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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, October 23, 2001

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 23, 2001

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1000)

[*English*]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 40 could be made an order for return, the return would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Question No. 40—**Mr. Charlie Penson:**

With regard to all government department and agency Internet web sites: (a) do they track visitors; (b) if so, what data do they compile on each visitor; (c) does each of these sites disclose that it is tracking and compiling personal information on visitors; and (d) what measures have been taken to ensure the privacy of visitors?

Return tabled.

•(1005)

Mr. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—BORDER SECURITY

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That, as part of a continental perimeter initiative to secure Canada's borders and protect the security of Canadians and our neighbours, and to protect our trading relationships, this House calls on the government to:

(a) provide both Immigration officers and Customs officers enhanced training and full peace officer status to allow them to detain and arrest suspected criminals or terrorists at the border;

(b) move Customs border officers out of the tax collection agency and into a law enforcement agency;

(c) detain all spontaneous refugee claimants appearing without proper documentation until their identities are confirmed and they have cleared proper health and security checks; and

(d) create a list of safe third countries, including the United States and member states of the European Union, from which Canada will no longer accept refugee claimants.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present the official opposition's motion on some of the steps necessary to create a continental security perimeter.

The Canadian Alliance supports the concept of a security perimeter. We have talked about it at length. It has also been proposed by others and by the U.S. ambassador to Canada, Mr. Paul Cellucci. Those of us who have proposed this have done so for several reasons.

First and foremost, we believe the perimeter concept is the best way to ensure the safety and security of Canadians.

Second, it would help ensure the safety and security of our friends and neighbours in the United States.

Third, it would help ensure that the vital flow of trade between Canada and the United States, which is some \$1.3 billion per day every day of the year, continues.

Fourth, by enhancing our ability to protect ourselves and our economic arrangements we enhance our own sovereignty. We become less subject to those who would abuse our openness and generosity and we increasingly become masters of our own destiny, truly *mâîtres chez nous*.

[*Translation*]

In recent weeks we have proposed that a federal-provincial summit be held to study the feasibility of this security perimeter. The Liberal government in its arrogance has, of course, reminded us that in its vision of Canada, which is out of touch with reality, the provinces have no place in decision making on this.

Yet, as far as public safety and security are concerned, Quebec and Ontario have their own police services. As far as immigration is concerned, Quebec and Alberta have a say. Rather than always perceiving provincial involvement as a threat, the Liberal government would be better off seeing it for what it is: an essential input from which everyone stands to benefit.

Supply

A North American security perimeter would mean harmonizing our borders and immigration policies with our neighbours, sharing common standards.

• (1010)

[English]

The perimeter involves harmonizing customs and immigration policies among Canada, the United States and perhaps Mexico to ensure that there are common and regular standards on our external frontier so that we do not have to slow down internal trade and we do not have to excessively infringe upon the rights of our own citizens domestically. Harmonizing does not mean giving up our controls. As a matter of fact, it would mean increasing control of our own territory and entering into an arrangement where we would be certain that our neighbours at the same time would be monitoring their borders with proper controls also.

This may involve certain things, for example, creating a common list of countries that we regard as safe countries. I will talk further about that in a moment. It may involve joint customs inspections at airports, both in North America and abroad. It may involve border stations where the United States and Canadian agents work more closely together. At a very minimum, any effective security perimeter will have to involve measures like the ones we propose in our motion.

Canada customs officers and immigration officers will have to be designated as full peace officers with the power to detain and arrest suspected criminals and terrorists. This will require that they have enhanced training and enhanced equipment.

Second, customs officers in particular have requested that they be removed from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. That agency is at root a tax collection agency. These customs officers should be placed in a designated law enforcement agency, perhaps an enhanced border control, that would fall under a law enforcement oriented department, such as the solicitor general.

Next we will need to have a firmer policy at the border so that surprise arrivals, who spontaneously claim refugee status at airports or at border crossings without proper documents such as passports or identity cards, should be detained, and not as the minister says "for a while" or "while certain checks are done" but until their identity is established and it can be determined that they do not present a health or security risk to Canadians.

Finally, there are a number of countries, including the United States and the member countries of the European Union, which are in compliance with article 33 of the Geneva convention on refugees. That means that these countries, like Canada, which are free and democratic and which are civilized and have an established history of protecting the human rights and interests of all people in their countries, are called safe countries according to that Geneva convention because they do not persecute, threaten or torture people for religious, political or other reasons. No persons in these countries deemed safe, such as Canada, could legitimately claim that they would be tortured or persecuted because of religious, political or other reasons.

People arriving from countries deemed as safe should not be accepted as refugee claimants. Persons arriving from these countries,

countries like Canada, Sweden and Holland, who try to claim refugee status saying that they would be tortured back in the country from which they came should be put on the next plane or bus and sent back to the safe country from which they came.

[Translation]

In short, the motion presented by the Canadian Alliance today particularly addresses providing our customs officers with enhanced training, ensuring that those who turn up at our airports without identity papers are detained until they are identified and we are sure that they do not represent a threat to our security, no longer accepting refugees from the United States or member states of the European Union, and if such people turn up at our borders claiming refugee status, deporting them immediately.

• (1015)

[English]

To most members of the general public, these would sound like basic and common sense proposals.

Our customs and immigration officers should have the tools and training they need to do their job. Canada should not accept refugees from first world safe nations or those who are trying to identify themselves as such.

I am sure in the debate today we will hear members of the government claim that these are radical policies, Draconian or un-Canadian. This is the inevitable Liberal reaction to any ideas which originate from the Canadian Alliance.

It was the German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer, who once said that all truth goes through three stages: first, it is ridiculed; then it is violently opposed; and then if it is truth, it is accepted as self-evident.

That has been the pattern of so many of the policies presented by Canadian Alliance members and members before us on this side over the years. When we talked about reducing and getting rid of deficit and debt, we were called extreme; it was violently opposed; and then it was accepted by the Liberals. So many of our policies followed this pattern.

I have no doubt that some speakers on the government side today will express a mixture of ridicule and violent opposition to our proposals. However, I have no doubt that in a few months, the Prime Minister will agree to a very similar list of the proposals that we are presenting today. He will do that in a press conference, probably with President Bush, likely claiming that these were obvious ideas which he had supported all along. Watch for that to happen. This has been the pattern of the federal Liberal government since the beginning of the response to the terrorist attacks of September 11.

As early as September 15, I and others spoke to the House about two great imperatives in the response to these terrorist attacks. I said that Canada would need, as our British and American allies already had, comprehensive anti-terrorism legislation. I said that Canada should not hesitate to fulfill our obligation under article 5 of the NATO treaty to provide military assistance to our friend and ally, the United States.

Supply

At first, the government response was that these steps were an unnecessary overreaction and that there was no need to adopt such extreme measures. However, barely five weeks later, the government has now tabled anti-terrorism legislation that has many of the very suggestions of the Canadian Alliance in a motion that the Canadian Alliance tabled and the government voted against on September 18. Thankfully, the government has finally committed to military support in the U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan; it was deemed not to be an overreaction.

I have no doubt that whatever the government talking points tell members to say today, and however the whip tells Liberal MPs to vote this evening, in a short period of time, in either the second round of anti-terrorism legislation or at a Canada-U.S. or Canada-U.S.-Mexico summit, we will see the government proudly introducing measures along the lines we are suggesting today.

I would ask the government members who will reply to the opposition supply day motion today to be very careful in what they say about our proposals and to remember the words that Prime Minister Trudeau wrote on his question period briefing book: "May my words today be soft and tender for I may have to eat them tomorrow."

The focus of the motion is on providing a safe and secure border for Canada.

The government has gone to extreme and far reaching attempts in proposing to reach into the lives of Canadians with criminal justice legislation. Bill C-36 will provide for new and unprecedented powers, like the right to make preventive arrests, the ability to shut down websites for content that it may deem to be hateful and the ability to permanently lock access to information on national security or diplomatic grounds without even offering the possibility of review to the information commissioner.

Some of these new powers may well be necessary, and the government will argue for that. We will listen, we will take part and we will support where we feel that is necessary. Some may, indeed, be overdue additions to the new law enforcement arsenal that is required. However, there are some matters in Bill C-36 which will raise valid concerns about civil liberties.

The one question that keeps coming back to my mind is: Why has the government been so hasty to introduce legislation which will infringe, perhaps justifiably, on the rights of Canadian citizens domestically, but it has done almost nothing to prevent the arrival of potential terrorists here from abroad? I do not understand this contradiction.

• (1020)

If Canada presented a solid frontier at the border and terrorists and criminals knew they had little chance of making it in, then there would be no need for some of the powers the government is bringing in under Bill C-36. We need wiretap powers because over 50 international terrorist groups are known to operate in Canada. With very few exceptions, almost every one of the suspected terrorists originated from another country. If these groups had been prevented from establishing themselves here in the first place, we would have no need to provide new sweeping wiretap powers.

Sergeant Philippe Lapierre of the RCMP's national security and intelligence section, the counterterrorism unit, spoke at the international conference on money laundering in Montreal last week. He pointed out that terrorist groups operating in Canada follow a common modus operandi. I am being careful to say that he was talking about terrorist groups and potential terrorists. That is who we are talking about, not all refugee claimants. We will be very upset if we get accused of that again today. We are talking about suspected terrorists.

This is what the distinguished member of the RCMP said:

Some people are sent here with a mission and some people come here on their own and are recruited. But once here, they all have the same MO (modus operandi).

He said that first they would claim refugee status, allowing the claimant to remain in Canada while their case worked its way through the system, which as we all know can take years. Then they would apply for benefits in Canada, welfare and health cards that provided an income stream while they got established. Next they would link with other criminals and terrorists to commit petty theft, economic fraud and other supposedly invisible crime. Then they would launder the money through legitimate businesses which then could be used to finance terrorist operations in Canada or abroad.

The pattern is common and the RCMP have seen it at work in different cities with different terrorist groups across Canada. Again I repeat it is not all refugee claimants. It is different terrorist groups across Canada. If we can break the cycle, we can do much to break the influence of terrorist groups in Canada. That is why I believe we can win this war if we fight it properly. The place we have to start is with tougher enforcement at the Canadian border.

In reference to Bill C-36, the Minister of Justice has said that its sweeping powers are necessary because we have to stop terrorists before they get on planes in Canada. She went on to say that when they got on planes intending to commit hijackings and killings, it was too late. We agree with that. The best way to ensure that terrorists do not get on our planes on our soil is not to allow them off the planes arriving in Canada in the first place.

Let me focus on one area of this debate which I believe will prove to be contentious. I have said in the House on several occasions that I believe people who arrive in Canada and spontaneously claim refugee status without proper identification or under suspicious circumstances, and I am not talking about all refugees, should be detained until their identities can be confirmed and until they have passed security clearance to ensure that they do not pose a danger to Canadians.

Supply

The minister of immigration, who is not known for using words which are soft and tender, said that this proposal of ours, which most Canadians would call common sense, was in fact “one of the dark moments in Canadian history”. She also said that it was nothing less than a proposal for penal colonies in Canada. We have never suggested such a thing and that is a departure from rational debate for her to even suggest that. Unfortunately, this reaction is only too typical of this minister who resorts to fearmongering and name calling in too many situations only to hide the weakness of her own logic and inaction.

When children are in schoolyards and their schoolmates call them names, they react with the chant: “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me”. Unfortunately, in politics name calling can hurt. The Canadian Alliance knows only too well that a common and underhanded strategy of the government is to name call when it is losing the debate or when its reason is lacking. We also know that name calling can hurt because unfortunately it is easier to report than the substantive argument that triggered the irrational insult.

Even though we know that names can hurt us, we also know that the sticks and stones of an exploding building or a falling skyscraper can do more than break bones. It can cause death and destruction. We will run the risk of being politically hurt, through this reported but irrational name calling, and press on to propose the things that we know will make our nation a stronger and more peaceful land than it is already today.

The minister assures us that Canada can and does detain any people that immigration officers deem to be a security risk. Therefore, there is no need to detain the thousands per year who show up here without proper documentation. In saying this she contradicts her own department's admonitions about the very limited conditions under which they can resort to detention.

The government's detention policies state clearly that detention is considered only as a last resort and that even people with criminal records are not necessarily to be detained unless there is substantial reason to believe that they will reoffend while in Canada. I am sorry but when it comes to predicting criminal behaviour or who might reoffend the government has a hopeless record. It needs to have laws which detain those who might be a menace to our security.

Imagine a 25 year old man arriving in Canada from a country in the Middle East or North Africa where there are active terrorist groups, which have been named by CSIS, the United States and British governments and which are not declared to be safe under article 33 of the Geneva convention. The person says he wants to claim refugee status, that he does not have a passport because he used false documents to get to Canada and that he destroyed the documents on the plane. If there is no evidence to tie such a person to specific criminal activities, it would be hard under the current refugee detention guidelines for this person to be detained. It is unacceptable. We must have the power in place to detain such individuals.

Between now and the time in which legislation will finally come in, how many people with terrorist or criminal intent will walk away from our border points when they could have and should have been detained?

I respect the Liberal MPs who in 1998 recommended in a committee the very same things we talked about today. I ask them to consider the integrity of their loyalties. I understand the politics of following what a cabinet minister wants, but this is about more than the aspirations of a future cabinet minister or the fear of the whip. It is about doing the right thing. It is about something that could be a matter of life and death. It is about the only too real possibilities of what shameless and evil terrorists might do.

In 1998, when Liberals recommended the very things that we are asking for today, there was not much North American evidence of just how evil terrorists could be. Today, in a devastated crater in New York City, there are at least 6,000 reasons to motivate us all. I encourage all MPs to vote tonight on the side of what is right and just; on the side of peace, protection and freedom.

• (1025)

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, since September 11 two changes have occurred that really have put an increased demand on our national leadership and on the political and international business exchange around the world.

We have responded. Our first declaration was to respond to the terrorism and the second is to respond to the economic recession. We have to deal with both. It seems as if the Liberals have left us completely unprepared for both of them. The Liberals cannot manage at all.

Would the leader of the Canadian Alliance respond to the deeper ideological reasons as to why Canada now is in a situation where we are really vulnerable? Who has been minding the store? The Liberals cannot blame the Conservatives any more, because the Liberals have been in power since 1993. It is not just an administrative foul-up, a miscommunication or the fact that someone is stupid. There is a deeper issue, an ideological attitude, an outlook that must be responded to, as to why Canada is now left vulnerable, both on our security side and our economic side.

• (1030)

Mr. Stockwell Day: Mr. Speaker, there is a deeper root to this problem. It is, I believe, the federal Liberal notion that all people are basically good and that there are no mean and nasty people out there. The Liberals believe that in Canada we have to somehow reinforce this notion by making sure, for instance, that we do not have customs officers who would have to perhaps wear sidearms, that we do not put air marshals on airplanes, and that we do not make an assumption that maybe somebody who is arriving here without documentation could be a nasty or evil person. That shatters the Liberal philosophical view of what the world should look like.

In fact, there are evil people in the world. We are now hearing that there are actually people in Canada who are part of terrorist organizations that do not mind the thought of slaughtering innocent people.

Supply

The war on terrorism is not like a game of baseball. When individuals who are possibly on the run arrive in Canada without documentation they should not be accorded a tie when it comes to making a decision about them. The umpire should decide, when looking at the one who is on the run, that if the matter is unsure the tie goes and the umpire rules on the side of safety and security of our citizens, on the side of protection, not on the side of assuming that no person would want to do an illegal or an evil act. Illegal and evil acts are part of the mindset of some people. We must protect ourselves from that.

Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say I agree with the Leader of the Opposition insofar as I do believe that we on this side of the House do look at people in general as being good people.

However we are not naive and we have put in place these kinds of measures with respect to security in Canada, not only with customs and immigration but also with respect to CSIS and the RCMP.

For example, I just came from the justice committee of which I am a member. We listened to Commissioner Zaccardelli and Mr. Elcock talk about the kinds of measures being taken in this all important area. It is now a different world as a result of what took place on September 11. As a result we need to take extraordinary measures. That is exactly part of what Bill C-36 says.

It is important that we as a government, in a balanced and fair approach, with a measured response and with the kinds of responses necessary in keeping with the charter of rights and freedoms, maintain the kind of system that has, I believe, Canadian values at the core.

What I want to ask the Leader of the Opposition, however, is this: Does he think there is anything to be gained by fearmongering as he and his party are doing? Does he think there is anything to be gained by pitting people against people, group against group, province against province, as he often does? I would be interested in hearing his response, because what he always does, it seems to me, is try to stir up fear when really what we should be doing is taking a calming approach and making sure that we approach this problem with dignity and with the kind of steady response that I believe the government has given. I would be interested in his response.

Mr. Stockwell Day: This is as predicted, Mr. Speaker. I said we would get this pretence of debate, by a form of name calling, that we are trying to stir up something.

What the member has just suggested is that the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain are involved in fearmongering because they take a very common sense approach of detaining somebody who, while he was flying somewhere, destroyed his documents. This is someone who destroys his identity and then says "I am an honest person. Take me at face value". It is not a matter of fearmongering when we say "Hey, pal, we are going to detain you until it can be determined that you are not a security risk".

This is not fearmongering. This is not stirring up fear at all. It is common sense and it is saying to our Canadian citizens that we respect them as much as the governments of the United States, Australia, New Zealand and England respect their citizens.

• (1035)

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in the last few weeks the minister has been telling us how we detain people who could be any type of risk to or problem for our society. Of course I have been taking the minister at face value on this.

Last Thursday, with the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, I visited the immigration facilities at the Vancouver International Airport. To my shock and horror I discovered that never, ever, is a person put back on an airplane and sent back to his or her destination when he or she arrives and claims refugee status with no documents. Nobody is ever detained unless it is so obvious that there is an international warrant for their arrest. Virtually everybody is released into society with no medical check and without fingerprints being checked, because that takes 10 months and then they are only checked in Canada any way.

I discovered that the minister has obviously never been on a tour because she does not know what is actually happening at the border.

I would ask the Leader of the Opposition whether he is aware that this is happening at the borders, that virtually every single person who enters and claims refugee status is immediately released. Yet when we had boatloads of Chinese claimants arrive here and detained them and processed them in detention, more than 90% were rejected. Has the Leader of the Opposition been aware of what is actually happening at our borders?

Mr. Stockwell Day: Mr. Speaker, I am aware of what has been happening at the borders. I am also aware of the good work done by the member who has just raised the issue and other members who have been aware of this problem for years. Yet when we bring it forward we are consistently charged with motives and with things other than our own genuine concern for the safety and security of our citizens.

I can say in all sincerity that I was shocked when the other day the minister fired on a policy that simply says if people have arrived here having torn up their documents, having flushed them down the toilet on the plane and hidden their identity, we would do as other safe countries are doing and detain them. We would detain them not just until we get their fingerprints, as the minister will try to say, not just for a little while, but until it is established that they are not a security risk. That is all we would do: detain them. What we get thrown back at us is that we want to establish penal colonies. If we were to put this policy in place, our unfortunate reputation of being a magnet for people who want to come here under questionable circumstances would be set back and people would not be getting on the planes.

