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Monday, May 28, 2001

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 28, 2001

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1100)

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from May 11 consideration of the motion that Bill C-222, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (deduction of expenses incurred by a mechanic for tools required in employment), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to this private member's bill from the hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans.

The purpose of the bill is to make the cost of tools deductible from a mechanic's or auto worker's income. I approve of it 100% for this is a matter of fairness, in my opinion.

All professionals, for example health professionals such as dentists and physicians, like the hon. colleague over there, who is a well-known West Island doctor, have always been able to deduct every year from their income, or depreciate to some extent, their equipment and everything used in their practice. The expenses incurred for this equipment or these tools may therefore be deducted from the income derived from their professional practice.

Unfortunately, that possibility is not available to professionals in the automotive field, those whose livelihood depends on their practising their trade.

In a former life I spent a good 15 years as a mechanic for a mining company on the North Shore, at Sept-Îles. Although that was as long ago as 1972 or 1973, I remember a simple pound and a half hammer, about 1,600 grams in today's metric terms, cost about $24 or $25 each at the time, and that was nearly 30 years ago.

● (1105)

Anyone working as a mechanic knows how easy it is to lose or damage a tool or even break it and have to replace it. None of this can be deducted from the worker's income, and I find that terribly unfair.

There is another aspect to the bill that I question. This would be an incentive to young people graduating from technical schools, from motor mechanics' training, for example. This would be an incentive to entering the trade.

Whether young people are studying philosophy or motor mechanics, they run into unavoidable costs such the costs of food and housing for the period they are taking their training and all of that.

While the profession may be less noble than that of law or medicine or some other career, these people need to eat. They generally run up a debt like all the other students in the various professions. They come out of technical school or Cegep vocational training with just as much debt as those graduating from the same level in the academic course and heading toward the priesthood or some other field.

These people have a lot of debts. Unfortunately, auto mechanics do not earn as much as my colleague opposite, to whom I referred earlier, as an eminent medical practitioner. These workers face major expenses when they buy their professional material, yet they cannot deduct these costs.

Finally, this deduction would be an incentive in that it would encourage young people to become automotive mechanics.

In the early sixties, with the quiet revolution in Quebec—but the same is also true for the other provinces—education became free under the social programs that were put in place. People used terms such as ''universal'' and ''free'' anyway. Education was for everyone. Anyone who wanted to get an education could have access to training, right up to and including the university level.

The result was that we ended up with large numbers of philosophers, lawyers, notaries, medical doctors and geologists. People

shifted away from traditional occupations. Now, after 30 or 40 years of this somewhat easier access to higher education, we realize that we have moved away significantly from traditional occupations. There are shortages in certain trades, including plumbing, worksite mechanics and automotive mechanics where, unfortunately, salaries are not very high.

In the case of automotive mechanics, a lot of additional training is required outside working hours and is not paid. This includes all the new car models and all the electronic systems that are now an integral part of automotive mechanics. Generally speaking, those who want to do well, who want to take a step further and upgrade their skills must do so during their spare time, in the evening or on weekends, at a college or even a university, without being paid for their efforts.

They may also have to learn things in the electrical field, since this is now a major component of automotive mechanics. Indeed, the mechanical and electrical fields often complement each other for the greater benefit of automobile owners.

These people make a huge personal contribution and they take their own work performance very seriously. In my opinion, the least we could do would be to make the costs of providing tools required to pursue such of a career—often a lifelong one—deductible or depreciable under a provision that it will be up to Revenue Canada to establish. At the very least, there should be a kind of yearly tax depreciation which could be scaled over not too long a period, perhaps two or three years, in order to reduce the fiscal cost of providing the tools required for employment.

● (1110)

In my opinion, given his good nature, if the minister feels able to do it and if he is committed to make these professions or trades accessible, he could not only apply that new provision to auto mechanics but extend it also to worksite mechanics or electricians.

A Snap-On tool like an 8-inch screwdriver costs $20. When it touches a contact a spark can result. That will wreck the tip of the screwdriver and there goes $20, perhaps one-quarter of the electrician's or mechanic's daily pay. If he touches two wires with the tip of the screwdriver, his salary for a quarter of his day's work is already gone. This is if he did not get a ticket for parking on the street in front of his employer's building. At that point, he would have nothing left.

I believe this is a tax equity concern. A credible government must respond to the expectations of all its citizens, of all those who ply a trade, often much more to the benefit of the government than their own. These people pay taxes. We know our tax system. It is not on a straight line but on a rising curve.

There is reason for concern. This should have been done a long time ago. Under the bill of the member for Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, we must at all costs allow these mechanics to deduct from their income the amounts required to buy a tool kit that is essential for their trade.

I implore the Minister of Finance to agree to the request of my colleague from Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans and to have a little compassion for those who, unfortunately, were not lucky enough to become a finance minister.

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to speak to Bill C-222.

I would like to tell a story about my growing up in Toronto. My father was a labourer who worked very hard as a painter. His tools were very important to him because they were very expensive and they were his key to advancing in Canada. I can therefore relate to mechanics and to individuals who want to move ahead for themselves and for their children.

I must admit that I am somewhat surprised by the government's reaction to this private member's bill. The government talks about upward mobility and fairness. It talks about educating and training our citizens for the future. Here is a very simple, cost effective and equitable way of doing just that.

We have a situation where mechanics because of their jobs are forced to buy tools. This is a condition of their employment. It seems common sense to me and basic that these individuals are acting like business people. Yes, they are on an employment contract but they are acting as entrepreneurs.

● (1115)

In our tax code we put forth certain elements to deal with the situation. Members on the other side have argued that it is an employment contract. However I point to other sections of the tax code that deal with musicians, loggers or chain saw operators where this type of provision is there to take into account their situation.

I know mechanics in my riding of Richmond who have had to spend $40,000 to $50,000 to get tools for their trade. The bill makes sense, particularly at a time when Canada needs trained mechanics and blue collar workers. I read in a report the other day that there is a shortage of over 60,000 workers in this field alone.

Perhaps this is not the ideal way of dealing with the problem. However it is a reaction to a Liberal government that deals with the rhetoric of upward mobility and education of the workforce but which, when it comes to dealing with concrete situations, does not act.

There is a small, family run automotive parts business in my riding. It has six or seven mechanics. They would love to hire more individuals but they simply cannot find skilled, trained people to hire. Hiring new people would have an impact on the economy. I am not an economist, but I believe there are similar situations across the country.

My colleague from Quebec has talked about situations he knows of personally. I urge all members in the House to go beyond party affiliations and look at the merits of the bill. The bill does not deal with professionals who are making $200,000 to $300,000. It does not deal with individuals who have access to lobbyists. There will not be many wine and cheese parties to discuss this type of thing. The individuals the bill will affect are the backbone of our country. They are the small, middle class people trying to move up.

I am speaking passionately on the issue because it touches me. My parents came here from Italy with nothing. They used this type of work to move up the ladder that I call the Canadian dream. At the end of the day, when we vote as a House, I urge all members to look at the merits of the case and vote positively for it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Duplain (Portneuf, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I wish to inform the hon. member for Chambly, who referred to mechanics as a less noble trade, that this trade is as noble as any other. In my opinion, it is a very important trade.

This private member's bill would amend the Income Tax Act to help mechanics pay for the cost of providing tools for their employment if they are required to do so under the terms of their employment.

This enactment would permit mechanics to deduct purchase, rental, insurance and maintenance costs of their of tools. Mechanics would benefit from a tax deduction applying on the cost of tools under $250. This amount could be adjusted for inflation. The cost of tools exceeding this amount would be subject to a kind of capital cost allowance, which would be set by special regulation.

The Government of Canada understands the situation that this bill aims to solve. We are aware that tool costs can be significant, particularly at the start of a career.

Because of that, I am happy to say that there is merit in the idea behind the private member's bill and I wish to congratulate the member for Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans for his dedication and perseverance. However, I must also point out that this bill ignores some very important issues, such as the need to ensure that our fiscal system remains fair.

● (1120)

Financial aid to one particular group of employees can be justified only if those employees have to spend substantially more that others.

Mechanics do not form an homogenous group. There are many types of mechanics. Members need just think about the car maintenance technicians and all those specialists who repair brakes, transmissions, radiators and fuel injection systems; the members know what I am talking about. There are also the bus and truck mechanics and even the automotive body repairers.

However, it is at this point that I begin to have some doubts. What about the aviation mechanics or heavy machinery mechanics who repair the large vehicles used in forestry, mining and construction? Do they have to spend large sums for the purchase of their tools?

If we must give a tax break, it should be given to the appropriate persons, to those who must incur employment related expenses substantially higher than those of the others. The persons I have just mentioned are all mechanics. However, they do not all have the same expenses.

We are faced with a problem. If we grant a tax benefit to all mechanics, we will find out that some mechanics do not incur major expenses whereas some others do. For some of them, the expenses are comparable to those of carpenters or plumbers, for example. Why, then, should the member make a distinction that would amount to discrimination against other trades, and why should the same tax break not be granted to all? How could we explain to many other employees that this tax measure is for mechanics only, even if they incur similar costs in their job?

Why not extend this measure to all employees? We have to recognize that this would be very costly, potentially over $1 billion. It would limit the government's capacity to grant tax cuts to all taxpayers.

Besides, it would be difficult to ensure that the expenses are effectively incurred for employment purposes. Many items can be used for personal as well as professional purposes, like computers, software and cell phones. A tax deduction for employment expenses for all taxpayers does not seem to be advisable.

If we do have a tax break, we believe it should be only for taxpayers who incur exceptionally high employment related expenses, especially when compared to their income. Is this really the case for mechanics?

For example, let us take a mechanic who already has his tools. How much should he spend to maintain and upgrade these tools? A survey by the Canadian Automotive Repair and Service Council shows that the average expense is about $1,500 annually. Some spend more and some spend less. It is reasonable to think that many other employees have employment related costs similar to those of mechanics.

Now, is there any reason to believe that these expenses are a heavier burden for mechanics than for other workers? The members of the House know full well that mechanics are not rich. However, mechanics make a better living that other workers. Let us try to put them in the proper perspective.

In 1996, when the last census was taken, the average annual wage of an automotive service technician was approximately

$38,000. The same year, the average wage of a university graduate was slighter higher than $42,000. Workers with no university diploma earned, on average, $26,000.

Therefore, the situation of mechanics is good compared to the national average. And their situation is also good compared to many other trades such as bricklaying and woodworking, where the average annual wage is approximately $34,000.

● (1125)

It would not appear that, as a whole, mechanics form a group that incurs employment related expenses that are substantially higher, in proportion to their income, than those incurred by other workers.

This brings me to another point. When we recently debated a similar bill, I was astonished to hear all members, except for one, talk about the effect that the cost of tools is having on all the mechanic apprentices entering into the trade.

For many years, the Automotive Industries Association of Canada has made a priority of the recognition for tax purposes of expenses incurred by mechanic apprentices. According to the association, the cost of tools represents a barrier to the recruitment of mechanic apprentices. I would like to take a few moments to address this position and, more particularly, the proportion of their income mechanic apprentices spend on tools.

I guess the first question is, how much does it cost for a starter toolbox and tools? Well, the CARS council says it can cost between $3,000 and $4,000. This is just the basic starter kit. The apprentice would add more tools as he or she progressed through the apprenticeship program.

During a typical four year apprenticeship, it would not be unheard of to spend $15,000 and sometimes more. And so let us compare that to what they earn. The average annual income is about $20,000.

It would certainly be a challenge for a mechanic apprentice to buy $3,000 worth of tools on an annual income of $20,000. In some cases the costs might even make someone think twice before going into this line of work, as industry representatives have said.

In conclusion, the bill before us today has some laudable goals, but it also has some significant shortcomings. It does not take into account the different circumstances of various kinds of mechanics.

At one level, we have apprentices who pay somewhere around $3,000 a year for tools, on an annual salary of $20,000. And we have mechanics spending around $1,500 a year on tools, but making a great deal more. The bill fails to distinguish between those who can reasonably afford to cover tool costs and those who might really need some help.

The tax relief proposed in this bill needs to be better targeted. I therefore urge members of this House not to support it.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise to speak to the bill and I want to congratulate the Bloc member for Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans.

[*English*]

The particular bill is one that I think can be described as being very straightforward and common sense in its approach to assisting a segment of our economy, mechanics specifically, that works extremely hard and is looking for a simple incentive, some signal on the part of the government that its contribution is valued and is recognized through tax relief. It is to permit mechanics to deduct the cost of providing tools for their employment if they are required to do so.

It is not as if mechanics have a choice in the matter in terms of getting by without tools. It is aimed specifically at mechanics who cannot benefit from either borrowed tools or tools that are owned by their employers and are required as a condition precedent to purchase tools.

Many tools of the trade are extremely expensive, which can be quite a deterrent to individuals trying to enter the particular trade. The bill is aimed specifically at offering those individuals who have made a career choice some relief to enter into this chosen profession. I commend the hon. member for bringing forward the matter.

● (1130)

Like many motions and bills in the House, this bill has been debated in the Chamber on numerous occasions, and quite ironically has seemingly received broad support. Yet my fear, and I am sure the hon. member's fear, is that when it comes to a vote the government will not support this bill. We got the inkling from the previous member's words that the government was not inclined to support this legislation.

On the other hand, our party has brought forward similar motions and will support this legislation. That comes as a result of having spoken to many individuals involved in the actual trade who are looking for such relief and are looking to parliament to show some leadership, vision and originality when it comes to offering tax relief to those who are most in need.

Specifically, I met with numerous mechanics in my constituency of Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough. At their request, I brought this very issue to the attention of the current finance minister. Unfortunately, after doing so on their behalf, the Minister of

Finance indicated that there was really little that could be done and little that he and his department were willing to offer as relief for those who found themselves in a position where in certain instances they were required to shell out anywhere in the range of $15,000 to $40,000 as a start-up cost to entering the trade of being a mechanic. This is at time when the average mechanic's salary, as I am told and the statistics seem to support, is in the range of $29,000.

Given the high level of technology that is involved now with mechanics, there are occasions where they will in essence be required to, somehow through a mortgage, or a loan or otherwise, shell out more money than they are actually taking in in their first year. This presents a significant hurdle as well as a disincentive for those who wish to enter into the profession.

It is difficult, as in many instances in many trades, to attract new persons who want to get involved in automotive repair and other types of repair. This industry has seen a decline in those who go to trade school and attend community colleges, like the very impressive and ever improving Nova Scotia Community College. Enrolment in some of these areas is actually down as a result of this outlay of capital required to get into the working field.

I would hasten to add that it also contributes to this increase in brain drain. We are seeing attractive, young, hardworking, talented, motivated individuals lured south of the border by the promise of better taxation and higher rates of salary.

We can talk endlessly about Canada's quality of life, and I would be the first to praise what we have, but if a person's salary and their tax rates result in a greater return on their investment in their future, that quality of life can be purchased. That is the basic reality and choice that many young people decide to face which eventually leads them to go to the United States.

The bill before us has been assailed by the government in some instances as it would focus on only one segment of society. Clearly, there are others who in our current Revenue Canada tax scheme have been afforded the same type of option, for example, and I believe previous members have alluded to them, those individuals who work in the forestry industry and operate chainsaws. They are afforded a tax break on their equipment.

Similarly, musicians and others who are reliant upon a specific tool or instrument are afforded a break, a recognition that they are required, by virtue of that chosen profession, to use a certain instrument or a certain tool.

All that mechanics in this instance are looking for is a recognition in legislation that would allow them to write-off some of the expense involved in using this type of equipment. Again, it bears repeating that it is pricey equipment. Mechanics' tools are extremely expensive and this presents a considerable obstacle for those who want to enter into that type of work.

• (1135)

Because this type of change was so specific, our party initially had concerns because it would perhaps complicate an already overly cumbersome tax code. However, in many ways it simplifies the tax code because it is a straightforward recognition and encompasses what we should always look for in this place, and that is parity and equal treatment for all under the tax code. As I mentioned, other industries can claim tax deductibility on equipment which is necessary to complete a job. Therefore, it is about parity and fairness in treating mechanics.

In 1996 and 1997 the House of Commons finance committee recommended that we move toward ensuring the tax deductibility of equipment and tools necessary for mechanics. If that had happened, we would not have had the necessity of this legislation before us now. It would be a small step forward but an important step nonetheless, and one that all members of the House should support at this time.

The legislation would benefit Canadians and provide them with a fairer, more progressive and innovative tax system which would create a culture of opportunity. This is essentially the motivation behind this and should be the motivation for much of the legislation that we see in this place. We need to ask ourselves how can we improve the quality of life and opportunities for those who are making significant contributions to the workplace.

I very much support the bill. I have a similar motion that encompasses the same spirit that we see in this bill. I would request that all members give close attention to this issue and support this member, as our party will do.

The Deputy Speaker: I want the House to be cognizant that there is approximately 10 minutes left for debate on this bill. The Chair is going to recognize the hon. member for Provencher. Because I see that more than one person wishes to rise and speak to this issue, may I ask if the member for Provencher would agree to split his time of 10 minutes thereby giving 5 minutes to another colleague. Is the member for Provencher agreeable to this suggestion?

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): That is agreeable with me, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of Bill C-222, an act to amend the Income Tax Act. The purpose of the act is to permit mechanics to deduct the cost of providing tools for their employment, if they are required to have these tools according to the terms of their employment. It allows for a full deduction of costs up to $250 and the capital cost for tools over $250.

The riding of Provencher is a mainly rural riding, yet this was a very big issue in the last election. Steinbach, which is the largest urban centre in my riding, is known as the automobile city because

of the number of automobile dealerships. There is also a number of agricultural service centres and implement dealerships, all utilizing the services of mechanics who require tools for their trade. These are hardworking, strong work ethic individuals who want to work and who are also looking for fairness. Canada needs these skilled workers, and this is one step toward attracting more workers to this profession and keeping the existing mechanics working.

I noted with some concern the comments of the Liberal member. His comments were essentially attempting to put up roadblocks rather than assisting in the resolution of the problem. We should not be looking at technical problems because these are problems that we can overcome. We do not need excuses. We need reasons.

The Canadian Alliance supports measures that might in any way lower the tax burden on Canadians. This is one such measure. Since industry is expected to train and educate its workforce, the government can play a role by removing impediments that discourage job seekers from pursuing the training and education needed to find employment.

● (1140)

It has been noted that mechanics have been known to spend many thousands of dollars, certainly in excess of $15,000 or $20,000. Of course, depending on the exact requirements, it could even be in the range of $50,000 or more. They cannot declare these employment related expenses while many other professionals can.

This is an issue of equity. Others, for example artists, chainsaw operators and musicians, can use the tax act to write-off the cost of their tools. The Liberal member knows it. Every member in the House knows it.

I urge the House not to simply set this bill aside again as it has done so often. I urge members on both sides of the House to vote in favour of this commendable bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond : Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Since I am the member who introduced the bill, I ask for unanimous consent to have the floor for the few minutes left in the debate.

Since I have already spoken during the first hour of debate, I must seek unanimous consent. Let us not forget that this bill has been deemed votable. I therefore must get my colleagues' unanimous consent to close the debate.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to give the hon. member the few minutes left in the debate, which is about four minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, two years ago the subcommittee on private members' business produced a report in which it recommended to the House that certain criteria be met before a private member's bill could be made votable.

Among these were: that the bill address matters of certain public interest; that the bill and motions address matters not covered by the government's legislative program; and that greater priority be given to measures relating to matters of more than purely local interest and not partisan in nature.

I would respectfully submit to all hon. colleagues on both sides of this House that Bill C-222, despite its imperfections to which my colleague from Portneuf has referred—I know it could be improved—is a matter of fairness to a category of men and women, more often men since this is an untraditional career for women. Mechanics should be able to deduct the purchase cost of their tools.

It is true that the government could think of extending this in future to other categories of workers who might also need it. I believe, however, that there has been unanimous industry support for this for more than 10 years.

I would remind my colleagues that last year in the last parliament we did get the House, all opposition parties and the majority of government members as well to vote in favour of referring this bill to the Standing Committee on Finance.

During the vote to be held today or tomorrow—the government whip ought to introduce a motion to defer it until tomorrow—I appeal to the sense of honour and fairness in all colleagues here in the House. In the division on Bill C-205, we had 218 votes in favour.

● (1145)

I remind the House that Bill C-222 is based on the exact same criteria as Bill C-205, which had the support of 218 members, namely all members of the opposition and a majority of Liberal members. Only 11 Liberals voted against the bill.

I also remind hon. members that the bill goes beyond party lines and that it has nothing to do with partisanship, the right, the left, federalists or sovereignists. In each of our ridings, we have automotive mechanics who work in service stations or car dealerships. We met with them during the election campaign that ended last November 27. We promised we would listen to them and respond to their needs and concerns.

In conclusion, I appeal to the common sense of hon. members who were present in this House during the 36th parliament and who

voted in favour of the previous bill to support Bill C-222. I ask the 45 new members who did not have the opportunity to take a stand on the previous bill to support Bill C-222 as well. After the vote at the second reading stage, the bill will be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance where we will have the opportunity to improve it.

All members sitting on the committee will have an opportunity to bring amendments to the bill. I only wish to improve it. I ask that, by the vote, the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and that automotive mechanics and technicians have, once and for all, their status recognized by the House of Commons. They expect justice and fairness.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 11.47 a.m., pursuant to order made on Friday, May 18, 2001, all questions necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of Bill C-222 are deemed put, and a recorded division is deemed demanded and differed until later today, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

[*English*]

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The House was nice enough to give its consent for the member to continue speaking beyond the deadline as specified. I would like to ask the same consideration for one of our own members who also wishes to speak on the motion before the House for five to seven minutes. If we could allow that to happen as well, then I would be prepared, as the member has referred to, to move the motion to defer the vote until tomorrow night.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the House give its consent for the hon. member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot to speak for seven minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the very impassioned remarks of the member for Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, who has proposed a bill that has been given very serious consideration by the House. It is an important bill, but I do have to say with some regret that it is not a bill that I am prepared to support.

I listened to all the arguments in the House and indeed I was here in the House when we had this debate on similar motions before. I find it difficult because I think the bill as written runs on a rock that is very difficult to recover from even in committee.

Very simply there are three questions we have to ask ourselves, about the bill when we look at it. The first question is: what is a mechanic? The second question is: what is a tool? Finally, we have to pay attention to the fact that the bill would allow the rental of tools, whatever they are, to be deducted from taxes.

The member for Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans said in his original speech that he was referring to auto mechanics, but in fact a mechanic is not defined adequately in the income tax legislation. We rely on provincial governments to define what mechanic means.

● (1150)

Mechanic may extend beyond auto mechanics. It may actually extend to the person who fixes the hard drive in our computer. It may extend to the people who work on ships and make repairs to the sophisticated technology that is now occurring in all areas of transportation.

Second is the definition of tool. Everyone seems to be assuming in this debate that we are talking about socket wrenches, box wrenches, screwdrivers and those kinds of thing. Even in the auto industry, auto mechanics have advanced enormously and it is no longer a question of a mechanic having a box wrench, pliers or whatever else. What it really is a question of is the expensive diagnostic equipment. Not only is it a question that mechanics need things, like the machine that enables them to change truck tires, radial tires and those kinds of things, but automobiles have changed so dramatically that a mechanic now is a person who goes in and replaces sophisticated computerized components. That is what being an auto mechanic is now.

The problem there is that if that is what a tool now becomes, then what we are talking about in the legislation is the tax deductibility of equipment that is worth thousands, if not tens of thousands of dollars, that any individual mechanic cannot afford to buy himself and is likely to rent.

The legislation shows us what we would be creating. The legislation would have been perfect 20 years ago but it does not fit as written today. I have to say to my own government side and the speaker for the government that this aspect of the bill has been overlooked in the government's speeches on the bill.

The reality is that we have passed the point in time when a mechanic can be viewed as simply a person with a box of tools that he has to renew from time to time or gets renewed when the Snap-On truck comes. The Snap-On truck is an enterprise that goes around to various auto shops and offices to replace their tools.

We are now in the computer age. An automobile is something that requires sophisticated diagnostic equipment just to determine whether the exhaust is working properly. What this would do is create a situation where mechanics would no longer acquire tools whatsoever. What would happen is that we would be indirectly subsidizing those enterprises that rent out this kind of equipment.

I think the House has to carefully consider the legislation and carefully ask itself whether it is something that can be fixed in committee. I do not doubt for an instant the sincerity of the member

for Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans in bringing the legislation forward. I also do not doubt for a moment that the House was quite correct in its heart of hearts to want to support it in the times preceding.

However the reality is that the legislation, I am sorry to say, belongs in the past. The auto industry, auto mechanics and all mechanics, including computer mechanics, ought to be covered by the legislation. Times have changed and I think we need to go back to the drawing board on this particular piece of legislation.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There is general agreement among the parties that it would be preferable, notwithstanding a previous order of the House, to have the vote on the bill tomorrow evening.

Therefore, pursuant to discussions that have taken place among all parties concerning the taking of the division on Bill C-222 scheduled at the conclusion of government orders today, I believe you would find consent that the recorded division scheduled to take place at the end of government orders today on second reading of Bill C-222 be further deferred until the end of government orders on Tuesday, May 29.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the chief government whip have the unanimous consent of the House to put forward the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Does the House give its consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Deputy Speaker: It being 11.55 a.m. the House is now suspended until 12 noon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11.55 a.m.)

● (1200)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 12 p.m.

Hon. Don Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been further consultations and a motion that had not been accepted earlier would perhaps be accepted after these consultations. The motion is that the recorded division scheduled to take place at the end of government orders today on second reading of Bill C-222 be further deferred until the end of government orders on Tuesday, May 29.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the House give its consent to the government House leader to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT

BILL C-7—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That in relation to Bill C-7, an act in respect of criminal justice for young persons and to amend and repeal other acts, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage of the bill and one sitting day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill and, fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government business on the day allotted to the consideration of the report stage and on the day allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1245)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 100*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Bagnell	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélair

Bélanger
Bellemare
Bertrand
Bevilacqua
Binet
Bonin
Boudria
Brown
Bryden
Bulte
Byrne
Caccia
Calder
Cannis
Caplan
Carignan
Carroll
Castonguay
Catterall
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Copps
Cullen
Cuzner
DeVillers
Dion
Dromisky
Drouin
Duhamel
Duplain
Easter
Eggleton
Eyking
Folco
Fry
Gagliano
Gallaway
Godfrey
Goodale
Graham
Gray (Windsor West)
Grose
Harb
Harvard
Harvey
Hubbard
Ianno
Jackson
Jordan
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Lastewka
LeBlanc
Lee
Leung
Lincoln
Longfield
Macklin
Mahoney
Malhi
Maloney
Marcil
Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan
Minna
Mitchell
Murphy
Myers
Nault
Neville
Normand
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly
Owen
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Pettigrew
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri
Provenzano
Redman
Reed (Halton)
Regan
Richardson
Robillard
Saada
Savoy
Scherrer
Scott
Sgro
Shepherd
Speller
St. Denis
Steckle
Szabo
Telegdi
Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Torsney
Valeri
Vanclief
Wappel
Whelan
Wood—125

NAYS

Members

Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bellehumeur
Bigras
Blaikie
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Cadman
Comartin
Crête
Desjarlais
Dubé
Duceppe
Elley
Epp
Forseth
Fournier
Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier
Girard-Bujold
Godin
Goldring
Gouk
Grewal
Guimond
Harris
Hearn
Hinton
Laframboise
Lebel
Lill
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mayfield
McDonough
Meredith
Moore
Nystrom
Obhrai
Penson
Perron
Peschisolido
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Reynolds
Ritz
Sauvageau
Schmidt
Skelton
Solberg
Stinson
Stoffer
Strahl
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Wasylycia-Leis —57

PAIRED MEMBERS

Allard
Asselin
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bergeron
Cardin
Coderre
Collenette
Dalphond-Guiral
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Finlay
Gagnon (Champlain)
Guay
Jennings
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Lalonde
Lanctôt
Lavigne
Loubier
MacAulay
Manley
Ménard
Paquette
Parrish
Pratt
Price
Proulx
Rocheleau
Rock
Roy
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Stewart
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

REPORT STAGE

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-7, an act in respect of criminal justice for young persons and to amend and repeal other acts, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of Motions Nos. 1 and 3.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak again to the bill, which was under consideration prior to the parliamentary recess.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to an important event that took place on our final day of debate on this matter, and that is the motion passed unanimously in the Quebec national assembly. It was a joint motion by the Liberal member for Bourassa and the Quebec minister of justice.

