



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, May 17, 2001**

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 17, 2001

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1005)

## 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 four petitions.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts relating to chapter 11 of the October 2000 Report of the Auditor General of Canada, "Human Resources Development Canada: Grants and Contributions", and the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts relating to chapter 14 of the October 2000 Report of the Auditor General of Canada, "Canadian International Development Agency: Managing Contracts and Contribution Agreements".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to these two reports.

[*English*]

BILL C-25

**Mr. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report on Bill C-25, an act to amend the Farm Credit Corporation Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, without amendment.

I would like to thank the members of our committee for their attention and due diligence in considering this legislation and bringing it back to parliament.

[*Translation*]

### LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

**Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Henri—Saint-Paul—Pointe Saint-Charles, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament.

With leave of the House, I intend to move for concurrence in this report later this day.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

## KANESATAKE INTERIM LAND BASE GOVERNANCE ACT

**Hon. Allan Rock (for Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development)** moved that Bill S-24, an act to implement an agreement between the Mohawks of Kanesatake and Her Majesty in right of Canada respecting governance of certain lands by the Mohawks of Kanesatake and to amend an act in consequence, be read the first time.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

**Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Henri—Saint-Paul—Pointe Saint-Charles, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with leave of the House, I move that the first report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[*English*]

## PETITIONS

### CENSUS RECORDS

**Mr. Murray Calder (Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present another petition to the House calling for the release of historic census records to the public. The

*Supply*

petition is signed by more than 5,500 Canadians. Combined with the signatures of the previous petitions that I have presented on this subject in this session of parliament, the total number is now over 9,000.

• (1010)

The petition points out that an estimated 7.5 million Canadians are engaged in the pursuit of their family history and that census records are a valuable tool for such research. The records have been used in historical research, for tracing genetic diseases and in settling wills and estates.

The petitioners are calling upon parliament to take whatever steps are necessary to retroactively amend confidentiality clauses of the Statistics Act since 1906 to allow the release to the public, after a reasonable period of time, the post 1901 census records.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[*English*]

**SUPPLY**

## ALLOTTED DAY—DRUGS

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance)** moved:

That a special committee of the House be appointed to consider the factors underlying or relating to the non-medical use of drugs in Canada and make recommendations with respect to the ways or means by which the government can act, alone or in its relations with governments at other levels, in the reduction of the dimensions of the problem involved in such use;

That the membership of the committee be established by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs;

That the Standing Committee report the membership of the special committee to the House within five sitting days after the adoption of this motion;

That substitutions may be made from time to time, if required, in the manner provided for in Standing Order 114(2);

That the committee shall have all of the powers granted to Standing Committees in Standing Order 108; and

That the committee shall present its final report no later than June 1, 2002.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to speak today to the motion and to get it to the floor of the House of Commons. It has been about eight years, since 1993, that I have been very close to this issue and have wanted to get it to the House.

When I look back at the record of the House of Commons I find there actually has not been a debate in the House on drugs for decades. That concerns me, particularly because of the advance stage of concern from parents and virtually everyone in the country about drugs.

The reason we are asking for a special committee is that it is time the House of Commons, on a non-partisan basis, organized itself to go across the country to the small towns, villages and cities and to hold hearings here in the House of Commons to get people together and assess how difficult the situation is today.

I can assure members that I will let them know just how difficult it is from my perspective. As I say, I have been involved with this for some time.

Some have said that there is a Senate committee looking at this issue, but it is actually only looking at the issue of cannabis. What I am talking about here is assessing the non-medical use of drugs, such as heroin, cocaine, ecstasy and LSD, the kinds of drugs that are addicting our young people.

The important thing I want to emphasize is this committee and its make-up. The committee should be made up of members of all parties of the House. They should be members who want to consistently be involved in the committee on a longer term basis with other members who have an avid interest in the issue. They should be individuals who are somewhat compatible, regardless of philosophical beliefs or politics. They should be compatible on the issues and the understanding of drugs themselves.

• (1015)

I do not doubt that this will take a lot of time and work but we have to deal with the issue, and I will show the House why.

I want to relate how drug use is growing in our country. The results were astonishing in a particular study I was recently looking at, the Ontario student drug use survey that has been done biannually since 1977. It indicated that between 1997 and 1999 the use of some drugs almost tripled. The percentage of students who said they could not stop using drugs soared from 2.9% to 6.5%. That was in Ontario schools.

With cannabis the percentage peaked at 31.7% in 1979 and then fell for the next six surveys to 11% in 1991. Since then usage has soared, reaching 24.9% in 1997. We can see that is increasing.

Cocaine use has been tracked since 1977 and crack cocaine has been tracked since 1987. While cocaine peaked in 1979 at 5.1% and then fell, only to rise again, crack cocaine usage has increased steadily. Cocaine usage rose sharply in 1999 to 3.7% in Ontario schools. That is concerning.

I can tell the House that 36% of students in 1999 said that someone had tried to sell them drugs in the last year and 32% said they observed someone selling drugs. That is in our schools.

I was in a school not too long ago where three students in one behavioural class admitted to being heroin users. That is concerning. It is such an addictive drug that these young people will end up stealing, robbing, prostituting or doing whatever they can to get the drug. Those are our children. That is why the motion is important.

I have here Canada's drug strategy. It was produced by the current government. I looked at the particular strategy and I compared it with the strategy done by the previous Progressive Conservative government. I think both governments, in all fairness, tried their very best to assess the drug situation at the time and perhaps had the bureaucracy write the strategy.

I actually took this strategy to the streets, to people working with drug addicts and to drug addicts themselves. I asked them about the strategy. They had no idea what I was talking about and quite frankly told me that it did not affect their daily lives.

When we compare the strategies it is really interesting. I ask all colleagues who are interested in this subject to compare the strategy produced in 1987 by the Progressive Conservative government with the strategy produced by the Liberal government. I am not trying in any way to discredit either government. I am just relating that perhaps the bureaucracy has this idea about drug strategy.

In 1987 the goal or the overall objective of the drug strategy of the government of the day was to reduce harm to individuals. In 1998 this strategy by a different government but by the same bureaucracy said that the long term goal of Canada's drug strategy was to reduce the harm associated with alcohol and drugs.

Between 1987 and 1998 a whole bunch of things happened regarding drug use. It became worse and there were more manufactured drugs in the country, but virtually the same document has been produced by the same bureaucracy but by different governments. I do not think this is getting to the bottom of the issue.

• (1020)

Let me talk about the comprehensive framework. In 1987 the bureaucracy of the day said this was a multifaceted response to a complex issue. It said that the most important things were education and prevention. In 1998 the government and its bureaucracy said that it was a comprehensive framework and that the most important things were prevention and education.

### *Supply*

In 1987 they said we needed enforcement and control. In 1998 they said we needed legislation, enforcement and control. In 1987 they said we needed treatment and rehabilitation. In 1998 they said we needed treatment and rehabilitation, and on it goes.

It is an overlay, an absolute overlay from 1987 to 1998. Yet the problem is probably three to four times worse. What I am getting at is that I do not see improvement. We have to put together a committee in the House and we to get on the streets where the problem is. We have to come back here on a non-partisan basis and say that we have to take the following action. It is not to write a drug strategy like the one that has been the same for 10 years with a poor outcome.

I have been many places in my day. One of the worst times in my life since I have been a member of parliament is when I was on the streets watching a young 13 or 14 year old shooting heroin between her toes because there was no other place on her arms or elsewhere to put the needle. That kid is likely dead today. That child was somebody's child. We forgot her.

There are many other children like her out there. Today we are arresting prostitutes one after another, treating them like criminals rather than victims of a very harsh drug trade where the profiteers at the top are making a lot at the expense of the young kids at the bottom.

One night I was on shift with a police force when we arrested four prostitutes. The oldest was 16. They were arrested, booked and let back out on the streets. Before I finished my shift one of them was back out on the street, on the corner. She stayed there because there was no consequence to just being arrested. These kids need a shot of heroin. This cannot continue.

I have a lot of police reports. The police give me a lot of reports on things that go on. I want to give a few examples of efforts to smuggle drugs into Canada. These are from intelligence bulletins and, no, I will not tell anybody where I got them. Ecstasy was seized from a female body packer at Vancouver international airport. Inspectors seized 10,212 ecstasy tablets from a young woman arriving from Amsterdam. That was on Friday, December 3, 1999.

On November 30, 1999, 23,057 tablets of ecstasy were hidden in socks at Vancouver international airport. On November 4, 1999, 104,000 tablets of ecstasy were seized at Vancouver international airport from two Israeli nationals arriving on KLM flight 681 from Amsterdam. On August 18, 1999, 33 kilos of cocaine were seized on the Pacific coast highway commercial corridor from people from California.

I have pages and books of this stuff. Surely everybody listening gets the point. It is out of control. I am not talking about catching everybody involved in drugs, locking them up, throwing away the key and starting a war on drugs. To some extent the Americans are on the wrong track by doing this.

*Supply*

● (1025)

I am talking about assessing the state of drug use in the nation, the state of our children in schools, the state of prostitution on the streets, and the state of parents from whom I receive calls practically on a daily basis. They ask if I can help them get their child out of a crack house or out of a province and into another province, into a facility for drug rehabilitation and detox.

We do not even have enough detox facilities to look after a small percentage of the addicts in our country. For goodness' sake, there are almost 8,000 heroin addicts in Vancouver alone who shoot up every day at \$20 a cap. Every one of them has to earn the money to get heroin five to eight times a day. They are stealing and robbing from people. They are prostituting themselves. That is only one city.

There have been 147 deaths from overdoses this year in Vancouver alone. These were someone's children or someone's parents. If they were raped and murdered there would be a sex offender registry in two seconds. If they were shot with a gun or driven over by a drunk driver this place would be erupting with new legislation.

We are pleading for all parties to look at the issue on a non-partisan basis now and not over the next five years. Let us give it a year but study it thoroughly and come back to the House to take some concrete action.

The reality is that the drug strategies appear to be a failure. There is no point coming here and ragging on any government about drug strategies. The people who really need help are not interested in reading a drug strategy that does not go to the streets.

I have been involved in a needle exchange that gives out needles to some addicts, not all of them. It gave out 1.5 million needles last year to drug addicts in one facility. I have seen the needle exchange in Sydney, Nova Scotia. Who would have ever thought this could happen in a small place such as Sydney?

Right now my community of Abbotsford is debating the issue of whether there should be a needle exchange. We can reserve opinion on the effectiveness of a needle exchange and safe shoot up sites. They were talking about that in Vancouver yesterday. We do not have to get into whether it is right or wrong right now, but we have to get into how Sydney, Nova Scotia, and small towns in the country are into these exchanges. Why is it? How big will it get?

My colleague tells me there are about 4,000 to 5,000 people in Stellarton, Nova Scotia. Recent information highlighting a growing drug problem among Stellarton's youth is prompting the town's police commission to seek government funding to help pay for a new drug enforcement officer. The town's drug problems came to the fore following a recent news report highlighting an incident

involving an 11 year old Stellarton girl who was discovered by police to be carrying 140 tablets of a street drug.

This is happening with an 11 year old kid, and we sit in the House debating some legislation that the average person on the street does not give two hoots about. It is not just Stellarton. It is all over the country and we are closing our eyes to it.

● (1030)

There are a lot of things this committee has to look at. I believe we will get, if not unanimous consent, majority consent to establish this committee. I am begging the House to have the committee, on a non-partisan basis, get down to looking at the issue on the streets. We should forget the bureaucrats who sit in high buildings. Let us get down on the streets and figure out how to fix this thing.

I have a litany of problems here with regard to the judicial system. I have here case upon case of individuals trafficking in \$300,000 to \$400,000 worth of drugs who get caught and get suspended sentences or conditional sentences. There are individuals with better than 60 convictions. They go into our courts and they come out of our courts. They sell drugs, they buy drugs, they trade drugs, they make money and they go into our courts and come out of our courts. Meanwhile our children become addicted and these individuals get rich. The justice system just drags along real slowly and the police say "What do you want us to do?"

I have stood by with police and talked to people who are in this country illegally. One was smoking a marijuana joint while he was talking to us because he knew nothing would happen to him. I am not here to debate whether marijuana is a good thing or a bad thing. I am here to try to establish some action. I sincerely hope that if we establish the committee we will have people on the committee who truly care about the issue and will truly do something.

Finally, I want to thank all of those people listening and watching who have some concern for this matter. I hope that they too will write to members of parliament in the House of Commons and say that we have to take some action in this country. I say please, on behalf of our children, on behalf of the tens of thousands who are addicted in this country, let us take some action and do something positive for a change.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform my colleague that, as a party, we are going to support this motion.

We share his feeling that it is high time parliamentarians addressed the issue of drug use and its connection with other problems.

*Supply*

The question I wish to ask my colleague is this: Has he heard of the harm reduction model? This is an intervention framework in place in Vancouver and in Quebec, which provides needle exchange sites.

This approach is based on the principle that, before people can get clean, they need a support process and that this must involve providing the safest possible conditions for drug use. That is why there are needle exchanges. Earlier, our colleague gave some figures that I took note of: 1.5 million needles in his region. The same situation exists in Montreal.

In preparation for our future endeavours, I wish to indicate immediately to him my interest in a committee of this type, an interest I know is shared by the hon. member for Rosemont—Pétite-Patrie.

Does the hon. member believe that the first stage needs to be based on the premise of harm reduction? Is he familiar with this?

[*English*]

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I am very familiar with the concept of harm reduction. I do not want to limit the committee by suggesting that it would proceed on the basis of a harm reduction model.

I have a lot of questions about the harm reduction model. In talking to hundreds of people about it, I have learned that there are different understandings of what harm reduction is. That is why we have to look at it. What does harm reduction mean?

• (1035)

To some, harm reduction means not doing too much on the enforcement side. It means that if people get involved in drugs we reduce the harm by getting them into methadone treatments and safe shooting up sites. There are many people who disagree with safe shooting up sites, for instance, which Vancouver is considering. When we talk about harm reduction, I do not think there is a person here or anywhere else who can be consistent in saying exactly what it means and how far we should go. To me harm reduction is something whereby we ask how we can best deal with an addict.

I am equally concerned about keeping people from becoming addicted. I am equally concerned about individuals who are trafficking in this and making profits on it. It is a complex issue, but I will reserve opinions as to whether or not harm reduction is, first, defined and, second, acceptable, until I get into this personally and see what this committee will do with itself.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to commence by congratulating the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford. This is an issue that he has long pursued and I know that his participation in the justice committee reiterated his interest and his passion for seeking solutions in this area.

The hon. member spoke of a place very near and dear to my heart, Stellarton, Nova Scotia. I know that the chief of police there, Ambrose Heighton, and others, including principal Jeff Green and community members, have tried to aggressively attack this issue of possession of very serious drugs in our community.

The young girl the hon. member mentioned in his remarks was in possession of tablets of dilaudid, I think, which is a highly addictive morphine-like drug that has become very prevalent and is very available in communities in Pictou county and the nearby areas.

My main concern, like his, is how we address this in a broad fashion. It will take the police, the education system and the health professionals to address it. However, perhaps I am looking for a more specific direction from him for this committee and for any parameters he might suggest that we put in place. He mentioned having a time limit of a year to report. Would this include calling witnesses? Would it include bringing forward some of these studies he has already alluded to as the basis for this committee?

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well I have a great deal of respect for him. I think he is one of the individuals the House needs on that committee.

In regard to the terms and conditions of the committee, a budget would have to be established because there would have to be a great deal of travel. I am not a big one to be travelling, but the committee has to travel, and not only to the big cities. We have to go to Stellarton and find out what the problem is, how it is occurring and how to stop it. We must have the right people on the committee, not too many but the right ones who are all of the same frame of mind, and that is, how do we fix this? We have to set out objectives. We must have a commitment from the House that when the committee has its report it comes in here at least for debate. The committee has to set other parameters as well, which I do not think I have time to discuss here. I am willing to discuss all of them.

**Hon. David Kilgour (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member is extremely interested in this subject. It is very important for all Canadians, or should be.

How many residents of Vancouver are dying every day or every week? Is the hon. member able to tell us anything about that? Does he have some country or some place in mind where there is an effective strategy against drug abuse which he would like to mention beyond what he has already said in his comments?

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, drug overdoses in Vancouver alone average 147 yearly. Together in Toronto and Vancouver last year there were over 400 deaths from drug overdose. This is acute; that is just two cities.

*Supply*

• (1040)

I would venture a guess that there are well over a thousand overdoses a year in this country. Then again, that is what the committee has to determine. How serious is this thing? Often in little towns like mine there is a death from overdose but it is not recorded that way. Some are and some are not. Perhaps somebody on drugs was driving a car and killed himself. It is very loosely defined.

In regard to other countries, I have read a lot about the experiment in Holland. Some say it failed. Some say it was the only way to deal with it. Some say it created a greater drug trade in Europe. Other countries promote the drug trade. In some of the southern countries, one of the main national incomes is from drug exportation. In British Columbia, B.C. bud is traded in large quantities to the south in return for money or cocaine coming north.

I honestly have not read about a completely satisfactory solution in any country. At least this committee should be able to come back here and say whether the world has a problem or that several countries seem to be addressing it better and we should be focusing in that direction. However right now this country is all over the map on the issue. Provinces and even cities are tackling it in different ways. We have to do something better.

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I want the hon. member to know that I did a research paper with regard to marijuana and exactly what it does to young people and people of all ages. The research I did was out of Berkeley university. I want the hon. member to know that the first marijuana cigarette that anyone smokes goes into their brain cells, unlike an ordinary cigarette, and remains there for nine days. We are all aware that young people who get into the alleyways and start smoking up do it more often than every nine days.

Just so the members know, about three or four years ago on Christmas Eve a young man came to my door to tell me that his mother and father wanted him to thank me for getting him out of the alleyway and off cocaine.

I have been told that the hon. member and his party are in favour of decriminalizing marijuana and making it available. I want to know if that is true. Is that part of what this committee is looking at? Is that part of what is being put on the table?

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, that is categorically not true.

The member should start looking at this not on a partisan basis but in a way that would help our young people. I too was a resident of Saint John, New Brunswick. I know the city fairly well. They have drug problems there too. This problem has to be curtailed all over the country.

The answer to that question is that it is categorically not true. There is no hidden agenda here. The agenda is to try to protect our children from drugs.

**Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the opportunity to address this issue this morning. I acknowledge the conviction and passion of the member for Langley—Abbotsford in proposing this motion and speaking on it.

I am speaking on behalf of the Minister of Health this morning. I would like to thank the hon. member opposite for bringing forward this motion. I certainly applaud his concern over the issue of non-medical drug use in Canada because it is a subject that merits the attention of all members of parliament and all parties.

Reducing the magnitude of the drug use problem is a priority for the government, throughout Canada, especially in our urban centres and in some of our aboriginal communities.

Also, I want to echo the comments of the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford.

• (1045)

Drug use is one of the most complex and vexing challenges before us today. It is not simply a question of controlling the supply of illicit drug products but of curbing demand and dealing with the health impacts, the crime and the myriad of other consequences of non-medical drug use.

It is such a complex problem that it demands a comprehensive range of solutions. It requires the co-operation of numerous departments and agencies within the Government of Canada as well as meaningful partnerships among and between governments, institutions, voluntary organizations, community groups and advocacy organizations. That is the essence of Canada's drug strategy.

It is a comprehensive approach aimed at reducing harm associated with alcohol and other drugs, harm caused to the person who lives in the grip of these addictive substances and harm to their families and to their communities.

The strategy reflects a balanced approach to reducing both the supply and the demand for drugs. It is a measured approach that focuses on our capacity to prevent drug use, to enhance treatment and rehabilitation and to support an expanded range of enforcement and control responses.

Over time we have integrated other elements into the strategy which address the global nature of the drug problem, for example, an increase in our support for research and evaluation here at home.



*Supply*

I want to underline that the reason for the ongoing acceptance and success of this strategy is its emphasis on partnership.

Canada's drug strategy involves a variety of partners, including 14 federal departments, provincial and territorial governments, addiction agencies, non-government organizations, professional associations, law enforcement agencies, the private sector and community groups.

As was stated in the most recent red book and in the Speech from the Throne, our role and commitment to addressing substance abuse issues remains a priority.

In the area of injection drug use, Health Canada co-chairs with British Columbia a federal-provincial-territorial committee comprised of representatives from health, justice, the aboriginal community as well as other stakeholders. The committee's task is to recommend what kind of co-ordinated action governments and their partners could take to reduce the harm associated with injection drug use in Canada. The committee has already engaged in extensive consultations on safe injection sites but any concrete proposals to curb injection drugs can only proceed with the full engagement of the communities concerned.

Health Canada is also a partner in the innovative Vancouver agreement. The five year agreement takes the position that the drug problems of the downtown east side demand a comprehensive range of solutions. These include everything from treatment and health promotion to increased housing, public safety and economic revitalization.

Last summer I had the opportunity to visit east Vancouver with the subcommittee on organized crime. I witnessed the very sad commentary on our society. I observed individuals in the shadows shooting up. I observed an individual who died almost before our very eyes on the street from a drug overdose. I saw the flop houses where these people live almost like creatures. This had a tremendous impact on those of us who walked through this area with a member of the Vancouver drug squad.

I saw youth who had so much potential. I could see in their eyes that they were just wasting away. I saw other youth who were down there for a joyride so to speak, just for a walk on the wild side. I told them to get out of the area before they were caught. I found it incomprehensible.

We came across a young woman who obviously knew the police officer as they were on very good terms. Instead of being penal officers they are guardians who monitor these individuals. This young woman advised the officer that there was an individual preying on women in the area and had raped several of them that week. She had been raped a couple of days earlier. She was also HIV positive.

We could see the downward cycle of all the people who were involved in that area. Our committee was looking at how drugs

came into the area, which was mainly by way of airports and seaports. We saw the end result of those activities. It was an incredible experience. It would have had an impact on any member of the House.

● (1050)

It is worth noting that the four pillars on which the Vancouver agreement is founded, prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction, are consistent with the goals of Canada's drug strategy.

Like other Canadians, some first nations and Inuit struggle with addiction to various substances. Health Canada is committed to working in partnership with the aboriginal communities to address alcohol and other drug abuse problems. This past winter we saw young children sniffing gasoline and being taken from their community in order to be rehabilitated and to be put on the right track. We see that all over Canada.

One way we are tackling the problem together is through the national native alcohol and drug abuse program. We aim to confront the cultural, social and personal aspects of addiction. In addition to a network of 53 treatment centres, the program encompasses more than 500 community based initiatives geared toward providing first nations and Inuit people with culturally relevant education and prevention programs, crisis counselling, treatment referrals and follow up.

Within that context, solvent abuse among aboriginal youth is of particular concern. That is why we have been working with aboriginal communities to establish a network of 10 residential sites to treat young people with solvent addictions in a culturally appropriate environment.

The youth solvent abuse program also includes an outreach component. Treatment centre staff work with communities to offer education on abusive solvents, such as gasoline and aerosol sprays, and to provide follow up care for youth who have completed treatment. The follow up care is almost as important as the treatment itself so that they do not fall back into the lifestyle that they had been experiencing.

Clearly, as long as drugs remain a problem for Canadians, we need to understand a great deal more about why people become addicted to drugs and to help them conquer their addictions.

The Canadian Institutes for Health Research currently funds more than 300 researchers in the realm of drug research and pharmaceutical science for a total of some \$20 million. The investment supports a vast range of work, including investigations on the puzzle of drug addiction. As with all Canadian health research initiatives, this work is collaborative involving teams of researchers across a range of disciplines.

*Supply*

I would like to point out that our efforts to reduce drug abuse are carried out in an international context. The United Nations international drug control program and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission have both urged governments to develop national frameworks to address the global drug problem.

The supply and trafficking of illicit drugs, which feed our domestic demand, are very much international problems that demand co-ordinated action. In addition to fulfilling our international commitments, we also work closely with other nations to see if we can apply their lessons learned to our own situation.

The member for Langley—Abbotsford mentioned the drug trade between British Columbia and the United States. The trade goes both ways across the border and it has to be stopped. There is a co-ordinated border approach by police and revenue and customs. They are working together as teams to fight the problem on both sides of the border.

The Minister of Health has taken the lead on Canada's drug strategy which is only fitting since drug use is, first and foremost, an issue of human health. However it is also many other things, with economic, social, legal, judicial and public security dimensions included. That is why he is grateful for the contributions of the many other partners who make the strategy work.

Canada Customs and Revenue Agency aims to stop the flow of illegal drugs across the border. All of us have witnessed the drug dogs that are extremely competent at finding illicit contraband. The solicitor general and the RCMP, who work so hard to get drugs off the streets, and the provinces and territories are all vital partners in all aspects of the strategy.

There are many others too numerous to list, such as individuals, community groups, volunteers, government officials, researchers and countless others, who are doing their part to reduce the dangers of drug use in Canada.

In that context and on behalf of the Minister of Health I welcome the concerns of the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford. As a government we have committed to continue the battle against illegal drug use. Our efforts can only benefit renewed interest by a committee of the House.

Should hon. members vote to establish such a committee, I give my assurance that we will look forward to the committee's recommendations on new ways for the Government of Canada to help further reduce the dimensions of Canada's drug problem. At this point I move:

● (1055)

That the motion be amended by deleting the words "June 1" and substituting the following therefor:

"November 1".

It would give more time to implement the motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The amendment is in order.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy that the government has agreed to go along with the motion and to establish the committee.

I caution the government on some comments that were just made. It is probably necessary in the debate to say how much the government is doing and how well it is doing on this issue. However I can sincerely say that no one thinks we are doing enough. The country has a serious drug problem in schools, homes, the workplace and recreation areas.

We might say that the government is working on comprehensive programs. It has written documents and has a strategy, but not many people think it is working because it is not working. That is why the parliamentary committee is so necessary.

I thank the member opposite for his co-operation on the motion. Does the member have any statistical data that would tell us just how many people in Canada have died in the last two to three years from drug overdoses?

I am sure he knows the situation is escalating and that many individuals are in anguish today because someone in their family may be on drugs. Does he believe the problem is escalating? Have any of these programs really done their job to date?

**Mr. John Maloney:** Mr. Speaker, I am not personally aware of the actual number of people who may have succumbed to overdoses of drugs over the last two or three years. I can simply say that one is too many. I also agree that we have a problem. That is why we are trying to address the problem with a multifaceted and co-ordinated approach.

Bill C-24 is before the House. It would give our police forces the tools to fight organized crime. All of us here would agree that organized criminal activity is behind much of the drug activity. It requires a two pronged approach. We have to approach the issue from a health perspective and the law enforcement perspective. We will fight the war on drugs by working together and working with our international partners.

● (1100)

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned illicit drugs coming into the country. I was at a meeting not too long ago in my riding at which a representative of the provincial police force spoke. When the meeting was opened up to questions, I asked the police officer if more drugs were coming into the country since the elimination of the port police. As we

know the government decided to eliminate all port police across Canada.

He thanked me for the question and said that I was the first person to ask that question. He said they were having a terrible time at every port because there were no port police. He said that with the removal of the port police the situation of illicit drugs entering the country should be looked at very seriously.

I ask the hon. member that when the committee meets that it take a look at that situation. I think we can make very positive changes if we bring back the port police.

**Mr. John Maloney:** Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting factor which the committee should look at. The elimination of the port police was a cost saving measure with the understanding that the existing municipal forces, the provincial police, as well as the RCMP could handle the situation in a co-ordinated approach. If it is not working, then it is incumbent upon this committee to explore that avenue and bring recommendations back to the government.

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, since he is the parliamentary secretary for justice, I would like to ask him a question that relates to drugs in prison. I know a fair bit about this and have watched it over the years. Even today there are drug cartels in prisons, which is unbelievable.

Something that has always perplexed me is there are people going into prisons who are not addicted to drugs and coming out addicted. There are a lot of drugs in prisons. If we cannot stop that kind of drug activity in a prison where there are bars, razor wire and big walls to keep people out, how on earth will it be possible to stop the proliferation of drugs on the outside?

**Mr. John Maloney:** Mr. Speaker, the member raises a very interesting concept which the man on the street finds hard to believe, that behind these custodial facilities there is a drug problem. It is another area that the committee should look into. It is a question that might better be put to the solicitor general or the parliamentary secretary to the solicitor general who have carriage of that aspect of our government.

We are fighting drugs in prisons. Prisons have ion machines and searches are conducted. There are some very unique ways in which contraband is brought into prisons. One method is by placing contraband in human orifices. It is a question of how far we go with our searches. We will have to go further. We will have to be militant and vigilant with the individuals who deal with these offenders, whether they are on day parole or something of that nature.

### *Supply*

Drugs are getting in somehow and we have to stop that flow. We have to combat the whole situation within prisons, including diseases that can be communicated through drug use with needles. We have to fight it. This is what the committee needs to look at to make proper recommendations to the government, and I am extremely positive that the government would move on these recommendations.

● (1105)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The meaning of the amendment tabled by the government is not immediately clear. Could you read the amendment tabled by the government?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The amendment says, quite simply that instead of June 1, 2002, the date be November 1, 2002.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate the member for Langley—Abbotsford, myself. I repeat, the Bloc Québécois will support this motion.

I would however, since we now have a French translation of the amendment, read the first part if I may for the people joining us.

The motion tabled by the Canadian Alliance provides:

That a special committee of the House be appointed to consider the factors underlying or relating to the non-medical use of drugs in Canada and make recommendations with respect to the ways or means by which the government can act, alone or in its relations with governments at other levels, in the reduction of the dimensions of the problem involved in such use;

I would like to make three comments on the wording proposed by our Canadian Alliance colleagues.

We want to sit on the committee. I am the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve in Montreal east, and drug use and traffic and shooting galleries are a reality there.

However, I do not want the philosophy and work of the committee to be considered from a “law and order” perspective. There are certain circumstances in which drug use is a problem. There are others where it is not.

I listened earlier to our colleague from Saint John. She was getting in a bit of a state even before the work had begun. I think we should issue a call for calm. She says that she herself did a study—picture it—on cannabis, and that smoking it automatically kills nine cells a second.

I hope that she will be so good as to table these studies, because this week the Canadian Medical Association—and with all due respect for the member for Saint John, I would be more inclined to go along with the Canadian Medical Association than her on these

*Supply*

matters—asked that possession of marijuana for personal use be decriminalized because no studies had shown that it had any harmful effects.

Naturally, when it comes to heroin or other hard drugs, I think that a different attitude is in order. But I hope that in the committee's work—and I know that the member for Rosemont—Petit-Patrie also has an interest in these matters—there will be some leeway and that a “law and order” mentality will not prevail. That is my first comment.

My second comment is this. In June of last year, the leader of the Bloc Québécois asked me to work in a group with the member for Longueuil and the member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert on the whole issue of street prostitution.

I visited Vancouver. I went to that part of the city where prostitution and drug use are rampant—I think it is called the middle east—and where there have been many problems. I saw horrific scenes. I must admit, I never thought such a situation could exist in Canada.

Certainly, there are links between street prostitution and drug addiction. Of course, the problem cannot be reduced to solely an effect of drug addiction, but there is a connection between the two.

Third, I also hope that the parliamentary committee our colleague wishes to strike will have the necessary resources to carry out investigations. Often, in my opinion, we rely on hearsay, on statements that often feed prejudice.

• (1110)

I hope that we will have the full co-operation of the departments of justice and of health and that of Correctional Service Canada, so that we will have access to all available data.