As a matter of fact, there is a tragic irony when Liberals accuse us of wanting to do things like establish penal colonies. Does the minister mean the same kind of penal colonies that the Liberal government established in World War II to intern Japanese people in this country? Is that the kind of penal colony she is talking about, the kind the Liberals put in place? Or, in regard to refusing to allow certain people to come in, is she talking about the Liberal government policies that during the second world war turned away a boatload of Jewish people who had all their documents in order? Is that what she is talking about? If she wants to get into certain types of historical remembrances, to jar her sensitivities we can do that.

Supply

What we are asking for is common sense and common decency for the common people of our country. That is all we are asking for.

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, just a couple of weekends ago I was at one of our border checkpoints, one just south of Montreal. There I asked a point blank question of the people who deal with border security. They said they did not have enough sniffer dogs for eight locations on the Quebec border. They have one sniffer dog for eight locations. Also, they wanted ion scanners. When I visited just this last weekend they also told me they need vehicle lifts. They need to be able to lift up the vehicles so they can check underneath them and they need closed areas where they can take a vehicle off to the side to examine it.

I would invite the Leader of the Opposition to comment with regard to sniffer dogs, ion scanners, vehicle lifts and closed areas at our border points, things that the Liberal government and the minister across the way are not addressing.

Mr. Stockwell Day: Mr. Speaker, we have indicated to the minister that we will support her requests for increased resources because in her realm of responsibilities she will need increased personnel for a while. Until we turn around this reputation we have, she will need an increase in personnel and they are going to need the increased resources of highly technological equipment to equip them for the task.

Again, this is for a deterrent purpose. Once the word gets out that Canada is stepping up to the plate like the United States, Australia, New Zealand and England, like any common sense nation, we will see a depletion in the amount of people coming here under questionable circumstances.

• (1040)

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Waterloo—Wellington.

Let me begin by getting right to the point. The opposition motion is, I believe, a simplistic reaction to a very complex set of issues and concerns. It looks for a quick fix where a range of efforts and instruments are both required and in fact already at work. The motion is uninformed, ill-considered and, in my view, impractical. Therefore, in short, it should be rejected by the House.

First let me be clear about the facts. The current Immigration Act already contains some of the toughest provisions to deny admission or deport terrorists and they are used frequently. Bill C-11, the new immigration and refugee protection act, would make a series of improvements that would allow us to intensify our fight against those who would threaten Canada's security. It clearly spells out a range for grounds for inadmissibility in a comprehensive code that would replace the current act's 50 different grounds scattered in 4 different lists. The new bill, called Bill C-11, contains comprehensive measures that would further strengthen national security, which is of course a priority not only for the government but for my department.

The new immigration and refugee protection act would add new grounds of inadmissibility. It would strengthen the authority to arrest criminals and individuals who present a threat to security. It would eliminate appeal rights in these cases and streamline the removal process for persons who are security threats.

Bill C-11 would provide our immigration officers with a set of up to date tools, the tools they need to bar entry to those who pose a threat to national security or engage in acts of terrorism or are part of a terrorist organization. Bill C-11 would bar entry to those who have committed human rights violations such as war crimes or crimes against humanity. It would also bar entry to those who have been convicted for serious criminality in or outside Canada.

Canadians have told us what they want in immigration and refugee legislation. Let me say that we have listened and we have acted. The training on these new provisions and their subsequent application is already taking place. It is underway, as we anticipate the bill will be passed, hopefully soon, in the Senate.

I want to be clear about Canada's relationship to immigration. Immigration is an important face of Canada's future, just as it has been in the past. Immigrants will help us to sustain our standard of living and replenish our labour market as the baby boomers begin to retire.

Let us consider for a moment some of the demographics. In just 10 years immigration will be the only source of labour market growth. In just 20 years Canada's only source of population growth will be from immigration. Of this there is no doubt. Canada needs immigrants for our future growth and prosperity if we are to compete in a global economy and continue to grow and prosper. Yes, have no doubt about this, but we do and will crack down on criminals and security threats. We will do everything in our power to fight and defeat the scourge of terrorism, but we cannot and we will not turn Canada into a fortress. Our economy, our society, and our way of life are too important to us to sacrifice them in this way.

Part of my mandate as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the RCMP, CSIS, the customs agency, the Department of Justice and the solicitor general, is to help maintain the safety of Canadian society. Canadians are of course naturally disturbed and worried and feeling insecure and fearful because of last month's activities. They should know, and I think do know, that their government has acted and was right to have taken the action it has. They were concerned that criminals might be slipping into the country. They were concerned that the safety and security of Canada's borders might be compromised. That is why I announced my department's recent four-pronged strategy as part of the government's anti-terrorism plan.

• (1045)

My department's share of the emergency fund would amount to almost \$50 million. That is a considerable sum for my department. It would strengthen the department's ability to move quickly on such key measures as the new maple leaf card, a permanent resident card for new immigrants that will be fraud resistant, tamper resistant and secure. The first step has already been initiated in intensified security screening of all refugee claimants, enhanced detention and increased deportation activity.

My department and its partners are working together to protect Canada's borders. We are working with the United States to protect our common border to ensure security and the important flow of trade between our two countries.

Canada is only one among the countries which find themselves facing the new and emerging terrorist threat to freedom and justice. As clearly illustrated by the terrible attacks on the United States last month, our terrorist opponents are highly motivated, highly skilled, funded networks of fanatics with access to intelligence and technology. Its members can change identity and location to elude authorities. They often use expertly forged documents.

We must be aware when we act emotionally or out of fear that above all we must guard against turning our fears against our own best interests. It is in our interest to continue to welcome immigrants, those who have helped build this country and who will be needed in the future to help us continue to grow and prosper. It is in our interest to welcome genuine refugees. Canada is proud of its humanitarian tradition. We despair about some of the dark moments of our history and do not want to make those mistakes again.

While no country is immune to the dangers, perhaps no two countries work more closely on the common goal of ensuring the safety of their citizens than Canada and the United States. The Government of Canada reacted and responded immediately to the horrendous acts of September 11. Immigration officers have increased their vigilance and tightened border controls. Our officers have been on high alert and are conducting intensified security screening of all arrivals on both sides of the border.

We work together more closely than any two countries in the world. That is why we will not unilaterally declare the United States to be, in the vernacular terminology of the Geneva convention, a safe third country. That has special meaning.

The opposition motion assumes we would do so without the consent of our American partners. It assumes we would begin sending back to the U.S. large numbers of refugee claimants who come to us through the United States. That is simplistic. Such arrangements rely on negotiated bilateral treaties. We are open to such discussions as we are open to discussions about a range of instruments and procedures to help make our system more compatible and efficient.

Why is my esteemed colleague determined to cast a pall over the country's good reputation? I am here today to assure him and all Canadians that there is every reason to speak confidently about Canada's role in the battle against terrorism. Canada is a world leader in detection and deportation. If we take the example of perpetrators of modern day war crimes and crimes against humanity, Canada has long voiced its strategy in this regard. My colleagues from around the world come to Canada to ask for our advice and look at what we do and how we do it. Canadians should be proud.

I will put the challenge in context. Over 110 million people enter Canada each year. Despite these numbers our enforcement officers have produced tremendous results. I am proud of the effort of the people who have been working in my department on this important initiative.

Supply

Our enforcement officers reported 65,000 people, 7,300 of whom were serious criminals, in the year 2000 alone. We have increased resources for overseas interdiction. We have one of the best immigration control officers networks anywhere in the world. It is a model. Our officers are placed at airports around the world and they train airline staff. They are doing an outstanding job.

• (1050)

We will continue to make every effort to stop people from coming to Canada who do not belong, who have murder in their hearts or terrorism on their minds or have committed serious crimes. We will do everything we can to protect Canadian interests. We will continue these efforts but we will not accept simplistic, quick fix proposals like the one proposed by the opposition today.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we just heard how well the system works so I will cite the example of the case of Nabil Al-Marabh.

Mr. Al-Marabh had been ordered deported. He was facing criminal charges in the United States. He was arrested trying to enter the United States carrying forged Canadian passports and, unbelievably, was detained for all of two weeks by the Immigration and Refugee Board of our country. It now turns out he may have been one of the organizers and masterminds of the September 11 atrocity.

My question is simple and I am not talking about immigration policy. Would the new legislation and the minister have the ability to detain suspicious refugee claimants who arrive here without documents or with questionable documents until they are cleared and proven not to be security risks? Simplistic, yes, it is very simplistic. Canadians want to know they will be safe and secure.

Hon. Elinor Caplan: Mr. Speaker, existing immigration law gives authority to immigration officers to detain individuals if they are suspicious, if they do not know who the individual is, if they are concerned they will not show up for hearings, or if they have any evidence whatsoever to suggest the person poses a threat to national security. That is also contained in the new legislation. It would go a step further by stating clearly that if someone is undocumented and uncooperative it is grounds for detention.

We detain whenever we have concern and when we have evidence to sustain the detention. In Canada we must have evidence to be able to detain someone and take away their liberties. That is one of the important features of the Immigration Act. It gives my officers the authority to do that and they do it.

I would caution the Leader of the Opposition not to act as judge and jury on individual cases and not to do or say anything that might prejudice the outcome of an important investigation or trial. We want justice to be served by bringing people who are guilty to justice.

Supply

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, the minister has suggested the opposition motion was an overreaction, an inappropriate reaction and a quick fix to a complex problem. She said the government does not take simplistic approaches to these questions.

If the government does not resort to the quick fix approach, why did it jump to buy an illegal medication for the anthrax problem when there was a legal medication available? The government jumped to purchase an illegal product that had not been tested or approved. It seems to me that is a quick fix.

The member of parliament for North Vancouver said that when immigrants with no papers, wrong papers or whatever come into Canada through an airport they are released into society. Could the minister either confirm or deny that? Is everybody released into society no matter what?

• (1055)

Hon. Elinor Caplan: Mr. Speaker, the question of the member opposite is a good one. A wrong impression is being created. At every border point there are immigration officers checking the people who arrive, whether they are immigrants, refugee claimants, visitors or students.

As I said, 110 million people come to Canada each year and they are checked by our immigration officers and customs officials. If our customs officers have a concern that someone poses a threat, if they do not know who they are or if they believe they will not show up for any kind of hearing, they have the authority to detain and they do detain. To suggest that is not happening is false and it is fearmongering.

Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an important debate. It is well worth the consideration of the House in terms of what we as a government have done in the last while in terms of Bill C-11 and other measures.

For many years the countries of North America have discussed and worked together on initiatives born of a common desire to make our continent more prosperous and competitive on a global scale. Sadly the current initiative to fortify our respective borders is born of terror and bloodshed.

It is Canada's hope that all nations of the continent will do what they can individually to respond to the needs of the collective. Bill C-11, it goes without saying, is a major move forward for Canada in upholding the enforcement of our borders. It is a good bill and it is worthy of support.

Today in the House we are considering a motion that requests that the government work more diligently to secure our borders. The government has responded to that demand by bringing forward Bill C-11 and making it an utmost priority, and rightfully so.

The motion before us requests increased powers of detention for customs and immigration officials. I find it passing strange that a short five months ago the Canadian Alliance immigration critic tabled a motion in the House to amend Bill C-11 at report stage. Motion No. 5 would have watered down the definition of security threat to determine who is admissible to Canada. The motion was supported by all members of the Alliance.

I find it strange that one thing was said then and quite another is said now. Our definition of Bill C-11 includes activities outside Canada and indirect threats. The Canadian Alliance motion included only direct and active threats. The Alliance went further. It tabled a motion at committee stage to restore certain appeal rights through the immigration appeal division for serious criminals and threats to Canadian security. Bill C-11 has removed these to allow for quicker removals from Canada.

I am not sure what that is called. The word flip-flop comes to mind. The ability to detain and arrest at the border suspected terrorists or individuals who do not provide proper paperwork for identification is already in place. Bill C-11 works to increase the capabilities of our frontline officers by giving them early access to security screening processes and enhanced exclusionary mechanisms to remove undesirables from the process. The people who handle refugee cases now have more tools with which to work.

The Canadian Immigration Act currently allows customs and immigration officers and officials to detain anyone they determine to be a security risk to Canadians. Bill C-11 provides a means to strengthen the ability of officials to bar entry to Canada of potential terrorists whether they commit terrorist acts in Canada or in other countries.

On October 12 the minister of immigration announced a five part security strategy as part of Canada's anti-terrorism plan. As part of that plan the government is strengthening immigration measures in light of the terrorist attacks that took place on September 11. The minister has announced that we are increasing detention capability and hiring up to 100 new staff to enforce upgraded security at ports of entry. As a further sign that the government is committed to this initiative, and rightfully so, cabinet approved funding of \$4 million to cover these needs in the coming months.

The issue of detention has been a delicate one indeed. The government is attempting through Bill C-11 to find the proper and acceptable balance between protecting the citizens of Canada and maintaining an even-handed approach with those legitimately attempting to gain entry into Canada.

Customs and immigration officers are fully trained to perform their duties effectively. They are aware of their duty to uphold the values of fairness, openness and protection that Canadians across this great country of ours hold dear.

Of course of the 100 million people who come to Canada each year not all are seeking to get in illegally by way of refugee status. However it must be noted that in the 2000-01 timetable for which data is available over 8,700 individuals were detained for a total of 136,000 days.

•(1100)

This is a tremendous success for the officials patrolling our borders. On any given average day the number of individuals in detention under the auspices of the Immigration Act ranges from 400 to 800 people. That is a significant number when looked at over the long term. I am saying to the House and the Canadian people that the system in place works efficiently and effectively in most of the cases most of the time.

Immigration officials do not work alone. Canada has nurtured working relationships with CSIS, the RCMP and foreign immigration and law enforcement agencies such as those in the United States, Great Britain and the European Union to prevent criminals and people who are considered to be a security risk from entering Canada. We have worked closely with our partners not only within Canada but internationally as well. These networks of information are crucial to maintaining our level of security and safety.

The United Nations security council recently passed a binding resolution regarding elimination of terrorist financing. Two paragraphs contained therein demanded that the United States tighten its refugee regulations. Canada will continue to welcome refugees and will adhere to the resolution passed by the United Nations. Canada has commenced work in this regard with Bill C-11.

We have implemented a screening process for all refugees that is stringent yet fair. We have made it clear to all who appear at our country's doorstep that no individual involved in terrorist acts will be welcomed here. Furthermore, they will be ineligible to make a refugee claim in Canada.

As was mentioned on an earlier occasion, the Immigration Act currently allows for interdictions abroad. Canadian officials overseas work closely with the transportation industry to examine and evaluate the paperwork of immigrants and visitors coming to our country. Embarkation is denied when necessary and when required.

Over the past two years Citizenship and Immigration Canada increased the number of control officers from 31 to 48. This network of immigration control officers abroad in the last year alone intercepted 6,000 improperly documented travellers that were attempting to fly into Canada. Over the last six years approximately 33,000 people attempted to enter Canada fraudulently and they were detected and stopped before they departed their country of origin. The interdiction program is successful and the department can be very proud it.

These are trying times not only in Canada but around the world in terms of what took place on September 11. However we had foresight with respect to Bill C-11. The minister in her wisdom brought forward a very good bill which we as a government supported. It has proceeded through committee and ultimately through the House. It was fortuitous for us to do that in keeping with the values of Canada, in keeping with what we needed to do by way of security measures at our borders and with respect to people coming into Canada.

We will not allow people who are terrorists, who harbour terrorists or who want to wreak havoc on Canadian soil to get in. However, what we will do is be fair and evenhanded to genuine people of

Supply

refugee status who want to come to Canada. We will support them in the way that Canada has always supported them.

At the end of the day we will keep building a country of significance where values are built on common sharing, caring, compassion and tolerance. That is our Canada, the Canada that seeks to enhance the very fundamental core of those Canadian values that are so dear to people across this great country of ours.

At the same time we will ensure that we are safe and secure not only in our communities and neighbourhoods but in the country as a whole. That is what Canadians and parliamentarians want. We as a government will ensure that while on the one hand we will be fair and evenhanded and ensure that the charter is respected as it should be, on the other hand we will also bring forward the security measures required.

Bill C-11 does that. It does it in a way that is in keeping with those great Canadian values. I am very proud that the government brought that legislation forward with the foresight that was required.

•(1105)

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, earlier the minister of immigration again used some very uncomplimentary terms. She accused the official opposition of fearmongering.

Members will recall that a few years ago 2,200 blank visa forms were stolen and 788 computer files were altered in our immigration computer system called CAIPS in our Hong Kong foreign mission. Foreign missions are the first line of defence for us. Those altered files were naturally the files of organized criminals attempting to abuse our immigration system and enter Canada. Those people may have been organized criminals or terrorists. We do not know.

Would the parliamentary secretary tell the House what his government has done to curtail corruption in our foreign missions which are our first line of defence?

It has been shown that some locally hired employees in those missions are engaged in corruption and fraud. Some time ago I lodged a complaint with the ministry and the RCMP. A special squad of the RCMP went to New Delhi and Islamabad, and they fired four locally hired employees in Delhi and three in Islamabad based on information I had provided. However I have never heard anything from the government side of the House on what the government has done to curtail corruption in our foreign embassies.

Could the parliamentary secretary to the minister comment on this issue and highlight anything in the bill about which he boasted so enthusiastically?

Mr. Lynn Myers: Mr. Speaker, what I can say in response to the member opposite is that the government will take whatever measures are necessary to correct situations as they exist. When there are problems abroad or within Canada we move very quickly to ensure that the proper authorities are notified and that the corrective measures are taken.

Supply

Are we perfect all the time? No, we are not. We are like any other country in this regard. If the Americans had been perfect in their screening of terrorists the 19 people who landed in Florida and did the kinds of things that they ultimately did would have been caught very quickly. That did not happen.

The reason it did not happen is that up to this point we have been taking the kind of security measures that have been required based on world effort. What we need to do now is make sure that we have more security based on the kinds of things that have happened. The Americans have learned that lesson the hard way. We in Canada are doing the kinds of things that are required, not only with immigration and with customs but also with CSIS and the RCMP.

The world has changed and Canada's priorities have also shifted as a result. I do not understand why the opposition is always pointing out the negative, always chipping away at the people who do great work on behalf of Canada.

Why does the opposition not help us and work with us on this instead of fearmongering all the time and always putting up the most outrageous and negative cases? Why does it not say that it will help us, that it will work with us, and that it will stand up for Canada?

● (1110)

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the member for Waterloo—Wellington. Unfortunately the government seems to know how to do the talking but there are very little results from the way it walks the talk.

The minister indicated this morning that the current legislation allows for removal and deportation. Unfortunately that is rarely exercised. Over the last months we have heard the immigration minister repeatedly tell Canadians how important it was that Bill C-11 be passed.

I was glad to hear that the member for Waterloo—Wellington gave us some numbers in terms of people entering Canada who were detained due to fraud or improper identification. In fact in the year 2000—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hesitate to interrupt any member at any time, but there is only a five minute period for question or comment. I ask the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River to put his question now.

Mr. Inky Mark: I will, Mr. Speaker. In the year 2000 the minister personally okayed 3,989 otherwise inadmissible individuals. This certainly—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Given the importance of this question to both sides of the House and to give as many members as possible the opportunity to participate, I ask the hon. member to put his question.