● (1250)

The motion read:

> That the National Assembly call on the Government of Canada to make provision within the criminal justice system for young persons for a special system for Quebec under the Young Offenders Act, in order to fully reflect its particular intervention model.

After the players in the field, those who work with young people, all expressed their opposition to Bill C-7, the Quebec national assembly, the only legislature in which Quebecers form the majority, decided unanimously last week that it wanted Quebec to have its own system, that of the existing law.

This position is in fact based on the interpretation of a former chief justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, Mr. Dickson, who

said that the federal government could, if it expressed the political desire to do so, apply the law with full flexibility so that Quebecers could retain the Young Offenders Act, with the results they have obtained in rehabilitation and re-integration into society that are the envy of all of Canada. They would want this flexibility to be used by the federal government so they could assess the results over a period of time, such as five or ten years.

All Quebecers, all stakeholders in this area and all parents in Quebec are prepared to bet that the outcome of this operation will be an even lower crime rate in Quebec and an even better performance in terms of rehabilitating our young people. This would show even more clearly that Quebec, which wants to continue to apply the law based on its own vision, should not be forced to follow this government's right wing offensive to impose a national way of doing things that does not reflect Quebecers' views.

I will conclude on that note. It is important for all members of the House, particularly those who represent ridings from Quebec and including all the Liberals who were elected at the last general election, to remember that if they support the bill they will go against the unanimous consensus reached in Quebec and against the motion unanimously passed by the Quebec national assembly.

Therefore, I call on them to think about this issue and to vote according to the interests and priorities of Quebecers, not the priorities set by this government to please a right wing group in its ranks and in Canadian society.

I urge all members to vote in that fashion this evening when we vote on the bill at report stage and then at third reading. It is important that all members from Quebec join forces with the Quebec national assembly.

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, before becoming Speaker, you sat on the benches opposite. Debate in the House can sometimes be intense, exchanges sharp, sometimes caustic, perhaps overly so. The very layout of the House, with benches on opposing sides, unfortunately, perhaps contributes to an often confrontational attitude.

I also have a tendency, of which I am very proud, to defend my party's position tooth and nail based on internal discussions. I owe no one any apologies for this tendency, nor do I ask any members of the House to apologize for positions they are defending on behalf of their party.

● (1255)

The debate on Bill C-7 must be completely non-partisan. We must eliminate every ounce, every trace of partisanship from a debate such as this because what is involved is the future of our youth. It is in this non-partisan spirit that I rise to speak today to the young offenders bill.

The hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm has just returned from a tour of Quebec. He met with people from various sectors in all regions of Quebec. I congratulate him on his excellent work on this issue. During this tour, he confirmed in a concrete, not an abstract, way the very broad, I would even say almost unanimous, consensus of Quebec's stakeholders with respect to the young offenders legislation.

All stakeholders, judges, lawyers, including the bar associations, social workers, youth groups and so on, were almost unanimously in favour of keeping the existing Young Offenders Act. They rejected the unfortunate new approach of the Minister of Justice.

This consensus so completely transcends party lines that the three parties represented in the national assembly, parties whose views differ on sovereignty and on a whole spectrum of issues ranging from left to right unanimously agreed to a motion calling for the existing Young Offenders Act to be maintained intact.

In Quebec there is a strong national desire to retain the system in place today, which has proven itself. It has given Quebec the lowest rates of youth crime and of recidivism by young offenders.

I have trouble understanding why a system that is working properly would be shunted aside, destroyed by the Liberal government out of mere political calculation aimed at pleasing people on the right wing who are often the western voters.

Last week new stakeholders made their voices heard. They are the aboriginal communities of Quebec. Rosario Pinette, chief of the Sept-Îles Innu community, met with my colleague, the hon. member for Berthier-Montcalm. Speaking on behalf of Matthew Coon Come, the grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations, he took a strong position against the provisions of Bill C-7. He said:

> If Bill C-7 is passed, it will not get into our community. It will be kept out because it attacks aboriginal people outright. It is an imposed law that does not respect our cultural reality.

That is pretty strong language. He went still further:

> Mistakes are quickly forgotten. In 50 years, there may be a compensation fund to undo the damage done by Bill C-7, as there was for the residential schools.

● (1300)

Here we see an alliance between the aboriginal nations and the Quebec nation in demanding that this government not put in place, not enact, not pass Bill C-7.

Is there perhaps a compromise? I am very open to that. Let us ensure that Bill C-7 allows provinces which so desire to withdraw from the new system the Minister of Justice is putting in place and allows those provinces which so desire to retain the present system.

The mechanism is possible. Mr. Justice Dickson, the former chief justice of the supreme court, said so in a legal opinion which, I hope, most members of this House and particularly Liberal members from Quebec have consulted and read. This legal opinion provided that it was quite possible to adopt such a mechanism.

Another legal basis is the concept of distinct society. This government had a motion passed to the effect that the government should take the distinct character of Quebec into account before passing a bill. We could base our decision on that. Let us ensure that Quebec, if it so desires, and heaven knows it does, can be exempted from implementing the harmful system that would be put in place through Bill C-7 and can continue to apply the existing Young Offenders Act.

One may wonder, and many actually do, why this government is not using the bill to promote its political option. It could easily say ''Look how open federalism is, look how it promotes diversity. We are allowing Quebec to withdraw from the application of this bill''. The government could earn brownie points. It always pays to listen to what the public wants.

I sincerely call on the Liberal government and Liberal members from Quebec to not support Bill C-7 or at least to ensure that Quebec can apply the existing Young Offenders Act. It is not too late to respect the consensual choice repeatedly expressed by Quebecers through various forums, including the House of Commons by a majority of members from Quebec, the national assembly or the various stakeholders representing civil society.

I ask Quebec Liberal members to vote with us and to ensure that Bill C-7 does not apply to Quebec.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Discussions have taken place among all the parties, and with my colleague from South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, concerning the taking of the division on Bill C-222, pertaining to the deduction provided for mechanics, scheduled today, Monday, May 28, at the conclusion of private members' business.

You will find there is unanimous consent for the following motion:

That at the conclusion of the debate on Bill C-222 on Monday, May 28, 2001, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion for second reading be deemed put, a recorded division deemed requested and deferred to Tuesday, May 29, 2001, tomorrow, at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

● (1305)

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have the consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[*Translation*]

YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-7, an act in respect of criminal justice for young persons and to amend and repeal other acts, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of Motions Nos. 1 and 3.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we will frequently be hearing the same appeal in the various interventions by the Bloc Quebecois, an appeal aimed primarily at our friends and colleagues, the federal Liberal members from Quebec, to whom we extend a hand one last time.

As the countdown to the passage of Bill C-7 becomes more pressing, the extension of this hand is becoming more pressing for our Liberal friends and colleagues from Quebec. We ask them once again to listen to the consensus expressed throughout Quebec society in opposition to C-7.

I will read a motion that was introduced at the Quebec national assembly and passed unanimously, as mentioned by my colleague from Charlesbourg earlier. I would like all Liberals from Quebec to listen.

That the National Assembly call on the Government of Canada to make provision within the criminal justice system for young persons for a special system for Quebec under the Young Offenders Act, in order to fully reflect its particular intervention model.

I believe that when we analyze the motion introduced in the national assembly properly, we see that it is, in every respect, rational and adaptable to the requirements of federal government parliamentarians. If we read this motion properly, we see that it is not calling for the bill to be withdrawn outright or scrapped, nor is it describing the bill as terrible for Quebec society. It is asking whether there is a way of including provisions in Bill C-7 to preserve what is working well in Quebec, and the system is working well in Quebec.

The purpose of Bill C-7 is to provide solutions to problems in certain regions of Canada but if there were a problem in Quebec it seems to me that it would be very difficult to get the unanimous approval of Liberal, ADQ and PQ MNAs for a motion calling on the federal government, unanimously as I keep repeating, to consider the possibility of including provisions in Bill C-7 to recognize the distinctive character and the successful approach of the government of Quebec in its policy in this area.

As the member for Berthier—Montcalm repeatedly mentioned and as he also pointed out during his tour—which was much appreciated by the public—with Marc Beaupré, the actor who played the character of Kevin in *Deux frères*, they made a non-partisan tour of Quebec. For a politician, it is very difficult to seriously say that we have been on a non-partisan tour because we are always for the Bloc Quebecois or sovereignty, but with this bill, we tried to behave in a non-partisan way; this is why the actors agreed to join the Bloc Quebecois on this tour.

The justice critic for the Bloc Quebecois and the young actor who went on the tour heard the same message everywhere: if the rest of Canada wants to implement Bill C-7, there is no problem. If it is more acceptable elsewhere, culturally speaking, to have Bill C-7, there is no problem but we want no part of it.

As my colleague from Charlesbourg said earlier, the Liberal Party voted on a motion recognizing Quebec=s distinct character. Since then, Liberal members have never used this for a House of Commons bill. Perhaps the time has come to do so.

● (1310)

My colleague from Berthier—Montcalm went on the tour. We, on this side, have tried to meet, one by one, all Liberal members from Quebec to ask them why they would vote with their government and therefore against their constituents on Bill C-7.

I have talked about this in speeches at general meetings of the Bloc Quebecois in some ridings. I must admit the answer was quite surprising and rather weak as an argument. The answer we heard was: ''We know you have the unanimous support of Quebec groups because they are funded by the government of Quebec and therefore have no other choice''. I find it despicable for Liberal members from Quebec to assert that we bought the support of different groups in Quebec by giving them some financial support.

I would like the Liberal members from Quebec to explain how the government of Quebec, sovereignists, can financially support the Liberal Party of Quebec. I would like to mention that the MLA for Brome—Missisquoi, Mr. Pierre Paradis, voted for the unanimous motion of the national assembly. I do not believe he is being funded by Mr. Landry, no more than his colleagues of the Liberal Party.

The Association des chefs de police et de pompiers du Québec is against Bill C-7 and I do not think it is funded by the government or has a real say in decisions or ties to the government.

As the hon. member for Charlesbourg said earlier, other organizations are against this bill, like the Innus, the British Columbia Criminal Justice Association, Tim Quigley from the University of Saskatchewan, Dr. James Hackler from the Sociology Department of the University of Victoria; I doubt they are funded by the Parti Quebecois. I do not believe that the League for the Well-being of Children of Canada is funded by the Parti Quebecois either.

I told the members from Quebec that they may be right in part and that we may be biased in terms of our defence of or our opposition to Bill C-7, but that they also have to realize and acknowledge that they are somewhat biased. We recognize that both the Bloc Quebecois and the Liberal Party are biased on this issue.

I suggested to them that we have a list of 23 individuals, organizations, institutions or associations that are against Bill C-7, choose anyone of them at random and ask them what they think about the positions taken by the Bloc Quebecois and the Liberal Party and that they could and why they are against Bill C-7. I was not asking them to talk to one particular group that happens to share the views of the government of Quebec, which is subsidizing it. I was telling them to choose anyone of them at random.

We have been making this request to Liberal members from Quebec for the last two weeks and, from what I understand, none of them have even tried to find out why the people in the field in Quebec—not the officials of the justice minister—are against Bill C-7.

I believe that, with the kind of unanimity found in Quebec, with 23 organizations opposed to Bill C-7 and the national assembly, which passed a unanimous motion to that effect, not to mention the Liberals in Quebec, the government members who argue that the Bloc Quebecois is being stubborn in opposing this bill ought to respond to the motion passed by the national assembly.

● (1315)

The motion of the national assembly states, and I quote, ''That the Government of Canada make provisions within the criminal justice system for young persons for a special system for Quebec''.

To conclude, I would ask the government to listen to what the people have to say, to reach out to them and look at what is being done in Quebec to meet the aspirations of those who work to fully rehabilitate young offenders.

Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today.

I am saddened by the attitude of the government for the umpteenth time, if not the 69th, 70th, 72nd or 75th time, is gagging

the opposition. This morning a time allocation motion was agreed to. It is always a little sad to see the government refuse to listen or have an indepth debate on a bill.

If the Bloc Quebecois has been so steadfast in its opposition to the bill it is not for the mere pleasure of playing its role as an opposition party. Everyone has certainly noticed how relentlessly and how hard my colleague for Berthier-Montcalm has being working on this for the past year and a half or two years. I take this opportunity to acknowledge his perseverance and the unique work he has been doing on this bill. My colleague has travelled across the province of Quebec. He has met with various people. He has discussed the bill with every stakeholder in Quebec, bar none.

Once again, we have compelling arguments but the justice minister refuses to hear them. The current Young Offenders Act has been in force in Quebec for close to 30 years. So far, it has been successful because it has been properly implemented. The government should ensure that the act is correctly enforced in the rest of Canada instead of trying, as the minister is doing, to go along with a far right trend coming mostly from western Canada.

I understand that being from the west she is trying to hang on to some votes. I hope this is not the only reason why the justice minister is not more attentive to the 23 groups mentioned by my colleague for Repentigny. I have here the list of these 23 groups in Quebec but I will not name them all.

They are among others the Centrale de l'enseignement, the Conseil permanent des jeunes, the Commision des services juridiques, the Assocation des centres-jeunesse, the Conférence des régies régionales de la santé et des services sociaux. There is also the Association des avocats de la défense du Québec, the Canadian Criminal Justice Association, and the Child Welfare League of Canada.

They all support the Bloc in its opposition to Bill C-7. These are not people with grey hair like you and I, Mr. Speaker, these are people who work with young people on a daily basis. What should people with grey hair do? They should look at what is going to happen to young persons.

● (1320)

We sould think about it. It could be our grandchildren who we will be sending to the school for crime at 14 years of age by throwing them in jail. We will be sending them to the school for crime. It is a shame to send our young people to the school for crime.

If the Young Offenders Act were applied properly in the rest of Canada, as it is in Quebec, people would see a 23% drop in the youth crime rate. Quebec has the lowest youth crime rate in Canada because it has applied the current legislation properly using the available tools.

The youth crime rate in Quebec is still too high, with 500 young offenders per 10,000 youths, compared to 900 young offenders per 10,000 youths in the rest of Canada.

Throwing our children in jail is not the answer. It will not help. We must look closely to see why a youth has gone down that path and what we should do to help him instead of giving him a criminal record. We must help him instead of making him a criminal for the rest of his life.

As a young father, the member for Berthier—Montcalm understands that. When he studied this piece of legislation, he looked at the future of his young children: his daughter who is about 10 years old and who is a skater, and his son who is about 12 years old. If one of these children had the misfortune to commit an offence, how could we get them out of this mess? Certainly not with the Minister of Justice's Bill C-7.

There is a consensus in Quebec. A motion was brought forward last week and agreed to unanimously. It tells the minister that if she wants to win votes in western Canada, her law sould apply there, but that she sould exempt Quebec from legislation that will only more criminals in our prisons. That is what Bill C-7 is all about. That is the ultimate goal of Bill C-7.

In closing, at the beginning of March, not too long ago, I received a letter from Geneviève Tavernier, the secretary of the ASRSQ, an association dealing with criminals.

I will read this letter so that members can understand properly. I hope the members opposite, as well as those to my right and to my left, will listen. It reads as follows:

> Although specializing in dealing adults in trouble with the law, the volunteers and professionals belonging to our association are interested in the situation of the young offenders and are well aware of the needs of the youth at risk. This is why our association studied Bill C-7.
>
> We are calling on you today to reiterate our opposition to Bill C-7. We remain part of the Coalition pour la justice des mineurs.
>
> It is on the basis of our great expertise in the area of criminal justice for adults that we want to raise awareness regarding the pitfalls of this bill.

● (1325)

The letter goes on to say:

> As the Coalition has said, and as we have also said regarding other bills, we are convinced that the legislative elements contained in this bill promote the categorization of crimes by creating automatic reactions that will have a major impact on the way these people are dealt with. It is important to understand that the nature of the offence does not always reflect the offender's true personality.

There are three more pages I could read, but the only thing that I would like to say in closing is: Let us think about it. Let us not make criminals out of our youth. Let us not send our youth to the university for crime for no good reason.

Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to take part in this debate, although I had not intended to, and to say that in the opinion of all Quebecers there is absolutely no comparison between this bill and the act that now applies in Quebec.

The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles said, and it was well put, that the current legislation in Quebec is designed to promote reintegration of young offenders into society. One can make all sorts of mistakes in life but in Quebec we believe in reintegration. We believe that the sometimes tragic mistakes of youth do happen, and I agree.

Recently in my riding five young people killed an 81 year old woman after breaking into her home. Obviously such a crime does not leave us indifferent in Quebec. It affects all of us. I am especially affected for it happened in my riding, in the beautiful city of Chambly that I have represented in this House since 1993. I admit it has affected the whole community. The crime was despicable if not downright heinous.

However society should not seek revenge. Society must manage our legal system, our criminal justice system, and ban terrible acts like the one I have mentioned. It is not there to seek revenge. The penalty for seeking revenge is very heavy.

Having a young person who made a mistake at age 14, 15 or 16 years of age dealt with by adult court and sentenced to 5, 8, 10 or 15 years in prison, under the rules applying to adults, to hardened criminals, is in fact, as the hon. member for Rivière-des-Milles-Îles was saying, sending that young person to a university for crime.

All young people are seeking to find themselves, whether they are young people who have made a mistake or students trying to choose a career. Sadly, in this quest for a future, for good and evil, some are doomed to failure. The social environment has a major impact. The famous Dr. Mailloux would speak of ''maternal deprivation'', a concept that has been greatly overworked. For my part, I do not believe in it. In many cases, we are just dealing with a single mistake.

This is no reason to turn them into hardened criminals, to send them to adult prison where they will complete their education as criminals. We can bet a hundred to one that those young people who live through this situation, who are sentenced and treated like hardened criminals will, in 10, 12 or 15 years, at the end of their sentence, be a bit older, old enough to look for work, since we are asking for their reintegration into society.

● (1330)

In their resumes, they must indicate that they spent 10 years at Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines or 12 at Kingston or Port-Cartier. What employers would take such a risk? They do not know who they are dealing with. They will not hire these youths, even if they are deeply repentant and have chosen to live a respectable life on all accounts. If we do not want to give them a chance and to reintegrate them into society, what option have they got? Once again, they will turn to crime and we will have repeat offenders.

In Quebec, crime is not praised, crime is not forgiven indiscriminately. We try to guide youths, under close supervision, toward specific goals. Psychiatric evaluations are done. There are also tests similar to those applied to young students looking for a goal in life. We supervise and help young offenders. We say ''You are good at this. You can complete your post-secondary education. Go for it, the state is behind you.'' We are not out for revenge.

After a few years of training, the youth often gets a diploma, which does not mention where he learned and which is delivered by an authorized educational institution. The youth has then been reintegrated into society. The success rate is absolutely convincing. In Quebec, it is beyond all expectations.

All those involved in the fight against crime in Quebec, including the Quebec bar association, are unanimous in saying that the provincial law is in itself a success. The rehabilitation rate is well above what any legislator might have imagined, even in his wildest dreams.

Now the federal justice minister has come up with her infamous Bill C-7 to try to please western Canada and get the support that has eluded her so far and will continue to elude her. In the end, this bill is only an indication of the revenge some members in this House are looking for. Whatever it takes, whatever needs to be done, they are out for revenge. But it is not up to society or the government to meet these kinds of expectations and to seek revenge.

The role of the government is to build a good relationship between its citizens and to create sustainable peace within its borders. I know from personal experience that members of a political party do not always agree but we learn to cope and to accept our differences of opinions. The same thing goes for society.

With her infamous Bill C-7, the Minister of Justice is sending the following message ''We no longer believe in social rehabilitation. Young offenders will be criminals their whole lives''. This is not true.

Whether we are young or not so young, we have all made our share of mistakes and blunders. A few years ago, we found out, shortly after an election that a respected member of this House, who had been elected in a riding in the heart of Montreal, had made a rather huge mistake when he was young. He had committed armed robbery when he was 18.

● (1335)

What was done to that man was terrible. Twenty years after committing the offence, he was truly rehabilitated, as evidenced by the fact that he was elected to represent a large segment of the population. His political career was destroyed because of his past.

Such things must never be allowed to happen again. We must be able to support our youth, guide them, accompany them, supervise them and make sure they stay on the right path.

That is what Bill C-7 introduced by the Minister of Justice does not do. I know, Mr. Speaker, that you are not allowed to take part in this debate, but if you could, I am sure you would agree with me.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 1 stands deferred.

[*English*]

The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 3.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-7, in Clause 125, be amended by replacing line 4 on page 129 with the following:

''services to young persons shall disclose to any''

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to the amendment which, given the length, breadth, width and complexity of the legislation, would classify as an improvement.

Without getting into a full debate on the merits of the bill itself, the amendment would in essence change but one word in the legislation. I know the Minister of Justice is very interested in the amendment and I know she would not want to miss my comments on how to improve her own bill. The amendment would change the word ''may'' to ''shall''. It would make it obligatory for the justice system, mainly the courts, upon making a finding, to mandatorily inform the school boards, that is, to give them relevant information that could be used in a very productive and, in some instances, protective way to enhance the rehabilitation of a student and, perhaps equally if not more important, other students and those in the educational community.

The amendment has the important backing and blessing of those who are most affected, short of the students, which is the teachers themselves. The Canadian School Boards Association, the Canadian Teachers' Federation and the Canadian Association of School Administrators have all expressed their unanimous support and their desire for the amendment to take place in the current youth criminal justice act.

They, among a plethora of other representatives who wished to have input in the drafting of the bill, were denied the opportunity to appear before the committee. They were denied the opportunity to have input into Bill C-7 prior to it being introduced in the House, as they were on the previous bill, Bill C-68. They were not given the opportunity to speak to the specifics as to why the amendment was necessary. I am pleased to have the opportunity to give members the opportunity to put their thoughts on the record.

• (1340)

One of the justice minister's justifications for not permitting or for not endorsing changing of the word ''may'' to ''shall'' was that it would impinge upon a young person's privacy or confidentiality with respect to having been involved in the criminal justice system.

Without being too dismissive, I do not believe that is a relevant response. Teachers routinely and as a matter of course in their profession deal discreetly with sensitive information. As part of their own ethics, as a school teacher and as a person working within the system, they are required to positively enhance a young person's life. To say that this would somehow jeopardize the privacy and the sensitive information about a young person trivializes what an important role teachers play in the development of our youth. It is akin to not giving doctors all the relevant information they need to make a diagnosis.

Allowing the courts to transfer relevant information to teachers for a specific purpose would allow teachers to provide the necessary attention to young people in order to help enhance their rehabilitation and to ensure that when they go back into the school system their specific needs will be addressed. It would also recognize that if a young person had been involved in a violent act or if the act itself involved aggression toward other students, a teacher or property, it would allow the teacher to have all of the information when approaching that child. The teacher could take into consideration the child's education, the education of other students in the classroom and other students with whom the young person might come in contact.

The amendment is very straightforward. It should not require a great deal of consternation on the part of the department or the minister herself. It is one that has broad support among the teaching community and the education systems, the ones which would be most effected.

The youth in question are already protected by other sections of existing legislation, namely the Young Offenders Act, and by virtue of confidentiality sections that are contained in the current bill. It is still a criminal offence to disseminate or use information about a young person's conviction or the terms thereof for a non-specified purpose. This would specify that it would only be used for the purpose of informing schools, principals and teachers. Therefore, to suggest that it would perpetrate a stigmatization of a young person or cause a young person's privacy to be jeopardized or brought into question is simply incorrect.

I submit to the House that the amendment, if it is supported and passed, would enhance legislation that is drastically in need of improvement. It is a complex and cumbersome bill. Those who were allowed to appear before the justice committee indicated that it was unworkable and that it would be extremely costly and impossible to administer by those in the provinces who would have the task to do so.

The amendment would have a profound effect by changing one word. It would make it mandatory for the youth court system to share information about a young person with teachers and school boards. It would significantly enhance the ability of the schools to do their work in conjunction with the criminal justice system. Sharing of information for a specific purpose has its merit. It is something that those who have worked in the justice system or those who have been teachers will be quick to embrace.

I look forward to hearing what other members have to say about the amendment. It is one I urge them to support.

● (1345)

Surely it is repetitive to say that if we can make a positive change or a positive impact on the bill, we should be very quick to do so. The law enforcement community is supportive of the legislation as well.

We know that teachers are much like police in the sense that they are on the frontlines. They are dealing most directly and in a most concentrated way with young persons. It therefore stands to reason that they should be given the information, the support and the backup to carry out their very important duties.

Once again I will put on record the words of Marie Pierce, executive director of the Canadian School Boards Association. She said that inconsistencies in the way information is relayed to school boards could pose a serious threat.

Her comments specifically suggested that lack of information could in some cases cause a serious problem. I illustrated by an earlier example that if a young person has a propensity for violence and has been convicted of a violent offence, it is common sense to suggest that the school board, the teacher and in some instances the principal of the school should know about it so they can act accordingly.

Marilies Rettig, president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, said justice officials were misguided if they were concerned about the confidentiality of a student's past. She said:

> There is no reason to deny us access to information we need to work effectively with justice officials in helping offenders while fulfilling our commitment to all students.

It is about the greater good. It is about ensuring that the community is protected but that the efforts of teachers do not in any way infringe upon privacy concerns. It is specifically aimed at helping students and ensuring that a person in their class does not interfere with the education of others or put others at risk in terms of safety.

The amendment addresses just that. It addresses safety concerns in the classroom. It specifically touches upon the sharing of information in a specific and protected way to give teachers a better ability to know the student, to know the background of the person who is in part the focus of their daily existence. The teacher is in many cases trying to focus on what is wrong in the young person's life outside what takes place in the classroom.