Third, I recall that a certain amount of work has already been done. Today is not the first time Canada and the provinces have addressed the consequences of drug use. As long ago as 1969, we had the Le Dain Commission. We need, I believe, to start with what has already been done. There are other basic premises as well, of course, but I do believe we need to start with what has already been done.

Our hon. colleague, the sponsor of the motion, has just made the statement that the Senate committee had restricted itself to cannabis. I have looked into this, and the Senate committee did not limit itself to the cannabis issue. It is engaged in an overview of the entire drug use situation in Canada. This Senate committee, chaired by Senator Nolin, has a two-year mandate. This is not something that can be done in a couple of days.

Even if my political party, and that of the hon. member who sponsored the motion, would like to see the Senate abolished, we

ought I think to take inspiration from its resources and the work its people are doing.

We need to keep in mind that assessing the consequences of drug use cannot divorce this problem from the social considerations. We will also have to make a connection with poverty and with the meaning of life. It is interesting to see that there is often a connection between the use of drugs and an environment where poverty is prevalent. I hope that we will keep this in mind when the time comes to make recommendations and deal with these issues.

Another issue that the committee will have to examine is how effective the repressive approach has been so far. The motion reflects a degree of conservatism, in my opinion. It refers to drug use as if it were a phenomenon or a problem. However, its mover was very eloquent in concluding that, so far, the repressive approach has not been effective at all. It cannot be said that using this repressive approach, prohibiting drug use and making it a criminal offence have had much impact on the balance that we as parliamentarians are trying to establish.

I now want to deal with another important issue. Earlier, I wondered whether we should start from the framework proposed under the harm reduction strategy. This framework, with which Health Canada officials are familiar, is rather well defined. Of course, it is not a magical solution that automatically makes people stop using drugs, but it is a model for action.

The harm reduction strategy is based on three elements. There is recognition of the fact that there are people who have drug dependency problems. No moral judgment is made. No one says that it is good or bad. Rather, there is simply recognition of the fact that there are people who use drugs and that this makes them dysfunctional and can even adversely affect the communities in which they live.

Two, three, four or five years can elapse between the time when this is recognized and the time when these people actually stop using drugs, particularly soft drugs.

• (1115)

What can be done to ensure that drugs are used under the safest conditions possible for the user and his surroundings? The safest possible surroundings means that dirty needles are not used or shared among users, that there are places to inject safely and to exchange needles and that the needles are recovered and cannot be used in the community.

This is the model proposed under the harm reduction strategy. This model is known to the various interveners, especially people in the regional boards and those in the health field.

There is another statistic we should bear in mind in doing our work. According to police data, data available from the various police forces, the RCMP, the SPCUM and the Sûreté du Québec,

*Supply*

barely 1% of drugs on the market are intercepted. This means of course that there is a whole element of drug use and of drug trafficking that is totally beyond police control.

According to various police data, somewhere between 1% and 10% of narcotics are intercepted by the police. Should we not conclude there is some link between the prohibitionist strategy that has been followed now for several decades and the fact that the police have been unable to stop drug traffickers? The committee should look at this question.

I also want to remind the House that, in our consideration of drug use, we should make a distinction between cannabis and heroin or other hard drugs.

In 1999, a Canadian Alliance member introduced a bill. I know that we may not name members but, since I do not know the name of his riding, allow me to disregard the standing orders for 30 seconds. I am referring to the member who is a doctor, who ran for the leadership of the Canadian Alliance, and who is a friend of the leader of that party. On April 26, 1999, he introduced Bill C-503 to decriminalize simple possession of marijuana. I would ask the member who moved the motion today whether he supports the bill introduced by his colleague.

In my party, the member for Rosemont—Petite-Patrie also moved a motion, which was voted on, in which he urged parliamentarians to decriminalize the use of cannabis for medical purposes.

I understand that today's motion is about the use of drugs for non-medical purposes; that is very clear in the motion. Should we admit from the outset that cannabis should be treated differently than other drugs? In all likelihood, there is no harm associated with moderate consumption. The Canadian Medical Association reminded us that there is scientific evidence to support this.

That is so much for the premise. I am grateful to the member for Langley—Abbotsford for moving this motion. As parliamentarians, we are capable of taking an objective look at this issue. Obviously, when I talk about an objective look, I realize that we all have our own moral values regarding drugs. However, as parliamentarians, we cannot impose those morals on others.

I hope that we will be guided in our work by two main concerns: the safety of communities and the issue of crime.

• (1120)

Once again, questions have to be asked about the current repressive approach, which has been in effect for 50 years, has created a sizeable black market and has led to clashes within the world of organized crime.

Since 1995, there have been at least 147 victims of motorcycle gang turf wars. Battles over territory are most certainly connected with establishing areas in which they can sell drugs. These are all matters we need to bear in mind.

I can assure our Alliance colleague that the Bloc Québécois will make a very serious contribution to this committee. I do not know whether the Canadian Alliance agrees with the amendment presented by the government on the reporting date of November, but we will have an opportunity to discuss that. I am also going to look at this with the leader of my party.

I do, however, believe that there is considerable consensus in this House on the striking of this committee. I trust that it will have all possible means available to it in order to do quality work and, therefore, draft informed recommendations.

[English]

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, in response to my colleague, yes, we agree with the date change. It is a friendly amendment because it would allow us over the summer of 2002 to look at that as well.

Also in response to my colleague, yes, there are probably members of this party and every party in the House who think marijuana should be looked at in terms of legalization or decriminalization. That is one of the reasons politicians in Canada are so reluctant to talk about drugs, as we are doing here today for the first time in decades. It is because they do not want to answer the question of whether marijuana should be legalized. That is one of the things that should be within the scope of the committee. A lot of people out there and in the House have yet to form an opinion.

The hon. member brought up the issue of prostitution and suggested that it was correlated to drugs. He said that prostitution and drugs were cause and effect. I have accompanied the Vancouver police and have looked through facilities where drug addicts and prostitutes live. I can tell hon. members that the average person would not put a dog in those kinds of places. They are rat infested, terrible, dilapidated places with used needles and condoms lying around.

Does my colleague think prostitutes are criminals or victims of the drug trade?

[Translation]

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, I have had an interest in prostitution for the past five years. The answer will be more nuanced than the question. Could I have calm please. Those who want to take part in the debate should do so responsibly.

In certain cases, prostitutes, also known as sex workers, are definitely victims, because they did not choose this work, because they are under the control of a pimp, because they are beaten and

*Supply*

because society is prejudiced. The state of the law prevents prostitution from being considered real work.

I remind all members in this House that, when prostitutes are assaulted, they cannot call in the police; since they operate clandestinely and the whole context of prostitution is criminal—there is a legislative framework—prostitutes are often victims.

• (1125)

I will give an example that comes from personal experience. In 1995, a meeting took place in my office to discuss the issue of prostitution. Among the sex trade workers who were present, there was a former page of the House of Commons, a person who had worked here as a page in 1993-94. At the time, I was a young member of parliament; I remember her well. So, this was a few years later. She had gone to university. She came from a well to do traditional family, but she had chosen the sex trade.

When we talk about prostitution, we must not have preconceived ideas or be biased. The reality of prostitution is not black and white.

This being said, it is true that there is a very real connection between drug dependency and prostitution. I hope that, as parliamentarians, we will have a debate on prostitution. We should clearly recognize that prostitutes are people, like everybody else. However, prostitutes must, on their part, recognize that they cannot operate anywhere, any time and any way they want.

Hon. members may remember that in June 2000, in south central Montreal, and more specifically in the riding of the Bloc Québécois leader, there was a confrontation between local residents and sex trade workers. The public too is entitled to a certain quality of life. People should not have to put up with disgraceful scenes in front of their homes. We will have to provide a legislative framework for prostitution, something that is sorely lacking right now.

[*English*]

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, prostitution is a serious issue in Canada. The many prostitutes I have talked to were all drug addicted and were all very young children. It is sad to see.

What does my colleague think about the effectiveness of our court system? I will give one of the hundreds of examples of which I know. A fellow was caught with drugs worth a street value of \$366,000. He was on social assistance as many such people are. He was given one day in jail. His track record goes back to 1972 and includes dozens of convictions for things such as possession of a restricted drug, possession of narcotics, trafficking, importing narcotics, cultivation of narcotics and on and on it goes. After all these convictions the fellow received just one day in jail.

I ask the hon. member: What is wrong with our justice system today? Why do sentences not escalate according to the number of convictions? It seems very erratic. Criminal records for some individuals go back years and years and yet they have been given five days, ten days, nothing, suspended sentences and so on. It is an erratic approach in our court system. Does that not aid and abet the drug problem?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, the only comment that comes to mind is a wish. When an adolescent is sentenced, I do not think that incarceration alone is the answer.

The House is of course familiar with our views on young offenders. I do not think that our views on street prostitution are different.

I have spoken to many prostitutes, and I have done so often in recent months. When someone is 16 years old and walking the streets, this should be of concern to us socially. Naturally, there is an element of personal responsibility. I do not think we should exclude individual responsibility, but I am not convinced that repression, incarceration and heavier sentences are the automatic solutions certain members of this House may think.

• (1130)

That having been said, when the member gives examples of repeat offenders for whom rehabilitation has obviously not worked, I think there are certain circumstances where we must face the facts and that some people must be put behind bars.

The Bloc Québécois does not automatically maintain that rehabilitation is always the answer, but we do not wish to conceal our view that there should be a very serious attempt, particularly for those who are 14, 15, 16, 17 or 18 years of age, to rehabilitate.

[*English*]

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I was not talking necessarily about putting these people behind bars, but I wonder if my colleague could talk about what could be done to break the cycle of addiction.

When people have no qualms about stealing or robbing because they must have a fix, in particular of heroin and other addictive drugs, is there not a point where we must get these people into detox and rehabilitation and out of that cycle?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes. We must consider the background and all the variables, but the member is right. In certain cases, we must get these people out of this cycle and put them behind bars. There are cases where a sentence is indicated, where it is the approach to consider.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Following consultations I seek unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion. I move:

That Mr. Harris and Ms. Gallant be substituted for Mr. Strahl and Mr. McNally as members of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** 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)

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### SUPPLY

#### ALLOTTED DAY—DRUGS

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

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased, as always when I get an opportunity to speak in the Chamber, to take part in the debate today.

We are voting on whether to strike a special committee of the House to investigate factors underlying or relating to the non-medical use of drugs in Canada and to make recommendations regarding ways the government can act, alone or in relation with governments at other levels, to reduce the problem.

The issue is timely in the sense that we see in the newspapers and on television an increasing interest in it. There was an article yesterday in one of the Ottawa newspapers outlining the pros and cons of decriminalization. Last night *counterSpin* on CBC television devoted its hour to vigorous debate, as it usually does, on the pros and cons of decriminalizing some of the softer drugs, particularly marijuana.

I will begin with a synopsis of what Dr. John Hoey, the editor of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, had to say on the

### Supply

subject. He said recreational use had proven fairly harmless over the years but that he was increasingly concerned, as are many folks in the Canadian Medical Association, about simple possession and personal use leading to a criminal offence being left on a person's record throughout his or her life.

Members of the CMA take the position that possession for personal use should be decriminalized. According to Dr. Hoey there are minimal negative effects to the estimated 1.5 million Canadians who use marijuana in a recreational way. He says the real harm is the legal and social fallout from charges of possession for personal use. He adds that 50% of all drug arrests are for simple possession.

It was interesting that members of parliament recently received a little pocketbook from Statistics Canada, "Canada at a Glance". It was sent out in connection with the May 15 census day. According to the section on law enforcement, we are at a 20 year low in terms of criminal code offences. In virtually every category but two, and there are roughly 12, there are decreases, many substantial. For example, property crimes went down by 14.7% between 1994 and 1999. Sexual assault was off by almost a quarter in the same period.

• (1135)

However there are two exceptions. There was a slight increase in motor vehicle theft between 1994 and 1999. It went up 1.2%. Drug charges went up a whopping 32.8%, almost a one-third per cent increase, from just over 60,000 charges in 1994 to just under 80,000 charges in 1999, the last year for which statistics are available.

Clearly Dr. Hoey and others are saying that there is a problem. If it is true that 50% of charges, which would be some 40,000, are for possession for personal use, then there is a clear problem and a clear mandate for parliament to look at the issue in a serious way.

I was not a member of parliament in 1996 but it is unfortunate that an opportunity at that point to strike a special committee in both Houses to examine the issue was turned down. It was voted down and rejected for whatever reason. I have not yet had time to investigate why but it was turned down.

As a result, a Senate special committee on illegal drugs is well underway. It is scheduled to report next August. That would be several months before the amended date that has been proposed, which is November 2002. It is unfortunate that we will be duplicating what the other place is doing if we agree to support this. As far as I understand, all parties in the House are supportive of the motion of the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford.

I suspect we will be attracting the same experts to come and testify and will be meeting many of the same people. It is unfortunate, when people are concerned about spending money wisely, that we did not seize the initiative in 1996 and have one committee rather than two.

### Supply

The special committee on illegal drugs being run by the other place has quite a comprehensive series of references. It refers to the Le Dain commission which began its work in 1969 and finished in 1972. Virtually 30 years later we are still debating the issue.

The Le Dain commission, we may recall, held serious consultations on the negative impact of Canadian drug policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It focused mainly on the non-medical use of drugs. It concluded that hundreds of thousands of Canadians found guilty of prohibited drug possession saw their personal freedom restrained for the rest of their lives because of a criminal record.

The commission also concluded that the huge police resources used to fight prohibited drug trafficking and consumption were aimed mainly at young people. Under the circumstances, the Le Dain commission recommended that sanctions against drug users be gradually eliminated, that the use of marijuana be decriminalized and that control methods other than criminal justice sanctions be used. That was the essence of what Le Dain had to say 30 years ago.

• (1140)

More recently, the U.S. national academy of sciences' institute of medicine published the results of a study commissioned by the white house director of drug control policy. The study dealt with the medical use of marijuana, which I appreciate is not part of the debate today. It is interesting that despite this academic finding the U.S. supreme court recently voted 8 to 0 against allowing the medical use of marijuana. I am pleased that is not the position of the government opposite and that we are proceeding along. The government's position is commendable.

We are not talking about decriminalizing marijuana. To refer to the member for Langley—Abbotsford, we are not saying that there should be no offences for use but that we should take it out of the criminal code. Even the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police acknowledges that it makes sense to decriminalize possession of small quantities of drugs, including heroin, without actually legalizing them. That is one side of the issue but there are at least two sides.

Half the editorial page in the *Ottawa Citizen* dealt with the current city of Ottawa police chief who says that the decriminalization of marijuana or soft drugs for personal use is not a road he wants to go down. He sees the effects of drug abuse each and every day and says that it attacks the fabric of society.

He argues that marijuana and other cannabis products have much higher levels of THC than they did in the 1960s and 1970s. I do not know whether that is the case. Someone on counterSpin last night argued very vigorously that it was not. It is something the special committee could look at if the resolution passes. I suspect it is something the Senate committee will look at or may already have looked at.

A couple of other points are worth making. I wonder, given that we are going down a slightly different path than the United States, how much flexibility Canada will be allowed.

Within the last year stories have come out of British Columbia about police departments looking the other way with regard to small amounts of drug use. However we have also heard and read stories about American law enforcement officials prepared to chase suspected drug users beyond the Washington border into British Columbia and try to force the Canadian government to take a stronger position against drug use.

On the relationship between Canada and the United States, the front page of today's *Ottawa Citizen* features an interesting story about how high tech military spies in Ottawa have joined the United States' war on drugs by eavesdropping on South American drug lords.

• (1145)

With globalization and the intertwinement of our two countries, one wonders how much freedom Canada will actually have in areas like this. We obviously know that the current U.S. president and most of his predecessors have been very hawkish on trying to eliminate the importation of drugs into the United States. One could hardly imagine that they would take a softer policy north of the 49th than they would take south in Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. That would be something which would merit attention by any special subcommittee that is established.

I would also like to make reference to my colleague, the member for Vancouver East, who has spoken out on the subject of drugs and the particular plight of people in her constituency in the downtown Vancouver area. She has been pressing the government on its response to the health crisis that results from drug use, its over use and the safety of citizens. In fact the member has raised this issue ever since she arrived in the House in 1997.

She reported that there are experts out there, including from the city of Vancouver, but the leadership and action on this issue over a long period of time has been so slow. She has called on the Minister of Health to adopt multi-centre heroin prescription trials, safe injection sites and better housing and social support.

These are some of the things the member for Langley—Abbotsford asked the colleague from the Bloc about when he referred to the places where users lived. They were places in which we would not want to put a dog. I am sure that that is absolutely true and something that needs to be looked at. Perhaps if we were to take some progressive steps here we could get beyond some of those deplorable conditions that exist now and make not only the users safer but the non-users and the people who are on the streets safer.



We think, and my colleague from Vancouver East believes, it would reduce crime. We have seen examples of that in places like Europe and Australia, which have been a little more avant-garde than Canadian politicians have been.

In conclusion, the New Democratic Party welcomes the opportunity to debate this issue. We will support it. We regret that a special committee of both Houses of parliament was not struck in 1996 when this matter came up. It seems that the Senate is already well down this investigative road on the illegal or legal use of drugs or the decriminalization thereof. We are just starting down this road.

Having said that, we cannot go back to 1996. It is unfortunate we did not have one committee. We will now have two, but we will be supportive of this policy and this motion.

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged by the very productive and non-partisan approach that members in the House are taking. I would like to commend the former speaker for his comments. I noted he brought forward again the Le Dain report, which many of us recall, and the recommendation in that very significant but overlooked report.

The issue of gradually reducing the penalties on illicit drug use is of course a contentious matter, but would the member have any initial views on the non-criminalization and the elimination of penalties for the use of these drugs? I ask the question based on comments that I think many of us have received from constituents. Certainly these are comments that I have received from constituents when I served in the Manitoba provincial legislature where I represented an urban riding.

• (1150)

The comments go along very generally like this. If all presently illegal drugs were legalized and the distribution properly controlled, there would be no incentive to rob and otherwise injure law-abiding citizens. Then we could divert resources from law enforcement to more intensive social services to get to the root of the problem. Has the member any further comments to add on that?

**Mr. Dick Proctor:** Mr. Speaker, there were a couple of parts to that question. Let me deal with some additional thoughts on the Le Dain Commission.

Gerald Le Dain, who headed the commission, held serious consultations on the negative impacts of the Canadian drug policy back in the late 1960s, which focused mainly on the non-medical use of drugs. As the member would know, he was the former dean of the Osgoode Hall Law School of the University of Toronto and former justice of the supreme court. He took the view that politicians were the ones to blame over the years for not seizing the initiatives on this issue at the beginning of the 1970s. In fact in an interview about three years ago Mr. Le Dain stated:

### *Supply*

It was a hot potato for all the parties and they didn't want to run any risk. The position adopted by the politicians was to do nothing. We saw at the hearings the public was worried about their kids. The public saw those current laws as a tremendous injustice.

I think all parties and all governments stand accused of not doing this. It is unfortunate that time has elapsed.

With respect to the decriminalization of all drugs, I am not an expert. I would hope and think that would be part of this study. I tend to agree that we should decriminalize marijuana. That happens to be our party's policy. I really do not have a view on whether we should decriminalize ecstasy, or heroin or cocaine. I suspect we are dealing with more addictive drugs, at least that is what I am given to understand. That would be something a special committee of the House would look at, and I rather suspect the other place is looking at that as well.

**Hon. David Kilgour (Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member from Fraser Valley spoke about the drug problem primarily in British Columbia.

Could the member for Palliser tell us about the various types of drug problems in his province?

**Mr. Dick Proctor:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if I can pull them out, but I have seen some statistics that would suggest drug use in Saskatchewan is just a little under the national average and quite a bit lower than it would be in British Columbia, Quebec and perhaps one or two other jurisdictions.

In all jurisdictions, I think people who tend to be more vulnerable, the young and the poor, would use these drugs. We probably would see a greater percentage of use by native people and perhaps newcomers to Canada. Regardless of the percentage of use in a province or jurisdiction, there would probably be an overarching group of people who would be most vulnerable and likely to use these drugs more than others.

• (1155)

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, let us not kid ourselves. This is not an issue about a certain type of individual. I know children from fairly wealthy families who are addicted. I know men and women who have children who are addicted. This is not something where we will look for a certain type of individual, whether they are new to Canada or have been around Canada.

I am talking about people from middle and upper income families. Their children are on the street right now selling themselves. As I said before, they are right now shooting between their toes because there is no other place in their arms to shoot up.

This is not just about the legalization of marijuana. This is about cocaine, ecstasy, LSD and heroin. It is about things that kill and addict people. That is what the committee has to wrestle with.

*Supply*

The question I have for the hon. member who just spoke is this. Could he explain in his own words the idea of rehabilitation and the types of facilities for that? For instance, in British Columbia there are scant few detox facilities. There are very few intermediate ones. There may be one long term rehabilitation facility in all of British Columbia. Considering there are over 8,000 heroin addicts alone in Vancouver that is virtually nothing.

What kind of resources in terms of rehabilitation does he think this country needs? I know it will have to be part of the study we will be involved in. I do not know if there are many in his province, but I know they are ridiculously low and virtually non-existent in mine.

**Mr. Dick Proctor:** Mr. Speaker, before I answer the last question, I did not mean to suggest that there are not people in all strata of our society who do not have a problem with recreational drugs, abuse and addiction too. Maybe there was some misunderstanding.

What I said was it seemed to me to be more prevalent in people who were the more vulnerable in our society. I agree with what he said. Those of us who have seen the award winning movie *Traffic* would see that it strikes at all levels of society.

With regard to detox centres, yes we do have some in Saskatchewan. I doubt there are enough. I imagine there is a paucity of these in all jurisdictions in the country. However I would hope that part of any study done by the House would look into that in detail.

Just on that point, the provinces deliver health care. We must work with the provincial and territorial jurisdictions to find out what is currently available and what we think needs to be done collectively to address any shortage of detox centres.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the Chamber to take part in this very important debate. I commend the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford again for his diligence and his perseverance in bringing this issue forward.

As has been stated, the motion calls upon the House to consider the factors underlying and relating to the non-medical use of drugs in Canada, to make recommendations, to put this matter into the hands of an all party committee and to report within a year.

Although we can all acknowledge this is a massive undertaking, it is perhaps one of the most fundamental things we can do in a positive fashion to look for solutions to a very complicated and multifaceted problem facing many Canadians.

This motion is one which is broad enough in its terms of reference, but I have some concerns with respect to a current motion and a current committee that is undertaking a similar exercise. That committee of course is in the other place and is

chaired by Senator Nolin. The issue is receiving considerable study.

• (1200)

The exercise being done in the other place is not limited to marijuana. It is in fact quite broad in its scope. The purpose of the study, similar to what the motion proposes, is to look at all the symptoms and causes. It calls for broad consultations with stakeholders in order to delve into the indirect harms and costs of illicit drugs in Canada.

The costs far outweigh the direct financial cost when we begin breaking it down. It is symptomatic of some of the broader social ills and vices that exist. Drugs and alcohol are in many instances escapism. They are used in an attempt to get away from the toils, the mundane and the horrors that exist in people's lives or to escape from a past that may have included a sexual assault or a terrible incident of violence.

Drug and alcohol abuse are like a cancer that eats away at productivity in Canada. People who are addicted to drugs or alcohol cannot realistically reach their potential or make contributions to society. It is almost trite to say that the impact is so broad that for many it becomes a question of where to start. The type of study we would undertake would certainly be a step in the right direction to finding out where to go, what direction we should be taking and where we should be concentrating our efforts.

Like so many problems of this magnitude, simply putting resources into existing services or attempting to address the problem will not suffice. We need to be focused in our direction when searching for a strategy.

The terms of reference of the committee in the other place, which has been studying this issue since November 1998, say that the most direct harm occurs in high risk populations, such as injecting drug users, street youth, the inner city core and natives. That is almost a penetrating statement of the obvious.

Indigenous Canadians are facing huge problems in their community. Their reliance on or addiction to drugs and alcohol has had devastating effects. Between 65% and 80% of aboriginal people have a drug problem. This has been one of the leading causes of death among the Inuit and native peoples. Injury and poisoning, with patterns of violent death, are three to four times greater than the national average when one starts to look at the drug problems and their costs in terms of human lives. Many meet unnatural deaths while drinking. Compared with 45% of non-natives, alcohol or drug involvement is the primary cause of death and is five times greater for natives.

The suicide rate for native children on reserves in Saskatchewan is 27 times higher than for other Canadian children. Native youth have a two to six times greater risk of an alcohol related problem

than their counterparts in the rest of the country. We will not even get into the massive problem of fetal alcohol syndrome, which is also symptomatic of this greater challenge that we have in helping our native Canadians.

The mention of street youth and adolescents who leave home to escape physical, emotional and sexual abuse or neglect is again very acute, not only in metropolitan big cities but is becoming a problem in rural small town communities. Sometimes it is a symptom of boredom and a symptom of youth who are looking for an outlet of sorts. They are looking for something to pique their imagination or to give them some form of entertainment in a mundane life.

• (1205)

This is why many members and many Canadians are looking for more active attention and more acute focus on programs such as sports, recreation, music and arts as outlets for young people's energies and ingenuity, rather than in sad cases falling upon the use of drugs and alcohol as a form of recreational escape.

It is with some encouragement that we in the House again delve into this issue and not try to skirt the thorny or hot potato political aspects of decriminalizing marijuana. We are at a point where we can move beyond. We want to start looking at the hard core addictive types of drugs and the effects they are having on our youth and all other people.

The decriminalizing element and the medical use of marijuana are starting to become destigmatized. Chiefs of police and police officers are generally acknowledging that too much effort is being put into soft drugs as opposed to hard drugs such as heroin, acid, LSD and cocaine. In my home community in Pictou county there is a rash of availability of a highly addictive and destructive chemically manufactured drug called dilaudid. This is where the real cost in human lives and health seems to be spiralling out of control.

It is very much linked to another subject matter we have had before us in recent days and months, organized crime. Because of the demand and the profitability organized crime chooses to prey upon a person's vulnerabilities and addictions. This is where much of our focal point should be in terms of law enforcement.

This is not to suggest in any way that it is a simple problem. It is a multifaceted problem. It will not only require giving police the tools and the resources. It will require a very concentrated and far reaching effort throughout health professionals, the courts, the education system and social services. Young people need to be made aware of their alternatives, as opposed to being addicted to drugs and involved in that sordid lifestyle.

The debate over the non-medical use of drugs is something that is long overdue. Other members have commented on the fact that there have been various studies and attempts in the past to wrestle

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with this very thorny issue. This is a wonderful non-partisan opportunity for us to wrap our arms around the motion and get the appropriate individuals and representatives to participate in the process.

I caution again about the risk of duplication. Much of the exercise has begun and is continuing in the other place. It is unfortunate that there is not some way to combine our efforts and tap into the research and the work that have been done already.

Government is offering exemptions from prosecution to persons with serious illnesses who grow or use marijuana. Approximately 210 people have obtained these types of exemptions. There is a case involving a gentleman by the name of James Wakeford who is now seeking to force the federal government to supply him with a safe and consistent supply of marijuana. He believes it is safer to be able to buy a supply of marijuana from the government. We know there have been steps taken in that area.

The province of Saskatchewan is at the forefront of this area. The Prairie Plant System in Saskatchewan has won a five year \$5.7 million contract from the government to supply marijuana for medical and research purposes by next year.

• (1210)

I have one concern about the actual effect of marijuana use. It appears there may be some research lacking in the health risks associated with that particular drug. Higher levels of THC and a higher risk of carcinogenesis can result from marijuana being taken into a person's system.

There is a lot of controversy on this issue south of the border. The efforts and the resources that the Americans have put into this issue are astronomical by comparison. In terms of the money alone, the drug strategy and the efforts of law enforcement by our American neighbours as compared to what we are doing in Canada truly pales by comparison. Arguably we may be moving in a different direction, one that is aimed more at the root of the problem.

The United States supreme court ruled just this past week against the legalization of marijuana for medicinal purposes and struck down existing regimes in California, Arizona and a handful of other states that had held referendums on the subject matter of distribution. This is in sharp contrast with what we have seen and the growing trend that exists in Canada where the government has taken steps toward legalization.

It is also interesting to note that this week the *Canadian Medical Journal* called for the decriminalization of marijuana. It clearly stated on the record that this was its position.

We know that policing has moved in more recent years toward focusing on the real criminals, those who distribute the drugs and

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those who exploit children who are prone to using all types of drugs, not just marijuana or hashish. It is a complex issue.

In Vancouver, where the mover of the motion has focused much of his commentary, the police themselves are deeply divided over a departmental policy of not recommending charges in connection with marijuana growing operations. The focus is now on shutting down the operations while allowing the growers in some cases to go free.

There are large hydroponic operations on the west coast and we are seeing those cropping up in places around the country. There is a huge market in the United States. Statistics indicate that of the top three or four products being exported out of the province of British Columbia, marijuana is in the top three or four.

In 2000, Growbusters, a team of Vancouver patrol officers set up specifically to deal with this problem, had not recommended charges against suspects even though it had raided over 100 growing operations in that past year. It simply seized the plants, the equipment and, in some cases, the home. It had city engineers shut off power so it could shut down some of these operations.

Regular drug squads continue to recommend charges. This controversy of deciding how to deal with this growing problem under the current laws goes down to the police level. It brings up the question of whether this is an effective or even legal problem as much as something that we should be looking at in broader terms, particularly in health terms.

This brings me to the point that I know other members have contemplated as well. Should we be focusing our efforts in terms of incarceration in clinics that are akin to prison where the individual cannot leave voluntarily? It would be a treatment facility as opposed to warehousing drug users and drug addicts. In some cases the drug dealers themselves are hopelessly addicted. Selling drugs to feed their habit is what has fed their appetite.

Should we be putting greater emphasis on rehabilitating and treating as an illness those who are hopelessly addicted rather than putting them, cold turkey in most instances, into prisons with other criminals? That is another problem in terms of the availability of drugs in prisons.

It is something many Canadians wrestle with. The stigma of being an addict as opposed to being a criminal is sometimes inextricable. However there is this health element and this addictive quality that exists around the use of marijuana and the use of many of these substances.

• (1215)

In 1999 in Vancouver only one in five growers who did wind up before the courts received jail sentences. Most received fines. In approximately a third of the warrants executed, viable suspects were found at the scene and yet were released without charges.

That creates a certain friction in information sharing. Sometimes police forces take a different attitude toward how they deal with those involved in the illicit drug trade. In defence of the Vancouver police, there are reportedly over 7,000 marijuana growing operations in Vancouver alone. There are simply not enough police or legal resources to deal with the problem.

With inconsistencies occurring in police forces, though, it is obvious that we have to study this from all angles and come up with a very thoughtful, cohesive, national plan that creates a balance between law and order and health issues, a strategy that will be pragmatic and achievable. Many experts in the field possess the know-how. We should be trying to draw upon those experts who have specific knowledge of the addiction and health aspects of this problem.

It is the Conservative Party's position that the decriminalization of marijuana for medical purposes is a step in the right direction. Reliance by many in society on drugs, both legal and illegal, is accompanied by these heavy social and economic costs. Neither legalization nor increased criminal sanctions will fully address the complexities of drug abuse.