Mr. Inky Mark: Mr. Speaker, do the 3,989 persons okayed by the minister pose a security risk to Canada?

Mr. Lynn Myers: Mr. Speaker, the member who is asking the question said the following five months ago:

Witnesses stated that they felt the language of the bill placed undue emphasis on enforcement and criminality, as opposed to language that highlights the waffly nature of Canada's immigration and refugee program.

Then his comment was "That is very true". That is the extent of that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, exactly six weeks ago today, the world was rocked by a quake whose magnitude exceeded anything on the Richter scale. With an epicenter located in the New York-Washington area, the terrorist acts of September 11 have led to especially great concerns in Canada, since they took place in our backyard, so to speak.

The motion brought forward by the official opposition today provides us with a good opportunity to debate the need to reconcile democratic values and security in what can only be described as horrible and cruel circumstances.

This is the fifth opposition day since the reopening of parliament. All but one of these days dealt with votable motions, and all dealt directly with the repercussions of September 11.

I would now like to read verbatim the motion by the leader of the official opposition, and member for Okanagan—Coquihalla. The motion reads as follows:

That, as part of a continental perimeter initiative to secure Canada's borders and protect the security of Canadians and our neighbours, and to protect our trading relationships, this House calls on the government to:

- (a) provide both Immigration officers and Customs officers enhanced training and full peace officer status to allow them to detain and arrest suspected criminals or terrorists at the border;
- (b) move Customs border officers out of the tax collection agency and into a law enforcement agency;
- (c) detain all spontaneous refugee claimants appearing without proper documentation until their identities are confirmed and they have cleared proper health and security checks; and
- (d) create a list of safe third countries, including the United States and member states of the European Union, from which Canada will no longer accept refugee claimants.

Everyone recognizes that because it is generating real anxiety in all spheres of society, the current international situation is ripe for extreme reactions. These are never productive and rarely do anxiety, anger and panic help us think straight.

As parliaments reflect on effective and realistic ways to fight terrorism, it is important not to lose sight of the values that underpin our democratic society. I will therefore be studying the opposition motion with the values of justice, freedom and compassion in mind, taking into consideration the international conventions that Canada has ratified, including the UN convention relating to the status of refugees, the torture convention and the convention on the rights of the child.

I would like first off, if I may, to comment on the preamble to the motion. It refers to the continental perimeter initiative. The Bloc Québécois has expressed its opinion of this perimeter. We believe such a perimeter should exist only in conjunction with the three primary signatories to NAFTA, namely, Mexico, the United States and Canada.

We understand that the aim of this motion is primarily Canadian and American security and the assurance of continued trade relations. However, I saw no reference in the motion to this last objective. We must therefore face the fact that the motion is off the mark. While the events of September 11 raised the issue of security, can we allow the security measures to apply just to refugees, as if they were the guilty parties?

● (1115)

Let us move on to paragraph (a). It reads, and I quote:
provide both Immigration officers and Customs officers enhanced training—

The responsibilities of these officials are important and we support their being given training that will enable them to do their day to day work properly, upholding the law and treating individuals with respect. This is a worthy objective.

In April 2000, the Auditor General of Canada made the following comments “Training is a key element in providing customs staff with the knowledge and skills to speed the entry of travellers and manage risk”.

He asked customs to “ensure that the training needs of all employees are assessed on a regular basis, training plans are developed annually and appropriate training is provided in a timely manner”.

He considered it important as well that “training for term and student employees take into account their skills, experience and the job requirements”.

And he recommended that “training records be complete and be used to assess whether employees have received the training they need”.

Clearly, we will support the first part of paragraph (a).

However, we have some concerns about the second part of the motion which reads, and I quote:

(a) provide both Immigration officers and Customs officers...full peace officer status to allow them to detain and arrest suspected criminals or terrorists at the border;

What is the current status of these two groups of public servants? Subsection 110(1) of the Immigration Act reads as follows:

110.(1) An immigration officer has the authority and powers of a peace officer to enforce any provision of this Act, the regulations or any warrant, order or direction made under this Act or the regulations respecting the arrest, detention or removal from Canada of any person.

Therefore, how do we define full peace officer status?

As for the Customs Act, it provides the following in subsection 98 (1):

98.(1) An officer may search if the officer suspects on reasonable grounds that the person has secreted on or about his person anything in respect of which this Act has been or might be contravened, anything that would afford evidence with respect to a contravention of this Act or any goods the importation or exportation of which is prohibited, controlled or regulated under this or any other Act of Parliament.

(a) any person who has arrived in Canada within a reasonable after his arrival in Canada,

(b) any person who is about to leave Canada, at any time prior to his departure, or

(c) any person who has had access to an area designated for use by persons about to leave Canada and who leaves the area but does not leave Canada, within a reasonable time after he leaves the area,

Supply

The Customs Act also provides that the customs officer has the right to seize goods. Moreover, some agents are designated as having peace officer status for the enforcement of certain provisions of the criminal code, such as those on arrest without warrant.

Section 2 of the criminal code defines a peace officer as follows:

“peace officer”

(d) an officer or a person having the powers of a customs or excise officer when performing any duty in the administration of the Customs Act or the Excise Act,

As we can see, immigration agents are deemed to be peace officers when they enforce the provisions of the Immigration Act, while customs officers are also deemed to be peace officers and they have all the necessary powers to enforce those of the act for which they are responsible.

● (1120)

Since we have just finished debating a bill to amend the Customs Act, Bill S-23, which was debated at report stage in the House of Commons last Friday, it is hard to see why the Canadian Alliance did not take the opportunity then to present the amendments to the bill that it thought were necessary.

As we can see, both immigration and customs officers have the necessary powers to enforce the provisions of the legislation, particularly since the Immigration Act also provides that, in certain specific circumstances, an immigration officer may detain an individual.

The difficulty probably lies in the word “full” peace officer status. Perhaps this will become clear later in the debate.

Not only am I uncertain what “full” peace officer status means, but I am hardly reassured when I read that they should be allowed “to detain and arrest suspected criminals or terrorists at the border”.

What is a suspicion? *Le Petit Robert* defines it as conjecture by which blameful intentions are assigned to someone. It seems to me that the present situation may cause us to be more suspicious and that the very broad wording in the motion is hard to square with the 1986 Landry decision, which defined the notion of “reasonable grounds”. Furthermore, the 1999 edition of the criminal code provides, and I quote:

In order to arrest a person without a warrant, a police officer must have reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the person has committed an indictable offence. This subjective belief on the part of the police officer must also be justifiable from an objective point of view.

We can see how far apart the criminal code, the existing legislation and the Alliance motion are.

Paragraph (b) of the Alliance motion proposes that customs officers be moved into a law enforcement agency. This in itself is not without interest, although it raises a number of questions concerning conditions of work, the administration of customs duties, and budgets.

At this point, it is probably interesting to quote what the national president of the Customs and Excise Union said in his recent appearance before the Standing Committee on Finance regarding Bill S-23:

I believe this was proposed under the Conservative government, some six or seven years ago [—]

Supply

It must be a good eight years.

—perhaps longer—I forget now. At that time the Customs Excise Union fully supported that concept for customs officers. We do see customs officers as being a group of individuals that is becoming more and more oriented towards enforcement. In fact, the approval of Bill C-18 in 1998 has made that even clearer—

As for Denis Desautels, who was auditor general at the time, he stated that the role of customs offices “has evolved ...to one of facilitating the entry of travellers and goods, while protecting Canadian society”.

Now we come to what strike me as the two most worrisome paragraphs, (c) and (d). Their objectives seem very clear to me.

The first stipulates that any refugee claimant without proper documentation is potentially dangerous. The second is equally disconcerting, because it radically limits the reception of refugees, even if this represents a break with the Canadian tradition of compassion and openness.

Paragraph (c) reads as follows:

(c) detain all spontaneous refugee claimants appearing without proper documentation until their identities are confirmed and they have cleared proper health and security checks.

We are opposed to automatic detention of refugee claimants without papers.

•(1125)

The reason is a simple one. What reasonable person can believe that a refugee without documents represents such a risk to Canada's security that he or she must be imprisoned? I do not think so. Nor am I the only one, because it would make no sense for anyone who had any ill intentions toward Canada or any other state not to have official identity documents, or at least ones that looked authentic. Why not three or four different passports? We have already seen that. Why would anyone run the risk of an investigation? If I wanted to do some evil deed, I would come across as innocent as possible. That is elementary.

We do not think that this measure will in any way improve Canada's security coefficient. What it will succeed in doing is to treat the innocent unfairly, and we will thus be failing our duties under the charter of rights and freedoms, which is a source of Canadian pride.

We feel that our present procedure meets Canada's needs and requires no changes.

Right now an immigration officer uses the following procedure. He asks for the claimant's identification and the claimant states his true identity. The immigration officer then questions the claimant to determine whether he can provide identity papers. The claimant has to complete a form in which he provides information as to his identity. Finally, the immigration officer can detain the individual if he is unable to establish his identity to the officer's satisfaction.

Should the immigration officer find that the claimant is not properly answering the questions put to him, appears confused or refuses to answer certain questions, the officer may detain him for a period of seven days.

Interestingly the Canadian Council for Refugees notes that it is exceedingly rare for a person seeking asylum to be detained for not having identity papers or for having forged ones.

With paragraph (c) of the motion, we move to an extreme that is unacceptable. We oppose the systematic detention of persons claiming refugee status, since the practice is contrary to the charter of rights and freedoms, which applies to every citizen.

I will move on quickly to the last point, the request to establish a list of third countries. Once this list is drawn up, Canada will no longer accept refugee claimants who have come through a third country.

Forty per cent of those claiming refugee status arrive in Canada from the United States. Forty per cent is a lot. What I understand from this is that we do not want any more refugees. I oppose this, especially since applications for refugee status in the States are given much more restrictive treatment than they are here in Canada.

Are we consciously, as a parliament, going to destroy what has been a part of peace and life for many who have suffered through wars and undemocratic regimes? We need only think of the millions of Afghans who are trying desperately to leave their country. Can we say “No, we will allow only those who arrive via Vancouver or Montreal or St. John's, Newfoundland”?

We also oppose this fourth paragraph strongly. I call on all parliamentarians who recognize the importance of compassion, justice and respect for the fundamental values of our society to oppose the Alliance motion.

•(1130)

[*English*]

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I commend the men and women at immigration and customs for their hard work and dedication.

A few years ago a couple arrived at the Vancouver International Airport from Australia and uttered the magic word refugee. Their refugee processing began and they applied for financial assistance, which they received. After spending two months vacationing at taxpayers' expense in Canada, they returned home.

The official opposition has asked for adequate resources and training to be provided to the employees of these departments. They should be provided with the appropriate legislation, regulations and tools of the trade so they can do their jobs effectively. A few minutes ago the minister and her parliamentary secretary defended the status quo.

Would the hon. member agree that this motion from the official opposition demanding the appropriate resources and training for customs and immigration officers to do their jobs effectively is a fair demand?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, particularly since this is one aspect of the official opposition motion with which we are in agreement. We believe that immigration officers, as well as customs officers, must be properly trained and competent professionals.

Borders are, of course, a kind of gate through which people enter or exit a country. It is an advantage for those at our borders to be properly trained, abreast of the latest technologies. Far be it for us to oppose this.

I must, however, also acknowledge that this is virtually the only thing in the entire motion with which we are pleased to say we agree.

[English]

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in the debate and to put a viewpoint on the record on behalf of the New Democratic Party.

I am sure it will come as no surprise to the authors of the motion before us today, the members of the Alliance Party, that New Democrats will oppose the motion. I am sure that causes no revelations for the members beside me.

However they may be somewhat surprised when I say that I and my party welcome the debate. It gives us an opportunity to clear the air, to deal with some very contentious issues in Canada today and to move toward a more responsible, effective solution to the very difficult circumstances we are facing today.

Let us begin by agreeing on one thing: We all deplore, with every breath we can muster, the heinous events of September 11. There is no question about that. I want members to keep that in mind as we discuss options, alternatives and solutions for dealing with this very difficult situation.

There is no one in the House who is not prepared to stand and condemn with every ounce of energy the heinous acts of the terrorists who struck in the United States on September 11. Every one of us here are grappling with solutions to prevent the spread of terrorism and to bring those terrorists to justice.

The motion before us today suggests that Canada must look at its own immigration and refugee policies as part of that solution. That is not a point of contention for us. We are all prepared to look at Canada's policies on every front, whether we are talking about immigration policy, airline security, cross-border crossings or our own ability to respond to bioterrorism. On each and every aspect of terrorism we have an obligation and a responsibility to assess the situation, to determine if Canada's policies are effective in that regard and to make suggestions based on any flaws or weaknesses in those areas.

We have done that on numerous occasions. We have been vigilant since September 17 about proposing solutions and making suggestions.

As members know, we proposed a motion to deal with the uprising of incidents of racism and intolerance in our society as a result of the terrorist acts. We made suggestions in the House repeatedly over enhanced resources and supports for being prepared in the event of a bioterrorist act.

Today I am prepared, on behalf of my colleagues, to make some suggestions with respect to immigration and refugee policy. I want to be clear that the most important item for us to deal with today is to avoid feeding any mythology around Canadian immigration and refugee policy. Our responsibility today is not to feed this notion that Canada is a safe haven for terrorists.

Supply

I am not suggesting for a minute any malicious intent on the part of the Alliance but I certainly have serious grievances with its recommendations. I am here to suggest that since September 11 there have been a number of commentaries, opinions and statements made that do feed the notion that Canada somehow is a safe haven for terrorists. The implication touches us even more given the feelings people have that terrorists are refugees and refugees are terrorists.

We cannot allow that kind of talk to go on. We must address the fears and concerns of Canadians without feeding hysteria. We must be responsible in our response to the events of September 11.

I only have to turn to some of the newspaper articles, however few and far between they have been with respect to this issue, to make the case and help ensure that the House puts all this in perspective.

• (1135)

I want to touch on an article written by Haroon Siddiqui which appeared in the September 16 issue of the Toronto *Star*. The headline was "Don't scapegoat Canada for terrorism in America". He wrote:

While we grieve with Americans in the aftermath of their single biggest death toll since the civil war, and pray for the dead as well as the living, it needs to be said that Canada's border is no more porous than America's. In fact, Canada has a tighter perimeter than the United States; far fewer illegal immigrants come here, even proportionately speaking, than there.

Canada may also be less of a haven for terrorists or terrorist groups than America, the centre of monetary and military sustenance for the Irish Republican Army and the hub of anti-Castro adventurism, among others.

I may not agree with everything the author of the article wrote but I can say he identifies a very serious issue and that is, if we make generalizations based on the events of September 11 and make wide, sweeping generalizations about our policies, we will have done no great service to combat terrorism. We will have done what so many have cautioned against, which is we will have stooped to the level of the terrorists themselves and sacrificed our fundamental principles of peace, security and freedom.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs himself made exactly that kind of statement. He said on one occasion recently that if a battle against terrorism must be waged, we must be sure we do not undermine our principles of an open society founded on democracy. If we do that we will have given terrorists, and I am paraphrasing, a victory.

That is one commentary that was in the paper. I also want to read from an article by Hugh Winsor in the *Globe and Mail* on October 15. I do not always agree with this commentator but he made a very important observation:

In the current atmosphere, there will be a lot of pressure to dilute the broader fundamentals of Canadian justice in pursuit of the tiny minority of dangerous people trying to get into Canada as refugees. That would be a mistake.

We use that kind of wisdom to bring caution to the debate and urge that we do not destroy the fundamentals and values that hold the country together, the glue of Canadian unity, in the interests of looking for easy solutions and quick targets. That is what the motion does today.

Supply

Speaking of the generalization that Canada is a safe haven for terrorists, I remind members what the RCMP commissioner told the immigration committee just last Thursday. In response to a question I raised about these broad, sweeping generalizations, he said that even the word haven is a terrible word to use because it implies that we somehow support or nurture terrorists to stay in the country. That certainly is not the case. He went on to talk about how Canada is no different from other countries that are dealing with the same kind of threat and is no different in terms of precautions we take on the security front.

It is very important for the House to remember the makeup of the country and the traditions we hold so near and dear. We went through this in great detail during the debate on Bill C-11. The debate on that bill was very heated. We were struggling to find the balance between respecting our open door policy and humanitarian traditions with the need to ensure that proper security measures were taken to prevent people who had malicious intents and agendas to get into Canada. We struggled very hard to balance those interests.

From my vantage point I am not completely happy with Bill C-11. I do not think we achieved that balance, but I can say that the debate was thoughtful and should enlighten us today in our discussions. One of the conclusions we on all sides of the House made during that debate was that Canada's legacy and history is about diversity.

• (1140)

We said time and time again that it is not just about the number of people who have come here from so many places, it is about how we deal with one another in the context of being a mosaic. Our tradition and our values have shown the way. Canada is a model for the world in terms of respect for differences, for not imposing one view or one way of thinking or one way of life on our immigrants and the people who make up this country. Our way is one of easy going acceptance, generosity, tolerance and respect for differences. We do not impose some uniform identity on the immigrants who come to Canada.

Those sentiments are as important today as they were when we were debating Bill C-11 last spring. We have new circumstances to deal with. We have to make adjustments and review policies, but we do not sacrifice our fundamental understanding of this country and how we have come to grow together as a multicultural nation.

Since September 11 in many ways we have started to show suspicion about one another. We have started to question on the basis of racial makeup. We have started to look behind us and see trouble in the shadows. We have started to create a climate of fear when we should be doing the opposite. I urge members to put this all in perspective and to come up with solutions that actually work.

The motion deals so much with the issue of refugees. One of the themes of the Alliance Party these days seems to be to point fingers at Canada's policies on refugees and to suggest that we have bad policies and bad programs and that we need to put a moratorium on refugees coming into Canada. That is what part of the motion actually does when it talks about detaining all refugees who come into Canada. In effect it is quite a major difference from the practices and traditions we have today and is not necessarily one that would ensure greater security for Canadians.

In that context I want to put on the record some of the concerns of the organizations that work on a day to day basis with refugees. These organizations care deeply about the flight of the millions of refugees around the world. They know that Canada has a responsibility, an obligation and an interest in ensuring that we offer a safe haven for people fleeing persecution on the basis of political, religious or economic reasons.

On September 14 the Canadian Council for Refugees issued a statement. This is part of it:

In the wake of the horrific terrorist attacks this week in the United States, the Canadian Council for Refugees offers its condolences to the victims and their families. As an organization committed to the protection of human rights, the Canadian Council for Refugees condemns these attacks on civilian lives and urges Canadians, as well as immigrant and refugee communities, to speak out against violence and intolerance in our society.

That was a very important statement for all of us to hear and understand. I hope members in the Alliance Party also heard and understood the meaning of that statement. All Canadians from whatever walk of life condemn the terrorist attacks and now look for solutions that work to make sure that we rid this globe of terrorism so we can live in peace, freedom and security.