This type of information sharing in specific instances would be addressed effectively and specifically by support for the amendment, the changing of one word. I hope that in their wisdom members of the House, and particularly those on the government side, will also support the amendment.

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the motion as it is identical to a motion I submitted. It has been put forward because of evidence presented to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

The Canadian School Boards Association, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association and others have presented an argument to the effect that subclause 125(6) of the bill be changed to mandatory language from its permissive nature. What I mean is that the subclause uses the word may and the motion changes the word to shall. Instead of saying that maybe we should be getting schools involved with the youth justice process, we would be saying that we shall get schools involved.

Schools are an important partner in the youth justice process. Our schools, by law, must be accessible to young offenders. Our

schools are obliged to facilitate attendance and educational success. Like any employer, our schools have a statutory obligation to ensure the physical safety of their employees, to say nothing of their obligation to protect the safety of their students. These are all noteworthy objectives.

However, as with most noteworthy objectives, there is often a but or an exception. In this case it is this: To properly participate in the rehabilitation and reformation of young offenders, schools must be informed when young offenders enrol within the school environment.

As I have stated, our schools have a number of obligations to the various participants in the system. The interests of employees, students, the community and the school system must be considered along with the interests of the young offender.

The present wording of Bill C-7 states that the provincial director, youth worker, attorney general, peace officer, et cetera, may disclose to those engaged in the supervision or care of a young person, including schools and other educational institutions, information contained in a youth record if such disclosure is necessary to ensure compliance with an order of the court, to ensure safety of staff or students or other persons, or to facilitate the rehabilitation of the young person.

● (1350)

All the motion is saying is that if it is necessary to ensure compliance with a court order, to ensure safety of a school population or to assist in the rehabilitation of a young offender, the necessary information from the youth records shall be disclosed.

Some will argue that this type of mandatory disclosure will abuse the privacy rights of the offender. First, I have difficulty swallowing that argument when the legislation already permits disclosure in some circumstances. The clause says that information may be disclosed. Where is the privacy protection there?

Second and far more important are the security rights of staff and other students at the school. The institution must know the background of the student to provide proper safeguards for all to work and learn in its surroundings. Surely this is an example when the rights of the many should come ahead of the rights of the few, especially when the many are innocent and law abiding and the few have voluntarily decided to break the laws of society.

Other critics talk about the fear that education professionals will not respect the confidentiality of the information. That is also bogus and it is a red herring. Bill C-7 already permits the disclosure of this type of information. It is just not mandatory. There seems to be little concern for breach of confidentiality in these few cases.

As well educational people are professionals. They deal with confidential material every day whether it has to do with child welfare involvement, police investigation or even student disclosure in confidence. There is little, if any, concern about abuse of confidentiality by school board personnel.

Lastly there is the argument of civil liability. I can readily foresee, especially with the way society has been rapidly moving toward holding others civilly liable for damage and harm, that we may be placing the taxpayer at risk by failing to provide this type of information to school board officials. I can imagine a day when a violent young person is released from custody and placed in one of our high schools without anyone knowing the background of the youth.

Should that youth commit another violent crime such as a sexual assault and it becomes known that there was a previous record of violent behaviour, I cannot help but think that the victim and/or her parents would have a case to pursue to obtain compensation for damages and suffering.

After all, we have the state permitting a young person to surreptitiously enter the community and the school, yet we are not providing any notice whatsoever to prepare unsuspecting school employees and students. It is like putting a time bomb in a school and not telling anyone. Surely our courts will hold someone accountable when this occurs.

The government's feeble response to the cries of our citizens to replace the despised Young Offenders Act is most disappointing. For the past number of years I have been actively involved in the review of Bill C-7 and its predecessors, Bill C-3 and Bill C-68. The minister and the government have been quite clear that there is to be no deviation from or improvement on the government's idea of what is best for Canadians when it comes to youth justice.

I am not holding my breath for the government to accept this motion. However it is my job as a critic to present changes such as this motion after hearing from various groups and witnesses from many parts of the country. Nonetheless I urge members of this place to have a serious look at what is a relatively simple proposal. I also urge members to consider whether they want to be responsible for failing to support school boards and institutions across the land.

I will conclude by reading a paragraph from a letter I received from the British Columbia School Trustees Association. It reads:

> As school boards, we have the responsibility to ensure the safety of our staff and students, and to provide the best educational opportunities for every student in our care. We also work through our school communities to prevent crime. Young offenders are often students in our care. In order to provide a safe school environment and also facilitate the education (and rehabilitation) of a young offender, it is vital that we have access to information about the young offender.

I urge all members to support the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this bill. On the substantive issue, the Bloc Quebecois rejects this bill. We are now discussing the amendment moved by the Progressive Conservative Party.

● (1355)

It is an amendment to a bill that basically seeks to impose a tougher and much more punitive approach to young offenders. It is important that we do not consider this amendment only in the context in which they have tried to present it, that is as something that would minimize reality, that would not constitute an indepth change.

It is also an amendment that adheres to the broader reality of this whole bill, which seeks to make the management, the approach and the policy that will be adopted regarding young offenders, much more punitive and, in the end, to send them directly to the penitentiaries, to what can be called a school for crime.

Particularly in Quebec, however, we have developed over several years a rehabilitation and reintegration approach, one that is very demanding for young poeple. This is something that should never be forgotten. It is an approach that requires youths, while in an institution, to meet daily with social workers, with people who try to make them aware of their responsibility, because this is the root of the problem.

The bill introduced by the government provides for punitive solutions to acts committed by a young poeple. These solutions send them the following message ''You have committed an unacceptable act; we are giving you a very severe penalty. But we are not making any effort to let you know that we would like you to understand that you cannot do that again; we would like you to know that your act had a negative impact; we would like you to understand that your whole future might be affected if you do that again''.

However we could send them a different message. We could tell them that if they came under the current act as it is now implemented in Quebec, they would have to give some thought to these questions and find out how they can get back on track''.

It works and it works very well. Crime rates are going down. The rehabilitation rate for young people is also very high. In the end, it makes it possible to correct situations and, in a practical way, it ensures that individuals who made mistakes will not have to bear this burden for the rest of their life. They have the opportunity and the good fortune to have access to the resources necessary to correct the situation.

The bill before us today will have as a result that within six months, one year or two, there will be an increase in the demand for resources to build new prisons, and to support a punitive system, when we could have continued to make available the resources necessary to support rehabilitation and reintegration.

In such a context, the Bloc Quebecois does not believe that the amendment put forward today would correct the situation. What would correct the situation would be for the government to decide that in the end Quebec would be allowed to keep on implementing the act as it is doing currently.

If other provinces in Canada want to have a more punitive approach under which a young person is not viewed as being responsible for his actions, but which takes into account the action itself and which punishes him hoping that he will be able to return to society after spending some time in an institution where he will not learn—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon. member but we must now proceed to statements by members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

DANUTA BARTOSZEK

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate a constituent of mine, Ms. Danuta Bartoszek, who won the women's National Capital Marathon in Ottawa on May 13.

Danuta won the women's division of the 42 kilometre race in 2 hours, 37.58 minutes. It is her first national marathon title and it places her second in the national marathon qualifying standings for the world championships.

Danuta, born in Poland, immigrated to Canada in 1989 and became a Canadian citizen in 1992. She has participated in many prestigious marathons since 1991, including Canadian and world championships and the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games.

On behalf of my constituents in Mississauga West, I commend and congratulate Danuta and wish her many more first place finishes.

* * *

● (1400)

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a man charged with diplomacy, has recently been anything but diplomatic. He has made offensive remarks about Canada's head of state. I refer to his recent

remark that ''the Queen does not represent Canada; she represents Great Britain''. That is wrong. Queen Elizabeth is the Queen of Canada and as a minister of her crown he ought to know that.

The monarchy is a fundamental aspect of our distinctiveness as a nation. The crown defines a distinct Canadian identity contrary to that of the republic to the south. An elected president, and perhaps that is what the minister aspires to be, would owe his or her election to a political faction.

The minister seems to prefer republican partisanship over our longstanding historic institutions. Perhaps he ought to listen to the Prime Minister who said ''The monarchy is not a problem in Canada. It is not an issue at all''.

It is insulting for the minister to suggest that the Queen cannot truly represent us. Fifty years of public service given freely sets a standard of service that all Canadians should attempt to emulate and not attack.

* * *

CANADIAN POLISH CONGRESS

Mrs. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize the Canadian Polish Congress that is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

On May 27 Kitchener's Polish community hosted a parade and festival to mark the occasion. It is unknown when the Polish community first established itself in Kitchener. However by the turn of the 20th century there were 250 families registered at the Catholic parish. Immigration to the Waterloo region increased in the 1920s following Poland's independence and has continued ever since.

Leading the parade was a banner that read ''Our roots are in Poland—Our fruits are in Canada—Proud to be part of the Canadian mosaic''.

Multiculturalism works in Kitchener. Polish Canadians have added their rich heritage to Kitchener. The Kitchener district of the Canadian Polish Congress preserves traditions and language to enable the Polish culture to enjoy a strong presence in our community.

I ask the House to join with me today in congratulating the Canadian Polish Congress on 50 years with a presence in Kitchener.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the world is in great hands. On Friday, May 25, I was delighted to host some 160 students and members of the community of Burlington at a human rights forum.

Our speakers, Senator Landon Pearson, Ms. Jaene Castrillon of Save the Children Canada and Mr. Martin Connell of Calmeadow Inc., ensured debate was lively and topic varied: war affected children, work against the sexual exploitation of children at home and abroad, micro credit and poverty alleviation, international labour and trade laws, and the environment.

The high school students were engaged, informed and curious. Their energy and dedication in making choices to work for change in their world were refreshing and encouraging.

Canada has an important role in world issues. Citizens have an opportunity to get involved to help ensure our nation continues to be the best place in the world in which to live. The dialogue the young people of Burlington engaged in gives me great hope that we will continue to care, to renew and to innovate, and that human rights will be respected and indeed improved internationally and domestically.

I congratulate my parliamentary intern, Ms. Jackie Steele, for organizing the whole event.

* * *

BACKCOUNTRY SAFETY DAY

Mr. Stephen Owen (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's first national Backcountry Safety Day will be held this fall on September 8 as designated by the Kokanee glacier alpine campaign.

The Government of Canada supports this important effort to promote backcountry injury prevention and backcountry safety. The Kokanee glacier alpine campaign is a national campaign in memory of Michel Trudeau and other Canadians who have lost their lives in pursuit of their passion for the backcountry.

We applaud the organizers of this campaign for their hard work and dedication to help raise national awareness of this important safety issue. I invite everyone to join me on Grouse Mountain in North Vancouver on September 8 for the celebration of Canada's first national Backcountry Safety Day.

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NATIONAL CAPITAL

Ms. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Canadians look to their nation's capital as a source of pride. National pride is about to be replaced with a national shame as the Prime Minister pushes for his dubious legacy, aided by his heiress apparent, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, to gut downtown Ottawa in favour of a plan to build monuments to make up for a sketchy political record.

This billion dollar scheme will no doubt be paid for by the GST, the true heritage of the party that campaigned on its elimination.

The Prime Minister's obvious favouritism to promote one sad replacement candidate for his job over another by spending hundreds of millions of dollars on his ego at a time when there is no

money for our farming community or for our health care system will be the true legacy of the government.

One is reminded of the Roman Empire during the time of Nero with one exception: the other place has too many docile appointees to overturn the emperor.

* * *

● (1405)

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS CARNATION MONTH

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House and all Canadians that the month of May has been designated Multiple Sclerosis Carnation Month by the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada.

Multiple sclerosis or MS is the most common neurological disease affecting young adults in Canada. It is characterized by loss of balance, impaired speech, extreme fatigue, double vision and paralysis.

Founded in 1948, the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada has invested nearly $64 million to find the cause, prevention, treatment and a cure for MS. This past year, thanks to donors across the country, the MS Society directed an additional $3 million to MS research over the next three years for 13 potentially groundbreaking research projects and more than 30 research scholarships.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada on its efforts and in wishing it a successful Multiple Sclerosis Carnation Month.

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[*Translation*]

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for 40 years Amnesty International has been defending prisoners of conscience, people whose only crime has been to express their convictions.

These men and women are imprisoned in the name of freedom, condemned to death, and often tortured to death. Without Amnesty International, they would have been totally forgotten.

Amnesty International can count on the Bloc Quebecois to carry its battles to the federal parliament. We have done so for the past eight years, most recently in the case of Mr. M'Barek, who was expelled from Canada last January, according to the assessment by the Canadian government, at no risk if returned to his country.

After an unfair trial, Mr. M'Barek was found guilty, jailed and tortured. Thanks to pressure by the Bloc Quebecois, Amnesty International and other human rights organizations, Mr. M'Barek was finally released on May 26.

The Bloc Quebecois will continue to support Amnesty International in the name of our fundamental rights: freedom and democracy.

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OLD WENDAKE

Mr. Jean-Guy Carignan (Québec East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to bring to the attention of this House the designation of Old Wendake as a national historic site.

This village, created in 1697 after the dispersal of the Huron nation, is a witness to the harmonious cohabitation between the Huron and French nations in Canada.

This community was able to reconcile the model of European habitation with the lifestyle and traditional values of the Huron-Wendat community, without putting the latter at risk.

In addition to representing an example of successful cohabitation between francophones and aboriginal people, Old Wendake symbolizes the history, culture and values of the Huron-Wendat nation.

For all these reasons, I wish to draw attention to the Canadian government's initiative to recognize the significant contribution Old Wendake has made to Canada's heritage.

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[*English*]

MINING

Ms. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is mining week in Saskatchewan. Mining contributes more than $2 billion to Saskatchewan's gross domestic product annually. Almost 20,000 people are employed either directly or indirectly by the mining industry today.

The total value of Saskatchewan's mineral sales was $2.4 billion last year. Saskatchewan is the world's leading producer and exporter of potash and uranium, accounting for almost 30% of world production in both of these commodities.

The opening of two new uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan and the growing momentum in diamond exploration will contribute to ensuring that mining continues to be a significant contributor to our provincial economy.

I take this opportunity to congratulate everyone involved in the mining industry in Saskatchewan on a wonderful past and a very bright future.

[*Translation*]

GILLES LEFEBVRE

Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has just lost a great cultural leader. Gilles Lefebvre has passed away at the age of 78.

For over 60 years, Mr. Lefebvre distinguished himself as a man of vision and a man of passion. We will remember him as an excellent violinist, a pioneer in our great institutions of music. In 1949, he was one of the thinkers who gave birth to Jeunesses musicales, an organization that is to be found today in many countries. In 1951, he founded the Jeunesses Musicales camp, known today as the Centre d'art d'Orford, in my riding of Brome—Mississquoi.

● (1410)

In 1970, he established the world youth orchestra, a symphony orchestra uniting the world's greatest musical hopes. He is also one of the founders of International Music Day, celebrated in Canada annually on October 1.

An officer of the Order of Canada, he received many other distinctions including the Prix Calixa-Lavallée.

Today, we lament the departure of a great educator and humanist. Gilles Lefebvre devoted his life to music, to discovering new talent and to promoting Canadian artists on the world stage.

I would like, on behalf of the Government of Canada, to thank him and to offer my sincere condolences to his family.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL DRINKING WATER STANDARDS

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest crises facing our nation today is the safety of our freshwater supply.

In the province of Newfoundland and Labrador alone it is estimated that over 250 communities are under a boil water order. For many years the aboriginal communities across the country have known the danger of poor water quality. Now other communities such as Walkerton and North Battleford have experienced firsthand the devastating effects of a dangerous, contaminated drinking water supply.

The historical assault on our environment by such practices as logging, agriculture, urban sprawl, dumping of hazardous and household waste is now taking its toll on our water quality. The time is now for the Liberal government to show leadership and institute a national safe water policy.

[*Translation*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, close to 3,000 people marched in the streets of Pointe-Claire, a Montreal suburb, to defend the right of everyone to the respect of their differences.

Roger Thibault and Théo Wouters have been living quietly together for 23 years in this suburb of Montreal. However, some of their neighbours told the couple, more than once, that it was not welcome and that its lifestyle was unacceptable.

In response to this lack of respect and to repeated acts of intimidation, they chose to speak out, but above all, to fight peacefully against ignorance and bad faith.

Their call for the recognition of their most fundamental rights and for the respect of their dignity was heard by thousands of people who marched with them. That call was also supported by the vast majority of Quebecers.

Let us hope that these two can live in peace and in dignity anywhere they want.

* * *

[*English*]

PORTUGAL

Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Canada it is an honour for me to welcome President Jorge Sampaio of the Portuguese republic.

President Sampaio has been on an official visit to Ottawa since May 24 and will stay until June 1. This is President Sampaio's first visit to Canada.

Our Prime Minister met earlier today with President Sampaio to discuss ways to broaden and deepen our expanding relationship with Portugal. For quite some time now Portugal has been a proud economic partner to Canada.

In 1999 trade between our two countries reached $320 million. Also more than 400,000 people of Portuguese origin now live in Canada and have made a significant contribution to our nation.

The president of Portugal and his delegation will also meet with Governor General Adrienne Clarkson. Once again we welcome President Sampaio to Canada and congratulate him on his recent re-election.

Oral Questions

FISHERIES

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans recently announced this year's total allowable catch quotas for Newfoundland northern shrimp. The minister stressed that Newfoundland and Labrador would receive 70% of these quotas. This is like saying that Saskatchewan could own 70% of its wheat or Alberta could own 70% of its oil.

This resource is a Newfoundland resource fished on Newfoundland's fishing grounds. When Newfoundland entered Confederation it brought the fishing grounds with it. This government looks upon them simply as the Grand Banks off or away from Newfoundland.

They are our wheat fields. The resources are our resources. They are the banks of Newfoundland. Newfoundlanders should be prime beneficiaries of any resource developed in that area.

* * *

ARGENTINA AND CHILE

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the week of May 6 I had the honour and privilege of joining the Governor General of Canada and His Excellency in Chile on their first state visit to Argentina and Chile.

The central theme of the visit was bringing people together. This theme embodies the goal of building on the growing political and economic ties between our countries by broadening, deepening and strengthening connections that already exist in many sectors of society. It also symbolizes the desire to create new and lasting relationships.

● (1415)

The delegation represented a broad cross-section of Canadian society. Delegates included: writers, artists, aboriginal leaders, scientists, parliamentarians, directors of major cultural institutions, and representatives from universities, hospitals, and the food, wine and agribusiness sectors.

This exchange, through dialogues and conversations, allowed participants to learn from the sharing of each other's ideas, achievements and experiences and engage their counterparts in innovative ways to give form and life to the idea of Canada in the minds of Chilean people.

* * *

THE FUTURE GROUP

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to rise in the House today to recognize the efforts of seven dedicated university students known as The Future Group. These students raised enough money to travel to Cambodia so they could learn about and lend their support to local organizations combating child prostitution.

As I speak, a team of students is in Cambodia, acknowledged as the child prostitution capital of the world. One of its tasks is to try to find an effective way to protect children from the sexual depredation of unscrupulous travellers.

Estimates suggest over one million children are victims of child prostitution in southeast Asia. It is encouraging that a group of concerned young Canadians is trying to do something about it.

I would like to tip my hat to the efforts of The Future Group in standing up for decency, integrity and justice.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we are hearing news reports today—

Some hon. members: Leader, leader.

The Speaker: We all know the hon. member for Medicine Hat is a popular member, but we would like to hear his question.

Mr. Monte Solberg: Mr. Speaker, we are hearing news reports today about the possible torture of a Canadian citizen who has been held in a Saudi Arabian jail without charge for the past six months.

According to medical sources, William Sampson was hospitalized with a crushed vertebra and trauma to both his hands and his feet. This follows two separate heart operations he has undergone in the last couple of months.

What specific actions has the government taken to ensure that this Canadian citizen is not being mistreated while in that Saudi jail?

Mr. Denis Paradis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, following reports that William Sampson may have been physically abused, the Minister of Foreign Affairs called the Saudi ambassador to Canada on May 24 to express his concern for Mr. Sampson's well-being.

The Canadian ambassador to Saudi Arabia raised concerns about Mr. Sampson's well-being with the Saudi deputy minister of the interior on May 27, which was yesterday. The ambassador was given permission to visit Mr. Sampson on May 28, which is today,

to discuss his physical condition. It was agreed that the medical physician selected by Canada would accompany them.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah is due to arrive in Ottawa next month to open the new Saudi embassy.

What steps is the government prepared to take with respect to Prince Abdullah's upcoming visit to underline Canada's frustration with the Saudi treatment of Canadian citizens while they are being held in Saudi custody?

Mr. Denis Paradis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to put pressure on Saudi authorities to make sure that Mr. Sampson is well treated.

We will wait for the results of the medical doctor's visit to Mr. Sampson today and we will continue to put on pressure.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Canadian concerns go well beyond the alleged torture of Mr. Sampson. This is a very serious issue.

The Saudis claim to respect human rights conventions, yet our officials are routinely denied access to Mr. Sampson. He is allegedly facing torture and he certainly faces the prospect of the death penalty.

Let me be very specific. Is the government prepared to cancel the scheduled visit to Ottawa next month of Prince Abdullah and recall our ambassador if the Saudis are not prepared to meet the most basic standards for fair treatment of Mr. Sampson while he is in their custody?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Paradis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, our ambassador has been given access to Mr. Sampson, whom he will be visiting with a physician who will examine him.

We will wait for the report of this doctor, who was selected by Canadian authorities and our ambassador, before deciding on what to do next.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yet another official report has condemned CIDA mismanagement, incompetency and waste.

● (1420)

This time the public accounts committee has learned that CIDA breaks contracting rules, fails to cut off bad projects and gives sweet deals to retired bureaucrats.

CIDA has become the country's top expert in abuse, mismanagement and patronage. Will the minister act now and fire the managers responsible for this mess?

Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the auditor general also said that CIDA does fantastic work, that 97% of all the programs analyzed were doing very good work.

However CIDA has already taken corrective action with respect to the areas that were identified, especially with respect to the regulation regarding use of former civil servants in receipt of pensions.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are proud of our tradition of generous development assistance but they want cost effective aid programs, not patronage and abuse of public funds.

It is clear that CIDA is bringing ill repute on this proud tradition. CIDA is actually discrediting our aid programs. What will the minister do about it?

Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have already said and as the hon. member knows, the auditor general was quoted very clearly as saying that after thousands and thousands of programs, 97% were found to be accurate.

All CIDA programs are monitored. The money is not wasted as the hon. member has suggested. Corrective actions in those areas that were recommended have already been taken and they continue to be improved.

* * *

[*Translation*]

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the proven approach of rehabilitating young offenders was at the heart of the tour throughout Quebec just completed by the member for Berthier—Montcalm and the young actor Marc Beaupré.

And everywhere, the message they heard was the same. All stakeholders in every region are unanimous: Quebec wants nothing to do with the repressive system the federal government is seeking to impose.

Given the intransigence of the Minister of Justice, I appeal to the Prime Minister. Will he rise in the House and assure us that

Quebecers' unanimous wish to be allowed to continue to enforce the existing young offenders legislation in Quebec will be respected?

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me reassure everyone in the House that our new youth justice legislation is premised upon values shared by all Canadians regardless of where they live. In fact, those values are prevention, meaningful consequences, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Let me reassure the hon. leader of the Bloc that there is sufficient flexibility in our new youth justice legislation to permit Quebec to carry out the programs and policies it presently has in place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, not one political party, federalist or sovereignist, in the national assembly supports this bill; not one group supports it; not one judge supports it. Even the police are against it. Only she is right.

Does the Prime Minister, who talked about a distinct society, and introduced a motion supposedly recognizing the distinct character of Quebec, realize that there is a distinct approach to this issue in Quebec? If the motion he had passed was more than just words, could he prove it by allowing Quebec to take a distinct approach in this area?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member listens to the minister, he will understand that the proposed legislation will allow Quebec to maintain its present approach. It is possible that other provinces will decide to have a system different from that of Quebec.

What we are doing is letting all Canadians have a good piece of legislation allowing some differences in various parts of Canada.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have just finished a tour that took me all over Quebec and enables me to state that there is a unanimous feeling in Quebec that Bill C-7 is a bad bill, a useless, costly and dangerous one.

Everyone, seniors, judges, victims of crime, teachers, condemn the minister's bill.

My question, a very simple one, is for the Prime Minister of Canada. Before causing irreparable harm to the Quebec approach, is the Prime Minister prepared to bow to the very broad consensus in Quebec and to allow Quebec to continue to apply the Young Offenders Act in its present form?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had listened to my reply, instead of reading out a prepared question, he would have understood that Quebec can continue to do in future what it is doing at present.

• (1425)

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister is the one reading out prepared replies. Otherwise, he would realize that no one in Quebec supports this bill, no one.

Even the national assembly, in a unanimous motion, is calling upon the Minister of Justice to have a specific system for Quebec, so that it may continue to apply the Young Offenders Act, because it gets results.

Above and beyond partisan politics, what is the Prime Minister's reply—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice.

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member says that no one supports our efforts in relation to new youth justice legislation in the province of Quebec, but in fact I am in receipt of a letter addressed to myself from the Barreau du Québec in which it supports our efforts focusing on youth rehabilitation and reintegration.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, foot dragging in relocating Sydney tar ponds residents continues. One resident, frustrated out of her mind, scooped up some sludge and sent it off for analysis. The results were in within a week, not a month, not a year, but a week. The results were clear: arsenic at eight times the acceptable level and lead at three times the acceptable level.

How much more evidence do governments need before they take the only responsible action, which is to relocate area residents to put them out of harm's way and to do it now?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague, the Minister of Health, has made clear on a number of occasions, we intend to proceed with the testing of the sites adjacent to the tar ponds. We intend to continue to follow the advice of an expert, Dr. Lewis, who came from outside Canada so that we would have an independent opinion.

We will continue to work to make sure that where it is necessary we take the measures needed to protect the health of the individuals in this area.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, these are the same old excuses for delay: we need more tests; we need more analysis; and we need good science before we can act. Now we learn that the government is preparing to weaken the standards to

rig the results to minimize government responsibility. That is not science. That is not good science. That is Bre-X science.

Is it not true that the government is preparing to lower the standards to justify as little action as possible to protect as few residents as possible?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not for the first time the hon. lady is incorrect in her assertions. The government has no intention of altering the standards.

We do of course continue with ongoing scientific work, which she may describe as unnecessary, but we do think the decisions that affect the well-being, the health and the location of individuals in Canada should be based on good information and not on her unscientific views.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, it seems that tomorrow cabinet will consider a low interest loan to Bombardier so that it can sell more jets to Northwest. Analysts, however, say that Bombardier already has a natural advantage because Northwest owns 36 Bombardier jets, and we all know that a common fleet cuts maintenance costs.

Would the Minister for International Trade tell me why a taxpayer subsidy would be considered for a company that already has a natural advantage in the particular sale?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no decision has been made by government on the transaction the member is talking about. What we absolutely want on this side of the House is a level playing field around the world. We have been fighting for a level playing field. That is what we do through every international trade negotiation. That is what we do when we bring cases to the WTO.