We know that other parties have taken a similar approach. The mover of this motion and the Canadian Alliance Party also support decriminalization of marijuana for medical purposes, although it is interesting that it was not in the party platform. That election platform did include things such as zero tolerance for illegal drugs in federal prisons, which I think is also a part of this particular issue.

In red book 3, the Liberal Party promised that a Liberal government would implement a national drug strategy to reduce both the supply of and demand for drugs. Here is an opportunity to do that. Here is the impetus, the stepping off point. We hope that statement is an indication of some consistency, perhaps for a change, on this particular issue, that there will be support and that the support will be forthcoming in the form of support for this motion.

These problems do require a variety of measures in seeking solutions. They include education, treatment, health and rehabilitative efforts and government regulations. There is no denying that the government does have a responsibility to make laws and to adjust laws in some instances.

The problem with marijuana itself is that it has become more potent in recent years. It is imperative that extensive studies be undertaken to ensure that any proposed use of drugs will not lead to an increase in health and social problems or even an increase in its availability to minors. It is an area in which government regulation will be required. The status quo simply will not suffice.

*Supply*

The position of the Progressive Conservative Party can be summarized in a quotation from a former Progressive Conservative senator, Duncan Jessiman, who stated:

Making the mere possession and use of drugs a criminal offence has not in any way reduced the use and abuse of drugs. The present system breeds crime. It is imperative that a new approach be found and it is my view that the use and abuse of drugs must be treated as a health problem.

Nevertheless it is obvious that this issue of the medical use of marijuana cannot be addressed without discussion of the problems related to the use of other illicit drugs. The area of bigger, more lethal and more highly addictive narcotics is, in my view, perhaps the area we should be concentrating on most.

The use of drugs in the country is extremely widespread now. I again commend the hon. member for bringing this forward so that we have the opportunity to push this matter on the agenda.

As mentioned, the senate committee is doing a widespread study, arguably in a perhaps less partisan atmosphere. I feel that the commons committee might work with it or at least co-ordinate efforts in such a way that we all could work together for the solutions that we all seek. It certainly merits greater attention. It is certainly an opportunity which the Progressive Conservative Party very much hopes to be a part of.

• (1220)

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough. I want to ask him to develop the theme he raised, which is that we may be going in a slightly different direction than the Americans are. I agree with him very much on this.

In our speeches we both raised the fact that the U.S. supreme court has taken a very different position on the use of marijuana for medical purposes. Last week the justices voted 8 to 0 against allowing it. We have gone in a different direction in this country. I think some 400,000 Canadians have been designated to use marijuana for medicinal purposes. There does seem to be some science that goes with it to suggest that this is a good thing.

In regard to the broader idea of taking a direction that is different from the American direction, I do not want to bring up politics, but the member's party and our party have a different view of free trade. It is my contention that globalization and NAFTA are placing greater impositions from the United States on Canadians and Canadian law.

If we were to go in a significantly different direction than the Americans would appear to be going—and there is nothing to

indicate that they are about to decriminalize anything related to so-called soft drugs—I wonder how much latitude we would actually be given as a country. I would be interested in the member's comments on that.

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Madam Speaker, I thank my friend for the question. It is something that I quite frankly had not contemplated because I do not see the drug trade as being directly related to free trade, although there are certainly implications whenever a country such as ours, which does so much trade with the United States, takes a radically different policy position. There are inevitable implications of such a move. There are implications on all sorts of issues, including trade.

The United States has very clearly stated by virtue of its supreme court decision and by virtue of the amount of time, resources and effort it puts into drug enforcement, that it will not change any time soon. In fact, statistics show that in the United States the annual cost to the federal, state and municipal levels of government is over \$30 billion. This is absolutely staggering when we consider what we spend in this country. Yet what levels of success are the Americans achieving compared to our own?

The approach is obviously important. It is my belief, and I think it is shared by many, including the hon. member, that the focal point should be on the health aspect, not necessarily on going after the small users and those who are using perhaps softer elements of narcotics. There should be a clear dividing line between the suppliers and those who are using these very addictive and very destructive types of drugs that alter a person's life completely and in some cases irretrievably.

I thank the hon. member for his question. It is an important part of the debate to compare both what is happening in other countries and the implications for the approach we might take in the future.

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate today on the Canadian Alliance supply motion brought forward by the member for Langley—Abbotsford.

I would like to begin my remarks by pointing out that there seems to be little doubt that Canada's approach to illicit drugs over the past few decades has been a dismal failure. I sincerely believe we need to start looking objectively and openly at new approaches to combat this very serious and complex problem.

When I say that there has been a failure in our drug policy, I do not point at any one particular agency or indeed any particular political party. I think we have all been a part of this failure. Our reluctance to look at genuine efforts to improve and change the system is a very important part of that failure.

*Supply*

• (1225)

At the onset of my comments I would also like to commend to members a reading of the special report that the Ottawa *Citizen* put out in September 2000. It was a report by Dan Gardner entitled "Losing the War on Drugs". The first line indicates that for decades the United States led a global battle against illicit drugs. The results have been catastrophic. It is very important to read that report to get an understanding of some of the issues. One may or may not agree with the conclusions the writer reaches, but certainly I commend the report.

I also want to state that we have to recall that drug addicts are human beings. Whether they have brought this condition upon themselves or whether they are victims, they are human beings worthy of respect. They come from all types of homes and economic backgrounds and from all parts of the country.

My own riding of Provencher is a conservative, primarily rural riding. We do not have prostitutes in the streets of our communities. The hard drug problem and indeed even the soft drug problem are by and large silent and hidden, but I think there are ominous threats that will affect even relatively serene rural parts of the country.

I can point to the threat of methamphetamine, which is working its way through the United States and becoming more of a problem in Canada. As the minister of justice in Manitoba, I had occasion to work with American law enforcement agencies that have dealt with the horrendous problem of methamphetamine. In some of the seminars I attended and the discussions in which I took part, I was advised that in the state of California 90% of the child welfare apprehensions are related to methamphetamine abuse and many police officers and child care workers investigating these situations do not even realize that methamphetamine is at the root of some of these problems in terms of the immediate drug problem.

This very dangerous drug is finding its way not only across the United States but into Canada. For those of us who think that heroin, cocaine and other drug problems are largely an urban, large city problem, methamphetamine should be a wake-up call for police forces in rural areas, because its use appears to be growing primarily in rural ridings and among blue collar, Caucasian individuals.

Sometimes we tend to see a drug problem as belonging to another economic or racial group. There can certainly be very general categories when it comes to that, but I think it is important to remember that the problem of hard drugs ultimately affects everyone, no matter what racial background we are, no matter what economic background we are from and no matter where we live in our country.

Even though a riding like Provencher does not have prostitutes in the streets and the drug problems are primarily hidden, the reality

is that even children and young adults from the riding of Provencher can become prostitutes and drug addicts. They drift to the streets of larger cities, where they die in anonymity.

• (1230)

The citizens of the large core areas of our cities suffer from the presence of drug addicts and prostitutes. Their streets are congested with johns, with organized crime and with other contributing factors to the problems raised by drugs. We see this more visibly in cities like Vancouver, Toronto and Winnipeg.

We should also commend those workers who are involved in this very difficult struggle on a day to day basis: the police officers, the social workers and the volunteer community organizations. They truly are angels in a very dark night.

With the debate today, I hope we can get beyond our apprehensions about this issue and have a productive and non-partisan dialogue. I appreciate that the Senate is also conducting hearings and studies in respect of this matter. However I think we as elected representatives need to participate in a very active way in the discussion. Because we are elected and because we are responsible to our constituents, we need to be involved in this process in a substantive way. This is not about duplication. This is about participation. We need to start thinking beyond our current policies and start asking ourselves the tougher questions about what is working and what is not.

If the motion is passed and implemented, parliament will have a new special committee examining the way in which the federal parliament can address the wide ranging problems that result from the non-medical use of drugs. The need for such a committee can hardly be in question.

The annual worldwide revenue generated by the illicit drug industry is approximately \$400 billion American, which amounts to about an 8% share of total international trade.

Of course Canada does not exist in a vacuum, and In Canada alone each year the total economic costs attributed to illicit drug use is estimated at \$1.4 billion, with billions more fuelling organized crime. According to the RCMP's 1999 report on drugs in Canada, the illicit drug trade is a principal source of revenue for most organized crime groups. This is a serious situation with no easy answers.

In light of this, I would like to bring to members' attention a letter that called into question traditional methods of dealing with illicit drug use.

Almost three years ago, the secretary general of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, received a letter signed by a variety of both academic and public figures, including a former UN secretary general, a former U.S. secretary of state, a former U.S. surgeon general, Nobel laureates, former presidents and cabinet ministers

of Latin American countries and, indeed, in among that list was a number of prominent Canadians. What was so remarkable was not so much who signed the letter but the content of it. The letter stated:

We believe that the global war on drugs is now causing more harm than drug abuse itself.

● (1235)

This is an extraordinary statement. The main thrust of this statement of course was that the consequences of social deterioration from illicit drugs resulted not so much from drug use per se but from failed drug policies.

The concerns articulated in this letter focus on the idea that international trends reflecting primarily punitive drug control measures have empowered criminals, corrupted governments, eroded security and impeded efforts to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, such as HIV and hepatitis.

The letter also claims that significant resources are being depleted on ineffective and increasingly more expensive interdiction efforts, and that not enough is being expended on reducing drug related crime, disease and death.

I cannot imagine that anyone here today would dispute the kind of substantial and permanent harm that results from the use of illicit drugs by members of our society. However, this letter and many other briefs and documents currently in circulation indicate that there is significant and widespread disagreement as to how best to solve the issue in society.

To that effect, we are proposing today to create a committee to analyze these issues carefully and as objectively as possible.

The current strategy in Canada is almost identical to the strategy introduced by the Conservative government almost 15 years ago. Therefore, I do not think finger pointing is productive in this debate.

Both policies, the former and the current of the Conservative government, clearly articulate the overall long term goal of harm, reduction and rehabilitation, in addition to the principles of criminal prosecution and education measures intended to combat and prevent the abuse of such substances.

The reality is that these strategies appear to have failed almost completely.

The Addiction Research Foundation has been conducting the Ontario student drug use survey since 1977. I would like to mention some of its findings today in the House.

The percentage of students using cannabis in the last 12 months peaked at 31.7% in 1979 and then fell for the next six surveys to 11.7% in 1991. In 1993 it increased slightly to 12.7%. Since 1993

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usage has climbed back up to 25% in 1997. The percentage of users is now highest in grade 11 at 42%. That is an astounding figure when one considers this is an illicit drug and that 42% of grade 11 students in Ontario utilize this drug.

Peak usage of glue and solvents was in 1979 and then there was a sharp decrease until 1991. Numbers rose again after reaching 1.8% for glue and 2.6% for solvents in 1997. The 1999 survey gives a sharply higher figure for glue at 3.6% and solvents at 7.1%. The issue of glue and solvents is a horrendous problem in the core area of the city of Winnipeg and some other rural prairie cities and does significant damage to children and adults. We have been powerless to do anything about the spread of this horrible addiction.

The peak for LSD was in 1981. The trough was in 1991 at 5.2%. However it has risen back up to about 7%. Overall, LSD usage has risen over the past decade.

● (1240)

Cocaine has been tracked since 1977 while crack cocaine, which is usually associated with urban ghettos primarily in the American cities, has been tracked since 1987. Cocaine peaked in 1979 at 5.1% and then fell only to rise again. Crack cocaine usage has increased sharply. Cocaine usage rose sharply in 1999 to 3.7%. The usage of crack increased in 1999 to 2.4%.

Thirty-six percent of students in 1999 said that in the last year someone had tried to sell them drugs. Thirty-two percent said that they had observed someone selling drugs.

I think the statistics are clear, whether we look to Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia, the maritimes or Quebec, illicit drug use, particularly by adolescents, our future here in Canada, has been increasing steadily over the past decade.

Additionally, the Vancouver drug scene has seen a huge increase in the purity of heroin and the introduction of cheap cocaine and crack to the city in the early 1990s. I always have to remark about the conjunction of the words pure and heroin. It almost has a very chilling effect on one when something that devilish and that horrible can be considered pure, but of course I understand it in the chemical sense.

The number of illicit drug overdose deaths have averaged 147 per year over the past seven years. Many of those who die from drug overdoses are not even the heavy drug users. Casual users do not know the strength of street heroin and mixing alcohol with heroin dramatically increases the risk for overdose.

Experimentation with marijuana in Vancouver has risen by 50% in the last five years to 58% of the 17 year olds interviewed.

Other areas of concern are HIV and hepatitis C infection, increased drug misuse among youth, inadequate treatment services and the relationship between crime and substance abuse.

*Supply*

If we look at the economic costs, we need to look far beyond the simple cost of enforcing drug laws themselves. Illicit and illegal drug use is a significant contributing factor in a wide range of crimes, such as property offences, violent crimes, robbery and prostitution. That does not even take into account the organized crime rings that thrive on the commerce and the money generated by this trade.

As elected representatives, we need to participate in an active, substantive way. Burying our heads in the sand and saying that this will not affect our particular riding because it is a quiet rural riding and we have other things to concern ourselves with will simply delay the problem. One day the problem will even be in those ridings that we consider safe and secure from the problems of drugs.

I commend my colleague for bringing the motion forward and I commend the motion to others in the House.

**Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, when I look at the Alliance platform on drugs it is sort of a vague discussion regarding the creation of a national drug strategy and talking about increasing funding for rehabilitation and education.

• (1245)

However, when the government did exactly that by providing roughly \$2.5 million for a drug addiction research facility, the member for Langley—Abbotsford called it redundant. How serious is the Alliance about this problem? Perhaps the hon. member could provide some insight.

**Mr. Vic Toews:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question. I cannot speak to the details of the concern of the member for Langley—Abbotsford about the particular expenditure of funds. In the area of drug addiction and drug treatment it is very important to ensure that money is being used effectively. I do not know whether the concern was that the money was not being used effectively.

I have spoken to the member who introduced the motion. I know this matter concerns him very deeply. He has spent a lot of time on the street with police forces looking into the situations and conditions involving drug addicts and prostitutes. I do not think he brought the matter forward in a frivolous way.

If our policy is in some way inadequate, I as a member of the Canadian Alliance would like to hear from Canadians. We need to be responsive to them on this issue. If we need to spend money in certain areas in an effective way to break the cycle of drug addiction and the downward spiral of some of our core areas, I am prepared to re-examine policy.

I come to this issue with an open mind, in recognition that past drug policies of Conservative and Liberal governments have failed. I prefaced my remarks by saying that I am not pointing fingers. I want the contribution of all members to this very important debate, not just in the Senate but in the House of Commons.

**Mr. John Maloney:** Madam Speaker, as the member opposite is probably aware, we have a rather innovative project called the Toronto drug treatment court. It is a special court designed to supervise cases of drug dependency of offenders who have agreed to accept treatment of their substance abuse. Another project of a similar nature will be starting in Vancouver.

I am aware that some representatives of the Alliance Party have visited the drug treatment court in Toronto. I would very much appreciate the comments of the member opposite on whether he is aware of the program and, if so, what he feels about it.

**Mr. Vic Toews:** Madam Speaker, one colleague from Regina who will be speaking to the motion had occasion to attend at the Toronto drug court. Generally speaking I know he received some favourable impressions and will be speaking about them.

I commend that member for taking the initiative to look beyond the box, the way we have traditionally approached the particular problem. I trust his comments and the experience he gained will not only assist us in our deliberations today but perhaps help guide the committee.

In the area of drug policy I recognize that there will be a lot of controversy. We have to be very hesitant to condemn those who speak about new innovative ways. We have to seriously analyze and evaluate these programs. We cannot just let them go on and pretend that by simply creating new programs we are making changes. There is a responsibility on us if as a House we fund some of these programs. We have a responsibility to evaluate but I will not condemn those who, having looked at the wreckage of the drug policy over the past three decades, now say we have to do something else.

• (1250)

This is not only an issue of street workers or social workers against police. I think we would find division in all these professions, but all these individuals are trying to help the very unfortunate people who are addicted to illicit drugs.

We need to encourage innovation that does not absolve us from the responsibility of evaluating what has gone on. Part of the problem is that we have not been evaluating what has gone on, but my colleague from Regina will be giving a little more detail in that respect.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I commend the member for Provencher on his comments



and refer to his previous office in another life when he was minister of justice of the province of Manitoba. He is only too well aware of the difficulties in administering justice and making sure that our justice system works.

He made the observation that the drug policy had not worked. That is a very serious allegation. The questions then become: Is it that the policy was wrong? Is it that the people charged with enforcement or implementation of the policy were wrong? Or, was it the attitude of society which says it wants the policy but really does not care about the problem or is not so sure that it is a real problem and in fact says that there is nothing like having real good coke after dinner with friends in the neighbourhood?

Parents tell their kids they are not supposed to take coke, but they go to the living room, open a little drawer, take out the coke, put it on the table and consume it. What is the problem as the member sees it? I am sure he knows only too well from his past life what it is doing to society.

**Mr. Vic Toews:** Madam Speaker, as a politician and justice minister in Manitoba I saw the top of the problem. I did not get to see what was happening on the street and why things were breaking down, but I think that there has been a reluctance on the part of politicians to address the issue and a reluctance in society generally to deal with the problem.

I speak outside the context of the urban riding in Winnipeg that I represented where the reality of the drug problem was much more evident. I look now at the wonderful riding of Provencher that I represent and see a reluctance sometimes to deal head on with the issue because it does not appear to affect the riding. Drug and alcohol problems arise in some rural areas. People move into urban ridings where drugs are more accessible and anonymity protects them.

We simply push the problem off but it grows. The most telling issue is when we speak to parents who previously may not have had any concern about the drug problem and suddenly one day realize that their child is addicted, that their brother is addicted or that another member of their family is addicted. Then the reality and the horror of drug addiction come home.

We have seen this trend in the nation. Whether we brought on the problem ourselves or whether we are victims, we need to deal with it. The legal framework, the enforcement policies and the social policies do not seem to be curtailing the problem. The problem is being fuelled and we need to address it.

• (1255)

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I begin by saying that the member for Langley—Abbotsford who presented the motion this morning takes a position on most political issues with which I thoroughly disagree. In fact the policy

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differences between me and the member for Langley—Abbotsford are too numerous to mention.

However, in connection with the subject we are discussing today, I believe that member and I have a lot of common ground. He has suggested and I agree that it is time for the House to look broadly at the question of the factors underlying the non-medical use of drugs in Canada. He has suggested and I agree that it is time for the House to look at ways in which the Government of Canada can act either alone or in combination with other governments to address the underlying causes of the use of non-medical drugs.

It is also important that this examination be undertaken in a very non-partisan way. That is certainly the spirit in which the motion is presented and it is in that spirit that I intend to vote in favour of the motion.

In essence the member is proposing that a committee of the House examine what should be our national strategy in relation to the non-medical use of drugs. He is proposing that we look at an integrated and coherent approach to the use of illegal drugs in Canada. May I say the motion is entirely consistent with the policy and with the process the government supports.

I have had an opportunity to look at this issue both as a former minister of justice and attorney general and now as the Minister of Health. I can recall when I was minister of justice that I asked for the opportunity to spend time with the police forces around the country. In each of nine Canadian cities I road with police officers during the night shift as they contended with the issue of crime and safety on urban streets.

I have vivid memories of spending just such an evening with the Vancouver police department. We parked the car and we walked through the downtown east side. I can recall going through the alleys behind the facade of stores and hotels in downtown east side Vancouver and stepping over people who were lying prone in the alleys with needles stuck in their thighs. They were giving themselves injections of illegal drugs. They were lying helpless in the alleys.

I remember discussing with the police officers the role of the criminal justice system in relation to these people, as pathetic as they were, as heart wrenching as they were. The conclusion to which we all came was that this was a problem, at least when presented in that form, that was not best addressed by the criminal justice system because in truth it was a health issue.

Now as Canada's Minister of Health it is terribly important that I use the opportunity the member opposite has provided to marshal support of all members in looking critically at how we deal with the issue, how we can best use the resources available to all levels of government to deal with this difficult issue.

It does little good for those persons to be arrested, brought before a criminal court or imprisoned. Surely the better answer is

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the long run is to treat them, overcome the addiction and get them back into society. Surely the better answer in the long run is to prevent people from becoming addicted. I should like to speak to each of the elements of that approach in the few moments available to me today.

In the course of last fall's election campaign we as the Liberal Party at that time undertook to implement a national drug strategy to deal with both supply and demand and to crack down on organized crime to the extent to which it was involved in supplying the illegal drug market. We spoke during the campaign of prevention. We spoke of treatment. We spoke of rehabilitation. We spoke of enforcement and control.

• (1300)

We also talked about this as being an international issue and the need for research to better understand the nature of the challenge, and an evaluation to make sure that the steps taken by government are effective.

I came back last night from Geneva where I attended the annual assembly of the World Health Organization. I had occasion during the last few days, in the company of four or five members from other parties, to speak with ministers of health from around the world. On the list of items where we had a common interest, where we said we wanted to enlarge our collaboration, was the whole issue of the trafficking and the use of illegal drugs.

I found that all ministers of health from around the world, whether it was from Egypt or Israel or from the United States, Wales or Mexico, talked about the need for international co-operation to share best practices and to work together toward finding more effective ways of dealing with addiction and the illegal use of drugs.

As the government forges a national drug strategy to respect our commitment during the election campaign, what better way to make sure we have the right balance among the intrinsic elements of that strategy than to put the matter before a committee of the House and get the best views of members from across the Chamber as to how we ought to proceed.

In the course of the election campaign we agreed also to devote some \$420 million to support the national drug strategy. What better way to make sure that money will be well spent than to solicit the views of members of the House of Commons and have them look at the alternatives available.

I welcome the motion. I welcome the opportunity it provides in a non-partisan, constructive way for all members of the House to make sure that we act in a way that is going to be effective.

The urgency of the issue is obvious. I have some numbers to underscore that fact. The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse

tells us that there are 804 deaths per year as a result of illicit drug use in Canada. The city of Vancouver tells us that it is now at the point where, primarily because of the problems in the downtown east side, there are 147 overdose deaths per year in that city.

We know that in 1999 some 80,000 convictions were registered for drug offences under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. We know this is an increasing problems among young people. Studies of young Canadians in grades 7 to 13 show an increasing trend in the use of alcohol, cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy and cocaine. This is a trend that cannot be ignored. It must spur us to action.

There is the cost. Quite apart from the human cost and the tragedy of wasted lives or wasted opportunities, it is estimated that in 1992 alcohol abuse and illicit drugs cost the Canadian economy over \$9 billion.

It is in the face of that stark and troubling reality that we must put together a national strategy for dealing with the non-medical use of drugs which will make a difference. The strategy we have had in place since 1997 has four pillars. It deals with prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction. It is intended to address both supply and demand and tackles the issue of substance abuse fundamentally from the perspective of health. It involves 11 departments of government, from the solicitor general and justice to foreign affairs and revenue, to heritage and transport. Each of those departments in their own way contributes to an overall effort. It involves also the provincial governments and municipal governments. Each level must contribute in some way to the solution.

Let me touch briefly upon each of the four elements to give the House some idea of what we are doing at present and identify the action that I believe we have to build upon if we are to make a difference.

First, in terms of prevention, this involves warning and educating young people, giving them the facts on which they can make sensible decisions about their own behaviour and their own conduct.

• (1305)

It also involves research to try to better understand what lies beneath the use of illicit drugs and indeed the tendency toward addiction. Are there health or social factors that we should know more about so that we can design strategies that are more effective?

I was pleased to see the solicitor general just last year open up a centre for research into addiction in Montague, Prince Edward Island so that we can answer some of these questions. Of course the Canadian Institute of Health Research and the Institute of Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addiction have been asked to look at exactly the same things, so that we can further understand the nature of the problem on an individual basis with which we are trying to deal.

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The second element is treatment. I will draw the attention of the House to the fact that often these treatment options are best administered regionally or locally. It is for that reason that every year my department transfers \$14.5 million to the provincial governments for alcohol and drug treatment and rehabilitation services. That money is combined with provincial funds to provide a service capacity on the ground that truly makes a difference. Apart from that, Health Canada funds treatment centres for first nations and Inuit people across Canada who have difficulty with substance abuse and addiction.

We are also funding local projects such as the million dollars that Health Canada provided for the downtown east side of Vancouver for the creation of a resource centre, a safe place for people to go to seek refuge from the street, to have access to social and health services and to take a time out from the threatening and very dangerous conditions that are sometimes found on the streets of that area.

Through the Department of Justice, we have also innovated the justice system by creating drug courts. In the city of Toronto special courts have been opened to deal with those who are charged with offences relating to non-medical drugs in circumstances where it is believed that intervention to encourage treatment and rehabilitation is more effective than simply processing individuals in the criminal system, resulting in a conviction and incarceration. I can tell the House that based on what we have learned in Toronto, we are looking at the question of whether that approach can be broadened to other parts of the country.

The third element is enforcement. The solicitor general and the Department of Justice have been developing strategies to focus on the traffickers of illegal drugs, working with foreign affairs to identify the sources of the illegal drugs and to find out whether there are ways working with other nations to choke off those sources.

The last element is harm reduction where we deal with the human circumstances of the addict. How can we cure the addiction as well as punishing the crime? How can we tackle some of the underlying social and health issues that are related to the addiction? Mayor Owen of Vancouver has shown particular leadership on this issue.

Confronted with the tragedy of the downtown east side, Mayor Owen last fall produced a very thoughtful and comprehensive paper identifying steps that could be taken in each of the areas of enforcement, prevention and harm reduction. He identified some innovative ideas which I understand were just put into final form by his municipal council the other evening. I intend to meet soon with Mayor Owen to talk about some of those ideas. I would also like to have the views of the other parties in the House as to whether they think that some of the proposals made in Mayor Owen's report would be helpful.

Let me also mention some of the steps being taken by our solicitor general in prisons where injection drug use has been

identified as an issue. The solicitor general has been working with prison administration to try to put into practice some lessons learned from elsewhere about how to come to grips with that problem.

I welcome the motion and the initiative that lies behind it. People speak often about the partisan nature of debate in the House, but what should be brought to the attention of Canadians is that there are issues such as this.

● (1310)

There was the issue two weeks ago in relation to assisted human reproduction, cloning. There are also issues such as the safety of women in fertility clinics, the framework of principles to govern research when it comes to embryos, organ donation, illicit drug use, where all members of the House come to common ground. We are all worried about our children and our communities. We see the damage that can be done through the illicit trafficking in drugs and their use, and we are all focused on solutions that will work.

I listened with interest to the intervention this morning of the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough as he talked about the American approach. I share his views that the American style war on drugs with an army-like approach is not proving to be as effective as it had hoped and that a somewhat more nuanced and broader approach is needed. I think the elements of the drug strategy we have been talking about may provide that. Again, let us get a committee of the House to look at how those elements could be put together to be as effective as possible.

In fact the recent events in the United States concerning medical marijuana illustrate in many ways the differences between us. Members may have noted that just the other day the supreme court of the United States ruled that medical marijuana would not be permissible. Two years ago we announced we would make it available for medicinal purposes. With the assistance of the courts, we have come to understand better how that can be done lawfully. We now have proposed regulations that would provide for that on a very formal basis.

First, that is the way to go. I think it is supported by the Canadian public and perhaps illustrates some of the differences between our two countries.

I also listened with interest to the speech by the hon. member for Palliser this morning. He spoke about the useful work being done in the other place and regretted the duplication. While the other place has been doing some work on this, I do not see that as a reason for us not to act. We can take advantage of the Senate's work to date. We can perhaps co-ordinate some of the efforts. However the House has the perfect right as well, and the responsibility, to do its own work in this regard.

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I will conclude by saying that I will support the motion. I look forward to working constructively with members on all sides of the House to make sure that we put this issue squarely before a committee and that we get back from that committee recommendations that will put us in a position to do the job that must be done for the Canadian people.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, while I agree with many things the health minister has said, I disagree with one thing he said. He indicated that we were focused. That we are not.

**Hon. Elinor Caplan:** We are.

**Mr. Randy White:** Already I am getting an argument, which is silly.

The fact is we have pilot projects going on all over the place. There are drug courts in Toronto. There are other areas looking for drug courts. There are programs of all sorts all over the place. There are safe shoot up sites.

I am not unduly criticizing the government. Hon. members should not take it wrong. I am saying we are not focused. That is why we need a special committee of the House of Commons that would try to focus on those things. If they cannot even simply agree with that over there, then there is a problem with the understanding of what is wrong in Canada.

There are safe shoot up sites. There are needle exchanges in some places. There are communities in the country that are looking for needle exchanges but do not know what to do. They do not know whether needle exchanges are good or bad. Our prisons are a good example. There is a project in one prison but not in another prison. Drug cartels are in some prisons but not in others.

In my opinion the country needs a RITE commission, rehabilitation, intervention, treatment and enforcement, which the minister talked about. There are some RITE commissions in some provinces. The federal government does not have one. Other provinces do not have them. Some say they work. Some say they do not.

• (1315)

The exercise here is not to debate whether it works or whether it does not, it is just to do what the minister said, and that is to focus what is going on in this country so that we can look at all the ramifications and all the projects to see if we can get something conclusive and provide leadership.

In fact, Mayor Owen's proposal said exactly that. I have been familiar with this proposal for well over six to eight months. I have been dealing with downtown east side businessmen in assessing various projects within that project.

I would like a comment from the minister to see if he agrees with me that it is a problem of focus, not so much a problem of certain things going astray or certain things not being done. It is a problem

of various communities all over the country really trying whatever they can to dislodge the problem and not being sure where they are going.

I would love to have time to debate this one, but I would ask the minister to comment.

**Hon. Allan Rock:** Madam Speaker, I do not disagree with what the member has said, but what we have to overcome is the tendency in Canada, because of the division of responsibility between the federal and provincial governments, to have piecemeal action.

What can easily happen in Canada is that the Government of Canada can have some ideas in the area of health, the delivery being a provincial responsibility, but provincial governments take a different approach and we end up with a patchwork. That is why we have pilot projects: the Government of Canada cannot deliver health services. Nor would we want to. That is provincial. We in the government sometimes fund pilot projects hoping that we can demonstrate whether something works. If it does, we make that information available to provinces, which might adopt the practice.

However, the member is right in that there is a patchwork at the moment. What we need is a co-ordinated national approach whereby we bring the provinces on board and come to some common ground as to how best to prevent, to treat, to deal with enforcement and to deal with harm reduction.

I would hope that the special committee the member has proposed today would develop a strategy for an effective, uniform and pan-Canadian approach so that we do not leave out some people.

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to compliment the Minister of Health for his non-partisan tone in terms of setting the base for what is to be surely a very important debate.

I was a little surprised, though, when listening to the member for Langley—Abbotsford. I recall that in December 1999 when we tried and in fact went ahead with putting a research addiction facility in Charlottetown under correctional services, he opposed it. He said it was an outrageous thing. Yet in the party platform of the reformed Alliance people in 2000, they said “. . . we will also increase funding for rehabilitation and education, and treat addicts through immediate access to rehabilitation facilities”. So again we see the kind of contradiction that those reformed Alliance people have on this very important issue.

My question to the Minister of Health is this. He spoke about the Toronto experiment in terms of treatment and rehabilitation and how this might be a template, perhaps even a blueprint, for other

centres. I wonder if he could elaborate on that, because it seems to me that at some of these grassroots kinds of facilities where community people are involved at the very basis in a very meaningful way, we end up developing and building things that could be of national importance.