The motion before us today denies the responsibility we have in terms of refugees. It denies some of the experiences that organizations such as churches, non-profit organizations and volunteer groups have with respect to creating a home for refugees and newcomers and integrating them into our society. It denies the sentiment expressed by the people who run Romero House in Toronto when they said:

When Canadians meet refugees and hear their stories, they are usually impressed by their courage, resourcefulness and enduring capacity for joy. Refugees are brave people who have escaped to Canada from traumatic and often horrific situations in their homelands. They have experienced, or been in danger of, torture, arbitrary detention and death. Although many of them have escaped with little more than the clothes on their backs, they do not come empty handed. They bring to our country the gifts of courage, hope and strength.

Let us not forget that in the debate on this very important issue.

• (1145)

We have concerns with all four aspects of the motion before us today, beginning with the preamble and the suggestion that we need to establish a North American fortress, that we need to have perimeter security. The motion is premised on this notion. All of us need to question the validity of this so-called continental perimeter initiative. We should question it as a concept and assess it from the point of view of loss to Canada of our sovereignty, loss of our ability to make decisions pertaining to our own foreign affairs policy and our economic policy and hence every aspect of our day to day lives.

We are very concerned with the parts of the motion that deal specifically with detention of refugees. I have already touched on that. The Alliance Party is not taking into account the fact that the American policy of detention has not necessarily been successful. It has not necessarily achieved the kind of results which I think the members of the Alliance are hoping to achieve with this motion. It has not been helpful and it has been hurtful in many other ways.

The Alliance members have not taken into account that many refugees come to Canada without proper documentation precisely because of the kind of country and government they are fleeing. In particular, people from Somalia and Afghanistan do not have documents because the dictatorial, repressive regimes they are fleeing from would not allow for those documents to be processed and to try to obtain those documents would be even more harmful in terms of their future well-being.

We are very concerned about the suggestion that we need to change the role and responsibilities of immigration officers and customs officers in order to make the country more secure and deal with cross-border issues. As has been noted already in the debate, those two provisions miss the critical issue at hand here. There is an issue that has to be addressed and I look to members on the government benches to ensure that this is heeded.

The issue is one of resources. During the hearings on Bill C-11 and now during the Senate hearings on Bill C-11, during this debate, and since the events of September 11 time and time again we have heard about the lack of resources in terms of immigration officials and customs agents. Going back to the serious cuts of 1993, I think the Alliance probably supported those kinds of cuts back then in the interests of smaller government. The number of immigration officers was slashed from 7,000 to 4,000. Similarly the customs and excise union has reported how at least 1,200 new customs officers are needed to do the job. Let us assess the situation for what it really is and deal with the root cause of the problem.

It is very important to acknowledge difficulties with the fourth part of the motion which calls for a list of safe third countries, including the United States and member states of the European Union, from which Canada will no longer accept refugee claimants. For the record, it has to be said that that is a very serious recommendation that would have all kinds of ramifications for Canada's role in the United Nations and for ensuring that we live up to the convention on refugees. I hope to have a chance to deal with this during questions and comments. It is a very negative suggestion and would not have any basis in terms of being a good solution. It would take us in the opposite direction of our responsibilities with respect to the international convention on refugees.

Finally, as we pursue the debate and look at solutions, let us look at some other options. Let us look at the immigrant investor program where people can actually buy their way into the country and not face the same kind of scrutiny as people seeking to be united with their families or people coming to work in Canada. That is a serious shortcoming. There are many solutions and issues that need to be addressed and we can do that here today. I do not think the answer is found in the Alliance motion. I look forward to ongoing discussion.

•(1150)

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, if the member truly deplores September 11, why does she then go on to undermine her own sentiments with qualifiers?

She says that she is prepared to look at what we are pointing out but then says that she will not even support the modest suggestions in our motion today. She says that we have to worry about mythology. The FBI says that it evaluates us as a safe haven.

Supply

Her denials and the controls that she puts on us for political correctness do not change the reality of who is here in our country already. The essence of what she is saying is that others are weak so it is okay for us to be weak. She is so concerned about admissions, but the central issue is that change begins with the recognition that a problem exists, admit it and then we can appropriately act.

Does the member or her party have one concrete measure to suggest that will make us safer in this country or is the member basically saying that everything is okay, just watch out for any hint of being an alarmist and then just hang on and hope for the best? What is her party's solution to the direct threat to our society at home while we have soldiers abroad right now in an effort to defend her capacity to stand in the House and be sincerely wrong? Why does she not like our motion? What does her party suggest to respond directly to the threat that our society is facing today?

•(1155)

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I tried to address some of that in my speech and I am glad of the opportunity to elaborate.

We are opposed to the specific recommendations put forward by the Alliance today as solutions that do not get to the root of the problem and can do more harm than good. They may be easy fixes but not necessarily effective.

I have made some suggestions for things that can be done and I will elaborate on those. I think we absolutely do need to ensure that resources and staffing levels are adequate to enforce the existing legislation. We need to ensure prompt action on any security related orders. I think that issue has been identified. The need for additional resources in Canada, at the borders and overseas, has to be addressed by the government. The resources that were cut out of the system because of the preoccupation with the deficit and balanced budgets back in 1993, an agenda supported and fueled by members of the Alliance, have caused some of the problems we are facing today.

I think we need to review the whole immigrant investor program which has been a controversial element of Canada's immigration program since 1986 when it was implemented as a way of providing risk capital. This program has been criticized. I do not know why we are not talking about it these days. That program has been criticized for having little control over questionable financial arrangements, money laundering, the involvement of organized crime and funds from illegitimate business activities. We need to look at those kinds of programs to see if some tightening up of such programs can ensure better security in this country.

Supply

Given the fact that less than half of 1% of people coming into this country are refugees, let us be realistic in terms of what we are dealing with and why people are coming here and not throw the baby out with the bath water. We know that 99.9% of people coming into this country either as refugees, to be reunited with families or as independent entrepreneurs, are good citizens. We do get some bad apples but do we destroy our system? Do we throw out our values in order to deal with those bad apples? Or, do we get to the root of the problem and deal with it in terms of the necessary resources, the co-ordination of security arrangements and programs that allow for people to buy their way into this country as opposed to getting here on the basis of their talents, their contributions, their need to be reunited with families or their need to seek refuge from unsafe environments?

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I am halfway between the questioner and the speaker here today.

I do not believe that Canada is a safe haven any more than is the United States. However we do have some serious problems. I just wonder if the member could address what was raised by the auditor general's report. The report simply states that of approximately 31,200 claimants who were denied refugee status between 1993 and 1997 or were not accepted to Canada, only 22% have confirmed their departure from Canada. That would indicate that 78% of those refugee claimants who were denied access to Canada have somehow found their way into Canadian society and are now hidden away disappearing in our society. That means 78% are successful. If someone comes to Canada as an unacceptable refugee, they still have a 78% chance of staying in Canada even though it is illegal.

I wonder if the member could address that concern. Does she agree that there should be some increased effort placed on that problem?

• (1200)

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech and in an answer to a subsequent question, there is an issue here that needs to be addressed, not by moving toward a system of detection, detainment and deportation but to a system of openness and humanitarian principles. If people are not legitimate refugees we need the resources and procedures in place to ensure those people are not allowed to stay in the country.

We do have a problem and it is a resource problem. However I want to put that problem in perspective and clarify what I was trying to say earlier. Refugees account for about one-tenth of 1% of immigration and tourist traffic, yet this seems to be the focal point for all suggestions and recommendations and the centerpiece of any recommendations coming from the Alliance or any action coming from the Liberal government.

We must look at where we can actually make a difference. I do not believe that by denying our responsibilities and our traditions for being a welcoming nation, to encourage immigration that is so desperately needed in this country, we are doing any great service. I want to point out that if it were not for refugees and immigrants coming to a province like Manitoba, our population growth would be at zero percent or in the negative.

We are grateful for the talents and the contributions that refugees and immigrants make to that province and to the country. We know

we must do more in that regard but we can do it without causing fear and hysteria by addressing some of the root causes of those who get into this country with malicious intentions and who may be terrorists in disguise.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify something the member brought up earlier about the Canadian Alliance attitude to refugees.

It has been very well established in our policy position for many years that we support the idea of Canada bringing its refugees from the established refugee camps which are run by the United Nations around the world. There are literally millions of people there.

I wonder if the hon. member knows that there are millions of pre-screened refugee claimants in United Nations' camps waiting for a safe haven. Why then would we just accept queue jumpers who arrive here with no documents? If we are going to be tolerant and open our arms to genuine refugees, we should be taking genuine refugees and rejecting those who want to jump the queue and just get here by choice.

For example, she mentioned refugees from Somalia and Afghanistan. Does she know they had to change their planes in either Amsterdam, Heathrow or Frankfurt? Surely that makes them choose Canada. They are not looking for a refugee haven. They are looking to come to Canada as immigrants.

Finally, does the member know that up to 50% of all the arrests on any night in downtown Vancouver are refugee claimants?

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept what the member is saying about our system as a whole. It would be absolutely unfair and unfounded to suggest that refugees coming into this country are queue jumpers.

We have a process in place. It is not always perfect but to suggest that people fleeing from Somalia and Afghanistan are really not looking for protection as much as they are looking to settle in Canada and have chosen Canada, does not address the reality of the situation.

People often see Canada as the end of the line in terms of protection and in being able to settle somewhere. Nothing in the motion addresses that issue.

I totally agree with the member when he talks about the world's refugee problem. We know there are about 39 million people looking for refugee protection somewhere. Canada plays only a small role in creating a home for those refugees. We should do more and we cannot do it by generalizing and implying motives that are not true and not based on fact.

• (1205)

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate that I will be dividing my time with the member for Dauphin—Swan River.

I am pleased to speak on the motion today. We have mixed feelings on it one way or another. I would like to go through those mixed feelings in different directions.

Supply

The motion makes an assumption that is not accurate. The motion says "That, as part of a continental perimeter initiative...". The government has not accepted that concept and has not agreed to a continental perimeter initiative. By making these proposals as part of a continental perimeter initiative, which has not happened, has not been agreed to and in fact has been discouraged by the government, it makes the whole debate pointless.

I will go through the issues and the proposal as raised by the official opposition and discuss the issues one at a time. I think a continental perimeter is inevitable. Because of our close association with the United States and Mexico, it is only a matter of time before a perimeter is established. Certainly officials in the United States, the ambassador, several senators, the president and the vice-president, have said that they will have a security system for the United States and that their preferred system is a perimeter system.

The president of Mexico has stated very clearly that if there is a perimeter system for the United States that Mexico wants to be in on it. If Mexico and the United States are in on a perimeter security system, then Canada will have no choice. It is the wise choice in any case.

Many provincial premiers have come out strongly in favour of a perimeter security system for North America as have several state governors and state governments. It is almost not plausible that there would be a North American perimeter system that included the United States and Mexico but not Canada. Eighty percent to eighty-five percent of our trade is with the United States. For Canada to be locked out of that secure border would be impractical for our country.

The government's approach seems to be resisting the philosophy of a security perimeter but that is out of step with reality, with our trading practices, with our relationship with the other two countries in North America and it is certainly out of step with Canadians.

I asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs at committee whether he was in favour of the perimeter security and would he support it. His reaction was that when he hears the words perimeter security he feels it is a front for some other terminology or some other concept that he was not clear on. He was uncomfortable with the concept of perimeter security. The minister did not elaborate on why he was not comfortable or on the details. He only indicated that he was uncomfortable, which I would think would be an indication that the government at this moment in time is not in favour of a perimeter security system.

As the leader of the official opposition said, it is only a matter of time that the government will probably change its mind and come around to that. I agree that will happen.

In Canada, where 80% to 85% of our foreign trade is with the United States, it is absolutely critical that we protect that trading relationship. It is naive not to expect the United States to impose some restrictions on trade if we are not in its circle of perimeter security. Since September 11 much of our trade has been brought to a crawl. The industries in Canada that need just in time delivery of parts, services and goods have been penalized and hurt. They have had to layoff people and their businesses have been damaged because of the substantial delays. This is only a precursor to what

would happen if the United States established a perimeter security system around its country and we were not on the inside of that.

The United States has focused on the Canadian weakness. I do not think that is accurate. It has focused on our weakness as a safe haven for terrorists. I do not accept that position. We all know that most of the terrorists on September 11 were actually residents of the United States, trained in the United States or lived in the United States. It appears that its systems are no more secure than our systems. However that does not change the fact that we both have to tighten up our security systems, our immigration regulations and our enforcement.

• (1210)

It is quite amazing that the auditor general indicated in a report in 1997 that of 31,000 claimants that were denied refugee status between 1993 and 1997 and not accepted into Canada, only 22% were confirmed as having left. This indicates that 78% of these illegal and denied immigrants to Canada are still here.

According to the auditor general, if people in Afghanistan or any other country look at the possibility of coming to Canada, once they are in, even if they are denied immigrant status and are asked to leave, chances are only one in four they will ever leave. That is kind of a scary concept. It is important that we address it in the strongest possible fashion.

The opposition coalition supports the concept of the perimeter security proposal for many reasons. It just makes sense from a safety point of view to ensure the safety of our citizens, our economy and our culture. This is a broad motion which very extensively affects many aspects of our society and our regulations. We do not agree with many aspects of it, although we do agree with the concept of the perimeter security system.

We do not agree that customs officers should become armed police officers. We do not believe that they should be armed. We do not think it is necessary. We do not think it is appropriate that customs officers should be police officers in the same way as we do not think police officers should be customs officers. We would oppose that.

We would oppose the proposal to remove customs officers from the collection of taxes and duties. Who would provide this service? If customs officers do not collect customs duties, who will? Why would we do this? How would this be set up? Would every border crossing have a customs officer, an immigration officer and a police officer as well? It is very confusing and it seems extremely cumbersome for us in the opposition coalition that every border entry would have this triple series of officials.

We also do not believe that customs officers should be law enforcement officers. It does not make sense. We do not see any reason for it. We think they should have the power to retain people at the border, question them, certify their documentation and take the appropriate steps at that time, but we do not agree with making them police officers.

Supply

Again I come back to the auditor general's report which says that Canada's lax approach to immigrants costs the federal government and the provinces hundreds of millions of dollars a year in enforcement, in trying to find some of the immigrants that came to Canada, were denied access and then disappeared into the woodwork and into our society. This is a very expensive situation which can be rectified if it is dealt with at the border.

If immigrants do not have the proper documentation when they come to Canada, if they do not have the proper qualifications to come to Canada, they should be stopped there rather than automatically allowed into society and impossible to find later.

We agree with the concept of the list of safe countries. That has been debated for years and there has been no agreement on how to implement it. All countries have to agree, and there is no agreement on it. Even though we agree with the concept we do not think it can be done.

We agree with the concept of the perimeter security system and that Canada is very much a part of it. Although Canada was not the target on September 11 we were severely impacted. Dozens of Canadians lost their lives in that terrible act of terrorism. Transportation in Canada literally came to a standstill. Business and investment were curtailed. They are still curtailed and are suffering right now because of it.

The security costs must be enormous. There have been additional security costs on the Hill. We can all see the extra police, the extra inspections and everything that is going on.

Canada is very much a part of this situation and must be very much a part of the reaction to it. We must be part of the establishment of a security system to protect our people. We must be in on the ground floor. We must be in early.

I would like to hear the government state right now that we will be a part of the perimeter security system as proposed by the United States, but we want to be a part of the planning. We want to be in on the ground floor. We want to protect our sovereignty. We want to protect our people. We want to make sure that Canadians are as safe as possible and that our industry is protected.

● (1215)

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise as coalition immigration critic to take part in the debate on the supply day motion put forth by the Canadian Alliance.

Since September 11 the world certainly has changed and national security is on everyone's mind. We are all aware of the threats to our freedom by terrorist organizations of the world. At the same time Canada must be cognizant that Canada is a land of immigrants.

If we look at our history, Canada was built by immigrants. At this time we must not be pointing fingers at legitimate refugees and immigrants, including myself who immigrated to this country before the events of September 11.

The coalition's position is that Canada needs to keep its door open to genuine immigrants and refugees. Our present and future standard of living depends on immigration. We attract the best in the world and we must continue to do so.

Despite the current fear of terrorism we must not repeat the dark side of Canada's history. Let us take a reality check. Over 99% of the annual movement of up to 40 million people between the United States and Canada is by legal people. The vast majority of those who come into Canada use the legal means. In fact terrorists can enter this country as visitors, students, refugees or legitimate immigrants. We need to tighten up our front end screening to detect those who would wish to do us harm.

As coalition critic my job is to point out the holes in the system. Let me take time to respond to the specifics of the supply day motion. This motion is much like an omnibus bill. It covers too much. In principle the coalition supports the motion, but we have concerns about the way it was put together.

Let me address some of our concerns. In the preamble the continental perimeter denotes a North American border, not a Canadian one. While the notion of a secure North American border is a good one, Canada cannot be expected to look after American borders. Nor can Americans be expected to look after Canadian borders. Agreements can and should be made on who looks after what and what jurisdiction we can share and co-operate on.

A continental perimeter does not by default ensure the safety of Canada's borders. Improved staffing levels, better training and better enforcement of existing laws will.

Under the Criminal Code of Canada a Canada customs officer has the authority to be a peace officer already by definition. In fact the criminal code states:

(d) an officer or a person having the powers of a customs or excise officer when performing any duty in the administration of the Customs Act or Excise Act.

According to the 1992 Immigration Act, section 113 states:

Duties of Peace Officers to execute orders—Every peace officer and every person in immediate charge or control of an immigration station shall, when so directed by the Deputy Minister, an adjudicator, a senior immigration officer or an immigration officer, receive and execute any written warrant or order issued or made under this Act or the regulations for the arrest, detention or removal from Canada of any persons.

We agree that immigration officers and customs officers should receive better training in identifying suspicious persons. There seems to be an attempt to arm immigration and customs officers with sidearms. While customs officers at borders should have sidearms, immigration officers at ports of entry should not.

If immigration officers simply use the enforcement tools at their disposal they have every ability to detain and even refuse entry to anyone who is thought to be a risk to the country.

I will comment on part (b) of the motion. This is a clear indication of seeking a sidearm for a border official. We do not disagree with this. However this would in fact make customs officers at the borders police officers. This would eliminate a number of positions across Canada in favour police enforcement.

• (1220)

We already have such a situation with park wardens who have effectively been replaced by RCMP because the wardens wanted sidearms.

We agree with part (c) of the motion. All asylum claimants should be held until their identities can be discovered and they are determined not to be a risk to Canadians. Proper security and health checks should be done to ensure the safety of citizens welcoming newcomers.

We agree with part (d). The safe third country concept has been used in immigration legislation since 1992. While the term and definition have been used to keep refugees and asylum claimants who have already been recognized as convention refugees from other countries from applying for refugee status here, there is no such thing as a list of safe third countries from which we might accept refugees or deport refugees to await identity discovery.

In 1999 a Sri Lankan national was refused refugee status as the claimant was found to already have refugee status in Germany. In 1998 a Liberian citizen was refused conventional refugee status since the person already had such status in Sierra Leone.

It is the broader sense of the legislation that is not being applied. A list of countries from which asylum seekers could come to claim such status or be detained while waiting for the outcome of such an application has never been compiled. It is believed that the reason for this is largely due to a lack of agreement on who decides which nations are considered to be safe. The safe third country concept does not guarantee the detection and apprehension of potential terrorists.