We will promote the Canadian interest all around the world at every opportunity we have, but on that case no decision has been made.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is a dangerous game the minister plays. He wants a level playing field, but when it comes to airplanes and Bombardier there seems to be a precedent from the government to put subsidies forward.

This is a dangerous game we are playing because there are other commodities that are in jeopardy right now: agricultural commodities, softwood lumber and P.E.I. potatoes. Why is the minister prepared to go to the WTO, potentially, when he has other areas he should be dealing with which have unlevel playing fields?

● (1430)

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member could ask his neighbour, the member for Richmond—Arthabaska, to think about that.

I would like to add something. We are not talking about subsidies. These transactions in terms of loans do not equate to subsidies.

The government will stand by the jobs of Canadians. We will make sure that trade partners around the world respect the WTO organization and its regulations. That is the way we see things, and we will promote that view to the world.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice said that she has made approximately 182 amendments to her youth justice legislation. Some 180 of those amendments resulted from defective drafting by her department in the first place and many were to correct discrepancies between English and French versions.

Since her original bill contains so many errors because of hasty preparation, why does the minister refuse to accept any beneficial changes proposed by the opposition in response to committee hearings?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we listened intently to many of the witnesses and all members of committee during the committee process. We made substantial amendments to the legislation in light of that which was brought forward at committee.

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, last week a 16 year old was killed in an after school fight in the minister's home province. I appreciate that she cannot discuss cases before the court. However, even under her new legislation, there is no guarantee that youthful killers will receive an adult sentence, and there is no guarantee of public identification for the safety and security of the community.

Since the introduction of her legislation in 1999 there has been much criticism over its complexities and loopholes. Again, why is she so resistant to changes intended to enhance public safety?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member should be fully aware that we have made significant changes to the legislation, first, to reduce complexity and, second, to respond to many of the legitimate points made by witnesses at committee.

I come back to a basic fundamental point. The legislation is based upon the fundamental values of all Canadians: prevent youth crime, meaningful consequences when it occurs, and meaningful rehabilitation and reintegration of young people so they can get on with their lives.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on May 22, the grand chief of the Innu community of Sept-Îles, Rosario Pinette, made the following remarks on Bill C-7, and I quote:

> This legislation, if passed, will not enter our community. It will remain outside, because it has a direct impact on native peoples. It is legislation imposed that fails to respect our cultural reality.

The Assembly of First Nations and its national chief, Matthew Coon Come, are profoundly opposed to the bill.

How will the Minister of Justice answer the Native Peoples, who refuse to have this law applied in their community?

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working very closely with aboriginal communities all over the country, not only in relation to youth justice but other important justice issues.

We have held a number of workshops with aboriginal leaders and those who work with aboriginal young people. Just as in the case of Quebec, there is sufficient flexibility in the legislation to acknowledge the realities of aboriginal young people and the circumstances of their lives.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, they must not understand either, because the same chief said, and I am again quoting:

> The errors are quickly forgotten. In fifty years, perhaps they will make available a fund to repair the social damage caused by C-7, as in the case of the residential schools.

Before committing the irreparable and repeating past mistakes with native peoples, is the minister prepared to delay passage of Bill C-7 until she has formally met the native leaders of Quebec and Canada? Is she prepared to meet them before implementing this bill?

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would hope the hon. member is not suggesting that the existing young offenders legislation has worked for aboriginal youth. This is a country that incarcerates more young people than any other western democracy. Unfortunately a great many of those young people are aboriginal youth.

We have to do better. We are willing to work with our aboriginal communities to ensure less aboriginal young people end up in the jails of the country.

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in Alberta in 1986 Mr. Al Dolejs brutally murdered his two young children. He was sentenced to life imprisonment with no parole for 25 years. Now, only 15 years later, he is eligible for parole under the Liberal faint hope clause.

His ex-wife is fearful for her life, but it appears that Liberals are more interested in protecting criminals than victims. Why will the minister not bring forward legislation to protect victims like this unfortunate woman?

● (1435)

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe what I am hearing from the hon. member in the opposition.

The government has done more in the area of domestic violence and for the protection of victims. In fact, my predecessor introduced amendments to section 745 of the criminal code to ensure that its application takes place only in extraordinary circumstances.

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, if she says she has done more for domestic violence, she is correct. This is an example of it.

When the Liberals introduced the faint hope clause they promised, as she said, it would only apply in exceptional cases. However statistics show that four out of five murderers never serve a life sentence.

Will the minister show some common sense and repeal the clause so that victims are protected and murderers serve their sentences?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is probably aware, the government made amendments to section 745 in 1997 to ensure that it would only be used in exceptional circumstances.

For example, we introduced a screening mechanism whereby a superior court judge could screen out applications that had no reasonable prospect of success. We also have a new requirement that the jury considering an application must be unanimous.

We have acted to ensure that section 745 is used in only exceptional circumstances.

* * *

[*Translation*]

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, twice just now, in response to questions from the leader of the Bloc Quebecois and the member for Berthier—Montcalm, the Prime Minister said that Quebec will be able to enforce the legislation as it sees fit and keep the existing system.

If the Prime Minister is serious, why will he not agree to include this in the bill? Just a few words will keep everyone happy.

[*English*]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no necessity to indicate anything directly in the bill.

As we have said throughout, the bill is sufficiently flexible to permit Quebec or any other province to work in relation to locally based strategies and approaches. Therefore, it is unnecessary to put any particular section in the legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the time for academic replies is over.

My question is for the Prime Minister. He himself said twice in the House, at the beginning of this oral question period, that Quebec could continue to enforce its young offenders system.

I hold out my hand to him today. If the Prime Minister is serious when he says this, let him rise in the House and include it in the bill so that everyone will be happy. That is all that Quebec wants.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised at the attitude of the Bloc Quebecois which, as I very clearly remember, voted here in the House in December 1995 against a distinct society for Quebec.

Furthermore, if we were to do as the member requested, if it is true that Quebec's system is as good as all that, I would like the other provinces to be able to do likewise.

* * *

[*English*]

TRADE

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government is at it again, undermining the World Trade Organization by offering Northwest Airlines a subsidized loan worth more than a billion dollars to ensure that Bombardier secures a contract with another large American airline.

Only 15 years ago, the federal government sold Canadair to Bombardier to end the drain of public money to the aerospace industry. Why do Canadian taxpayers have to continue financing the former crown corporation in the year 2001?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know how much the reform alliance has always been against Bombardier and does not like to see a worldwide champion of aircrafts, one of the great successes we have had.

Yes, the government will fight for the jobs. No, we will not accept Embraer of Brazil taking back its share in a way that the WTO considers will not respect its international trade obligations. We will get to the bottom of this for the benefit of thousands of Canadians who have jobs in the air industry across Canada.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is easy to see why we can have national champions when the government is the banker for this company. That is exactly what has happened.

In January the industry minister said the Government of Canada would offer subsidized credit to stop Brazil's Embraer from benefiting from unfair trade practices. He sold this to Canadians as a one time emergency deal. Less than five months later, and as we predicted, Bombardier is back for more.

● (1440)

When will the Liberal government learn that Canadian interests lie in a rules based policy and not an accelerated trade war with Brazil by being Bombardier's banker?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we repeat that in the case of Brazil it is not respecting the decision of the World Trade Organization.

We have said to them that we want to follow trade practices that are acceptable and that they cannot steal jobs away from workers in all parts of Canada who are producing a very good airplane. They should not have their jobs stolen because another country does not respect the rules of this international organization.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Scherrer (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for several weeks now, members of the House have been hearing about the serious problems encountered by Mr. M'Barek since his return to Tunisia.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell us what the Government of Canada intends to do now that Mr. M'Barek is out of jail?

Mr. Denis Paradis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we learned that Mr. M'Barek was conditionally released on Saturday, until his appeal is heard in September.

We are pleased that our representations and those of our embassy in Tunisia were successful. Our embassy will also be represented at the appeal.

Canada is closely following the human rights situation in Tunisia and it regularly raises related issues with Tunisian authorities, particularly freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

[*English*]

HEALTH

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are reeling today at the news, and yes we are talking news, about the shocking and disturbing finding that Health Canada made a conscious and deliberate decision to ignore its own food safety standards and put human health at risk.

A report by the Ottawa *Citizen*, backed by laboratory testing, has revealed levels of mercury in several species of fish for sale in Canada that are twice Health Canada's own safety standards.

I trust the Prime Minister is also shocked by these revelations. Is he prepared today to issue a warning to have all retailers remove such fish from the marketplace?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that the hon. member's fishing trip will end rather quickly.

Indeed, Canadians should know that our standards regarding the levels of mercury in fish are twice as strict as those of the United States.

As for the species to which she is referring, namely tuna, shark and swordfish, the Minister of Health indicated that if these species are consumed in very small quantities, they do not pose a threat to health.

[*English*]

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians will be even more shocked when they hear that kind of answer. We are talking about Canadian standards for health and safety purposes. We are talking about a Health Canada decision to violate those standards and our own law, the law of Canada.

My question today is for the government. Will it put human health and safety first, not only recall all fish that may cause mercury poisoning but issue a proper warning to all people, especially pregnant women, women of child bearing age and young children?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Health Canada—we are talking about pregnant women—released a document entitled ''Nutrition for a Healthy Pregnancy''.

This publication includes all the necessary information and appropriate warnings regarding certain species of fish.

These warnings were sent to a dozen health organizations. They were also posted on websites. All the necessary information is available.

* * *

[*English*]

WHARVES

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Transport knows, when the wharf in Digby, Nova Scotia, was divested to a not for profit society, the not for profit society also got a cheque for over $3 million to cover a 10 year period.

● (1445)

However, on the day the society received the cheque it flipped $1 million to a private company and, over the next 12 months, it flipped a total of $1.9 million to a private company. The department did an internal audit but nothing happened. It has now done an independent audit. Can the minister tell us why this $2 million was flipped out of the not for profit society?

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member has asked similar questions on numerous occasions and has received very complete answers. He is aware that a thorough audit has been undertaken and that all the issues are being dealt with.

I am not aware of any serious allegations being made other than the ones being made by the member. If the member will allow a little more time for the results of the audit to be borne out in actual practice, he will no doubt get the satisfactory answer for which he is looking.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, what he is saying is that I have asked the question many times but that I have never received an answer, and I did not get one today.

I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Health, a question I have also asked several times.

Phoenix Agritech, a manufacturer in Nova Scotia, manufactures an electronic device designed to scare birds away from oil spills in airports by making a noise. The Department of Health has deemed this a pesticide so it can charge a pesticide tax under the Pesticide Control Act.

Has the minister yet decided whether he will continue charging the tax as a pesticide or not?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under the Food and Drugs Act, these products are deemed to be pesticides and they are subjected to the usual regulations.

[*English*]

AUBERGE GRAND-MÈRE

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like the Prime Minister to answer a question on the Auberge Grand-Mère.

Has the RCMP been involved at all in this matter and, in particular, has the Prime Minister's Office been in contact with the RCMP regarding the Auberge Grand-Mère?

Mr. John Cannis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows very well that the leader of the Conservative Party did ask for an inquiry and that the RCMP did come back and exonerate the Prime Minister. By his own admission, he was satisfied with the RCMP's investigation.

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in February the official opposition asked, under access to information, for any documents on the Auberge Grand-Mère from the Shawinigan HRDC office. We were told that there was more information available but that it needed more time in order to consult with the RCMP.

Will the Prime Minister today clarify the RCMP's involvement in the Auberge Grand-Mère?

Mr. John Cannis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how clear I can be. Perhaps there is confusion in the hon. member's party.

I just clarified that the RCMP was asked formally to conduct an inquiry. It did that. It came back. The member accepted the findings of the RCMP. I think the member is just as confused as his party is.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are documents to indicate that the Minister of National Defence has concealed from the public the advanced state of contamination of the drinking water wells in the town of Shannon, out of concerns that are far more about image than about public health.

Are we to understand that DND, while aware of the situation, preferred to keep the entire population in the dark for fear that Quebecers would realize how badly served they are by the federal government and would become even more sovereignist?

[*English*]

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is not the case at all. We are working very closely with the town of Shannon. In fact the mayor of Shannon and a delegation came to see me just a couple of weeks ago. We have entered into a very substantial expenditure of money, over $2 million, to try to get to the bottom of what is causing the problem and to find ways of remedying it.

We are taking this matter very seriously and we are being very responsible. We are communicating with the town, its mayor, its people and the environment ministry in Quebec.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the document goes on to say ''Although we are all equally responsible, the main thing is to clean up our land and show our good will to the municipality of Shannon. The message that has to be put across is not guilt, but partnership''.

Is the minister going to acknowledge that this document is evidence of his department's concern for its image far more than any concern for protecting public health?

● (1450)

[*English*]

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker. We are concerned about people's public health. We are concerned about doing the responsible thing. I have had a meeting with the mayor. I have put a proposal to the mayor and to the council that would involve us in helping them out in this situation. We will continue to work very closely with them.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, during the war in Kosovo, Canada's air force very quickly ran out of precision guided munitions for our CF-18s. Modern missions require modern precision guided munitions but the government failed to provide the necessary capability to the air force. This represents a shocking level of unpreparedness.

What is the minister doing to address this issue? Why is our munitions' inventory at such an abysmally low level?

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is an absolute wrong characterization. The right characterization is the fact that we played a very key role in terms of that air campaign in Yugoslavia.

We were one of the top allies of NATO in providing the kind of forces and equipment that was necessary. Even the United States,

which had more forces and equipment than Canada, had difficulty with its number of munitions, as did all countries that were involved. The campaign went on for a considerable period of time.

What is important is what the head general told us. He said that Canadians were first teamers and that we were doing an excellent job.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, imagine if Canadians were aware that only 5% of our CF-18s had the necessary targeting systems to fly in operational missions with our allies. In Kosovo we had to borrow from the Americans to equip 12 CF-18s with precision guided targeting equipment. This level of readiness is deplorable and disgraceful for a G-8 country.

Is our armed forces' state of readiness based on what we can beg and borrow from the Americans? Will the planned CF-18 upgrade equip all our fighters with precision guided targeting systems?

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am getting tired of this member running down the fine dedicated men and women of our Canadian forces. They were well equipped in that air campaign and they will continue to be well equipped. In fact, we are spending some $872 million in a contract to upgrade our CF-18s. They will be amongst the finest that can be provided, if necessary.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MISSING CHILDREN

Mr. Claude Duplain (Portneuf, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May 25 was National Missing Children's Day.

Could the Minister of National Revenue comment on the role of the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency in the fight against the major problem of child abductions worldwide?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As we know, Canada customs fulfills an important mandate. Customs officers take part in a variety of programs, including the International Project Return. Three thousand five hundred customs officials take part in this program annually. There are partners as well.

I would like to explain to the House that, over the past ten years, 982 children were found through this program, which is now a symbol of excellence. I thank all customs officers and all of the partners.

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[*English*]

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, farmers can compete and succeed if given a chance. The minister in charge of wheat has said that grain farmers are lurching from crisis to crisis. However this year the Canadian Wheat Board has told farmers that it will only allow them to sell 60% of their durum crop.

How can producers in the middle of the worst farm crisis in decades survive on 60% of their income? Will the minister make the necessary changes to allow farmers to market the rest of their crop, the same crop that the wheat board refuses to sell for them?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the course of the crop year, the Canadian Wheat Board obviously makes arrangements to bring into the marketing system the maximum amount of grain possible at the maximum available price. It is doing so in this case.

In some years there are carry overs from one marketing season to the next. I have every confidence that the Canadian Wheat Board will do everything possible in the context of world market conditions to make sure Canadian farmers can sell their grain at the highest possible price.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Wheat Board is refusing or unable to sell producers' wheat. Farmers can either sell it for feed, store it or sell it to the wheat board and buy it back themselves at a higher price.

● (1455)

Instead of telling farmers to quit growing wheat, when will the minister allow farmers the freedom to market their own grain and free them from the ridiculous scenario of having to buy their own wheat back at higher prices in order to market and process it?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, independent surveys among our foreign customers have indicated that with respect to timeliness, reliability, consistency, contract execution and before and after market services, the Canadian Wheat Board ranks ahead of the United States, the Europeans, Australia and Argentina. It in fact ranks number one in the world.

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to Major Robert Porter, the situation at the military facilities at Valcartier is disquieting.

In an electronic message of January 14, he stated that under the environmental policy of the Department of National Defence, Canadian forces must comply with the law. He added that they were currently outside the law.

Could the Minister of National Defence tell us how much he intends to spend to help build the water supply system Quebec is preparing to build to resolve the problem of the 80 contaminated wells?

[*English*]

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, we are working with local residents, local municipalities and responsible officials in the province of Quebec to make sure clean-ups are conducted and that we do abide totally by the law in providing the cleanest possible water from an uncontaminated source for the people in the area, including our own troops.

* * *

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Ms. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the House had a debate a couple of weeks ago on the issue of drug abuse and addiction. The problem of drug use in our prisons poses particular challenges. We also know that 70% of the offenders going into our federal prisons have alcohol or drug addictions. In fact, 50% of them are intoxicated when they commit their crimes.

With these kinds of numbers, can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General tell the House what the government is doing to deal with this issue?

Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the House that Correctional Service Canada is fighting this on a number of fronts, such as through prevention, intercession, education and treatment. It is very important.

I am pleased to announce that two weeks ago the solicitor general opened a new addiction research facility. It is a worldclass facility for which all Canadians can be proud. It underscores the government's commitment to ensure that we do the right thing in this all important area. Unlike those people, that is the strength of this government.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, western Canadian livestock producers are facing a real major drought this spring. In fact, water supplies have dried up as fast as the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act's budget for more wells and more surface dugouts.

Is the minister prepared today to commit more money to the PFRA for essential emergency water?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are constantly looking at the budgets of the agencies in the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

As members know, agriculture is a shared jurisdiction. We have a large safety net program in place. The provinces are looking at individual circumstances in each province. We will continue to work to assist producers as much as we can.

* * *

[*Translation*]

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all of us here are experienced parliamentarians and we know that the legislator never includes anything in a bill for no reason. Conversely, when it does not include something in a bill, it is because it does not want to.

What are we to think of a government that says through its Prime Minister that Quebec will continue to apply the Young Offenders Act, but whose Minister of Justice systematically refuses to put it in the bill? Who is telling the truth? The Minister of Justice and the legislator, or the Prime Minister?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Both, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

● (1500)

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday a mother was forced to take her five year old and six year old daughters to visit their father, a convicted sex offender, at an Alberta jail. The children were so traumatized by the event that a social worker had to intervene to suspend the court ordered visit. Unfortunately, unless the justice minister now intervenes, we are going to see this travesty repeated month after month for years to come.

What specific steps is the justice minister prepared to take immediately to ensure that young, innocent children are not forced to go behind bars to visit a convicted sex offender?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think everybody in the House has been disturbed by what we have seen in relation to Mrs. Dillman and her two children. However, I hope the hon. member understands that it would be inappropriate for me or any member of the government to interfere with an order of the court.

Mr. Justice Foster's decision on Friday in relation to this question indicated that there were appropriate avenues of appeal available to Mrs. Dillman. Mr. Justice Foster went on to indicate that Mrs. Dillman had unfortunately signed an undertaking that any appeals in relation to custody and access would be heard in Saskatchewan.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Tom Lush, Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs and Government House Leader of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. John Cannis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just for the sake of clarification on a question the member for Richmond asked during question period. The RCMP was requested to do an investigation. It looked into the matter and concluded that no investigation was necessary. I just wanted to state that for the record.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

PRIVACY COMMISSIONER—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough concerning interference in the work of Information Commissioner John Reid by Privacy Commissioner George Radwanski.

The hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough stated that in his letter to Mr. Reid the privacy commissioner had carried out what amounted to an attack on the information commissioner, an officer of parliament. He argued that this alleged attack eroded public confidence in the institution of parliament and constituted a contempt both of the House and its officers.

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough for having drawn this matter to the attention of the Chair. I would also like to thank the government House leader and the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader for their thoughtful contributions to the discussion of this point.

A small number of individuals have the special distinction of being officers of parliament. So great is the importance which parliament attaches to the responsibilities entrusted to these individuals that they are appointed by resolution of parliament rather than by the governor in council.

● (1505)

Because of the special relationship that exists between these officials and the House of Commons, any actions which affect them or their ability to carry out their work are watched with particular attention by members.

The hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough has brought before the House legitimate concerns about a situation involving the attempt of the privacy commissioner to influence the information commissioner. This attempt has been carried out by way of a letter—an open letter, not only made public but widely disseminated by the signatory—at a time when the case in point is being appealed to the supreme court by the information commissioner.

[*English*]

There are in my view two questions which need to be addressed in the case before us. Has there been interference in the information commissioner's ability to carry out his duties? Has the privacy commissioner conducted himself improperly?

I have examined with great care the letter sent by Mr. Radwanski to Mr. Reid. The letter unquestionably attempts to influence the information commissioner and seeks to exert that influence by reference to the interpretation of statutes and court decisions.

It is not my place to weigh the arguments which the privacy commissioner has put forward, nor will I speculate on whether or not the letter will prove persuasive to the information commissioner, but I must conclude that in itself the presentation of views by one commissioner contrary to those of another cannot be considered as interference.

Indeed, it must be recognized that there is a natural tension between the concepts found in the Access to Information Act and

those enshrined in the Privacy Act, so that it can come as no surprise that the officers charged with the responsibility of implementing these two acts may well hold differing views on issues of great substance. Thus, the letter does not in my view interfere in the information commissioner's ability to carry out his mandate.

Now to the matter of the conduct of the privacy commissioner, irrespective of the views which the privacy commissioner's letter contains or even the egregious language in which he chooses to express those views, I can find nothing in his letter which might be taken as a threat or intimidation. One may regret that this representation has been made by way of an open letter and one may be dismayed that this has been presented in the media as an unseemly squabble between one officer and another, but these are matters of opinion or judgment and as such are not for the Chair to address.

[*Translation*]

The second point to be considered is whether the action of the privacy commissioner in writing, sending and making public this letter constitutes a contempt of the House.

The hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough stated that, in his view, the privacy commissioner had overstepped his statutory role by his attempt to influence the information commissioner in this way.

But, as the hon. member himself went on to point out, it is not part of the Speaker's mandate to comment on points of law.

[*English*]

The Speaker of the House of Commons has no role in interpreting the mandate of the commissioner under the Privacy Act. However, as the remarks made by the government House leader and the parliamentary secretary indicate, there are differing views as to the proper role of the privacy commissioner.

Members may conclude that there is a need to examine the role of the privacy commissioner and, more to the point, the privacy commissioner's own understanding of his role. There already exists a forum for such an examination and that is the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. I would commend that committee to hon. members as the body to which they should have recourse to pursue questions of mandate, where the issues of appropriate communication might be further explored with both the officers themselves.

Neither the privacy commissioner nor the information commissioner is an agent of the government. They are both officers of parliament. It is their responsibility as well as ours to see that their relationships to each other and to parliament are maintained and strengthened.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1510)

[*English*]

COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT COMMISSIONER

Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) I have the pleasure to table, in both official languages, two copies of the 2000-01 annual report of the Communications Security Establishment Commissioner.

* * *

[*Translation*]

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 three petitions.

* * *

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. John McCallum (Markham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration on Bill C-11, an act respecting immigration to Canada and the granting of refugee protection to persons who are displaced, persecuted or in danger.

* * *

PETITIONS

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from citizens of the Peterborough area who are concerned about the genetic engineering of food, plants and animals.

The petitioners point out that the techniques and the science involved are very new, yet the practices are expanding very rapidly. They also point out that this genetic engineering now involves the manipulation of the most basic building blocks of life and that the long term effects of genetic engineering of plants and animals on human health and the global ecosystem are completely unknown.

The petitioners call upon parliament to persuade the federal government to introduce clear labelling of seeds and food products that are genetically engineered so that both farmers and consumers have a clear choice.

IRAQ

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition from citizens of Peterborough who are concerned about the sanctions in Iraq. These petitioners, as before, are appealing that the sanctions be lifted. They point out that the sanctions are not having an effect on the government of Iraq and Saddam Hussein, but are in fact having a tragic effect on the children of Iraq in particular.

This petition has involved a vigil by the petitioners at my office in Peterborough, a vigil that takes place every week on Fridays at noon. People in Peterborough are very concerned about it. They call upon parliament to do all it can to lift the sanctions on Iraq and to help the children of that country.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition from the citizens of Peterborough asking parliament to do all it can to return VIA service between Toronto and Peterborough. These petitioners point out the environmental advantages of this, such as the reduction of greenhouse emissions, for example. They also point to reductions in accidents and in costs on the highways and to the improvement of Peterborough as a business centre, an educational centre and a centre for tourism.

This petition has support in eight federal ridings from Peterborough to the downtown Toronto area. These citizens call upon parliament to do all it can to return VIA commuter service between Peterborough and Toronto as soon as possible.

* * *

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 Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-7, an act in respect of criminal justice for young persons and to amend and repeal other acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee; and of Motion No. 2.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I resume where I left off before question period, when I still had a few minutes left to debate Bill C-7.

• (1515)

During question period it was obvious that the federal government either totally misunderstands the situation or lacks the political will to act.

The Prime Minister himself said that the legislation put forward by the justice minister would allow Quebec to continue to implement the current legislation. However, he was totally incapable of giving us a clear answer when we asked: ''Why then not include that provision in the legislation?''

We are all of us legislators and we all know that when we specify or not something in a legislation, we do so deliberately. If the justice minister refuses to grant Quebec the right to continue living with the current legislation, even if the rest of Canada would have a more punitive law, a more rigorous law which would encourage young offenders to end up in prison, if this is the type of legislation the rest of Canada wants, let them adopt it.

If, as he said, the Prime Minister really wants Quebec to continue to enforce the existing legislation, I think that is most important. It is a fundamental question which goes well beyond the Conservative amendment. It is an important question because there is an extraordinary consensus in Quebec on this point.

All stakeholders are against Bill C-7. They say that we must be allowed to keep the existing legislation, which is giving good results because it has reduced crime and permits social reintegration and rehabilitation of our young people.

This legislation is not so easy on young persons. They have to answer questions and they have to understand their responsibility in what they did. The success rate is very high and few of them return to a life of crime, whereas the model proposed by the government is influenced by the strong right wing current spreading in the United States. It is also flourishing in western Canada and in Ontario. Ontario also wants amendments that would make for a stricter legislation.

Would the solution not then be for the minister to make it possible for us to end up with a bill that would allow Quebec to continue to enforce the Young Offenders Act while the rest of Canada enforces another law?

I would like us all to rise to this challenge. If the Minister of Justice accepted this decision, this approach, then in five or ten years we would be able to provide clear proof that the Quebec model yielded the best results, that it was the one to enable our youth to be reintegrated into society and not sent to the school for

criminals. I hope we will have that latitude. The government still has the leeway to do so.

Today we are engaged in debating the provisions of the bill at the report stage, along with the proposed amendments. One introduced by the Bloc Quebecois has been turned down. These amendments will be voted on this evening. In the end, the government will also have the opportunity of deciding to redo its work, not start the third reading debate too precipitously but to give itself an opportunity to again consult those who are opposed.