**Hon. Allan Rock:** Madam Speaker, I think the experiment in Toronto can help. I have had correspondence from members of the criminal bar in Toronto who are very enthusiastic about what we are learning there. They are asking us, first of all, to continue in Toronto and then to broaden the experiment beyond that.

• (1320)

As I mentioned earlier, what it is intended to do is bring together a number of responses to this problem. I practised law for some 20 years, and while I did not do a lot of criminal work, in the early years of my practice I did. I can recall appearing on behalf of people accused of drug offences who were themselves addicts. I cannot imagine a less appropriate response to someone who is in the grip of an addiction than the criminal justice system. It just does not work. What that person needs is treatment. What that person needs is support to overcome a health problem.

That is what we are trying to illustrate in the Toronto drug courts. I believe that we will learn lessons we can apply in other parts of the country. I know that the Minister of Justice is extremely interested in looking at what we are learning there and if possible broadening it to other parts of the country.

It is an example of what we can learn. It is an example of where the Government of Canada has a role to play, because we do bring the prosecutions under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Whereas ordinarily prosecutions are a provincial matter, in drug matters they are federal. It is a place where we can make a difference and we hope we will do so.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Madam Speaker, in keeping with the minister's comments on this issue of how we create greater synergy between our justice system and our health system, I would be very interested in hearing his comments in that regard with respect to current sentencing availability in our judiciary.

A rational extension of what the minister seems to be alluding to would be to have available to judges in this country the equivalent of mandatory treatment. This would also include of course a significant investment in facilities, treatment facilities in particular, where attendance would be mandatory. Rather than having people languishing in the traditional penal system where in most instances no treatment is available and they are simply biding their time, mandatory treatment would be part of that sentence to be served. In such instances an individual, I would submit, would be

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far better served, as would society, if that were to be encompassed as part of the actual sentence itself.

Not to follow the example of the member opposite with respect to the partisanship in this debate, because I think it does detract from this, why are we waiting? What has been the holdup on the part of governments generally to address this issue?

We do know that there has been good work commenced in the other place, but this seems to be something of such pressing concern, something that is so broad, so absolutely systemic now in all regions of the country, is this not the area where we should be focusing our attention immediately? This committee would be a good start, but what has been the delay, other than the thorny issues, I suppose, that tend to stem from this in Canadians' minds? We have to start acting with real diligence and real haste on this issue.

**Hon. Allan Rock:** Madam Speaker, very briefly, I have been working with justice, solicitor general and other departments trying to put some meat on the bones of the election campaign commitment for a drug strategy. We expect to be coming forward with a strategy, at least a proposed strategy. I think the committee that is being proposed today can help us in that regard.

Second, the member talks about compulsory treatment. I believe that in the drug court in Toronto that is the kind of approach they are taking. Obviously having that available in every court in the appropriate cases would be ideal. Often those social services are not in place. Sometimes it is a question of money. Sometimes it is a question of organization.

Let me say very briefly that he is right and that is the ideal we should work toward. If we get all governments on the same page and we have the money necessary and the professional treatment available, I think that would be ideal. I think it is the best way of responding to someone with an addiction.

• (1325)

**Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to this very important issue. I want to thank my hon. colleague from Langley—Abbotsford for having the foresight to bring this motion forward to the Canadian Alliance caucus and I thank my colleagues there for understanding its importance and choosing it for today's supply day motion.

I speak to this with sincerity and with the earnest concern that we move forward on this. I am very pleased to hear the comments in support of the motion from the government side of the House. It makes me very happy to feel that we can work together on some things and move forward.

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I entered the political arena last fall in the election campaign. One thing I addressed in my campaign was the idea of public safety in regard to crime, young offenders and those kinds of things, so I speak to this in an effort to respond to my constituents in Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre.

I would like to share a couple of stories because when we talk about drugs and the use of illicit drugs we are talking about the impacts on lives. I am thinking of a friend of my youngest son who played on the same sports teams. They were both quite talented in their pursuit of sports. That young lad became entangled in drug usage before completing high school. It went on for a number of years. Now in his early twenties, he is hopefully just beginning to come out of the problem he has had with illicit drugs. I spent time talking with his parents. Their hearts ached when they saw their young son going through that.

I think of other families in my town with whom I have spent time, families with children of high school age who would lie in bed for hours and hours on end refusing to get up because of the drugs they had been on. I think of another friend who was a very special friend to me. I had the pleasure of uniting him and his wife in marriage, working with his family and seeing it grow. However, as time went on I saw the drug habit he could not shake finally destroy the family. He is one of those who ended up in prison because of his efforts to support his drug habit.

It has been almost 28 years since the Commission of Inquiry into Non-Medical Use of Drugs tabled the Le Dain report. It addressed many good issues and contained many good recommendations, but we all know that times have changed drastically since 1973. The proliferation of drugs in our society and the ease with which they can be obtained is not news to any of us. We see it wherever we go.

Recently the United Nations' International Narcotics Control Board tabled its annual report. The report found a disturbing increase in the production and abuse of synthetic drugs in Canada. The report found that the illicit manufacturing of methamphetamine has increased in the past year. Law enforcement agencies have uncovered a record number of production laboratories throughout our own country.

It is clear that Canada does need an updated, comprehensive strategy to deal with the significant problem we have in our country today. Our supply day motion asks the government to deal comprehensively with this complex issue by establishing the committee. I say again that I am thrilled to hear that the government agrees with this.

There are few things that make me angry and there are times when it is okay to be angry. Members may have heard the story that it is okay to be angry if we are angry in the right way at the right or the wrong things. I am angry because of the tragedies I have referred to that are being brought about in our families in Canada.

• (1330)

It makes me angry that there are people out there who make their living by selling drugs and destroying lives. It also makes me angry to see people willingly or for some unknown reason become so involved in drug use that they are a burden to society.

It makes me angry to have to spend the money we do on prevention. It makes me angry that society must do so for a relatively few people. It makes me angry to spend money to enforce regulations that are for these people's own good.

The costs, manpower, time and facilities required for rehab and treatment attempts make me angry. However getting angry about a situation means it is time to do all one can to remedy it.

In the year 1997-98, in Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, just under 4,000 people were treated in the drug and alcohol treatment centres of Regina. A recent report looked at alcohol and drug abuse in the Regina health district. It found that the most commonly abused drugs in North American cities are readily obtained on the streets of little old Regina, in the middle of the prairies where it is supposed to be safe to live. The drugs most often used are a combination of both Talwin and Ritalin, sometimes referred to as the poor man's heroin.

The report stated that injection drug usage is quite common, methadone is available on the streets and illicit drug use is a considerable factor in many violent and property crimes in Regina. The figures would go higher but we cannot include those that relate to young offenders.

I will read from an article that appeared in the *Regina Leader Post* in February. It stated:

Recently, a United Nations agency has criticized Canada for its lax attitude toward illegal growers of cannabis and failure to control illicit production of drugs such as "ice" and "ecstasy".

The report finds a disturbing increase in the production and abuse of synthetic drugs in Canada.

The illicit manufacture of methamphetamine—or ice—has increased, it says. In the past year, law enforcement agencies have uncovered a record number of clandestine laboratories.

Some labs producing MDMA—or ecstasy—were found in middle-class suburban neighbourhoods, especially in central Canada. The laboratories were run by people with no criminal records or connections.

In its annual report Herbert Schaepe, the board's secretary, said: "The board is not happy with the controls established in Canada; the Canadian government is not yet controlling, for example, one of the main precursors of methamphetamine—ice".

Precursors are substances used in the processing or manufacture of narcotic drugs.

The board is calling on Canada to make greater efforts to comply with its obligations, under the 1988 UN convention against illicit drugs, to prevent "Canadian

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territory from being used to divert chemicals for the illicit manufacture of drugs in other countries”.

The UN report says there has been an increase in the amount of cocaine and heroin smuggled into Canada from countries such as Mexico. Last year, Canadian law enforcement agencies intercepted 156 kilograms of heroin.

I am happy to stand and speak to the supply day motion brought forth by my Alliance colleagues. The hon. parliamentary secretary some moments ago mentioned the Canadian Alliance policy on drugs and crime.

• (1335)

I will point out a couple of things from our policy paper. It mentions that one of every two federal inmates in Canada were under the influence of alcohol or drugs when they committed the crime for which they were incarcerated. Fifty per cent were on drugs or alcohol.

We need a national strategy to reduce drug usage, one that works in partnership with provincial and municipal governments and incorporates strategies at the community level. This proposal comes directly out of the Canadian Alliance policy paper. The Alliance favours working with the provinces to develop and implement a national drug strategy that will work effectively at the street level. The street level is where a lot of work needs to be done.

Recently I was privileged to hear a police chief from the United States of America outline what happens in the downward spiral of a community. He pointed out that when a criminal or drug element goes into a community the community at first tolerates and lives with it, although not with pleasure or willingness, but after a period of tolerance it tends to become apathetic.

Tolerance is one thing but apathy is another. It is a downward step where the community stops caring about what is going on. It begins to trust the criminal element as much as it does the law enforcement element. It becomes apathetic to what is going on.

In the next downward step the community begins to defend the criminal activity. We see that over and over again. Communities begin to defend not only the criminal element but the use of drugs. This needs to be addressed by the committee so that it can deal with community attitudes and help create a more unfriendly environment for those who do hard core drugs and traffic drugs to our youth.

The Alliance policy paper points out our desire to work in partnership with the provinces to promote the use of drug courts. A number of members opposite have mentioned the Toronto drug court and I will say a little about that in a moment. However, parliament needs to address these concerns.

The Toronto drug court is the first of its kind in Canada. I understand it is patterned after similar things in the United States. It is a joint venture involving the Ontario court of justice, the Department of Justice, the Government of Canada's national

strategy on community safety and crime prevention, the Centre For Addiction and Mental Health, Toronto based representatives of the criminal justice system, the Toronto police service, Toronto public health, and various city and community based services and agencies. It is funded by the national strategy on community safety and crime prevention as a pilot project.

This does not relate to the committee we are talking about establishing. However, I have visited the drug court and it seems to have been very successful. I hope the hon. Minister of Health is aware that funding for the project is nearing the end. If funding is not extended before the end of the trial period it will have to stop admitting patients.

• (1340)

I would encourage the extension of the drug court because it seems a helpful and pleasant program. The drug court brings together elements within the community. I was amazed when the Toronto drug court told us the number of agencies and people that have worked together to assist it.

Let us get back to our job here as members of parliament. We need to view the work of the committee as something very important. I hope the committee will be given the freedom to look at all aspects of the issue and at legislation. We are sometimes hesitant to move and do things differently but the committee needs that freedom. It needs to look at strategy and determine if there are better approaches.

It was mentioned a moment ago that the war on drugs in the United States has not worked very well. However the answer is not to simply throw it away and legalize everything. The answer is somewhere in between. It is my hope that the proposed committee will examine all possibilities and develop better approaches for enforcing or adjusting drug laws as needed.

Penalties, treatments and all these things need to be worked through but they need to be worked through with a sense of responsibility, urgency and co-operation.

In closing I will say a bit more about the Toronto drug treatment court. It is my hope, as I mentioned earlier, that this model will be extended to a broader range of things than simply drug treatment courts. We could apply it to young offenders and some elements of the criminal code.

It was my privilege to sit in on a healing circle in Wilcox, Saskatchewan a few weeks ago which has taken this approach with young offenders. Young offenders are brought into the presence of their peers, teachers and those in authority, and each person is given the opportunity to state how the crime affected them. It was very positive to see that.

*Supply*

I will skip a full description of the drug court but let me say that after being in the drug court a couple of weeks ago it was not like being in court. It is like the difference between a funeral and a wedding. This was more like a wedding. There was celebration. One young lady came in very excited because she had gotten through another week without succumbing to the temptation of drugs. The judge commended her. The other offenders who were sitting awaiting their turn all cheered and clapped. It was a real joy to see them celebrate that victory with her.

I then saw one who had failed. He came before the judge and had to admit his failures. The judge had to address his failures. There was no defiance or anger when the offender received his warning. He went out of there determined to try again to do what he needed to do.

I commend the government for these kinds of projects. This type of committee needs to look at these solutions and extend them as much as it can. We put too many people in jail who simply come out madder. I would love to pursue these kinds of things through this type of committee.

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is refreshing and enlightening to hear the member opposite talk about the good work being done in Toronto by the drug court. He made some very wise comments. Obviously he has studied the matter and understands it. He is to be congratulated for bringing that enlightened view. It is rare among the Alliance people.

• (1345)

I also congratulate him in terms of the recognition of alcohol and drugs and the role they play with respect to criminal activity. It underscores the good work that Correctional Service Canada is doing in this all important area dealing with rehabilitation and working with inmates in a very meaningful way. It underscores the need to ensure that the right things are done with the programs that are in place so that the chances are there for people to reform, improve and do the kinds of things that are required. I want to indicate to the member that those points were very well taken.

I have two questions for the hon. member. First, does the hon. member personally support the medical use of marijuana in Canada as it has been proposed? Second, does he support the city of Vancouver's proposal for safe injection sites? Those are two fairly straightforward questions and I would be interested in the hon. member's views.

**Mr. Larry Spencer:** Madam Speaker, those are two more things that make me angry because they put me in a position of having to choose between the lesser evil. I have been slow to adjust my thinking. I have come to the conclusion that a number of medically prescribed drugs are also addictive and if misused can be totally out

of place in a person's life. I am not an enthusiastic supporter of cannabis for medical purposes but I understand the wisdom of it and can live with it.

I am sorry but I forgot the other question.

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Madam Speaker, it was with respect to the city of Vancouver's safe injection sites.

**Mr. Larry Spencer:** Madam Speaker, that too is hard for me to live with. Again it is one of the lesser evils for which I am trying to learn the advantages. I ask the member to bear with me.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I also commend the hon. member for his comments and his presentation this afternoon.

We need to recognize another point. We heard the Minister of Health and other members this morning say that we have to study this problem. We have had people explain in detail how serious the problem really is. The hon. member who just spoke has a tremendous background in the business of dealing with people, particularly in a pastoral sense. I believe that in another life he knew all about those kinds of things.

Are we dealing here with a situation where people are unwilling to face the reality of the situation? We had a drug policy in 1987 and 1996. We have had laws changed and programs introduced. We have had all kinds of things happening, yet the use of illicit drugs in our society has increased.

Obviously the programs and policies are not working and the law is not working. Could one of the reasons be that people do not want it to work? We talk about and we lament the fact that families are being broken up and that people's lives are being destroyed. However, are we really serious about dealing with the problem?

Is this kind of committee a way in which we can sensitize society to finally admit that we have a problem and that it is society's problem. We have come to the point where we are saying that it is a problem but that it is not our problem. I wonder if what we need as parents, as leaders in the community, as pastors and as teachers is a shift in attitude. Would the hon. member respond to that?

• (1350)

**Mr. Larry Spencer:** Madam Speaker, that was exactly what I was referring to when I spoke about the decline of a community. It goes from tolerance to apathy to defence. I believe we could demonstrate that it has happened in terms of drug usage, not in an overall total way but in a very spotted way. We have those who would now defend, who do not care and who tolerate, but I believe the committee would really need to take a strong look in order to give us the actual truth as to the dangers of these drugs.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, a little while ago the Parliamentary



*Supply*

Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada, who tends to be far to the partisan side in the House, which is bad for the debate, indicated that I was against the development of a drug research centre in Prince Edward Island.

The reason for my opposition was that millions of dollars would be put into the wrong thing. A building, which would last 40 years, would be built in order to study something that could be studied in our universities, in the House of Commons or somewhere else. We should be looking at education, rehabilitation, detoxification and so on.

Once a report is tabled in the House of Commons by the committee, what would the member expect would happen to the report? I sincerely hope the report would not come here to collect dust. It is far too important for that. I would like to get an indication from him as to the value of the report.

**Mr. Larry Spencer:** Madam Speaker, one of the values I hope would come from such a report would be the opportunity for us to address some of the gaps in legislation. During my speech I did not have enough time to give the list that I received from the Toronto drug court crown prosecutor. He indicated a number of gaps in the legislation that needed to be amended in order to properly operate such an alternative court system.

There needs to be a willingness to make some adjustments in the legislation. I hope that as the report comes out it would make adjustments at every level to what we are doing. The report cannot sit on somebody's shelf to get stale after two or three years. I hope it would be a report that would stir parliament to action.

**Mr. Randy White:** Madam Speaker, I have dealt with many young kids in the country who need help today.

One young lady, a 14 year old named Angel, came off the streets. She had been in 22 foster homes before she entered a particular facility in British Columbia. The trouble is that she has to leave that facility after 14 weeks or so and, because there are no long term rehabilitation facilities, she will be put back into a foster home.

What does my colleague see as the answer for young people who are on the street and need treatment? Where do they go? What kind of resources are required? Do we need to spend some money on this issue?

**Mr. Larry Spencer:** Madam Speaker, obviously we will have to spend some money. I recently saw a lady in Wilcox, Saskatchewan, who was about to retire from the RCMP. She sat as the facilitator for a community group. They brought in the young offender and those around him. They allowed community peer pressure to come to bear on the young person. Those are the kinds of things that are needed.

• (1355)

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this is a very important debate and I want to start by saying that Canada's drug strategy reflects a very careful balance. I will be splitting my time with the member for Vancouver Kingsway.

This careful balance between reducing the supply of drugs and reducing the demand for illicit drugs is very important. In Canada the abuse of drugs is recognized as primarily a health issue. Nevertheless it includes a very important enforcement component.

Drug enforcement continues to be recognized as an important aspect of our drug strategy because efforts to reduce the harm caused by drugs would be hampered by an environment of unrestricted supply. For example, studies have shown that one of the major causes of drug abuse among youth is simple availability. Enforcement activities then help to maintain a level of control over availability. Supply reduction creates an environment in which drug prevention can succeed.

In this regard the nature and focus of drug enforcement should be emphasized. Often we have heard references to a war on drugs. However law enforcement has not adopted this process. The focus of enforcement efforts is instead on high level criminals that supply illicit drugs rather than on individual users. For individual users the focus is on prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

The enforcement component is seen as complementary to prevention, treatment and rehabilitation efforts. Specific efforts have been made to bring these components together. I refer in particular to the health and enforcement partnership network which was formed in 1994. This network brings together representatives of the health and enforcement fields to encourage collaborative efforts in addressing substance abuse issues.

The need for a balanced approach toward drugs has been specifically recognized by police forces in Canada. For example, I refer members to "Taking a balanced approach: Canada's Drug Policy from the National Police Perspective", which is on the RCMP website.

I also refer members to the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police drug policy resolution from 1999 in which the CACP, while standing firmly opposed to the legalization of illicit drugs, specifically endorsed a "balanced approach of prevention, education, enforcement, counselling, treatment, rehabilitation and diversion to counter Canada's drug problems". That is an enlightened view consistent with the values of Canadians and consistent with the values of the government in terms of how we want to see this very terrible problem tackled.

In addition, speaking of police services and forces, I should note that joint force operations involving various Canadian enforce-

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ment agencies and those of other countries are employed frequently during anti-drug operations. Recently we have seen very successful operations take place. We applaud all those involved, especially our police services that have done such a good job in this very important area.

Police are involved in drug prevention efforts. I mention specifically the RCMP drug awareness service which provides education, training, programs and co-ordination on substance abuse issues in communities across Canada. The focus of Canada's enforcement efforts is against high level drug suppliers rather than individual users.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

### CANADIAN RANGERS

**Mr. Jean-Guy Carignan (Québec East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity, as Aboriginal Awareness Week will be held from May 21 to 25, to draw attention to the singular, and too often ignored, contribution made by aboriginal people through the Canadian Rangers program.

Under the Rangers Program, which was established in 1942, there are currently close to 3,000 aboriginal people maintaining a military presence in this country's remote regions.

• (1400)

In addition to affirming Canadian sovereignty, the Rangers are always available to provide invaluable assistance in the event of a disaster.

As active and involved members of their community, program participants, moreover, often serve as role models for aboriginal youth.

The Canadian Forces have a long and proud history of accomplishments in the Canadian far north. Without the Rangers, it would be difficult for our military personnel to provide humanitarian assistance to the people who live in our sparsely populated northern regions.

Not only are the Rangers the eyes and ears of the community; they are also vital members of the Canadian Forces.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, throughout Alberta and western Saskatchewan farmers are facing a potential drought that could knock out any

hope of producing a crop this summer. Some areas, especially in eastern Alberta, have had a shortage of moisture for well over a year.

Cattlemen are already telling us that they will have to sell off cows due to a lack of groundwater. Yesterday, as it has done for the last few weeks, the wind blew. It blew until there were dust storms with blizzard like conditions and in some areas visibility was down to 100 yards.

Meteorologists are already anticipating that this widespread drought could be the worst drought we have seen in 100 years.

Given the Liberal government's previous slow response to agricultural issues, I would like to ask the government the following questions: Is the government aware of this potential crisis? Does Agriculture Canada have an action plan in place to help those farmers affected by a drought? Will it be too late before this government takes any action?

\* \* \*

### GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to extend sincere congratulations to the new Premier of British Columbia, Gordon Campbell, and to his new caucus.

The size of the election victory provides a strong mandate for the new government of British Columbia. This will mark the beginning of a new era in British Columbia.

This is the first time in 49 years that a Liberal Party has been in government in British Columbia. We express our sincere best wishes for success during its term of office, and we look forward to working with the new government.

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### OLYMPIC GAMES

**Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians were pleased to learn that Toronto, along with Paris and Beijing, is one of three cities in the running to host the 2008 Olympic games. However it is regrettable that the decision to award the Olympic games appears unrelated to issues of human rights.

For this decision to come at a time when China is engaged in the most persistent and pervasive assault on human rights since Tiananmen Square sends the wrong message to those anywhere concerned with the protection of peace and human dignity, an objective of the Olympic charter itself.

In a word, awarding the Olympic games to China turns the struggle for human rights on its head. It not only does not hold China accountable for the most egregious human rights violations

but it even confers retrospective legitimacy upon it. It sends the disturbing signal that not only can human rights be violated with impunity but countries can even be rewarded for it. Such a decision can only breed cynicism in a world that has too much indifference and not enough moral courage.

Beijing might be a good place, but not now, not until it comports with the basic principles of the Olympic charter regarding the protection of human security. For 2008, Toronto would be the better choice.

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#### GOVERNMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK

**Mr. Andy Savoy (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, two days ago the Conference Board of Canada released its publication “Provincial Outlook”.

The conference board specifically cited a continuing weakness in construction activity as dampening real growth in New Brunswick. In yesterday’s *Globe and Mail* write-up, New Brunswick was even branded as an economic “laggard”. They stated, and I quote:

In both years, the biggest laggard will be New Brunswick where a three-year string of declines in construction activity is undermining the province’s ability to gather momentum.

Although I fully endorse the Government of New Brunswick’s commitment to fiscal responsibility, I call on the premier to use some of their \$100 million in rainy day fund on highway construction and help New Brunswick in the upcoming tough economic times.

New highways will create much needed jobs. New highways will help New Brunswick weather hard economic times, but most importantly, new highways will help save lives.

\* \* \*

#### GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise in the House today to congratulate two constituents of mine who yesterday won seats in the British Columbia legislature.

Kevin Krueger was easily re-elected to his seat for Kamloops—North Thompson. Claude Richmond, a former Socred cabinet minister, is the new MLA for Kamloops. I am certain these two fine individuals will be excellent representatives for my people and my riding and I look forward to working with them.

● (1405)

For the first time in a decade, my home province of British Columbia will be governed by a party espousing the free enterprise principles of the Canadian Alliance. Lower taxes, smaller responsible government, free votes and a set election date will all soon be law in B.C.

*S. O. 31*

The government across the way should take note of the overwhelming majority of British Columbians who cast their ballots for common sense government.

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#### SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Mr. Larry McCormick (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canada-wide science fair is an annual national exhibition of outstanding science and technology projects created by Canadian youth in grades 7 to OAC and is the premiere event of the Youth Science Foundation of Canada.

This year’s science fair, entitled, “A Science Odyssey through the Thousand Islands”, is being held from May 12 to May 20 at Queen’s University in Kingston.

Students have committed many long hours to the conception and design of their projects. This event offers them a remarkable opportunity to showcase their hard work while exploring a number of exciting areas of science and technology.

Participants have entered and won their local, regional and provincial competitions; accomplishments that clearly reflect an understanding of their projects and their scientific importance.

I am sure, and I know the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands will agree, that those involved with the Canada-wide science fair will experience a memorable time in Kingston.

I would like to congratulate the organizers of this event and wish the participants every success. I hope hon. members will visit their young constituents in Kingston for this event.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### BERNADETTE RENAUD

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, recently, during la Quinzaine du livre de Contrecoeur, a two-week celebration of books in the municipality of that name, located in the riding I have the honour and pleasure of representing in this House, the municipal authorities acknowledged the literary contribution made by Bernadette Renaud, throughout her 25 year career, which has been prolific, to say the least.

Among the works Bernadette Renaud has authored during her impressive career, which has been marked with numerous prestigious awards, are children’s books, textbooks, and children’s theatre productions, as well as a number of film and television scripts for such programs as *Bach et Bottine* and *Watatatow*.

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It may be mere chance, but her decision 25 years ago to settle in Contrecoeur coincided with the start of her brilliant writing career. The people of Contrecoeur are extremely proud of their fellow citizen and author of the trilogy *Un homme comme tant d'autres*.

Congratulations, Madame Renaud, for the quality of the timeless works you have given us so far. We can hardly wait to see what else is going to come from your pen in future. Thank you very much.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### **SPIELO GAMING INTERNATIONAL**

**Mr. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Mr. Jon Manship, the chief executive officer of Spielo Gaming International of Moncton, New Brunswick, for being selected as one of Canada's top 40 under 40.

This prestigious award honours the achievements of a new generation of leaders in business, the professions, academia and public service.

Mr. Manship is a most deserving recipient of this award. He has built an impressive, new economy business in Moncton which employs hundreds of people and exports its products and technology around the world.

My colleague, the Minister of Labour, has done a great deal to support this important business in southeastern New Brunswick and she joins me in expressing our congratulations to Mr. Manship and his team at Spielo Gaming International.

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#### **JESSICA KOOPMANS**

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, as the grandfather of four grandchildren, including five year old Kayla, my heart is grieved over what happened to Jessica Koopmans in Lethbridge. This five year old was innocently on her way to her friend's house when she was abducted and brutally murdered.

How could anyone so violently attack a little girl? It is totally beyond comprehension. The person who did this is really sick.

While the federal government dithers on a registry of sexual offenders and child molesters, the provincial governments are going ahead to set up their own. However it would be much better to have a nationwide registry since it would track offenders everywhere instead of just in their home province. Alberta is fast-tracking the setting up of such a registry, following the lead of Ontario and British Columbia.

I cannot understand why the federal government is doing nothing to set up a national registry to protect our children. It would make a great deal more sense than registering the long guns of law-abiding citizens who go hunting in fall.

#### **BRAIN TUMOURS**

**Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, each year approximately 10,000 Canadians will be diagnosed with primary or metastatic brain tumour.

• (1410)

The Canadian Alliance of Brain Tumour Organizations is in Ottawa this week to raise awareness of the impact of this most debilitating and too frequently fatal disease. Brain tumours afflict young and old alike. Early diagnosis of course is crucial to treatment, yet the incidence and rate of death from brain tumours has increased dramatically since 1960.

Regrettably, reliable information regarding brain tumours is both scattered and uncoordinated. This makes it difficult to make proper assessments or to prepare proposals for research, and research is required. Some estimates put the number of new people diagnosed with primary brain tumours at above 5,000 per year.

Health Canada and the Canadian Cancer Society need to set aside resources in order to establish an effective data gathering system. As well, I encourage Health Canada, the Medical Research Council of Canada and other funding agencies to allocate moneys for research in combating this most deadly and debilitating of diseases.

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#### **CAPE BRETONERS**

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, New Democrats across the country are feeling very sad for the good people of Cape Breton with the announcement yesterday by the Minister of Natural Resources to close the last operating mine, the Prince Mine. This will throw 440 hardworking men and their families out on the streets again.

The provincial Tories went after them on the Sydney steel. The federal Liberal Party left them with the worst toxic site in all of Canada, with the highest rates of cancer in all of Canada, and it will not even move those people to safer grounds. Now it is again throwing the hardworking people of Cape Breton out on the streets.

What is worse is that in the last election Liberal after Liberal told the people of Cape Breton "Just vote for us and we will take care of you". What an absolutely misleading truth that was. The Liberals of Canada misled the good people of Canada.

I want to tell the good people of Cape Breton here and now that they can always count on provincial and federal New Democrats across the country to stand up for the people of Cape Breton once and for all.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**JEAN BESRÉ AWARD**

**Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on March 14, Sherbrooke, the Eastern Townships and all of Quebec lost one of their most remarkable sons, Jean Besré.

Jean Besré was a well known comedian and a great humanist. He was active in all sorts of organizations, including the Little Brothers of the Poor and the telethon for the CHUS foundation, in Sherbrooke.

To honour the memory of this great volunteer, the CHUS foundation has created the Prix reconnaissance Jean-Besré. This award has just been granted to television hostess France Beaudoin, who was born in the Eastern Townships and who hosted the telethon for several years. Incidentally, Ms. Beaudoin said that she was sharing this award with all those who worked behind the scenes to produce this special program.

Ms. Beaudoin is like Jean Besré who, throughout his life, showed great and very unassuming generosity toward his community.

On behalf of my Bloc Québécois colleagues, I offer Ms. Beaudoin our sincere congratulations.

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[English]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. John McCallum (Markham, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a word or two about the Canadian Alliance's call for an early budget. At least when we get off Parliament Hill people care more about actions than words. In terms of actions, it is abundantly clear that the measures taken last October, including the largest tax cut in Canadian history, constituted maxi action or maxi budget.

We could call these budget measures an economic statement or a mini budget if we wished. If it would make us feel happier we could even call it a hippopotamus or a stockwell day, and I use that term—

**The Speaker:** That sounded very much like a name. I assume the hon. member knows he is referring to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, I was using that word in the generic, uncapitalized version. In any event, my point is that words do not matter. The only thing that really matters is that these budget actions were maxi actions that will carry us through for another year.

**PENSION PLANS**

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the nation's police and firefighters face daily dangers in their service to the public that can exact a heavy toll on their lives and their families. In recognition of that fact, police, firefighters and other public safety officers have the ability to retire early. However that means many of them retire with less than the usual 70% of what they had been earning.

• (1415)

In an effort to correct that problem, firefighters and police have been asking government to change income tax regulations to allow them a pension approval rate of 2.33% as compared to the usual 2%.

I call upon the Minister of Finance to make this regulatory change so as to provide full and fair recognition of the service that our firefighters and police make to the rest of us in the community at large.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT**

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that over 70 student jobs will be created in my riding of Vancouver Kingsway through the HRDC summer student employment program.

With over 26 different employers in my riding this program will help the many community groups with their summer staffing requirements while providing valuable summer work experience for the young people of Vancouver Kingsway. Without the help of the federal government, those jobs would not be available.

I congratulate HRDC for continuing the funding of this important program. We wish all students and community groups involved in the program success this summer.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, this morning the Minister of Finance released a five year target and forecast for the rate of inflation. I do not mind saying that was the right thing to do, but he did not release a report showing a five year projection for taxing and spending.

