, and who alone understand that the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust are too terrible to be believed but not too terrible to have happened.

I say to the survivors, and to those whom they represent here today, “you are the true heroes of humanity. You have not only witnessed and endured the worst of man’s inhumanity to man, but you somehow found in the wellsprings of your own humanity the courage to go on, to rebuild your lives as you helped build your communities here in Canada. You taught us the evils of racism and bigotry, and the dangers of silence in the face of evil; of the importance of remembrance and the remembrance to act; of the reminder that every human being is a universe, and whoever saves a single person it is as if they saved an entire universe”.

I ask all members to join me in this tribute to these heroes of humanity, and to remember and act upon the injunction of “Never Again”.

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### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the evidence keeps building that an election must be coming soon. The Liberals have suddenly decided to reverse themselves on EI changes after years of ignoring concerns from Atlantic Canada.

One change is to restore full EI payments to seasonal workers who make about \$50,000 a year and above. The Liberals have yet to explain why more money should not instead go to seasonal workers at the lowest end of the income scale.

● (1410)

The Canadian Alliance is committed to a strong employment insurance program. Members of the PC Party and the NDP choose to deliberately misrepresent the issue for political purposes rather than join the fight for their most needy constituents.

I urge the government and all members of the House to focus on constructive debate on policy issues that matter to Canadians even with election fever raging.

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[Translation]

### THE HOLOCAUST

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on September 27, 1945, the concentration camps in Poland and

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elsewhere in Europe were liberated, and the world discovered the full horror of the Nazi holocaust.

Today, the 55th anniversary, the Government of Canada and national Jewish organizations are commemorating the event and honouring 55 holocaust survivors. The ceremony will commemorate the six million men and women and half a million children who did not survive these terrible events.

We also remember the thousands of survivors, many of whom emigrated to Canada and made such a contribution to our country’s economic, social and cultural growth.

I therefore invite my colleagues in this House to remember these events and to pay tribute to the survivors and descendants of these victims of the holocaust.

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[English]

### TRADE

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, from Seattle to Washington to Windsor to Melbourne and now to Prague the movement against the current model of globalization continues to grow.

Instead of trade deals that limit the power of governments to serve their people, the protesters want a completely new approach to globalization. They want agreements with binding and enforceable standards to protect core labour standards, human rights, the integrity of the environment and cultural diversity. They want debt relief so that the poorest nations of the world can even contemplate helping their citizens to survive. Most of all, they want meaningful democracy. They want their elections to matter. They want their policies to be made by elected representatives and not unelected trade tribunals.

As long as governments, negotiators and, in this country, the Liberals refuse to listen to their citizens and rethink the current approach to globalization, the protests will continue.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### MEMBER FOR COMPTON—STANSTEAD

**Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, what a surprise this morning for the people of Compton—Stanstead to learn in Info-Vision that their Conservative elected member now Liberal defector is still considering matters.

Has he already forgotten that his new leader in Ottawa said a few weeks ago that his time for reflection was past and that he was now very definitely a Liberal?

*Oral Questions*

In the same breath, he says he has frequently disagreed with Liberal policy but thinks that the Prime Minister's approach has changed in the areas of finance and health. He said "If the financial situation in Canada has greatly improved, it is thanks to the work of former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney". He is sorry to see that the public is showing so little enthusiasm for the Conservative leader, who will no doubt be glad to hear that.

The people of Compton—Stanstead will not be taken in by a member who deceived them and who changes tack with the slightest breeze. They will vote for Gaston Leroux, the Bloc Québécois candidate, an honest, reliable and coherent member.

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[English]

**FEDERAL ELECTION**

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, rumours of a fall election call this past Sunday did not come to fruition but the fall is not yet over.

Here are the top 10 reasons why the Prime Minister could call a fall election: Tenth, it is too cold to golf; ninth, his wife said he could; eighth, it is not the first time the Liberals have called an election during a crisis—remember the 1997 Manitoba flood; seventh, the Liberal nervous Nellies have to be shown who really is the boss; sixth, only one word for this number, surplus, so much money, so little time to spend, spend, spend; fifth, three years with this Prime Minister just seems like a long time; fourth, it falls nicely between water ski and downhill ski season; third, the Liberals got away with broken promises the last two times, three times are a charm; second, plain and simple, the Minister of Finance; and first, the reason why the Prime Minister could call an election this fall is that there are no new ideas.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL**

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government will be holding consultations to determine whether or not Canada should adopt the biosafety protocol, an international treaty which will define the rules for the exchange of genetically modified organisms.

• (1415)

Canada opposed the adoption of this protocol at a meeting of environment ministers held in Cartagena, Colombia, in 1999. In his last annual report, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development mentioned that Canada's position showed more concern with trade than with the environment.

Seventy-five countries have now signed this protocol, but in several respects Canada's position remains contradictory. Protection of biodiversity, human health and the environment should be a priority of this government.

I therefore urge the Minister of the Environment to show some leadership and take action to ensure that Canada signs the biosafety protocol as soon as possible.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, we have just learned through access to information that on May 4 our Canadian high commissioner in Sri Lanka sent a classified message to Ottawa warning that a minister of the crown was about to attend a dinner for a Tamil terrorist front organization.

The commissioner wrote "In view of the timing and sponsorship, consideration must be given to the perception of attendance of a minister of the Canadian government". Why did the finance minister ignore this warning and attend the meeting anyway?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this was a meeting of Tamils who had gathered together to celebrate the Tamil new year.

These are Canadian citizens who were gathered to celebrate their feast. I am pleased that I attended a meeting of Canadian Tamils celebrating their feast.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, CSIS clearly lists the Tamil tigers as one of the many groups with terrorist links that are active in Canada. The United States state department lists FACT, which was the sponsor of the dinner that the minister attended, as a front organization for the Tamil tigers.

These facts were included in the warning that was sent from our officials. Yet both the Minister for International Cooperation and the Minister of Finance have claimed that FACT is an innocent cultural organization. Why did two ministers of the crown ignore the warnings of our own Canadian diplomats?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this was not a meeting of Tamil tigers. This was a meeting of Tamil Canadians.

At the particular meeting a young woman stood up who had recently graduated from high school and talked about what she wanted to do in Canada, what she was going to do in university,

*Oral Questions*

how she wanted to be a success, how important Canada was to her, and how this was her country.

She said that she could not believe that people would condemn her because of her Tamil race, because of something that was happening somewhere else. It is too bad that the Leader of the Opposition does not see that.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the high commissioner in Sri Lanka expressed concern about the possible security threat that the minister's attendance would have on Canadian mission staff and their families.

Foreign Affairs recognized the threat. They wrote back saying "Thank you for keeping us up to date on the threats on personal security of Canadian mission staff and dependants". They should not try and hide behind these threats that we are just zeroing in on a certain individual. We applaud this young woman who spoke but we do not applaud the denial that the finance minister is making. Why does the Prime Minister allow these—

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

• (1420)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there was a celebration of Canadian citizens. There were representatives of the federal government and provincial governments present. There were editors of newspapers present.

When people come to Canada from anywhere else in the world we want them to be equal. What the Leader of the Opposition is saying tells us a lot about his thinking—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Southeast.

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is CSIS, our security force, not the official opposition, which has said that the Federal Association of Canadian Tamils, FACT, has connections to the Liberation of Tamil Tigers Eelam.

I am holding in my hand an e-mail from the high commission in Sri Lanka dated May 26, indicating that after the finance minister had this dinner there was a front page picture in the Sri Lanka newspaper saying "Canadian finance minister at the Tamil tiger fundraiser held by the Federal Association of Canadian Tamils".

Despite warnings from our own officials, why did the finance minister allow our officials to be put in danger—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in addition to the young woman at this dinner there were doctors, there were lawyers, there were business people, there were teachers, and there were educators who had come together to celebrate their new year.

All of us on this side of the House have attended group festivities and celebrations of people from other parts of the world where there are also problems, but never once has it occurred to any Canadian to simply make the allegation that because in somebody's country there is a problem these people are not Canadians but these people are terrorists.

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, if there is any shame then it is in this place in that a minister of the crown ignored warnings from one of our foreign embassies indicating, and I quote from a Sri Lankan newspaper, his "Liberation Tiger sympathies" and his presence at a "Liberation Tiger fundraiser" threatened the safety of Canadian embassy employees".

Why does he continue to ignore the fact people in Sri Lanka read in a newspaper that he attended a Tamil tiger fundraiser and that he has Tamil tiger sympathies? Is he not at all concerned about the warnings that this would be a security threat to Canadian embassy employees?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what I am concerned about is the sense of values that is being demonstrated by the official opposition.

Let us make it very clear, and I do not believe I am only speaking for the government but I am speaking for all Canadians, that there are not two kinds of citizenship in this country. When people land upon our shores they are entitled to celebrate their heritage and they are equal Canadians with all of us.

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[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, an election is in the air and that is perhaps why the Minister of Human Resources Development is getting ready to do something about employment insurance.

We have been pointing out these problems for years, but people had to take to the streets before she finally did something.

• (1425)

Will the minister give her word that she intends to undertake an overall reform of employment insurance and not just the piecemeal, cosmetic adjustments now being offered in an attempt to woo voters?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will know that we have given notice of our intent to present amendments to the Employment Insurance Act in the near future. I would ask him to wait and see what that package looks like.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** A few days ago, it was not necessary, Mr. Speaker, and now all of a sudden it is.

The real and necessary changes which the minister must make to employment insurance affect seasonal workers, of course, but they also affect young people, women and the regions. What is needed is an overall reform of unemployment insurance, and the government has the money to act because it has helped itself to \$30 billion from the EI fund.

Will she address all the problems quickly before the election?

*[English]*

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government stands firmly behind the principles that motivated the 1996 employment insurance amendments.

We believe in building a fairer employment insurance system. We believe in building an employment insurance system that responds to the changing dynamics of the new economy. We believe in monitoring the impact of those amendments and making changes as changes are warranted.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the hidden agenda of the government's latest employment insurance reform was to reduce the number of recipients to 38%, with young people among the most heavily penalized.

Can the minister tell us whether her piecemeal adjustments include anything for young people, or will she continue to exclude them as she has in the past?

*[English]*

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member that since the government came to power in 1993 the unemployment levels for young people in Canada have dropped significantly.

A lot of that had to do with the investments the government is making right across the country, including in the province of Quebec on behalf of young people, particularly youth at risk who have not been able to find their place in our Canadian society. We will continue to do that.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister's policies on youth and seasonal workers have been disastrous for the regions, which see their future slipping away from them.

Is the minister going to come to the realization that her government's record as far as employment insurance is concerned has impoverished and emptied the regions?

*[English]*

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again I point out that unemployment in the country has come down significantly since the government took office. As I have said on a number of occasions, I have been listening to groups representing seasonal workers, for example, and monitoring an assessment report gives us guidance.

As I have always said and as the government has committed, if there are indications that we need to make our system more efficient we will do that.

\* \* \*

**RIGHTS OF WOMEN**

**Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as a Canadian woman I want the Prime Minister to know that we are not here for his personal viewing pleasure. As women in Canada make efforts to mobilize nationally and internationally against issues that affect us, we are hurt by the Prime Minister, not only by his policies but by his very own words.

Will the Prime Minister stand in the House today and apologize for the degrading remarks made yesterday that have insulted all Canadian women?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the hon. member is referring to. If I have offended anybody I regret it, but the person in question can defend herself. I am sure it was taken in the spirit that I said these words when I was talking to the press that I meet regularly.

**Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, an apology is only one step in many. Will the Prime Minister now commit to working with Canadian women and not against them and bring in policies before an election that will end discrimination against women?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is an opportunity to say that my record with the presence of women in public office has been excellent. I named a woman Governor General. I named the first woman Chief Justice of Canada. I named more women senators than men up to now.

The majority of the lieutenant governors in Canada are women, and in the territories it is the same. I think that the hon. member should get up and say that the government and the Prime Minister have done much for women in public life.



*Oral Questions*

• (1430)

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Seventy-five per cent of seasonal workers in New Brunswick earn less than \$10,000 per year. The Prime Minister knew that when he attacked those seasonal workers with his employment insurance changes in 1996. What has changed since then to cause him to swallow his policy?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we knew we needed reforms because we were faced with a \$42 billion deficit that his party had left us. We had to do something and we made some reforms. When we make reforms, sometimes we make changes. Eventually we see the results of them and we adjust them. That is what a moderate government that is flexible enough to adjust to the situation does. It is exactly what we are doing with the changes in the EI laws. I think the system has worked very well and the people will be very happy with the changes the minister will introduce on Monday.

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, he picked on the poorest of the poor. There are Liberal values.

Will the Prime Minister promise the House that there will be a full debate and a final vote on these employment insurance changes before parliament is dissolved? If not, this is an empty promise, as worthless as the Prime Minister's promise on the GST.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are willing to pass the bill in one day on Monday. We are asking for the consent of the House of Commons to pass the bill in one day. I hope we will have the support of hon. members.

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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the official opposition is not saying that there were not innocent people at that supper in Toronto on May 6. I know there were many innocent people at that supper on May 6 in Toronto, but my problem is that perhaps the finance minister was not. He had warnings from departmental officials from many departments that things were not wise for him to go there. CSIS warned against it. The U.S. State Department warned against it.

Why did the minister ignore the warnings of his own officials?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has said, there were over 25 elected politicians there. There were representatives of the Harris government. There

were representatives of Toronto city hall. There was the managing editor of the Toronto *Sun* as well.

For the member's information, this minister and this government do not take orders from the U.S. State Department.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, again I mention that it was his own high commissioner in Sri Lanka who expressed concern about this.

The Prime Minister talks about values. The government brags about values. I will tell hon. members what we value. The high commissioner in Sri Lanka. The foreign affairs staff who did amazing work with warnings. We value the CSIS experts who gave red lights here and who were very concerned about it. When we are talking about values, I would like to ask the finance minister—

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

• (1435)

**The Speaker:** Order, please. We will hear the question my colleagues, as we will hear the answer.

**Miss Deborah Grey:** Mr. Speaker, we do value the high commissioner and the advice that she had. We value the foreign affairs staff who had very serious concerns about this. We value the CSIS experts who certainly know what is going on here.

Why did the finance minister and his friends who went to that supper ignore the value of those warnings?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out what they are doing that is terrible. The member got up and said that there were some innocent people there. She implied that there were some criminals there or people who were not innocent. That is the way to destroy people, when statements of that nature are made. She said some were innocent but perhaps some were not innocent. This is unacceptable. If the member has proof, she has a duty to tell it to the House of Commons.

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[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, Bloc Québécois):** Mr. Speaker, women are being doubly penalized by the employment insurance program put in place by this government.

First of all, it is harder for them to qualify and second, the government has decided to tie the parental insurance program to eligibility for employment insurance.

With a view to the coming election, will the Minister of Human Resources Development announce that she is going to correct this injustice toward women?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member pointed out, as a result of our expansion of parental benefits we also looked at the circumstances facing women returning to the workplace having had children. We made changes there. We continue to look at the impact of the amendments made back in 1996. Where there is evidence that we can have an improved system we will make changes.

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, under the positive influence of the pre-election climate, could the minister now announce that her government is going to listen to reason and finally agree to transfer to Quebec the funds earmarked for parental leave, as a broad consensus in Quebec desires?

*[English]*

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are extraordinarily proud on this side of the House of the direction of the government and the doubling of parental benefits that will come into effect at the end of this year. We are going to do it within the context of the employment insurance system without raising premiums and in fact, by continuing as referenced in the budget to reduce premiums.

*[Translation]*

I would point out that the Institute for Research on Public Policy has indicated that the government of Quebec ought to consider the possibility of setting up a program in Quebec that would be independent of and complementary to the Canadian program.

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*[English]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, various reports indicate that FACT is a front for the Tamil tigers. Would the minister agree, yes or no?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member of all of the members in the opposition ought to understand that this was a celebration. It was a celebration by Canadians who had come together to celebrate their new year. That is the kind of people who were there. The Prime Minister has asked if there are specific allegations against people who were at that meeting then why does the member not say who they are.

Let me simply say that the Leader of the Opposition says that he is the new sheriff in town. It sounds to me like he is trying to organize a lynch mob.

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. My colleagues, perhaps you could tone it down a bit. Today is Wednesday. Could you tone it down just a bit now. It is going a bit far.

• (1440)

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, earlier the CSIS director indicated that organizations linked to terrorist activities were given tax free status in Canada. The government, instead of stamping out terrorists, has put terrorists on Canadian stamps.

When so many reports indicate that FACT is a front for the terrorist Tamil tigers, will the minister explain and say straightforward whether theirs are terrorist activities? Yes or no?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the hon. member that Canada took the lead in negotiating an international convention on the financing of terrorism and has signed that convention.

What it will do is set up proper legal procedures to determine how we assess responsibility or blame. We do not use innuendo. We do not use guilt by association. We do not use allegation. We will set up proper legislation that will determine the procedures for making that determination and not this kind of nonsense.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, do members recall Placeteco, that corporation in which a friend of the Prime Minister received \$1.2 million from the Minister of Human Resources Development, who swore up and down that she had given out this subsidy on the basis of invoices presented?

We got the invoices in the end and we had a look at them. Today I ask the minister how she can justify paying out \$1.2 million to a friend of the Prime Minister on the basis of invoices that were dated between 12 and 15 months previously, that is even before he decided to buy Placeteco?

*[English]*

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will know from reading the same media reports that I read that this file is under investigation. As such it is inappropriate for me to make further comment.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, she has just admitted that it is under investigation and that is excellent.

*Oral Questions*

I would ask her, as the minister who paid out \$420,000 in subsidies on the strength of an invoice marked “replacement invoice for missing invoices”—a subsidy in the amount of \$420,000 paid out on the basis of such an invoice—if she can justify her remarks here in the House to the effect that she properly administered people’s money by giving out a subsidy on the strength of real invoices.

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, media reports have indicated that this file is under investigation. As I said, I will not comment further at this time.

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**DANGEROUS OFFENDERS**

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, Christopher Dawson was convicted of 15 counts of sexual assault against minor boys. Christopher Dawson has been one of the few designated in Canada as a dangerous sex offender.

I ask the solicitor general why did Christopher Dawson, a dangerous sex offender, receive a passport while in the care and custody of Correctional Service Canada?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if my hon. colleague had any desire to have an answer to a question like that, he would have given me prior notice.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, as if that would make a difference. As it happens, I wrote the solicitor general and I have his response dated May 3 in my hand.