The auditor general made some very enlightening discoveries in his December 1997 report on the Immigration Refugee Board. Since 1993 over 99% of all claims were judged to be eligible by CIC officials. The claimants were then given the necessary documentation for filing a claim with the IRB and allowed to enter Canada.

Today there is still a 30,000 case backlog. With the passing of Bill C-11 all claims in the system that are not finalized will be nullified. All other claims will have to be started over again regardless of the stage of review. That will only create more backlog.

It was noted that over 90% of those denied refugee status remain in Canada, according to the auditor general. These problems have not gone away. They pose a real risk to Canada's security. The government has to account for how the IRB operates, recognizing and acknowledging that the IRB is a patronage vehicle.

I have tried over the last year to convince the immigration minister to set up front end screening of refugee claimants. I will close by making a few more comments on front end screening. I have indicated that the RCMP, CSIS and CIC need more staff.

No one can board a domestic or international flight without identification and in some cases travel documents. The fact that people arrive in Canada without such documentation should be grounds for immediate detention. The minister alluded to over 8,000 persons who were detained for an average of 16 days in the year 2000. What she forgot to say was that she personally okayed 3,989

Supply

otherwise inadmissible individuals, most hardened criminals, entering and remaining in Canada for a period of time.

The 3,989 people were obviously security risks to Canada since without a permit from the minister they could not have entered Canada. With no entry or exit data kept on persons coming and leaving Canada, it is impossible to tell whether those who are ordered out actually leave.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time.

The official opposition has moved:

That, as part of a continental perimeter initiative to secure Canada's borders and protect the security of Canadians and our neighbours, and to protect our trading relationships, the House calls on the government to:

- (a) provide both immigration and Customs officers enhanced training and full peace officer status to allow them to detain and arrest suspected criminals or terrorists at the border;
- (b) move Customs border officers out of the tax collection agency and into a law enforcement agency;
- (c) detain all spontaneous refugee claimants appearing without proper documentation until their identities are confirmed and they have cleared proper health and security checks; and
- (d) create a list of safe third countries, including the United States and member states of the European Union, from which Canada will no longer accept refugee claimants.

These basic requests arise from government employees on the line and are reasonably modest.

Since September 11, two changes have occurred that have put increased demand on our national leadership in politics and in business. First, is our declaration to respond to terrorism. Second, is the economic recession. The Liberals have left us unprepared for both. The Liberals cannot manage.

On the economic front, while there is a vital need to increase spending on national security, federal revenues are starting to shrink. The opportunity for the wise choice of reducing taxes and debt to competitive levels, while our economy was being lifted along by a buoyant U.S. economy, has passed us by. It can be said, in view of today's motion before the House, that the Canadian Alliance was right and the Liberals were wrong.

The government is also mean-spirited and dishonest when it claims that we are anti-immigrant or hard-hearted about genuine refugees, for we want an orderly and safe immigration and refugee system that operates with the highest possible level of integrity and reliability.

Supply

The government announced up to \$250 million, generally for security matters, some of which might help immigration screening. However, 100 immigration officer positions is only a start, not a solution. Resources must be utilized in the areas of increased staff deployment and training, enhanced security and background checks and aggressive deportation of failed refugee claimants and others. The immigration system likely needs 500 additional employees in its system around the world to meet our national security needs.

In respect of the citizenship and immigration minister, staff in her department at the lower levels, who have to carry out the system on the line, talked to me of their utter frustration and even disdain of the public relations game played by the minister since the September 11 attack. There is system-wide snickering from immigration officers when the minister oversells the improvements from Bill C-11 or the benefits of the maple leaf card. Although necessary, it is only one of the many holes that must be plugged if Canada has any hope of exercising basic sovereignty of its borders and protecting its people.

The majority of persons who attempt to swamp our protections enter Canada illegally by using passports of countries which do not require a Canadian visitor visa or they use someone else's passport who has obtained a visa. The passports are photo substituted and the person freely boards a plane to Canada.

Capacity creates its own demand and the ability to get through with low risk invites repeated testing of the system. Smugglers enjoy their lucrative business without a care of being caught as they receive only an insignificant punishment if ever prosecuted. The government does not have the political will to make people smuggling unprofitable.

Then there is the trump card played by thousands of people who declare themselves refugee claimants upon landing or a few days later after having disposed of their legitimate looking documents and having been carefully coached by their handlers as they arrive with a request for legal aid, welfare and the medical plan. Most refugee claimants are released into the community without Canada having knowledge about who they really are and what their backgrounds are.

We need to detain all surprise arrivals for whom we have any concern. It should be reverse onus and the burden should be on the claimants to demonstrate that they are indeed refugees and not something else, if they are using that particular category. The evidence for such a need is the high percentage who disappear once they are released into the community.

• (1225)

It is likely that most persons who arrive uninvited at our borders are not true refugees. They are those who do not wish to apply through the proper channels because they know they will not qualify due to a past they want to cover up or they are in groups that we as a nation have said we will not take, which is the policy assumption of the point-merit system of immigration.

Some may be fleeing prosecution and not persecution. Some use the refugee claim as a ruse to enter Canada to cross into the U.S.A. Most true refugees do not even have the means to get to Canada in that way.

In respect to the societal costs of the consequences, it is likely more cost efficient and a lot safer to first detain all refugee claimants. If all questionable people were routinely placed in holding centres pending necessary investigations and hearings, they would receive housing, meals, health monitoring and care. Their stories and the international reputation would be deterrents to the pressures on the system, just like the deportation of the British Columbia boat people which took the pressure off that type of activity.

If detained, claimants could not go on to another province if denied and under another identity begin a second and third refugee claim, as we have seen. Criminal checks could be completed while the person is in custody, if the government ever got serious about access to databases from all available countries rather than just within our own lists.

The voice of one immigration officer says it for many. He said recently:

I could no longer tolerate the frustration of seeing the fraud being perpetrated on the naive taxpayers of this country and which I was impotent to prevent. I have never been more certain of my decision to leave this department as I have since September 11. You have absolutely no idea of the extent of fraud within the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Immigration officers must be able to do their jobs with confidence and without political influence or interference. A plastic card will not eliminate the fraud—I'm sure someone is already working on reproducing it. I could easily write a book on this subject. I am certain that 99% of front line immigration officers echo my sentiments, but of course are not permitted to speak their minds and tell the truth.

Canada is a nation of immigrants and has always been enriched by new arrivals to our shores. A Canadian Alliance government would facilitate the current levels of immigration and make improvements to the security, fairness and integrity of the system. The system must meet the high expectations of average Canadians and enhance the welfare of new arrivals. We must ensure Canadian sovereignty on the borders.

We appreciate that Canada is a society built by successive waves of immigration from all sectors of the globe. We need to create a positive immigration policy that is merit based. Administration should take into account primarily Canada's economic needs. We must introduce greater security and reliability into the system, including enforcement of sponsorship obligations. The federal government must work more co-operatively with the provinces on national policy and settlement costs. We must also affirm the independence of immigration administration from multiculturalism.

Non-citizens of Canada who are convicted of an indictable crime or who are known to engage in serious criminal activity must be deported quickly. By more careful screening of the criminal element, we can protect the integrity and security of immigrants and enhance community crime prevention. Canada should no longer be called a safe haven for international operatives.

We affirm Canada's international humanitarian obligation to receive its fair share of genuine refugees. Refugee status must be determined expeditiously under the rule of law and beyond political interference. To ensure fairness, we should deport failed refugee claimants and illegal entrants quickly, and prosecute those who organize and profit from abuse of the system. To accomplish those reasonable administrative goals, we must reallocate resources to reduce the thousands within Canada who are without legal status or who are on the deportation list.

We also need to review the extra ministerial permit category by seeking to provide transparency and public accountability within the context of the Privacy Act to eliminate government vote buying, patronage and cronyism.

To accomplish anything less is to fail our nation and breaks faith with our young people, for their hope in a bright and prosperous future.

• (1230)

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in the House to participate in this very important debate. The motion put forward by my party is of critical importance to our country, our economy and our physical safety.

The debate over the need for a continental security perimeter has been taking place from the grain elevators to the boardrooms, but sadly, it has not been taking place in the House.

I am proud that again today it is the opposition that is addressing another issue of utmost concern to Canadians. We have heard a lot about a continental security perimeter, but it has yet to be clearly defined.

In my remarks today, I would like to take this opportunity to define our concept of a continental perimeter, address the role Canada customs plays in it and conclude with my personal perspective on a Canada we are living in post-September 11.

The government opposite does not like to define things. It likes to spin and manipulate the policies of others without ever committing itself. Look at the 1988 debate over free trade. The Prime Minister, along with his comrade Maude Barlow, travelled the country, striking fear in Canadians that we would lose our sovereignty over free trade. It has been over 12 years now and we are not the 51st state of the United States. In fact, we are stronger than ever. So let us put to rest right now the hyperbole over national sovereignty.

The free trade agreement and NAFTA involved harmonizing Canada's tariff and duty regulations with its North American neighbours. Our nation has prospered as a result of our proximity to trade with the U.S. Eighty-seven per cent of our trade crosses into the U.S. Untold jobs and livelihoods are contingent upon strong, uninhibited trade with the U.S. and Mexico.

The next logical phase in NAFTA is to protect the trading relationship by harmonizing our security regimes.

A continental security perimeter is a fancy name for knowing who is in our country. To keep the flow of goods, people and capital across our internal borders, we must be more vigilant at screening and tracking those entering North America. A perimeter does not

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surrender any of Canada's independence to the United States nor does it remove our decision making ability. We can have a made in Canada solution to the continental security perimeter, it just takes initiative and vision. Hopefully the government opposite will someday demonstrate these virtues.

Today we are at a crossroads of what has been and what will become. The course of action taken by us in this place will have a tremendous impact on future generations.

Today the U.S. announced that it may require the registration of all those entering and exiting its borders. This will have a disastrous effect on our trade.

Over the last few weeks, the Liberals have finally responded to terrorism. However, the response thus far has been inadequate. They have responded like Liberals always do, with money and band-aids. Throw money at the problem and the symptoms will go away for a while, but the problem will continue to fester. Money may buy votes, but money alone will not protect Canada, its citizens or the economy.

The revenue minister has announced more money and the hiring of customs officers. This is a very small step in addressing the deficit that existed prior to September 11. The customs union is calling for 1,200 new officers; it is getting 130. These new officers will be unable to adequately protect our border because they will lack the legislative tools to do their job.

Bill S-23, which is passing through the House, was touted as a new vision for Canada's borders. While the official opposition agreed with the initiatives for liberalizing trade, we were shocked by its lack of security measures. The revenue minister bragged that Bill S-23 was a product of a year and a half of consultation but he did not say with whom. He bragged about the dual mandate of trade and security, but actions speak louder than words. His actions have dictated that there is no dual mandate.

There were 18 months of consultations on Canada's borders and not one security expert or organization was consulted by the minister. The only groups consulted were related to trade and tourism. Where is the dual mandate? Where is the balance?

It is evident that CCRA is a department focused on streamlining accounting systems and collecting revenues. It is not focused on security. The logical question is: Why are our border guards, Canada's first line of defence, managed by bean counters?

You seem like a logical person, Mr. Speaker. If you see a crime in progress, would you call the police or your accountant? You would call the police. Why? Because they have the training, knowledge and tools to protect society and enforce laws.

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● (1235)

Our customs officers do a tremendous job, especially when one looks at the number of statutes they are charged with enforcing, their limited resources and their inability to protect themselves from the potential dangers inherent in border protection. We believe that Canada and our customs officers would be better served by moving Canada customs out of the tax collection agency and into a law enforcement department such as the solicitor general's. Just as customs now enforces the statutes of several departments, it would continue to enact the national revenue policies of trade liberalization.

We can have it both ways. We can have strong borders and strong trade with the U.S. In fact, a continental security perimeter would facilitate the freer flow of trade for we could be more certain that what is flowing across the border is legitimate trade. I believe it is worth protecting. I believe my arguments here today are balanced, logical and practical. I ask members to look around this room. This is the home of our democracy. Is it not worth protecting?

Contrary to the views opposite, it is not fearmongering to audit our ability to protect what we hold most dear. In the interest of public safety, it is responsible to question our security and equally responsible to admit inadequacies where they exist.

Under the Liberals we have seen an erosion of the value of Canadian citizenship. As someone who came to this country as a refugee, I cherish my Canadian citizenship. To be Canadian and free was not my birthright and so I do not take it for granted. Members of my family, like the vast majority of refugees, are thankful every day for what we have here in Canada and as a result they are hardworking contributors to this country.

We, the refugees in Canada, are calling for a more stringent refugee determination process. Greater scrutiny is in Canada's best interests and the best interests of legitimate refugees, for if people have nothing to hide they have nothing to fear from the system.

Our livelihoods, our citizenship and our freedoms are worth fighting for and protecting. The refugee determination system is an insult to Canada and it is an insult to those seeking refuge. As a result of the inept IRB process, those refugees who are granted asylum continue to have their motives for being in Canada questioned long after their claims are settled. Why? Because those political appointees charged with the responsibility of refugee determination lack qualifications and lack a clear definition of refugee. The UN has a definition but Canada does not follow it.

My colleague from New Westminster has already addressed the immigration component of perimeter security. I feel compelled to speak out on behalf of refugees to address the Liberal policy that is a disservice to those who choose to live in Canada.

The immigration minister labels anyone who criticizes this government's immigration policies as anti-immigrant. It is time for the Prime Minister to call off the dogs. The system is broken and it desperately needs fixing. If he does not fix it, Canada's economy will suffer.

I call on the Prime Minister to follow through on the agreement with President Fox of Mexico and hold a summit on a North American security perimeter.

● (1240)

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague, the member for Edmonton—Strathcona. He was the industry critic for our party and knows the concerns that Canadians have in terms of any possible restriction in access to our U.S. neighbour's market. Considering that some 33% of Canada's GDP is generated from our exports to the United States, he will also know how vulnerable we would be if that border were to close or to be restricted. Some of his comments did address that.

I wonder if he could tell us more about the nature of Canadian and U.S. business, the integration that has happened in a number of sectors in the last several years which means essentially that there is \$1.5 billion worth of business across that border every day. Every day trucks are delivering products on a just in time delivery basis. This means that the product out of a steel mill in Hamilton that is going to a plant 20 miles down the road is being stamped into fenders that afternoon. That is just in time delivery. Could he tell us how susceptible we are to losing that market share in the United States if we do not address this security concern the Americans have and develop a new border protocol?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Peace River for his question. It is clear that we do have a problem in the country and that we do have something to fear, especially when it comes to what the U.S. might do in reaction to what is happening at our borders.

Today in the *National Post*, I believe, as well as in the *Washington Post*, there was an article about the revival of section 110 in the U.S. This would stop trade from Canada to the U.S. by implementing a number of provisions that since 1996 have been held off by our Canadian trade negotiators. We said we would make changes to our border security to allow the free flow of trade to the U.S. but would increase security so that the U.S. would not have anything to worry about on our side of the bargain about keeping security tight at the border. In fact we have failed on that measure and because of that the U.S. is now entertaining invoking section 110 which, as my colleague has identified, would especially affect just in time manufacturing. It is literally true that producers here will make a product, put it on a truck to the U.S. and later that afternoon it will be turned into some other viable product. With what the U.S. is planning, those products will be stopped at the border and held sometimes for hours if not days.

We could protect our industry, our jobs and everything in the country that we are so proud of if we were to make the minor changes at the border that I spoke about in my speech and that many of my colleagues are speaking about today: improving security measures so that they can have that dual mandate of expediting trade but still be responsible when it comes to protecting security. They are minor changes like giving the border agents the proper tools to do their jobs, whether it is firearms, the ability to detain potential criminals coming through the border or whatever it might be to have them do their job, not just on the revenue side but especially on the first line of defence side. That would give the U.S. the security it wants to see. It would see that we are taking our responsibility seriously. That would allow our trade to continue to flow. As I said, the effects on our economy could be disastrous if that border starts to close.

• (1245)

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was interested in my colleague's comments, but I cannot help but recall the numerous times over the past number of years that the Canadian Alliance, as the Reform Party, criticized the public service in Canada. It criticized the government for spending dollars on public service employees, supported the government cuts and actually pushed for greater cuts to the public service, which directly affected the numbers of customs and immigration officers at the border who are doing exactly what he is talking about. His party really is the root of the problem. That is the root of the problem: When people call for these cuts they have to accept that the employees will not be able to provide the service.

I would like to hear his position on whether he thinks his party made a serious mistake in saying to make deeper cuts to the public service, the employees are really not doing anything, they are just a bunch of highly paid public servants and they should not be there. That is what the Reform Party said for a number of years.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Mr. Speaker, unlike my hon. colleague from the NDP who calls for spending in every facet of Canadians' lives, in every level of the bureaucracy, and for outrageous levels of spending, this party has called for prioritization, especially when it comes to the important areas that we as Canadians feel government should put money into. We have called for that type of money to be spent, especially in the area of the solicitor general and in giving CSIS and the RCMP the tools to do their jobs. We have continuously called for stronger tools for border guards. The hon. member is completely mistaken when she makes these accusations that we have not taken the security of this country responsibly.

Hon. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too will be sharing my time.

The American public and particularly the politicians must wonder what is in our water. A senator in the United States stood up at a press conference and held up a study that she purported proved that the Canadian border was a sieve and that our country was a haven for terrorists. When she was asked where she obtained her information and how she could justify her statements, she said "I got the information from Canadian press reports". This is remarkable. They read the newspapers and hear people in this country making these allegations, so they say that if we in this country are saying it, it must be true.

Supply

I find it incredible that we have an official opposition that would actually make statements which would undermine the ability of this country to negotiate a fair and reasonable response to the tragedies that have befallen our complete world as that relates to trade between Canada and the United States. We know that 87% of our exports go south of the border. We also know that 25% of theirs come north. If American authorities are seeing and hearing Canadian authorities say that the sky is falling and we are a haven for terrorists and we are this and we are that, would it not seem reasonable that they would be loath to enter into new arrangements and new agreements?

Winston Churchill said that the first casualty of war is the truth. Never before have I seen it be more obvious. Let us take a look at what the motion calls for. It says that immigration officers and customs officers should be granted "full peace officer status" with the ability to arrest and detain criminals and terrorists. Would it come as a shock to the author of this motion that this is the fact today? Our people have the status of peace officers. They have the ability to arrest and detain.

It does not matter that this is the current situation. What matters is that there is an opportunity being seized upon by the official opposition to somehow fearmonger and, in its members' minds, enhance its political status within the Canadian system and within the country. I suggest that it is not going to work.

First, they know full well, or they should know, that previous critics from the Canadian Alliance and its predecessor, the Reform Party, refused to attend trips with the minister of immigration to actually investigate, on the ground at our foreign posts and in our embassies, what goes on. Their reason for refusing was that they insisted on being given the opportunity to attend every meeting the minister went to. When we went to Kenya, we did not have the critic from the official opposition with us because he wanted to attend a meeting that the minister was having with the president of that country.