In light of the fact that some economists at least are saying we could be hitting a deficit within three years, will the Minister of

*Oral Questions*

Finance do the right thing and return to the good habit he was just getting into of tabling five year projections?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I made it very clear at the meeting this morning that we were not going into deficit. There is an ample cushion to protect us against any kind of an eventuality. However I would simply like to quote an eminent economist who said the following:

Much more weight should be placed on . . . forecasts, over the two year budget horizon than over the five year planning horizon. Not only is there more immediate accountability, the economic and fiscal forecasts are much more reliable.

That is what he said. Interestingly enough this is by WEFA.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the minister is reading our stuff. It is good stuff. It goes on to say that we encourage him to return to a precedent he was making, and that was five year forecasting.

The numbers just released show that spending has increased by 8%. That is the same rate of increase in spending that we saw when the Prime Minister was finance minister under Mr. Trudeau, and we know where that took us. What can the finance minister tell us about how he will curb this vicious increase in spending?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, the fact is that the hon. member's numbers are wrong. Second, I would like to quote a couple of things.

Who was the treasurer of Alberta when program spending increased by 28.6% in a three year period? Who was the treasurer of Alberta who presided over the largest one year increase in program spending of any Alberta finance minister since 1985-86? I have more, Mr. Speaker.

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. It is very difficult to hear the question. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor and has another question.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I will simply ask the Minister of Finance, because we are looking at \$15.5 billion of overspending in the last four years, who the treasurer in Alberta was when spending was increased at the same time as the net debt was brought to zero and a single rate of taxes brought in.

• (1420)

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Dinning.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Now we want to hear the answer.

**Hon. Paul Martin:** I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if it was the same person who brought in \$2.3 billion in unbudgeted program spending during his three years as Alberta's finance minister.

Who was the treasurer of Alberta who brought in the largest unbudgeted spending bill of any Alberta finance minister since 1986?

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, this is the finance minister who has presided over the incredible shrinking surplus from \$20 billion to \$15 billion because of \$5 billion in over budget spending. This finance minister has overspent by \$15 billion in the past four years and will continue overspending if he does not take control of the demands around the cabinet table.

Will he not admit that every additional dollar in new spending is a dollar taken away from working families for tax relief and from our economic future in terms of debt repayment? Why will he not get his priorities right?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us take a look at where the bulk of the increases took place: in health care spending, following the largest transfer to the provinces; the largest increases in equalization transfers to the less well off provinces in Canada's history; and increases in old age pensions and servicing elderly Canadians.

I would simply ask the finance critic which of those he would cut.

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the finance minister does not understand that it is possible to control spending instead of going back to the levels of spending set by the Prime Minister when he was finance minister which drove the country into deficit.

Many senior economists have said that we are headed for a planning deficit within four years. The finance minister has not given us an adequate response. Will he guarantee to the House today that we will not end up with a planning deficit that eats into our emergency surpluses, our emergency reserves? Will he give us a commitment now that we will not go back into deficit at any point by eating into the emergency reserves?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if we look at the projections that were made last year, if we look at the cushions and if we look at the protection of the contingency reserve, it is patently clear to anyone who wants to understand the numbers that the cushions are there.

Let me simply say the hon. member refers to the spending that has taken place under the Prime Minister. When we took office in 1993 our program spending was \$120 billion. Today, eight years later, our program spending is \$120 billion.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in the future, in Quebec, it will be the mother tongue of the majority, whether French or English, which determines whether those districts in Montreal not already bilingual will become so.

The official languages commissioner, backed by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, is proposing the criterion of language spoken at home, which would change the linguistic balance to the detriment of Quebec's francophones.

Will the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs admit that, by backing Dyane Adam's request, he is hindering the development of the French fact in Quebec?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not backing anything at all. It is perhaps difficult for the leader of the Bloc Québécois to understand, but Canada operates under the rule of law.

When the official languages commissioner asked to be heard by the court, it was up to the judge to determine whether or not her request would be granted. He decided to hear her. As for the legal value of what she has to say, it will be up to the judge, not the leader of the Bloc Québécois or myself, to decide.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, before the passage of Bill 171, Quebecers who did not speak French at home were automatically considered anglophones, even if they were not. The government of Quebec merely passed legislation to eliminate this distortion, without changing the existing situation of the anglophone community.

Will the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs admit that, by encouraging the status quo, he is advocating that the provision of municipal services in English no longer be based on the linguistic reality in Quebec?

• (1425)

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since we are speaking about the rule of law, the supreme court ruled that it was legitimate to wish to promote and defend French in Quebec.

But it is also legitimate to take into account the rights of anglophones in Quebec. As Canadians, both Quebec's francophones and anglophones are entitled to the protection of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It will be up to the judge to determine whether the arguments of the official languages commissioner are legally valid or not.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, let us take a hard look at the situation. If we were to keep the old criterion of language spoken at home, we would find ourselves in the ridiculous situation where a Quebecer who spoke Portuguese at home would be considered an anglophone for the purpose of determining the level of services to be provided to citizens.

Is the minister prepared to admit that using the criterion of language spoken at home rather than mother tongue would mean that anyone whose mother tongue is neither French nor English would be considered an anglophone? He is the minister responsible and he should give us an answer.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Once again, Mr. Speaker, when the Premier of Quebec intervened yesterday, it was not to say that he disagreed with the official languages commissioner, but to say that she did not have the right to interfere in Quebec's jurisdiction, supposedly because Quebec is a nation.

My view is that, if the concept of nation becomes a sort of wall separating us as Quebecers from other Canadians, that is to distort the meaning of the word nation in French and in English.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, rather than see walls where there are none, the minister should consider that the situation in Quebec is one of great mutual respect when it comes to the linguistic rights of anglophones and the status of French as a common language.

In 1992, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs wrote that the best solution would be a unilateral devolution of powers with respect to language solely in the Quebec legislature and enforced solely in Quebec's territory.

Does he admit that Quebec's actions are entirely consistent with the proposal he himself made in 1992?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, except that since then, former Chief Justice Dickson, former Chief Justice Lamer, and the current Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada have said that Quebec was a distinct society and recognized as such in law in the court's decisions.

In this regard, we know that what gives Quebec society its distinct nature is that everyone is a minority in that province. Anglophones are a minority in Quebec, but a majority elsewhere in Canada and in North America as a whole. Francophones, although a majority in Quebec, are a minority in Canada and throughout North America, with the result that both communities are entitled to legal and linguistic protection, and this must be taken into account.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, budgets are about choices and about priorities, as are economic statements. When the finance minister chooses to apply all the bonus surplus to repaying debt and none of it to dealing with the environmental debt and the income divides that are growing daily, he is making the wrong choices.

The minister brags about the health of the nation's finances, but how does he justify ignoring the deteriorating health of real people and real communities?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member will take a look at budget 2000 she will see very large spending on behalf of the Minister of the Environment and on behalf of the Minister of Natural Resources in terms of climate change and the environment. This is not one time spending but is continuing on and on.

There is no doubt about the primacy of the environment to the government. There is no doubt about the linkage between the environment and health, clean air and clean water. We did that in budget 2000 and we will continue to do that.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for a politician who used to talk about social justice and environmental responsibility, the finance minister's tunnel vision is breathtaking and in fact for many it is heartbreaking.

The minister has chosen to ignore the deterioration of our environment. He has chosen to ignore the erosion of vital services. He has chosen to ignore the growing gap between the rich and the poor. How can these fundamental priorities have no claim on at least a healthy portion of the hefty bonus surplus?

● (1430)

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that of course they did. Much of the \$750 million that went into the Canada Foundation for Innovation will go to the environment. Much of the funding that went into Genome Canada will deal with the health of Canadians. This was all money that came out of that year end surplus.

I remind the hon. member that as a result of the paydown of \$33 billion of debt, \$2 billion will accrue to Canadians every year, which they can invest in health care, in education and in the environment.

I also remind the hon. member that it was Tommy Douglas who said that the state should not be beholden to the bondholders. She might well reread what Tommy Douglas had to say.

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister's advisers claim he supports parliamentary reform. No aspect of reform is more important than parliament's control over the spending and fiscal policy of the government.

Why did the minister not demonstrate his respect for parliament, his respect for members of the House and for all Canadians by tabling a budget in the House of Commons?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if we take a look at all the spending announcements and spending commitments that have been made, they are either being covered by specific legislation in the House, which the hon. member and the others can certainly debate, or they are part of the main or supplementary estimates.

Every spending item at one point or other will be open to scrutiny by parliament.

**Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier today the minister defended his decision not to table a budget by saying that he took the advice of a select, elite group of economists that told him not to bother.

Why does the minister respect the views of elite economists and lobbyists more than the views of elected members of parliament?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the October statement we provided over \$24 billion of stimulus to the Canadian economy. That statement also previewed the largest debt paydown. At the same time it made massive investments in health care and a wide range of social issues.

That is what it did. It is important to allow the effects of that to wend their way through the economy and that is what will happen.

Finally, the Canadian people in the November election voted and supported that budget and that statement.

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**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, last week during committee testimony the commissioner of the RCMP confirmed that the federal CPIC system was unable to perform the function of a national sex offender registry. Legislation and funding are required.

Will the solicitor general today commit to introduce legislation as a first step to create that effective national sex offender registry?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have said many times in the House that we have a very good system, one of the best computerized database systems in the world.



We are working with the provinces and territories to improve the system in any way that needs to be done. If the provinces wish to provide addresses, they will be put in place on the CPIC system.

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the commissioner disagrees with him and yesterday the Minister of Justice had the courage to admit that the existing CPIC registry did not effectively protect Canadians from sexual predators.

On behalf of the potential victims of sexual predators, will the solicitor general join today with the Minister of Justice to take every necessary step to create an effective sex offender registry?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure my hon. colleague would not want to misinterpret what the Minister of Justice said. She did not say that we needed new legislation. She did say that we would work with the provinces and territories to improve the system in any way possible.

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[Translation]

#### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the use of the criterion of language spoken at home defended by the minister would have negative consequences not only for francophones in Quebec, but for the Acadians and francophones in Canada.

• (1435)

Does the minister not understand that to apply these criteria on language spoken at home elsewhere in Canada would be devastating for the francophone and Acadian communities, as they would considerably reduce their numbers and, accordingly, the services available to them?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the member mentions the other provinces, because the Commissioner of Official Languages intervenes in the other provinces as well. Why could she not intervene in Quebec? That is the sole question today.

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, does the minister not see that, by defending the criterion of language spoken at home, he is opening the door to certain provinces that could use it to justify significant cuts in services to francophones on the grounds that they speak English at home?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member's very question is before the courts. The Government of Canada is an observer.

#### Oral Questions

The Government of Canada is intervening in the Montfort case, because it is in appeal. However, it is before the courts at the moment. The Commissioner of Official Languages has arguments to present. The Government of Quebec has arguments to present. It will be up to the judge to decide, not the member or myself.

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[English]

#### JUSTICE

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, virtually every police force in the country disagrees with the government and is saying that legislation is required to enable a sex offender registry to be developed.

In Ontario Christopher's law is the enabling legislation that provides and mandates registering changes to develop a sex offender registry.

Would the solicitor general acknowledge that a sex offender registry cannot be just developed by software and that it needs enabling legislation to mandate the changes?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what we must have across the country is support from the provinces too.

As I have indicated, we have put \$115 million in place to make sure we have the best database computer system in the world, which is the envy of all police forces around the world. We have also indicated that we will accept addresses from provinces if they wish to have them put in place.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, that guy sounds like a software salesman, not a solicitor general. What is required in legislation is a mandate that sex offenders report changes in names, addresses and phone numbers. Also it must be mandated that sex offenders will be penalized if they do not report them.

Would the software salesman mind standing in the House and telling us that legislation is required to implement a sex offender registry?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would not refer to my hon. colleague in the way he has referred to me, but I will tell him that changing one's name is under provincial jurisdiction. It is the same with addresses. It is under provincial authority.

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[Translation]

#### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, while the minister wants to come across as the champion of official

*Oral Questions*

languages, a damning report from the Treasury Board paints a grim picture of his government's performance in this area.

How does the minister explain the cuts in excess of \$100 million, over a 10 year period, in the budgets of the official languages programs, thus bringing these budgets back to the 1977-78 level, more than 25 years ago?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has started investing again in official languages programs. An annual amount of \$70 million was added in the 1999 budget.

The Commissioner of Official Languages has indeed criticized the government sharply. It is her role to do so. She is not easy on us and it would appear that she is not easy on Mr. Landry either.

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we hope that some day we will get an answer.

In addition to reporting cuts in excess of \$100 million in the programs' budgets and a smaller percentage of francophone deputy ministers, this study shows that the number of employees in official languages has dropped by 50% over a five year period.

Does the minister not think that he should look after his own affairs and change what his government is doing wrong before giving lessons to others?

• (1440)

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that the Government of Canada must set an example in the area of official languages, and we will definitely improve our programs.

This being said, everything that goes on in Canada is my concern and everything that goes on in Quebec is also my concern.

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[English]

**IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the minister of immigration has said that the Sklarzyk family are queue jumpers, but the fact is that the family has been ordered deported due to a technical error. Meanwhile a suspected assassin, Rudy Pacificador, has been allowed to stay in the country for 14 years and still has not been deported.

Where are the fairness and compassion in her system when it allows a suspected assassin to be treated better than a family who has behaved in an exemplary fashion?

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is often and in fact I would say always

difficult to tell people that they have to leave Canada. It is never easy to do that, but I will say to the member opposite that last year 8,600 people were removed from Canada.

The number one priority for removal is criminals. The other priorities are those who are failed refugee claimants and those who have overstayed visitors visas.

I can assure the member that I have reviewed the file, that I have seen no administrative error, and that it is difficult to tell people that it is time to leave.

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, how about the 15,000 that cannot be found in the country? The immigration department has decided to deport the Sklarzyk family as a result of an administrative error, but the minister has claimed she cannot deport an assassin due to administrative problems. Where is the logic and compassion?

Will the minister try to defend her system, which would allow a family who has behaved in an exemplary fashion to be deported but cannot remove an accused murderer after 14 years?

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we are dealing with people's lives, grandstanding in the House of Commons is completely inappropriate.

This member and others come to me with individual cases, and on this one that member never came to me, never asked for the facts, has stood in the House and is hurting people. I would say that this is completely inappropriate.

In Canada we have due process. Before people are removed they are entitled to due process. I can assure him that no one is removed if there is an administrative error. The priorities for removal are clear: criminals, failed refugee claimants and those who have overstayed visitors visas. He never once took the time—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

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**HEALTH**

**Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Hepatitis exerts a huge burden on those who suffer from the disease and on their families. Could the minister tell the House what Health Canada is doing to raise awareness of hepatitis?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Health Canada has designated the month of May as Hepatitis Awareness Month in Canada. I thank colleagues in the House for encouraging that step to be taken.

*Oral Questions*

Just last week Health Canada organized and financed a national conference on hepatitis C to have researchers come together, share information and enlarge both public understanding and scientific discoveries in hepatitis treatment.

We are focusing on supporting those in the community who work in this area and on assisting scientists across the country developing new methods of treatment and hopefully one day a cure.

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**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. One of the biggest failures of the Liberal government across the way is the complete lack of attention to the environment. In fact the University of Victoria recently did a study that said Canada had one of the worst records in the industrial world and that on 25 environmental indicators we now rank 28 out of 29 countries in the OECD.

The minister chose to put some \$15 billion on the national debt. He knew there was a big surplus coming. Why did he not put some of that money into the environment? He had an option. Why did he choose the national debt entirely and ignore the environment?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt about the priority of the environment to Canadians and to the government. That is why we have put \$1.1 billion toward climate change over the next five years. That is why the government allocated in the \$2 billion municipal infrastructure program a minimum of 50% of the total program to go to green municipal infrastructure, which is primarily dedicated to drinking water and to sewage treatment projects.

Announcements of these kinds of investments have already been made in the member's province of Saskatchewan, in Newfoundland and New Brunswick, and we intend to continue with that course.

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● (1445)

**POVERTY**

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, another major failure of the Liberal government across the way has been the growing gap between the rich and the poor. After eight long lean Liberal years, Statistics Canada says the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, yet the minister did not even mention equality or poverty in his speech today.

Why did the minister not put some of the money he put on the debt toward narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor? Why not put more money into the war against poverty instead of all \$15 billion on the national debt?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the government did. Perhaps the hon. member

was not paying attention at that point, but \$900 million as of July 1 will go into the child tax benefit. That is primarily to deal with low income families with children.

If we take a look at our tax cuts, overwhelmingly they were dedicated to middle and low income Canadians. Let us look at the kind of money we put into health care and education to help low income Canadians. If we look at the numbers, we see that while the gap between the rich and the poor before taxes, and nobody should be very proud of it, after taxes that gap narrows.

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**IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister of immigration stated that no one gets deported over a \$50 administrative error, so how did an immigration file get so lost in the system that the applicant ended up before the courts over \$50?

Will the minister tell the House if members of the Sklarzyk family can remain in Canada until they have their humanitarian application interview? Will we not deport them? Could they at least have the humanitarian application interview?

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the hon. member asked about an administrative issue within the department. Today he has changed his tune.

He is playing politics with people's lives. He did not come to me. As a member of the House he is entitled to have all the facts of this case. He has not asked one question of me privately, although he has on other cases.

I would say to him that it is very difficult to tell people they have to leave Canada. It is more difficult when members grandstand in the House inappropriately.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, DND has just initiated a change to its contracting procedure which will allow it to avoid going to tender and avoid the openness and accountability which Canadians deserve.

In fact the latest bid to bring our troops home from Eritrea was sent out to Europe well in advance of Canadian companies being advised of it. Why has the minister changed the tendering process in favour of one company?

**Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this has to do with the private contracting of sealift capability to bring our equipment home. As the House knows we had difficulty with one particular ship last year, so we changed our procedures to tighten up on that.

### Oral Questions

In the course of doing we contracted with a company which is the only company that has the kind of expertise needed to meet the new conditions. We therefore contracted with that company which will in turn give us a list of different ships available from which the department will choose.

We feel that is the best way to protect Canadian interests and the taxpayer dollar.

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### HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, last July the minister for HRDC said that bonuses would not be handed out to executives in her department to fix the million dollar boondoggle, but what do we find?

We find that 226 executives in her department received \$685,000 in performance pay for meeting key performance targets. Why are we paying executives performance pay to correct their own mistakes?

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the men and women in the Department of Human Resources Development Canada should be applauded for the work they have undertaken over the course of the last year to improve the administration of grants and contributions.

The auditor general said that the department had turned itself inside out to respond to this important undertaking. We will continue to ensure that the administration of grants and contribution is done perfectly in order.

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### TREASURY BOARD

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, this is not applause. This is throwing money at these people.

• (1450)

Performance pay for senior public servants was to be paid out for superior performance. Now we find that virtually every executive across the board in every department qualifies for performance pay. It is just another way to get another raise.

My question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Is the qualification bar for performance pay so low that even incompetent executives qualify for raises nowadays?

[Translation]

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, performance pay is not automatic for all senior executives.

It is a new way of paying those among them who have been set very specific objectives. It is a new approach to remuneration for that group.

Even the Strong report said that it was premature to reach a judgement on implementation at this time, because it is just beginning to be used. Next year, or the year after that, we will be in a position to know with some accuracy whether the objectives have been met.

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### PARENTAL LEAVE

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, section 69 of the Employment Insurance Act provides that, when a province wants to offer a broader program than the one available, the federal government will transfer the necessary funds.

Why do we have to fight the government to get what is rightly ours, when the Employment Insurance Act provides for a transfer of money to provincial governments, and Quebecers want a real program of parental leave?

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of discussing this with the committee last week. I also had occasion to discuss it with my Quebec counterpart, Ms. Goupil, earlier in the week.

As I have said, our priority is to set up a program that meets the needs of all Canadians, including Quebecers.

As of December 31, we offered parental leave for one year at no additional cost to Canadians.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the program of parental leave the Government of Quebec wants to put in place is also supported by the leader of the official opposition in the national assembly of Quebec, Jean Charest, and I quote him "The federal government has to negotiate that with Quebec".

Will or will not the federal government agree to sit down and negotiate with the government of Quebec before setting up the program, given that the welfare of young families is involved?

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, nothing prevents the government of Quebec from improving our program if it wants.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, an internal report has just indicated that the Canadian Human Rights Commission is in chaos. Forty per cent of the members have quit and another thirty-seven per cent are poised to quit. Even John Hucker the second in command said “We simply cannot carry on the way we have been carrying on”.

My question is for the responsible minister. Why did senior executives of the Canadian Human Rights Commission receive pay performances for this dismal performance?

**Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we take the issue of human rights very seriously. The Canadian Human Rights Commission has recognized a problem within its management, and I commend it for initiating an internal workplace survey to correct any errors that may exist.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, while all of this is going on, the head of the commission is off gallivanting in Southeast Asia. The issue is why the executive of the commission is being rewarded for an appalling performance.

Again my question is for the responsible minister. Are these the performance levels that people in the executive have to meet to receive pay benefit packages?

**Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in 1999 the government appointed a panel headed by the hon. Gérard La Forest to review the Canadian Human Rights Act, including the mandates of the commission and the human rights tribunal.

The review panel provided significant recommendations covering the various issues. We are currently reviewing those recommendations.

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● (1455)

**BOATING SAFETY**

**Ms. Aileen Carroll (Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Victoria Day long weekend is here. It is a traditional time for Canadians to go to the lake to open their cottages. It is also the beginning of Safe Boating Week and is a time to remind Canadians to be safe during the summer.

Could the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans tell us what he is doing to make our waterways safe this summer?

**Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question. As members of parliament know, this week is Safe Boating Week, which runs from May 19 to May 25. It is extremely important. The coast guard is working with its partners across the country to make Canadians aware of boating safety.

Last year we introduced an operator competency test which we asked all Canadian boaters to take. We can prevent many of the injuries that happen every summer on our lakes and rivers. We ask Canadians to be fully involved in safety during Safe Boating Week.

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**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, already this week three Indian band offices have been occupied by grassroots natives in western Canada. The Sagkeeng in Manitoba, the Tsuu T'ina in Alberta and the Pentiction of B.C. have all been occupied by frustrated band members.

Could the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development tell us why these kinds of events are happening under his watch?

**Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is pretty obvious that when individuals in Canada have an interest in making a point they can start a demonstration. That is perfectly within their right and perfectly normal in a democracy.

**Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, that answer tells me quite clearly that the minister does not know a darn thing about what is going on in his department. I will tell him why these natives are so unhappy.

In speaking with them, they are unhappy with the social conditions on reserves, where inadequate housing, soaring unemployment rates, a lack of proper health care and terrible financial mismanagement are making their lives simply miserable.

What will the minister of Indian affairs do to solve these problems and help the native people of Canada have some kind of future in the country?

**Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the member had been watching closely, last year our department went into the economic development business. We have been working with our partners, the provinces, the private sector and first nations, to develop a first nation economy.

The best way to deal with poverty is to find people jobs. That is our mandate. That is what we are working on together.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**YOUNG OFFENDERS**

**Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm is currently touring Quebec regarding the bill on young offenders.

People are unanimously outraged to see that it will cost more in Quebec to implement an act that no one wants and that does not at all take into account our societal choices in dealing with crime.

Does the Minister of Justice not find it absurd that Quebec is forced to fight against the federal government to preserve an act that enjoys the unanimous support of Quebecers, and moreover that it will be forced to spend more on an act that no one wants?

[English]

**Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, certainly under the youth criminal justice act there will be funding to the province of Quebec. There is \$206 million across the board for the initiation phase. Also nationally there will be approximately \$1 billion for all provinces.

However over the next five years the province of Quebec will receive roughly \$191 million to implement and support youth justice services in that province.

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**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Stephen Owen (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have another question for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice. We all know that the crime rate in most categories of crime in most parts of the country have been reducing steadily over the last decade. Yet crime still happens daily causing more victims.

Will the parliamentary secretary explain to us what the government is doing to prevent and further reduce crime in our communities?

**Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while Canada's crime rate is falling, we know that the cost of each crime is too much. That is why the Liberal government created the national crime prevention strategy. The strategy has supported over 1,600 projects across the country so far.

Today in my region of Niagara the justice minister will announce funding for 156 more projects in Ontario. These projects will provide local solutions to local problems and address the root causes of crime.

The national strategy demonstrates that the Liberal government's commitment to help prevent crime in the first place is paramount.

• (1500)

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, we have another project for the minister. The solicitor general advised the House that a national sex offender registry was a matter of provincial jurisdiction.

First the commissioner of the RCMP and now the Minister of Justice acknowledged the need for federal action. Will the solicitor general bring forward the necessary federal legislation to protect all Canadians from sexual predators regardless of where they live in this great country?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I said that we have offered to the provinces to put the addresses of any offenders on CPIC.

We have had discussions with provincial and territorial ministers. Some provinces have indicated they will attempt to put a registry together. Provincial justice ministers agree that we should evaluate what takes place down the road, not duplicate, not waste money, and be sure that we do the thing right.

We have one of the best systems in the world. It is the envy of all police forces around the world.

\* \* \*

**MINING INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, never in the history of Canada has there been a federal government to hold the people of Cape Breton in such utter contempt as that government over there.

Yesterday will go down as a day of mourning for the people of Cape Breton. The Minister of Natural Resources should resign his seat today for the way he treats the people of Cape Breton by going in there and destroying the hopes and aspirations of 440 miners and their families.

My question is for the government. Why do you hold the people of Cape Breton in such utter contempt after all the promises you told them in the last election, that if they vote Liberal you will look after—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member intends to address the Chair.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman should not rely upon his NDP colleague, Mr. Corbett, for his facts because he will get them dead wrong every time.

We have invited Devco to sit down with the union and negotiate an appropriate human resources package. In addition, we have topped up the economic development fund by \$28 million, for a

total of \$108 million by the government to defend Cape Breton, the NDP notwithstanding.

\* \* \*

### PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Sue Edelman, Minister of Tourism of the Government of Yukon.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

\* \* \*

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the usual Thursday question of the government House leader on the business for the rest of the week and the business for the week after next, after we all get the well deserved break next week to go home and spend some time with our constituents.

What can we look forward to when we return and have an opportunity to see the report from the members' services and pay commission that we expect any time? Can he tell us what we will be doing in the House?

[Translation]

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will continue this afternoon with the debate on the opposition motion.

Tomorrow, we will begin second reading of Bill S-24, the Kanesatake agreement legislation, and resume debate on Bill C-27, the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act.

[English]

When we return on May 28 we will complete consideration of Bill C-7, the youth justice bill. I will be seeking advice from members opposite about wrapping up that debate. As backup we would have Bill C-27, if necessary, and Bill C-19, the environmental legislation.

Around mid-week we hope to commence report stage of Bill C-11, the immigration legislation.

Thursday, May 31, shall be an allotted day.

• (1505)

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the Thursday question. May I use this opportunity to inform the House, and in particular the Leader of the Opposition, that it would be the desire of this party that the Leader of the Opposition use his authority under Standing Order 81(4)(a) to continue the examination of the estimates of the Department of Industry in committee.

### Supply

There are important questions that need to be answered before the House can decide whether to pass the estimates. We must move to facilitate this study and in the past it has not always happened. In the event the Leader of the Opposition is not prepared to designate a department, there are other members, particularly members in this party, who are prepared to act.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### SUPPLY

#### ALLOTTED DAY—DRUGS

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

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I noted prior to question period, the focus of the enforcement efforts of the Government of Canada is against high level drug suppliers and traffickers rather than individual users. This is in accordance with the law enforcement priority of the government with respect to organized crime.

Organized criminal groups control a very large portion of the drug trade in Canada. The drug trade in turn provides a prime source of profit for these groups. Over the past number of years the government has taken action against organized crime. I will outline some of the things we have done in this very important area.

The government has provided significant RCMP budget increases in the year 2000-01 in order to bolster organized crime efforts and enforcement in this area. We have also made available 13 integrated proceeds of crime units which have been set up across the country to deprive criminal groups of their profits and property.

We have also made amendments to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to ensure that people convicted of offences related to organized crime were no longer eligible for accelerated parole review. Further, new money laundering legislation has created measures for reporting suspicious financial transactions and the cross-border movement of large amounts of currency. Amendments were made to the criminal code in 1997 to specifically address criminal organization offences. These criminal code measures against organized crime will be reinforced in Bill C-24 currently before the House.

These are some of the steps the Government of Canada has taken in the past and will continue to do in measured efforts. We know this is a very serious problem.

*Supply*

We recognize that despite these efforts it is likely to be impossible to completely prevent all drug trafficking in Canada. That would be ideal but it is highly unlikely and unrealistic. Nevertheless enforcement can help to ensure that efforts toward prevention, treatment and rehabilitation do not become undone in an environment of unrestricted access to illegal drugs.

We also recognize that more can be done with respect to Canada's drug strategy. Now is not the time for Canada to rest upon its achievements, many that they are. Rather it is time for further action to build on what has been achieved.

Countries around the world struggle with the issues surrounding drug abuse and addiction. Canada unfortunately is no exception. The government is clearly committed to the issue and to further action. As part of that action I think it is very appropriate for parliament to be reviewing drug abuse issues.

I therefore have no hesitation in supporting the motion. It represents the kind of forward moving thinking we need as a government and on all sides of the House to prevent the kinds of things that are taking place in this area.

On behalf of the constituents of my riding and indeed all Canadians, we need to pull together in this very important area. It behoves all of us to move together to try to see if there are solutions. In the process we must remember that treatment, prevention and rehabilitation are key words when it comes to these kinds of things, especially when it comes to our young people who I believe Canadians, wherever they live in this great country, want us to prevent going down this path because at the end of the day there is nothing but trouble there.

• (1510)

I can say firsthand that all Canadians recognize the problem. Certainly we as a government recognize it. We need to work efficiently and effectively to ensure that what we do in this important area produces results at the end of the day. I believe that is in keeping with the great values of the country and of the people of Canada.

The motion is timely. I think it is one that we as a government can and will support. It is something of great note to all Canadians.

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to support my hon. colleague in this important effort. Keeping drugs off our streets and away from our children is one of the primary efforts of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. It is obvious that CCRA takes seriously the job of protecting Canada's borders. I for one am very proud of the work it is doing. Saving Canadians from the harmful effects of illicit drugs is an ongoing battle. I believe CCRA has shown that it is up to the fight.

Crime knows no boundaries when it comes to smuggling drugs. As a Canadian I find it comforting and reassuring that there are dedicated men and women at our borders who work diligently to prevent harmful, illegal drugs from entering the country. Day in and day out some 3,500 customs officials work tirelessly to stop illegal goods and inadmissible people from entering our country. Canada's customs officers are the frontline defence against the entry of illegal drugs into Canada, and they do an excellent job.

I will give some statistics. Last year customs officers seized almost \$900 million worth of illegal drugs at the border. Some \$900 million worth of drugs were kept off our streets, out of our schools and away from our children. Drugs have been found in some very interesting hiding places. Customs officers have detected drugs hidden in shipments of fish, shoes, statues, machines, picture frames, toys and even pineapples.

How does the CCRA seize almost \$900 million worth of illegal drugs? The CCRA uses a variety of tools to help stop the entry of illegal drugs into Canada. The equipment can detect drugs hidden in various types of substances such as plastic, coffee and clothes. The use of contraband detection equipment and detector dogs enables customs officers to conduct effective, non-intrusive inspections and allows the CCRA to focus on high risk individuals and their goods.