The solicitor general said in his letter that it was not against the law to give a dangerous sex offender a passport and that it was not his problem because it came from the foreign affairs minister.

I would like to ask the foreign affairs minister why is it that we gave a Canadian passport to a designated dangerous sex offender while he was incarcerated in a federal penitentiary?

• (1445)

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are proper international procedures. When we have treaties and agreements with other countries in terms of extradition matters, we have to carry them out according to the rules that are set and the proper relations between countries.

That is simply the way that good relations are maintained with other countries, something the opposition would not understand.

[Translation]

**HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT CANADA**

**Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a few months ago, Human Resources Development Canada officials encouraged the establishment of a co-operative in my riding.

A few weeks later, they withdrew their support by mistake and in so doing risked forcing the 21 workers of the Confection haut de gamme industrielle de Québec co-operative into unemployment, indeed into drawing social assistance.

Since I asked the minister about this last week and she assured me that she would look into the file of these 21 workers, who are watching and who risk losing their jobs, and given the urgency of the situation, could the minister tell them what she has decided?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Yes, I can, Mr. Speaker. Officials have carefully reviewed this file and the record shows that the sponsor did not wait for approval before proceeding with this project. In fact, equipment and space were rented, employees were chosen and were being trained as early as January 2000.

This would suggest that the Canada jobs fund is not applicable. However, I would say, as we have said to the employer, that there may be other programs that can support this undertaking in recognition of the growing concern. They have yet to come forward and ask to sit down and talk about these opportunities. I suggest the hon. member encourage them to do so.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week the hon. member for Calgary—Nose Hill made some remarks in the House about seasonal workers, about 600,000 Canadians who are affected by EI and seasonal employment, such as people in the forestry, fisheries, agriculture and tourism sectors.

I know the hon. member may be able to live on about 50% of the minimum wage or about \$3 an hour in her good place in Calgary, but I would ask the minister of HRDC to give her comments in terms of seasonal workers and how our government hopes to help them out in this very difficult situation.

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are two things I know for sure. First, the member of parliament from the Miramichi understands the realities facing seasonal workers and has made representations on their behalf in a very effective way.

### Oral Questions

Second, the member for Calgary—Nose Hill is completely out of touch with working Canadians, as evidenced by the question she posed in the House two days ago.

I would say to the hon. member that his representations, along with others made by groups representing seasonal workers across the country and the employment insurance commission, are guiding and directing our decisions that will be made public.

\* \* \*

### HEALTH

**Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, Richard Rushworth of White Rock knows that the portability principle of the Canada Health Act is a myth.

Currently in Ottawa to visit his son, Mr. Rushworth requires dialysis three times a week but has been told that no public facilities in Ottawa could accommodate him and that he would have to use a private clinic. This would cost him almost \$1,400 out of his own pocket.

Why is the Minister of Health not defending the portability principles of the Canada Health Act?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are. The recently concluded agreement with the provinces includes a billion dollars in federal money, available now, to allow the provinces to put dialysis machines, CT scanners and MRIs in place wherever they are needed in Canada.

Let me say to the hon. member that the government believes the best way to deal with the threat of privatization is to make our public health care system as strong and as accessible as it can possibly be. We have taken a giant step toward that objective.

**Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, there is a happy ending to this story, with no thanks to the health minister.

Once it became known that this issue would be raised on the floor of the House, there was suddenly room in a public Ottawa hospital for this individual. Unfortunately it took political intervention in order to deliver good quality health care to this Canadian.

Since the minister is not defending the principles of universality and portability in the Canada Health Act, just what is he defending?

• (1450)

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we saw just today reference to the fact that Premier Harris intends to do everything he can to assist the Alliance electorally.

Perhaps the hon. member will take up with the premier of Ontario and the Ontario officials the need to provide in hospitals

with this new federal funding the kind of responsive accessible care that Canadians need.

For our part the Government of Canada will continue to ensure the system is properly funded so provinces are in a position to provide the care that Canadians need.

\* \* \*

### NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

**Ms. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the people have spoken and the message coming in loud and clear is that the funding for highways in the last budget amounts to squat.

The coalition to renew Canada's infrastructure calls it a disappointment. The Canadian Automobile Association has said that the Liberal government shortchanged our highway system. Investing in highways would save lives, help the economy and save our health care system billions of dollars in preventable injuries.

Will the government admit that it has failed to invest enough in our crumbling highways? Will it tell us how much money it will bring to the table at next week's meetings of federal and provincial highway ministers?

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I recall the member being here when the budget was read this past February. We announced that a major investment of \$600 million would be allocated for highway purposes in the country. Those negotiations are ongoing as we speak.

If the hon. member has any real concern she should speak to the premier of her province to make sure that those provincial priorities are brought to the attention of the federal government.

\* \* \*

### TAXATION

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Finance.

The Liberal government has raked in hundreds of millions of dollars in gas taxes from British Columbia drivers but has not put one cent back into public transit. Now TransLink in the lower mainland wants to hit B.C. drivers with a \$75 levy for every car they own.

When will the government finally listen to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, to environmentalists and to the people of British Columbia and use federal gas tax revenues to make a major investment in public transit? It is good for clean air, it is good for taxpayers, and it is good for commuters. When will the government put it into transit?

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I believe I gave the answer and the

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member should have heard it. The federal government has made a major commitment to the provinces and territories. The investment of \$600 million is not peanuts.

I think they should be putting pressure on their provincial counterparts to make sure that those provincial priorities are brought forward to the table.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC):** Mr. Speaker, we have received notice that a bill to amend the existing Employment Insurance Act will be introduced.

Why—this is my question as well as that of many other Canadians—did the government take so long to become aware of the difficulties it had created with the 1996 reform, for employers as well as employees, Canadian workers?

[*English*]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, indeed there is as part of the 1996 amendments a good requirement for the government, through monitoring and assessment, to consider the amendments and make sure they are doing what they are supposed to do.

There are already examples of where we have made changes, not the least of which is expanding parental benefits and looking at small weeks. This is part of an ongoing process.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin with a reminder to the Prime Minister that seasonal workers are not for sale.

He said he wanted to have the bill fast tracked, that he was going to amend the EI program. However, families have been suffering for four years.

I have one question for the Prime Minister. Is he making fun of the intelligence of seasonal workers?

[*English*]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we have been listening to seasonal workers. We have been looking at the amendments, seeing how they play out, and making sure they do what we anticipated them to do.

If the hon. member will be patient, she will see in a package of amendments some response to this review.

[*Translation*]

**INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION**

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago we all heard the announcement by the Minister for International Co-operation outlining the four new social development priorities on which CIDA's budget will be focused: health, nutrition, basic education, HIV/AIDS and children.

Will the minister tell us what she is planning to do for children?

• (1455)

**Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the new social development priorities have resulted in CIDA's first ever budget for child protection, with \$122 million earmarked over the next five years for this priority.

We have even created a children's secretariat within CIDA.

In addition, by appointing General Roméo Dallaire special adviser for the protection of war affected children, the minister is assured of obtaining the best possible advice.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**FIREARMS**

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, fewer than one million firearms owners have been licensed to date. There are likely two to four million left. The current backlogs at the firearms centre processing site are unmanageable. It will take years to complete.

What will the minister do to prevent gun owners from becoming instant made in Ottawa criminals on January 1? Her advertising blitz on television is extremely misleading. Buying ammunition is the least of their worries on January 1. How will the Prime Minister deal with the biggest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again the hon. member has it all wrong.

Canadians are complying by the tens of thousands with our new firearms licensing and registry program. Let me reassure the hon. member that well over one million law-abiding firearms owners have been licensed in the past number of months. We are receiving tens of thousands of licences on a weekly basis. We are processing tens of thousands of licences.

Canadians want to comply with this law. It is too bad the Canadian Alliance does not want to comply with it.

*Privilege*

[Translation]

**HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last June during the summer recess when the minister tabled the invoices about Placeteco she said “Here. This matter is now closed”.

But we just learned today that there is a police investigation into this issue. It is once again in the Prime Minister’s riding and it involves people who are very close to him.

Could the minister tell us at what time this issue became the subject of a police investigation?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, questions about investigations should go to the appropriate authorities. All I can do is confirm what I know the hon. member knows. From reading media reports, the indications are that this file is under investigation and as such it is inappropriate for me to comment.

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**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Merchant mariners deserve full and prompt payment. Almost eight months after announcing the package not even two-thirds of the claims have been processed. Those who qualify have only received partial payments.

Will the minister clearly make two commitments right now: first, that all qualified merchant mariners receive their full second payment and not just a portion of the funds to which they are eligible and second, that all payments will be made this calendar year, given that every month more merchant mariners die of old age?

**Hon. George S. Baker (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the deadline for applications was six weeks ago. There were 14,000 applications received. We have two shifts working 15 hours a day to process these applications. Sixty per cent have been processed. The hon. member should be standing and praising the government for the \$50 million approved for this initiative.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the proposed replacement program for the Sea King helicopters disqualifies the Sikorsky S-92 and the EH Cormorant. This replacement should be about saving lives, not about saving face.

Will the Prime Minister please do what is right and modify the Sea King replacement contract to allow a full and fair tendering process that gives all companies a fair chance to bid and be considered?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we are doing. We are going through a consultation period right now so that any of the proposed suppliers of helicopters can tell us if they think there is anything wrong with the process.

● (1500)

We are not into buying developmental or experimental aircraft. If the S-92 happens to be certified at the time we are ready to purchase aircraft, that is fine. It will qualify. We clearly have said for a long period of time that we will buy off the shelf helicopters because we believe that will give the best deal to the taxpayers. It would take an awful lot more money to do what their party would have put us through.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PRIVILEGE**

## DISCLOSURE OF DOCUMENTS

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to raise what I believe to be a blatant breach of my parliamentary privileges. Is it not contrary to the rules for the government to give to the media copies of a bill before that bill has been introduced in the House of Commons?

I believe that my rights as a member of parliament have been violated by the Minister of Human Resources Development and the member for Brant, since she is responsible for her department’s actions. The minister should be blamed for her contempt of the rules of parliament in that regard.

Yesterday, the Minister of Human Resources Development tabled a motion with the journals branch and gave a 48 hour notice, pursuant to Standing Order 54(1), to the effect that she would be introducing a bill entitled an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act.

As members know, a bill is deemed secret and cannot be made public before having been given first reading in the House of Commons. However, within hours, and in some cases barely a few minutes after the motion was presented, the media received copies of the bill from an official or unofficial government representative.

● (1505)

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I have copies of over a dozen news articles with me that appeared across the country today and that I am prepared to table in the House. In fact, yesterday afternoon one reporter read on

live television the details of what will be contained in this legislation.

These media reports are not just that the government intends to introduce this legislation. Rather, they contain very specific details about what will be in it, such as, to quote an article in today's Ottawa *Citizen*, the details that the legislation will:

Raise from \$39,000 to \$48,000 the income level at which benefits are clawed back from repeat EI users.

Eliminate entirely the intensity rule, under which a frequent user's benefits dropped by one percentage point for every 20 weeks of benefits claimed, from a maximum of 55 per cent of insurable earnings to a minimum of 50 per cent.

This is not a unique problem in this or previous parliaments. In fact several times in this parliament you have heard cases of privilege involving the leaking of information not yet tabled in the House to the media. It happens with committee reports, with the budget and with legislation.

I would like to remind you, Mr. Speaker, of your ruling of March 28, 2000, in which you found a prima facie case of privilege in the matter raised by the hon. member for London North Centre concerning the premature disclosure of a committee report to the media by the hon. member for Lakeland.

Occasionally, draft copies of legislation are circulated among party critics as a courtesy in advance of tabling in the House of Commons. As NDP critic for employment insurance, I attempted to obtain a draft copy of the legislation, but it was denied to me by the government House leader on the basis that it was secret until tabled in the House of Commons. The minister herself also denied me a copy of that same legislation.

[*Translation*]

This bill is very important for my constituents. I have been working hard on this issue since I was elected to this place. I do not need to remind the House that my private member's Motion M-222, asking that the government take immediate action to restore employment insurance benefits to seasonal workers, was unanimously approved by the House on May 9.

[*English*]

In conclusion, I would like to quote from Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, chapter 2(24):

Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively as a constituent part of the High Court of Parliament, and by members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals.

This practice of leaking information to the media before it is made available to members should not be tolerated. This House cannot function and members cannot discharge their duties if

### *Privilege*

persons outside this place are accorded privileges not enjoyed by all members of this House.

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, I want to say to the hon. member that I totally agree with him that it is inappropriate for this information to find itself in the newspaper. That is the first proposition.

It is true that he approached me personally yesterday and asked me to get an advance copy of the bill, to which I responded that a bill of course is cabinet secret until introduced in the House and therefore it would be a breach of the cabinet secrecy to offer him a copy of the bill unless it had been so decided by a decision of cabinet.

Later yesterday afternoon the hon. member in question came back to me again and made the allegation that the bill was now in the possession of the media or that at least the contents of the bill were known to the media.

• (1510)

It is quite obvious that he was correct at least in terms of the content of the bill, because the bill was in the media before I, as the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, had a copy myself. I am not amused by this any more than the hon. member is.

I am stating the obvious here. This is not something that I participated in and hopefully no one else in the House participated in this. I am quite confident that no one who sits in the House participated in this.

Be that as it may, the material, I must admit, found itself in the hands of the media. It is almost 24 hours before the bill is to be introduced and some elements of the contents have been alleged to be in the media. Tomorrow of course we will be able to compare the accuracy of the information in question. Certainly one does not have to be a genius to understand that there is a significant portion of it that is accurate.

First of all, in regard to the notice I signed, it is not respective ministers who sign all the notices of motion, it is I as government House leader. The notice I tabled yesterday of course describes a little of what the bill does, at least in its title form. I had of course also given notice to the opposition House leaders of the fact that there was to be such a bill. I actually gave notice at approximately 3.15 yesterday afternoon, and the table would know this, of the introduction of this bill, which is to take place no earlier than tomorrow. It could take place later but it will not. It is still our intention to introduce it tomorrow.

In summation, I want to indicate to the House that I do not believe there was any deliberate attempt on the part of any member of the House for this information to find itself in the media, however regrettable that may be.

*Privilege*

On the issue of whether or not this constitutes a question of privilege based on the principle of a committee report, I do not think it does. The issue of a committee report is a report of a committee of the House being available to someone other than a member of the House before the House has knowledge of it. That is the principle behind it. I am sure all hon. members are quite familiar with it. This is not an issue of a report from the House. The government could issue a draft bill when the House is not even sitting; that is perfectly legal.

However, I made a commitment yesterday that this issue was cabinet confidential, which it was, and I am personally insulted at the fact that this document was made public before it was made available to the House, particularly when I personally refused to give it to a member of the House prior to its introduction. It is my duty to refuse prior to a bill's introduction in any case.

I feel just as much aggrieved as the hon. member. I know the member has a very particular interest in the subject and has worked very hard on this issue. I appreciate that. We are all in agreement when something like this happens. The fact that I may feel personally offended and the hon. member, having an interest in the issue, might be similarly offended, if not more, is of course of interest to all of us, but it is not the same in that it does not meet the threshold of the parallel of a committee report and I do not believe it is a case of privilege.

That said, I will do everything I can as a minister to ensure that bills that are to be introduced in the House and are not scheduled to be announced elsewhere before they reach the House are not announced before the House sees them first.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the words of the government House leader that he is aggrieved by what has apparently gone on here. There is a problem with being aggrieved, even agreeing with the member's statement that a document that should have been tabled first in the House found its way to the media instead. Once again members of the House are being treated as second class recipients of information instead of being the first to get the information.

• (1515)

The problem with just being aggrieved and even agreeing that it is a bad thing is that nothing is ever done. From the words I heard from the government House leader, nothing will be done. He might be offended. He might think it is a bad deal. He might wish it never happened, but because nothing is ever done, because neither the government House leader nor the Chair ever says "I have had it up to here with this systematic misuse and abuse of the House", it will happen again.

I urge the Speaker to take this question very seriously. The trouble is we all cluck our tongues and say "Yes, we should know first in the House and then in the media". However, because

nothing happens, it is like a policeman standing on the sidelines with a sign saying "Please go slower", and there goes another one speeding. We have to intervene. Failing to do that means just stay tuned because there will be more.

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I believe I am involved in the point of privilege of my colleague. Without a doubt, here we are in a matter that is very much in the news, coming to the conclusion that there has been a leak somehow.

The government House leader regrets that this has happened, but I do not feel that regrets are enough. If there is a true desire to remedy the situation, if we want to ensure that nothing similar occurs later on, there must be an investigation and it must be clearly determined whether the Minister of Human Resources Development or any other member of the government or of the House—although it cannot have been anyone from outside the government—was or was not responsible for a leak to the public. As a result, the journalists knew before we did, thus preventing intervention in the House at the appropriate time.

[English]

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to add a few comments to what has already been said by the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst and by other members who have intervened.

I urge the Chair to take this question very seriously. It may be, as the government House leader argued, that the former judgment by the Chair with respect to the premature release of committee reports is not identical to what we are protesting here, but it is all in the same vein. It all shows a similar contempt for the House of Commons.

All these things, whether they are committee reports that are released before they are tabled in the House, or government legislation that is leaked to the media before it is tabled in the House, or anything in the same vein, it all erodes the ability of members of the House individually and collectively to do their jobs. Mr. Speaker, you should regard it in the same spirit in which you regarded the release of committee reports before they were tabled in the House.

The government House leader says he feels badly, and I believe him, but some responsibility has to be taken somewhere. That is the point. If nobody on the government side is to take responsibility then it is up to the Chair to assign responsibility for this, because clearly somebody somewhere in the Department of Human Resources Development gave it to the media. I do not think anyone could claim anything else. This is what happened.



*Privilege*

I would make the argument that this is a parliamentary democracy. We have responsible government. The buck stops somewhere, and in this case the buck does not stop with the government House leader. I believe he was a victim of the Machiavellian machinations of his own colleagues in this case.

The fact is that somebody has to take responsibility, and in my judgment it is the Minister of Human Resources Development who should be held responsible. It is her department. She should be in here explaining what happened and why heads are rolling or why she is resigning or whatever the case may be. It is her department or her ministry that has demonstrated this kind of contempt for parliament through the deliberate leak, unless somebody wants to get up and actually ask us to believe this was somehow an accident. We are asked to believe an awful lot of things around here, but that would be a big one.