I am a member of parliament in support of the government. I would not be so presumptuous as to insist that unless I am allowed to attend a meeting between a member of cabinet and the president of another country I will not go. It seems to me that is a bit of a cop-out. In not going, that critic failed to see what was there, and this has happened in Moscow, the Ukraine, London, Africa, the Middle East and the Far East, all over the world. They do not want to know because it takes away from the ability to stand up in the House, as members shamefully have done, and make wild accusations that the foreign service is subject to bribery.

• (1250)

I have heard statements made by members of the official opposition that visas are given out in return for favours and bribes. To make those kinds of allegations with no evidence whatsoever, except to have the opportunity to hear from someone like Diane Francis writing in the *National Post* with the most extraordinary accusations based on fantasy, is not becoming of a member of parliament.

Supply

The first point in this resolution is that our people already have that authority. It goes on to say that we should detain all spontaneous refugees. I would like to talk about that. A spontaneous refugee as defined by the official opposition is someone who shows up on our shores uninvited. Is it not astounding that a refugee would actually arrive somewhere uninvited? Let us imagine that.

We have millions of refugees in campsites. I have been there. The critic once again refused to go to the desert in Africa to meet the refugees and to talk to them about their plight and how they lost their families, homes and infrastructure.

Do members opposite think the people in the Sudan have the opportunity to go to a government office and apply for a passport? The Sudan does not have such an infrastructure.

There is no doubt that we have people who show up here without ID. In many cases they leave their homes in the middle of the night with the police coming in the front door. That is not an exaggeration. I have met and talked with them. I know it happens because I have seen it with my own eyes. They leave in the middle of the night with their children and the shirts on their backs. They do not have time to stop and ask where is their driver's licence, if they have one to begin with.

We have an international tragedy that was in existence before September 11. It is a tragedy to see refugee camps with hundreds of thousands of people, insufficient water and no infrastructure, not knowing what to do and wanting to go home, might I add. That is what they truly want to do. They want to go home.

What do we hear? The opposition wants us to detain everybody who comes here uninvited. What happens now if people show up who do not have proper ID? We interview them at length. We determine whether or not their story is true. We fingerprint and photograph them. We check them through international security services and computer links. We attempt to find out who they are and what they are doing here.

If we do not get satisfaction on those points, they are detained. It happens now. Does that matter to members of the official opposition? Would they rather perpetrate a fraud upon the public in this country that somehow or other we are simply releasing people willy-nilly into the community, even if it is not true?

The accusations that were in the media about 50 Afghani and Pakistani refugees arriving here less than 10 days ago and being released into the community without any security checks whatsoever were absolutely false. Does it matter, though, that they were false, or does it only matter that it was in the paper so it must be true? The opposition then has the ability to propagate that information even further.

I urge Canadians to remain calm and to recognize that the politics of hatred and fear being propagated by the official opposition is not the Canadian way. We need to be secure in our borders. We need to keep trade flowing between Canada and the United States. Telling the international community that we have all these problems when in fact we do not is the most irresponsible and reprehensible action that anyone can take, yet alone a member of this place.

● (1255)

That is not to say improvements do not need to be made. They should be made. There was a breakdown in immigration. Unfortunately it was in the United States and it led to that tragedy. We need to work with the Americans to secure our borders, keep our goods and services flowing both north and south, and keep Canadians safe. My government is committed to that.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased the member opposite realizes that we must have good security in North America. I hope that means he is supportive of the idea of a continent-wide shield of security.

The NDP is against it. It claims that it would take away our sovereignty. I do not understand why the NDP cannot see that we have no sovereignty if we do not have security. We need a definite North American-wide approach to the sovereignty issue.

The member made the comments that it was astounding a refugee would arrive at our borders uninvited. Does he not know, and I must believe he does, that refugees must purchase an airline ticket to get to Canada? They cannot just walk across a border. If they are coming from Somalia where the average income per year is maybe less than \$60 U.S. and they have to buy an airline ticket for \$600 U.S., the first question we want to ask is: Where did they get the money? If it was not theirs, who paid for it and why?

They cannot get into Canada without some sort of documentation to get on the plane. He talks about not being able to apply for a passport and that is fine, but they change planes at Heathrow, Amsterdam or Frankfurt. If they are genuine refugees should they not be claiming refugee status there? If they get back on the plane with their \$600 U.S. ticket they are choosing Canada as a destination and we need to be suspicious of that.

● (1300)

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Mr. Speaker, I made note of a statement made by the previous speaker for the opposition. He said that most of the refugees who arrive in Canada and claim refugee status are not refugees. He is the opposition critic in the citizenship and immigration committee. That is so wrong that it is laughable. The approval rate by the refugee board is 57% of people who make claims. Members would be surprised to know that the approval rate in the United States is 54%.

I wish our society was a neat little box like the member opposite suggests. If people do not meet the standards of our comfortable little cozy world in Canada then we are automatically suspicious.

We do the security checks and the interviews. We find out who the people are, where they are from and what they are doing. If they pose a security risk or if there is any doubt that they may not show up for a hearing, they are detained. What more do these people want? Do they want a penal colony? That is not Canada.

Supply

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am having trouble following the logic of the member opposite and that is not unusual. Sometimes during a reasonable debate in the House we have to put up with what is going on across the way as is the case during this debate.

Canadians are worried about this issue. Our constituents are in our offices. They call us because they are nervous and concerned. They want to make sure they are safe and secure in their own country. The first priority of any government is to make sure its citizens are safe and secure.

How can the member explain more than 20,000 people who should not be in Canada living in Canada and doing whatever they do? They have been refused admission to Canada and they are still here. How does the member explain that?

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Mr. Speaker, as MPs we all know what goes on in our offices regarding immigration. I am sorry if the hon. member wants to insult me personally about my presentation, but I feel very passionately about the issue. I am the longest serving member of the citizenship and immigration committee.

We have people who apply for visitor visas and come to Canada. When that visa expires they disappear. Am I happy about that? No, I am not, but they are not criminals. Many of them are working in the housing industry and in the construction trades. They are also not necessarily refugees.

We have people in Canada and in the United States who are living here without the proper status. Yes, we should try to correct that and Bill C-11 goes a long way toward allowing us to do that. This is a bill that the hon. member's party spoke against in committee and voted against in the House.

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the issue of a secure border is a very major issue for all Canadians. It should not only be secure but also perceived to be secure. We trade mostly manufactured goods with our southern partner in the United States. The products that cross that border amount to \$1.5 billion a day. We need a seamless border which allows goods to travel back and forth with no problem at all.

A manufacturing corporation which has a large engine plant in Windsor made a statement last week to show how important the seamless flow of goods and merchandise is across the border. It said that when an engine leaves the engine plant in Windsor it is important that no blockage at the border occur because in two hours they expect under the delivery system that they operate on the engine to be in a truck going off the assembly line in Detroit. That is the kind of just in time delivery system that is required if our Canadian industry is to be compatible and operating with our American partners.

It is very clear that our borders are significant to all trade. We cannot avoid to bottleneck everything at the border. How do we strike that balance between security and business opportunities to make certain that everyone survives and survives reasonably well?

It is imperative that we look at our system of immigration and refugees and state things that are accurate. When I look at some of the facts pertaining to our border, they are not what I hear every day.

Canada and the United States share some 8,800 kilometres of border. In Canada we employ more inspectors and people at the border than our U.S. counterparts. Canada has 350 citizenship and immigration inspectors and 2,400 customs inspectors while the United States at the same time has approximately 1,500 in total. The number of people who work at Canada's borders are nearly double those in the United States.

Many statements have been made by politicians in Canada and in the United States that Canada is a haven for terrorism. That is absolutely not true. Let us look at terrorism and what happened tragically on September 11. Canadians did not go into the United States and create that danger. However we have to look very carefully at border operations between Canada and the United States. Certainly some changes need to occur.

Senior bureaucrats in the United States have commented that most of the western border crossings do not operate on a 24 hour basis. They were talking about North Dakota. Three out of fifteen border crossings operate on a 24 hour a day system. That means the other 12 only operate from 9 until 5. The only thing that stops anybody from crossing the border is a red cone in the middle of the road. That is not the protection we expect between Canada and the United States.

• (1305)

Our border has been very open. It has not required security. The U.S., with 2,000 and some people at the border, did not see Canada as a problem before September 11. The U.S. has eight times as many people at the Mexican border than at the Canadian border. That means it saw a major problem between Mexico and the United States but did not see the same problem between Canada and the United States.

I find difficulty with some of the irresponsible comments that have been made at this point in time. There has been a lot of irresponsible finger pointing and rhetoric that does nothing to enhance our opportunities in Canada or our business opportunities abroad.

I find difficulty with the suggestion that we do not make sure that when immigrants or refugees land in Canada they are brought into an inspection area, fingerprinted, questioned and checked. If for any reason a person coming into Canada shows evidence, as the former speaker has said, of being a danger to the country, a terrorist threat or someone who might not appear at future hearings, the person is detained.

We do not just open the borders and allow anyone to come in. Health and criminal checks are done on every person who makes an application. People cannot just fly in, go abroad or do whatever they wish. That is not the case. However this is the message I hear from various people, and it is a pretty unfair message.

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In my area where crossing the border is so important car traffic has been down by 60% since September 11. In southwestern Ontario small restaurants and businesses that depend on cross-border traffic, tool and dye companies and our whole tourist and manufacturing sectors are finding these times very difficult. Plants are laying people off and having brief shutdowns. The backups at the borders are as long as two hours in some cases. At other times traffic flows through relatively easily.

If an American thinking about coming over to Windsor for supper knows there will be a potential two hour backup at the border and another hour backup going home, he will not use the Canadian facilities. Our business is suffering dramatically as a result.

Canadians must be reassured that the country is safe. I give the commissioner of the RCMP a tremendous amount of credit. When he met with the immigration committee last week and with the Senate briefly, his number one message was that Canada is the safest country in the world.

We make certain that people coming into Canada are checked carefully. Our sharing of information with officers around the world, be it Europeans, Americans or anyone else, is extremely good. Through CSIS and the RCMP we have access to all kinds of records of people from every nation of the world so that we can check carefully.

We are well known for training people and making sure the immigration and RCMP officers at our borders are highly trained and skilled. That does not mean we have a perfect system. However we are putting a great deal of money into improving it through the terrorist bill.

• (1310)

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have heard some of the Liberals today stand on the other side of the House to give us their talking points as though there were almost no problems with the immigration system. I served with some of them on the citizenship and immigration committee. At that time, thankfully, they were willing to acknowledge there were problems and put out some reports, but they have not measured up in terms of reporting back mechanisms.

I will propose a scenario and ask my Liberal friend across the way a question. The government and the minister have the power to detain people. Liberal members have been talking about fingerprinting and everything else in some of their speeches, and I am sure it is on all their talking points. However if people arrive at one of our airports who have burned or destroyed their documentation, all they are asked for is their name. That is all that happens. If they give their name that is good enough.

Because the people at our airports do not want to deal with all the paperwork and problems and whatnot, they pass it on. All they do is take down the person's name and hope that at some point whoever it is will show up at an appropriate time before an appropriate body.

I would point out to everyone listening today and to my Liberal friends across the way that despite the fact the Liberal government has the power to detain it does not. This makes it easier for our people at airports who do not have the proper staff, manpower or resources because the government has not given them what they

need. As a result people arriving in Canada can give a fictitious name and walk free. Is that not true?

• (1315)

Mr. Jerry Pickard: Mr. Speaker, I have a real problem with the question and the way it was put forward, not because it is not an important issue for Canadians but because of the insinuations it makes.

My colleague stated that immigration officers do not want to be bothered. Quite frankly, that is anything but true. I have met with people on the immigration board. I have met with immigration officers, many of whom are neighbours and friends of people across the country. They are there to protect our borders. No one in the House should make a blanket statement that immigration officers do not do their job. That is ridiculously wrong. They should be ashamed of themselves for doing that.

Liberals detain people. There is absolutely no question. The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River, the critic for the opposition party, appeared before the committee working on Bill C-11 to talk about the bill. He tried to weaken the bill the Liberals put on the floor of the House in June. These were his words:

An officer shall not detain a person who is not a Canadian citizen for a term of greater than six months.

Quite frankly Alliance members cannot stand today and say that was not the case. They jump on the bandwagon when they should not. They create fear where it is not and they do not take responsibility for past actions. That is a shame, but that is the Alliance.

Mr. Charlie Penson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am waiting for an answer to the question that was put to the member. I am hoping he will get to it. It was a straightforward question.

Mr. Jerry Pickard: Mr. Speaker, the suggestion was that anyone could get off a plane and walk free on the streets with no problem at all. These gentlemen need to bring forward information with regard to what is happening.

When people get off a plane without documentation they are fingerprinted and there is a security criminal check. When they get off a plane without information there is a medical check and they are searched to make sure they do not have other bits of information. If there is any thought at all that people will not report back for a hearing they are detained.

That is true in every case. Quite frankly this is a way of saying the members do not agree that the people in our system do their jobs.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Surrey North. I am pleased to be the next to speak because I can clarify something that was said by the member who just spoke.

I visited the Vancouver airport immigration processing centre last Thursday with the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast. The hon. member for Chatham—Kent Essex needs to visit an immigration centre to find out what actually happens.

Supply

When the member says the people who get off planes are fingerprinted he is correct. They are. However does he know that it takes 10 months to get the fingerprint results back? Does he know that it is only for fingerprint records in Canada and nowhere else in the world? A person can turn up and give any name such as Joe Smith. CSIS will check only that name in its records. The fingerprints take 10 months to check and they are only for Canada. Can the hon. member not see that a criminal can walk into Canada instantly?

There are no medical checks. The member can verify this any place where there is an immigration port. The refugee claimant is given a package of documents, asked to report at a certain time to a certain place, and given an application for a medical check. However there are no medical checks at the airport before the person is released.

As for detention, yes, technically it is true that people can be detained. However last week when we were in Vancouver there were only five people detained and awaiting deportation. They were all international criminals with lengthy international warrants for their arrest who had been identified. For people who are detained because they are uncooperative, the maximum amount of time is two to three days in the Richmond lock-up and then they are released. As soon as they give any name at all they are given the refugee package and dispensed out the door.

I challenge the hon. member or any other person on that side who has been brainwashed with their talking points to go to any port of entry in the country and prove me wrong, because that is what happens.

Everyone in this place knows it is ridiculous to suggest there could be refugee claimants from Amsterdam in Holland, Heathrow in the U.K. or Frankfurt in Germany. That would be ridiculous. These countries do not produce refugees. However for Canada they do. We accept refugees from Heathrow, Amsterdam and Frankfurt every day of the week. These are people who get on planes in countries where they need to change planes. They change planes at Frankfurt, Heathrow or Amsterdam.

The UN charter on refugees allows refugees to claim safety in the first safe country they get to. I challenge anyone on that side of the House to tell me how people can be refugees if they change planes at Heathrow, Amsterdam or Frankfurt and choose to come to Canada. Did they not forgo their opportunity to claim refugee status in the first safe country they reached?

When it comes to refugee producing countries I cannot think of many. The only one from which there is a non-stop flight to Canada is Cuba. There might be others; I could be corrected on this point. However everyone else must change planes somewhere, and that somewhere is always a safe country. When people get on a plane with a \$600 U.S. ticket, I want to know where they purchased it, who gave them the money and if they came from Somalia or Afghanistan. I want to know how they got the ticket.

The U.S. takes the attitude that if people arrive with no documents it is a pretty good indication of the type of character they are. It indicates that they trying to hide something. They do not get

admitted. They get shipped out right away. Anyone who has no documents does not get into the United States.

In other respects the United States is as weak as us. It detains people for a short time. It has in the past, as we have, released these people for medical examinations and so on. It needs to tighten up its rules as well.

The member who just spoke said it is wrong to say Canada is a haven for terrorists. However CSIS has told us there are more than 300 people with terrorist links in the country right now. Can Liberal members deny this? CSIS has identified them for us. In addition, 50 or more organizations with terrorists links are raising money.

● (1320)

If there were no problem why is it the new bill the government has put on the table includes provisions to take away the charitable status of these terrorist organizations? I wonder how many Canadian people know that terrorist organizations at the moment can legally set up a charity in Canada under the umbrella that they are informing people, that it is an information service about terrorism, and all the while they are happily raising money.

The Minister of Finance attended a fundraising dinner that CSIS warned him could be a fundraising dinner for terrorists, the Tamil tigers. There is a lot to answer for on that side of the House. They can wax eloquent on their talking points all day and quote their brainwashed programming from upstairs but it does not alter what is happening at our border crossings.

I asked the NDP member who stood up earlier whether she was aware that on any particular night in downtown Vancouver 50% of the arrests made by police are refugee claimants. Surely that is an indication there is a problem. If that is occurring at every major centre across the country, we have a huge problem on our hands, and that is the amount of resources being consumed because we were careless at the borders.

When we had several boatloads of Chinese migrants arrive here last summer, the immigration minister finally showed some courage and detained those people while we processed their claims, considerably faster than average I might add. What did we do? We rejected more than 90% of those people. More than 90% were found to be cheats, queue jumpers or non-refugees. They were opportunists trying to come in through the back door when they should have been coming through the normal immigration process.

Last Thursday immigration officials told us that for every 63 people arriving at the airport claiming refugee status, 200 people claim refugee status at a downtown immigration office in Vancouver, that is 200 people who have slipped through with forged documents, visitor visas or some other way with the intention of claiming refugee status, getting on our social welfare programs, obtaining free dental care, a free apartment to live in and 12 years of appeals before their refugee status is ruled on.

Supply

My riding has probably one of the largest refugee claiming populations in the country. It has been estimated that up to 50% of the people in the Iranian community are refugee claimants. I have had genuine Iranian immigrants call my office identifying some of these people by name and asking me why we let them in. They give me names of certain Iranian individuals who are criminals and wanted for bank robbery or other crimes in Iran. I always report the names to immigration Canada but it never has any record of those names because these criminals do not use their own names when they come to Canada.

The fact is that anyone coming to our border and making a refugee claim when they changed planes in Amsterdam, Frankfurt or Heathrow is a queue jumper because there are millions of genuine refugees in United Nations' camps around the world waiting for us to help them. We should be sending a strong message throughout the world that we want to help genuine refugees and we will take the maximum number we possibly can within our economic constraints, but they will all come prescreened from United Nations' refugee camps. If people want to get into Canada they must go there. They should not bother trying to queue jump into this country because it is not right and we will not tolerate it. The other side loves to talk about tolerance and that Canada is a wonderfully tolerant country, but we will not tolerate queue jumpers, cheats, criminals or anyone else who is taking advantage of our system.

I would like to actually compliment the government for stationing immigration officers in places like Heathrow, Amsterdam and Frankfurt because they do a great job prescreening and assisting the airlines in tracking false documentation, but they are spread too thin. The airlines have told me that they have one of these people on hand who can be called if necessary but it is not for every flight and every passenger. There are still plenty of people sneaking through.

● (1325)

I would put to the other side, who happily quoted that we prevented 6,000 people from getting on planes last year, that figure might have been 60,000 if we had been checking every document and every flight carefully at Frankfurt, Heathrow and Amsterdam.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the frustrations I have heard from many members of parliament is that we continue to hear in the debate a co-mingling of refugees and immigrants. As members know, there is a difference and a different process.