This is not a partisan approach. It is not the Bloc Quebecois calling for this, nor the Parti Quebecois. It is all the Bloc Quebecois MPs here in Ottawa, along with the entire national assembly, which is unanimous in Quebec on this matter, along with all the stakeholders.

I hope the federal Liberal MPs representing Quebec ridings will be in solidarity with this position. If the Liberal members vote in favour of Bill C-7, then they will be quite simply voting totally against the wishes of all Quebecers who want the present legislation to continue.

Here we are faced with a fait accompli. In the report stage debate on the Conservative amendment, this view is important. It is not merely changing the details in a bill. No, for Quebec what is important is for this bill, as tabled by the federal government, not to apply to Quebec, for us to have the right to opt out and continue to enforce the existing legislation in order to get the results we have in the past.

● (1520)

[*English*]

Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the outset I offer the fact that I am heartily sick of the bill. It has made its way through three parliaments and three separate incarnations. It has gone on for over seven years and has been subject to a 30 hour filibuster by the Bloc. At some time or another enough is enough. The bill has morphed through many changes over those years, but it is important to get it as right as possible since it will become the bible for youth justice.

The filibuster by the Bloc was quite irritating. It will never be happy unless it gets its own criminal code and youth justice bill. There is nothing the Government of Canada could or should do to try to make the Bloc happy. The Bloc cannot be accommodated. We should move on.

The problem with a filibuster is that only one person gets to speak. It is the ultimate insult to parliamentary democracy. I have to listen to the member but he or she does not have to listen to me. The corollary result is that it leads to legislative fatigue and amendments such as the ones introduced by the minister do not get the scrutiny they deserve because debate time is eaten up by those who were implacably hostile to the bill.

Even after the reintroduction of the bill and the committee's somewhat reluctant willingness to open up to deputations from the provinces we heard some evidence on funding and other issues. The evidence was somewhat dismal. I do not know whether the additional money is adequate, but when the deputy ministers and others were asked directly about additional increases to the CHST, both in cash and transfers, their responses were somewhat platitudinous and disingenuous.

A cynic might suggest that the ministers from the various provinces send their minions to Ottawa for one last squeeze at the federal government after they had already won or lost their internal provincial dispute within their departments over the allocation of the new federal money that had already been transferred through the CHST. It is a bit of a mug's game and every province always claims that it never has enough resources, read money, to do the job.

The Bloc filibuster resulted in much less time than one would have liked to review the amendments. Just before the rise of the last parliament the minister introduced quite a raft of amendments in response to the evidence to which she had listened over the course of a number of months. For instance, the amendment which gives regions, read Quebec, the option to raise the age of exposure to adult sentences from 14 to 16 for the six presumptive offences offends the notion that there is one law for all youth regardless of where they happen to reside in Canada.

In the name of flexibility a youth on one side of the Ottawa River runs one risk and on the other side a lower risk of receiving an adult sentence for the same offence. Sometimes local needs and circumstances create a Swiss cheese result across the nation. Allowing provinces to opt out would however be ridiculous, but allowing a province to dictate the threshold to obtain flexibility is somewhat problematic.

In the name of flexibility we have created a patchwork which begs for a constitutional challenge. Assuming that Ontario has a low age threshold of 14 and Quebec has a high age threshold of 16 for the six presumptive offences, a well advised youth might well do his criminal work in Hull rather than in Ottawa. How much sense does that make? How ironic, for in some bizarre way it almost attracts criminal activity to Quebec.

● (1525)

Quebec made certain claims that it had a kinder and gentler system. The evidence however suggests otherwise. Mr. Bégin claims to have a system geared to rehabilitation. What Mr. Bégin has is a system of diverting youth from the criminal justice system, which has specific sentencing and evidentiary requirements, to a child welfare system where periods of incarceration are sometimes indefinite and frequently longer than specific sentencing requirements. The evidence for the offence is somewhat less rigorous than one would get in a criminal court. Again, if our proverbial

delinquent is well advised, he should commit his crime in Ottawa rather than in Hull, as the offence would be dealt with in a more rigorous fashion.

Lord help us from those who claim to be locking them up or treating them for their own good. That is a great way to lose a kid in a system over a relatively minor offence.

The disingenuous argument of Quebec is even further disingenuous when it is contradicted by the fact that Quebec actually had the second highest rate of transfers to adult court.

In Ontario the government holds to the myth that punishment alone protects society. Research does not support that view. It could be argued that if protection is the most significant issue, as is punishment alone, it is counterproductive and only leads to a well trained young criminal as opposed to an amateur. Adult time for adult crime is a catchy phrase but just awful youth policy.

I am quite incensed by some of the incidents I read about in newspapers. If individuals are locked up and the proverbial key is thrown away and then they are pitched over the proverbial prison wall after they have done their time, a criminal disaster is waiting to happen.

Ontario is rampant with contradictions. It was invited to participate in the parliamentary hearings and declined to do so. Having done so, it then set up its own hearings. Ontario's big thing is moving kids from the youth system to the adult system. It has made repeated statements to that effect. Unfortunately the evidence does not support its contention because last year it only moved six kids from the youth system to the adult system.

Mr. Myron Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I realize the member is making a fine speech regarding a certain issue, but it does not really pertain to Motion No. 2. Before he ends his speech I would like to hear his comments on Motion No. 2.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): We have heard the comments of the member for Wild Rose. I am sure that at some point in time the hon. member for Scarborough East will tie in his previous remarks in the two minutes left in his speech.

Mr. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, I thought I was speaking somewhat tangentially to the issue before us. We are dealing with a filibuster. We are dealing with a motion which has to do with the issue of whether we should continue to debate this ad nauseam after seven years.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if the Chair could inform the hon. member that it is impossible to have a filibuster when we already have time allocation.

Mr. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his limited edification on such an obvious matter. As I was indicating before, the issue before us is the time that Bill C-7 has taken up before parliament and in particular the time that has been wasted by the rampant contradictions of members opposite and their provincial counterparts.

The so-called gentler society in Quebec actually put 23 kids into adult court whereas Ontario's incarceration rate in that regard was less.

● (1530)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would only ask the hon. member who has the floor what is the motion he is talking about.

[*English*]

Mr. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, the final point I want to make, as opposed to the points my hon. colleagues want to make, is that Canada over-relies on incarceration. If the bill does one thing alone, hopefully it will reduce incarceration for young offenders.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Is there no such thing as a speaking rotation? All the parties have spoken. Members of the NDP have not yet had a chance to speak. May I have a chance to speak on behalf of the NDP?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I am following the order that has been agreed to by the House leaders. According to my list, the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona is scheduled to speak after the Alliance member and a Liberal member.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I am the NDP House leader and I did not give you any list.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): You were number four in the first rotation, and there was no speaker. Now we are in the second rotation and you will be speaking after the Alliance member and the Liberal member.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I had a discussion with the parliamentary secretary who I thought was going to speak for the government. I did not rise at the time because I thought I was allowing the government to speak. Instead, another government member spoke and now you are telling me I lost my spot.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I would like to inform the hon. member again that we are in the second rotation. Nobody from the NDP rose during the first rotation. We will have a Liberal, an Alliance, another Liberal and then the NDP. Is that agreeable?

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I want to register my disagreement with the Chair's interpretation of the events. It does not make any sense to me whatsoever.

Mr. Myron Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am more than willing to give this time to the hon. member and I will take the next spot.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Thank you for your generous offer. The Chair was about to ask for unanimous consent to give the floor to the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona. The problem has been settled.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to take up a lot of the House's time with respect to the motion put forward by the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough. The motion would change the wording of the bill to require that the authorities shall rather than may notify teachers who have young offenders in their classes.

● (1535)

After much thought I want to say that it is our intention to support the motion of the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough. It is tempting to leave this kind of discretion with the courts, the judges or the police.

Upon reflection, to not require that this kind of information be passed on to teachers is to single out teachers as the one class of professional that deals with young offenders that will not have access to the information to which all other professionals who deal with young offenders will have access.

I say to the government that I think I understand its position without having heard it expounded on the floor of the House. The parliamentary secretary has not yet had a chance to speak and the Liberal member who just spoke did not address it.

There is an element of discrimination against teachers. It may be unintended. It may be done with the best intentions to build a certain amount of discretion into the system. I understand that. On balance, we come down on the side of the amendment which changes the language from may to shall because it would seem to us that when all things are considered teachers should not be excluded. The possibility of teachers being excluded from access to this information should not be enshrined in the bill in the way it is now. For that reason I wanted to rise very briefly to indicate our support for the amendment.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear the member from the New Democratic Party support the amendment because I likewise support it.

I will go back in history to 1980 when I was appointed principal of a school in Alberta. From 1980 to 1984, whenever a transfer student came in from anywhere, accompanying the student would be all kinds of records. These would include not only school and academic records but behavioural records and even criminal records if that were the case.

Needless to say, when someone arrived at our school who had a past history of criminal activity, it made it a whole lot easier for the school to accept him and to enter into specific programs or interventions that would make it easier for the populace to accept him. It also made it a whole lot safer for people around the individual depending on what the circumstances were.

In 1984 the Young Offenders Act became law, and suddenly there were numerous people transferred into our school without any indications other than academic records. When phone calls were made to other school boards or schools they had attended, no information was released regarding their behaviour or any activities outside school they may have been engaged in that could be a danger or threat to other students in the school body.

As a result I saw a very significant change begin to happen. It only took a few months for the first one to come about. I thought a normal schoolyard scrap was developing between two individuals. When we managed to get to the scene and break up the so-called fight, I quickly realized that it had gone beyond a schoolyard squabble between two young people. One of then was trying to put an end to the life of the other individual. It was that serious. He had attacked him with a weapon and his intentions were to really hurt the young fellow.

● (1540)

At that time an investigation was done by the police because we brought charges. The investigation involved parental input. We learned that the young individual had taken part in cult activities where he had come from, and believed in these kinds of activities as a way to resolve difficulties with other people. In other words, the individual believed the violence and severe assaults he had committed in previous years were legitimate and that he should continue that way of life.

Had we known this was the kind of individual who was coming into our school, we could have taken steps that would have possibly prevented any threat to other students or other individuals in our community who were accessible to the young fellow.

From 1984 until 1992 when I finally retired and went into a new profession much like the previous one but where the kids are older, it was impossible to determine the kind of individuals we were getting with transfers to the school. I would get reports from the city, for example, that the reason certain individuals were coming to my school out in the country was because they were no longer accepted in any school in the city. They had been expelled from every school in the city.

It would have been nice to have been able to determine that before they arrived. It would have been nice to know that they had gone through a great pile of difficulties in the city, that no school or school board in the city would accept them and that they had to move in with relatives in my community and start school there. However I was not allowed to know anything about it.

This happened so many times that I could almost write a book about it. Why would I want more information on students who were being transferred to my school? Why should the government support the amendment that my colleague from the Conservative Party has brought forward?

Since 1993, when I came here, I have heard that prevention is the real key to stopping youth crime. I agree. However I would like someone from the Liberal government to stand and tell me that making sure school authorities do not know the facts about a new student is a good measure of prevention. Prevention of what? It makes the community at large unaware of the kind of individual living in it. It makes the teachers and other students unaware. They go on as if the individual is a normal human being and that they should not be alerted.

Even if one has the brains of a freshwater trout, common sense ought to dictate that it is safer to know what kind of situation one is dealing with than not to know.

However, the people on that side of the House over the past seven years have constantly refused to change the Young Offenders Act to give it real teeth. Along comes an amendment from my colleague in the Conservative Party that would add teeth and makes perfectly good common sense. I do not think a school in the whole country would not agree to the full disclosure of the records of violent young people being transferred into schools. The information should be available for the safety and the prevention of harm to others. If the Liberals cannot buy into that then they are as bad as I think they are.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Marcil (Beauharnois—Salaberry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recall the facts about Bill C-7 now under consideration.

In the last parliament, the government introduced a bill to amend the Young Offenders Act.

● (1545)

We already had a Young Offenders Act which was enforced differently in different regions of our country. Each province would enforce it in its own way and Quebec is a model in that regard. Quebec has its own culture and thus its own way of approaching problems.

The Bloc Quebecois was very much opposed to the first bill tabled at that time. It had even received the unanimous support of the Quebec national assembly, which had passed a motion in November 1999 asking the federal Minister of Justice to suspend passage of Bill C-3 and to allow Quebec to continue implementing an intervention strategy based on prevention and rehabilitation.

The Bloc Quebecois had moved almost 3,000 amendments. In fact, it had moved 2,977. That was a lot of amendments for one bill, to delay what we call at home—in political language or at least in parliamentary language—filibusters. We came back and we moved amendments; we moved them to play for time and to prevent passage of the bill.

In February 2001, the Government of Canada introduced in the House of Commons Bill C-7, the youth criminal justice Act. There was also a reason for this. Most of us, Liberal members here in Ottawa had met with some members of the Quebec national assembly to know about the inherent objections to passage of Bill C-3.

Of course, after some discussion, five points stood out and we made representations to the federal Minister of Justice. A specific answer was given to the five points raised by the members of the national assembly in their letter. Of course, not all the members of the national assembly signed the letter. We did not have consultations with the sovereignist members of the national assembly. We had consultations with the federalist members of the national assembly because this is also a federal bill. We really wanted to know their position.

We answered the five concerns raised about Bill C-3. We have amended the bill to completely resolve these issues.

We now learn Quebec's national assembly has unanimously agreed to another motion expressing its opposition.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Including the Liberals.

Mr. Serge Marcil: Yes. We still wonder why. For what fundamental reasons? We still do not know why.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Oh, come on.

Mr. Serge Marcil: When the Bloc Quebecois says that it believes Bill C-7 favours—

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: You're better at bridges.

Mr. Serge Marcil: Mr. Speaker, I wish I could speak without hearing all the barnyard noises across the way. The Bloc Quebecois believes that Bill C-7 favours repression over the rehabilitation of young offenders. Even the hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm said in this regard ''that the new legislation continues to focus on repression by neglecting the needs of young offenders. Once more, the federal government has rejected the consensus in Quebec that focuses on rehabilitation, an approach that is working in Quebec''.

I read this in the press release he issued at that time but we are still asking the question. We get the impression that we are not

reading the same bill. There are two sides to a coin. They read the bill one way, and we read it another.

We know very well that the objective of the federal government in Ottawa is not to marginalize young offenders. The purpose of this bill is to prevent crime, to ensure the rehabilitation and the reintegration of minors into society and to show that when they commit an offence there are real consequences.

The Bloc Quebecois cannot oppose such objectives, which will make our communities safer as well as allow for the rehabilitation of young offenders. We are talking about rehabilitation, we are not talking about repression. This is why the bill provides that young offenders who have committed a serious crime and gets an adult sentence will be held apart from adult criminals.

While these young poeple are in custody, they are supervised and those in charge will provide them with any therapy or other program needed for their rehabilitation into the community.

We should realize the obvious: the Bloc Quebecois exaggerates all the time. It is a grand master of the art of blowing things out of proportion. The balloon eventually blows up.

● (1550)

The Canadian government is not intent on repressing adolescents. The measures in the bill give the preference to rehabilitation and the reintegration of young offenders into the community. We should speak the truth. Some, especially in that party, have a tendency to tell the opposite of the truth.

We want young offenders to get the help they need to develop in our society. A young offender is just starting in life. The bill's purpose is to help young offenders through a difficult period in their life in the best way possible so that they can have a fulfilling life afterward.

The Bloc Quebecois is asking the government to withdraw the bill or to give Quebec the right to opt out so it can continue to implement the current Young Offenders Act.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: That is the unanimous consensus reached by the national assembly.

Mr. Serge Marcil: According to the Bloc, there is a broad consensus in Quebec on the effectiveness of the current legislation. In this regard, Quebec wants the status quo.

It seems to me that even though there is a Canadian criminal law framework for young offenders, Quebec implements its own legislation. As the Prime Minister said once more today in the House, the proposed legislation would allow Quebec to continue to implement its own legislation.

Each of the regions would have its own criminal law framework. The bill would allow each region of Canada to adapt its approach. This frees up resources that can be used for more positive action for the young offenders.

The proposed bill would give a lot of freedom to provinces. As we will see, it will be implemented and if there are problems, we will solve them. We will solve them one at a time.

Provinces can apply the bill according to their own needs and taking into account their own situation as long as they respect the guidelines provided for in the federal act. They are guidelines. It is a criminal law framework. What is a framework? It is a set of rules that allow each of the regions of Canada to adapt and to put forward a particular approach, as has been the case until now and as still is the case.

The Government of Canada recognizes the success Quebec has had in rehabilitating young offenders. Have members ever seen a government pass legislation that goes against well applied legislation, against a successful approach put forward by a province?

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Yes, the Liberals.

Mr. Serge Marcil: To think that way is to be defeatist, as they usually are, and negative.

Ms. Christiane Gagnon: So Quebec is rather negative?

Mr. Serge Marcil: It also encourages Quebec to continue its efforts. The federal bill is flexible enough to allow Quebec to apply its own legislation regarding young offenders effectively. The provisions of the bill meet the needs expressed by the provinces.

However the youth criminal justice act is founded on federal powers governing criminal law and criminal proceedings. There should be only one youth criminal justice law framework in Canada but with the possibility for each region to apply its own approach.

It has been said that the Bloc Quebecois speaks on behalf of Quebecers. I am sorry but when I rise in the House I speak on behalf of Quebecers also. We got more votes than they did. I can say that I speak on behalf of the majority of Quebecers—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Serge Marcil: —and if I add the Conservative federalist vote and the NDP vote, we have more than 60% of the votes in Quebec. Therefore when I rise in the House it is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the majority of Quebecers.

[*English*]

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise to debate Motion No. 2 to amend Bill C-7. I would like to draw the attention of the House to the content of the motion itself, which amends the word may to read shall.

● (1555)

What is the significance of that word? That word tells the judge that he shall make information available to the appropriate school authorities, among other people. They have to be people in a responsible position who need to know information. That is what we are trying to achieve. Why is this so important? Without knowledge, it is impossible to deal with the problem.

This act deals with young offenders. Sad to say, there are among our young people those who commit violent acts and do things they are not supposed to do, things which society says should not be done. Some people would argue that the only way to deal with them is to put them in jail or incarcerate them somewhere. That is not the only way.

It is impossible to help young people to understand what they have done wrong and how they can right it without first knowing who they are. We need to know who they are if we are going to have a program of rehabilitation and a program that will prevent future behaviour of this type. That is the absolute number one requirement. That is what this amendment does. I am very surprised that there are members in the House who are avoiding this amendment. That amendment should pass unanimously in the House.

Some might ask why are some people not supporting this amendment. I have to refer back to question period today. I was terribly surprised at the response from the Minister of Justice to a question raised by the member for Fraser Valley concerning two children who were forced to visit their father. The conditions of that particular order were such that we had to wonder where the common sense was in this situation. Rather than sympathising with these poor children who did not want to visit their father, the minister said the system said they had to go. A social worker had to intervene in this case.

It was absolutely atrocious that the Minister of Justice, who had the golden opportunity to sympathize, to show compassion and recognize that there was perhaps a flaw in the system, did nothing. She defended the system, then the law. She did not recognize that there could be a problem. There are problems not only in this instance, but also in a variety of other instances.

While a lot of things can be adjusted in this young offenders act, this is an instance where there should be no quarrel. Yet, we had to bring to the government's attention not only at committee level, but at report stage the fact that some changes had to be made.

We need to recognize that the reason why school officials need to know is because they act in loco parentis. It is significant to recognize what this phrase means. This phrase has been used for school boards, teachers and principals. Teachers who act in loco parentis act in the same position as a well meaning judicious parent. It is not only their actions, it is also their responsibility. They have the responsibility to look after our most precious resources.

There are many people in this House who have children. Probably the most traumatic experience we face is when our five or six year old youngster leaves home for the first time to be entrusted to a teacher. We are giving teachers custody of our children and we have to trust them to act in our best interest as parents and in the best interests of society.

Our judges ought to be acting in that same way. They need to recognize the responsibility that exists in our schools. They need to recognize the responsibility of teachers and principals. Judges should take the same care as if their child were being accused of certain things. What are they trying to do? Hopefully, they are not punishing the child but helping him or her to grow into responsible citizens. That is what the purpose of this should be and that is what it is. That is why we want the word shall in there.

● (1600)

We want it so that the judge shall make it possible that those who are charged with the responsibility of looking after our kids will do so in a manner that will reflect the values of our society and the best thinking among our professional people and among us as well-meaning parents. That is why the word shall should be in there.

I will now refer to a speech made very recently by the ex-prime minister of Great Britain, Margaret Thatcher. She was at a college in the United States recently and reminded the assembled group of a visit she had from Mr. Gorbachev just before the system changed in the communist U.S.S.R.

She made the observation that he recognized that the system was not working and that an attitude had to change. The attitude that had to change was that human beings need to have the incentive to do what is right coming from within them, that the government could not force upon them a certain behaviour pattern. The government tried that for 50 years. It did not work. Finally the economic system broke down. The social system broke down. The judicial system broke down. Fear itself was no longer strong enough to bring these people under control.

Mrs. Thatcher said there is one thing we need to recognize, which is that the human spirit requires liberty in order to evoke the best and most noblest of emotions. That is what we need to engender in young people. We need to recognize that the greatest liberty for youth is to be able to walk down the street safe from the threat of punishment or violent attack. The same thing should happen in the corridors of schools. As well, teachers should know that they are free and have the liberty to work with these youngsters without feeling the threat of being violently attacked.

To do that we have to know who these people are. That is not an infringement on their privacy. They took the public action of

committing violent acts. Those acts were not done in secret. They took it upon themselves to make victims of us all, because when one of us is attacked we all suffer, directly or indirectly.

How many of us did not empathize with the two young kids who had to go and visit their father, a convicted sex offender? Who did not? It would be a very callous, heartless person who would not sympathize with that. We did sympathize.

Now we want to create an environment where school officials will indeed have the knowledge and then develop the skills in order to treat these people. Can it be done? Yes, it can be done.

I want to refer to an interview in the Vancouver *Province* with RCMP inspector Rick Betker. He has been a cop for 30 years and has seen every type of bad guy and heard every sob story excuse.

Why is Inspector Betker waxing so enthusiastic about a program in which the bad guys do not go to jail, do not go to court and do not even get charged? For him the answer is simple: because it works.

What is this program? ''Probably for me it is the most positive thing I have seen in 30 years of policing'', he says of the community justice forums he has now started in Victoria's western suburbs, where he commands the RCMP detachment. The idea of the forums is to bring offenders and victims together face to face, with a trained facilitator, to talk about what happened and to work out a resolution that leaves both happy.

Inspector Betker says:

> It is very powerful. . .You can see the remorse (in offenders). You can see. . .this may be the first time they really realize how their actions have affected not just the victim, but their own family as well.

Here is an RCMP officer with 30 years' experience who shows us a way. It is not the only way, but it is a way that works. Will we give that kind of tool to our educators and school authorities, which is what we are talking about today? Will we tell the judges they shall make it possible for them to do that? Yes, we should do that. I hope we all support this amendment.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this bill on criminal justice for young persons.

During the week of recess, the Bloc Quebecois members were working; we went on a tour. My colleague from Berthier—Montcalm went on a tour of all the Quebec regions to meet with people. Unlike the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry, we met with people and asked them their views about the young offenders bill.

● (1605)

In Quebec, many representatives of organizations with a particular expertise on troubled youth or young people with delinquency problems have a different approach. They told us that the bill was unacceptable and that it was a major change of direction with respect to the rehabilitation of young persons who have committed minor or serious offences.

This does not mean that we do not deplore the fact that these young people are committing criminal offences, serious offences against some people, and that it affects society as a whole.

I heard the new member for Beauharnois—Salaberry, who got elected on the promise to have a bridge built in that riding, say that once again the Bloc Quebecois wanted to delay the passage of the legislation and that we were in bad faith. I remind the House that we have done some field work. In my riding, representatives from 15 different organizations, people who are working with street youth or in youth centres, came to tell us that this legislation represented an approach totally contrary to the one in Quebec.

I remind the House that the Jasmin committee was struck to conduct a study aimed at improving the approach used to work with young people who have committed serious criminal acts. What we wanted in Quebec was to act more swiftly, ensure consistency of action and give more room to parents and victims, and to have a good measure at the right time.

The legislation put forward by the minister ignored that approach. To illustrate what we mean when we say that our approach is different in Quebec, and that it brings a good measure at the right time, I will summarize Hughes' case and how under Bill C-7 that young person would be accompanied.

Hugues would appear before a court after his offence. Given the antecedents of the accused, the crown would deny him a release on bail and Hugues' counsel would agree by strategy. After a 30 day period, at best, the trial would begin and Hugues would finally be found guilty.

What would happen then? A pre-sentence report would be requested. After a minimum of 30 days, the report would recommend eight months detention. Hugues would have already served two months of temporary detention. The judge would sentence him to four months in prison. Hugues would serve two-thirds of the sentence; he would really serve 80 days, at worst. Note that during the 80 days of detention, Hugues will not have access to rehabilitation programs; he will be left to himself. Finally, our specialists, teachers and scholars will become prison guards.

That is the bill this member, who says he is a Quebecer, will support. He will support the federal minister. Under the existing Young Offenders Act, there is a totally different approach providing immediate support. This is what the Jasmin committee requested: quick action in dealing with young persons who have committed a serious crime.

There will be an appearance before the court and a request for a report on the adolescent. His background will show that his belonging to a street gang is the problem and that he is retrievable. The crown and the defence attorney will probably agree on a training and social reintegration program where he will be kept away from his gang. With a six or eight month social intervention program, Hugues has a chance. He will be working with specialists who will be more demanding

Members can clearly see that the approach we offer in Quebec is different. I do not understand how the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry can say this comes from the Bloc Quebecois. It goes well beyond the Bloc, it is a consensus. Therefore, one must think twice before supporting this bill.

Another event occurred last week. A motion was unanimously passed at the national assembly. I must stress that the Parti Quebecois and Bloc Quebecois members are not the only ones to oppose the minister's bill. There are also federalist members in the national assembly who adopted a motion asking for Quebec to be excluded.

Why is it that when questions are asked in the House—

● (1610)

[*English*]

Mr. Myron Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is the kind of speech that we heard at second reading and that we will hear at third reading. I would like the member to get to the topic of Motion No. 2.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): This is a point of debate more than anything else.

[*Translation*]

I believe the hon. member for Quebec nevertheless got the message that she ought to keep her remarks more directly relevant to the bill.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: It is all part of a whole. Everything is linked.

Ms. Christiane Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact we are against the amendment, if that is what the hon. member wants me to say. We are opposed to the amendment because we do not want piecemeal amendments to the bill.

We do not want piecemeal amendments but rather for Quebec to opt out. We want Quebec to be excluded from the application of the act that the minister is trying to impose on Quebec.

This is another example of what flexible federalism is not. This is another example, like the millennium scholarships and parental leave. The fact is they do not understand the way Quebec does things.

It is unfortunate that members of the Alliance Party do not agree with us because they want a tougher bill, whose approach is the exact opposite of the one taken by Quebec. They are at the other end of the spectrum from what Quebec wants.