Over the past several years the CCRA has invested approximately \$12 million in contraband detection technology which is deployed at ports of entry into Canada. Equipment such as ion scans, contraband detection kits, laser range finders and night vision equipment help customs officers detect drugs in clothing, luggage, vehicles and marine containers.

• (1515)

There are detector dogs. Forty dog teams strategically located across Canada were responsible for over 1,000 seizures of drugs and weapons last year. For 22 years detector dogs have played an important role in stopping narcotics from entering the country and helping the CCRA to be more effective and efficient in its anti-smuggling initiatives.

The CCRA has forged important partnerships with other law enforcement agencies to stop the entrance of illegal goods into Canada. Together the RCMP and the CCRA have intercepted many elaborate schemes to smuggle drugs. Just this week, as a result of interdepartmental co-operation, 179 kilograms of cocaine with a street value of over \$70 million was seized. This is an excellent example of law enforcement agencies working together to fight crime.

These partnerships extend worldwide. As part of the world customs organization, the Canada-U.S. shared border accord, the Caribbean customs law enforcement council and the Canada-U.S.



cross border crime forum, the government is making a real difference in protecting Canadians.

The CCRA also works closely with the private sector to combat drug smuggling.

The partners in protection program involves a two way partnership in which a shipping or trading company and the CCRA sign a memorandum of understanding outlining ways to work together to stop illegal activities. The CCRA provides guidance on how to spot illegal activity and in turn the importer provides the CCRA with information it may have regarding illegal activity. I am very pleased that the CCRA has developed such proactive relationships with these companies.

Stopping the entry of illegal drugs into Canada is one of many ways these joint efforts are working to make our communities more safe. A safer community is a healthier, more prosperous community.

Partnerships like these help the CCRA fulfill its mandate of protecting the border. They attest to the government's commitment to improve the quality of life of all Canadians.

In conclusion, stopping the spread of drugs is critical to winning the battle for a healthy Canadian society. As past experience has shown, the drug problem is one that the CCRA and the government take very seriously indeed.

The CCRA is dedicated to enforcing Canada's laws at the border, stopping the entry of illegal drugs into Canada and protecting Canadian citizens.

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

I am pleased to participate in the supply day motion of the Canadian Alliance, the official opposition of Canada.

Last year I asked to ride along with Vancouver police to experience first hand the illicit drug infested area of east Vancouver. I did this for a few hours one night before I could not take it any more and returned home. What I saw was an appalling and shockingly dreadful experience of life.

• (1520)

Many young and old people were injecting drugs in back alleys which were littered with needles and condoms. Dirty hotels and dormitories looked extremely unhygienic and were full of drug addicts sitting or lying on the floor.

So-called refugees around 20 years of age, mostly from Honduras, were selling cocaine and heroin. Almost all of them had about \$200 in their wallets in assorted denominations, were carrying refugee ID cards and had business cards for the same lawyer. They wore jewellery and designer clothing and had stereo Walkmans.

### *Supply*

When they spotted the police in civilian clothes and cars approaching them they blew whistles to warn their colleagues. As soon as the police stopped them they stuck out their tongues, spread their arms and hands, and made themselves ready for inspection.

Some attempted to swallow drugs they had wrapped in plastic. Many tried to hop on the skytrain to escape and sell drugs elsewhere. Their suppliers were hiding in nearby restaurants. In the area where illicit drugs are sold there are pawn shops to make it convenient for drug addicts to sell stolen items such as TVs, stereos, computers, et cetera. Restaurants, back alleys and other facilities in the area are like one stop shopping centres for drug addicts.

The government and the community have completely neglected the issue. What I saw in Vancouver was the rule of the jungle. All three levels of government have talked and studied too much. They are all talk and no action. They have no effective plans. The future for those people looks bleak, and that is a pity. It is certainly not the Canada I dreamed of before immigrating here.

I also visited the port of Vancouver where there is no effective control of drug imports. They are not even minimized, let alone stopped. Less than 3% of cargo containers arriving at the port are examined. Of those that are, many are found to contain drugs. The government disbanded the Vancouver port police. It should have strengthened and supported them by co-ordinating their activities with the coast guard and other law enforcement agencies. Instead it abandoned them.

It is no wonder the lower mainland of B.C. has the highest needle exchange rate in North America. Our law enforcement agencies are stripped of resources to fight crime and illicit drugs. Our laws have no teeth. The government has no vision, no plans, no priorities and no focus. Illicit drugs are even available in government controlled prisons where criminals are supposed to be punished and not entertained.

I have visited schools in my riding. The students tell me they can purchase drugs faster than they can have pizza delivered. In a 1999 survey, 53% of students said cannabis was easily or very easily available. That is almost double the 28% recorded in 1981. Some 36% of students in 1999 said someone had tried in the last year to sell them drugs, while 32% said they had observed someone selling drugs in school.

It is no wonder the Marijuana Party received 3.5% of the votes in last night's B.C. election. About 100,000 people in B.C. supported the Marijuana Party. That tells us a great deal. Marijuana growing operations can be found on every third block or so. These grow-ops are a huge money making operation. Marijuana is traded pound for pound with heroin south of the border.

• (1525)

Motorcycle gangs are expanding their operations. Other organized criminals are thriving. They have excellent houses, cars,

*Supply*

boats, planes, cutting edge technology, equipment and appliances. The government gives them passports. Instead of spending time in prison they go on cruises and exotic vacations, things the ordinary taxpaying citizen finds it very difficult to do.

Proceeds of crime are not confiscated from drug dealers and organized criminals because we have no effective laws with teeth. While money is the motivation, the lack of tough penalties is no deterrent.

I had an opportunity to visit a couple of harm reduction clinics in Surrey that are professionally managed by Dr. Anna-Marie McGuire. I was disappointed to see a large number of patients there but was encouraged to hear their success stories. One patient told me he had been on drugs 15 years and had never been home to see his family. He said he was completely changed after receiving treatment and had met with his daughter for the first time in 15 years. He had tears of regret and joy in his eyes when he told me the story.

Another individual had been on drugs for many years and had stolen car stereos and women's purses to finance an expensive drug habit. He also repented and was a completely changed individual.

To my surprise, the city of Surrey was reluctant to renew the clinics' operating licences. I noticed no support for the clinics from the community or from any level of government. I understand that there may be problems. However there must be a solution as well. The seriousness of the issue should not be ignored.

A head start program would help the early detection of children susceptible to drug and alcohol abuse and other anti-social behaviour patterns. A head start program could offer more effective treatment. Although a motion was unanimously passed in the House I have seen no action from the Liberal government. It lacks vision and political will.

More resources should be allocated to detect drugs which cause impaired driving. A breathalyzer may show no alcohol but a driver may still be under the influence of illicit drugs.

Illicit drugs are not only unregulated; they are in many cases lethal. The increased purity of heroin and other drugs is causing deaths. In Vancouver there are on average 147 deaths per year due to overdoses of illicit drugs.

In 1998 Canada's long term drug strategy was to reduce the harm associated with alcohol and other drugs to individuals, families and communities. The strategy accepts that eradication of the problem is impossible and that we must simply live with the problem.

Strategies always talk of damage control, harm reduction, cures, intervention, needle exchanges, et cetera, but not preventive measures. The solution is to stop illicit drugs from being manufactured and imported into Canada. We need to protect our borders. We need regular inspections at our borders and ports. The coast guard,

surveillance planes, port authorities, local police forces and others must work together and with the tools and resources they need.

A national drug strategy in partnership with federal, provincial and municipal governments must work at the community level to reduce drug use.

We need to infiltrate gangs and criminal organizations. The RCMP and other law enforcement agencies have trouble getting permission to use wiretaps and other surveillance efforts. It takes about 1,500 pages of petition to get such permission. Even then the monitoring period is limited to 90 days. The whole process must be restarted after the 90 days expires. The investigation suffers in the meantime.

• (1530)

During this process codes need to be broken, languages on surveillance tapes have to be translated, and other such work needs to be done to complete the investigations. Our law enforcement agencies need the high tech tools. However the criminals have money and state of the art technology while our police struggle to maintain 20 year old technology.

Money is the motivation for criminal activities. Their money and assets should be confiscated and turned over to our law enforcement agencies to be used to fight crime. We need tougher laws and we need to have them enforced. We need the punishment to fit the crime.

This would establish tough deterrent measures and not encourage crime with the lax laws and lax sentences that the Liberals allow. What we have here is a Liberal government that lacks a will and a vision to address these things. It has been the cause of the problem for so many years.

Now is the time to set up a committee to look into all these things so that something effective can be done. I appreciate speaking to the motion and I look forward to all members of the House supporting the Canadian Alliance motion to set up a committee on the non-medical use of drugs.

**Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to today's supply motion. I will begin by thanking my hon. colleague from Langley—Abbotsford for bringing this important matter before the House.

The motion before us today is very serious and addresses a very real problem in society. One of the greatest problems facing our young people today is the non-medical use of drugs. Over the past number of years the prevalence and availability of non-medical drugs have been overwhelming. Today's youth face enormous pressures in the world. Our young people face constant forms of peer pressure, one of which is to conform to the usage of drugs.

There are entire industries based upon the non-medical use of drugs. Internationally or nationally we can all point to situations

where this is true. My home province of British Columbia is well known within the drug world for so-called home grown marijuana, as well as other non-medical drugs.

My hon. colleagues have already mentioned several different statistics concerning non-medical drug use. As the aboriginal affairs critic for the Canadian Alliance I am particularly concerned with the problem of substance abuse among our native people. I would like to take a few minutes to review some of the statistics because they have not yet been entered into the debate.

The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse in its 1999 profile tells us that indigenous Canadians are at particular risk for substance abuse. The majority of aboriginal youth are at two to six times greater risk for alcohol problems than other Canadians. Indigenous Canadians have relatively high rates of illicit drug use.

I would like members to consider some of the following rates. According to the *Canadian Journal of Public Health* over 73% of natives use marijuana, 37% sniff glue, 6% use solvents, 5.5% use heroin, almost 10% use speed, 14% use LSD, almost 5% use cocaine and 8% use crack. Most disturbing about all these statistics is that the usage rates are higher than in the non-native population in some cases by as much as four times. This is completely unacceptable.

• (1535)

Our native people are among the most susceptible to non-medical drug use and the statistics seem to bear it out. I have been involved with native people as a counsellor and my wife and I have been foster parents for over 25 years. I have seen the results of many of these problems, and they are heartbreaking.

To see individuals, families and in some cases entire communities devastated by the use and abuse of alcohol and non-medical drugs is startling. The results of these actions should not exist but sadly they do. As parliamentarians and as a nation it is time that we take real action against this problem.

As I mentioned earlier, my home province is well known in the drug world for illegal drugs. Unfortunately along with the beauty and the splendour of a craggy remote coastline come thousands of miles of secluded coves and places to import illegal drugs from offshore.

Along with hydroponic growth operations, the remoteness of the gulf isles and many parts of the B.C. interior provide ideal locations for marijuana fields. The RCMP searches and finds some, but with its limited resources, the overwhelming scope of the territory and the sophistication of the growers only a small percentage of the drugs are actually found and destroyed.

### *Supply*

Nanaimo is the largest city in my riding. Many tourists call it the hub city. However it has also become known as the heroin capital of Canada. What a sad title to bestow on such a beautiful city.

My colleagues have referred to the drug problems of Vancouver's downtown east side and they were absolutely right to do so. There are very serious problems there. I remind the House that there are serious and equally devastating problems not only in a city like Nanaimo but throughout a thousand other cities and towns across the country.

We all know what the problem is. It is important that we start doing something about it. Our past actions have not been wrong. They were all well intentioned but for some reason do not seem to be working. We have had an escalation, a growing epidemic of illicit drug use across the country.

There are many other consequences beyond simply the non-medical drugs. Drugs are not free and profit is the motive for the drug dealers, be they at the local level or the major international players in the drug game. Another consequence involves both petty and major crimes and prostitution, including the exceedingly young. My heart breaks when I see young people 13 and 14 years of age trapped on the street. These are children. They are our future and their lives are being squandered and wasted in a life of drug abuse.

In 1996 the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse estimated that the economic cost of illegal drugs was \$1.37 billion or \$48 per capita. The largest cost, approximately \$823 million, was as a result of lost productivity due to illness and premature death. A substantial portion of the costs, \$400 million, was for law enforcement. Direct health costs due to illicit drugs were estimated at \$88 million. There was also the social cost of lost families whether through death, illness or retreat from society as a whole.

How many potentially great minds in the nation have been lost to the illegal use of non-medical drugs? Can we afford, financially or otherwise, to continue down this sordid path of human sorrow? Can we in all good conscience stand idly by and allow these problems to continue? I suggest not.

• (1540)

I believe George Eliot said it correctly when she said:

Failure after long perseverance is much grander than never to have a striving good enough to be called a failure.

Let us not fail for a lack of trying.

One of the issues arising out of today's debate is the medical use of marijuana. We all recognize that this is a contentious issue. When we refer to marijuana we often relate it to the criminal

*Supply*

element and the role it often plays in leading to other drugs. I personally do not dispute this but I do believe there is room in the debate for the medical use and research of marijuana, particularly in a non-smokable form, such as pills and inhalers. In turn, it should be treated like any other drug that is approved and regulated in Canada. The body of medical research appears to be showing that the medical use of marijuana can be most helpful for some diseases.

We should differentiate between the medical and the recreational or street use of marijuana. If there is a possibility of bona fide medically proven results then we should not close the door to this kind of help.

Earlier I mentioned that the motivating factor of profits is the drug world. From a personal perspective, I think we need to rethink how we approach the drug problem. The criminal element in our society is interested in only one thing and that is profits, not just small profits but obscene profits that have no regard for the waste of human lives and ongoing suffering. In simplistic terms, if we can remove the profit element we can reduce or ideally even eliminate many forms of non-medical drug use.

How do we do that? How do we remove the profits from the sales? I do not have the answer and that is why we need this kind of committee. It may be able to come up with some kind of innovative way to take the profit motive out of the drug scandal.

I am pleased to be part of the debate today. I hope the motion receives non-partisan support from right across the House, and that it will eventually lead to something being done about the most pressing problem among our young people today, which is the use of illicit drugs.

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his intervention. He mentioned the medical use of marijuana. One of the debatable points on that is that youth may get the wrong signal. They may think that if marijuana was fine for medical use, then maybe it would be fine in a more recreational form.

How would my hon. colleague prevent youth from getting the wrong signal from those who say that medical marijuana is just fine?

**Mr. Reed Elley:** Mr. Speaker, a distinction has to be made in our society, particularly when we are engaged in any kind of drug education with our young people.

Personally I do not believe that the recreational use of marijuana should be a legal activity in Canada. Studies show that the continued use of marijuana, particularly in a very heavy way, does lead to all kinds of physical consequences, such as a lack of concentration and brain damage of some kind that eventually leads to the person becoming a far less effective person.

However we also have to be able to say, and this is a basic philosophy, that all things created do have a good intention because that is the way the Creator meant it to be. We need to see the benefits of marijuana for medicinal purposes. We must also make it very clear to our young people that the continual recreational use of marijuana is very harmful to them.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan is actually entering the debate because he has firsthand experience from his past life of some of the results of the abuse of illicit drugs.

• (1545)

One should appeal to people who have had that experience as to why they are so involved in this particular debate. It is no accident that we are talking about setting up a special study committee for this particular subject. The problem is all around us. I wonder if the hon. member could explain perhaps in more detail just how in his family or in the families of his friends we could actually create a change in attitude toward the illicit use of drugs.

**Mr. Reed Elley:** Mr. Speaker, I do thank my hon. colleague for the question. It is true that in my former life I did have a great deal to do with people who were addicted to non-medical drugs. It is a very involved process. It means coming alongside people in critical situations and providing them with real reasons for, first of all, why they ought to live. In many cases people just simply do not want to live. We have to provide them with a reason for living.

That goes not only to the physical, but to the spiritual, to the emotional, to the whole person. I was very involved in helping people work those things through so that they did not have to become dependent upon a chemical substance to try to find the reason for living.

Also, as foster parents of aboriginal children, we are very well aware of the results, for instance, of fetal alcohol abuse and what happens in little lives when the mother drinks heavily during gestation. That little life, who never asked for that, is scarred by it forever.

Somehow we have to do something to help change the attitudes of people at a primary level so that they know life is worth living. Many times, I think, that is why people enter into this kind of thing.

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening closely to the debate. I congratulate the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan for his informed remarks.

I took note of the latter reference in the remarks to the medical use of marijuana, but I have to say that this is an infinitesimally

*Supply*

small piece of whatever this problem is. In the overall scheme of what we are dealing with today, marijuana has to be very low in priority. In my own personal view I am not too sure why it even shows up on the Richter scale. However, it is an illegal substance in our law now. Let us focus on the big picture.

We all know the costs of illegal drug use. There are of course the huge costs of lost lives, the policing costs, costs of prosecution in the courts and sentencing in our institutions, incarceration costs, rehabilitation costs, medical treatment costs, the costs of theft of goods, break and enters in homes, thefts of automobiles, the VCR, and the jewellery. How many grandmother's rings have been stolen in the last year by people stealing to pay for a drug habit? It is an epidemic.

There are also corruption costs. In some quarters our society is being undermined by the sheer corruption of the organized crime that drives the illegal drug trade. If left unchecked it will undermine our society, as it has some other societies around the world. It is insidious. So far we have been lucky but we should not take our luck for granted.

The costs of needle sharing are huge. One statistic I have here covers injection drug use, with all the harm it causes, such as overdosing, HIV, hepatitis and other communicable pathogens, suicides, abscesses, infections, poor nutrition and endocarditis.

• (1550)

An estimate for all the direct and indirect costs for only injection drug use is \$8.7 billion over a six year period. That is principally related to HIV-AIDS. The costs related to hepatitis C that comes from injection drug use are anticipated to overtake even the costs of treating HIV-AIDS over the years.

These are huge costs which we as a society are now bearing or are about to bear. I do not think anyone has truly added up the costs. Is there one minister in the House whose responsibility it is to add up the costs of illegal drug use? The Minister of Health will have a perspective. The solicitor general will have a perspective. The customs and revenue agency will have a perspective. There are a lot of perspectives.

My taxpayer constituents do not have the total number, but it is huge. I am sure most members in the House will agree with that. We do not even know what the total is. What cost do we put on a young life snuffed out by illegal drug use?

I maintain that we have to radically change the way we look at illegal drug use. We must radically change it because the methods we are using now are virtually the same methods we have used for the last 75 or 100 years. Essentially they involve criminalizing the use of certain drugs.

There will be some real restraints in changing the way we deal with this. I know that and most members of the House know that. I

am sure that by the end of this debate, maybe by the end of my own remarks, there may be some phone calls to my constituency office. I do not know. However, I am suggesting that we have to radically change the way we look at this if we are to make any progress as a society. I think we are afraid to change. Some of us are and some of us are not, but I think a lot of us are afraid to change the way we look at drugs.

There is another constraint. We as a country are bound into certain international treaties that oblige us to criminalize possession or use of certain drugs. We as a country are a good boy scout. We criminalize it, we prosecute it and we follow the other countries in these international conventions. That does not give us much freedom. We have to be bold and take the initiative. We do not have to reject the treaties, but we have to find ways to find new approaches.

Our neighbour to the south, the U.S.A., is a constraint, believe it or not. The way the U.S.A. treats this issue is the same way it has treated it for 75 or 100 years. It is based on enforcement and interdiction. That is not working. It is not working there and it is not working here. It is imported across our border just about the same way that a lot of other things are imported across our border. I am not talking about the drugs. I am talking about the policy, the method of enforcement.

It is difficult for us here to do things in a way that is radically different from the way policing and medical counterparts deal with it across the border, but we have to find a way to do it.

Lastly, we have to look at our own attitudes toward these drugs. Why do we criminalize certain drugs? Is it that the drug removes some degree of sobriety? Is it that individuals get a bit of a buzz with marijuana? Is that the evil thing? However, maybe that is the same thing that alcohol does. We do not criminalize alcohol.

Is it that some drugs are addictive? Is it evil because it is addictive? Possibly, but cigarette tobacco is addictive. It is just about as addictive as a drug can get. We do not criminalize tobacco, but we can identify the drug, it is addictive and we sell it in corner stores.

• (1555)

It is not intrinsically sobriety or addictedness that is the key to why we criminalize. I do not think we know why we criminalize certain drugs, but it is in our law and we just cannot change. However we have to, we must, find a way to break out of that paradigm. If we do not, we will not find any new solutions and we will stay on the same track we have been on since the years of prohibition.

I will suggest that we make a significant change. We do not have to throw the baby out with the bathwater. We will have to maintain strict laws and strict enforcement. For those who distribute, for those who create the stuff, for those who break the laws, we will

*Supply*

maintain strictness. We cannot forget that we are dealing with organized crime as a business. Organized crime is driving virtually the entire gamut of illegal drug use.

We must keep the dynamic in mind. The dynamic is not that people intrinsically as individuals walk out and seek addictive drugs. The problem is that a businessman, a criminal, is bringing in the drug and marketing it to the individual. That is the most important part of this dynamic.

Am I suggesting that we legalize drugs? No.

Mr. Speaker, I notice that you have been indicating the passage of time. It is not my intention to split my time. I would like to continue and if there is some time left perhaps my colleague could use that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Now that the parliamentary secretary has raised the prospect of whether or not he will split his time, I am in a bit of a dilemma. Either he will split, and there is very little time left, or he will not, the difference being that at that time I would recognize someone across the floor should someone wish to speak.

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I will continue speaking.

One of the reasons I will continue speaking is that this is an issue that I brought with me to the House when I was first elected in 1988. I believe that this is the first occasion I as a member have ever had, as a result of the motion being moved today, to address the entire package of the issue of the illegal use of drugs. It has been a long wait.

I think it is fair to say that when I first arrived here the political context was not right in the country to look at new approaches. I found significant political impediments in suggesting new approaches. People were well-meaning, but perhaps 12 or 15 years ago we did not grasp the significance of all of the evil and the costs involved.

Now I think our Canadian society has changed and the country may be ready. We are not sure. Therefore I am not going to suggest that we legalize anything. We do not have to legalize all illegal drug use. I am not even suggesting decriminalization.

The problem is much more serious than could be addressed by simple legalization or simple decriminalization. The reason it is more complex is that we are dealing with the business of organized crime. Whatever move society makes on the chessboard, organized crime will make a countermove. If we legalize, it will work with that. If we decriminalize, it will work with that.

• (1600)

As I look at this, it is my view that we should maintain our strict laws and enforcement of the illegal black marketing of drugs, the importation of them and the conspiracies to do that. I am not advocating any change in that.

What I advocate is what I call medicalization, not legalization, not decriminalization but medicalization. The principal aim is to remove the potential customer from organized crime. Society will get its best bang for the buck by doing this.

The main way we can do that is to recognize when individuals have become addicted and dependant on illegal drugs and as soon as they interface with our justice system or any of our institutions, medical or otherwise, divert them into a medically supervised program. I am not putting parameters on it or being specific about it. What I am saying is when people have become addicted to a drug and are dependent on it, they should be given that drug under medical supervision. At the same time they should also have access to whatever programming is available to get them off the drug and give them back their life. However they must have access to the drug. In some cases if they do get it they die or they do not make it very far. Those are difficult times. I will give a little comparison.

The average Canadian bears the costs of illegal drug use. We have the costs associated with home break-ins, stolen cars, medical costs of needle sharing and the spread of HIV-AIDS and hepatitis. There is also the heartbreak associated with individuals who have to steal and cheat to sustain an illegal drug habit. We could give them the drug for \$5, a drug that would cost them \$1,000 or \$2,000. In other words, medicalize it and bring them into the system.

I recall a friend of mine in the United States took a slightly more liberal view. He said that we should give them a barrel of the drug, then the person would be satisfied. We have to go further than that. We have to realize that an addicted person is essentially a sick person. A drug dependant person needs continuing medical care.

The essential part of this solution, and I hope it is a solution, is to divert the customer of the organized criminal into the medical system and make the drug easily available to the person through a medical doctor's supervision. Maybe the medical doctor could switch the drug from A to B to C, but the doctor's goal would be to service the person's addiction, while at the same time moving that person off the drug dependency.

We are all aware of the methadone treatment programs. Some of these programs work and some do not. However there are many other ways to approach the challenge of moving people away from addiction. We are still experimenting. Federal tax dollars are supporting pilot projects now. Huge dollars are being spent by provincial governments for the same thing. I am not so sure we have added up all the money, as I said earlier, but that is now going on across Canadian society.

• (1605)

We must take away the customer from organized crime. We could ascribe a societal dollar cost to every person who is

*Supply*

dependent on illegal drug use, let us say \$10,000, \$50,000 or \$100,000 a year because the costs are huge. We could medicalize the addiction which would stop them from purchasing drugs from organized crime. We would then greatly reduce the direct or indirect costs. I point out that in many cases the medicalization would be there anyway, but it would be done in a much more targeted way for the individual.

I will reiterate the term that I used which is medicalization. It is absolutely essential for Canadians through their government to compete against the ugly, evil organized crime. We have to take away its customers and profits. That will reduce the cost to our society.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member a couple of questions that have to do with the medicalization and the treatment of drug addicts. There is some merit in the suggestions that he made.

However the assumption underlying the treatment of addicts and the medicalization of drugs starts somewhere. If we help these people get off the addiction that is useful. However what about creating a program that would help them not to get started in the first place. It seems to me we are dealing with a symptom of a deeper problem. Could he address that problem?

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite right. Prevention is a heck of a lot easier and a whole lot cheaper than the cure. We have ongoing drug education programs in schools and various other fora across the country. We spend taxpayer money now doing that. However we are failing. It is not working.

The hon. member would not be far off if he is saying that we should spend more money on it and put more resources into it. I would agree with him 100%. More resources for drug education and a preventative initiative would help a lot.

There has been some drug education since I was a kid in grade school up to now, but we could do more. However we are failing and I do not want to fail any more.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I was glad to hear the remarks of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader. I know this is an issue that he and all members of the House take very seriously.

My question for him though deals with the issue of priorities. He spoke of his own personal view of this issue as it being something that necessitates government attention, that necessitates the focus of all the stakeholders, such as health and justice officials.

Not to sound too partisan but why has it taken opposition motions to get the government to recognize some of these priorities? Whether it be issues of foot and mouth disease, agricultural, water safety or justice, why is it that it takes the opposition to motivate the government to take the initiative to address some of these issues that appear to be so apparent and so obvious? Welcome to the bandwagon.

• (1610)

Why has his government not taken the initiative on something like this in the past? It is going on in the other place, but the opposition appears to be the only one able to raise these issues in the House of Commons to the extent that the government is prepared to take notice and more important, take action.

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member of the opposition who moved this motion. I congratulate members of all parties for participating in the debate. Government members will speak to this issue from various perspectives.

As a member on the government side, I have to acknowledge that governments tend to get stuck in the status quo. I mentioned earlier the obstacles of changing attitudes in relation to fighting the problem of illegal drugs. The government is locked into treaties and the current drug enforcement initiatives. Things are going on. The government is working at it.

Who in the government or in the House has been charged with the challenge of finding a new way to deal with it? Who is going to admit that we are failing? That does not happen often. We are unlikely to find a minister who will stand in the House or anywhere and say that the government is failing at something. Our marks are low and we can do more. I am reasonably confident we will do more.

I have been in the House for 12 years and this is the first time I have had an opportunity to address this issue head on and as comprehensively. I sat in opposition for five of those twelve years.

Not one member of the House, not one opposition party nor not necessarily the governing party, but the whole House will have an opportunity to deal with this issue by way of a vote. This may move the yardsticks in a way that we have not moved them before. I am grateful for that opportunity.

**Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his remarks. I know that this is something that is very dear to him.

He made a comment about the marijuana problem being infinitesimal, that it was a trivial part of this whole issue. I am not sure if he was referring to the medicinal use of marijuana or the recreational use.

If he was to make a trip out to my part of the country on the west coast he could take a look at the grow ops. We have one grow op pop up every day in my city of Surrey alone. One pound of marijuana goes south across the border and comes back as a pound of cocaine. Marijuana is a monstrous issue out there because of the involvement of organized crime. The cash involved fuels organized crime. It is anything but a trivial issue when it comes to that.

*Supply*

Would he care to clarify his comments?

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I do not underestimate for a moment the amount of money involved in illegal marijuana growing and trafficking. However we cannot convert marijuana to cocaine.

I understand the member's analogy about what goes out and what comes back. However people who use marijuana do not inject the drug. The basic marijuana usage we are thinking about in this issue does not involve addiction or injection drugs.

I am wildly speculating, but if marijuana is for recreational use and not addictive then people are paying for it with their spare change and are paying for it on the black market. However they are not stealing to support their recreational use of marijuana. I am making assumptions that I cannot back up.

When I talk about all of the costs of illegal drug use, I was talking about billions of dollars of direct and indirect costs. The marijuana component of growing and selling on the black market may be part of the big organized crime picture, but in terms of its actual total piece of the whole, in my view it is small.

• (1615)

We may learn more if this committee is put in place. I may learn a great deal. I respect the views that the hon. member has indicated, that the organized crime element of marijuana is big, because it is illegal, because it has been criminalized. If we were to decriminalize it, if it had no addictive properties, if it were treated like tobacco, it would not even be criminalized. It would not show up on the Richter scale. It would be a cash crop.

I will leave it there. I may say too much. The phone may be ringing, as I said.

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to enter this debate because I think this is a very significant subject. The honour of it really is to have the support of the Minister of Health, to have the support of the hon. secretary and to recognize that virtually everyone in the House is on the same page on this one. I find that very rewarding and very significant.

At the same time, however, it seems to me to be a rather interesting phenomenon that this problem has been talked about since at least 1986, when a set of policies was created by the then Conservative government. There was a further policy development by the Liberal government following that. We have been talking about it for 15 or 20 years and nothing seems to have been done about it. It seems to me that we need to look at this a little differently and ask why not.

The hon. member from the Conservative Party just raised the question: why is it that if the problem is so significant the only way it gets to see the light of day is through an opposition party raising

it on a supply day motion? If it is so important, why is that the case?

It seems to me there are several reasons. First, I think as a society we need to recognize that in order to really deal with the problem we have to analyze the dynamics of a social change, because what we are dealing with here is a social change, a lifestyle change.

My hon. colleague from Surrey North mentioned this marijuana business and said that it is an infinitesimal part of the drug trade. It is not. It is very significant. In British Columbia, of course, we grow very high quality marijuana. In fact it is so good that a pound of marijuana goes south into the United States and there is exchanged pound for pound for cocaine. Cocaine is far more addictive than marijuana, but the marijuana has that kind of life.

I am not an advocate of drug use in one way or another. In fact I despise tobacco. I think it is a terrible addiction that we have, but we have it. In order to change that, we have to change our society. It used to be socially unacceptable to smoke. It is not any more and we have accepted that. It is not a criminal act. However it is a criminal act to smoke marijuana.

It seems to me that as a society we have to decide what shall be criminal and what shall not be criminal. There are three parts to this that we need to recognize. First we have to recognize what problem we are facing with this business of drug use. What is the problem? It seems to me we have had ample demonstration of what the problem is. Our young people are using it. Our adults are using it. The incidence of the use of the drug is increasing. That is the problem. Why is it a problem? Obviously somebody does not want people to do this. If all of us wanted them to take drugs, it would not be a problem. We would not be talking about it. Clearly we have recognized it as a problem.