I think the member has probably added again to this confusion by talking substantively about refugees and then talking about queue jumping.

I wonder if the member could clarify what he referred to as queue jumpers so that Canadians will understand how that terminology relates to refugees and how it relates to immigrants.

● (1330)

Mr. Ted White: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for giving me the opportunity to expand on this topic.

I am an immigrant. When I applied in 1977 to come to this country I was turned down the first time. Some may say that was good but the fact is that I was turned down the first time and I think

that was very wise. The first step is to make sure that the people who decide at a party on a Saturday night that they want to go to Canada need to be weeded out right away. I applied again wondering why I did not get in the first time? It took two years for my family to get approval to come here. It was 1979 before we came and we felt we had earned our right to come here. We went through the process and did it properly. We did not try to queue jump.

We should have a similar process for refugees. As I mentioned and as the member knows, there are many refugees waiting in United Nations' camps around the world. I believe those refugees have every right to expect prompt attention to their plight. For every person we accept at our border and use resources and processing time on, it is one or more people who we cannot use resources and processing time on from those United Nations' camps where they have already been proven to be refugees.

I would say that anybody who comes to this country via Heathrow, Amsterdam or Frankfurt is probably not a refugee and is jumping ahead of the proper process, which is to be recognized as a refugee first. That is what is happening at United Nations' camps. We should send the message that nobody is coming to this country pretending to be a refugee when they more properly should come through the correct channels and get in the queue along with all those people who have been waiting patiently for years in refugee camps.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from North Vancouver gave an interesting speech. I know he has a very busy constituency office dealing with immigration matters. In my constituency office in Grand Prairie, immigration takes up the biggest part of our workload.

Canada accepts about 250,000 to 300,000 immigrants yearly. We are all immigrants or descendants of immigrants and we know we need to have immigration in order to continue to have the level of population we need for the economy to grow. I do not think that is in question.

My office is sometimes involved in immigration cases where it takes up to three years for people, who are going through the process legitimately, to come into Canada. I have met with a lot of people who would make outstanding citizens. Does my colleague not experience the same kind of situation where people who are trying to come in through the legitimate process are waiting longer because we are facing a huge problem with refugees coming into this country illegally and thereby inflating the numbers which hurts legitimate applicants?

Mr. Ted White: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for bringing up that point which I should have mentioned when I stood on the intervention previously.

He is absolutely correct. Our immigration department has a huge amount of refugee claims which no doubt take resources away from genuine immigrants. I have had refugee claimants call me up to say that their files are taking a long time.

Members would be amazed if they saw some of the files that I see from people asking for assistance. Incidentally, I never act as an advocate for someone trying to get into the country but my office will definitely check the file to make sure it is on track. I had a refugee claimant upset that he was being rejected because he had been back to Iran, the country from which he was claiming refugee status. I asked him how he could be a refugee if he went back? He said "how else am I supposed to look after my business?" There is the problem.

• (1335)

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak on my party's supply motion. In light of September 11, each one of the four points outlined in the motion is of the highest importance to all Canadians and our allies.

In my submission to the House today, I intend to address each point in the motion. It is obvious to Canadians and our neighbours that the time has come to do more than just consider a continental perimeter initiative. We need to take decisive action to ensure the security of our country and to protect our vital trading relationships.

Today's motion calls on the government to take four steps that the Canadian Alliance believes will go a long way toward ensuring that our country can make a significant contribution to the fight against terrorism on the home front as well as maintaining the healthy trading relationship we currently enjoy with the United States.

The first area that today's motion explores is not only to provide both immigration and customs officers with the training that is required but to also give them full officer status to allow them to detain and arrest suspected criminals at all points of entry.

It is obvious to most Canadians and to our American neighbours that the current safeguards on our front lines are substandard. I want to be very clear. This is not the fault of the hard working men and women who staff our borders. It is the government which refuses to give them the tools and training necessary to do the job properly.

I have been informed that at Pearson International Airport during peak arrival times in the primary customs inspection area, up to 25% of the staff are university students with little more than two weeks worth of training. The students are left with minimal supervision to make decisions as to who can enter the country and who must go on to secondary inspection.

It is incredible to me that in the wake of the events of September 11 and the claims of the government to have beefed up security, the students are still out there as our first line of defence. Even more shocking, I have learned that at some of our land border crossings there are students doing secondary customs inspection. This has to stop. If Canada expects the U.S. to take any of our border security measures seriously, we require qualified and highly trained people on our front lines and they must be given the powers they need to do the job. This is the type of initiative that would go a long way to better securing our borders.

This brings me to the issue of giving our front line officers the powers and tools to detain and arrest suspected criminals and terrorists. I will go back to the Pearson airport example. I have learned that if customs officers want to detain or arrest a suspected

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criminal or terrorist, they may have to wait anywhere from 15 minutes to half an hour for police to respond to the call. A lot can happen in half an hour without the proper equipment or powers to do the job.

Not only are we putting Canadians at risk with the current practices, we are seriously jeopardizing the safety of our front line workers.

The next logical step is to examine our more remote border crossings. How long is the response time of police at those locations? It is an unenviable position in which the government places its front line border staff. More to the point, Canadian security is put to risk.

It is clear by the actions of the government that our front line customs officers are to be little more than duty and tax collectors. It would seem that the government, as evidenced by its inaction, is more interested in collecting the health minister's \$10 duty on a carton of cigarettes than it is in identifying or arresting terrorists or serious criminals.

This brings me to the second point of today's motion. If the government is to take seriously the threat of terrorists and criminals breaching our borders and using Canada as a staging ground for their nefarious activities, we need to move the customs officers out of the tax collection agency and into law enforcement agencies.

It goes without saying that as long as the front line of defence at our borders is under the supervision of Revenue Canada then the emphasis will always be on tax collection and not security. Certainly I think the government would find that its customs officers would overwhelmingly support this type of move.

The next problem the government has failed to address properly is the practice of releasing spontaneous refugee claimants who appear without proper documentation before their identities are confirmed and before they have cleared proper health and security checks. All too often refugee claimants are released on the same day they arrive in Canada on a promise to appear before the Immigration and Refugee Board.

A few hours of questioning is clearly not enough to determine possible security threats and it certainly does not allow for proper health examinations. The truth of the matter is that it can take weeks or months with the current resource shortfalls to properly determine the true identities of refugee claimants who arrive on our doorstep without documentation. Again it is a resource and training problem.

Nobody is suggesting that we hold refugee claimants in detention for extended periods of time. What we are saying is that if the government were to commit the proper resources and determination methods, we could accept legitimate refugee claimants faster and protect Canadians and our U.S. neighbours from the unwanted dangerous elements.

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● (1340)

We are saying that if the government were to commit the proper resources and determination methods, we could accept legitimate refugee claimants faster and protect Canadians and our U.S. neighbours from the unwanted dangerous elements.

Detention in this context is not inhumane. Detention upon entering a country, without any proof of identity or in some cases fabricated identities, should be expected. Most genuine refugee claimants would see this simply as one minor setback on the way to establishing a new life in Canada. If the claimant desires to be released from detention, the process does not have to be complicated, as many people making refugee claims in Canada come from a safe third country. At any time during their detention, the refugee claimant would be free to go back to that safe third country and make their claim from there.

With a real acceptance rate of nearly 60% of all refugee claims, Canada has become the asylum shoppers destination of choice. Canada's refugee system would be completely different if the government were to act on current laws and prescribe certain countries as safe third countries. This would drastically reduce the number of spontaneous refugee claimants in Canada and would go a long way toward increasing this country's security.

The majority of asylum seekers enter Canada through the United States. If Canada were to enter into an agreement with the United States alone, we could reduce the burden on our refugee determination system by more than one half.

Similarly, if we were to enter agreements with the European Union countries, we would also see a drastic reduction in the number of spontaneous refugee claims in Canada, thereby sending a message to the world that asylum shoppers need not put Canada on their list. That in turn would free up the resources to really help the most needy refugees and to do more work overseas by easing the pressure in the refugee camps. We could then offer truly destitute people the chance at a new life.

Many EU countries have already implemented the safe third country concept. It is long past time that Canada get on board and act on laws that are already on the books. It is not necessary for Canada to give up its sovereignty to accomplish the goal of a continental security perimeter. We simply need to look at what we can do to strengthen our current practices to ensure the safety and security of Canada and our U.S. neighbours. It is not a lot of ask.

I encourage all members of the House to vote in favour of today's motion because I believe that the steps which it encourages the government to take would make great headway in easing the legitimate fears and concerns of Canadians and Americans alike.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mark Assad (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Alliance has brought a motion before the House. I note that the minister replied this morning to the speech by the Canadian Alliance leader. The motion states:

That, as part of a continental perimeter initiative to secure Canada's borders and protect the security of Canadians and our neighbours, and to protect our trading relationships, this House calls on the government to:

(a) provide both Immigration officers and Customs officers enhanced training and full peace officer status to allow them to detain and arrest suspected criminals or terrorists at the border—

Obviously immigration officers have long been peace officers, meaning they have authority to arrest and detain persons who are inadmissible to Canada. This obviously includes persons they suspect of being criminals or who already belong to terrorist organizations in other countries.

Right now the existing legislation, as well as proposed Bill C-11, contain provisions for protecting our borders. It is completely wrong to suggest that we do not have such provisions. We do. Our officers have all the means at their disposal to protect the Canadian public.

The motion raises another point I wish to address. It states that the government should:

(c) detain all spontaneous refugee claimants appearing without proper documentation until their identities are confirmed and they have cleared proper health and security checks—

Here again I would mention that our immigration officers conduct an investigation as soon as an application for refugee status has been received. I wish to give an idea of the figures. Some 600 to 800 persons are detained every day by immigration officers. It is wrong to say that they are not doing their job. On the contrary, I think they are doing it rather well in the circumstances.

I am not saying the system is completely perfect. As we know, it obviously has its shortcomings but hundreds of thousands of people have been processed over the years. It is therefore not impossible that errors may occur or that someone may slip through.

On the whole, however, there are certainly safeguards. Last year alone over 8,500 persons were detained by the authorities for a full verification of their origins and their past, as to whether they had ever been charged with a crime and so on.

On the whole, as the minister already mentioned this morning, we already have in place a great number of mechanisms to protect our borders. Contrary to what has been said, I do not think a continental perimeter is required. I believe the Government of Canada has considerable experience in the field of immigration. I have visited some of our offices abroad. It may be true that on occasion there was a lack of resources. I do not doubt it. Our immigration officers work very hard. On the whole, I was impressed by both the quantity and quality of the work they accomplish. It is not insignificant. They work very well. This is a fact that we need to mention more often.

I do not mean to impute motives to the members from the Canadian Alliance, but it is unfortunate that the words "terrorist" and "criminal" come up too often when they speak in the House.

If we look at the facts—which is important—we see that Canadians on the whole very rarely use this kind of language.

Supply

●(1345)

Since September 11, it is all that people are talking about. We often forget the contributions that immigrants have made to our country. I would like to highlight a few facts.

First, if we look at people's files, very few immigrants have criminal records or have been in trouble with the law. It is very important to acknowledge this, and it is a fact.

Second, once immigrants settle, on the whole, very few of them require employment insurance benefits. It is important to note that these people contribute to our country, they do not abuse the system as some in this House have implied.

Third, we often hear stories to the effect that immigrants abuse the system in another way, with welfare. Obviously, when some immigrants arrive, before settling in the community, they need help. We have a very sophisticated system. Some may believe that it is being abused on a daily basis, but this is not the case. There is a social infrastructure in place to help people get settled. I believe that it is one of the great achievements of our Christian society, if I may use the term.

Another thing we have seen with immigrants over the years is that, in their first five years, the average immigrant will earn less than the Canadian average. After their fifth year of working in Canada, in excess of 50% of them earn more than the Canadian average. Once again, this gives some idea of the effort they put into contributing to this country, and not only for themselves and their families. This gives some idea, when over 50% of them earn more than the Canadian average.

There is another aspect people are neglecting to mention here. The educational level of most immigrants to Canada is higher than the Canadian average. Many are technicians or professionals. In Damascus, I had the opportunity to sit in on an interview with a man who had been working in Syria for four or five years and was seeking to immigrate. It took him about a year and a half. He had a doctorate in biochemistry, a great asset for our country.

Overall, I find that these facts are being forgotten. Too often we have been hearing "immigrant", "terrorist" and "criminal" used in the same sentence. I do not find this acceptable, when the facts demonstrate the opposite. This needs some thought. As everyone keeps saying, we in this country are all the children or grandchildren of immigrants. We need to think about that.

There is one other point I must mention. We have heard in the past four or five weeks that some members of the U.S. House of Representatives have been pointing fingers at Canada, saying that our immigration policies were not efficient, that many people were getting around the system. I do not know where they have been getting their information, but they are completely wrong.

I would like to give a few important statistics: 40% of people who make refugee claims at the Canadian border are coming from the United States. They are on American territory and come to the Canadian border to make a refugee claim. Are we the ones responsible if they have got into the U.S. and then come to our border to make a refugee claim? How is this a flaw in our system? It is theirs that is flawed.

●(1350)

[*English*]

I would like to mention some of the comments I have heard made by Alliance members in the past weeks. I bring to their attention that quite often in a lot of their speeches they use the word "immigrants" and in the same sentence they bring out the fact that there are criminals and terrorists. That is a little exaggerated on their part and they should be very conscious of it.

What we have achieved in this country has been a tremendous advantage to most Canadians. In the past weeks many Canadians have expressed their profound belief that Canada is a peaceful and highly respected country throughout the world. They know there are problems in other parts of the world and as Canadians they feel that maybe the root causes should be attacked. More than ever we have to show restraint in what we do in Canada. It would be very wise for us to realize that some of the things we do are going to have profound repercussions not only here but abroad and for those who want to come to Canada.

I hope we can keep in mind that we have a tremendous advantage by living in this country. Many people want to come to Canada. However we cannot start making them feel as if we suspect everyone who wants to come to this country and that we want to have investigations. We do not want them to feel that way. We want them to feel welcome here. If in speeches they hear the word "immigrant" is followed every time by "criminal" or "terrorist", that is highly unacceptable.

[*Translation*]

In closing, when Bill C-11 was examined in committee, the Canadian Alliance member for Dauphin—Swan River worked a lot with us to find ways to improve our immigration system. We sat over five or six weeks and corrected certain things.

Overall, the Immigration Act will be much more secure, because parts of it will make the system more effective. We will be able to make quicker decisions, because we will have the information at hand.

I just wanted to make these comments and I am prepared to answer questions from my colleagues.

●(1355)

[*English*]

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I found the comments of the hon. member rather interesting. It seems to me that the hon. member forgot to read the motion currently being debated.

He waxed long and eloquently upon the benefits of immigrants coming to the country, which I certainly would endorse. Many people, I dare say most of us, have ancestors who were immigrants to Canada. We are very proud and thankful that we are able to live and make a living here. Many people have contributed many things to the country. The hon. member absolutely is correct about that, but that is not what we are debating today.

S. O. 31

We are debating the possibility, in fact the desirability, of creating a defence mechanism whereby government officials would be empowered to arrest suspected criminals or terrorists at the border. Spontaneous refugee claimants appearing at the border without documentation would be detained until we could find out whether they were legitimate refugees. Finally, there would be a list of safe countries from which we would not accept refugees. That is what we are debating.

This is not a question of whether we should or should not have immigrants come to the country. Of course we want immigrants. We want to be compassionate toward refugees who are suffering and who are in danger of being persecuted for whatever reasons, whether they be religious or political. We want to be compassionate and encourage immigrants but the issue is what the best possible mechanism would be to make sure that people who are suspected of being terrorists or who are known to be terrorists are kept out.

We all want safe communities. We want to feel free from having our possessions stolen. We do not want our friends or associates murdered. We want peace. We want quiet. We want non-violence. The motion is designed to create a mechanism to take the identified terrorists aside and tell them they cannot come to Canada, that Canada will not be a place for them to launch their terrorists activities or for them to go to other countries.

That is the issue. I wish the hon. member would comment on that issue rather than on the immigration issue at large.

Mr. Mark Assad: Mr. Speaker, I say to the hon. member that I mentioned that we have the necessary provisions already in the law. Our immigration officers are acting as peace officers. We already have mechanisms at work to protect our borders.

The fact is that some people slip through. We have never claimed to have a perfect system. I would say to the hon. member that of course we all want safe borders but there is no doubt in my mind that the immigration officers are doing their work. Quite often they are doing it quite well. There are circumstances, and I have to say in exceptional cases sometimes there are errors, but all in all they are doing a very good job.

We do not have to debate the motion on this issue. We know very well what our immigration officers are doing.

The Speaker: When the House resumes consideration of the motion, the hon. member will have six minutes and a bit remaining in the time for questions and comments.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

ADOPT A DOG MONTH

Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Oak Ridges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has declared October Adopt a Dog Month. It is calling upon all members of the public to do what they can to lessen the demand for puppy mill dogs and identify puppy mills in their areas.

Thousands of dogs need loving homes. Adopting helps reduce pet overpopulation. It also reduces the demand for dogs sometimes filtered through puppy mills.

Life has taken a turn for the better for one of these dogs. Honey, a two year old pup who lost an eye because of an infection and became the poster puppy in the fight against puppy mills, has been safely adopted into her new home.

The OSPCA is headquartered in the northern end of my riding. Over the summer it took in well over 200 dogs and puppies from puppy mills. As a charitable organization the society's work is funded entirely by donations from concerned individuals, associations and corporations. I would like to thank them for their hard work and dedication in caring for tens of thousands of animals every year.

* * *

TERRORISM

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in the wake of September 11 we have heard a growing number of voices of moral equivalence in Canada from anti-American diatribes aired in ridiculously unbalanced CBC forums, to left wing editorialists like Haroon Siddiqui suggesting that the Americans got what was coming to them, to some who say that the murder of 6,000 people is no more an act of terrorism than Israel's self-defence.

Even members of the House have said that this struggle is not a question of good versus evil. Last week the finance committee heard from a group called Kairos arguing that deaths from natural diseases are as much a moral concern as the mass murders in the United States.

Let us be clear that there is no room for this kind of moral relativism in the face of September 11. The root cause of this terror is hatred, particularly a virulent strain of anti-semitism. When referring to terrorists the Leader of the Opposition stated in this place:

The hatred that moves them to massacre the innocent can never be negotiated with or reasoned with. It is not a matter of shades of grey...It is set in black and white. This is not a time for moral ambiguity. It is a moment of moral clarity.

* * *

VOLUNTEERISM

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I hosted a reception to recognize 10 volunteers from the Guelph-Wellington chapter of the Canadian Red Cross. My guests ranged in ages from 17 years of age to 90 years of age. It was a fitting time to honour these individuals as 2001 is the International Year of the Volunteer and this is a Women's History Month.

I should like to highlight two programs that these volunteers participate in. Meals on Wheels delivers hot meals to those unable to cook for themselves. The Red Cross trace and reunion program brings together families separated by war and strife. Canadians appreciate both these worthy programs.

Like so many Canadians I am appreciative of the invaluable services the Red Cross and its many volunteers provide here and around the world. I applaud the Red Cross for it truly represents and responds to those in need.