They say they want to accompany young offenders with this bill. To the contrary, they will analyze the seriousness of the offence allegedly committed by the young offender rather than his background to find ways to postpone measures which would be more efficient if implemented at the right time. What does that mean? It means that young offenders would not be made aware immediately of the seriousness of their offence.

When it toured Quebec, the Bloc Quebecois had the support of an actor who portrayed a young offender who had committed a serious crime against a person, a crime against life. He was part of a gang of young people. This young comedian, Marc Beaupré, who played Kevin, spent two days in jail to really get into his role of a young offender.

Treating a young offender as an adult will teach him to become a criminal instead of teaching him to take responsibility for his actions. This was what this young comedian learned during those two days. He learned what it was like to go to the school of crime, to become part of the network of adult criminals.

In Quebec, the current act resulted in a 23% decrease in the crime rate among young people. We have groups in Quebec—there are so many that I could not mention them all today—that have thought things over. These are people whose approach is geared to the needs of young people. They are not, as claimed by the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry, people who want to delay the passing of the bill and who seem to be talking through their hats.

The minister's bill involves a major change in direction and we deplore the fact that the government does not accept Quebec's ways of doing things.

It is even said that Quebec's model is envied and that it generates interest on the part of various stakeholders dealing with young people at the international level. We are even told that officials from centres in Chile and Brazil came to Quebec to see how the act was implemented and how we were dealing with young offenders.

This is unfortunate because, as with parental leave, Quebec is a model but it is being ignored and, more important, it is not respected.

I hope this act, like the parental leave scheme, will show the public just how inflexible the federal government is.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester, Lumber Industry; the hon. member for St. John's West, Infrastructure.

● (1615)

Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond today to Motion No. 2 to amend Bill C-7, the youth criminal justice act.

Motion No. 2 calls for clause 125 to be amended to make the disclosure of information about young persons mandatory rather than permissive. Clause 125, like the Young Offenders Act, specifically recognizes the interest that a school, professional or other person engaged in the supervision or care of a young person may have in receiving information when a young person is dealt with in the youth justice system.

Clause 125 would allow the provincial director, the attorney general, a peace officer or any other person engaged in the provision of services to a young person to disclose identifying information to any professional or other person engaged in the supervision or care of a young person, including a representative of a school under the following circumstances: first, to ensure compliance by the young person with a court order; second, to ensure the safety of staff, students or other persons; and, third, to facilitate the rehabilitation of the young person. This can be done without a court order.

The clause expands the Young Offenders Act provision that was included in 1995 by adding the authority to disclose information to facilitate rehabilitation of the young person. It is important to remember that privacy protections are a hallmark of the youth justice system in Canada. Any disclosure of identifying information in the youth justice system is dealt with as an exception to the general rule that no person shall be given access to the record of a young offender.

Non-legislative approaches could be developed to assist in implementing and supporting the disclosure provisions of the youth criminal justice act. Provinces could develop guidelines for police officers, probation officers and others on the issue of disclosure of information. Provincial government officials have indicated that they prefer guidelines rather than mandatory disclosure.

The Department of Justice has provided funding for the Canadian School Boards Association to develop an information sharing guide and protocol for the education community relating to information sharing between schools and professionals in the youth justice system.

The disclosure provisions in Bill C-7 strike an appropriate balance between the need to support a constructive role for the educational system and others working with young people, ensuring that pertinent information is disclosed, and the need to respect guaranteed privacy protections and to avoid stigmatization of a young offender.

Unlike an automatic notification approach, the approach in Bill C-7 would enable the exercise of professional judgment which takes into account the circumstances in individual cases, the protection of the public and the impact on the rehabilitation of the young person.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking to the report stage amendment to illustrate as an example the larger difficulty with Bill C-7.

The amendment to change the word may to the word shall at page 129, clause 125, line 4, is a case sample of fundamental philosophical confusion. The Liberals cannot manage and they really do not hear the public either for they perpetuate the outdated system agenda rather than an accountable people community agenda.

The minister said that the enactment would repeal and replace the Young Offenders Act and provide principles, procedures and protections for the prosecution of young persons under criminal and other federal laws.

It sets out a range of extra judicial measures. It is to establish judicial procedure and protection for young persons alleged to have committed an offence. It is to encourage participation of parents, victims, communities, youth justice committees and others in the youth justice system. It sets out a range of sentences available to the youth justice court. It is to establish custody and supervision provisions. It sets out the rules for the keeping of records and protection of privacy. It provides transitional provisions and makes consequential amendments to other acts. Those are the claims of the government.

It is obvious that the government has failed, particularly at the operational community level, and at the levels of broad themes and societal objectives. The Minister of Justice tabled legislation three times and three times she struck out. For example, the minister once again fails to restrict conditional sentencing. It is open to repeat offenders and it is open to violent offenders.

● (1620)

The list of presumptive offences for which an adult sentence may be imposed is severely restrictive. The list includes murder, attempted murder, manslaughter and aggravated sexual assault. However it does not include sexual assault with a weapon, hostage taking, aggravated assault, kidnapping and a host of other serious violent offences.

The minister will further weaken the legislation by limiting presumptive offence procedures even more. For example, in clause 61 any province may decide that only 15 or 16 year old offenders who commit offences such as murder could be transferred to adult court. Ten and eleven year olds are still not to be held criminally accountable for their crimes.

The legislation would create a patchwork or chequerboard system of youth justice as many of its provisions would permit the provinces undue discretion whether to seek adult sentencing, publication of names and access to records, just to name a few. The legislation would provide some movement toward victim rights but even those are not ensured and would still be inadequate.

British Columbia has had a legislative basis for diversion since 1968, some 33 years ago. Parliament has been struggling with a criminal set of rules since 1908 to address the specialness of young offenders. Now we have a bill that is so complex it caves in upon itself to accomplish the original broad objective.

We need to clarify the basics. We are striving for a set of rules that outlines how criminal law would apply to a child or a young person. It is assumed that there is a diminished capacity for a young person to appreciate criminal acts and therefore should not be subject to the full weight of the law. As the bill shows the Liberals have fallen all over themselves. They have tied themselves in knots because they do not have a guiding vision.

In each province we have social welfare legislation with large systems of care, including social workers who have the legal capacity to take into care with the full authority of a legal parent any child who is deemed to be in need of care and protection. If we had a wise but simple and more circumscribed youth criminal justice act, it could complement and support the social welfare mandates of the provinces. However the latest managerial disaster of the government is off target in this respect because philosophically the Liberals do not stand for anything.

A dichotomy is revealed in the bill. Through many convoluted provisions it tries to deal with the principle of diminished capacity for young people but in a most complex way tries to accommodate violent offenders and criminal code precepts such as protection of society and denunciation.

Clearly the community expectations of a government providing peace, order and good government are not met in the bill. The anger in the land over public observance of how young offenders are dealt with generally in the courts will not be diminished with this prime example of Liberal ideological confusion.

This is why the symbolic yet substantive amendment is very important. It is about knowledge to care. If a social welfare agency, a social worker or school authority is to be part of the community response for children in conflict with the law, they must be knowledgeable and fully informed. That must not be discretionary.

The previous minister of justice had no satisfactory answer when I asked him in question period about the principle of disclosure, all the secrecy around the operations of the law, and to deal with the theory of preventing community shame for young people to give them a fresh start. How can pursuing that theory be justified when its very operation has caused unnecessary deaths as a consequence? The government persists in pursuing its unsubstantiated theory even though people have died because of it. Secrecy has no place in young offender court proceedings and its final judgments.

In summary, the bill is so misguided that it will be back to the House in the future. It is not based in its substance on a reasonable canopy of values. The preamble of the bill is nice sounding fuzzy mush. Then comes the substance of 171 pages that does not put to rest what communities want: predictability, reliability, clarity, being operationally pragmatic and having political legitimacy.

The report stage amendment before us today reveals the utter confusion upon which the bill is based. My community does not support that kind of a bill and I cannot justify it either. Consequently I will be voting against the bill at third reading.

● (1625)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, many things were said about Bill C-7. I listened to the speeches made by some Liberal members and I am very disappointed.

If there is one issue where we must avoid playing politics, and I try to avoid it myself, it is the young offenders issue. I sincerely doubt that if they have to rise to vote for this bill as they did for the motion to curtail the debate, these members will do it with great relish.

I spent 14 days doing a whirlwind tour of all Quebec's regions. I met with judges, lawyers, Crown attorneys, stakeholders, victims, persons in charge of centres for victims of crime and senior citizens. Even the Quebec Federation of Senior Citizens of some administrative regions supported the approach, not the Bloc's approach, and it was more a social than a political tour, but the purpose which was to defeat Bill C-7 proposed by the Minister of Justice and to allow Quebec to continue enforcing the Young Offenders Act.

I met at least 20 organizations per region or more than 400 people. Right from the beginning I knew there was a consensus in Quebec. After the tour, it was obvious that we should not talk of consensus but of unanimity. Everyone I met unanimously said that the justice minister was on the wrong track and that by wanting to impose her own vision of things she was jeopardizing the Quebec approach, that shows beyond any reasonable doubt that we have a winning formula.

I spoke from a non-political point of view in a non-partisan way. As members know I was accompanied by Marc Beaupré, the young and talented actor who played Kevin in the TV series *Les Deux frères*, in order to reach a segment of the population that we, as politicians, are unable to reach simply because we may enjoy the credibility we justly deserve. Our credibility among people in general is not very high. This actor was very surprised to see that nobody was in favour of the minister's legislation.

I do not understand Quebec Liberal members who rise to say the opposite of what their constituents are saying. Earlier as I was listening to the speech by the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry—I do not want to play politics—I was wondering if he was on the same planet as I was.

I am convinced he was simply reading from a speech prepared for him and which he was delivering without being aware of its content. He went as far as making light of his Liberal friends in the national assembly who unanimously voted with the government in favour of a motion asking the Government of Canada for a special allowance so that Quebec might continue implementing the Young Offenders Act. He even ridiculed his colleagues in the national assembly saying that they did not know what they were doing. Imagine that.

Frankly I realize that the justice minister might have made commitments to her constituents in western Canada who, under the influence of the Canadian Alliance and the right wing movement in Canada, are asking for a much more punitive legislation to deal with young offenders. Coming from Alberta, the minister undoubtedly made such a commitment.

● (1630)

I do not want to bring up politics but the minister can, if she wants to, answer all the expectations of the west as well as those of Quebec.

I have moved the only amendment which should be accepted here. The amendment we are talking about would add a couple of words to a subsection without changing the ultimate purpose of the legislation. We are totally against such an amendment.

Rotten apples will stay rotten apples, no matter what. The same is true with this bill.

That is why the only acceptable amendments, to please everybody as well as to make concessions are the two proposed by the Bloc Quebecois. According to one of those amendments the lieutenant governor in council of a province may, by order, exempt from the application of Bill C-7 a young person between 12 and 18 years of age. In such a case the Young Offenders Act would continue to apply in that province.

This would please both sides. Those who wish a stricter legislation would have Bill C-7 which will be passed and those who wish to continue enforcing the Young Offenders Act will be able to do so since one section would allow it.

Some will ask if this is legal, if it is constitutional. I would not promote something that was not. Some may have doubts and questions when it comes from me but a legal opinion was tabled in the national assembly.

Three constitutionalists, people doing law involving young people, examined these amendments or similar ones. With the decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada on the application of criminal law, on regional differences and the social aspect of criminal law, they concluded that it was legal and feasible.

The government can do it but one thing is lacking: political will. When I reached out to the Minister of Justice this morning I was sincere and am still. It is not too late. Let the minister set her bill aside. Together we will repeat the tour of Quebec I did in the past few days. She will be able to see for herself. She will hear for herself what the regional stakeholders have to say. She will see how the Young Offenders Act is applied daily. No one will support her proposed repeal of the Young Offenders Act, on the contrary.

Today I have the clear impression that the minister is in a glass bubble here in Ottawa. She is defending a bill drafted by public servants in Ottawa's fine office towers who have absolutely no idea how the Young Offenders Act is applied on a daily basis.

Today these officials have made it a personal issue. They want the bill passed at any cost, even at the risk of threatening a Quebec approach that shows how well we succeed in Quebec. We have the lowest crime rate. They want to implement it at any cost and win, as if they had something to win.

It is not too late. If the Minister of Justice and the Prime Minister are sincere when they say they want to allow Quebec to continue to enforce it, I would hope that they will act on it, that the minister will first agree to tour with me and that she will then vote in favour of the amendments we have proposed.

● (1635)

[*English*]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise on behalf of the constituents of Calgary East to speak to the Motion No. 2 at report stage consideration of Bill C-7 dealing with the issue of young persons.

The Young Offenders Act has been the talk of Canadians for a long time. I have received numerous calls and petitions in my riding in reference to the Young Offenders Act. The government is now making an attempt to address these concerns, but like every-

thing else it does it is a haphazard attempt to address the concerns of Canadians.

I listened to my colleague from the Bloc who said that whatever amendment was done was because the minister was from the west. I should like to tell him that there is uniformity across the nation in asking that the Young Offenders Act be reviewed, that proper amendments be made and that concerns be addressed. The government has failed to do so.

Today the government brought in closure on the bill. It left the impression that it is serious about the issue of young offenders and was bringing in closure in order to pass the bill. However the history of the government on the bill has been very poor. It has been in the process for six and a half years. The government dissolved parliament without thinking about the impact of that on the bill. I hope Canadians do not see closure as an attempt by the government to take the issue seriously because it is not.

We support the motion in amendment put forward by my colleague in the Conservative Party because a concern has been expressed by teachers, and rightly so, that they need to know what they are dealing with. I will repeat what some teachers in Calgary have said.

According to statistics Calgary schools are no strangers to violence. In the 1999-2000 school year more than 1,300 students in Catholic and public schools were suspended for incidents related to drugs, alcohol, weapons and assault. That is a huge number. We are putting an undue burden on teachers. Naturally they need the tools by which to deal with rising violence in schools so that they can protect students and provide rehabilitation for those who need it.

Not related to this, only yesterday there was an unfortunate incident at a Calgary high school where two young students went outside to fight. Regrettably one of the students lost his life. The incident has shocked everyone in Calgary. It underlines the fact that teachers need the tools to stop these kinds of things.

We are all very saddened that a young, promising individual lost his life. For what? From the newspaper I understand that it dispute had been brewing in the corridors for a while. If teachers had known about it, I am sure they could have addressed it and cooled passions, and a young man would not have lost his life. School boards are requesting that they be given the tools to address the issues.

● (1640)

As usual the government only went halfway by saying that it may disclose information on violent offenders to school boards if it feels it is necessary. Those involved in teaching and school affairs have said that such a system has not worked. Let us look at what they have said.

The president of the Alberta School Boards Association, says the provisions do nothing to improve the release of information to schools. Let me quote her:

> We are looking for the amendment because we believe without it you are going to get the haphazard (situation) that we have right now.

No one has to share information so it is left to the person to decide who needs to be told. That has not worked. It is left to someone else to decide what information is important and what information is not. When the decision is left to someone else, the right information may not go fast enough. As a result, we do not know what kinds of situations there are in our schools.

We need to create an environment of safety. Schools need a safe environment. They are where our children learn. Our children are the future of the nation. What children learn in school will form and shape the society of the future. They therefore need a safe environment in school where they can go and learn without fear or intimidation. Newspaper reports across the country and across the continent have shown an increase in school violence and this is creating concerns.

I have a son who goes to Lisgar high school in Ottawa and at times I am concerned about violence in school. I am concerned about the atmosphere in which he is growing up. At times that puts pressure on me to find out what is happening.

It is commendable that teacher associations have raised these issues. They are looking after the best interests of students, and rightly so. We should give them the tools. However the bill would leave the decisions to someone who is not in the school system. It would be up to someone outside the school system to decide whether the information should or should not be released to schools. As a parent I am saying that it should be released to the schools and to teachers.

I heard the argument of my colleagues from the Bloc who are opposing the motion. They say they do not want to go this route because, if I understand correctly, youth crime is not very high in Quebec. At the end of the day we need to create a safe environment in schools so that students can study, which is what they are there for.

In conclusion, I feel it is very important that we support the motion. I am happy to support it although I do not support the bill in totality.

● (1645)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague from Berthier—Montcalm when he spoke about his amendment a few moments ago. I wish to draw to the attention of the House the fact

that there is an error in the text of the amendment as shown in today's order paper and notice paper.

The amendment proposed by my colleague should read as follows:

3.1 The lieutenant governor in council of a province may, by order, fix an age greater than twelve years—

It says 10 years in the document but it should say 12. I know the member for Berthier—Montcalm will see to it that the necessary correction is made.

The amendment that was tabled and signed by the member says ''twelve years'' but there is an error in today's notice paper. You should have this information, Mr. Speaker, so the necessary correction can be made. My colleague is taking care of it.

I am pleased to speak to Bill C-7. I listened to the member who spoke before me and he expressed his support for the amendment proposed by the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

To understand this amendment, one has to look at the bill because the text of the amendment itself makes absolutely no sense. If one reads paragraph 125(6) of the bill, one will see that it says:

125.(6) The provincial director, a youth worker, the Attorney General, a peace officer or any other person engaged in the provision of services to young persons may disclose—

The amendment proposes to replace the word ''may'' with the word ''shall''. This kind of amendment can only be characterized as trivial. In a bill containing such a large number of pages and clauses, an amendment is proposed to replace the word ''may'' with the word ''shall'' in one particular paragraph but not anywhere else where there can be disclosure.

Clause 125 is all about disclosure of information. It says ''may disclose'' in virtually every paragraph. Why is it that all of a sudden, in paragraph 125(6), it should no longer be ''may disclose information'' but ''shall disclose information''?

The clause said that information may be disclosed to teachers. I do not understand why this should be turned into an obligation. It is not always necessary to disclose information to all teachers involved with a young person. In comprehensive schools, there is not just one teacher in charge of a group of students.

A student who is considered an offender could have classes with 10 or 12 teachers in a single week. Should the information be disclosed to all of them? We might as well brand him or her on the forehead so that everybody knows he or she is an offender. It would be like in the United States, where convicted offenders have to hang a sign at their doorstep saying ''A pedophile lives here'', or ''A sexual offender lives here''.

Where are we heading with this kind of policy? In all simplicity and truthfulness, I worry very much about the future of Canadian society when I hear some of the debates we have had in the House since 1993. If this bill is passed, I hope Quebecers will understand that they do not want to be part of a country that deals with its young people is the way Bill C-7 would. We should get out of this country. It is urgent. It is a fundamental reason for leaving when we cannot agree on such a thing.

I heard what the Ontario attorney general had to say. He wants the bill to be even more repressive. Let those who want to travel that road do so but give us a chance to maintain the status quo because it works.

Why does the minister not want to understand? Why do the ministers of the Canadian government who represent Quebec not want to understand? I have often heard the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and the Minister for International Trade say ''Quebecers are well represented in cabinet. We are Quebecers''.

I wonder how Quebecois they are if they cannot understand the message sent by Quebecers who do not want Bill C-7. What are they waiting for to stand up and say to the minister to go back to the drawing board? This does not make any sense. This is unacceptable. I fail to understand why the federal Liberals from Quebec are the only ones to agree with this bill.

● (1650)

All the representatives of the people in the national assembly, who represent the people of Quebec, unanimously said no to Bill C-7 ''We must keep the law as it is; we want to continue to make the crime rate go down; we want to continue to rehabilitate our young people who are experiencing difficulties''.

A young person who is experiencing a delinquency problem at age 12 is not a criminal. He is not a bandit. Unfortunately he is a child who was poorly raised, who was neglected by his parents and who was badly influenced in school, by a movie or something else, but something happened to him. He was not born an offender. He became an offender but he was not born so. At the time of their birth, children have the potential to become balanced and honest people, good workers, sincere persons and so on. Society shapes them. Then they become victims.

Why should we not approach children in a way which would treat them as victims rather than criminals? It is irresponsible on the part of adults not to acknowledge the importance of taking care of children and rehabilitating them instead of putting them behind bars.

We had the opportunity to meet young Marc Beaupré, who helped my colleague from Berthier—Montcalm on his tour of Quebec and who met several colleagues. He told us that in order to

portray his character on TV, he spent short periods in prison. This allowed him to learn things to better play his role.

I wish he could be a member of parliament for one day in order to stand in the House and tell members what inmates tried to teach him during his short stay in prison so he could become a real criminal. He was taught the tricks of the trade. Prison is not the appropriate place for children. Coercion is not the way to rehabilitate young offenders. They must be taken charge of and given the support they need to become rehabilitated and honest citizens.

In Quebec, some children had the misfortune to commit reprehensible actions. Society as well as justice took care of them. There are even people who did reprehensible things when they were young and who have since become ordinary citizens and active members of their community. They have become fathers and mothers who take good care of their children and raise them the right way. It is a lot better than to have sent them to prison where they would have become bad seeds, which is exactly what this bill wants to do.

Among the amendments brought before the House is a cosmetic one. Members know as well as I do that when applied cosmetics do not last long and do not mean much. We know what cosmetics are worth. It is only a cover-up attempt that does not deal with the real issues.

My hon. colleague has put forward some basic and fundamental amendments. The lieutenant governor in council of a province should have the authority to exempt his or her province from the application of this legislation.

During question period today, my colleague from Roberval told me ''If the minister refuses to write it down, she must have reasons to do so. She knows full well that it will be not be possible afterwards''.

If the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Denis, among others, has some influence in cabinet, I strongly urge him to stand up and say that as a true Quebecer he supports Quebec's demands.

[*English*]

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, despite the interest and concerns that Canadians have expressed over the failure of the Young Offenders Act to deal effectively with youth crime, the Liberal government seems to be at a loss for finding a solution to this problem. Today the only solution the Liberals are willing to impose is closure. I am very disappointed in the response as there are serious issues that remain to be debated.

● (1655)

The Minister of Justice introduced the legislation into the House, but unfortunately the new legislation contains very little, if anything, that will address the ineffectiveness of the Young Offenders Act. The lack of substantive change is not surprising, given the lack of consultation and the failure to listen to the many Canadians who have reasonable solutions to offer.

In a substantive way, the closure being imposed today by the Liberals is symbolic of the seven years of not listening to the people of Canada and to the concerns that they have over the Young Offenders Act.

I appreciate some of the comments raised by members of the Bloc. There certainly are issues that need to be discussed. However I would suggest that the Bloc need not worry about this bill sending anyone to jail. The bill is so convoluted that I would be surprised if the youth will ever get out of court and out of the clutches of judges and lawyers. They will certainly never see the inside of any type of rehabilitative program that could assist them. In that sense I certainly agree that the law is not a good law.

I also would express some sympathy in the Bloc's desire to ensure that the programs that it already has in the province that are working should be allowed to continue under the act. There should be a measure of flexibility to account for different programs and different issues that we face in different parts of the country. We can do this without taking the drastic and radical step of suggesting separation. I think the confederation is flexible enough to take into account some of these differences. However, given that the Liberals are imposing closure in the matter, there are a few things that need to be discussed.

The first is the specific issue of notification to school and child welfare authorities in respect of young offenders. The Canadian School Boards Association, the Canadian Association of School Administrators and the Canadian Teachers Federation have called on the federal government to make the disclosure of this information mandatory. I also received letters from a number of local school boards in my riding and across Canada which called for parliament to support the amendment to Bill C-7.

I heard the concerns expressed regarding a possible failure to keep the information confidential. These organizations and the people who are in these organizations, our school administrators, are well acquainted with the requirements of confidential information and how to utilize that information in a legally appropriate way so as to assist other students and, indeed, the young offender himself or herself in the context of the school.

I met with representatives from the school boards. They impressed upon me the need for school authorities to be informed if there were, for example, dangerous offenders among the students. They are not asking for a broad publication, but simply that the school authorities know so that that information can be taken and used for appropriate purposes.

The amendment would not only provide for safer learning environments, it would also enable schools to direct necessary assistance to those young people who were in the process of rehabilitating themselves back into society.

● (1700)

These school boards want to be real and effective partners with the government in the process of keeping our young people safe and secure. However, the federal justice minister refuses to take the step to help school officials provide such a safe learning environment. She has said repeatedly that the provision already exists in the proposed youth criminal justice act and permits provincial officials to provide this information.

However, it should be pointed out that the present Young Offenders Act already provides for this discretionary sharing of information in these cases, but as we all know that process has failed. The new bill simply reintroduces past failures. The minister ought to listen to reasonable people across Canada who want to provide every possible support. The executive director of the CSBA has said ''Without an amendment requiring information sharing we simply can't do our job''. She says ''Our surveys indicate that information sharing has been inconsistent—sporadic at best''.

One of the other significant shortcomings of Bill C-7 is its failure to make provisions to assist youth under the age of 12. I have raised this issue in the past but the government has done nothing to remedy these shortcomings, to put in place a system that will prevent under 12 year olds from becoming repeat offenders and indeed hardened criminals.

While the minister attempts to justify this failure on the basis that the provincial child welfare system would deal with children under 12 who are involved in criminal activity, it is clear that the child welfare system on its own, without the assistance of our youth courts, is not equipped to deal with children whose criminal conduct brings them to the attention of the authorities.

It is evident from recent statements by the Minister of Justice that the real reason for Liberal reluctance to improve the proposed youth crime legislation is the financial commitment that would be required in order to assist children under the age of 12.

The Canadian Alliance has proposed that we provide the courts with the power to allow them to provide to these children the same rehabilitative measures offered by the act to those over 12 years old. Working together with provincial child welfare authorities in a co-operative and co-ordinated fashion, the youth courts could supervise these children and ensure that we save them from a life of crime.

The most significant issue aside from legislation and the lack of substantive reform in this new bill is that the minister has refused to financially partner with the provinces on a 50:50 basis. When asked why, she has said that the federal government does not have the money. This is a federal program, a federal initiative, and yet she expects the provinces to pick up, in effect, 75% of the cost of her program. The minister is asking us as local taxpayers to pick up the cost that the federal government will not pick up.

Although there is some initial funding over the first number of years, the funding, as is well known with other federal programs, becomes discretionary. As we know all too well, the funding will eventually diminish if not disappear.

Last, the bill is a complex bill. Mr. Rob Finlayson, a committee witness from the province of Manitoba and assistant deputy minister, said on April 25 of this year:

> On the complexity in proceedings and drafting, the complexity of the YCJA is perhaps the first thing that strikes a person who attempts to read it. This complexity has two undesirable consequences. It makes the act extremely difficult to understand, and it will create delay and cause court backlogs.

● (1705)

Mr. Finlayson, the assistant deputy minister, has a long history of working in the courts and indeed at one time was in charge of youth prosecutions in the province of Manitoba. He understands the issue. Canadians understand the issue. Why does the Minister of Justice not understand this problem?

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the constituents of Surrey Central to participate in the report stage debate on Bill C-7.

The Liberal government appears to have only reintroduced its previous legislation, Bill C-68 and Bill C-3. In Bill C-7, the name of the bill was changed for window dressing but the problems remain. On top of that, using closure to stop debate and move the bill through clearly shows the government does not care and lacks the political will to have effective legislation in the youth criminal justice act.