The fact of the matter is that this is a deliberate strategy on the part of government members time after time after time, so that they get the lead on the story, so that their spin, so to speak, on the story is out there before other members of parliament and other parties get to comment.

• (1520)

It may be something they can sit in the back room and grin about, saying “Aren’t we smart? Didn’t we outsmart the opposition that time? Didn’t we slip one by them? Didn’t we get them one more time?” Every one of those little strategies and tactics is another nail in the coffin of parliamentary democracy, one more time eroding the power of the House of Commons, one more time eroding the perception by Canadians that this is the place where information is revealed.

This is the place where public policy is announced, not in the back rooms where somebody slips somebody from the media a brown envelope, or across the way in the press gallery, or wherever it is of the many places. Sometimes from hundreds of miles away ministers of the crown decide to make public policy announcements. All of this tends toward the deterioration in the public mind of the importance of parliament.

I would urge you to do whatever is in your power, Mr. Speaker, to chastise, assign responsibility, refer it to a committee, or whatever you see within your power to do, because someone has to do something about it. We are doing what we can on the floor by appealing to you.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this question of privilege. I would very much attach my comments to those of the previous speakers on this side of the House, particularly the last speaker who you know and all members know has a long history in this institution.

He pointed out very clearly that an attempt has to be made by the Chair and all members to stop the practice of floating trial balloons prior to the proper tabling of legislation in the House. There is a long record of this occurring. In the short time I have been in this place we have seen it happen time and time again.

I would suggest as well there is very much an elevated sense of anticipation of a possible election, which adds to the political climate and the timeliness of having this information out there earlier. As the whip for the New Democratic Party has pointed out, he made direct appeals to the government, and rightfully so, to have an opportunity to review the legislation as the critic in this regard, as did members of our party. We were denied.

Again I would suggest it is cold comfort to have the outrage and the feigned indignation of the government House leader standing here and saying “It is a terrible thing. I do not know how it happened. We are very upset about it on this side of the House too, but *c’est la vie*”.

I ask the Chair to keep in mind that in this instance there is a very important factor. The evidence is not in. This matter should not be decided today by you, Mr. Speaker. There was a time, and the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona will certainly recall, when it was very clear that if a leak such as this occurred there would be direct ministerial accountability, which adds to the democracy in this place, which adds to accountability and responsibility on the part of government. That seems to no longer exist under this administration.

There is but one source from which this information could have been leaked, and that is the government that drafted the legislation. Obviously there has to be some form of accountability on the part of the department, on the part of the government, and on the part of the government House leader.

The evidence is not in. We do not know the source of the leak. Yet we do not even hear the slightest indication from the government that it is willing to even make inquiries. Has there been an inquiry? Have the police been involved in how this information was leaked?

This type of information is of equal importance to a budget leak. I would suggest we cannot diminish the importance of what has just happened in this place. Again I marry myself to the remarks that have been made by other members of the opposition. It is incumbent upon the Chair to enforce some semblance of accountability when this type of information winds up in the hands of the media prior to the people who have been democratically elected having an opportunity to review this type of important legislation.

I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to proceed with due diligence in this matter, not to react quickly to the request and the question of privilege that has been raised, and to make inquiries on what type of investigation has been made to discover the source of the leak.

*Privilege*

This cannot continue. As has been pointed out, it continually diminishes and completely casts a pall over the importance of this place and the government if information is to be allowed to be leaked out in an unfettered way prior to any kind of examination in the House of Commons. I know you will proceed with this charge very diligently, and I would urge you to do so post-haste.

• (1525)

**The Speaker:** Members will recall that this issue was raised a number of times in the last session of parliament. As I recall, one of the members of the then Reform Party, now Canadian Alliance, admitted in the House that he did it to test the rules, and we had a debate here.

I have heard from the House leaders on the particular matter and I have been urged to take it seriously. I do. I had hoped that after we had the last discussion on this matter that we as parliamentarians would be able to keep our own house in order.

I direct my question to the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst. Is the hon. member alleging that the Minister of Human Resources Development leaked this paper herself? Is that what the hon. member is alleging?

**Mr. Louis Plamondon:** Yes, yes.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst can speak for himself. I was addressing him.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can speak for myself.

[*Translation*]

The answer is yes. In the present context, in today's context of uncertainty as to whether there will be an election or not, our battle against employment insurance and my travels across the country have led to a bill that will change the rules of employment insurance.

As a member of parliament, I personally requested a copy of the bill. I respect the government's decision that I cannot have one, but then I turn around and find the media discussing it. I say yes, the minister was aware.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member's response is yes. He said that the minister is responsible for leaking this information to the media.

[*English*]

The very least we can do is this. We have an allegation specifically against a minister, and I would like to hear what the minister has to say about the particular point. When she is in the House and I am here, I will direct that. Until I hear from her, I will hold in abeyance whatever decision I might be taking. I will let it sit right there. I think I have heard enough.

[*Translation*]

I trust hon. members are taking this seriously.

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

[*English*]

I will let this sit until a bit later. We will take our time and get to the bottom of it. I will listen to another question of privilege from the hon. member for Winnipeg South.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Winnipeg South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your giving me the opportunity to speak to this matter. I am speaking to a matter of privilege raised by the hon. member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot.

I realize it is somewhat unusual to be speaking this long after the original point was raised, but I am deeply interested in the matter. In a way it relates to some of the discussions that just took place on the previous matter of privilege.

• (1530)

I will not go through the history of it as that has already been put on record and the government has had a chance to speak to it, but I want to raise what I believe is one of those generic, organic understandings we have of what our democracy is all about.

Eugene Forsey, when he was called upon to describe it for the new online system here, talked about a responsible government with a cabinet responsible to the House of Commons and a House of Commons responsible to the people. That is how we describe it too. That is what we teach children in school. That is how we understand it to be, that this is the place where citizen's rights are acted out.

I will contrast that with a comment contained within a report commissioned by the Privy Council Office that describes the Canadian House of Parliament as weak in most of its roles because of special Canadian factors that make the Canadian parliament especially weak, even in comparison with other parliaments based on the British Westminster parliamentary cabinet model.

I reference it in that way because for me one of the things that allows us to play our role as representatives of citizens and that allows citizens to hold their government responsible to them is their ability to access accurate information about the operations of government. It seems to be a very fundamental issue.

*Privilege*

We rely upon an impartial public service to serve the members of the House equitably and to provide information to them that is, dare I say, policy neutral, not designed to spin or shape the attitudes of members but to give them the facts upon which we can come to a decision.

The member has brought forward information relating to a private member's bill. It is information that related to this side of the House because it was information that was supplied to members on this side of the House about why they should not vote in favour of his particular bill.

There are two specific points. In that information and in a document supplied to cabinet someone within the public service wrote that the privy commissioner believes Bill C-206 is a serious threat to the privacy of Canadians. The member, being somewhat surprised at this, wrote to the privacy commissioner and asked: "Is serious threat to privacy an evaluation that can be directly attributed to you?". The privacy commissioner wrote back and said "No, neither my staff nor I have ever used that term".

We have information supplied to cabinet and information supplied to members of the House because the same allegation is made in the documentation provided to members of House. It would seem to be at odds with the very person it is attributed to.

This is a chamber for debate and we are debating all the time. The information used in debates may be called into question by any one of us at any point in time, but there is a different bar to which I believe the public service needs to be held. It is incumbent upon them to supply us with information that is not just kind of accurate but that fairly represents the situation with which they are confronted or to which they are asked to respond.

The second point is that they also reference in this information a comment by the privacy commissioner in his annual report because he did have concerns about the bill. While they highlight that, what is interesting is that they forget to highlight that he had concerns about several government bills that were passed by the House and received royal assent.

What we have seen over the years is an erosion of the rights of members of the House. They are not our rights. They are the rights of Canadian citizens that we exercise on their behalf.

I have just a final point. In this documentation and in other things that have been written about access to information and privacy legislation there is the indication that the government has a process for this right now that it is being conducted by the public service in house. I think that is wrong. The review and the design of that legislation should be such that it is done by an all cabinet committee and in public. It is wrong to do that in the privacy of back offices because it relates to reference of the rules that we play by here.

I urge you to look at this issue very carefully, Mr. Speaker, as I am sure you will. I urge you to take it one step beyond the narrow focus you would put on the interpretation of the points raised by the member and to look at the position that every member of the House is in when we try to carry out the functions we are here to carry out, which is to hold the government to account.

• (1535)

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the member for Winnipeg South on this important issue. I have a couple of points that I would ask the Chair to consider. One is that public servants are asked on behalf of ministers to make judgments often. They prepare briefing books and they make judgment calls all the time. I do not find that unusual.

What I do agree with is the observation of the member for Winnipeg South that the powers of individual parliamentarians and the respect that parliamentarians are held in are continually eroded. The erosion of these rights is ongoing.

The hon. member should take this up with his caucus. The Liberal Party has been in control of this place for the last seven years. I agree there has been a steadily ongoing erosion of the rights and privileges of members of parliament, the esteem that the public would hold us in, and the things that Canadians expect of us. All those things have been eroded. To bring it forth here is good, I appreciate it, but he should also take it up with the Liberal caucus which has been in charge while all this has been happening.

Lastly I would wonder if the member for Winnipeg South would table the documents from which he quoted. He read snippets from them which I thought were interesting. Perhaps if he could table those documents it would help all of us to make an evaluation. It would help you, Mr. Speaker, and it would help all parliamentarians to make an evaluation of whether or not it truly was a question of privilege. We would like to see all the documents to get that information.

**Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I just wish to say that the pertinent documents had been tabled at the time I made the original interventions, with the exception of one additional document, a letter from the privacy commissioner to me that I would like to submit to you for your consideration.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member have consent of the House to submit this document?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** I have heard all of the argument on this question of privilege. I will now take all the information under advisement and will come back to the House if necessary.

*Routine Proceedings***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 two petitions.

\* \* \*

**INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present the most recent report of the Canada-Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group.

This is a report of a visit made by members of the House to Taiwan earlier this summer. It was a visit which involved urban and rural parts of Taiwan. It was a visit which followed their recent, most successful, highly democratic elections that resulted in the first change in the governing party in that country's history.

Speaking on behalf of members of parliament, we want to thank the people of Taiwan and the Government of Taiwan and wish the new government the very best in its mandate.

\* \* \*

● (1540)

*[Translation]***CANADA LABOUR CODE**

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-498, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of introducing a bill I consider entirely original, since it concerns a practice that has been in effect in Quebec for a number of years.

The aim of this bill is to ensure that pregnant or nursing women employed in the federal government, therefore under our jurisdiction here in the House, are afforded proper protection similar to the unique precautionary cessation of work practice we have already in Quebec.

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

\* \* \*

**CANADA LABOUR CODE**

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-499, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code, the

Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Public Service Staff Relations Act (prohibited provision in a collective agreement).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this second bill, which will prohibit the use of the so-called orphan clauses in the various collective agreements under federal jurisdiction.

These clauses cause discrimination between those newly arrived on the labour market, especially young people, and those already there.

My bill will put an end to these injustice, and accordingly people hired after or before a given date will enjoy the same salary and benefits as those already working.

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

\* \* \*

**PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT**

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.)** moved that Bill S-5, an act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (Parliamentary Poet Laureate), be read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

*[English]***PETITIONS****EPILEPSY**

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from citizens of the Peterborough area on behalf of the 300,000 Canadian children, adults and seniors with epilepsy in their families.

They point out that Canada's participation in the World Health Organization's global campaign is helping to bring epilepsy out of the shadows. They also point out that epilepsy is the most common brain disorder in every country of the world including Canada. It is also the most neglected.

It is seldom publicly discussed and epilepsy remains surrounded by myths. The petitioners call upon parliament to help launch a national campaign to raise public awareness of epilepsy and first aid procedures.

**KIDNEY DISEASE**

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my second petition is also from citizens of the Peterborough area on behalf of those with terminal kidney disease. The petition was developed by Ken Sharp of Peterborough.

The petitioners point out that those on kidney dialysis and those successfully transplanted recognize the importance of the bioartificial kidney as a technique which potentially will help all those with kidney disease in the future.

The petitioners call upon parliament to work and support research toward the bioartificial kidney which will eventually eliminate the need for both dialysis and transplantation for those suffering from kidney disease.

[Translation]

#### POLLUTANT RELEASE

**Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present, on behalf of over 400 constituents in my riding of Beauharnois—Salaberry and on behalf of the Comité ZIP Haut-Saint-Laurent, which is under the leadership of Marthe Théoret and Claire Lachance, a petition to the effect that the release from the PCB incinerator in Cornwall is a threat to property owners along Lake Saint-François and therefore to the St. Lawrence Seaway, because of the prevailing winds blowing toward the south shore of the river in Quebec.

• (1545)

The petitioners are asking parliament to take all necessary measures to have the federal Department of the Environment conduct an environmental evaluation of the project and restore funding for the Saint-Anicet weather station so that pollutants that may be released from the Cornwall incinerator can be measured.

[English]

#### HEALTH

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 and present a petition on behalf of a number of residents of the Kamloops region of British Columbia.

The petitioners have a long preamble to their petition. They are calling upon parliament to stop for profit hospitals and restore federal funding for health care, to increase the federal government's share of health care funding to 25% immediately and to implement a national home care program and a national program for prescription drugs.

#### NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by petitioners from a number of communities in central British Columbia pointing out the benefits of a national highway system.

#### Routine Proceedings

The petitioners are calling upon the government to use some of the money collected from gasoline taxes to build, maintain and improve Canada's highway network.

#### CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my last petition is very lengthy and was signed by petitioners from Kamloops and a number of communities nearby. They point out their concerns regarding section 608(3) of the Criminal Code of Canada.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to amend the criminal code in order to prevent persons convicted of serious crimes from being released from custody pending the hearing of their appeal except in very exceptional circumstances.

\* \* \*

#### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Question No. 105 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 105—**Mr. John Duncan:**

How much federal money was spent supporting the production of the 1999 National Film Board film *L'Erreur Boréale* or *Forest Alert* and in particular, how much federal money went to the organizations listed in the credits of this film as supporting this film financially: (a) Telefilm Canada; (b) Government of Canada—Canadian film or video production tax credit program; (c) Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; and (d) National Film Board?

**Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** L'erreur Boréale was co-produced by the Corporation de développement et de production ACPAV Inc. and the National Film Board of Canada.

The following federal contributions were provided:

(a) Telefilm Canada: \$87,790 to manage the Canadian Television Fund's equity investment program. The Canadian Television Fund is a partnership between Canadian Heritage, Telefilm Canada and the private sector.

(b) Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit program. Information on a specific production is confidential under section 241 of the Income Tax Act; however, under the rules of the program, the credit is equal to 25% of the admissible salary and wage costs incurred after 1994 and cannot exceed 12% of the net production costs.

(c) Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: \$32,500.

(d) National Film Board of Canada: \$162,000 as co-producer.

*Routine Proceedings*

[English]

**STARRED QUESTIONS**

**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 Starred Question No. 104.

[Text]

\*Question No. 104—**Mr. Dennis Gruending:**

With respect to the shipment of MOX, mixed oxide, fuel samples from the United States and Russia to the Chalk River facilities of Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd., AECL: (a) what is the total amount of fuel in kilograms and the total plutonium content in grams that AECL plans to receive in each shipment; (b) on what dates will those shipments arrive in Canada and at what points of entry; and (c) on what date, by which route and by what modes of transportation will each shipment be moved from the point of entry to the Chalk River facilities?

[English]

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I ask that the answer to Starred Question No. 104 be printed in *Hansard* as if read.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

**Mr. Derek Lee:** (a) United States: the total quantity of plutonium was 119 g. mixed in 4.7 kg of MOX fuel.

Russia: the total quantity of Russian fuel for the Paralex test program is 15 kg and the total plutonium contained in this fuel is approximately 530 g.

(b) United States: The MOX fuel test sample arrived in Canada on January 14, 2000 at Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

Russia: It is proposed that the Russian MOX shipment be shipped by air to a Department of National Defence air base in either Trenton, Ontario or Bagotville, Quebec. A new emergency response assistance plan ERAP, was submitted to Transport Canada on July 28, 2000.

The timing of the Russian MOX fuel test shipment will not be publicly disclosed for security reasons in accordance with the Nuclear Safety and Control Act. This policy is consistent with international practice and follows International Atomic Energy Agency recommendations. However, before the shipment is made, emergency response and security workers will be briefed appropriately.

(c) United States: The MOX fuel test sample from the U.S. arrived on January 14, 2000 by truck at Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and was flown from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario to AECL's Chalk River laboratories, Ontario.

Russia: Under a new emergency response assistance plan ERAP, it is proposed that the Russian MOX shipment be shipped by air to

a Department of National Defence air base in either Trenton, Ontario or Bagotville, Quebec.

The timing and transport route of the Russian MOX fuel test shipment will not be publicly disclosed for security reasons in accordance with the Nuclear Safety and Control Act. This policy is consistent with international practice and follows International Atomic Energy Agency recommendations. However, before the shipment is made, emergency response and security workers will be briefed appropriately.

[English]

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-16, in the name of the hon. member for North Vancouver and Nos. P-25 and P-26 in the name of the hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac are acceptable to the government, with the reservations stated in the replies and the documents are tabled immediately.

Motion P-16

That a humble Address be presented to Her Excellency praying that she will cause to be laid before this House copies of all documents, reports, minutes of meetings, notes, memos, polls and correspondence, on or after November 1, 1997, particularly from the Department of Justice and the Office of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, regarding Section 31 of the Elections Act and the Communist Party of Canada.

Motion P-25

That an Order of the House do issue for copies of all documents, reports, minutes of meetings, notes, briefings, e-mails, memos and correspondence involving the resignation of Erhard Buchholz as President and Chief Executive Officer of Canada Lands Company Limited.

Motion P-26

That a humble address be presented to Her Excellency praying that she will cause to be laid before the House copies of all documents, reports, minutes of meetings, notes, briefings, e-mails, memos and correspondence relating to Order in Council 1999-2029/00 approving termination benefits payable to Erhard Buchholz, President and Chief Executive Officer of Canada Lands Company Limited.

**The Deputy Speaker:** With respect to Motions Nos. P-16, P-25 and P-26, subject to the reservations or conditions expressed by the parliamentary secretary, is it the pleasure of the House that they be deemed to have been adopted?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Routine Proceedings*

(Motion agreed to)

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There are several items on which there have been consultations and on which you would find consent in the House to deal with at this time.