Next, if it is a problem, whose problem is it? Is it your problem, Mr. Speaker? Is it the Prime Minister's problem? Is it the government's problem? Is it our problem? Is it the parents' problem? Is it the kids' problem? Is it the teachers' problem?

One thing is sure. If it is no one's problem no one is going to do anything about it. If we are constantly pointing the finger at someone else and saying "That is your problem, so you go do something about that", what happens? We will not do anything about it. If we point the finger elsewhere then nothing is going to happen either. As long as there is an exercise like that going on, nothing will change.

• (1620)

It seems to me that we first need to recognize what the problem is and then recognize whose problem it is. Knowing that, we can then understand the situation and finally accept it. Until we do those things we will do nothing. We will talk about it forever.



The official opposition brought to the attention of the House a motion today which says that we should form a special committee to study the drug problem seriously with a view to examining the whole gamut of the issue. It is not easy.

Just recently I attended the Civitas conference here in Ottawa. It was a think tank conference, part of which involved a debate on whether we should keep the criminalization of drugs or decriminalize drugs. There were excellent debates on both sides of the issue.

What came out of the debate was a recognition that all of us need to be far better informed as to what the real issues are. Certainly there is a criminal element to it. Organized crime is involved. Also, there is a predilection to seek pleasure versus anything else and to do whatever one can to invoke the hedonistic tendency that all human beings have. We need to clearly understand the implications.

I think the hon. member mentioned in his remarks that there has been drug education in the schools. Yes, there has been a very complete exposé of what drugs will do to these kids. What has it done? It has not resulted in a decrease in the use of drugs. It has done the opposite.

I remember being asked, as the principal of a school a long time ago, if I would become part of a pilot project on drug education. I quickly did some research in schools where this took place. I compared the incidence of drug use in schools where the program had been implemented with that of schools where it had not been implemented. Guess what? The incidence was directly related to the degree to which the drug program had been implemented in that school. There was a direct increase.

We told the kids more about drugs, so guess what they did? They practised. Their curiosity was stimulated and they said "Gee, if it is that much fun maybe we should try it". Little did they realize that these drugs are extremely addictive, particularly some of the harder drugs. Then of course there are other abuses that take place. For example they put some kind of drug in a bottle of Coke and drive each other nuts. They do this. They play tricks on each other, sometimes to the great chagrin and terror of the victim.

Clearly drug education, or education about drugs, which is really what it amounts to, is not the answer. It does not do anything.

The first thing we have to do if we are really serious about making a change is know what we are dealing with. What is this drug phenomenon that people are subjecting themselves to? The second thing we have to do is understand what drugs do to people, how they are addictive and what can possibly be done to combat them. Finally people have to say "I understand what it is, I accept that it is my problem, my issue, and I have to make a decision".

### *Supply*

I think the hon. member recognizes it is probably more important to have preventive programs than it is to have rehabilitative and treatment programs. No one becomes a drug addict without making a choice to take drugs. That choice had to be made first. It is a matter of choice and if it is a matter of choice, we also know that we are dealing with morals or morality. Choice is determined by the value structure that one holds. If we get into that kind of debate, can we imagine where it would take us? I am not surprised that the Liberal government seems to first test which way the wind is blowing and then decides what the value is, rather than deciding what its principles are in the first place.

We need to recognize that it is essentially a moral choice in the first instance. We then have to move from there. There are people who will argue that all we have to do is have good laws and everything will be fine. I do not know of a single law that has made people good, but I know of a lot of good laws that have been made by good people. There is a fundamental difference. Let us not ever deceive ourselves by thinking that making good laws will make people good. It will do nothing of the kind.

• (1625)

However, if we do have laws, and we do, we had better make sure those laws are observed and that the people who break those laws are dealt with in an appropriate, fair and equitable way. The consequences have to be strong enough that the rewards for breaking the law are not greater than the consequences. That is what is happening now.

For example, I know RCMP officers who pick up these marijuana growers in Kelowna. There are a lot of growers there. These people who break the law and grow marijuana do all kinds of things besides that. They produce a drug that is illegal in the first instance, but they also break the utilities law and a lot of other stuff. They get fined \$2,500 for doing it. For an enterprise that generates something like \$200,000 to \$500,000 a year, \$2,500 is just a good business licence. They will not quit. They will keep doing it. There are no serious consequences.

When we do this kind of thing we really create an environment that says to criminals it is okay if they break the law because after all it is just the way things are and society really does not frown on it too much, so they can keep on doing it.

The thing that scares me more than anything else is that there seems to be a syndrome developing that if it is legal it is right. It could be legal, but it could be extremely immoral and false. An example is the Feeney case. Members will probably remember it. A man killed an individual and left a trail of blood. The police followed the trail of blood to a mobile home. They went in and asked the individual if he killed the man. He said yes and showed

*Supply*

them the bar he did it with. The police took him to headquarters and charged him with murder. They took him to court. The judge asked if the police had a warrant. The police officer said no. The judge said that then the individual did not commit the crime, that he could not be convicted on that basis. What a miscarriage of justice, what a miscarriage of truth.

I want to refer to one of the chief justices here in Canada, Justice L'Heureux-Dubé. At the 26th Canadian criminal justice congress in Ottawa in 1997 she said that "the search for truth is the very purpose of criminal justice".

In this case, the Feeney case, truth was completely subject to a legal process. It had nothing to do with justice. That is the kind of thing that is happening in regard to the enforcement of drugs and it is happening in other cases as well.

There is another case that is extremely significant in connection with this. It has to do with drugs. In 1997 in Ontario a judge decided that a principal's authority extended to searches of students suspected of bringing drugs to school. However, giving his good sense some time off, the judge then added, but not if the principal enlists the aid of a police officer. The good judge was pronouncing on a case in which a crime stopper tip alerted police to a student who had put drugs in the pocket of his red jacket to smuggle into his high school. An officer visited the principal and together they checked the student's locker. There was no red jacket. The pair proceeded to the gym where they saw the red jacket and spoke to the student. Knowing the game was up, he said "You'll find it in that pocket in my jacket". They did.

● (1630)

However the mere presence of a policeman stuck in the judge's craw. Moreover no cautions were given. There was no suggestion to the student of his right to counsel, et cetera. The evidence of both words and drugs were suppressed and the student was acquitted.

Where is the truth? Where is the commitment to decency and justice? The kids and the parents know it. The teachers and principal know it. These are the things we have to deal with. These are not matters of law. These are matters of choice to go in a certain direction.

A high school principal can proceed on mere suspicion but a police officer cannot. We pay officers to enforce the laws and then hobble them more than someone we pay to administer a place of learning. As for drugs, not to mention knives in our schools, this is scary stuff and becoming pretty common.

Not long ago, in fact it was 20 years exactly, at the Victoria Composite High School in Edmonton we had a student that walked

down the hallway, lifted his pant leg, pulled out a knife and stabbed a fellow student. What do we have coming?

I have another case. It involves two caring parents; their son George, aged 14; the accused John, a young 15 year old stray; and a judge who knew more than enough charter law. John had left his home and was kindly allowed by George's mom and dad to stay in their home. In 1996 George and John donned masks and armed with knives robbed a convenience store in Etobicoke, Ontario. As they were fleeing, George dropped his wallet near the store. This brought officers to call on his parents. George's mother made sure that George had a chat with the officers who produced the wallet. He admitted to the robbery and implicated John as well.

John was questioned. Knowing George had ratted on him, John told the officer that it was not a balaclava; they were wearing stockings. Months later he was videotaped by police telling all. He also agreed to testify against George in a plea bargain and was subsequently let go with 18 months of probation.

In 1997 George went to trial with two strikes against him but the judge excluded his confession saying that George had felt intimidated by the officers. Next the judge rejected John's evidence against George, which he held to be a derivative of George's conscripted admission, that is John would not have tattled on his pal if George had not first got them both into trouble. George went free.

Now back to George's mother who had ensured that her son co-operated with the officers. Did she believe that it would have been better for her son to face the music, pay his social debt and get on with his life, or did she agree that the charter knew better?

I did not write this book. It was written by Alex MacDonald who used to be the attorney general of British Columbia. He called his book *Outrage: Canada's Justice System on Trial*. He says that we do not have a justice system in Canada, that we have a legal system. He talks about the prodigal law and he says that the justice system, the legal system, expands to fill the time and money available. Where is the truth?

These are the kinds of things that terrify me. It is one of the main reasons I am here. We have to get to the point where we recognize that human beings make decisions. We as human beings make decisions and choices. I am so concerned that we concentrate on whether we are Liberal, Conservative, NDP or whatever rather than on getting to the point where we agree that the time has come for us to share a common set of values. In that common set of values there should be things like character so that individuals will clearly distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, so that there will be a commitment to courage and duty.

How many times do we find in this place that we consider it a duty to serve on a committee or a duty to be present for a vote, or whatever the case might be?

• (1635)

It is almost as if we are forced into doing it. The whip has to whip us into place. That should not be necessary. Out of 30 million people in Canada, there are 301 of us charged with the responsibility of looking after their interests, to push back the walls of evil and to make sure there is a law that will allow people to feel protected and secure to walk down the streets safely without worry.

Canadians trust us to do that. It is our duty to do that and we should have the courage to stand and say that some things are wrong. There is something very seriously wrong when we reward the results of crime to a greater degree than the results of doing what is right. That is what is happening. We protect the criminal more than we do the victim. It is backward and as long as we have that kind of process we will not resolve the drug problem.

My appeal to all members is that we set up the special committee and that we empower it to obtain all possible resources so that we can analyze this problem and then have the courage to deal with it because that is our duty.

**Ms. Aileen Carroll (Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's drug strategy reflects a balance between reducing the supply of drugs and reducing the demand for drugs. Drugs affect every country in the world. Problems associated with substance abuse, production of illicit drugs and drug trafficking cause harm to individuals, families and communities. Only through the co-ordinated action at the national and international levels can we reduce the demand, illicit supply and trafficking of drugs.

Canada's drug strategy involves 11 federal departments, provincial and territorial governments, addiction agencies, non-governmental organizations, professional associations, law enforcement agencies, and community and private sector groups. It is a co-ordinated effort to reduce the harm associated with abusive drugs, alcohol and other substances. The strategy is based on four pillars: prevention, enforcement and control, treatment and rehabilitation, and harm reduction.

Through prevention we seek to prevent individuals from falling prey to substance abuse. Through enforcement and control we seek to prevent these substances from falling into the hands of the wrong people. Through treatment and rehabilitation we seek to help those who have a substance abuse problem to overcome the problem. Through harm reduction we seek to prevent the problems of disease, illness and community malaise that often go hand in hand with substance abuse.

Harm associated with substance abuse can be physical, psychological, societal and/or economic. Substance abuse is primarily a health issue, not simply an enforcement issue. Reducing the harm is considered to be realistic, pragmatic and a humane approach as opposed to attempting solely to reduce the supply of drugs.

### *Supply*

The Government of Canada believes that a reduction of the harm can be achieved by a number of initiatives: first, by increasing the understanding of the risks associated with illicit drug use, particularly among young people; second, by reducing high risk patterns of alcohol and other drug use; and, third, by identifying and promoting best practices in substance abuse prevention, education, treatment and rehabilitation.

We are aiming at the illegal importation of illicit drugs and reducing that importation. We are hoping to reduce the availability of illicit drugs on the streets. We are reducing the ability of persons involved in the supply and trafficking of drugs to make use of the profits from their illegal activities.

It is not a simple response and it involves 11 departments in Canada's drug strategy. We are taking action on all those fronts. Canada's legislative framework is the backbone of our approach to drug control. Three international conventions guide domestic legislation, enforcement and control. They are: the 1961 single convention on narcotic drugs and its 1972 protocol; the 1971 convention on psychotropic substances; and the 1988 convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

• (1640)

Canada's legislation controls the import, production, export, distribution, possession and use of psychoactive substances that can result in harm when distributed or used without controls. The law also provides mechanisms to ensure that the export, import, production, distribution, possession and use of internationally regulated substances are confined to medical, scientific and industrial purposes.

In 1997 Canada proclaimed in force the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act which modernized and consolidated the existing legislation and provided enforcement agencies with additional tools necessary to combat illicit drug related activity.

The alcohol and drug treatment and rehabilitation program, ADTR, is another element that supports the Government of Canada's efforts to reduce the harm associated with alcohol and other drugs for individuals, families and their communities. Through this program, provincial and territorial governments have access to funding so they can improve accessibility to effective alcohol and drug treatment and rehab programs and services. Youth and women are major target groups for services funded under ADTR.

[*Translation*]

Canada places a high priority on international co-operation and recognizes the need for a co-ordinated international response in order to address the global problem.

*Supply*

International co-operation through the United Nations international drug control program, UNDCP, and the inter-american drug abuse control commission, CICAD, are the main elements of Canada's international drug control activities.

Canada's annual contributions are \$1.5 million to the UNDCP and \$600,000 to CICAD. Our activities internationally mirror the balanced approach taken domestically.

Canada took the lead in the development of a Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, or the MEM, as it is commonly known, which was agreed to in September 1999 at a meeting of a working group chaired by Canada's former deputy solicitor general, Jean Fournier, in Ottawa.

The first implementation round of the MEM began soon thereafter. The first reports from the MEM were submitted to leaders at the summit of the Americas in Quebec City, in 2001, and were well received.

[*English*]

The growth of drug abuse in many jurisdictions and the impact of trafficking and associated criminality have strained the resources of many countries in the hemisphere that are seeking technical assistance and training to develop the health, social and law enforcement infrastructure to deal with the problem. Canada provides assistance to countries in the region through bilateral programs of the RCMP, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Health Canada, Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Department of Justice. Canada also monitors and reviews experiences and innovations in other countries to assess the potential for applying new approaches here in Canada.

Canada's drug strategy is continually evolving. The types and nature of substance abuse problems change as does the national and international environment. Responses to Canada's drug problems, and our efforts on both demand reduction and supply reduction, are reassessed on a regular basis to ensure continued relevance and appropriateness.

• (1645)

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, before I get into my speech I would like to say something about what is happening in my family at this moment. My daughter-in-law, Lainy and my son Dan are in the process of delivering a child. This will be our fifth grandchild and somehow I have a feeling that Lainy is doing most of the work. I am very excited and just waiting for the phone call to find out how things are going.

With that in mind, the topic today is for my grandchildren and perhaps for other members' grandchildren. This is about the future of the children of Canada.

I would like to gently scold the government for half a second. I happened to note in an exchange a few moments ago between the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough of the Progressive Conservatives and the Liberal member for Scarborough—Rouge River. The Conservative member was absolutely correct in pointing out that this is not a Liberal initiative. It is a shame because this is a serious problem and perhaps the government does need to be prodded. The government should be more focused on the future of our children. I commend the member for Langley—Abbotsford who has been absolutely tireless on this issue.

The motion is that a special committee of the House be appointed to consider the factors underlying or relating to the non-medical use of drugs in Canada and make recommendations with respect to the ways or means by which the government can act alone or in its relations with the governments at other levels in the reduction of the dimension of the problem involved in such use. This is a scourge and is a tremendously serious problem for us within our society.

Illicit drug use contributes to crime and law enforcement costs in several ways. It also breaks down much of the fabric of our society.

However with respect to the costs, first there are the costs of enforcing drug laws. Second, chronic or dependent use of so-called hard drugs, like heroin, cocaine, crack, speed, LSD and other strong hallucinogens, is often implicated as a contributory cause of property crime particularly burglary and theft. Third, drug use contributes to crimes of violence. Assault, homicide and other crimes of violence have resulted from turf wars in the illicit drug market. Illicit drug users are disproportionately involved in incidences of spousal and child abuse. Even cannabis has been implicated as a contributory cause of crime with regard to impaired driving.

Criminal offenders have disproportionately high rates of illicit drug use. Up to 80% of offenders report using illicit drugs during their lifetime. That is an important number. There is a connection there. We cannot get away from it. Fifty to seventy-five per cent show traces of drugs in their urine at the time of arrest and close to 30% were under the influence of drugs when they committed the crime for which they were accused.

Drug addicts committed to treatment often have criminal records. There is clearly a relationship between illicit drug use and crime but it is not always casual. The fact that a crime is committed by someone using illicit drugs does not necessarily mean that the drug use caused the crime to be committed. However there are several plausible casual connections between drugs and crime.

First, there is the pharmacological effects of the drugs. Each drug has its own track, its own trace and its own way of impacting the drug user. There is a relationship between drug consumption and violence for certain illicit drugs. Cocaine, other stimulants and

PCP could induce violence by the loss of ego control, deterioration of judgement, induction of irritability and impulsiveness or the production of paranoid thoughts.

• (1650)

Second, there is a need for addicts to commit crimes to support their drug use. There is some argument that it is part of a drug culture, but when people become addicted to heroin and cocaine, they are unresponsive or their consumption of the drug is totally unresponsive to price. They simply go out and do more break and enters, or do more property offences or perhaps even become involved violently with people.

Third, addicts adopt a deviant way of life that accounts for both their drug use and their criminal behaviour. As I mentioned before, there is a relationship between those things.

Fourth, crime results from systemic violence inherent in the illicit drug trade. We are familiar with different turf wars that occasionally happen. We are also familiar with the fact that in many very strong ethnic communities in Canada, people who have come to Canada to build a better life for themselves and for their children are preyed upon by others within their own ethnic community who are involved in the drug trade. It is a very serious problem for law-abiding citizens, no matter what their origin.

There are police costs. According to figures I have in front of me, in 1992 the attributed costs of policing were estimated at \$208.3 million for illicit drugs and approximately \$168 million was expended on the enforcement of drug laws per se.

There are court costs. There are correction costs because the people involved in these property offences and other things end up being put away.

Finally, there is the issue of customs and excise and the costs involved there. Obviously we have to have borders that to the best of our ability will interdict the flow of drugs in and out of Canada.

Now, speaking of in and out of Canada, let me read a paragraph from the city of Toronto Drug Prevention Centre's article about the truth about marijuana. It says:

According to population surveys, past year cannabis use among Toronto adults remained relatively stable in 1999 at about 10%. Among Toronto students, past year use of cannabis increased from 9% in 1993 to 18% in 1995, levelling off at 19% in 1997. The 1999 survey found past-year cannabis use among 26% of junior high and senior high school students in Toronto, the highest rate reported since the survey started in 1994.

In 1998 almost one in five, or 18%, of drug treatment clients cited cannabis as a problematic substance.

The truth about marijuana is that it is not the innocuous substance that many of our hippie generation grew up with. The truth about marijuana is that it is cultivated and has a potency that

### *Supply*

was absolutely unimagined before. The truth about cannabis is that it has the potential to create tremendous serious societal problems.

Let me conclude with this statement. Often young users come from a background of poverty, physical and sexual abuse and substance misuse, particularly alcohol. Even before any influence by their peers, they are very much at risk of developing problems with alcohol or drugs. Experimentation with drugs and altered states of consciousness can start out innocently and often does not lead to harm. However young people can develop severe drug dependence and can be suddenly forced to navigate a complex, criminal environment to obtain the substance they are physically dependent upon to make it through each day.

I am sure the motion by the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford will be supported by all members because it is with the young people of Canada, it is with the very basis of our Canadian society that we must wrestle with these problems, and the buck stops here.

• (1655)

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for South Shore, the Lumber Industry.

**Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and to speak in support of the motion.

As we heard from my colleague from Kootenay—Columbia, we have heard many statistics, many studies and many comments, and those certainly have their place in the debate. It gives us some kind of an indication of the scope of the problem when we refer to numbers. Unfortunately, numbers tend to make things cold and impersonal. Human lives are reduced to numbers through statistics. We can never lose sight of the human element in the debate.

I would like to just take a bit of time to make a few comments on my personal experiences with some of these issues.

I recall back to November 4, 1992 when I was watching the evening news in B.C. There was a report about a double homicide in Cloverdale, B.C., which is a community in my city of Surrey. As the report unfolded, we knew that two women had been murdered. That developed over the next couple of days. I recall a couple of days later seeing on the news again a gentleman who was red eyed and crying. He was the father of one of the women.

Unfortunately, I and my family were recoiling at that time from a very specific traumatizing incident two weeks prior to that. I had the man's name so I took it upon myself to find his number and call him. I told him if he ever wanted to talk to let me know. It is an

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awful way to meet people but Bob and Pat are now among some of my closest friends.

As the story developed, those two women, and I will not name them, shared a house in Cloverdale. One lived downstairs in her basement suite with her three children and one lived upstairs by herself. A gentleman friend of the upstairs tenant paid her a visit. An argument developed over something and eventually he pulled out a knife and stabbed her. The lady in the basement, not knowing what was going on, went upstairs to see what all the ruckus was about. He stabbed her on his way out. The lady upstairs died instantly. The lady downstairs managed to make it out to the street.

The other element in this is that the lady downstairs had three children. Two of those kids were in school that day and that is where they found out what happened to their mother. The four year old was at home and saw the whole thing.

This is how this ties into the debate. When the case was investigated and was before the court, it was discovered that the gentleman friend was stoned on cocaine. He used the defence of cocaine psychosis. In other words, he said he blacked out and did not know what he was doing. Two minutes later there were two women dead as he ran out of the house.

My friend talked about our generation. There was a song by a group back in the sixties called *I Got Stoned and I Missed It*. I do not buy that kind of defence. We could get into a whole debate about what is an adequate or acceptable defence for killing people and whether cocaine or alcohol intoxication is valid, but that is a debate for another day.

The point is two women are dead, three children are without a mother and one of those children will be completely traumatized for the rest of his life because at four years old he saw his mother stabbed to death. All because of what? Cocaine, an illicit drug. That is part of the human side.

Members in this place have quite frequently heard me talk about how I like to ride along with the RCMP in my community of Surrey. I encourage all members to do the same, not just to have a cup of coffee with them for an hour and talk shop, but to get in the right-hand seat of a police cruiser and spend 12 or 14 hours overnight on a Friday or Saturday. These are usually pretty good nights to find out what goes on in the streets. I try to do that every couple of months with my detachment.

I have had a couple of experiences. It tends to be fairly routine most nights but every once in a while something comes along. I recall one time about a year and a half ago when we got a call very early in the evening about a shoplifter in a supermarket. When we responded to the call the security guard was holding a woman in her mid-thirties with no identification who had stolen three cans of Enfalac, baby formula, a hand puppet and a few little things.

• (1700)

As we questioned her we found out that her welfare cheque had not come and there was no food in the house for the baby. When the officer ran her name through police records he discovered she was on probation and was not supposed to be within 100 metres of the store. She was in breach of her probation.

What could the officer do? Where was the baby? The baby was at the drug recovery house where the mother had been living for nine months. The woman's husband was minding the baby. He was able to visit on weekends because he lived in another drug recovery house.

What could we do? Did the police officer breach her, which means take her to jail right away? No, he did not. He tried to help her and give her a break. The woman was taken to the house where the father, himself a recovering drug addict, was with the six month old child.

The police officer wrote her up and made her promise to appear at the police station the following morning and to appear in court about a month later. He lectured her. I gave her a piece of my mind and told her she was not doing her baby any good. I told her that people were trying to help her. The police officer could have taken her straight to jail but he did not.

I came back to Ottawa. About a month later I received a call from the police officer. The woman had never showed up at the police station and never showed up at court. There is now a double warrant for her arrest. What will happen to the child? That is my concern. Another young child will now go into foster care as a ward of the state. The whole vicious cycle will start over again because of drugs.

What should be done? I could take a hard line against the mother and say we should refuse to help such people. I could say that we give them all the help in the world but they do not want to take it and we should finally say enough is enough. However I am more concerned about the child because we have started the cycle all over again.

It is all too easy to make such judgments, especially if one has never seen how it is on the street. People here should look at the downtown east side of Vancouver or the core of Whalley in Surrey and see the junkies. They are called junkies and losers. I can tell hon. members that they are not. They have problems.

I was on a call one night, again on a ride along, to a house where a man had found his brother dead on the kitchen floor with a syringe beside him. He was in terrible shape. He was skinny, scrawny and dirty. I stood and looked at him and knew he was someone's son. It was the brother who called us. Let us never lose sight of that. We are not dealing with losers. We are dealing with people who have problems and we must do what we can to help them. Some want to be helped and will be helped. Others do not and we must deal with them too. They are all someone's kids.

I have kids of my own. The most traumatic incident in my life was the murder of my son. It was drug related. My son was not involved in drugs but the six people who attacked him and his friends that night were stoned. They had been doing drugs all day long. That is the human side of the issue.

I sense in this place a real mood of co-operation to do something about this issue. We all have different ideas, philosophies and approaches as to what should be done. However it is high time to bring those differences to the table, talk them out and do something. The country cannot take it any more.

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I have an opportunity to speak about a topic that has generated enormous debate in the country. I congratulate the member for Langley—Abbotsford who has spent a lot of time on the issue and has brought it before the House today. For those who might have just tuned in this is a motion to review Canada's laws regarding illicit drugs.

I will talk about the issue from the perspective of someone who has had a stethoscope around his neck for much of his life.

• (1705)

I will take on the human component of this as well, as my colleague did. I will talk about some of the experiences I had with the treatment end of drug problems and reflect upon how I think there is a need for a fresh look at what Canada is doing with its drug laws.

I will start by talking about a jurisdictional issue. This is reflective of the different positions of Canada and our large neighbour to the south. I noted this week that the U.S. supreme court has taken a specific stand on the medical use of marijuana. The supreme court said there is no redeeming value to marijuana for medical purposes.

Here in Canada we have taken a different approach. We are trying to figure out what diseases are helped by marijuana. This is a significantly different approach. My own feeling is that as a physician I was able to use the strongest painkillers available for those who were ill, especially at the end of life as palliative care for those with cancer and very serious illnesses. I could use heroin. Everyone said that was reasonable because it was being used for a specific purpose.

I feel that if marijuana is the only thing that will help people with a serious disease at the end of their lives it is reasonable to use it. I do not think smoking marijuana is ideal for this. Research has been done to get marijuana in different forms, forms that will allow it to be used in a waxy capsule or even used like the Nicorette patch. In my mind that is reasonable. For end of life issues, for palliative care, for severe problems when no other medication works, I do believe that there is room for the medical use of marijuana.

### *Supply*

However, what happens if our big neighbour to the south says "Forget that. That will not happen in the U.S."? What might Americans do who are living close to the border, have a severe illness and feel that marijuana is the only thing that will help? They might well come to Canada. They might well cross the border. In a sense, they might end up putting some strain on our medical system here.

I bring that up because I think it is very important in regard to jurisdictional issues that we do not forget what is happening nearby. We could end up with major problems if we forget that.

There is one debate I have been involved in and have listened to both sides of it. Some say that softer penalties for drugs would make sense. In some cases that is a compelling argument, because I think an intelligent individual looking at the drug issue in Canada would say that we have not made huge progress. I am now stepping a little bit into what I think the debate in this committee might be.

What about the argument that softer drug laws would be of benefit? To get a sense of that answer, I look at places where this has been tried. It is possible to look at other jurisdictions. In some parts of Europe the penalties for drug use are substantially different.

There is a jurisdiction fairly close to home that gives me some sense of what might happen. In Alaska, the home of the free, the home of "don't tell me what to do", they decided that the penalty for marijuana use would be virtually zero for adults. There would be no criminal penalty, no fine, nothing. If an adult wanted to smoke marijuana in Alaska not so long ago, have it was the attitude. That is the pioneer spirit, is it not, from the frontier? Yukon is the jurisdiction close at hand. Both of these jurisdictions are similar. They are fairly isolated and the populations are similar. A comparison of the two was done 10 years later. The use of marijuana in the adolescent population doubled in Alaska compared to Yukon, so it became obvious that this approach in that location was not a great success. I have heard individuals argue and debate that those are just straight statistics. From my perspective, to simply make it easier for kids to get an illicit drug is not the answer at least in that locale. I am not convinced that is the solution.

• (1710)

I will give another specific example from my own experience. In my little black bag I used to carry a medication called Demerol. I had little vials of it with me all the time. The proper chemical name for it is Meperidine. I would take it on house calls. If people broke a leg, for example, I could give them a shot of Demerol and they would be more comfortable going in the ambulance. It was thought to be fair and reasonable for me to do that. Demerol is very

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inexpensive to buy. I needed a triplicate prescription to get a supply and kept it with me.

It is a powerful, inexpensive narcotic. What is it worth on the street? It is not worth \$10 for a big vial of Demerol. It is worth \$1,000, plus or minus. Why is that? It is not available on the street. It is a potent narcotic. It is very close to heroin in its effects and so it is very popular.

The only way to get Demerol on the street is to break into a pharmacy or swipe it from a physician's black bag or get it from the manufacturer. There are other ways. There are people who wear the cloak of physician who dispense it. It gets out on the street in that way.

I use it as an example because it is an inexpensive medicine used for legitimate purposes which is very valuable in the illegal market. There are break-ins to get it. There are assaults to get it. There is damage done to individuals to get this drug. There are illicit activities for those who are using the drug so they can have it available.

What then would happen if we just made all these drugs available as that one was to me? That example tells me that it may not be the complete answer either.

What of those who say that we should put all our resources into treatment? That is also a good debate. There would be nothing directed toward those who were trying to supply the drug. We would just let people do what they want. There would be no penalties to the addict and the addict would be a patient. We would make the drugs available, license places to distribute them and might even tax them. There would be resources for the public and they would be very clean. It would not be illicit or illegal as the source would be government sponsored. What does that sound like? It sounds like the way we already handle one major drug, alcohol, which of course is a drug.

In my practice I was able to talk with a number of addicts. I should like to tell the House what treated addicts say. When treated addicts ask themselves why they started using drugs, the recurrent point I hear from them is that they started because of a broken family, peer pressure, loneliness, or because pushers tricked them. Why did they quit? Some quit because they hit bottom. Some found religion. Some had a wonderful rehab counsellor or friend.

This debate is about what society should do. My colleague who put the proposal forth suggests that we take a very careful look at the issue and debate it carefully. I support that and hope my colleagues across the way will as well.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 5.15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

[*English*]

The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The next question is on the main motion as amended. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion, as amended, agreed to)

**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

[*Translation*]

### CANADA MARINE ACT

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ)** moved that Bill C-253, an act to amend the Canada Marine Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to put before the House of Commons this bill I tabled, which aims to bring the Canada Marine Act into line with the reality of our regional ports.

First off, I will give a bit of background on why this bill had to be introduced.

In 1995, the Government of Canada decided to institute a policy of divesting itself of regional ports. Some ports were inactive, others were operating. Some were not cost effective, others were. The federal government therefore decided to establish a policy that would enable local communities possibly to acquire the port facilities.

In my riding, the port of Cacouna was affected. A port development corporation took this question on and studied the matter in depth. I would say it learned a lot about managing a commercial port like that of Cacouna.

The rule also spread to all regional ports along the St. Lawrence. Analysis has shown that in the medium term it was impossible for the local people to assume ownership, for the community to assume ownership, because this was too costly given the long term investments. Proposals were made to the federal government.



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There were counter-proposals, but never any conclusion because the infrastructures are indeed too costly.

Given this state of affairs, I had a look at the Canada Marine Act, with the realization that the federal government had put into place for the Canadian port authorities, which are the major ports, a structure which retains the government as owner, although day to day administration falls to the local community.