I would like to ask if this is what happens to the top priority of the justice minister. It is shameful. The amendment we are currently debating, put forth by the fifth party in the House, calls for a requirement to divulge the identity of a young offender to any professional or other person engaged in the supervision or care of a young person. This requirement to make known the identity and record of a young offender falls on the shoulders of the provincial director, a youth worker, the attorney general, a peace officer or any other person engaged in the provision of services to young people.

This amendment kicks in if such disclosure of this information is necessary, and the bill says it is necessary to ensure that the young person complies with orders under the act, to ensure the safety of

staff, students and other persons, and to facilitate the rehabilitation of the young person.

This amendment is reasonable. It is the least of what this side of the House is asking of the government. It is a shame the Liberals are stuck with their heads buried in the sand, refusing to allow even basic amendments to their bill even though they have introduced or accepted 182 amendments, 180 of which are just technical in nature, which shows that when they drafted the bill it was poorly drafted from just a technical point of view as well.

The amendment we are debating today is what the Canadian Alliance asked for at committee stage of the bill. People in our society such as teachers, counsellors, camp counsellors, volunteers, sports coaches, supervisors at religious events and many others need to know that there is a young person in their midst who is capable of violent behaviour.

It is with regret that I watched the infamous video clips on BCTV when a student in a school badly beat his schoolmate while other kids watched. Someone from the group secretly videotaped it. I saw in yesterday's or today's news that this aggressor has joined boxing to let off steam. I believe that Canadians want such aggressive behaviour or the offenders in those cases identified, in this case to the coach and to other officials who are responsible for management and supervision of other youths in that group.

The refusal of the government to accept an amendment that would notify people in supervisory roles about the presence of a young offender in their midst is typical of the way the government has handled the bill.

● (1710)

After months of review and after hearing so many experts on all aspects of youth justice systems, the only changes the government has agreed to make are technical amendments proposed by the government to correct the technical errors of Bill C-3, the predecessor to Bill C-7. The government has not been open to changing any aspect of its legislation.

All of the opposition parties except the Bloc presented substantial amendments to Bill C-3. Those amendments did not receive debate in parliament. What a shame that we are not debating those amendments here. They were not accepted in the committee. They do not appear to have been considered by the government at all.

The Minister of Justice has tried this legislation three times and three times she has struck out. The Canadian Alliance, through its former version, the Reform Party, and the justice committee first endorsed alternative measures for first time non-violent offenders. The minister has once again failed to restrict this form of conditional sentencing. It is open to repeat offenders and it is open to violent offenders.

The list of presumptive offences for which an adult sentence may be imposed is severely restrictive. The list includes murder, attempted murder, manslaughter and aggravated sexual assault. It does not include sexual assault with a weapon, hostage taking, aggravated assault, kidnapping and a host of other serious violent offences.

In Bill C-7 the minister has further weakened the legislation by limiting presumptive offence procedure even more. Through clause 61 any province may decide that only 15 year old or 16 year old offenders who commit offences such as murder could be transferred to adult court, while 10 year olds and 11 year olds would still not be held criminally responsible for their crimes. There is a free ride.

The legislation would create a patchwork or checkerboard system of youth justice as many of its provisions permit the provinces undue discretion in deciding whether to seek adult sentencing, in publication of names and in access to records, to name just a few.

The legislation provides some movement toward victims' rights but even those are not ensured and are still woefully inadequate.

The provinces will be tasked to administer this legal nightmare but the federal government does not seem to care. This weak Liberal government, which is so arrogant, which lacks vision, which lacks backbone, does not care. The Liberals have not been open to a serious discussion of the proposals in their youth justice law.

The Liberals have promised $206 million over the first three years for the implementation of the bill, but that will not even come close to meeting their responsibility of providing 50% of the funding for youth justice. The Liberals have allowed federal funding to slip to about 20%. The provinces have to carry the can financially for these proposals, the costs of which will rise dramatically through legal argument and procedure.

Initial review of Bill C-7 indicates that the government has made it even weaker, likely to appease the Quebec government and the Bloc Quebecois.

For instance, the presumptive offence provision that moves youth 14 years of age and older automatically to adult court for murder et cetera, now permits the provinces, that is, Quebec, to raise the age to restrict the transfer to only 15 year old and 16 year old offenders. Age of application remains at 12 years to 18 years, and there are still restrictions on naming violent offenders.

The bill still has an emphasis on attempting to understand the circumstances underlying criminal behaviour and on rehabilitation and reintegration. The protection of the public plays second fiddle. Denunciation and deterrence seem to be foreign words to the government.

● (1715)

If the legislation passes, the complexities and loopholes would cause horrendous delays and costs to our youth criminal justice process. Legal bills would be phenomenal. The government should understand that deterrence should not be a motivation to commit a crime. The amendment, if accepted, would provide for deterrence. It would also provide an opportunity to develop solutions for a safer environment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ghislain Fournier (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since debate started on Bill C-7, I have learned how effective the Young Offenders Act was in Quebec.

This all began with the press conference my colleague for Berthier—Montcalm held in Sept-Îles, which was attended by many organizations dealing with youth, including the police chief. On that occasion, I collected many testimonials about how well youth had been helped.

During the recess, I travelled around my riding. I met with parents and of course the discussion dealt with Bill C-7. I heard very emotional testimonials. A mother, with tears in her eyes, told me how, in Quebec, her husband had been helped when he was young. Who did not make any mistake? Who among us can boast that he never made a mistake?

That woman told me that today he is out of trouble and he is angry because this government is so pigheaded. Never in the history of any government have we seen a government so stubborn in its position against another government, against a nation, over a law that is so good and that has proved so good in Quebec. An expert from Montreal told us ''It has been said before, and I say it again, that law is universally approved in Quebec''.

Another witness told me ''My kid is 14 years old; he is too young to buy cigarettes, too young to buy booze, too young to vote. But the federal government says that he is not too young to be judged like an adult, that he should act like an adult. Giving a last chance is not an option''.

We have to put ourselves in the shoes of the parents of these children. I do not know how many of the members have children. If one of their children was to tell them that they have made a mistake, a serious mistake, they would ask for another chance, for a last chance. Are there any parents who would say no, it is over, you will be punished?

I think that our society is more modern. We pride ourselves on living in the most beautiful country in the world. We go out and meet people who really care and who ask, with emotion, if this is at all possible.

What will the Liberals from Quebec do? The question has been asked. How will they react? How will they vote? That is something we have been asked. How will they vote? I disappointed a lot of people by saying that we are used to seeing them follow. When the time comes for a vote, their leader gets up and they all follow, voting as he did. They do not have the right to speak.

What is great in the Bloc is that we have the right to speak. We have the right to express ourselves. I think the Bloc's history in Ottawa proved that a long time ago.

● (1720)

It is unacceptable and incomprehensible for the government to continue being so stubborn. Worse, the government submits motions for time allocation. It is because what we are saying is too much for its taste. The Bloc Quebecois and the opposition parties are too honest and candid. Why spend time, money and energy on modifying a legislation which is satisfactory for everybody in Quebec?

In my riding, more specifically in Havre-Saint-Pierre, I met someone who had had some bad experiences and was being rehabilitated. He told me: ''Mr. Fournier, the Quebec legislation is excellent because it served me quite well. I got a second chance''. Therefore, I am convinced we should not interfere with that and barge into an area of provincial jurisdiction, of Quebec jurisdiction.

I am eager to hear the position of Liberal members from Quebec when we vote on Bill C-7 shortly. I urge them to vote with the Bloc Quebecois. Quebec is looking at them today. It is not a minority but a majority of Quebec citizens who are looking and these members will have to live with the consequence of their vote. They will be politically marred for the rest of their life.

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The question is on Motion No. 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

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

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The recorded division on Motion No. 2 stands deferred.

The assistant government whip has asked to defer the votes on the report stage motions until adjournment tonight at 6.30 p.m.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT

The House resumed from May 15 consideration of the motion that Bill C-19, an act to amend the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I speak today to Bill C-19 to amend the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

This act was passed several years ago, in January 1995, but not without debate.

● (1725)

I will remind the House in the few minutes that I have left of the history of the Canadian environmental process as opposed to the history and claims of Quebec in terms of environmental assessment.

It is quite ironic to see former members of the Quebec national assembly, members of the Robert Bourassa government that defended Quebec's interests and who are now federal Liberal members, getting ready to pass this bill which goes against everything that Quebec wanted under Robert Bourassa, René Lévesque, Jacques Parizeau, Pierre-Marc Johnson and every Quebec government since 1975, since the beginning of the environmental process in Quebec.

The federal environmental assessment initiative is not new. On June 18, 1990, the federal government decided to introduce a bill, Bill C-78, dealing with the federal environmental assessment process. In many respects, this bill represented duplication and invaded provincial jurisdictions. It was a bill of which, at the time, Quebec's national assembly was very critical.

Quebecers were so firmly opposed to the bill that in 1990 Quebec's minister of the environment, Pierre Paradis, well known by members of the House—he always defended Quebec's environmental powers and prerogatives—wrote a letter to the federal minister of the environment, Robert René de Cotret, to ask him for two things.

On the one hand, what we wanted in 1990 was for Bill C-78 to introduce some flexibility with respect to Quebec's environmental assessment process.

On the other hand, Quebec's then minister of the environment, Liberal Pierre Paradis, asked that the legislation not duplicate the process because we had an environmental assessment process responsive to Quebec's initiatives, and we still do.

Following the letter, unfortunately,—and as usual it was a Liberal government in Quebec that realized this—the federal minister of the environment refused to amend the bill dealing with the environmental assessment process. Given the federal government's systematic refusal, Quebec's then minister of the environment even wrote a second letter.

On December 17, 1990, the Quebec environment minister wrote a second letter to the same Canadian environment minister clearly demonstrating that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act encroached on provincial jurisdictions. In this letter, of which I have a copy, the Quebec minister demonstrated this invasion into provincial jurisdiction and the negative impact of the Canadian legislation.

● (1730)

In spite of repeated requests, the Canadian government of the day did not seem to get the message. In May 1991, the government came back with essentially the same legislation, Bill C-13, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

Because of the federal government's lack of understanding and recognizing that the Canadian environmental assessment bill was essentially an exact copy of the old one, Quebec's environment minister wrote a letter dated November 22, 1991. To whom was this letter addressed? To the Canadian environment minister, Mr. Jean Charest.

Pierre Paradis wrote to the federal environment minister, Jean Charest, to reiterate Quebec's position. What was Quebec's position at the time that prompted Quebec's environment minister to reiterate it to the federal minister? First, it recognized that the environment was a shared jurisdiction. We recognize that, we even recognize the federal government's power to do environmental evaluations of projects for which a federal decision is needed.

For that matter, the Quebec government has drawn the federal government's attention to a supreme court judgment, the Oldman decision. In his decision, Justice La Forest said, and I quote:

> Thus, an initiating department or panel cannot use the *Guidelines Order* as a colourable device to invade areas of provincial jurisdiction which are unconnected to the relevant heads of federal power.

Following this decision, Quebec's environment minister wrote to the federal environment minister. In his letter dated February 28, 1992, the minister of the environment, Pierre Paradis, reiterated his

concerns. However it is clear that his concerns fell on deaf ears in Ottawa. Consequently, the legislation was not changed.

Because of the constant arrogance of the federal government, and it's repeated efforts to impose by legislative means its environmental evaluation process, Quebec responded through it's national assembly on March 18, 1992. Certain Liberal members who are in the House today were part of the Quebec consensus expressed on March 18, 1992 when the national assembly unanimously passed a motion to denounce the federal government's determination to impose its environmental assessment process.

In today's political context, when men and women elected by the people to represent them want to maintain a minimum of credibility, the one fundamental value that they have to adhere to is consistency in their ideas. One cannot, in 10 years, do a complete about face and say ''I supported the national assembly's consensus, I was part of that unanimous decision, but today I am voting in favour of a bill that totally ignores all the work that has been done in Quebec''.

● (1735)

Had the Quebec experience proved inconclusive, I might have understood why some members would be reluctant to vote against the bill. However, let us not forget that the environmental assessment process has been around for a long time in Quebec. It dates back to 1975, when the need for an environmental assessment process was recognized in the James Bay agreement.

When we created the Bureau québécois d'audiences publiques en environnement, the BAPE, it was in response to the following basic expectation: a transparent process that would be open to the public and that would not be a self-assessment of government projects. The BAPE is an arm length's agency, contrary to what the environmental assessment bill is proposing, that is the possibility for the federal government to conduct environmental self-assessments. The BAPE does not do that.

In this regard, transparency in terms of public participation, the fact that the Quebec process is at arm length's as compared to the federal self-assessment approach, the fact that not as many projects are excluded thus providing a better environmental protection, all that proves that it is effective. The Quebec environment minister has regulations and amendments to the act passed on a regular basis in order to be able to adequately protect our environment. It is part of the normal process.

A case in point is what happened last week. The Quebec environment minister announced that from now on any hydro projects of more than five megawatts had to undergo an environmental assessment, whereas only a few weeks ago and for years before that only projects of more than ten megawatts had to undergo one.

The environmental assessment process in Quebec is not static. It changes as projects and their impact on the environment evolve. I think we must be consistent in our approach. It is rather peculiar; I was reading a moment ago notes from a speech by the then Quebec environment minister. This Liberal Quebec environment minister was saying, concerning Bill C-13 on the environmental assessment process, that ''Bill C-13 is a steamroller condemning everybody to a forced uniformization, which might in turn jeopardize the environmental assessment process in Quebec and needlessly bring into question all our efforts in this area''.

This is not Quebec's current environment minister, whom opponents would dismiss as a sovereignist and a separatist. This is Quebec's former Liberal environment minister, who is still a member of the national assembly and who was part of the unanimous consensus in that assembly, which has just told the federal government ''We have a process that works; leave it as it is''.

● (1740)

For some weeks and months now, there has been a shameless desire on the part of members opposite to introduce legislative amendments or bills in order to destroy the Quebec model, anything produced by Quebec that is working well—from the environmental assessment process to the Young Offenders Act—and move their centralizing agenda ahead.

If there is really a desire to protect youth, if there is really a desire to protect our environment, why not let the Quebec model do what it is designed to do? It is a model which is working well and which has stood the test of time.

I see the reactions of some members opposite; I would not want to name these members, who were part of the consensus in Quebec, who voted in favour of the unanimous motion in the national assembly, but a number of them could be found in this House and are listening to me now. It is a bit surprising to see them reacting in the places.

I repeat, in politics, credibility is based on consistency. If one cannot be consistent about how one votes in this House, one would do better to defend other interests.

The bill before us, it must be remembered, goes against the Quebec model. In 1978 Quebec set up its own assessment system, which it incorporated into the environment quality act. As I said, the environmental assessment process in Quebec had its origins in the James Bay and northern Quebec agreement.

A few years later, three years later to be exact, an environmental assessment system was put into place within the framework of the Clean Water Act. In 1980 the Bureau des audiences publiques sur l'environnement was created. Of course, it called for a renewal of the Quebec environmental assessment act, and the government of Quebec acted accordingly.

I was reading over notes published in 1992 by the government of Quebec at a time where a Liberal government was in power in the province and while the MNA and minister of the environment in Quebec was still a member of the national assembly. The 1992 reports from the government of Quebec said:

> There is indeed a risk that the latter—

This refers to the federal Environmental Assessment Act.

> —will constantly be duplicated, disputed or subordinated to the application of the federal process. Yet, the Quebec procedure has been well established for ten years already; it is well known by the general public and the promoters from Quebec; and it has proven itself.

The areas where the federal authority can get involved are somewhat limitless, given all the levers one can find in the bill itself to force the mandatory examination of projects by the federal authority.

For months the federal government has been shamelessly tempted to destroy the Quebec model. We hope that all the members from Quebec, at least those who voted unanimously at the national assembly, will be able to vote against this bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, certainly environmental protection and pollution of the air and lands of the commons knows no boundaries, but the Bloc always brings up the jurisdictional argument repeatedly.

What do we have specifically in the bill? On page 2, it states very clearly:

> to promote cooperation and coordinated action between federal and provincial governments with respect to environmental assessment processes for projects;

The Bloc always cites duplication in jurisdiction, but it never admits that Quebec creates the administrative duplication, then with its extra costs wants equalization payments to pay for it.

● (1745)

Does the Bloc think Quebec is the only province that assesses projects environmentally? It certainly is not. Why is the Bloc so divisive and introspective? Should it not instead be trying to improve the protection of the environment for the whole world, for all of Canada and, by definition, for a safer Quebec?

Why is the Bloc out of step with the whole world? Nations of the world, rather than indulging in separatism, parochialism and small-mindedness, are coming together to recognize that broader national and international agreements and efforts are needed because pollution knows no boundaries. We need a broader perspective, not a narrower perspective. The Bloc needs to justify its direction.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, it takes some nerve to say such things in the House. I would say to the member from western Canada that the western provinces contribute and are preparing to provide to the United States all the fossil fuels, the oil, the natural gas and the tar sands.

We have nothing to learn from western Canada as far as the protection of the environment goes. I believe that if in fact western Canada were to use Quebec as a model in the area of acid rain, of environmental protection and of the production of greenhouse gases, the environmental picture would be quite different.

On the contrary, western Canada has decided to provide fossil fuels to the Americans. We need no lessons from the hon. member on this score.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague for Rosemont—Petite-Patrie.

There is nothing better than real striking examples to show those watching, and those in Quebec in particular, under what conditions this legislation is being received.

It is not for nothing that in 1992 the government of Robert Bourassa decided, with the unanimous support of the national assembly, to oppose any federal intrusion in provincial jurisdictions.

Here in the Outaouais region we have and still are witnessing the construction in the city of Hull of a highway called axe McConnell-Laramée. Concerning this construction project, which has been announced and will of course be carried out under a federal-provincial cost sharing agreement, I would like to ask my colleague to explain what could be the cause of the delay following that announcement. The Quebec transport minister had already asked his federal counterpart to co-ordinate his environmental intervention with that of the province of Quebec.

My question to my colleague for Rosemont—Petite-Patrie is this: What would be the impact of this bill on the McConnell-Laramée project in the Outaouais region?

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, the impact of this bill and of the federal legislation more broadly passed in 1995 arises precisely from the concerns of the government of Quebec of the day.

I quote documents of the Quebec minister of the environment from 1992:

> Bill C-13, if passed as it stands, will mean submitting to federal evaluation many environmental projects that have already gone through the Quebec environmental impact examination and assessment procedure. This situation will therefore create a serious duplication problem in Quebec.

Once Quebec has a guarantee that the environmental assessment process is solid, rigorous and includes public participation, I see no reason to support the one that comes under a federal law, that would simply, in the end, delay viable economic projects that are important to the infrastructure of the Outaouais region, for example.

I think therefore that, in this case, the Quebec environment assessment process should be the only one to apply in the case before us.

[*English*]

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague across the way has some interesting points regarding federal-provincial relations with respect to the bill.

I will start with the name: Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Why do we not call it the confederal environmental assessment act? The federal government is really the creation of the provinces. It came into existence at the will of the provinces. When they came together in 1867 to create Confederation, it was an instrument of the provincial governments, the colonial governments.

● (1750)

Would my colleague across the way support the idea of renaming the bill the confederal environmental assessment act? Does he think that would be an improvement over the word Canadian?

Proposed subsection 2(1) makes reference to the territories. We know the territories are under the thumb of the federal government, that they are oppressed and that the federal government regularly comes in to scavenge their resources at will. How would my hon. colleague from the Bloc feel about provincializing the territories and allowing them a greater share of resources? How would he feel about allowing them to get out from under the evil thumb of the federal government as we all want to do?

Proposed paragraph 2(1)(a) talks about the federal government's powers over waters and airspace. How might my hon. colleague respond to that in terms of provincial rights in those areas or in terms of property rights for individuals?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, in a few words it must be understood, and we acknowledged the fact, that environment is a shared jurisdiction. We recognize that fact and we are ready to admit that the federal government has a right to intervene in environmental matters.

However, the Supreme Court of Canada and especially Justice La Forest ruled in the Oldman case that the federal government cannot use a decree or any other measure to intervene in areas which are not in a federal jurisdiction.

Consequently, it seems clear to me that this bill represents, in terms of environmental assessment, a scandalous federal encroachment on Quebec's jurisdiction, all the more so if one considers that the environmental process put in place by Quebec is working very well.

I remind the House that councils of environment ministers have in the past directly denounced the federal strategy concerning environmental evaluation assessment. Therefore this is not something new. Since 1992 Canadian environment ministers have been asking the federal government not to intervene in that area.

Nevertheless, through this initiative the federal government is obviously continuing to encroach upon provincial jurisdiction in the area of environmental assessment and to create undue duplication.

This will not necessarily mean improved efficiency but will rather slow down certain economic projects which could improve the quality of life of our fellow citizens.

[*English*]

Mr. Rob Anders: Mr. Speaker, I will continue along the vein of questions I had for my hon. colleague from the Bloc.

In proposed paragraph 4(b.2) it says:

> to promote cooperation and coordinated action between federal and provincial governments with respect to environmental assessment processes for projects;

One of the hon. members in the House said the proposed change would extend a welcome hand. Surely, I ask my hon. colleague from the Bloc, are there not examples in the past where the federal government has slapped the face of the provinces? Should we really trust these milquetoast resolutions from the federal Liberals?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Mr. Speaker, this is one of the reasons why Quebec did not sign the harmonization accord on environmental assessment.

● (1755)

Back then, successive Quebec environment ministers, whatever government they were part of, agreed on one thing: There will be no harmonization agreement on environmental assessment as long as bills, legislative amendments and the legislation itself do not recognize the right of provinces to get involved in this area.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions with the parties and I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following. I move:

That Motion No. 1 of Mr. Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm), seconded by Mr. Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes), to amend Bill C-7, an act in respect of criminal justice for young persons and to amend and repeal other acts, as reported by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights with amendments, be amended by replacing the word ''ten'' with the word ''twelve''.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-68, an act to amend the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate on Bill C-19, an act to amend the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

It is rather interesting that the federal government should introduce such a bill when we are clearly under the impression that the Minister of the Environment adopted the wait and see approach to know exactly what Mr. Bush would say, what he would do, how he would proceed, how he would retract and where he would stand on the environmental issue.

This basic legislation passed in 1995 provided for a review after five years. When we debated this legislation in 1995, we probably told the government all the improvements that ought to have been made to it but being a majority government, it completely ignored these recommendations.

I wish the government could understand that a majority of seats and a minority of votes do not mean it can rule the roost. It is high time it started listening to the opposition parties to know what the interesting points are. The more people have a say, the more ideas will be brought up, and debate is the key to enlightenment.

In my view it is important that the government consider the views expressed by the opposition and try to amend the bill in a way that would allow us to improve it even more.

My colleague from Calgary Southeast—I hope I am not giving the wrong riding—reminded us that the government had added two amendements to clause 2 of Bill C-19 dealing with the purposes.

● (1800)

It is amending clause 2 of Bill C-19, section 4 of the old act, by adding the following:

(*b*.2) to promote cooperation and coordinated action between federal and provincial governments with respect to environmental assessment processes for projects;

If it wants to promote co-operation, the federal government should show good faith and stop saying ''I am the biggest; I am the strongest; I am the country; I am right and you are necessarily wrong''.

Co-operation with others requires mechanisms of consensus, consultation and co-operation to be created if there is to be successful co-operation between the federal and provincial governments.

There is something else:

(*b*.3) to promote communication and cooperation between responsible authorities and Aboriginal peoples with respect to environmental assessment;

There is one other salient point in this bill. The Canadian International Development Agency is to be subject to this legislation, to the environmental assessment process.

This is good news that CIDA can also be subjected to this process. We in the biggest and most beautiful country in the world can stop being ashamed by our involvement in certain countries that have been soundly criticized because environmental measures have not been taken into consideration and we are polluting elsewhere when we would not do it here.

There is another important point: the bill creates the position of federal environmental assessment co-ordinator for projects that involve several federal or provincial authorities.

I trust that they will take the trouble to select a bilingual co-ordinator who will be able to understand what goes on in Quebec and be capable of truly ensuring co-ordination and not the interventionism of which this government is so fond.

It also authorizes the use, as an assessment criterion, of local knowledge, aboriginal knowledge and traditions.

In this respect, we have an extremely important point to make. Sometimes I think the federal government does a reasonably good job at drafting documents but when we watch it in action afterward we find that there is a dichotomy between what it says and what it does.

If it is true that the government intends to take into account local knowledge and aboriginal traditional knowledge, we could end up with better results those that we are getting now.

Those who have the best knowledge of things are those who live close to them. The government will also have to show that it truly intends to do that. However since the past is an indication of what the future holds, I am very skeptical as to what the outcome might be.

The bill broadens the minister's discretionary power to get involved in projects on the Quebec territory. I find it extremely dangerous whenever the discretionary powers of a minister are broadened. It is always very dangerous because it depends on how that minister will want to use his discretion, to be discretionary or not.

Earlier this afternoon it was mentioned, in another debate and also during oral question period, that when ministers want to do something they put it in writing in the act. The Minister of the Environment wants to have the right to use his discretionary power so he puts it in the act to make sure he will be able to use that power. Therefore this should not come as a surprise.

This suggests that, with respect to the other bill, we were right to contend that the minister, who does not want to include certain provisions in the legislation, is very likely to want to implement the Young Offenders Act in the same fashion all across Canada.

What is at stake for us in this bill? You will be surprised, Mr. Speaker, but you will not fall off your chair because you are well settled. Bill C-19, as it stands, is not a bad bill. It is a considerable improvement on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, particularly by extending its application to CIDA and certain crown agencies.

● (1805)

Participant funding and the consultation of aboriginals are other very interesting features of this bill but, and there is always a but, I paid the government a compliment and I hope it will be well received—the problem lies with the very principle of the bill.

The act represents interference in Quebec's fundamental jurisdictions. This is the problem. The government could have stuck to improving its bill without interfering in our fundamental jurisdictions.

When it was introduced in 1992, the legislation was interpreted as an attempt by the federal government to reintroduce some discretionary leeway in its environmental assessment process. An interesting discussion of this can be found in the M.A. thesis of Luc Juillet, who studied this issue in 1992 at the University of Ottawa. This was a student at the University of Ottawa, not at UQAM or a Quebec university. He studied this discretionary leeway the government wanted to introduce in its bill.

In this regard, clause 22 of the bill clearly broadens the federal government's authority to interfere in one of Quebec's areas of jurisdiction. The minister reserves discretionary power for himself by adding ''the Minister is of the opinion''. The minister's opinion will not be up for discussion. There will always be a possibility for him to say ''This is my opinion and it must be taken into account since I am authorized by law to change things according to my opinion''. This type of discretionary power on issues as important as the environment is cause for concern.

> 46.(1) Where no power, duty or function referred to in section 5 is to be exercised or performed by a federal authority in relation to a project that is to be carried out in a province and the Minister is of the opinion that the project may cause significant adverse environmental effects in another province, the Minister may refer the project to a mediator or a review panel in accordance with section 29 for an assessment of the environmental effects of the project in that other province.