Following consultations among the House leaders, I move that the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights be concurred in. This is a report requesting a 30 sitting day extension for the consideration of Bill C-244.

• (1550)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

### ELECTION OF CHAIRMEN

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I believe you would also find consent for the following motion. I move:

That notwithstanding Standing Order 106(1), the following standing committees be permitted to meet on Thursday, September 28, 2000 for the purposes of Standing Order 106(2): Finance, Justice and Human Rights, Citizenship and Immigration.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Mr. Speaker, there are six items involving private members' business where there will be substitution of movers of motions. The motion would read:

That Private Members' Business item M-210 in the name of Mr. Brison now stand instead on the order paper in the name of Mr. Clark;

That Private Members' Business item C-469 in the name of Mr. Jordan now stand instead on the order paper in the name of Mrs. Jennings;

That Private Members' Business item C-438 in the name of Ms. Redman now stand instead on the order paper in the name of Ms. Torsney;

That Private Members' Business item C-230 in the name of Ms. Bulte now stand instead on the order paper in the name of Ms. Carroll;

That Private Members' Business item M-418 in the name of Mr. Szabo now stand instead on the order paper in the name of Mr. Calder;

And, that Private Members' Business item C-457 in the name of Ms. Leung be withdrawn on the order paper and the order for consideration thereof discharged.

**Mr. Nelson Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to make it clear that there have not been previous consultations. However, I wonder if I could add another item to the list. It is simply this. Tomorrow night's private members' hour is a motion in my name. Could we agree that the vote be held over until next week at the choice of the House leaders or the whips and that the motion be deemed put as a part of the package before us on private members' business?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The point has been made. Could we deal with the motion before the House first, and then perhaps the hon. member could ask for consent—I sense there is a general consensus—rather than clutter this motion with two things, because this deals with items currently on the order paper and the other deals with a vote tomorrow. I am not trying to jeopardize the hon. member's chances but I sense there is consent for that.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I know there were consultations on Motion M-210, substituting Mr. Clark for Mr. Brison because of the byelection. As far as I know, that was the only consultation that took place. That one I have no problem with because we have talked about it. The other ones, I take it, are because of some changes in the parliamentary secretaries, but I have not seen that list. Perhaps if the hon. member could send that list around we could have a look at it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Could the Chair suggest that the parliamentary secretary consult with a couple of opposition members here, get agreement on the list and the suggestion by the hon. member from Kamloops and come back to the House in a few minutes? Perhaps we could then clear it all up. Would that be possible?

Is there another motion the parliamentary secretary wishes to put at this time?

*Business 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, there is indeed another item of business and I would be asking for consent to table a report.

The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has the honour to present its 38th report. The committee recommends, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, that the list of members and associate members for standing committees of the House be as follows, and they are listed in the report.

I would ask for unanimous consent to table the report and unanimous consent for concurrence in the report.

• (1555)

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Mr. Speaker, I have no objection to giving my consent for the adoption of this report.

I just want to draw to your attention, and to the attention of my colleagues, that things seem to have been done in reverse order, in the sense that we are now adopting the list of members for the various committees a few minutes after having authorized these committees to meet without having to comply with the 48 hour notice requirement.

There is a bit of a problem here. That being said, I have no objection to giving my consent.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent for the parliamentary secretary to present his motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[English]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, given that some colleagues would wish to review the list of the reshuffling of names on the private member's business items, I would simply move one item. I move:

That Private Members' Business item number M-210 in the name of Mr. Brison now stand instead on the order paper in the name of Mr. Clark.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Nelson Riis:** Mr. Speaker, to be fair, there have been limited consultations. This is also a kind of consultation.

Tomorrow night is the third hour for consideration of Motion No. 259, which is in my name. There is no reason we could not proceed with the vote at that time, but I thought members would likely prefer to have it deferred until maybe Tuesday of next week. My suggestion would be that we agree to consider the vote to be put and that the vote be held next Tuesday if that is acceptable.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed that tomorrow evening at 6.15 p.m., the question be deemed to have been put on the hon. members motion, a division deemed demanded and deferred until Tuesday at the conclusion of the time provided for government orders?

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Mr. Speaker, as the member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys has pointed out, consultations have been rather limited.

I wonder whether he would agree to have the vote deferred until Monday rather than Tuesday, because I think that on Tuesday, if the agenda goes as announced, we should be starting the vote at report stage of Bill C-3, which means we will be launching into a marathon of almost 3,000 votes.

We should perhaps save ourselves an extra vote on Tuesday on the motion by the member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys by voting on it the day before instead.

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed that we do this on Monday?

**Ms. Marlene Catterall:** Mr. Speaker, there have been no discussion in this regard. We will be happy to discuss it and consider it but we are not prepared to agree to it at this point in time.



*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***MANITOBA CLAIM SETTLEMENTS  
IMPLEMENTATION ACT**

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (for Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-14, an act respecting an agreement with the Norway House Cree Nation for the settlement of matters arising from the flooding of land, and respecting the establishment of certain reserves in the province of Manitoba, be read the third time and passed.

**Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to support Bill C-14, the Manitoba claims settlement implementation act.

Bill C-14 has been thoroughly studied before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and has been found to be a solid piece of legislation that will move Canada forward in meeting its obligations to Manitoba first nations.

• (1600)

As hon. members have heard in the House and in committee, the Norway House Cree nation in particular will benefit from Bill C-14. Part 1 of the bill will affirm in law certain elements of the Norway House master implementation agreement which is now being implemented to bring about resolution of matters arising out of the northern flood agreement. Part 2 of Bill C-14 will also benefit Norway House, both as a treaty land entitlement band and by facilitating implementation of the reserve expansion commitments in the first nations master implementation agreement.

Let me expand briefly on these two elements of the bill, after which I will comment on the strong messages of support that we have received for this legislation, heard primarily during the time that the committees had their meetings a while back.

There is nothing really new in part 1 of Bill C-14. Parliament has already approved similar legislation for three other northern flood agreement bands: the Split Lake Cree, the York Factory and the Nelson House first nations.

What we are being asked to affirm in law is simply that compensation moneys and fee simple lands provided to Norway House under its master implementation agreement can be managed by the community in conjunction with the corporate trustee and outside the cumbersome restrictions currently in the Indian Act.

Important safeguards are there. They are in place to ensure that the decisions made by the first nation council and the trustee are

transparent, communicated to the community and are in its best interests.

Part 1 also gives effect in law to a locally administered and more effective approach to claims resolution than currently exists in the northern flood agreement itself. This new community based approach will deal with the vast majority of claims arising out of both the NFA and the Norway House master implementation agreement.

I ask hon. members to keep in mind that the Norway House master implementation agreement has been signed by the parties and that the implementation of the provisions of that agreement is currently under way. However, there is a commitment in the document and in the agreement to facilitate certain of its provisions through legislation and the government is determined to fulfil that commitment.

Giving the people of Norway House increased control over fee simple lands and compensation money provided to them under the MIA is an important step on the road to economic self-sufficiency and increased accountability. It will help enhance community confidence and community pride. In fact, it is already doing so.

Fred Muskego, a band councillor at Norway House, spoke about some of the benefits that have flowed under the master implementation agreement when he appeared before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development in March 1999. I would like to quote briefly from his remarks to that committee: "We have addressed our recreational problems we have on the reserve. We have a state of the art multiplex that was built because of the MIA. We have recreation programs for the young people, and even some of the older people benefit from them. We have had some housing come out of the MIA. We have programs for our alcohol problems and social problems. We have just put some money into the building of a church, a funeral home and meeting halls. Out of these MIA proposals we have created about 105 jobs".

The items listed by the councillor are not the end of it. I understand that settlement proceeds have been used for a recreation complex which includes facilities for bowling, curling and skating, as well as a community hall and restaurant. I am also advised that in addition to the new homes and churches mentioned by the councillor, new projects approved by the community using settlement funds include day care, road improvements and other infrastructure improvement projects.

The first nation has also acquired a fishing lodge, and in partnership with industry has acquired interests in mining exploration. The first nation has also purchased some 500,000 pounds of fishing quota on Lake Winnipeg, thus beginning to re-establish a role in the fishery of Lake Winnipeg, a status which was eroded with the original flooding.

Economic development jobs, community infrastructure and social initiatives; these are all solid proof of actual advantages for

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people who require them and people to whom we have obligations, people who deserve their economic self-sufficiency. They are proof that a proper balance of resources, accountability and local decision making can bring about positive and lasting change in first nations communities and more important in first nations lives.

• (1605)

The settlement moneys under the master implementation agreement are being put to good use and wise use by the community itself. It makes the decisions.

Passing Bill C-14 will allow for all of the settlement proceeds to be managed in this way by that community. Without the bill, some of the proceeds would fall to be administered under the Indian Act requiring the involvement of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

I alluded earlier to the fact that part 1 of the bill will also give effect to a locally administered process for resolving claims that arise under the Norway House master implementation agreement. That local process has been operating for about two and a half years now. It is proving to be a workable alternative to the cumbersome process that was in place under the northern flood agreement. Passing Bill C-14 will ensure that the local claims process continues to serve the individual claimants of Norway House.

Part 2 of Bill C-14 does introduce some new concepts that parliament has not seen in other legislation, concepts that should nevertheless be supported by all members of the House.

The goal of part 2 is to facilitate the transfer of lands to reserve status in order that Canada's land related obligations arising from claim settlement agreements across Manitoba can be fulfilled in a timely manner.

I believe that all members understand that a key component of a sound economic future for first nations is their land base. This legislation will improve the process by which new reserves are created pursuant to claim settlement agreements.

As I alluded to earlier, these agreements include treaty land entitlements and certain elements of the master implementation agreements signed by four of the five northern flood agreement first nations. As a first step in speeding up reserve expansions for all Manitoba first nations that have negotiated claim settlement agreements or that will do so in the near future, we need to get beyond the cumbersome process of obtaining an order in council to add lands to reserves. Canada already agreed to effect these reserve expansions when it signed the settlement agreements.

We need to improve the way third party interests on those lands are accommodated. The first nations have begun selecting their new lands. Many of these lands have been selected for their

economic development potential in areas such as forestry, mining, tourism, commercial buildings and farming.

There will continue to be further land selection activity of this kind under these agreements in the coming years. Under the treaty land entitlement framework agreement which benefits 20 Manitoba first nations, up to 450,000 hectares are to be set apart as reserve land over the next three to five years. Seven other first nations have treaty land entitlement claims that could involve up to another 62,000 hectares of land.

As my hon. colleagues have stated, the timely provision of these entitlement lands is needed to support claims implementation and the evolution of a vibrant on reserve economy. The business ventures on existing and future land selections under these agreements will require the co-operation and partnership of third parties.

We need to give these first nations the flexibility to aggressively seek out lands that have economic development interests or potential while ensuring that the rights of existing landowners and title holders can be accommodated.

This is what part 2 of the legislation is all about. It contains a number of provisions that will achieve these goals, and they are very laudatory goals.

For example, part 2 will empower the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to set apart as reserves any of the land selected by Manitoba first nations under a claim settlement agreement, eliminating the need for an order in council.

Part 2 of the bill will also allow for the finalization of agreements with third parties in a timely manner, which provides certainty and protection to all. It establishes more effective mechanisms for accommodating third party interests identified in the reserve creation process.

Specifically part 2 will allow Manitoba first nations to strike deals on third party interests as soon as a parcel of land is identified for reserve status. This will enable the first nations to accommodate different kinds of third party interests before land is officially added to a reserve, or to negotiate new rights that will come into effect upon reserve creation.

This latter aspect, negotiating new third party interests in addition to negotiating replacements of existing interests, is particularly noteworthy. As a result of this provision we will see first nations pursue emerging economic opportunities on their chosen lands immediately rather than experience the freeze on development which now occurs pending resolution of the land's status.

• (1610)

Part 2 of Bill C-14 is not creating any new entitlements for first nations or imposing any new obligations on governments or

landowners. It is simply making an existing process work better so that we speed up the implementation of the claims and facilitate first nations' use of their lands and resources to generate social and economic benefits for their community.

I have already quoted from the remarks made by Fred Muskego, a band councillor for Norway House Cree nation. He appeared before the committee on March 11, 1999. He expressed full support for Bill C-14, noting from his firsthand experience that the northern flood agreement was difficult to implement and that virtually every claim resulting from the agreement had been challenged and usually ended up in court.

He stated very clearly on behalf of the entire council and community that Bill C-14 is in the "best interests" of the Norway House people. Why? Because the MIA makes the Norway House Cree the masters of their own destiny. It lets the community decide how to spend its compensation moneys and makes the political leadership accountable. Canadians want that and so do the first nations. In his words, the MIA is an "avenue for the future of our children".

Manitoba Hydro, which is a party to the northern flood agreement and the master implementation agreement, was also represented before the committee. Mr. Bettner, associate corporate counsel for the utility, had this to say:

From Manitoba Hydro's perspective, the [master implementation] agreement and this legislation provide a number of positive benefits for all parties. First and foremost, it provides the parties with the opportunity to build a new and effective relationship by resolving issues which have, over the years, resulted in anger, mistrust, uncertainty, adversarial arbitration, and delays in delivering the compensation and benefits spoken to in the northern flood agreement. It provides certainty for the past, the present and the future.

Those are strong words from a key partner in the process. I remind hon. members that Manitoba Hydro has accepted additional responsibilities as a result of the master implementation agreement. The utility is eager to move forward even with those additional responsibilities in the partnership because it knows a new millennium and a new way is before us.

It does not end there. Mr. Bettner also spoke in favour of part 2 of Bill C-14, noting that it would allow Canada and the first nations to move and more effectively accommodate existing and potential third party interests in land. He said before the committee:

Part 2 provides a relatively seamless framework for developers or other land users and will hopefully forestall the loss of opportunities where the need to resolve land use issues is an early and paramount consideration. Part 2 will be a benefit to Manitoba Hydro in its ongoing dealings with first nations. . . in that it will provide the ability to resolve the ongoing land interests in a timely manner.

Gord Hannon of the Manitoba Department of Justice also stated full provincial support for both parts of Bill C-14. Mr. Hannon told the committee that a wide range of stakeholders were consulted on

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the treaty land entitlement framework agreement supported by part 2 of the legislation. These included the mining and forestry industry, Manitoba Hydro and municipal governments. Mr. Hannon said:

It is fair to say that there has been a high level of general consultation in Manitoba and, I hope and believe, a high level of understanding of the objectives in the framework agreement.

I could go on at length about the many benefits of this bill and the support it has received in committee. We have heard the arguments and there are always arguments pro and con. The bill has been studied from all angles. The validity of the Norway House master implementation agreement has even been confirmed by a court of law. Now it is time to move forward.

By emulating proven federal legislation and by introducing useful new mechanisms, Bill C-14 will help Manitoba claim settlements accomplish their objectives quickly and effectively.

If hon. members support the goals of this government set out in "Gathering Strength", goals of honouring treaty land entitlements, of supporting strong communities and people, of building the capacity for economic self-sufficiency and of renewing Canada's relationship with aboriginal people, then I urge them to vote in favour of Bill C-14 so that it can be sent to the other place.

• (1615 )

In closing, I would like to say that the time I have spent as chair of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development has been a most proud and useful time. I have learned more than I could ever give.

**Mr. Derrek Konrad (Prince Albert, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to address this bill again. I want to speak on both parts of this bill.

I notice the insertion of the word "right" in the bill, which does not mean much in light of recent supreme court decisions. It was probably requested by Warren Allmand who is a former minister of Indian affairs with this government.

I would like to speak about the process because process matters. The government seems to be under the impression that the end justifies the means, that the government can simply pass legislation to give legislative credibility to its actions and that it can hold a referendum after the fact to almost give credibility to a process that was quite flawed.

We had a lot of people in from Norway House and other parts of Canada who had connections with Norway House and who were really unhappy with the process that they went through. The result may have been inevitable but we had a lot of control over the process and it was not necessary to make a lot of people unhappy.

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Too much information was given to those people in too little time and it was not given to them in a language that they understood very well. They finally received a translation, if I remember correctly.

There were incentives given to vote for the legislation rather than voting for it based on its own merit. There was a denial of the use of public broadcasting facilities located in the town. Many people mentioned that they were not happy with that. That has created a great deal of bitterness in the community that will take years and years to deal with.

We talk about the honour of the crown a great deal when we talk about Indian affairs. In this case, the honour of the crown was somewhat tarnished by a process that these people had precious little control over.

In 1977, which was 23 years ago, the government signed an open-ended flood agreement that this act was meant to replace. These people have waited 23 years for a resolution to what they felt was their right. How did successive governments behave? They took a generation to deal with these issues. Older people are probably long since gone from the community for whatever reason. Young people grew up not knowing what they had had. A situation like this is unacceptable.

The Liberal government has a record of making big open-ended promises like the NFA which is very poorly defined. Then comes the reality check. Then comes the time when people across Canada or the people in the communities say that this is not deliverable or that the government has not delivered what it was supposed to deliver. It gets cut back, defined down and eventually gets to where it should have been right off the bat. That is not acceptable.

When the Canadian Alliance proposes that land claims, treaties and other agreements should be affordable, that the process should be transparent and that it should be capable of being delivered, the government attacks. The minister resorts to attacks on our party or personal attacks on the person who makes the criticism of the process. That is either myself or members of my party, my colleagues, who are under attack simply because we are quite realistic about dealing with these things.

We can think about a lot of things. In the Marshall decision, the minister made some really irresponsible comments about lumber, oil and gas after the Marshall decision came down. What was the result if it? Burnt Church, which is the current crisis.

We had the Lubicon building a sort of pretend reserve here to air their complaints and to publicize what they felt had gone wrong. I do not know what the total answer is to the Lubicon, but I know that a number of years ago the leader of the opposition at the time, who is now our Prime Minister, made a big promise. It was a promise he could not keep and probably had no intention of keeping.

• (1620)

Who did the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development blame yesterday? It was the Alberta government. If the Prime Minister, who was official opposition leader at the time, did not bother to consult with other governments to find out what their stand was, that is hardly an excuse for the position of the Alberta government.

To reflect on that type of action is ridiculous and it means that the honour of the crown was again tarnished. It means making promises that cannot be kept or that there is no intention of keeping. In the Lubicon, to say that I did not know is ridiculous. They had telephones as far back as 1993. That is some news for the Prime Minister in case he was not aware of that. In Burnt Church big promises were made but there was no delivery.