This means huge municipal tax bills can be avoided, and allows a certain competition between ports. This has made it possible to promote and market the ports.

• (1720)

However, the same thing was not done with the regional ports where the federal government in my opinion settled for a kind of clearing out of the existing facilities, closing those that were absolutely not operational, in order—and I believe it was in good faith in so doing—to allow the local communities to acquire facilities. But in practice, as I have said, community takeover was absolutely impossible.

As a result, the regional ports people thought it over, and I have my own ideas of what they concluded.

In the bill, I propose that a regional port may remain government property. It could be the federal government, but it could also be the Quebec government. The responsibility for managing the port would be delegated to local interests.

Since the introduction of this bill, the Quebec government has taken a very positive measure. It has told the federal government that it would be interested in negotiating to get a number of ports, such as those of Baie-Comeau, Matane, Rimouski, Cacouna and perhaps the port of Gaspé, for which negotiations with the federal government are already quite advanced.

This proposal from the Quebec government is interesting. It would achieve the same objective as the one that I pursue with the bill that I introduced. Indeed, my bill would allow for such transactions, because I anticipated that the provincial government, namely the Quebec government, could become the owner of the facilities and hand over the responsibility for managing these facilities to local authorities.

This situation is the result of what I call dropping the whole idea of a marine policy for Canada. For years and even decades, the federal government has neglected things, even though it is responsible for marine issues under the Constitution.

The hon. member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière knows that better than anyone else. He fought an extraordinary battle to try to finally get a shipbuilding policy, but we are no further

ahead. Despite his repeated attacks, his motions and his initiatives, we are still waiting for action from the federal government.

The same thing happened with the ports system. Under the constitution, this is a federal responsibility. But for years the government has been penny wise and pound foolish. When there was too much pressure in one sector, when partisan political pressure was strong, the government did the equivalent of slapping down a bit of asphalt. It applied just enough to calm public opinion, to be able to win an election, but there was no comprehensive development strategy, just as there was no comprehensive strategy for managing waterways such as the St. Lawrence River.

I think that we must work very hard in this area. The proposal by the government of Quebec to negotiate in order to acquire the ports will be a step in the right direction, particularly as it is getting ready to introduce a marine policy. In the coming weeks, for the first time since confederation, there will truly be a marine policy to develop the St. Lawrence River, this magnificent waterway which allows goods to be transported in the best possible environmental conditions. This is much cheaper in the long run. It promotes sustainable development and will also increase communications along the whole length of the river, as well as bringing the north and south shores into contact.

We could reinvent many things, such as cabotage, and allow ferries specialized in transporting raw materials, cargo material. Other ferries could carry standard vehicles and foot passengers wanting to get to the other side. There are all sorts of possibilities.

However, since the federal government had renounced its responsibilities in this area, the government of Quebec, at the suggestion of Jacques Baril, the minister responsible for this area by virtue of his transport portfolio and a very realistic and down-to-earth man, saw this as a fantastic opportunity.

• (1725)

He visited the port personally and analyses were carried out of the potential projects for shore-to-shore transportation. All of this was connected to the immense economic development we have seen on the north shore with all the major companies there.

This wish of the government of Quebec will be translated into a marine policy that will be presented in the next few weeks. It is the outcome of consultation with all stakeholders. That is very important.

The people I referred to earlier worked in the various port development corporations and were part of the consultations, as were Quebec stevedores and marine carriers who are shipowners.

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The outcome of all this will be the marine policy that is about to be announced. I believe it will be a historic moment for the use of the mighty river, an extraordinary rebirth that will allow the St. Lawrence to return to what it once was, a fantastic means of connection with other continents.

This week we were visited by a lobby of people involved in the Canadian marine industry. One of the things they explained to us was that a lot of shipping within the Americas is done by truck, but the main connection between Quebec and Canada's businesses and the rest of the world is by water. We now know how important transportation infrastructures are.

When it comes down to it, this is often what determines whether or not a product can be sold elsewhere. If savings can be achieved on shipping costs, then contracts get signed. There is a fairly important issue at stake and that is to know where the ships will pass. Is it not to our advantage to have the St. Lawrence used properly and the possibility of going in as far as Montreal, then using another means, including the railroad or truck, in order to maximize the impact of this industry?

If it is passed, this bill we are debating today will make a new form of ownership and participation possible for the community in port facilities. At the same time, this would mean flexibility so that a provincial government could acquire a number of facilities and give responsibility for management to local authorities.

This model is to some extent the result of the consensus there has been in recent years. I hope that the federal government will apply the same sensitivity to this issue it applied in the context of consultation on the Canada Marine Act. Initially, Canadian port authorities were supposed to become local owners and be subject to all municipal laws, including taxation.

Following consultation throughout Canada, the situation was corrected. The federal government retained ownership, but handed management over to local authorities. The results have been good. The model has proven itself. However, when it came to the regional ports, the government neglected to provide for this situation.

I think that the bill I am proposing would be a worthwhile amendment, an update of the Canada Marine Act. It would establish these situations and would give regional ports the opportunity to help the regions develop.

In my area, the port of Cacouna is an important infrastructure. A gas pipeline is being built and will, in the medium term, run from Sable Island through Rivière-du-Loup to the port, which could be used to export gas. The port could also be used to export other products, such as the powdered milk that is produced in Saint-Alexandre de Kamouraska and sold in North African countries.

The whole lumber export trade could also be redeveloped and a coastal shipping system could be set up. The link to the north shore would relieve some of the road transportation traffic in that area, and would prevent problems, particularly for the tourist industry.

Therefore, we must take a new look at the whole issue of river transportation to make it one of the elements of an integrated transportation policy, which I think would have been done long ago if transportation were the responsibility of one government only.

• (1730)

Let us look at what has happened in the past. Being responsible for roads, the provincial government invested money so that everything would work fine. The federal government was responsible for other things. In some cases, it was so far away that it did not necessarily make appropriate investments.

Had there been only one government, it could have ensured that its policy allowed intermodal transportation to maximize the use of the St. Lawrence River, which could have maximized the impact of ports, like the one at Cacouna, where the water is deep enough. This would have made the port a point of contact with the northeastern American states. This could have led to greater economic development than we now have.

In conclusion, I wish to say that this bill would contribute positively to better use of existing port infrastructures in Canada. I know that the regions are prepared to take over the management of these port facilities.

I believe that governments, such as the government of Quebec, would be able to carry the load of a comprehensive system. We could share use of all the ports, which would maximize benefits and enhance international marketing.

I hope that this House is listening and that members pass this bill to amend the Canada Marine Act. The economies of all regions of Quebec and of Canada would stand to benefit.

[English]

**Mr. Brent St. Denis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his work on Bill C-253.

The Canada Marine Act, which the member would like to amend, calls for a statutory review by June 2003. Given that there are a lot of other items that would certainly need to be reviewed under the umbrella of the Canada Marine Act, it is our view on this side that his proposals would best be left for review, again to be concluded by June 2003.

Let me explain a little bit about the Canada Marine Act and why we feel the way we do, notwithstanding the good work he has done thus far and, no doubt, will continue to do.

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The Canada Marine Act was passed in 1998. It was intended to and does help the Canadian port system to become more efficient, competitive and commercially oriented to commercialize the operations of the St. Lawrence Seaway and ferry services and to improve the operations of pilotage authorities. It marked the first comprehensive effort to increase competitiveness and to reduce costs in the marine sector. By making it easier for ports to operate according to business principles, it will make the marine sector even more competitive than it is now.

The benefits of the act are substantial. Ports benefit from reduced red tap, increased freedom to develop contracts and leases and to set tariffs and fees, and because funding no longer comes from the federal treasury, they will be free to pursue private sector capital to finance port projects.

The Canada Marine Act was a product of a lengthy and comprehensive review process. In 1994 the then minister of transport requested the House of Commons standing committee on transport to undertake a broad review of the marine sector in recognition of an inherent need to modernize Canada's marine system to ensure that the major ports and other marine infrastructures were in a strong position to respond to the demands in international trade, which is critical to Canada's growth.

In other words, there was a need for a port system that could serve both domestic and foreign shippers efficiently, one that was not only reliable and competitive but also one that could compete with the best in the world.

The standing committee issued its report in 1995 after hearing the views of provincial governments, municipalities, organized labour, shippers and other marine industry stakeholders.

In December of 1995, following a further round of consultations, we announced our national marine policy and our intention to bring in legislation containing comprehensive changes to the ports, the seaway, the ferries and the pilotage components of the marine industry.

• (1735)

The Canada Marine Act received royal assent on June 11, 1998.

The Canada Marine Act is a success story. Canada's major commercial ports are now competing on a level playing field for the first time. They have the tools they need to compete in the 21st century.

The St. Lawrence Seaway, which runs right past our Speaker's door in his riding, has been commercialized with control passing to a non-profit corporation controlled by the users of the system. It is

saving money on operations. Ferry services have also been commercialized and changes to the pilotage regime have been implemented.

The Canada Marine Act provided the authority to dissolve the Canada Ports Corporation, which the government did on November 1, 2000. It was not long ago that the running of Canada's ports was being stifled by too much centralized government decision making, including the role played by Canada Ports Corporation.

To remain competitive with American ports, Canadian ports needed to reduce their transaction times and their overhead costs to make the kinds of local decisions that make commercial sense. The new port authorities have been a great success because control of the ports is now in the hands of those best able to adjust to competition and introduce greater efficiency in the marine sector.

This sector is vital to Canada's competitiveness in a global economy. It provides us with a key strategic advantage in the movement of key commodities for important industries such as steel and container traffic. It is also becoming evident that the marine mode is in a good position to benefit and participate in the growth of the worldwide tourism industry.

The cruise industry in Canada is witnessing a staggering growth on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts in the number of visits being paid annually to the Canadian ports and in the amount this industry adds to the Canadian economy. Canada's cruise industry is forecast to continue its growth for some time to come.

It should also be noted that the world looks to the marine mode to provide leadership in terms of setting the standard for an environmentally sustainable and safe mode of transport. It is evident that the marine mode is not just important for economic reasons but because of the Canada Marine Act it has contributed to other aspects of our well-being.

The intent of the Canada Marine Act was to curtail the federal government's extensive involvement in port operations, to introduce a high level of commercial decision making, to encourage financial self-sufficiency and to reduce inefficiencies and overcapacity, which I believe are being achieved.

As well, under the old regime we believe that the taxpayers of Canada were not receiving an adequate return for the funding of many port development projects over the years. To date, as a government, we have created 18 Canada port authorities and will soon have 19 when the Hamilton port authority is created.

Canada port authorities are defined as federally incorporated, non-share capital, not for profit corporations with powers and responsibilities similar to corporations established under the Cana-

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da Business Corporations Act. Under this regime, which combines various aspects of the old port regimes, the Canada Marine Act has given Canada port authorities the autonomy and flexibility to operate according to business principles and to make investment decisions to the overall benefit of the port authority.

The proposed amendments contained in Bill C-253 will create a third class of ports which will receive automatic federal funding. These ports will be competing directly with Canada port authorities who are legally prohibited from receiving federal appropriations other than under a program of general application.

Under the Canada Marine Act, port authorities operate in a more commercial manner than under previous regimes. As Canada port authorities are not eligible for federal appropriation of funds, they are required to borrow funds from private markets. This gives port authorities the ability to make investment decisions to their overall benefit without government approval in advance, thereby allowing a quicker response time in the ever changing business environment of today.

In addition, the Canada Marine Act gives port authorities the ability to make their own operating bylaws and charge harbour dues without having to obtain governor in council approval. By making it easier for ports to operate according to business principles, cut excessive red tape and reduce overhead costs, it puts port authorities in a better position to meet their own needs and the needs of their customers. Also, port authorities now have increased authority to lease land and to determine priorities associated with capital expenditures.

If a new port class were to be created and were to receive subsidies, it would undermine the level playing field of the financial rules and authorities that have been created for ports coast to coast. The government's view is that the current proposal is unnecessary and would re-introduce the inefficiencies and overcapacity that existed prior to the Canada Marine Act.

• (1740)

Another main objective of the Canada Marine Act was to focus the Government of Canada's attention on ports vital to domestic and international trade. These ports have become or will become Canada port authorities. All other ports, except for those that serve the remote regions of the country, are to be divested to local or regional interests.

I believe that local users are in the best position to determine the level of service required at these ports and that the Government of Canada is prepared to negotiate a fair and reasonable transfer funding package to help ensure the long term viability of these facilities.

In that regard, the government has also established a \$125 million divestiture fund. The purpose of this fund includes the

following uses: bringing existing port divestiture up to a minimum safety or operating standard, covering a portion of the cost incurred by the transferee in complying with regulatory or insurance requirements, making a lump sum payment to facilitate the take-over of a port, assisting a group of communities or other interests to take over a collection of ports and to achieve cost savings by rationalizing infrastructure.

The intent of the fund is to facilitate port transfers and to provide a one time contribution to help ensure the port's long term viability.

A lot of good work has been accomplished by the government through the Canada Marine Act. Its five year review will be coming up by June 2003. I would encourage my hon. friend across the way to discuss his ideas with other stakeholders in the marine community and to make sure his ideas are brought into the mix during that review. We wish him well, nonetheless, with his work on behalf of his constituents.

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of the bill. I will restrict my comments primarily to the experience we have had in my home community, an experience which has been less than pleasant in spite of what we have heard from the government in the last few minutes.

I am quite interested in the approach that my friend from the Bloc has taken in terms of recommending that authority be given under this bill to transfer the management and control of these ports to the province. We ultimately would like to see them divulged down to the municipality because of the experience we have had in the city of Windsor.

However, as I have indicated, we are quite prepared to support the bill because I think inevitably, at least in Ontario, the result would be that the province would give the municipality the authority to manage and control these lands and the traffic that works its way through.

I strongly support the point my friend from the Bloc made about the need for an integrated policy around transport. However I would add that we also need an integrated program that would allow the municipalities to do the municipal planning they need to do in order for a large city to function.

There is another point that needs to be made. Because of the nature of some of the lands that the port authority has in the city of Windsor the issue of conservation raises its head.

The experience that we have had in Windsor has not been a pleasant one. There has been a great deal of conflict between the local and municipal authorities around the issues of how transport is handled and how some of the shipping is done, particularly around the issue of municipal planning, and some of the lands the

port authority holds. The city has had specific designs for not only its land but for some of the land surrounding it. There has been quite severe friction in some cases over the role the municipal government has and the planning that it wishes to do for these lands in a macro way. It has been thwarted on a number of occasions by the local authority in that regard.

I filed a petition with the House a week or so ago concerning one specific piece of land that borders the Detroit River. It is a piece of land that would act as a bridge to a large conservation area that we have in Windsor but which is controlled by the port authority. It wishes to develop it in a commercial fashion that would in effect act as a barrier for wildfowl that uses the Detroit River as a base and moves through this other region. This particular piece of land acts as a bridge. There is a local environmental group in Windsor that has been trying to get the land designated as a park but it has received absolutely no support from the port authority in that regard.

• (1745)

There have been other times where there was development with which we wanted to go ahead within the city and it too has been thwarted in various ways by the port authority because of its own self-interest.

I want to make one additional point concerning the history of the legislation that we now have. My friend from the government talked about the review that went on in the mid-nineties that culminated in legislation in 1998. Windsor sent a delegation to Ottawa at that time to put forward some specific proposals as to how the legislation should deal with the land and the control of it and its proposals were totally ignored.

The amendments that are being proposed in the form of the private member's bill would be much more in keeping with the position that Windsor had taken at that time.

I am pleased to indicate that my party supports the private member's bill. Assuming that it is not successful in passing, and I assume that will be the case given the government's position, the issue will be raised again at the end of the five year review. I assure the government and my friend from the Bloc that at that time Windsor will be here once again to make proposals on how the land should be more properly dealt with.

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to say a few words on Bill C-253, an act to amend the Canada Marine Act.

The summary at the beginning of the private member's bill indicates that the bill would create a new class of port under the name "local port council". The summary goes on to say:

Regional and local ports that become local port councils are not required to be financially self-sustaining when they are incorporated and may receive financial assistance from the federal government.

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It goes on to say:

When a local port council becomes financially self-sustaining, some aspects of a local port council may be transferred to the government of the province where the port operated as a local port council is located.

As this is a private member's bill I assume the hon. member proposing the bill must have a port or ports in his region or constituency that fits the thrust of the bill. In the ordinary course of events many ports that were operated directly by the federal government over the years have been placed under local port authorities.

It is interesting to see what has happened in some of the eastern Canadian provinces and, in particular, in my own province of Newfoundland. The federal government has been delinquent in how it has been treating small communities that have these wharves. These little wharves and local ports were built under Canada works projects or LIP grants. Since the current administration came to power about 10 years ago it has completely abandoned those small communities and has sent them adrift.

When communities look for money to do repairs on these small local wharves they are given the old song and dance routine that it is no longer viable to keep these wharves and ports operating. As a result they have become dilapidated. The federal government waves its hand and says that they are not getting any money because they have become dangerous and a hazard to navigation.

• (1750)

Therefore it is okay for ports that have sufficient traffic and an appropriate infrastructure already in place. They are able to get along quite well. They have financial viability combined with the flexibility and sensitivity that can only come from independent local management. However, in the case of small communities, the viability of these small ports and wharves cannot be maintained without the involvement of the federal government.

The problem arises when the local port has dedicated local users or it is vital to the local economy but it is not viable in the financial sense. The government appears to be getting out of the business of running such facilities as a service to the public.

For example, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is currently divesting itself of 325 harbours nationwide. That is a blow to the communities. A full 42% of these ports are located in the province of Newfoundland. I would say to my colleague that there is quite a number of them located in Nova Scotia, in Guysborough county, and in New Brunswick. However 42% of them are in Newfoundland.

Given the state of the province's rural economy, many harbours will have nobody coming forward to set up a local port authority. Perhaps many of the harbours in other provinces on the list are also non-viable in a financial sense. What will become of them?

In the past, many of the wharves, sheds and breakwaters were put out to tender for dismantling or demolition, but the watchword

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of the federal government these days is viability or debt. If it is not viable it goes. The parliamentary secretary gets up and gives such glowing reports on the federal government and how it is looking after all these things when that is simply not true.

I invite him to come to Atlantic Canada. He should get out of central Canada for a change and get out in the boondocks. He should come to Atlantic Canada and see what is going on in the small communities. I am sure the parliamentary secretary and the Minister of Transport would have a much different outlook on what they are doing to these small communities. The watchword of the federal government is viability or debt as far as ports and harbours are concerned.

Incidentally the same applies to airports. We have many airports in rural Canada that are being forced under local airport authorities and are now facing a struggle for their very existence. Such airports might be invaluable to the local people and economy, but the traffic volumes are not there to sustain an economically viable operation. The end result for many of these ports and airports would be closure unless the government is willing to subsidize the operations.

Bill C-253 does not directly address the policy question about whether or not the federal government should directly maintain financially non-viable ports as a public service. However the member proposing the bill is offering the federal government an indirect route to maintain non-viable ports by setting up a new entity called local port councils.

In the bill the government is being offered a vehicle through which it can subsidize the continued existence of financially non-viable ports. The parliamentary secretary and the Minister of Transport would do well to listen to the member who is proposing the bill.

I note that the wording in the bill reads that the minister may approve the setting up of a local port council. The Minister may make financial assistance available to such a port council. The Minister may transfer all or part of such a facility to the provincial government if the port becomes financially viable.

The local people in an area might be all for setting up a local port council to save a financially non-viable port, but they would be dependent on the goodwill of the minister to turn any of that into a reality.

• (1755)

To give it more teeth, a bill such as this one should try to establish certain objective criteria for port viability. Once the port meets those criteria, it is appropriate for there to be wording in the bill to say that the minister shall provide funding until such time as it becomes viable. The problem is that I am not sure the minister would want to be bound by the word shall.

The government appears to be getting out of running all kinds of services that are not financially viable. If local entities cannot run services on a self-sustaining basis, we can expect their closure or elimination. As I said a moment ago, with the current government the watchword has been viability or death over the last seven or eight years.

If nothing else, the member's bill points out a growing reality of the total elimination of federal services in institutions in rural Canada. The post office is now in the local drug store. The rail spurs are gone. The local airport is closing. Ports and harbours are being abandoned or dismantled.

The member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough said that the federal government was hot to trot on trying to get out of a whole range of services. It is looking at banks. It is looking at an awful lot of things. As I said, viability or death is the watchword of the government.

If the bill helps the member draw attention to a potentially viable port in his area, and if it sheds light on the problems we are having in rural Atlantic Canada, it is worthy of the effort. I congratulate the member on presenting the bill. We certainly support it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, knowing my interest for the maritime sector, and for shipbuilding in particular, members will certainly understand that it was with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I accepted the invitation extended to me by my colleague from Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques to speak to his bill.

There is a second reason why I accepted his invitation. It is because—he will not like this because I did not tell him in advance—through his dedication to defending the interests of his region and his riding, this member and colleague is a model for us all. He is very active in the House and cannot be accused of being negative. The proposal contained in the bill that he drafted some time ago and that we are debating today is one that the government seems to have considered.

I heard the remarks made by my Liberal colleague from a riding whose name I have unfortunately forgotten.

**An hon. member:** The riding of Algoma—Manitoulin.

**Mr. Antoine Dubé:** I listened to the Liberal member for Algoma—Manitoulin and he was very receptive to the idea. It is nice to see this kind of attitude from members on the other side of the House from time to time. He probably saw the benefit of such a policy with regard to ports.

I also have a third reason for taking an interest in this debate. Even though I represent the riding of Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chau-

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dière, I was born in the riding of my colleague from the Bloc Québécois. Specifically, I was in the Rivière-du-Loup section of the riding. When I was young, although I am still not all that old, a number of election campaigns were waged over the future of the port of Cacouna, what we locally call Gros-Cacouna.

I remember one Liberal MP at that time, now deceased, and also, it must be said, the former mayor of Rivière-du-Loup. The people must have been behind him because he was elected seven times in all. Something really interesting occurred, however. In just about every election, he promised he would get the port. He was a model of perseverance. After he finally got the port, he lost the next election.

• (1800)

Perhaps the Prime Minister has learned a lesson from this, and feels it is better to make promises than to follow through on them. I hope that is not the case. This was a typical situation, and one known to everyone in eastern Quebec.

I do not want to downplay the importance of the other gulf ports, but this was and still is, the most important south shore port, next to Quebec. For the region this is a port with a really important infrastructure. My honourable colleague's proposed solution is an appropriate one, because such an infrastructure cannot stand alone overnight the way things are at present.

The port is still the property of the federal government, which wanted to see it taken over by the local community. The bill presented by my colleague is a kind of compromise; it is like applying the principle of the community taking over an infrastructure of this size, while at the same time saying "Hold on, let us be realistic. This cannot be done so soon, just like that".

It is therefore a matter of amending the Canada Marine Act to enable this community, which really wants to take over this port, but which also lacks the ability as things stand at the moment to develop it as it would.

Of course, I support my colleague's bill, but there is a project even longer in the developing than the port of Cacouna. It took even more elections. I am talking of the famous merchant marine policy.

The government has talked of it as long as I can remember, and I became interested in the policy very early on. This has been discussed since the second world war. During the war, Canada had one of the largest merchant marine and warfare fleets.

With three oceans, the longest seaway in the world and the presence of the largest market in the world, the United States, how is it that we still have to plead for a merchant marine policy, a transportation development policy?

Maritime transportation is the most advantageous, the most economical in economic terms, the least dangerous in ecological terms and the form of transportation that carries 80% of goods the world over.

Let us have a quick historical overview. A retired general spoke to me about the veterans. He gave me his point of view as to what had made Canada change direction after the war. There were thousands of people working in the shipping industry, in ports. Cabotage was booming. What happened?

I will briefly describe what happened. Tax havens began to appear in the marine sector. People legally use all sorts of ways to pay less for people working on ships, to avoid paying corporate taxes and so on.

Originally this was a result of unionization. At the time people did not want that. The government co-operated in that regard. This is old stuff. This led to unionization by an American group. In the end it turned into a big mess.

• (1805)

We have been talking about this issue for years. If we had had one more week last year my bill on shipbuilding would have been passed. So far, I have not introduced a new bill on shipbuilding because there has been a coalition.

The minister agreed to set up a committee bringing together union officials, employers and his own representative, with a mandate to report back to him. The minister has had this report for close to two months and he promised he would do something, but it takes time. Had my bill been passed the problems in shipyards would already have been solved.

Fortunately the government of Quebec is concerned about this issue, perhaps because of the associate minister of transport, Jacques Baril. He will soon be presenting a shipping policy within the framework of Quebec's jurisdictions.

This will revive the issue of coastal shipping on the St. Lawrence River. In this context the future is even brighter for the port of Cacouna, an important infrastructure that is solid, well designed and very well located. Shipping activity between ports on the St. Lawrence River in Quebec is one more argument in favour of this bill, in favour of an integrated federal policy.

Interprovincial and international trade comes under federal jurisdiction. Again, I was impressed this week to see all the people who are interested in this issue: pilots, exporters, carriers, shipowners, builders. One of the problems that cannot be overemphasized is that we need an integrated approach because, as far as I know, at least 12 departments are involved.

I appreciated the comments made by our colleague opposite and by members of the other parties on this issue. I can see that the

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debate is moving ahead. I remember Rosaire Gendron, who represented the riding of my colleague from Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques some time ago. With patience and perseverance, he succeeded in having the port of Cacouna built.

I hope the bill introduced by my colleague will lead to a true policy for the development of small ports in Canada, and in Quebec, of course.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am quite pleased by the favourable reception the member for Algoma—Manitoulin has given my bill. I do not know if I may presume he was speaking on behalf of the government, but it is interesting that he thinks this should be included in a review of the Canada Marine Act.

The problem is that the review will not take place until 2003. The process of port divestiture is scheduled to end in 2002. There is therefore an undefined period that will not contribute to the economic development of the regions. I am very pleased by the favourable reception this bill has had, and would be more so if the government had accepted to have it passed as quickly as possible.

Indeed, the whole issue of the importance of maritime transportation, the need for an integrated development strategy in this sector, is making itself felt. I think the government of Quebec has taken the lead on this issue. It will be announcing its strategy soon, and it will be interesting to see how the industry receives it. I think the consultation undertaken will show this to be a joint industry and government project.

• (1810)

It would be a good thing if the federal government listened to all the arguments put forth by hon. members following the awareness day we had on this issue earlier this week. A true marine strategy must be developed and implemented as quickly as possible to deal with issues such as the merchant navy, shipbuilding, intermodal transportation and environmental protection.

In that regard, I just wanted to make one constructive proposal to give regional ports new impetus so that they can look after their development, and to allow local communities to do their share in that development, while at the same time not overburdening them with the cost of infrastructures, which can quickly run into the tens and even the hundreds of millions of dollars. It is from that perspective that I submitted my proposal.

I am pleased by the general reaction to my bill here. If the government feels that it is indeed a worthwhile piece of legislation, I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to make it a votable item.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent of the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Mr. Speaker, I did not obtain the unanimous consent of the House, but I simply wish to conclude by saying that the substance of the bill was well received. I will pass the proposals along, so that the Department of Transport can consider them. It will see what is acceptable from its point of view, and will discuss them.

However, we must avoid years of delay, which will result in regional ports being denied a satisfactory tool of development. That is my main concern in this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hour provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. As the motion was not selected as a votable item, the item is now 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.

### LUMBER INDUSTRY

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I had a question some time ago on softwood lumber. What brought my question about was the fact that from the Progressive Conservative Party's perspective we did not see any specific agenda that the government had to deal with the full-fledged crisis in softwood lumber. We felt the government did not have a plan or direction. It was treading water and not responding to a very important issue facing Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Rural Canada depends upon the softwood lumber industry as a major job producer. It produces a large percentage of the gross domestic product in Canada. It is an important issue.

I have another point to which I would ask the parliamentary secretary to respond. The government keeps saying that the softwood lumber industry is part of free trade. What has it done about it? How many delegations and when did we start sending them to the U.S. to speak to our counterparts in a minister to minister type of situation? The Minister of Industry says one thing while the Minister for International Trade says another. The Prime Minister is not responding at all.



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Six provinces had free trade with the United States. The Atlantic accord kept Atlantic Canada out of the softwood lumber agreement and provided free trade for Atlantic Canada, which has a long tradition in free trade going back to the 1800s between New Brunswick and Maine. Manitoba and Saskatchewan were also included in free trade.

There were only four provinces that did not have free trade: British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec. Those four provinces obviously need to get in on the free trade agreement, but everyone has been sucked into the vortex. Now, as everyone predicted, the Americans are playing hardball by putting in countervailing duties and anti-dumping is being claimed against all 10 provinces in Canada.

● (1815)

The countervail was not a problem. We have beaten countervail before, especially in eastern Canada, and we would expect to beat it again. The anti-dumping became a much more serious problem because that included all the provinces automatically and there was no opt out clause for anti-dumping.

We have seen a long list of mistakes that the government has made. It did not start two or three years ago dealing with the Americans on softwood lumber. It had no plan, no direction and no initiative on the Canadian side to deal with this extremely important issue.

We have local sawmills in the South Shore riding that I represent which have shut down and are no longer exporting because they do not know what is down the road. Quite frankly they cannot put themselves into the precarious position where they possibly get slammed with an anti-dumping situation and a large fee or a countervail duty to which we do not expect to be susceptible but could be. Every time something like this issue goes to an international court it becomes a precarious situation.

I would like to hear the government tell us what it has done about the softwood lumber agreement and when it expects to see an end to it.

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is incredible to hear the hon. member raise those points. It boggles the mind that he could be that misinformed about what the government has done. I do not know if he believes that the government has done nothing or if he has just been in rhetorical flight. Let me remind my colleague

about what the government has done on behalf of Atlantic Canadians and all Canadians.

First, this matter was raised at the highest levels by the Prime Minister of Canada on several occasions with President Bush. This matter was raised by the Minister for International Trade repeatedly with his U.S. trade counterpart, Bob Zoellick. When we were in Quebec City for the summit, the minister and I both had the opportunity to raise the issue with commerce secretary Evans.

It has been raised on a repeated basis. There have been wide consultations with the industry. The hon. member must surely know that. There have been weekly, sometimes daily, meetings with the stakeholders in Atlantic Canada in particular and throughout the country.

The minister continues to put forward the idea of an envoy, a more sensible way to try to resolve this dispute. There was very little interest apparently from the Americans until recently. Now we are at the point where Mr. Zoellick has been raising it with the Minister for International Trade. Perhaps we are finally starting to see the Americans realize that there does not have to be the unnecessary confrontation they have caused.

The fact of the matter is the government's position is very clear. I respect that the hon. member represents a riding in Atlantic Canada, but the government is charged with taking care of the interests of all stakeholders from coast to coast to coast.

This is not a matter of east versus west in Canada. It should not be that. I encourage the hon. member and all hon. members not to weaken our position by playing to that kind of argument because it is divisive and it is not constructive.

This is a matter of north-south. The United States is the one which has said it would not exempt the Atlantic provinces. We have supported the claim of the Atlantic provinces for an exemption, as we will support any province that feels it has the right to an exemption.

Let me conclude by saying there has been a clear national strategy. There has been a huge amount of work. I ask the hon. member to pull back his partisanship a bit and support the government in trying to put forward a national case.

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

(The House adjourned at 6.19 p.m.)



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