Members will realize that this is the infamous section 46. The government only slightly modified the French version by adding the words ''et peut, à son avis, entraîner des effets''. Therefore, the minister will really take that as a basis. He will look at that and of course, he will call on his advisers, but he may not feel like taking their advice.

We see how, in other departments, the ministers do not consider the collective well-being of our great country but rather their electoral map and the adversaries they have in their own riding. We can see clearly how the presence of the Canadian Alliance in western Canada has affected the Liberal Party, so much so that it is now beyond all recognition and the Liberal Party of Quebec is trying to shift to the left to see what it feels like to be Liberal these days.

Because of the federal Liberals, we no longer have a model of what it means to be a Liberal in Canada. With the NDP, those members were the ones with the so-called progressive ideas. Today, they are so afraid of the Canadian Alliance that the Liberals cannot even recognize one another. We do not know what a Liberal is supposed to look like either.

It is rather worrisome to see that the government does not manage this country for the public good, that it does not have a great vision for the development of this country called Canada, so that it can still be an interesting country to live in during the 21st century. What counts for the government is watching what the Canadian Alliance says and does, finding out what will bring in votes so that Liberals can stay in power as long as possible and go on using public funds to do whatever they like.

● (1810)

Let met tell my good friend, the Minister for International Trade, that I would like the bill to apply to his Export Development Corporation, but that is not the case. Things have been taken care of. The minister did not stand in cabinet to ask that the bill apply to the corporation as it does to CIDA.

Mr. Bernard Bigras: It is too twisted.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: Those are your words. I do not dare say that.

We have had many problems with this corporation and we will have more because the minister does not have enough courage to bring it under this bill. He did not speak to his colleague to say how important it was to introduce this concept in the bill. No, he preferred to say nothing. If nothing is said, the matter is not discussed. However we must look at all the problems that occurred abroad and that brought us shame in Canada.

Companies have embarrassed us by exploiting and polluting other countries. They are not satisfied with polluting here, they go and pollute elsewhere. We have to ask ourselves where all of this is headed.

Clause 8 provides for the creation of the position of federal environmental assessment co-ordinator. This shows clearly that the federal government decides and wants to insinuate itself into the Quebec environmental assessment process. It is because the federal government intends to act in Quebec's area of jurisdiction that it has to create the position of co-ordinator.

With whom does it intend to coordinate? With itself? We have seen in many other bills how it overlaps with itself: fisheries and oceans overlaps with heritage and with environment in the creation of areas of protection for this and that.

The government is creating a co-ordinator, and therefore co-ordination, position, because it will have something to coordinate and it will have to co-ordinate with the provinces. The government will present itself as the big brother, the all powerful, the one with the billions, money coming out of its ears, the one wanting to impose the law of money, of power, of the many on the little provinces, which will have to comply. It will say to them ''If you do not comply, you will not get this. If you do not do this, you will not have that''. This will be a position that could be dangerous for bargaining.

If the federal government stuck to its own areas of jurisdiction, co-ordination would not be required, but because it wants to create a system that will enable it to tramp over other jurisdictions, it needs a co-ordinator position to ensure that if it spies some way in which it can meddle in the affairs of others, it will do so at will and with pleasure.

Initially the provincial governments, including Quebec and Alberta, were the leaders. They criticized the Canadian legislation and demanded major changes that would have made it possible for provincial processes to be used in place of federal assessments but there were few federal concessions.

The bill appears to introduce discrimination between the promoters of projects associated with federal authorities and those that are not. For example, a partially federally funded project would be covered by the law but as soon as the federal level is not involved, another system kicks in.

My colleague was very eloquent in his treatment of this. We saw earlier in this House someone from the province of Quebec, the hon. member for Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies to be precise, who was president of the BAPE in Quebec—at least I believe he was. Our colleague, the chair of the standing committee on heritage, used to be minister of environment in the Bourassa government. A number of Liberal members in this House are former Quebec MLAs, for instance the hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie. The member for Papineau—Saint-Denis was not a member of the national assembly but he was very close to the government and worked for Mr. Ryan, so he was very much up to date on everything that was going on within that magnificent government that did something very significant for the environment. These are not innocents; they are very much up to date on events.

● (1815)

I can tell the House that I will go to bed even sadder tonight knowing that they are not capable of knowledge transfer. What they learned in Quebec they cannot make use of here for the benefit of Canada, and that I profoundly regret.

[*English*]

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from the Bloc raised questions about federal government violations in provincial jurisdictions. That is a good angle from which to view the bill. Clause 8(b) states:

> the Crown corporation or corporation controlled by it makes or authorizes payments or provides a guarantee for a loan or any other form of financial assistance to the proponent for the purpose of enabling the project to be carried out in whole or in part;

The key operating phrase is that these are crown corporations which would provide loan guarantees. It talks about using taxpayer dollars to extend the long arm of the federal government to exert influence on the provinces, whether it be Alberta, or Quebec in this case.

What does the member think of the whole idea of crown corporations being able to use taxpayer dollars to influence business practices in the provinces? It has been rightfully pointed out that it would be a violation of jurisdiction.

The other part that I would like the member to comment on is the reference in clause 9 to the Hamilton harbour commissioners. In the act that we are amending there is a reference to the Toronto harbour commissioners. If we are able to make reference to both the Hamilton harbour and the Toronto harbour, might the member postulate for us why there is no specific reference made to the province of Quebec?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the confusion with respect to clauses earlier. I want to be careful to refer to the same clause as the hon. member. It is clause 6 which amends sections 9 and 10 of the existing legislation referring to the Hamilton and Toronto harbours, and so forth.

It always comes back to the same principle. We are legislators. We therefore make bills, debate them and look at how they are drafted. When something is written down, we can understand what it means. Evidently there are commissioners appointed under the Hamilton Harbour Commissioners' Act because there is a specific reference to Hamilton harbour.

There is no specific reference to Quebec but there is a tiny clause, which I mentioned it earlier, that says ''the Minister is of the opinion—''. If the minister is of the opinion that he should interfere in Quebec, he will go right ahead and do so. The bill specifies nothing specifically—this is a pleonasm, forgive me—but it is so vague.

I am worried about this aspect of the bill. There is a danger of federal interference in provincial jurisdiction. The member for Rosemont—Petite-Patrie quite rightly said that we accept the fact that it is a shared jurisdiction.

If it is shared and if we want it to work the parties must respect each other's jurisdiction. That is the only way it will work. If the government does not want it to work, it creates all sorts of mechanisms, as it has done in this bill. Provisions are included or, if not, there is some little all purpose phrase: ''at the discretion'', ''the minister's discretionary power'', or ''where the minister is of the opinion'' so that the minister will be able to do as he pleases.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for her speech. She has drawn my attention to an aspect of the bill that has not been covered and that I would have liked to have talked about earlier in my own speech but did not have the time.

● (1820)

This is quite ironic, since in principle the legislation is supposed to cover projects solely under Canadian jurisdiction, pursuant to section 5 of the law.

How is it that the Export Development Corporation is exempted from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act when about two weeks ago a group published a report demonstrating clearly that the Export Development Corporation gives a financial hand up to businesses that violate environmental legislation contaminates and threatens the environment in certain other countries?

How is it that this corporation is exempted from this legislation in spite of the fact that many organizations are demanding that it be subject to it? That is my question for the hon. member.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I am really quite happy with this question because I raised it briefly when you motioned to me that I only had a little time left. I was only broaching the subject.

I was outraged to read that in the newspapers. We also read in international magazines that Canada is a polluter and that it pollutes with Canadian taxpayers' money. A federal crown corporation uses our money to encourage people and companies to open plants and to pollute abroad.

I think it is scandalous and I hope the minister will wake up in time and move an amendment that will ensure that this corporation is subject to this bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Rob Anders: Mr. Speaker, I wish to follow up on a couple of points made by my hon. colleague from the Bloc. She mentioned that CIDA should be subject to an environmental review. She talked about how we should not be having taxpayer promoted pollution. I agree with the hon. member. I happen to think that there are a lot of CIDA projects where Canada is using taxpayer funds to promote questionable things overseas.

She also mentioned the whole idea of broadening ministerial discretion. The federal government almost always continues to expand its influence and give its ministers more jurisdictional ability to put their fingers in more pies. I congratulate her for bringing this issue forward. Would she be able to expound on that in some way?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, as important as it is that ministers be accountable for what happens in their areas of responsibility, it is also important that they be given as little discretionary powers as possible based solely on their opinion.

This is extremely dangerous because we do not know on what it is based. If, for example, the wording was: ''Following the formation of a research group that will have demonstrated that the minister can use the results and make a decision other than'', it would be different.

The problem is the minister's opinion. No one knows on what a minister's opinion is based when such opinion can be used to justify the use of discretionary powers.

[*English*]

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as other members have said, these amendments have arisen as a result

of a review of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act which was conducted over the last couple of years before Bill C-19 was tabled in the House.

It reflects an attempt on the part of that review committee to deal with some of the problems we have had under the act. The New Democratic Party has certain reservations as the bill does not adequately address some of the severe problems which have shown up under the act. In quick summary, we are very concerned about its ability to deal with those problems and that in fact it may be compounding them.

● (1825)

I hear in some of the questions and answers and comments that have been made that the interaction of the bill and the act that preceded it and the overlapping of jurisdiction with the provincial levels of government including municipalities and the first nations have become major problems.

It is a common ground of the proponents of development and those who might have problems with it or are outright opposed to it that it is extremely important for the process to be transparent, meaningful and efficient. The amendments to Bill C-19 would only address the issue of efficiency. Without total prejudgment it is our opinion they would probably not be effective or transparent.

It may speed up the process. The minister and a number of speakers on the government side stated that it would be a more efficient process, that the process would be harmonized to the extent that it would be more efficient. There is serious doubt on this side as to whether it would be more effective.

Another point that we raised in opposition to the bill as it stands now is the way that it looks at traditional land use and more specifically the involvement of the aboriginal population in the process. Paragraph 2(b.3) talks about promoting communication and co-operation with the first nations. It is obvious that there are very few provisions in the bill which make that a reality.

The issue of the establishment of co-operation between provincial and federal jurisdictions leaves very much to be desired. My friends from the Bloc have addressed this issue extensively, but it is clear, despite some of their other concerns, that it would not do anything to improve the relationship if there are to be assessments at the provincial and federal levels. The development of meaningful interaction is not contained in the bill.

We constantly hear the term harmonization, but we are concerned that it is an attempt to streamline the process, to make it less costly and to speed it up, which would be done at the expense of valid, accurate and meaningful environmental assessments. The end result raises serious doubts about its ability to act as a mechanism to protect the environment from inappropriate, unwanted and environmentally damaging proposals or developments.

We see no thrust in the bill to amend the current legislation to increase protection for the environment by building in more structures that would protect it rather than providing limitations.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1830)

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION

The House resumed from May 18 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Pursuant to order made on Friday, May 18, 2001, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 219 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

● (1900)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 101*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anders	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Anderson (Victoria)	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bagnell
Baker	Bakopanos
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bennett	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Binet	Blaikie
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Borotsik	Boudria
Bradshaw	Breitkreuz
Brien	Brown
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Cadman
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Carignan
Carroll	Castonguay
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Chatters	Comartin
Comuzzi	Crête
Cullen	Cuzner
Desjarlais	DeVillers
Dion	Doyle
Dromisky	Drouin
Dubé	Duceppe
Duhamel	Duncan
Duplain	Easter
Elley	Epp
Eyking	Farrah
Forseth	Fournier
Fry	Gagliano
Gagnon (Québec)	Gallant
Gallaway	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godfrey
Godin	Goldring
Goodale	Gouk

Graham
Grewal
Grose
Guimond
Harris
Harvey
Hinton
Ianno
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Lalonde
Lebel
Lee
Lill
Longfield
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mahoney
Maloney
Marcil
Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mayfield
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
McNally
Ménard
Minna
Moore
Myers
Neville
Nystrom
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Obhrai
Pagtakhan
Patry
Peric
Peschisolido
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Redman
Regan
Reynolds
Ritz
Saada
Savoy
Schmidt
Sgro
Skelton
Speller
St. Denis
Steckle
Stoffer
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Torsney
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Whelan
White (North Vancouver)
Yelich—209

Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Edmonton North)
Guarnieri
Harb
Harvard
Hearn
Hubbard
Jackson
Jordan
Karygiannis
Keyes
Laframboise
Lastewka
LeBlanc
Leung
Lincoln
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Macklin
Malhi
Marceau
Mark
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews
McCallum
McDonough
McLellan
McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Owen
Paradis
Penson
Perron
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Richardson
Robillard
Sauvageau
Scherrer
Scott
Shepherd
Solberg
Spencer
St-Jacques
Stinson
Strahl
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tobin
Tonks
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)
Valeri
Volpe
Wasylycia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Wood

NAYS

Members

*Nil/aucun

PAIRED MEMBERS

Asselin
Bergeron
Coderre
Dalphond-Guiral
Dhaliwal
Finlay
Guay
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Loubier
Manley
Parrish
Price
Rocheleau
Roy
St-Julien

Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Cardin
Collenette
Desrochers
Discepola
Gagnon (Champlain)
Jennings
Lanctôt
MacAulay
Paquette
Pratt
Proulx
Rock
St-Hilaire
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-7, an act in respect of criminal justice for young persons and to amend and repeal other acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions on the report stage of Bill C-7. The question is on Motion No. 1, as amended. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 3.

● (1910)

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was negatived on the following division:)

(*Division No. 102*)

YEAS

Members

Anders
Bigras
Crête
Duceppe
Gagnon (Québec)
Girard-Bujold
Laframboise
Lebel
Ménard
Sauvageau

Bellehumeur
Brien
Dubé
Fournier
Gauthier
Guimond
Lalonde
Marceau
Perron
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)—20

NAYS

Members

Adams
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Assad
Augustine
Bagnell
Bakopanos
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Bonin
Boudria
Breitkreuz
Bulte
Caccia

Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Assadourian
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Baker
Beaumier
Bellemare
Bertrand
Binet
Blondin-Andrew
Borotsik
Bradshaw
Brown
Byrne
Cadman

Calder
Caplan
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Chatters
Comuzzi
Cuzner
DeVillers
Doyle
Drouin
Duncan
Easter
Epp
Farrah
Fry
Gallant
Godfrey
Goldring
Gouk
Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Edmonton North)
Guarnieri
Harris
Harvey
Hinton
Ianno
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
LeBlanc
Leung
Lincoln
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Macklin
Malhi
Marcil
Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mayfield
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
McNally
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Owen
Paradis
Penson
Peschisolido
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Redman
Regan
Reynolds
Ritz
Saada
Scherrer
Scott
Shepherd
Solberg
Spencer
St-Jacques
Stinson
Strahl
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tobin
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Whelan
White (North Vancouver)
Yelich—189

Cannis
Carignan
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Comartin
Cullen
Desjarlais
Dion
Dromisky
Duhamel
Duplain
Elley
Eyking
Forseth
Gagliano
Gallaway
Godin
Goodale
Graham
Grewal
Grose
Harb
Harvard
Hearn
Hubbard
Jackson
Jordan
Karygiannis
Keyes
Lastewka
Lee
Lill
Longfield
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mahoney
Maloney
Mark
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews
McCallum
McDonough
McLellan
McTeague
Minna
Moore
Myers
Neville
Nystrom
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Obhrai
Pagtakhan
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Richardson
Robillard
Savoy
Schmidt
Sgro
Skelton
Speller
St. Denis
Steckle
Stoffer
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Wasylycia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Wood

PAIRED MEMBERS

Asselin
Bergeron
Coderre
Dalphond-Guiral
Dhaliwal
Finlay
Guay
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Loubier
Manley
Parrish
Price
Rocheleau
Roy
St-Julien

Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Cardin
Collenette
Desrochers
Discepola
Gagnon (Champlain)
Jennings
Lanctôt
MacAulay
Paquette
Pratt
Proulx
Rock
St-Hilaire
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)

Mr. Rob Anders: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I voted in opposition to the motion but I would like to have my vote reflect that I voted in favour of it. I made a mistake when I was standing before.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I declare Motion No. 1 lost. I therefore declare Motion No. 3 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 2.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as voting on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting no, with the exception of the member from Huron—Bruce.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is there consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Richard Harris: Mr. Speaker, Canadian Alliance members will be voting yes on this motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Quebecois will vote against this motion.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, the NDP members will vote in favour of this motion.

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Progressive Conservative Party will vote in favour of the motion, in French.

[*English*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was negatived on the following division:)

(*Division No. 103*)

YEAS

Members

Anders
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Blaikie

Borotsik
Cadman
Comartin
Doyle
Elley
Forseth
Godin
Gouk
Grey (Edmonton North)
Hearn
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Mark
Mayfield
McNally
Nystrom
Penson
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Skelton
Spencer
Stoffer
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Wasylycia-Leis
White (North Vancouver)
Breitkreuz
Chatters
Desjarlais
Duncan
Epp
Gallant
Goldring
Grewal
Harris
Hinton
Lill
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough
Moore
Obhrai
Peschisolido
Reynolds
Schmidt
Solberg
Stinson
Strahl
Toews
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Yelich—54

NAYS

Members

Adams
Anderson (Victoria)
Assadourian
Bagnell
Bakopanos
Bélanger
Bellemare
Bertrand
Bigras
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Brien
Bulte
Caccia
Cannis
Carignan
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Crête
Cuzner
Dion
Drouin
Duceppe
Duplain
Eyking
Fournier
Gagliano
Gallaway
Girard-Bujold
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harb
Harvey
Ianno
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Laframboise
Lastewka
LeBlanc
Leung
Longfield
Mahoney
Maloney
Marcil
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Alcock
Assad
Augustine
Baker
Beaumier
Bellehumeur
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Binet
Bonin
Bradshaw
Brown
Byrne
Calder
Caplan
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Comuzzi
Cullen
DeVillers
Dromisky
Dubé
Duhamel
Easter
Farrah
Fry
Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier
Godfrey
Graham
Grose
Guimond
Harvard
Hubbard
Jackson
Jordan
Karygiannis
Kraft Sloan
Lalonde
Lebel
Lee
Lincoln
Macklin
Malhi
Marceau
Marleau
Matthews
McCormick
McLellan
Ménard
Minna
Murphy
Nault
Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Pagtakhan
Patry
Perron
Pettigrew
Pillitteri
Redman
Regan
Robillard
Sauvageau
Scherrer
Sgro
Speller
St-Jacques
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tonks
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)
Valeri
Volpe
Whelan
Paradis
Peric
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Richardson
Saada
Savoy
Scott
Shepherd
St. Denis
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tobin
Torsney
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wood—154

PAIRED MEMBERS

Asselin
Bergeron
Coderre
Dalphond-Guiral
Dhaliwal
Finlay
Guay
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Loubier
Manley
Parrish
Price
Rocheleau
Roy
St-Julien
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Cardin
Collenette
Desrochers
Discepola
Gagnon (Champlain)
Jennings
Lanctôt
MacAulay
Paquette
Pratt
Proulx
Rock
St-Hilaire
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I declare Motion No. 2 lost.

● (1915)

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe you would find unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as voting on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members including the member for Huron—Bruce voting yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is there unanimous consent to proceed in such a fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Richard Harris: Mr. Speaker, Canadian Alliance members will be voting no to the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Quebecois will vote against this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP present will be voting no to the motion.

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, members of the Progressive Conservative Party will be voting no to the motion.

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

(*Division No. 104*)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)
Assad
Assadourian
Augustine
Bagnell
Baker
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélanger
Bellemare
Bennett
Bertrand
Bevilacqua
Binet
Blondin-Andrew
Bonin
Boudria
Bradshaw
Brown
Bulte
Byrne
Caccia
Calder
Cannis
Caplan
Carignan
Carroll
Castonguay
Catterall
Cauchon
Chamberlain
Charbonneau
Comuzzi
Cullen
Cuzner
DeVillers
Dion
Dromisky
Drouin
Duhamel
Duplain
Easter
Eyking
Farrah
Fry
Gagliano
Gallaway
Godfrey
Goodale
Graham
Gray (Windsor West)
Grose
Guarnieri
Harb
Harvard
Harvey
Hubbard
Ianno
Jackson
Jennings
Jordan
Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lastewka
LeBlanc
Lee
Leung
Lincoln
Longfield
Macklin
Mahoney
Malhi
Maloney
Marcil
Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews
McCallum
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan
McTeague
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)
Minna
Mitchell
Murphy
Myers
Nault
Neville
Normand
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly
Owen
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Patry
Peric
Peterson
Pettigrew
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri
Provenzano
Redman
Reed (Halton)
Regan
Richardson
Robillard
Saada
Savoy
Scherrer
Scott
Sgro
Shepherd
Speller
St. Denis
St-Jacques
Steckle
Szabo
Telegdi
Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tobin
Tonks
Torsney
Ur
Valeri
Vanclief
Volpe
Wappel
Whelan
Wood—136

NAYS

Members

Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bellehumeur
Bigras
Blaikie
Borotsik
Breitkreuz
Brien
Cadman
Chatters
Comartin
Crête
Desjarlais
Doyle
Dubé
Duceppe
Duncan
Elley
Epp
Forseth
Fournier
Gagnon (Québec)
Gallant
Gauthier
Girard-Bujold
Godin
Goldring
Gouk
Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)
Guimond
Harris
Hearn
Hinton
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Laframboise
Lalonde
Lebel
Lill
Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Marceau
Mark
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mayfield
McDonough
McNally
Ménard
Moore
Nystrom
Obhrai
Penson
Perron
Peschisolido
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Reynolds
Ritz
Sauvageau
Schmidt
Skelton
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Stoffer
Strahl
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)
Wasylycia-Leis
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver)
Yelich—73

PAIRED MEMBERS

Asselin
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bergeron
Cardin
Coderre
Collenette
Dalphond-Guiral
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Finlay
Gagnon (Champlain)
Guay
Jennings
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Lanctôt
Loubier
MacAulay
Manley
Paquette
Parrish
Pratt
Price
Proulx
Rocheleau
Rock
Roy
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I declare the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

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

LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on a question I asked originally on April 3 about softwood lumber. At the time I pointed out to the minister that everyone involved with the softwood lumber issue, even the United States industry, had acknowledged that Atlantic Canada should be exempt from countervail duties. The actual petition said:

> Petitioners do not allege the softwood lumber production in the Atlantic provinces benefits from countervailable subsidies. This portion of Canadian production should be treated the same as it was in 1991-92.

The minister was very vague in the answer. He has not given us an answer. We want the maritime accord reinstated.

We have repeatedly asked the minister to bring the industry together, the CEOs, consultants and all other parties involved, and week after week the parliamentary secretary and the minister stand and say they are not ready to bring them together.

● (1920)

I now understand that the minister has extended invitations to the industry to come together on Wednesday at the meeting of the deputy ministers from all the provinces, the CEOs and the consultants, just as we have been asking for.

We would like the minister or the parliamentary secretary to confirm both the meeting and what is on the agenda. Are we going to get the maritime accord reinstated?

Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all let us be clear that the minister and the government share the member's concern for wanting an extension or a new exemption for Atlantic Canada.

The minister is working very diligently toward that end. Of course that is part of a larger solution, which should be free trade for softwood lumber from coast to coast to coast.

I am afraid that my colleague will have to speak with the minister directly vis-à-vis the agenda for such a meeting. I can tell him that for some time now the minister has been holding open the idea of calling the stakeholders together but that there has not been a consensus among the stakeholders themselves that the time was right. If we are at that point this week—

Mr. Bill Casey: We are.

Mr. Pat O'Brien: If we are, then the minister will certainly be convening that meeting.

As my colleague knows, the minister has raised this issue with U.S. trade representative Zoellick and with secretary of commerce Evans in Quebec City and the Prime Minister has raised this personally with President Bush. We are looking for the kind of exemption for Atlantic Canada that existed in years gone by.

The reality is, as my colleague knows, that it is a decision for the American government to make. We very much hope that they will take that step and that the Atlantic provinces will be very happy with that.

As the Speaker knows very well with the riding he represents, this is a national problem which requires a national Canadian solution that is good for all Canadian producers from coast to coast to coast. We ask for a united Canadian position that we can take forward because the facts very clearly support the Canadian industry.

I want to thank my colleague for his question. I hope he will continue to lend his enthusiastic support to the united Canadian position.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question was for the minister responsible for the environment. We talked about infrastructure funding especially as it relates to the cleanup of St. John's harbour.

I know that when I finish tonight I will get a prepared response from the parliamentary secretary, but I will say that I am looking for answers to specific questions and I hope that the member in responding will answer my question and not give me the same diatribe that we got from the minister.

When we talk about funding for the cleanup of St. John's harbour we talk about the specific funds committed to by three parties: the municipalities, the provincial government and the federal government. This is something that has been discussed for years and has been promised every time there is talk about an election, as we saw the Minister of Industry promise when we had the election in November.

However, in fact, my colleague from St. John's East, who is sitting here with me, and I were supposed to be taken out of the political picture by two candidates who would, according to the Minister of Industry, help him deliver the funding for the cleanup of St. John's harbour.

The municipalities in the region and the provincial government have committed their share of the funding, one-third of the total amount each, the total amount being approximately $100 million. The federal government is supposed to have promised and committed the other one-third.

Every time the issue is raised the government says it gave its infrastructure funding to the province. That is not being truthful. The infrastructure funding given to the province was the regular program funding that all municipalities across the country have available to them.

Here we are talking about specific funding for a specific purpose. Everyone knew the intent when the original agreements were talked about. Let me ask the parliamentary secretary, when she responds, to tell us if the province has come asking for specific funding. If so, why has the government not delivered as the government originally promised to do?

● (1925)

Mrs. Karen Redman (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has been a significant groundswell of interest in environmental protection in municipalities right across Canada.

In the case of St. John's, the enhanced awareness of the need for sewage treatment and the high priority stated within the community can be attributed in large measure to the hard work and dedication of the St. John's Harbour ACAP, which is a volunteer group of citizens. Its work has been supported by the Department of the Environment at the federal level as well as the Newfoundland government.

The infrastructure Canada program for Newfoundland and for all provinces is intended to assist municipalities to deal with their priority needs, with a focus specifically on environmental needs. The priorities established in Newfoundland by all levels of government have been drinking water quality and rural communities.

The solutions to this problem are complex and require significant investment. The solutions to the problem cannot be reactive and will not be ad hoc. A long term approach must be found at a national level and must include all levels of government.

Environment Canada recently hosted a national forum on municipal wastewater effluent. This session was attended by various stakeholders including provinces, territories, municipalities and their associations, environmental non-government groups and first nations. The objective of this national forum on municipal wastewater effluent was to share examples of best practices, information and ideas being employed to address municipal wastewater management issues right across Canada.

The creation of the Prime Minister's task force on urban issues is also an important step in addressing this issue.

I am sensing that perhaps I am out of time. Let me conclude by saying that the Government of Canada and the task force will continue to work with the provinces and the municipalities to identify appropriate mechanisms through which we can address the needs of municipalities across the country.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at ten o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.27 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, May 28, 2001

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

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