There is a lack of policy and a lack of progress in delivering what little the Liberals have. When they fail, bad manners is no excuse for action. The crown has other responsibilities but one of the words we never hear when we hear about those things is honour of the crown. Metaphorically speaking, people are always wrapping themselves in the flag.

However, let us talk about the honour of the crown. Does the crown not have an obligation to have honour ascribed to itself by fighting for freedom of speech and making sure that that happens? The people of the Cross Lake community were denied a voice on their own public radio system to broadcast their concerns with what was coming down. Whether they were right or wrong, they had a right to a voice and to be heard.

Does honour of the crown not require that the government to protect the weakest people in our country, our children? I refer to the Sharpe decision where the government sat on its hands for close to a year and did nothing about it. The decision allowed child pornography to be in the hands of pedophiles. Does the honour of the crown not require a strong defence force to protect its territories and its people? Where did the honour of the crown go on that issue?

We are always hearing about health care. The government cutback health care funding then bragged that it brought it back to where it almost used to be. Where was the honour of the crown? Where was the obligation to the people of Canada?

How about reasonable tax levels? Is the honour of the crown not impugned when tax levels are so bad that people are leaving the country, moving out from underneath the so-called protection of the crown and moving to other tax jurisdictions? How about responsible government that listens to the people? How about a working justice system that makes our streets safe through a parole system that works to protect people? How about a case that I am very strong on, a right to life for the unborn? I do not believe that the honour of the crown is much protected in many of these areas.

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I would like to tell the government that I want to see it start talking about honour of the crown in many more areas than simply Indian affairs. The honour of the crown can be protected when land claim negotiations have respect for existing private property rights. Affordable and conclusive settlements would also protect the honour of the crown and would state where the government, particularly the Alliance government when it is elected, stood. It would be open and honest and would not raise expectations beyond all reason to then cut them back for 20 or 30 years until finally people gave up or were driven to desperation.

We will see that all stakeholders are involved in negotiations. That is an honourable thing to do. We will protect the democratic rights and freedoms of individual aboriginals on reserves, including private property rights so that people are not driven off the reserves due to lack of housing, lack of money or no private property rights, and where people can protect their families. I remind the government that the honour of the crown requires that this government look after all citizens of this country.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today at third reading of Bill C-14, an act respecting an agreement with the Norway House Cree Nation. This is a bill that concerns the Norway House Cree but, like any bill having to do with aboriginals, there are implications in other areas, even in the immediate region to which this agreement will apply.

This part of northern Manitoba has undergone many ecological changes as a result of the introduction of dams, and the harnessing of major waterways in the region. Other aboriginal communities have been affected by these changes.

The reason I mention this is because later on I intend to give the background to the northern flood agreement. I think it important to name the communities which already have agreements: York Factory, Nelson House, and Split Lake. For these communities there were bills to give legal effect to the agreement.

We now have the agreement with Norway House and that would leave Cross Lake, which would signal the completion of this hydroelectric project, with its disastrous impact on the environment.

I should not restrict my criticism to Hydro Manitoba because many detractors, some of them in English Canada, have pointed a finger at the James Bay agreement. They told us that the ecological impact of the bill and the James Bay agreement in northern Quebec is terrible.

Having studied the files on Norway House and the other communities I have mentioned, I can respond to these detractors

that we in Quebec have no need to feel guilty about what has happened in northern Quebec, when we compare it to the situation in northern Manitoba.

In northern Manitoba, the Churchill River was re-routed to empty into the Nelson, in order to have a stronger flow. A whole string of dams and other structures was built in order to harness the current to generate hydroelectric power.

The impact in northern Manitoba was greater, judging by the figures we have before us: 2,134 square kilometres of land affected, 67 of those within the reserves. I would, moreover, remind hon. members that this bill also covers the aspect of the expansion of Manitoba's reserves, in order to save the honour of the crown and to be able to tell the aboriginal people "We flooded part of your land, but we are going to compensate you for it. For every acre flooded we'll give you four elsewhere". This is more or less what the bill we are looking at today does.

Moreover, the Bloc Québécois expressed the opinion on second reading that it might be worthwhile making this into two bills, one dealing with compensation and the other with the creation of reserves.

This has been an ecological disaster and has had a direct negative impact on the aboriginal peoples' traditional way of life, including their hunting and fishing. Also affected was their full enjoyment of their natural environment, something that is very important to them.

• (1630)

When we consider the flooding that occurred in northern Manitoba, and are somewhat familiar with the aboriginal issue, we realize this has had a major impact on their way of life. Everyone knows that flooding affects the forests and that, after a while, this will give rise to considerable mercury in the waterways. This necessarily creates a fishing problem, members will agree. In this regard, I must say that we are no better than anyone else; in northern Quebec, we had mercury poisoning too, but not to the same degree as in northern Manitoba.

Native commercial and recreational areas were also harmed, areas that they had traditionally occupied. Archaeologists are saying that the Cree, the nation affected, could have lived in this part of northern Manitoba for 10,000 years. This means long before the Europeans arrived in North America.

Therefore, these people had a way of life, of fishing, of hunting and of enjoying themselves. All of this has upset the traditional ways of doing things. There are therefore fewer fish for the reasons I have just given. Many fish did not survive the flooding because of the high levels of mercury and those that did contained mercury and, accordingly, the native people were denied their traditional subsistence fishing practice, which is extremely important to them.

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Drinking water was also contaminated because, as I said earlier, about 67 square kilometres of land in these reserves were flooded. Artesian wells were contaminated and aboriginals experienced a lot of problems. In fact, the agreement signed at the time includes provisions stating that the government must provide drinking water to aboriginals, since they could no longer use the water found on their reserve.

It also became more risky to travel by boat because of the lower water level. It goes without saying that if we divert a river into a bigger one, the level of water in the first river will necessarily be lower, since the water is diverted into a bigger river. This also had an impact on the ice level.

As we can see, when man plays with nature, it can sometimes be dangerous. Unfortunately, the first victims of that situation are the residents of Norway House and those living in the five communities to which I referred earlier. This even had an impact on Lake Winnipeg's water level. The result was that some reserves found themselves with a lot less water around their territory. This had a major impact on people living in northern Manitoba, particularly aboriginals.

The reason we are here today dealing with this bill—and I believe the Canadian Alliance member mentioned it earlier—is because it has been almost 23 years since the Manitoba northern flood agreement was signed.

I say it was signed, but that is not entirely accurate. At a certain point, the government agreed to let these five communities sit down and say “Listen, the bill before us will certainly have an impact on each of our communities and it would perhaps be a good idea to organize a round table so that, if we decide to move, we will do so together so that we can take into account the impact this bill will have on each of us in our individual reserves”. This was the strategy for a number of years.

With its policies on funding during negotiations, the government agreed to give money to the parties to the agreement so that they could work on their negotiations with the government.

● (1635)

The government realized that it was creating a sort of common front. People were working well together and at a certain point the government said it no longer wished to fund the northern flood agreement.

The reason is very simple. The government simply wanted to break down this common front. It began to work on each of the communities. The first was Split Lake, I think. I recall that one of the first speeches I gave here in the House, during the last parliament, concerned Split Lake.

The government said “We are prepared to come to an agreement with you. This is how we want to settle the matter”. Finally, it introduced a bill to give force of law to the agreement it had entered into with the people of Split Lake.

This is where things started to get a bit touchy, because some aboriginal communities said “There is an agreement with Split Lake, but not with us. Not that we absolutely insist on an agreement right away, but if work is begun that will have an impact on Split Lake and they get compensation from you, just think of the impact your project will have on us, to whom you are not yet giving any compensation”.

This is how the government managed to destroy the common front of the five communities. It is a pity, because basically the government tried to settle with one community as cheaply as possible and now it wants to apply the same scenario to the others.

There is, moreover, one agreement that has not been dealt with, and that is the one with Cross Lake. I have just been listening to the words of the former chair of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, who was saying that she had heard many witnesses voice the opinion that it was very important for the bill concerning Norway House to be passed. Indeed it is, but there were others who came before the committee and said that some changes had to be made. In fact, I tried to introduce some of those in the form of motions and amendments yesterday. Unfortunately the House rejected them.

I will return to this point later, since I had just 10 minutes for all my motions of yesterday. I feel that the matter of rights is extremely important. It is, moreover, one of the reasons the Bloc Québécois will not be able to support this bill, because the importance of these rights is not recognized formally.

The community in Cross Lake, in fact, was the last native community to be covered by a bill. The bill concerning Norway House is currently before us.

The government does not know when the Cross Lake people will arrive. They certainly appeared before the committee, though. I was there. They said “Listen, this makes no sense. There were incredible gaps in the bill. We do not agree to your settling with these people and then leaving us on the sideline”. That is the government's strategy. That was the strategy from the outset. They break a common front, try to settle for as little as possible and, if the last group demands too much, they are told “Listen, we are not going to settle with you, you are asking too much”.

In my opinion they are not the ones asking too much. Perhaps the government took advantage of an opportunity, of its divide and conquer strategy, to arrange to isolate the people. Today, they have a hard time resisting on their own.

Yesterday, I unfortunately did not get very far in my speech, because I had only 10 minutes, and the motions were grouped

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together. I think it important, however, to take a few minutes on the question of rights.

The Cree of Quebec and the natives in Cross Lake came to tell us that it was important to have the bill provide somewhere that the ancestral and general rights of native people are not threatened by this bill and the agreement referred to.

Naturally, there are a number of people who said “We can consider this a treaty and therefore it is covered by section 35 of the Constitution of Canada, by the Constitution Act, 1982”.

I read an excellent article by Mel Smith, which explained how inclusion of section 35 within the Canadian constitution was negotiated. It is an absolutely incredible story.

• (1640)

It took place over the telephone. There has been pressure to add the term “existing” to “treaty” in section 35 of the Canadian constitution.

Now, some people are telling us that this is covered under section 35 of the Canadian constitution, but, according to Mr. Smith and several experts, we still do not understand the full scope of section 35. It was not enough to say that it is covered under section 35 and that there is no need to be concerned.

At the time, we endorsed the view of aboriginal people who told us “If, as you say, it is already covered under section 35 of the constitution, then why do you not add the term right to the bill? You yourself are saying that it does not change anything”. Yesterday, the government rejected the amendments proposed by the Bloc Québécois to that effect. It is important to explain why we insisted on the issue of rights.

As I said yesterday at the beginning of my speech, when we tell someone “I have a right to do this”, it is certainly because there is a legal basis and some legislation somewhere. If there is legislation, some may say that it is flawed, that it does not go far enough, that there are grey areas. These people are free to appeal. This is regularly the case with aboriginal issues. I would be curious to know how many cases involving aboriginals are now held up before the courts.

Some laws give rights to aboriginals, but the Supreme Court of Canada has certainly gone the furthest with respect to aboriginal rights.

Yesterday, I spoke about a number of decisions and their impact. I described the evolution of aboriginal rights. I often criticized the government’s failure to act. In my view, it is clinging to an outdated piece of legislation, the Indian Act, which is over 120

years old. It is trying to tell us that it will sort out the aboriginal issue today with a piece of legislation that has been around for 120 years.

I am not a legal counsel, but this must be one of the few instances when the government has decided to enforce such an ancient statute. It is ridiculous. This must be one of the only areas where this is being done.

I do not think, in the case of the economy where the banks and takeovers are concerned or any other sector that lawmakers are called upon to discuss, it would be acceptable for them to say that, in the context of the year 2000, the third millennium, they are going to continue to operate with statutes that go back 120 years. It is preposterous. Naturally aboriginals are forced to turn to the courts for justice.

That is why it is important for them to talk about rights. That is why things are getting out of hand, as they are in Burnt Church right now. That is why aboriginals believe that it is important for the word right to appear in bills like this one. It is so that they will not be told that they have given up their ancestral rights.

There have been precedents, people who have paved the way in the courts for aboriginals. I think it important that we look at this, because it has an impact on the bill before us.

Yesterday, I paid tribute to Frank Calder, a Nisga’a. In my opinion he really paved the way in the courts for aboriginals. In 1973, the supreme court finally recognized the existence of aboriginal title. Before that, it had never existed. The federal and provincial governments believed that it was their prerogative to pass laws and that there was no special law for aboriginals—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I am sorry but I have to interrupt the hon. member. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest, Health; the hon. member for Vancouver East, Housing.

• (1645)

**Mr. Claude Bachand:** Mr. Speaker, I was speaking of the Calder decision, in which aboriginal title was recognized and for the first time it was said that “Yes, there is occupation, possession and use of ancestral lands, there is aboriginal title”. That is what the supreme court decided in 1973.

On the other hand, counsel for the Crown said “There cannot be aboriginal title because the royal proclamation of 1763 contained specific provisions”. There are specific provisions in the treaties and in the Indian Act.

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The supreme court refuted those arguments and, in the Calder decision, stated that there was aboriginal right and aboriginal title without explaining what that title was. It merely stated that there was one. That had to wait for the Guérin decision, in which the supreme court stated in 1984 that land entitlement was special because of its inalienable character, that the government had a fiduciary obligation toward the aboriginal people, and that the honour of the crown was at stake. This was stated in several supreme court judgments.

My Alliance colleague has just said the same: the honour of the crown is at stake each time a treaty is signed, and each time legislation is passed in the House.

One important step had been taken. It was stated not only that there was aboriginal title, but also that this was inalienable in character and that the government ought to commit to defending the aboriginal people because of its fiduciary role. Hon. members will understand that the government is often uncomfortable with its role of trustee, as in the case of Burnt Church.

In this case, we have a government that is the trustee of the native people and that must defend them. However, it runs over the canoes of the natives with its boats. This is hard to reconcile. The government is certainly going to say the resource has to be protected and so on. There is no proof, however, that the resource is being threatened at Burnt Church. I can understand the natives in Burnt Church who are told when they fish "You are entitled to put 50 lobster traps in the water, but the white community next door is entitled to put in 50,000. For you, it is 50".

Some people are starting to say "Listen, we are not responsible for declining stocks of fish and lobster in Miramichi Bay". I understand the natives, and the government is still stuck on its role as trustee.

In 1988 it was the Paul decision. It held that the aboriginal title was—*sui generis*, that is the only one of its kind. This was another step forward. The native title, and it is starting to be defined, is not only inalienable; it is unique. Previously there were naturally decisions recognizing that natives were here first and that they had specific rights because they were the first inhabitants.

Then came the Gladstone decision. It went even further. It provided that, when the government wants to impose a restriction on a native right, it must justify doing so clearly. Obviously in the case of Burnt Church, the government cites resource protection. This claim is not fully justified, however.

The government is not providing a specific study to show what size of catch is feasible during and after the fishing season. The government is not saying. The decision in Gladstone went even further.

• (1650)

This is why I can understand the aboriginals in Burnt Church. It would have been important to define the notion of right in the bill before us, but the government decided otherwise.

There was also the Delgamuukw decision in 1997, which went even further. Previous decisions always dealt with hunting and fishing issues. That ruling goes further by stating that the territory itself is included, that aboriginals who can prove long term occupation are entitled to more than hunting and fishing privileges. They have the power to decide on activities and to regulate them, including economic activities. This is where it goes a little further.

Meanwhile what is the government doing? It does not do anything. Yet the score, is so to speak, is 50 to 0 for aboriginals in supreme court rulings. The definition of title continues to evolve.

The Delgamuukw decision goes beyond hunting and fishing. It states that aboriginals have the power to regulate things over their own territory. This includes forestry, mining and several other activities over their territory. Delgamuukw is yet another step.

The Delgamuukw decision brought about something rather disconcerting for white people. When white people reach an agreement they sign a contract such as a lease or some kind of convention, but the Delgamuukw decision provides that the oral tradition will have the same weight as historical documents. This goes quite far.

There are certain conditions: "Aboriginals must prove that they have occupied the entire territory in question before the arrival of the British". In the case of the Cree, with their 10,000 years of history, and the Micmac with their 10,000, I do not think this should be hard to do.

"The occupation must have physically taken place and have been substantially maintained". A number of court decisions have said this. I do not think it is difficult to prove. The Micmac are in eastern Canada and the Cree in the north. Archaeologists and the best experts will tell you that they were there before us. They had a political system, an economy, agreements with their neighbours. I think that it is fairly simple to show that they occupied the lands, and that the occupation took place physically.

"The group in question must have exclusive jurisdiction and control of the land". This is akin to sovereignty, control of one's land. There is no doubt that the Cree have always controlled their land, and that the Micmac have always controlled theirs, before the arrival of the British and even of the Europeans.

Members will understand the importance to them of having the word "right" in the bill. Unfortunately the Liberal Party has decided otherwise and dismissed it.



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I am going to speak a bit about consultation because I see this as an incredible oversight in the bill. As members know, this agreement was to have the approval of the community proper. What happened was incredible. The government said "Here is the agreement". It agreed with the band council on the referendum question and that was what they asked.

Contrary to the government's expectations, they lost the referendum. The people said no because on the issue of ancestral rights it was not enough. The government changed its tack and said "I declare the referendum null and void". People wondered why it voided the referendum. It was because it had lost by five votes. The government said "It is because people who live off the reserve were registered as natives and voted. We do not think they should have voted".

They held a second referendum. They told the people before they voted "We have a cheque for \$1,000 waiting for each native person in the community", if they vote favourably, of course.

• (1655)

When someone waves a personalized cheque at a person who is one of the poorest in Canada, just before the Christmas holidays on top of it, and says "If you vote, you will have this cheque", it seems to me that there is a bit of a problem there.

Members will understand that this is why we had a bit of a hard time when the Liberal Party said that our referendums in Quebec are not always democratic because of the way we hold them. I do not think we have anything to learn from the federal government with examples like this.

That is the problem. People appeared before the committee to tell us that it was not right that everyone was promised \$1,000 if the outcome of the referendum was in favour of the agreement. It is like buying the results of a referendum.

The Bloc Québécois will have to object to this, because I think that the government did not do its job. The money has probably already been paid. The compensation has probably already gone to people and been spent, but we must not keep being held hostage and told that this is an implementation act, that it has been decided and signed several years ago, and that, now, a bill is needed to give it force of law.

The government should go back to the drawing boards. If it was wrong, it can pay what it paid before. And if there is a different outcome in a few years with the Norway House agreement in an unbiased and properly held referendum, then the government can pay again.

The government is responsible for the terrible mess. Not just the ecological mess I mentioned earlier, but the democratic mess as well. It is responsible for consultations which consisted of promising people things and offering them a cheque for voting in

favour. This is one of the primary reasons we cannot support this bill.

The issue of rights is a key one for us. It was very important to have it included in the bill. The government left it out and the members of the ruling party were all too quick yesterday to cast their vote showing that they thought it was not important. But it was indeed important for aboriginals. Perhaps not those of Norway House, because they were told that when it got passed there would be compensation. However, the others in the vicinity, for example the people in Cross Lake, which is next to them, will feel the impact of the decisions on this. They are being backed into a corner, because they are being told that the others have settled. That has an impact. If the democratic process that has been used is flawed, then things need to be started over again.

The government has decided to reject the entire matter of rights. We are not obliged to agree, now that there is something missing from the bill.

If the word right had been included, it would not have cost the federal government anything. If, as the government says, it is protected under clause 35, I do not see why the term right could not have been added. That would have not cost it anything. But there is a whole other matter, the fact that it does not want to recognize aboriginal rights.

It does not want to recognize them, even if the courts have recently said that there are ancestral rights, and that there are specific rights connected to the fact that they were the first inhabitants of this continent.

We will not reject the bill merely because of the matter of rights, but because the consultation process was very badly handled. I want the federal government, the Liberal government, to know that they need not lecture us on democracy when we hold our own referendum, and hold it properly.

The federal government made some promises at the time, saying "If you vote no, it is as if you were telling us yes, in favour of renewed federalism". We have seen what happened as a result.

I do not think it has anything to teach us about democracy. Our referendums and our elections are always carried out properly. If people are told "You are going to get \$1,000 if it passes" there is a problem.

For these two fundamental reasons, we will have to vote against Bill C-14.

• (1700)

[English]

**Ms. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do want to say I am pleased that we are finally at this point in Bill C-14 of coming before the House. Hopefully we will see it passed. I do not

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think there is any question that there have been problems in the whole process. I must say I am pleased that it is here today. Hopefully before the House puts itself to rest for this parliament, we will be able to see the bill passed.

I will take this opportunity to talk about the bill but also to comment on why we are here today. Canada's first nations people were robbed for generations of the natural process of cultural and social change. They were robbed of economic opportunities because of government policies. They were forced to give up their treaty rights to make a living and even forced to give up their treaty rights in order to fight for this country in the world wars, the Korean War and other conflicts Canada was involved in.

I wonder how many Canadians know our true history. How many Canadians know that when these first nations soldiers came back they were not given the same rewards as other Canadian soldiers? They were not allowed to vote. They had lost their treaty rights. I wonder, do we share this shameful part of our history with the rest of the world?

On many occasions the government has had the opportunity to right the injustices toward aboriginal people, but no, aboriginal people must fight for every single right they have, and most often in the courts.

This bill before us is no different. We should not be under any false impressions as to why this bill is before us today. In 1977 the federal government signed an open-ended flood agreement with first nations negatively affected by the diversion of water for hydro development in Manitoba. This agreement was to have meant great economic success for the first nations involved; it was their chance for future economic progress.

For the record, Mr. Warren Allmand, the Indian affairs minister at the time, was part of the negotiation of the northern flood agreement. When he appeared before the standing committee on this bill he commented that he saw this bill as a modern day treaty. For those who are under any impression about how the negotiators felt about this bill, they should know that it was seen as a modern day treaty.

The reason we are here today with this new bill before us is that in the northern flood agreement the Government of Canada once again failed to follow through on an agreement they made. It was an agreement that would have meant benefits to the first nations involved, but year after year they kept the first nations people in the courts, fighting for everything in that agreement.

For those who think, well, too bad, if it is not a given they should have to go out there and fight and prove that is what the agreement meant, let me remind the House, all Canadians and all those public service workers how pay equity was a right in this country and how for 15 years women in this country had to fight for the right to pay equity with the government, which did not want to follow through on the agreement.

Just in case some people think it is only the aboriginal people out there who have a beef on the issue of the government following through on the agreement, it is not. I want those people to recognize that this is not just an aboriginal issue. It is an issue of the fact of the government not following through on agreements that it should be following through on.

As a result of not following through on the northern flood agreement, yes, some first nations agreed to changes, because they knew if they were ever going to have any chance whatsoever they had better not rely on the federal Liberal government. They had to do something else. They were fighting for survival. One after the other renegotiated so that they would have that opportunity.

Over the years we often hear of big corporations doing that to the small guy. If the corporations just keep them in the courts long enough they will never be able to afford to fight. Ultimately the big guy wins out in the end. It is no different here. The first nations people were backed into a corner and in order to survive they had to renegotiate. Let us not be under any false impression of why they are here.

From the perspective of the bill, the Norway House First Nation has the right to make that decision. They have done that. They have agreed that the bill will give them an opportunity. Under no circumstances whatsoever do they intend that this bill should give up any of their treaty or inherent rights, none whatsoever.

• (1705)

I do find it unconscionable that the government was not willing to ensure this within the bill, to put it in words that in no way, shape or form would the bill affect the treaty or inherent rights of the first nations.

However, the government tells us that it will not. The Norway House first nation is willing to accept that and, because the bill affects them, for that reason we should support it. I am not going to be someone who tells them what they should be doing. They have had that happen for too long.

There has been consultation. The process was not perfect; I do not think there is any question about it. We have heard comments about referendums not being held properly and about situations where people may have been paid off. All those questions came to light in the committee hearings.

It was felt that the issues were dealt with, but the bottom line was that the first nation approved this. The chief and council who were representative of that first nation were re-elected, for the most part. I think that is an indication that the community supported the process. Therefore we should be supporting it because it applies foremost to the Norway House first nation.

However, we should not lose sight of the fact that there is another first nation out there, the Cross Lake first nation. They are not giving in. Quite frankly, they have every right not to give in.

The original agreement was signed. Negotiators to that agreement acknowledged that it was seen as a modern-day treaty. They believe that this first agreement, the northern flood agreement, in itself is what is best for the Cross Lake first nation.

They deserve to not have to go to the courts time and time again. They deserve to have the opportunity to have it settled once and for all. I would hope that the Liberal government will not force another first nation into the situation we see throughout the country. I would hope that we do not have to see violence being the answer in order for rights to be upheld.

While the government supports the bill, I would ask that it also support the rights of the other first nations to make their decisions, that it seriously negotiate a settlement on the northern flood agreement with the Cross Lake first nation and not play the big bad corporate government, holding off until Cross Lake first nation is forced into starvation, forced into receivership, forced into not being able to have houses or pay for the wonderful hydro project that was supposed to make everything better for them. They cannot even afford the hydro. The rates are higher in northern Manitoba because they do not have as dense a population. They pay higher rates than other areas. It makes one wonder why they are not out there jumping screaming and praising the whole process.

As much as I will be supporting the bill, I think Canadian people need to know we are in this situation because once again the Liberal government has failed to follow through on an agreement with first nations people. It is time it changed that approach or this country will never ever be out of turmoil.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-14, an act respecting an agreement with the Norway House Cree Nation for the settlement of matters arising from the flooding of lands, and respecting the establishment of certain reserves in the province of Manitoba.

We would like to have detailed commentary on the bill. However, due to time constraints, we realize that the passage of the bill is a lot more important to the principles involved than having our few words on the record. We will be brief to make sure that the bill can be passed in a timely manner.

The legislation speaks to two issues: the Norway House Cree Nation's master implementation agreement resulting from the flooded lands, and the reserve establishment, particularly in reference to the Manitoba treaty land entitlement framework agreement of 1997.

• (1710)

First, however, we are hardly impressed by the combination of these issues that the legislation represents. The two main issues

### *Government Orders*

addressed in this bill are far too important to have them lumped together. We certainly realize that the issues are related, but these issues should be addressed separately in order to provide each bill with the attention it deserves.

Legislation is not necessary for the implementation of this agreement since it is already going ahead. Instead, this legislation is another step toward implementing the terms of the northern flood agreement and the federal government's obligations under the agreement with regard to the first nations that have signed implementation agreements.

One advantage of this legislation should be the opportunity to move away from the dispute resolution process to a more conciliatory form of negotiation and discussion. This is something we would all welcome.

I would like to address the second part of this legislation, establishing reserves in the province of Manitoba. Part 2 of this legislation is expected to assist in establishing reserves where an obligation exists in a current or future agreement to set aside land for this purpose. Part 2 appears to be beneficial to the first nations by allowing them to take advantage of conditions on a timely basis and speeding up the process of reserve creation. Because of that, as I mentioned, there are a number of intricate terms we would have liked to explore, happenings of the past that we would like to rehash.

Again because of time constraints, and although it would have been great to get all of that on the record, in doing so we would compromise the possibility of getting the legislation put through.

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

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The question is on the motion for third reading of Bill C-14. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*Government Orders*

*And more than five members having risen:*

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

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The vote stands deferred until 5.30 p.m. this day.

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**MARINE CONSERVATION AREAS ACT**

The House resumed from November 24, 1999, consideration of Bill C-8, an act respecting marine conservation areas, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** We are resuming debate on this bill and the floor is open.

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

• (1715)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on Motion No. 1 also applies to Motions Nos. 2, 3, 7, 12, 13, 26 to 29, 37, 40 to 48, 53, 55, 56, 59 and 60.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

**Mr. John Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Just for clarification we are on Bill C-8. Do we have provision for debate on these amendments that are being put forward?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** A few moments ago I called for debate and no one rose. Since no one rose on debate, we put the question for this group. We still have to do the yeas and nays.

**Mr. John Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, for further clarification, will you have to repeat for the next grouping the request for whether there is debate or not?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Yes. When we go into the next group there will be an opportunity for debate.

We have already put 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 of 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 motion is deferred.

As the House knows, Group No. 1 went through rather quickly. Some of the movers and seconders of motions in Group No. 2 are not in the House. Could there be a motion from the floor to have the motions in Group No. 2 deemed moved and seconded? Is there such a motion?

**An hon. member:** Yes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Is there unanimous consent to move such a motion?

**An hon. member:** No.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We find ourselves in a very awkward situation and I need your help to see how we can go about this.

According to the order of business, to agreements made by the parties and the way we usually work here, Bill C-8 and the amendments thereto were not supposed to be brought before the House today.

• (1720)

We are now faced with the following problem. We come here to pass legislation with full knowledge of the facts. Our speakers are usually well prepared to take part in the debates. In a democracy, the most basic rules of courtesy and decency require the government to advise us of the bills it wishes to put before the House. Never, in any parliament, would a government call a bill at the very last minute without advising anyone as is being done here right now.

Since we only have 10 minutes left for government orders, could we not agree to say that it is 5.30 p.m. Then, when the House leader asks to bring this bill back before the House, we can have a very objective and effective debate, gladly and with good humour.

**An hon. member:** With great glee.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier:** We could resume consideration of the bill in the light of a strong debate. That is what I am asking for.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** As usual, the hon. House leader of the Bloc has suggested a very gentle means to get the Chair out of a bit of a problem. The House leader is quite correct. The House operates in a fashion that provides for fairness between all parties. The Chair thanks the hon. member very much for the suggestion.

Does the House give unanimous consent to the suggestion of the House leader of the Bloc Quebecois that the clock be seen as 5.30 p.m.?

**Miss Deborah Grey:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just want to clarify something further to what the House leader of the Bloc said. That is that we understood this bill would be coming forward on October 5 and we have now found out that the bill will be coming forward tomorrow. Now, at about 22 minutes after five, is the government planning on bringing report stage of this bill in for the second and third groupings?

It would look like perhaps this Chamber does not know how to run the country when it is putting bills in here at the last moment. I see that the government House leader is here. Maybe he could enlighten us.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Actually, it is not so much a reflection on the Chamber as it is on the chair occupant who also is faced with the same dilemma.

The House leader of the Bloc has suggested a very elegant means to get us through this, but obviously the government House leader should have an opportunity to respond.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I will forget the comments that were made by the last speaker, which is probably the best most of us could do at any time, and I will refer to the other comments that were made that were more enlightening, not that any of them could be less enlightening than the one that we just heard. I would agree to call it 5.30 and to end this debate for today.

**Miss Deborah Grey:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a further point of order. The House leader has announced that I am not the House leader and I certainly do know my place.

I would like to ask, if by the good graces of this Chamber, we call it 5.30 now, six minutes early, when might we see Bill C-8 come again, because I think it is important enough that it needs to be discussed now. I do not think we are prepared to give unanimous consent to just send it off into the proverbial night.

### *Private Members' Business*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Actually, we will not get into this. We have a suggestion on the floor to see the clock as 5.30 p.m. and that is what we will address.

Is there unanimous consent to see the clock as 5.30 p.m.?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

• (1725)

### MANITOBA CLAIM SETTLEMENTS IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-14, an act respecting an agreement with the Norway House Cree Nation for the settlement of matters arising from the flooding of land, and respecting the establishment of certain reserves in the province of Manitoba, be read the third time and passed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** It being 5.30 p.m. the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-14.

Call in the members.

• (1730)

*And the bells having rung:*

**Mr. Bob Kilger:** Mr. Speaker, I believe if you were to seek unanimous consent of the House, that the House would give its consent to pass Bill C-14, the Manitoba claim settlements implementation act, at third reading, on division.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the House give its consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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.

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### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

#### CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance)** moved that Bill C-409, an act to provide for the expiry of gun control legislation that is not proven effective within five years of coming into force, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

*Private Members' Business*

He said: Mr. Speaker, it has been a year and a half since we debated this bill and it seems the only way I can get three hours of debate on this common sense piece of legislation is by doing it one hour at a time.

I must once again deplore the fact that all private members' bills selected in the draw are not automatically declared votable items in this House. I have been working on this bill, the firearms law sunset act, since 1994. I first introduced a sunset clause as an amendment to Bill C-68 during the debate in the spring of 1995. This bill was first introduced in the House as Bill C-351 on September 28, 1995, then Bill C-357 on December 2, 1996 and again as Bill C-278 on December 7, 1997.

It is most disappointing to put so much effort into a piece of legislation to have it die again and again after just one hour of debate and no vote. This is a situation that must be rectified if we are ever going to have a chance of our constituents' legislative initiatives being given their rightful consideration in this House.

Every time there is a shooting, either here or in the United States, there is a clamour from the Liberal anti-gun crowd for more gun control laws. This despite the auditor general's warnings in his 1993 report that there was no statistical evidence to prove the previous set of gun control laws implemented by the Progressive Conservative government was working.

What we need, what the people really want and what the Canadian Alliance Party promises to deliver is effective gun control laws. As we have seen with Bill C-68, the Firearms Act, tougher does not equal effective because it is only tougher on law-abiding responsible gun owners and totally ineffective at controlling the criminal use of guns.

Bill C-409 would rectify the government oversight by implementing a process that would ensure that only gun law provisions that were proven to be effective by the auditor general would remain the law of the land. People arguing against this bill will have to argue that they support gun control laws even if they do not work, no matter how much they cost and no matter that other measures might work better.

I am not arguing that gun control laws are unnecessary, only that police time and resources should be spent on measures that get the best bang for our tax dollars. That is exactly what Bill C-409 is designed to do.

The bill provides a five year sunset provision on all gun control measures, which means the measure would be automatically repealed unless the auditor general reported that it had been a successful and cost-effective measure to increase public safety and reduce violent crime involving the use of firearms.

The auditor general's report would have to be considered by a committee representing broad interests in the firearms community and the committee report would be presented to and concurred in

by the House or the sunset provision would take effective automatically at the end of five years.

• (1735 )

The bill also provides safeguards to allow parliament the time necessary to make amendments to allow ineffective gun control measures to expire without affecting parts of the legislation that are effective at fighting firearms crimes.

The bill is the total opposite of the ill-conceived Bill C-68, the Firearms Act, passed into law on December 5, 1995 and prematurely brought into force on December 1, 1998.

Let us look at what the auditor general would have uncovered if he had been conducting operational and financial audits of Bill C-68 since it was brought into force. The auditor general would chastise the government for ignoring his 1993 recommendations by proceeding with the implementation of even more costly and complex gun control laws without first evaluating whether previous gun law control laws were working effectively.

The auditor general would report that the justice department's polls on public support for the gun registry were biased because they failed to reveal to respondents the estimated cost and impact the legislation would have.

The auditor general would have found that despite spending half a billion dollars on gun registry, biker gangs, bank robbers, homicidal and suicidal maniacs are still having no trouble getting their hands on firearms through the black market.

The auditor general would have found that despite spending half a billion on the gun registry there has been no reduction in the number of firearms being smuggled into the country.

The auditor general would have also reported that the gun registry has had no effect whatsoever in reducing criminal use of firearms. The number of armed robberies, the number of homicides or the number of suicides are not being reduced by this.

The auditor general would have found that despite the fact that 1,700 bureaucrats are working on the gun registry, there are fewer police on our streets today than were on our streets 30 years ago when measured by the number of criminal incidents per officer. Statistics Canada put it very simply. In 1962 there were 20 criminal incidents per police officer. In 1997 there were 46 criminal incidents per police officer.

The auditor general would have found out that the Department of Justice's multimillion dollar television ads are grossly misleading because the ads say the only consequence for unlicensed gun owners will be that they will not be able to buy ammunition. The truth is that unlicensed gun owners will become instant made in Ottawa criminals at the end of December and could be put into jail for up to five years. We must think about that. That is very misleading.

*Private Members' Business*

The auditor general would have found out that as of September 2, 2000 the Department of Justice had only issued 286,000 firearms licences in the last 21 months, that is 13,630 per month, and that there was a backlog of 339,000 licence applications. He would have also noted that it would take the Department of Justice more than 25 months to get rid of this backlog and 12 more years to process the licences from the remaining 2 million gun owners, which is the government's estimate. They have not even applied yet.

The auditor general would include in his report the justice minister's 1995 promise to parliament that the firearms registry would cost only \$85 million to implement and run a deficit of only \$2.2 million over five years. The auditor general would then report that the actual cost over the five years was \$325 million and the deficit was not \$2.2 million but \$310 million. That is almost 150 times as much.

The auditor general would go on to report that his sources in the justice department have provided documents that show the firearms registry budget for this fiscal year alone has already exceeded \$260 million and will top \$300 million before the end of March 2001, this year alone.

The auditor general would remind parliament that the justice minister promised user fees would cover the entire cost of the program, but as of August 11, 2000 the government had collected only \$17,139,000 in user fees and owed refunds of approximately \$1,234,000.

• (1740)

The auditor general would discount the Department of Justice statistics about the number of firearms licences refused and revoked and the legal gun sales blocked. He would write that these results have been achieved because of better background checks and information management and had absolutely nothing to do with the registration of guns.

He would also confirm earlier findings by the Privacy Commissioner of Canada that a large percentage of the blocked sales were as a result of incorrect information on 3.5 million Canadians in the RCMP infamous FIP, firearms interest police databank. That is serious and is a violation of our rights as individual Canadians.

The auditor general's report would make the following key points with respect to blocked gun sales. That is one of the government's claims for success.

First, the government has had the means to achieve these kinds of results for the past 20 years with the old FAC, firearms acquisition certificate program.

Second, there would be no need to create a half billion dollar gun registry for rifles and shotguns to achieve these results.

Third, the auditor general would point out that all these hundreds of millions have blocked only the legal sale of firearms. Absolutely nothing has been done to stop anyone from buying firearms on the black market. That is where the real problem is.

The auditor general would report that the gun registry is riddled with errors and is absolutely no help to the police in fighting against real criminals.

Obviously this bill needs more time to be fully explained and debated by the members of the House. At this point I would like to seek the unanimous consent of the House to have another hour of debate on this bill at future time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to have another hour of debate at some future time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Mr. Speaker, I am really disappointed in that. We have a common sense piece of legislation that asks the government to review the laws that it put in place way back in 1995 to see if they are effective. What I hear the Liberal members saying is that they do not want to review their laws. They do not want to check to see whether they are effective. They are willing to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on something that will produce no cost effective measurable benefits.

That is what we are talking about here. I pointed out all of the things that the auditor general would have reviewed and would have found in his study on it. What Liberal members are saying in effect is that they will put through laws whether they are effective or not. They will not use those resources to put more police on the street. They will spend it putting a piece of paper beside every gun in the country whether it makes sense or not. That is what I hear them saying. I hope all Canadians will take note that the Liberal government is willing to take money away from other areas where it could be used very effectively and plough it into this. It will not review it.

We have 60,000 people a year who die as a result of cancer. We spend about \$16 million a year on research in that area. We have spent close to \$300 million this year alone on a gun registry that has no measurable benefit, will not save lives or do anything that will help Canadians. If we were to put that money into cancer research, just think what that would accomplish.

That is the choice the government has made. It is not willing to let the auditor general review the legislation to see if it is effective. It is not willing to see whether that money would be more effective in health care or in putting more police on the street than in a very bureaucratic, useless gun registry that by the way and in conclusion is one huge boondoggle. The mess that is in Miramichi right now, the backlogs and the problems that are being faced by gun owners are horrific.

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If members could read my e-mails for just one or two days, they too would realize that we have to review this and we should allow the auditor general to do that.

• (1745)

**Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-409 proposes that we repeal the Firearms Act and indeed all gun control legislation in Canada without giving it a reasonable time to work.

The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville would propose sunseting a complex piece of legislation and an important public safety initiative just one year after it is fully implemented. In this scheme it would be impossible to accurately measure the comprehensive benefits of the firearms program. For this reason the Minister of Justice is firmly opposed to Bill C-409.

The Department of Justice already has a plan to evaluate the program's success in achieving its objectives. Bill C-409 ignores the public safety accomplishments that have already been achieved by the Firearms Act even before implementation is complete.

Canadians can already see the positive impact of Bill C-68 and continue to strongly support the government's position. The hon. member knows that more than 80% of Canadians support gun control and that the Supreme Court of Canada has unanimously found the Firearms Act to be both constitutional and directed to enhancing public safety. It is perplexing that the member for Yorkton—Melville chooses to ignore the foregoing.

I would like to talk about what the Firearms Act has already done for public safety. The Minister of Justice is confident that within a reasonable time after the new firearms law has been fully implemented its effectiveness will be even more demonstrable. However, the short timeframe proposed in Bill C-409 is simply unworkable.

For the first time ever the new law requires instant background checks before any firearms transfer can proceed. As of the beginning of September of this year, over 4,352 potentially dangerous gun sales were sent to further investigations. These cases included people with past or recent histories of violence, break and enter, theft, drug involvement, or people who were trying to acquire guns they were not licensed to purchase. Background checks are an important step in ensuring that potentially dangerous individuals do not have access to firearms.

This is the kind of situation the new system was designed to control. Every member of the House should share the goal of keeping firearms out of the hands of potentially dangerous individuals.

Almost one million Canadians have complied with the licensing requirements. To date more than 898 licence applications have been refused for public safety concerns. Additionally, 1,217 li-

cences have been revoked for individuals deemed no longer eligible to hold a licence.

As a result of the new system's capacity to more effectively check police and court records, the number of licence revocations is close to 20 times higher than the total of the previous five years. In light of such information, even the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville cannot deny the value of the gun control provisions. It is through results such as this that the Canadian public knows the new gun control program will make their homes and their communities as a whole much safer.

The choices laid out today are clear. If Bill C-409 were to become law and all Canadian gun laws were sunsetted, Canada would be left with no licensing, no registration, nothing. The adoption of Bill C-409 would put lives at risk, and that is unacceptable.

[Translation]

At a time when the rest of the world, in search of a better way to control firearms, turns to Canada as a world leader, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville wants Canada to revoke the gun control legislation.

[English]

The government, unlike members opposite, is committed to promoting a culture of safety and making Canada safer. We have listened to the Canadian public. Again and again Canadians tell us they support our firearms program. Indeed a majority of Canadians surveyed in a poll released by the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville on the day of the tragic events at Columbine high school felt that, if I may quote, "ensuring that all rifles and shotguns are registered" is a priority.

Let us talk about specific parts of the bill. The hon. member would have the auditor general and his office evaluate a complex piece of legislation and a major public safety program. To meet the bill's timelines an evaluation would have to end before all the benefits of our program could be measured.

However I agree with the need to evaluate laws. We heard months of testimony on gun control. We listened to what Canadians told us. We made sure the law would be effective. We built in an assessment program. We continue to streamline and improve the program and will continue to ensure the program meets the public safety objectives Canadians expect.

• (1750)

The fact remains, however, that when any new law comes into force we need to allow a certain amount of time before we can assess its impact and effectiveness. Individuals need to adjust to new requirements. Law enforcement agencies need to adjust to new responsibilities. The judiciary needs time to consider the law's meaning and intent as cases are presented. It takes more time than the hon. member's proposal would allow.



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The Firearms Act is no different. To assess its effect on public safety, on the incidence of violent crime, and on cost effectiveness, we have to allow time for the act to be fully implemented.

The hon. member should know that when the former Minister of Justice appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs he spoke about the evaluation process. He stated that the Department of Justice would be monitoring experience with registration, licensing to determine what improvements could be made and making that information available to parliament and to the public.

The evaluation plan calls for assessments of the extent to which the operational elements of the Firearms Act, part III of the criminal code, and their associate programs have been implemented and whether their objectives are being achieved.

Let me repeat again. Bill C-409 is not realistic in its timeframes, and the Minister of Justice is opposed to it.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate. I commend the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville for bringing the bill forward and for his tireless pursuit of this issue. I know he has put a great deal of effort and passion into bringing the bill before the Canadian people and getting some of the facts on the record, which are extremely important.

Let us be clear. Bill C-68 and the gun registry are not about effective gun control. They are an ineffective, discriminatory, expensive attempt to sell the public on something they do not achieve, and that is public safety.

I was very dismayed to hear the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice misstate the Supreme Court of Canada's interpretation of the gun challenge. At no time did it endorse the particular legislation as having anything to do with public safety. What it said is the government has the right to legislate in that area. That is a subtle but extremely important difference.

Bill C-409 speaks about bringing some degree of accountability to the venture the government has undertaken. What it calls for is an expiry or a sunset clause that would negate the legislation after five years if it was not cost effective. That is all the hon. member is trying to do. He is trying to bring about some element of accountability and cost effective examination or measure to increase public safety vis-à-vis a connection between legislation and a reduction in violence.

The legislation was first brought forward in the heat and passion of and in the fallout from a terrible incident in Montreal. The massacre at l'École Polytechnique is a black mark on Canadian history and will always be there, to the horror of Canadians. However the legislative response that was drafted in the wake of that tragedy is not proportionate. It does not respond to that type of incident. That horrible crime was perpetrated by a mentally ill

person who used a gun that was illegal in the first place. The legislation has nothing to do with that. It would have had no bearing on and would not have prevented such a tragedy.

The Conservative Party has always supported sensible gun control measures. The legislation is not about gun control. It is about bureaucratic red tape. It is an intrusive piece of legislation. I apologize for using the word target, but it targets the wrong people. Criminals are not participating and never will participate in this type of registry. It targets duck hunters, target shooters, Olympic shooters, farmers, fishermen, and average Canadians who use a rifle for pest control or leisure.

The legislation is not about public safety. It is about criminalizing individuals who were participating in, enjoying and getting some degree of security out of a legitimate and rightful pursuit in their communities. All of a sudden, if they refuse to participate, they will be criminalized.

• (1755 )

One of the intangible results of the government's pursuit of the legislation will be felt in the criminal justice system in the frustration that will be felt by average citizens when called upon to do jury duty. They will sit in the jury box and look with cynicism and antagonism toward the crown and the police who are prosecuting people for a reasonable and lawful pursuit. This is one of those intangible factors that is again lost on the government and is obviously lost on the Minister of Justice.

I will not recount the statistics and the figures with respect to the money and the number of bureaucrats and government employees who have been caught up in the pursuit of the giant propaganda effort that is taking place on the part of the government, but they are staggering.

This now infamous Bill C-68, better known as the Firearms Act, has been implemented by the government and sold to the public on a false premise. The public has been sold a bill of goods literally that this would somehow impact on violent crime and that it would somehow save lives and prevent violence. Where is any evidence that this will somehow protect or save lives? It does not exist. This legislative response is completely off base, off target. It was arrogantly, ineffectively and wastefully put in place to distract from the real issues.

Police across the country are desperately in need of resources. They are desperately in need of support from the government, from the solicitor general and from the Department of Justice, and they are not getting it. They tell us that resources are scarce and that they are using priority choices to decide where the money goes, yet they are pumping millions of dollars into the legislation while there is not enough money for overtime, for equipment or for training.

Police officers are being forced to do without. They are being forced to deal with the ever complicated and ever increasing

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presence of organized crime and high tech crime. There is no question that, on a rational basis and looking at this in terms of priorities, the money would be better spent elsewhere.

I would like to put on record some of the recent statistics from Australia and Great Britain where they have pursued this type of registry in advance of the Canadian example. Great Britain and Australia have both had disastrous results as a fallout from gun registry. In Australia the gun ban that took place in 1996 resulted in armed robberies increasing by 70% between 1996 and 1998. Unarmed robberies went up by 20% and attempted murders by 300%. Unlawful entry with intent to break and enter involving property rose by 30,000 cases in Australia.

A study from the U.S. Department of Justice regarding the armed criminal, a survey of incarcerated felons, included in its results that 91% of those surveyed agreed that smart criminals would try to find out if a potential victim were armed before they decided to act. Of those surveyed, 82% agreed that the gun laws only affect law-abiding citizens and therefore would enable criminals to know that most likely those they would prey on would be unarmed.

Gun registration has already failed terribly in the United Kingdom, as its overall violent crime rate increased 2.2%, with a 19% overall increase in muggings since 1998.

A recent policy conference of the Progressive Conservative Party in Quebec City reaffirmed its opposition to this specific part of the gun registry. We have to be clear on this. This pertains to the registry of long guns. The opposition has clearly stated its position.

We will always hear the government drone on about the opposition being opposed to gun control. That is not the case. We have had gun control in the country since the 1950s with respect to pistols, certain rifles and shotguns that were already deemed of an unlawful nature. That is not the subject of this debate. We are talking about shotguns and rifles that have been in use and have been in the possession of Canadians for hundreds of years, since the country began.

• (1800 )

In 1993 the Liberals proceeded with legislation on the unproven premise that a mandatory firearm registry would lead to a reduction in firearm related crime. One of the false premises was to inflate the statistics. For example, if a weapon was found at the scene of a crime or alleged crime, just present, not used or involved in the particular allegation of criminal activity, it would somehow be included as a firearms related crime. It was completely duplicitous and misleading.

In the first instance, long guns are rarely the weapon of choice, I would suggest, in premeditated criminal activity. The Liberal government has aimed this law at a segment of the population that

already acts responsibly and complies with reasonable, previously existing gun control measures. So again, there is a false premise.

Gun registration will not prevent or even reduce most forms of violent crime. It creates a false impression that having a little sticker or laser imprint on a gun will somehow prevent it from being used in a dangerous or unlawful fashion. It is a completely false premise. That little imprint or sticker will no more prevent that gun from firing than putting a bullet in the chamber; it is ridiculous to suggest otherwise. The government has failed to provide any proof whatsoever that gun related crime will be reduced as a result of this legislation.

As mentioned earlier, Australia and Great Britain have already proven that this type of legislation actually leads to an increase in violent crime. The promises made by the former minister of justice that it would cost only \$85 million have already been disproved. We now know, as the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville quoted extensively, the costs that relate to this. We are now nearing the half billion dollar mark with respect to the implementation of this legislation.

The reality is that this legislation has already cost Canadians over \$134 million and not a single gun has been registered to the extent that it is in a system that is up and operating. The system has yet to be in effect. I would suggest that the infrastructure in place at present could be used to enhance CPIC, to enhance the DNA data bank registry, to incorporate a system of registering sex offenders in the country. That is the type of registry that we need, registering the criminals and not the guns. This is where the effort should be and where the legislation should be pointed, not at registering an inanimate object and indicating to the public that somehow this will affect crime and somehow protect Canadians. It is a false premise.

I indicate clearly that we support the initiative that has been taken by my hon. friend and hope that Canadians will somehow grasp what is taking place in the country and reflect that in their vote in the coming election, because this legislation will not change until the government changes.

**Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate on Bill C-409, an act to provide for the expiry of gun control legislation that is not proven effective within five years of coming into force.

I am pleased to speak about this particularly because it is such an obstacle and a hindrance to the need for using guns in a legitimate way in a rural area such as the one I live in, in Cariboo—Chilcotin.

I am sure that members here and many people in the city do not realize the need for a gun and the cost of not having a gun for some people. I can tell many stories about people who have run into difficulty with wild animals. I can tell the story of a man who was without a gun and was killed and eaten by a bear. I can talk about parents who fear for their children who walk to school because in

winter there are cougars patrolling the roads for cats and dogs and whatever else might satisfy their appetites.

As I speak about this I want to have a practical attitude to what I say, but I want to begin by complimenting the author of the bill, the member for Yorkton—Melville. He and his staff have worked tirelessly for over five years to inform Canadians about the bad law and the enormous waste encompassed in Bill C-68. I would like the member to know that his contribution in calling the government to account on this duplicitous legislation is appreciated by so many people in my riding and indeed by all of rural British Columbia.

• (1805)

I note that in the *Ottawa Sun*, Peter Worthington, editor emeritus, said yesterday of the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville that not much gets by him and that he sends out statistical findings “much as Johnny Appleseed was reputed to throw apple seeds into the wind and hope they would take root”. He says that the member’s website is a “treasure trove of facts and arguments” why the federal government’s gun controls, started in the mid-70s and refined by the then gauche justice minister in 1995, are “a costly, emotional and pointless boondoggle”. I could go on and on.

It has now been five years since the passage of the infamous Bill C-68. Each week we have seen increasing evidence that the new gun registry is only a white elephant, a large, cumbersome, costly structure that will do nothing to reduce crime. In fact, it will do quite the opposite, as has already been reported by the statistics coming from Australia and Great Britain.

Why? Because hundreds of millions of dollars are misspent as a result of Bill C-68 and when these dollars are misspent they cannot be spent where they need to be spent. Once a dollar is gone, it is not there for use somewhere else.

One might say the same thing about the people involved in this. When I realized that about 400 RCMP officers alone are involved, I realized that when they are registering guns these people cannot be taking part in the activities that we normally expect policemen to be doing. If these hundreds of millions of dollars were spent on new equipment for the RCMP or for hiring additional law enforcement officers, it would make a difference. The taxpayer would get something back for the dollars invested. This costly boondoggle, this gun registry, returns nothing and never will.

We know ministers and government are unwilling to admit their error unless they are apologizing for something someone else did some time earlier. They are particularly unwilling to admit their error when money, hundreds of millions of dollars, has been wasted. Today we have before us the solution, the opportunity for the minister and the government to save face and the opportunity for the opposition to demonstrate the value of intelligence, hard work and perseverance via a private member’s bill.

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The happy solution is in the bill before us today, Bill C-409. The bill would provide for a five year sunset provision on all gun legislation unless the auditor general finds that the legislation has been a successful and cost effective measure to increase public safety and reduce violent crime. This makes perfect sense to me.

I know something about what the auditor general does because I sit on the public accounts committee and meet regularly with his staff and with other members of that committee looking at government programs and departments. The criteria that the Auditor General of Canada uses are, first, value for money spent, and second, if the money being spent is being used for what it was intended for, if the programs are doing what they were intended to do.

If he were to look at the bill and find that, wonder of wonders, it is money well spent, good value, the program is doing exactly what it was intended to do and crime and accident rates are down, this would be a great bill and it would not be withdrawn.

On the other hand, if he found that it was the tremendous boondoggle that it has been turning out to be, if in fact it was not doing what it was intended to do, the auditor general would be able to submit his report and under the provisions of the bill the sunset clause would kick in and it would be withdrawn. There would be no loss of face because it would be the auditor general who would point out quite clearly that this has not been a bill that has done what it was intended to do.

The attractiveness of sunset legislation is that it forces bureaucracies to work to ensure that the regulations and measures pertaining to the legislation are cost effective. If it is, the legislation can be renewed. If not, the legislation is automatically appealed and everyone is better off.

My view is that the new gun registry will fail in any cost benefit or cost effectiveness test.

• (1810)

If I and other Canadians are correct, the legislation will be repealed eventually and the waste of money will cease. If we are wrong, we will sing the praises of the government for its foresight.

Bill C-409 would be good legislation. I appeal to all members of the House to look at the legislation. At least give it an honest and fair look in a non-partisan way. See its merit and support it.

As I have a couple of minutes left, I would also like to bring to the attention of the House the serious problem that our Liberal justice ministers have created for millions of legitimate gun owners across Canada.

December 31 of this year is the deadline for obtaining the new possession only licence, or the possession and acquisition licence. That is only two months away. Those who do not have a valid

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possession licence at that time will be in violation of the law despite repeated attempts to comply.

There are people I have asked for support who say they cannot because they are Liberals, but they have come to me as their member of parliament to ask for support. What do they want? They want help to get through the bureaucratic process of getting their firearms registered and their licensing completed.

One person told me that he was sitting at supper one evening when he got a call from a lady. She said "You sent an application in with all those guns you want registered. We need to know the length of the stock. We need to have the numbers verified that are on it. We need to know if the stock has been changed on another gun. We need to know the length of the barrel on this gun. We need to know why there is no model number on this gun". He looked and he said "In that instance there is no model on the gun". She said "We know that. We know that gun never did have a model". When he laughed, she said "Are you laughing at me?" He said "No, I am just laughing at the process we are going through". She said "I do not think I can talk to you any longer," and she hung up on him.

This same man has received calls in the evening and on Sundays to get his registrations completed. It is a terrible bureaucratic mess. And he still does not have his guns registered. That is the problem Canadians are facing. I have written to the justice minister and asked her to solve the problem for this man and others but I have had no response. To the best of my knowledge neither have they.

My constituents are reporting long delays in their dealings with the firearms centre in Miramichi, difficulty in getting through on the toll free lines and failure to get answers to their questions. We understand that at the current rate of processing it will take several years to complete the registry and provide some assurance that the information is complete and accurate.

The government should not be placing citizens in a position of breaking the law when compliance is not possible because of bureaucratic complexity and delay. I would ask the minister to come to her senses, extend the deadline for these licences by at least 12 months, and take seriously the provisions of Bill C-409.

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to talk about Bill C-409 put forward by the member for Yorkton—Melville, which is an act to provide for the expiry of gun control legislation that has not proven effective within five years of coming into force.

I am going to read some policy. We believe there should be severe mandatory penalties for the criminal use of any weapon. We are committed to keeping guns out the hands of violent criminals as a necessary part of making our communities safer. We will replace the current firearms law with a practical firearms control system that is cost effective and respects the rights of Canadians to own and use firearms responsibly. This policy was approved in January at the national convention and was adopted on March 25.

When I became a member of parliament in 1993 firearms regulations were in place from the previous administration which were to come into effect on January 1, 1994. For long guns, that included very specific storage provisions. I took those responsibilities very seriously and, prior to arriving here on January 1, 1994, I had my firearms in safe storage within my residence. I was happy to do that.

• (1815)

There is a prevalent opinion among most firearm owners that there are a lot of acceptable and appropriate ways to regulate but by any objective test the registry that has been put into effect by Bill C-68 is a boondoggle and would not meet any objective test.

Legislation and government operations are held accountable in two ways. The first way is through the provision of information to the public and the other is accountability through such devices as the auditor general. In the federal arena it operates through access to information requests, through the auditor general and through this place, if we can access what we need to access.

In the case of the Canadian Firearms Centre, what we have in this legislation is one individual, the member for Yorkton—Melville, who has his hands full trying, through access to information, to access very necessary information to hold this whole exercise accountable. He is fighting all the resources of the government.

We have a minister who brought this legislation in, the current Minister of Health. We have the current Minister of Justice and all the apparatus of the Liberal government that is more than prepared to use its propaganda, its public relations and its pressure tactics on police organizations and the provinces when it is thought they are getting out of line. We only have to look at the example in New Brunswick. There are 250 jobs at stake at the firearms centre in Miramichi. According to a briefing note from the Department of Justice, pressure has been put on the centre to go along with this registry or employees might be in danger of losing their jobs.

We have had a non-controversial handgun registry in effect since 1934 at a cost of \$2.5 million a year and requires only 30 employees. We now have well over 1,000 employees and \$300 million in costs this year alone. The system is not cost effective. There is no minister who wants to be in charge when the final accounting for the firearms registry boondoggle comes due.

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville for his bill, Bill C-409. I am surprised, after having been here for seven years, that he is still sufficiently naive to believe that anybody over there cares or ever will care whether their laws are cost effective or not, but I give him A for trying.

The legislation that we are trying to get a sunset clause, namely Bill C-68, was based, as I recall very clearly, on public hysteria, prejudice, political expediency and on spurious, dare I even say

duplicitous cost estimates; \$85 million indeed. We said at the time that this was ridiculous. We have been proven right in spades.

• (1820)

The government has already spent more than four times that amount of money and it is nowhere with the program. It has managed to corral I think 800,000, or maybe even by this time a million, gun owners who have come forward to apply for their licences or who have received their licences, either a POL or a PAL, but there are at least, by the government's own estimates, another 2 million owners out there. Many people think there may be as many as 4 million. The government has 1,700 people trying to process paper in Miramichi. It is an impossible situation.

This is the old story of rolling the rock up the mountainside and it keeps rolling back down. They will never get this done in time for the deadline and when that deadline passes we will have at least a couple of million Canadians who will be deemed, under the provisions of Bill C-68, to be instant criminals. This is an absurdity.

I have only been here for seven years. I suppose I am a bit of a greenhorn in this place, but I do not know of any single piece of legislation that has created the degree of public anger, mistrust and pure bloody minded rage at government that this legislation has caused.

It has been on the books now for five years. To this day I cannot walk down the street in the town of Swift Current, Saskatchewan, where I have my office, without somebody accosting me and asking me what we are going to do about this loony legislation. It never dies. This is an area that is suffering from a lot of other real major problems, but this is the burr under the saddle. It is not good for government to have legislation that keeps a very large minority of the population in a constant state of agitation, and, believe me, they are agitated. I would think that anyone who lives in a rural riding, regardless of their party, would be well aware of that fact.

The parliamentary secretary in his analysis mentioned a couple of things which I really must comment on. He says that the background checks have been effective, and that people who should not have had guns have been denied the right to buy them because of these checks. However, what he fails to mention is that there really is not any solid connection between the availability of the checks and the legislation that we are talking about.

We have had background checks in this country for at least 20 years that I am aware of and they did not have to pass this nonsense. They did not have to bring in this bureaucratic monster in order to bring about something that was already there.

The parliamentary secretary also stated that if Bill C-409 were to become law, all Canadian gun laws would be sunsetted and Canada would be left with no licensing and no registration. Well, if that is true, I can only assume that the hon. parliamentary secretary is

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saying that all of our gun laws are useless because Bill C-409 would only sunset gun control laws that the auditor general proved were not cost effective at achieving their stated objective of saving lives and reducing the criminal use of firearms.

Again I have to ask: Is the parliamentary secretary saying that all our gun laws, going all the way back to 1934, are not cost effective? That is a terribly broad statement to be making.

• (1825)

When the legislation was first debated back in 1994, we believed that the government should at that time have done some really serious studies, some scientific evaluation of what the legislation might entail, what it might result in and whether it would be beneficial, cost effective or not. The government chose not to do that. At the time there were a couple of very important academic studies that had been done, one in Canada in Vancouver and one in the United States in Florida, that strongly—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member for Cyprus Hills—Grasslands but his colleague, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, has a right of reply for five minutes at the end of the hour allocated to private members' business. Since we have reached that point, I am obliged to interrupt the hon. member and allow his colleague to take the floor.

**Mr. Lee Morrison:** Mr. Speaker, I was watching the clock but forgot all about my poor colleague.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry to do that, but I am sure he is glad to yield the floor to his colleague, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville, who now has his five minute right of reply.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I too was so enthralled with what my colleague from Cyprus Hills—Grasslands was saying I had not noticed the clock either. His remarks were probably better than what I will be making here in conclusion.

In my introductory remarks I reported what the auditor general would have found if he had been able to look at Bill C-68, the Firearms Act.

My desire as a member of parliament is for all Canadians to scratch beneath the surface of the issues that face this country, to look at what really makes it tick and to see how things work, especially the legislation that is before the House, then they would understand what is actually happening. This legislation affects all Canadians.

The auditor general would scratch beneath the surface. He would look to see whether this law is effective. That is what I was asking. In fact, should we not be doing this with more laws? It really begs the question. We spend hundreds of millions of dollars, I believe, on things that really bring no material benefit.

*Adjournment Debate*

One of the most damning things that the auditor general would have found if he had been able to look at this would have been the deplorable fact that the gun registry has undermined community policing programs by treating more than three million law-abiding responsible firearms owners as criminal suspects. This is a key point. The consequences of this law is a breakdown of trust between the police and the average citizen in thousands of municipalities across this land. Everyone ought to take note of that. That is one of the very negative things that is happening.

If we would let the auditor general look at this he would go on for page after page documenting the most colossal political disasters and bureaucratic boondoggles in recent Canadian history. He would conclude by recommending that the gun registry be scrapped and the money go to putting more police on street in the fight against organized crime.

Bill C-68 will guarantee that gun control laws are both costly and ineffective, whereas Bill C-409, which I am proposing, will guarantee that every gun control law has to be both successful and cost effective in saving lives and reducing the criminal use of firearms.

If members of parliament want gun control measures that reduce violent crime, they will support this bill. If members of the House want gun control measures that improve public safety and save lives, they will support this bill. Finally, if MPs want gun control measures that not only reduce violent crime involving firearms but want the most successful and most cost effective methods for achieving these goals, they will support this bill.

Every year the government passes hundreds of new laws but seldom repeal any. That is my point. Maybe every bill passed by parliament should come with a built-in sunset clause which would automatically repeal any measure that is not working or is not cost effectively achieving its stated objective.

Bureaucrats who depend on costly ineffective government programs for their jobs will hate this bill. Ministers who are more intent on building empires and retaining their status at the cabinet table will hate this bill, but taxpayers who are footing the bill and the general public who have to pay through the nose for this bureaucratic bungling and inefficiency will love this bill, the firearms law sunset act.

• (1830)

Before this bill dies, I would like to respectfully request the unanimous consent of the House to send Bill C-409 to the Standing Committee on Justice for further review and consideration.

In making that plea for unanimous consent to send it to the committee, I would like to point out that parliament was deceived when this was originally introduced. The government said that the police supported gun registration. The government should go back

and check. I have very close contact with the police association. I know that in my province 91% of the RCMP oppose this bill. I challenge the government to find out whether that is true.

It deceived parliament by saying that Canadian people supported gun registration. Canadian people support effective gun control. They do not support hundreds of millions of dollars being wasted on a bureaucratic boondoggle. We were deceived about the cost. We were told it was only going to be \$85 million. The cost overrun will be 10 or 20 times that amount and that is no exaggeration.

We were told that the fees would cover the costs of the registry and that the deficit would be \$2.2 million. The deficit is 150 times larger than that amount. That is how parliament was deceived. We were told that it would not take police off the street. The police are calling for more resources and more people to work. The money is not being used.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that you will ask for the unanimous consent of the House to have this bill sent to committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent that the bill be referred to the justice and human rights committee?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. As the motion has not been designated as a votable item, the order is dropped from the order paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

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

HEALTH

**Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC):** Mr. Speaker, on May 10 I put a question to the Minister of Health and I was not very impressed by his response. My question had to do with the tainted drug issue in the United States.

In the U.S. a drug called gentamicin sulfate was under question. That drug is used to treat severe infections such as blood poisoning and inflammation of the heart lining. The drug is imported in the United States in bulk and there is contamination in the product. I asked the minister what safeguards were taken in Canada to ensure the same thing did not happen.

*Adjournment Debate*

Eighty percent of the active ingredients in many of the generic drugs in the U.S. come from third world countries. There is a quality issue involved here. Some of these contaminated products work their way into drugs which are given to citizens of the United States. At least 17 people died as a result of using gentamicin sulfate in the United States.

I was shocked by the casual reply by the minister. The minister said: "The manufacture and sale of pharmaceutical products in Canada is done in accordance with exacting regulatory requirements to ensure the purity of product and safety of consumers". The minister did not go into the kind of detail that we would expect on an issue that could be serious.

On these generic drugs that are coming into Canada, what safeguards do we have? How much do we know about the companies that are manufacturing them? How many of these drugs come into Canada? Is there any evidence at all, slight as it might be, that some of the products used in these drugs might be contaminated? What kind of regulatory inspections do we use on facilities that manufacture these products in third world countries? In other words, if it happened in the United States, why could it not happen here? I do not think we should have to go to the trouble of putting everything on the Order Paper. I would think that the minister would understand that it could be a problem in this country. We raised the alarm and we have to have some evidence from the government that it is not happening and that some kind of inspection process is being used.

• (1835)

Some of these drugs are too powerful. Some of them are not powerful enough. Some of them are absolutely biologically contaminated because the inspection process in some third world countries is not being carried out to meet U.S. or Canadian standards. Why is the situation in Canada any different from the situation in the United States? If deaths resulted in the United States because of contamination in generic drugs, why could it not happen here?

I do not expect a detailed report tonight from the minister because we have never got a detailed report in reference to any question put on the floor. However, I am putting the ministry on alert that tomorrow I will be putting questions on the Order Paper so we can get a detailed response to what I think could be a problem in this country.

I know the parliamentary secretary will respond tonight and we look forward to it. However, we do not expect to get the kind of answers tonight that we would like.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure our answer will meet the expectations of the opposition member.

This is an opportunity for us to remind members of the House that Health Canada's mandate is to protect the health and safety of Canadians and that the mandate of the therapeutic products program is to ensure that therapeutic products available to Canadians are safe, effective and of good quality, wherever they come from and whatever the origin of some of their components may be.

That program made the commitment, and that commitment still holds, to make the drug review process as efficient as possible. Between 1994 and 1996 the timeframe for drug reviews was reduced by 50%.

Pharmaceutical companies that want to sell their products in Canada, in order to obtain permission to sell a drug, must submit an application, which is reviewed carefully and in a very professional manner by the scientific staff of Health Canada's therapeutic products program.

Right now, it takes an average of 18 months for a new pharmaceutical substance to be approved, which compares very favourably with the timeframes in other countries.

[*English*]

Through strict regulations and high standards, the TPP helps to ensure that Canadians are never put at undue risk by the use of therapeutic products and that Canadians are informed about the benefits and risks of therapeutic products.

The TPP monitors each product through surveillance and inspection programs and in compliance with the regulations, including annual licences for manufacturers, importers and distributors.

[*Translation*]

In conclusion, all drugs approved by Health Canada must meet the very strict guidelines of the therapeutic products program, which is the national authority responsible for regulating, evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness and quality of therapeutic and diagnostic products available to Canadians.

[*English*]

## HOUSING

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House again today to call on the government to honour its stated commitment to provide decent housing for every Canadian.

During question period, on my first day back, I asked the minister responsible for housing what the government intended to do at the meeting of Canada's housing ministers, the first meeting in five years.

On September 18, I was somewhat encouraged by the minister's response to that question. He said that on that night and the next day they would be discussing how they could improve the situation and how they could give Canadians some relief and make sure that

*Adjournment Debate*

every Canadian had decent housing. He said that he looked forward to the meeting in Fredericton.

I was somewhat encouraged to hear the minister's words, because it led me and many others to believe that finally the federal government was paying attention to this very critical issue facing millions of Canadians who are either homeless or one step away from being homeless.

• (1840)

The minister attended the meeting. The following day I raised the matter in the House again and asked the finance minister, because it really comes down to a question of money, how he could feel so good about a massive revenue surplus of \$12 billion that had accumulated in the past fiscal year when many Canadians were denied the basic necessities of life, the right to shelter and housing.

In following the meeting of first ministers I have to say that there was huge disappointment in the lack of response from the federal government. I would like to quote from one of the most outspoken advocates for the development of a federal housing strategy, Mr. Michael Shapcott who represents the National Housing and Homelessness Network.

He was at the meeting in Fredericton with many other activists. In coming away from that meeting this is what he had to say: "The federal government had an historic opportunity this week to take leadership in ending Canada's nationwide housing crisis and homelessness disaster, and it fumbled the ball". He went on to say that there were high hopes that the minister would use the housing summit to take the next step and announce a federal housing initiative.

The federal minister is reported as saying after the meeting that housing is a complex issue and there would need to be months of consultations with stakeholders. These so-called consultations had already taken place a year earlier when the minister responsible for homelessness had travelled across the country.

In response to tough questions from the media, the minister responsible for housing for the federal government admitted that the government had no new money for desperately needed social housing, no new programs to offer and no timetable for bringing in solutions.

Today I again call upon the government to recognize the magnitude of the problem before us. There is no question a crisis exists across the country which demands a national solution.

In my open letter to the minister and the provincial housing ministers I called upon the ministers to acknowledge the magnitude of the problem and commit to a multi-level government strategy that incorporates the knowledge and expertise of our not for profit housing sector.

I also called upon the minister to agree to a national housing strategy that focuses on a not for profit housing supply program. The government has not responded to this issue, and as a result there are still people who are homeless on the street tonight.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, affordable housing remains a serious concern of the Government of Canada.

The minister responsible for housing met recently with his provincial and territorial counterparts to discuss housing issues and concerns, in particular the lack of affordable rental housing. Ministers there agreed on a work plan which involves a research agenda and multi-sector consultations with stakeholders to discuss and formulate action plans.

We recognize that the private market cannot meet the housing needs of all Canadians. That is why the Government of Canada spends approximately \$1.9 billion annually addressing the housing needs of low income Canadians, including ongoing support for some 640,000 low income Canadians receiving assistance to reduce their housing costs and to improve housing conditions for others.

The 2000 federal budget announced new affordable housing opportunities with the goods and services tax residential rental property rebate proposed for newly constructed, substantially renovated and converted residential rental accommodation. As well, through the \$2 billion new national municipal infrastructure program funding can be used for affordable housing.

Homelessness is also a serious issue that requires a comprehensive solution, with which the member agrees. That extends beyond housing alone. The Government of Canada has undertaken a range of measures including funding of the \$753 million federal strategy to address homelessness announced in December 1999. Of this amount CMHC will spend \$268 million expanding programs designed to repair and improve housing occupied by or intended to be occupied by low income people, including those at risk of homelessness.

Additional investments are being made in strategic initiatives for youth, urban aboriginal peoples and victims of family violence.

The cornerstone of our investment toward helping the homeless is the \$305 million supporting communities partnership initiative.

[*Translation*]

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

(The House adjourned at 6.45 p.m.)







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