* * *

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I should like to recognize the Meteorological Service of Canada, one of Environment Canada's vital services. It works every day, even Christmas Day, to bring Canadians essential information: weather forecasts, warnings of severe storms, smog alerts, and information on water levels, ice, climate and the ozone layer. Its weather warnings can save lives and its smog alerts safeguard our health.

Today marks the 130th anniversary of the Meteorological Service of Canada which was created in 1871 when Canada was still a fledgling nation. Its purpose then was to safeguard ships from severe storms in the Great Lakes and on the St. Lawrence River.

At the most basic level it used and still uses volunteer observers in all parts of Canada with stations near people's homes, on farms and campuses.

Early weather forecasts used telegraph lines and hoisted flags to warn of an approaching storm. Since then its work has expanded across the country. Its tools now include computers and satellite transmissions. Its scope has broadened to include many types of environmental information.

I ask members to join me in recognizing the Meteorological Service of Canada.

* * *

HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Kitchener—Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October 23 marks the 45th anniversary of the Hungarian revolution. The revolution was ignited when a student led demonstration against the Soviet Communist occupation was met with gunfire. The revolution was crushed by Soviet tanks. Twenty-five thousand freedom fighters were killed and a hundred thousand wounded. A reign of terror followed.

Two hundred thousand Hungarians fled Hungary with nearly forty thousand being granted refuge in Canada. Then minister of immigration, Jack Pickersgill, went to extraordinary means to expedite the movement of Hungarian refugees to Canada.

On behalf of my family and nearly 40,000 Hungarian refugees, I thank the Canadian people, the government and Jack Pickersgill for the compassion, concern and safe haven they offered us in this wonderful country.

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● (1405)

MARK R. ISFELD

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Courtenay, B.C., history was made with the opening of the Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School. This is the first time in

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Canadian history that a school has been named after one of our fallen peacekeepers.

On June 21, 1994, Master Corporal Mark Isfeld was killed while serving with the First Combat Engineer Regiment removing landmines in Croatia. He was on his third peacekeeping tour in 30 months.

Mark had studied every piece of known ordnance in Croatia. He could recognize it from 100 paces and could take it apart blindfolded. He was a perfect example of professionalism in our troops. Of the dangers he faced daily, Mark wrote:

I know what this stuff can do. Civilians, small children don't. My skills are to protect them.

Sadly, despite his skill and knowledge, on that June day Mark was outside an armoured personnel carrier when it ran over a tripwire to an anti-personnel mine.

His memory and that of all peacekeepers is honoured in Courtenay. I cannot think of a finer tribute to a soldier who cared so deeply about the job he did and the people he did it for.

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MIKE NEMESVARY

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to welcome back to Ottawa and to Parliament Hill Canada's own superman, Mike Nemesvary. Seven months ago, on March 20, we wished bon voyage and good luck to Mike as he embarked on the dream of his lifetime.

Today the round the world challenge is a fait accompli. After travelling more than 40,000 kilometres through 20 countries Mike has established a new world record, becoming the first quadriplegic to drive around the globe.

What a feat for Mike and what an accomplishment for his entire team. What generosity from people who have donated funds for spinal cord injury, research and rehabilitation.

On your behalf, Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to join me at your reception at 3.30 p.m. to welcome and congratulate Mike on his heroic voyage.

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[*Translation*]

CANADIAN ECONOMY

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, like many Quebecers, I am wondering what the Minister of Finance is waiting for to make his action plan public, when whole sectors of our economy have been affected by the terrorist attacks that took place in the United States and by the economic downturn prior to September 11.

On numerous occasions, we asked the Minister of Finance about his plans to boost the economy. While the problems are real and tangible, the minister's comments have been sketchy and inconsistent.

S. O. 31

It is not as though he lacks the means to restore economic growth and create jobs, because in a worst case scenario, he has at his disposal a surplus of \$13 billion between now and March 31, 2002.

The Bloc Québécois is only asking him to use 5 of the \$13 billion that he has to provide oxygen to the economy. It is imperative that the Liberal government end its silence and reveal to parliamentarians its strategic plan to put an end to the economic downturn.

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INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Mr. Claude Duplain (Portneuf, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been one year since the Canada-Quebec Infrastructure Agreement was signed.

Municipalities throughout Quebec anxiously awaited the start of the program, and they have been eager to respond to it.

For example, in Portneuf alone, there have been 34 projects, 14 of which are a part of the first component: green municipal infrastructure (drinking water and wastewater). At a time when the economy needs a boost and drinking water and wastewater problems are critical; considering that in the riding of Portneuf, the Government of Quebec has not yet made any applications to have component 1 projects approved by the federal government; and given that there are some families who do not have access to drinking water, action is required.

For this reason, I urge all stakeholders to work together in order to remedy this situation, which need not exist, and which is depriving Quebecers of the benefits of this program.

We may think of vast expanses of water, but in my riding, there are families that simply want a glass of water.

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[*English*]

TOBY BANKS-ROSSER

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today a fellow parliamentarian mourns the loss of a loved one. As colleagues and friends, Senator Tommy Banks from Edmonton needs our thoughtful wishes today.

Tommy's daughter, Toby Banks-Rosser, gave her voice in song on radio, on television and in the theatre. Music and song run deep in the Banks family tree. When faced with the sadness of another's despair we naturally turn to our own families for compare.

If any of us were to have one of our daughters slip away long before their time, the pain would be too great to bear alone. We as colleagues and friends are limited to words, words of sorrow and words sympathy but sincere words from friends who want to share the pain.

Tommy and his family are not alone in their grief. They are in our thoughts and in our prayers today.

●(1410)

[*Translation*]

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that a year ago the Government of Canada and the government of Quebec signed an agreement on infrastructure projects.

Given the economic downturn affecting the country at the moment and given that one way to stimulate the economy is to undertake infrastructure projects in traditional areas or in the area of the environment; and

Given that, in my riding of Pierrefonds—Dollard, no application has yet received provincial approval, I ask all those involved to be diligent in the matter.

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[*English*]

HEALTH

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in trying to explain this past week's drug purchasing fiasco, the health minister has referred to the many versions of events.

Canadians are used to many versions of Liberal drug patent policy. Before being elected in 1993 they were vehemently opposed to the Mulroney drug patent extension and vowed to reverse it. The post-election version, however, saw them extending it.

Then there was the new version in 1997 election and the promise of a national drug plan. Then there was the version that ended up as Bill S-17 extending patent protection again.

It is no wonder the health minister got confused last week. He did not remember which version he was on. The NDP version of what needs to happen is that instead of having a contest between the Liberals, the Alliance, the Bloc and the Tories as to who worships property rights more than public health and who is better friends with the drug industry, the law in question should be changed.

If September 11 has changed everything, perhaps it is time to change our drug patent law.

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[*Translation*]

QUEBEC-CREE AGREEMENT

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is delighted to highlight today the historic agreement reached between the government of Quebec and the Cree. This agreement establishes a new relationship, nation to nation.

The grand chief of the Grand Council of the Crees, Ted Moses, said “With this agreement, a new relationship will be established between Quebec and the Cree. This relationship will be built on trust and mutual respect. Some may think that this relationship is impossible. We will prove them wrong”.

Through this agreement, based on dialogue, all legal proceedings instituted by the Cree against the government of Quebec are dropped. Those involving the federal government, however, remain in effect.

This strengthening of the Cree's economic control over their future, this enhanced dialogue, obvious mutual respect and more modern partnership between the Cree nation and the Quebec nation point the way to the future.

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INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Mr. Gérard Binet (Frontenac—Mégantic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, improving and creating new infrastructures helps to improve the quality of life in our communities.

As part of its commitment to maintaining Canada's economic growth and the quality of life of Canadians, the Government of Canada, in partnership with the provincial government, has renewed the Canada-Quebec Infrastructure Works Agreement.

More than 45 applications for funding under this program have been made in the Frontenac—Mégantic region. We certainly hope the government of Quebec will forward these applications to the federal government as soon as possible so that action can be taken this year.

* * *

[English]

RETAIL INDUSTRY

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, this week the chambers of commerce across Canada are celebrating the success in retail business in Canada.

The retail sector in Canada is big business. There are 1.7 million Canadians working in retail. Retailers sell over one quarter of a trillion dollars of goods every year. That is more than \$9,000 for every man, woman and child in the country.

The retail sector is the very fabric of our national economy. At a time when Canadians are feeling less certain about events related to September 11 we must ensure that we reach out and support this important sector.

I salute the retailers of every community from the one store towns to the corporate businesses of our large cities. I would like to provide a warm welcome to the members of the Retail Council of Canada who are with us in the House today for its special “Retail Connects with Ottawa Day”.

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SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week is Small Business Week in Canada.

Oral Questions

Small Business Week runs from October 21 to October 27 and the theme this year is “The Power of Innovation Driving Small Business Growth”.

Small Business Week is organized by the Business Development Bank of Canada in co-operation with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. It is an annual event held in all parts of Canada with the support of national and local sponsors.

It pays tribute to the talents and achievements of the owners of small and medium size businesses and gives them an opportunity to network with those interested in small business and dedicated to its development.

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●(1415)

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister of agriculture gives the impression to many Canadians that he is dealing responsibly with the farm crisis and the drought experienced this summer.

Nothing could be further from the truth. He has stood in the House and told farmers that there are programs available to them, but he neglects to mention that they do not work and are not properly funded.

For example, the minister says that crop insurance should soften the effects of the drought, but the province of Saskatchewan has requested \$200 million to cover the shortfall for this year. The minister responds to these desperate needs saying that he is waiting to see how the programs work.

Farmers cannot wait. There should be the biggest payout in years, yet these programs are not even covering their input costs. CFIP and AIDA do not help those farmers who need them most.

The minister talks about his programs but it is all hot air. They do not work and are not properly funded. We have already had enough hot air on the prairies with the drought this summer. We need some action now.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday the Minister of Health on his involvement in the illegal drug scandal said “Health Canada officials did, on my direction. I told them to get these drugs”. Those are the minister's words.

He directed his officials to break the law. He cannot even argue that he broke the law to achieve some greater public good because the drugs were readily available to Canadians without the government breaking the law.

In a time of war against terrorism the public must have confidence in the government officials in whom they trust their health and safety.

Oral Questions

Does the Prime Minister believe that the Minister of Health's law breaking is building the confidence that we need among Canadians? Does he really believe that?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is talking nonsense. My direction to Health Canada was to stockpile the drugs we need to protect the security of Canadians. I did not direct it to make that contract with Apotex or any other specific firm. This time last week we could not ensure access by Canadians to the drugs they needed. Today we can.

Last Wednesday, on two occasions, Bayer Canada said it could not supply us with the drugs we needed. My officials, in good faith, went elsewhere to get those drugs. They made a mistake by not following the process but they did it in good faith, and I stand with them.

I will stand with any official who acts to protect the safety of Canadians.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, anyone can make a mistake, but consider the cost to the taxpayer of the minister's ongoing carelessness.

The tainted blood scandal; we have no idea what that has cost. The Mulroney Airbus witch hunt; \$10 million. The Pearson airport breach of contract, under his watch; \$600 million. The escalating costs of the firearm registry fiasco; half a billion dollars and climbing. Now there is his illegal drug deal. He has individually cost taxpayers over \$1 billion.

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is not in any position to talk about costing taxpayers to settle court cases.

The bottom line for us is to make sure that the health of Canadians health is protected, and that is exactly what we did. If big drug companies want to play shell games with us, we will not stand for it. We will do what is required to get the drugs in hand to protect the health of Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the fear of anthrax, the threat of bioterrorism and the health and safety of the public are much too important to be left in the hands of this incompetent minister while a war is going on.

With the public's confidence at an all time low, I have but one question for the minister: Will he resign, yes or no?

• (1420)

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to tell that member and everyone in the House that I am going to continue to aggressively protect the health of Canadians and do what is required to make sure we have what is needed.

Last Wednesday, Bayer told us it could not respond to our request for Cipro, which was a drug that in my judgment we needed to have. Health officials took steps to make sure we got that drug. I stand with my health officials.

Shell games by drug companies will not be tolerated. They are not good enough for us on this side of the House. We will do what is required to protect Canadians.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the awarding of the anti-anthrax drug Cipro would be understandable to every Canadian if in fact there was an emergency. However, the minister, by his own words, said that there was no emergency, that there was no anthrax in Canada and that they had some Cipro on the shelf for that emergency.

Will the minister accept the principle of ministerial responsibility and be responsible for his department? Yes or no.

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my responsibility is to make sure that the health security of Canadians is protected. I proudly accept responsibility for Health Canada. My officials worked in good faith, doing the best they could in their judgment to achieve protection for the health of Canadians.

On the subject of anthrax, it is an unlikely threat in Canada but, in my judgment, we had to have the drug. When Bayer told us twice it could not give it to us, Health Canada officials did what was required, in their judgment, to make sure we had what we needed.

The House can be assured that we will continue to do what is needed to protect Canadians.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister's actions have cost the taxpayer millions. I am reminded of the Airbus fiasco. I am reminded of the hepatitis C fiasco. Now we have the Cipro blunder.

Once again, will the minister accept the principle of ministerial responsibility and recognize that his mistakes are costly to the Canadian taxpayer? Yes or no.

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my responsibility is clear: it is for the health and security of Canadians. That is the responsibility I am concerned with, not the political games that people on the other side of the House want to play.

What would that member have said if an anthrax need had arisen and Health Canada was not in a position to respond with the medications that were required? We will make absolutely certain that we have what we need to protect the health of Canadians.

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[Translation]

ANTI-TERRORISM LEGISLATION

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House the Minister of Justice stated that she would await committee recommendations before taking a decision on the sunset clauses.

In committee afterward, however, the minister declared her opposition to such clauses, referring to the impact these would have on police investigations, a false argument which puts police professionalism in a bad light.

How can the Minister of Justice show open-mindedness in the House and then the opposite in committee? Is it because the government is quite simply opposed to the idea of adding sunset clauses to anti-terrorism legislation?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been absolutely clear on the point that the government has included a three year review. That is our preferred mechanism.

However, I have also indicated that in the House and the Senate committees there are hard-working members of those committees who think that other review mechanisms may be as appropriate or, in some cases, even more appropriate. I am certainly willing to hear their advice and recommendations, and the evidence on which they would make such suggestions.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister has said that the police could not do their job properly.

Yet the U.S. and France have included such a clause in their anti-terrorism bills.

Are we to conclude from her statements in committee that the French and American police will not do their jobs properly because their governments have included sunset clauses?

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is premature to determine how the United States law enforcement authorities or government authorities deal with sunset clauses that in essence are being discussed by congress at this time and are being agreed to.

I come back to the fact that the government believes that the three year review process is the appropriate process. However, we are open. The Prime Minister, myself and others are open to the fact that if either the House committee or the Senate committee can offer advice and recommendations to assist us in our important work, we are more than willing to listen.

• (1425)

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after the privacy commissioner and the information commissioner, now we have Mr. Claude Bisson, of the Communications Security Establishment, a former chief justice of the Quebec appeal court, telling the government that the bill gives it exorbitant powers.

The more the experts analyze this bill, the more they fear the potential use of these powers.

Does the minister, who also has an obligation to protect individual rights, not feel she has a duty to state clearly that this bill must include sunset clauses?

[English]

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bisson's comments were directed specifically at that portion of the bill that relates to the communications security establishment. He quite clearly indicated that his use of the word exorbitant was in the sense of being out of the ordinary and not excessive. In fact, I have a written letter from Mr. Bisson who

supports the amendment in Bill C-36 for the communications security establishment.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us be serious here.

A simple review of the act is recognition of the permanent nature of the so-called exorbitant powers, whereas sunset clauses are a recognition of the temporary nature of certain exceptional measures it contains.

My question is for the Minister of Justice. Does she recognize the necessity, in order to reassure the population, for certain clauses in this bill to be temporary in nature, and that sunset clauses are needed for this?

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have made it absolutely plain that we believe a three year review mechanism is the appropriate protection for all Canadians. I have also made it equally plain that reasonable people of good faith could disagree on that point. That is why I will be so interested in hearing the advice and recommendations that come from both the House and Senate committees.

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HEALTH

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has paid \$1.5 million for pills from Apotex and turned them over to Bayer. Bayer says "they don't anticipate the Apotex products will ever be used". In other words, Canadians pay the price so the Liberals can save face.

Is the problem with the health minister or is the problem with the Patent Act?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have today what they did not have and could not get a week ago, which is security of access to the drug they need.

We are not paying twice for the same drugs. The Apotex drugs will be kept. Bayer has said it will respond within 48 hours if we place an order for its drug, which we have not yet done. If it cannot respond, the Apotex drugs will be used. Last week it could not respond. If that happens again, we have the security of the Apotex drugs.

That is protecting the security of the health of Canadians.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before these Liberals were elected to govern, they promised to change the Patent Act. The health minister would not be in this mess today if the Liberals had kept their promise. The serious flaws in the Patent Act have been amply illustrated by the Cipro fiasco.

Will the minister now bring in the promised changes to the Patent Act or will he instead persist in perpetuating the Mulroney legacy?

Oral Questions

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we respect the Patent Act. We have to make sure everything is done in accordance with the Patent Act.

Let me say this. This has less to do with the Patent Act than it does with what happened last week when we went to a company that held a patent and asked for access to its drug. We felt we needed the drug. It said it did not have it. It said that on two occasions.

If Health Canada officials, acting in good faith, took steps on the basis of that information at a time of need to get access to the drug, then although they erred in not following the process, I stand behind them. We will continue to do what is required to protect the health security of Canadians.

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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, the campaign manager for the Minister for International Cooperation in last year's election received untendered contracts for slightly under \$50,000, just a few hundred dollars short of the threshold for which tenders are required.

Will the minister provide the House with a detailed accounting of Ted Lojko's work and billings to ensure that taxpayers received value for this money?

• (1430)

Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. It is very clear that the CIDA contracts always respect and, in this case, fully comply with treasury board rules and regulations.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, that is hardly an accounting. The minister has no excuse for such blatant and backdated patronage. She personally asked that her department, CIDA, award a contract to workers on her election campaign. Senior officials at CIDA said that they were pressured to award the contracts. They said "we were told to make this happen".

The contracts were questionable. The patronage is obvious. Will the foreign affairs minister provide some explanation on behalf of his cabinet colleague for this atrocious abuse of taxpayer dollars in awarding loyal Liberals?

Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these accusations are simply outrageous. The CIDA contract in question fully complied with treasury board rules and regulations, including contract regulations covering retroactive situations.

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TERRORISM

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in the month following the September 11 attack our solicitor general spent most of his time denying the Canadian connection.

Let us look at the facts. Al-Marabh, the former Toronto resident, has been identified by the FBI as one of four key suspects in the

attack on America. The RCMP is searching for another 10 to 12 key suspects in the Toronto area. Three suspects have been arrested in Fort McMurray, one a refugee claimant with up to 15 different aliases.

Will the solicitor general finally end the denial and admit there is a huge Canadian connection?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is too bad my hon. colleague continues to jump to conclusions. I get my information from the commissioner of the RCMP, the director of CSIS and the attorney general of the United States. These people and agencies have indicated that there is no evidence of a direct link between Canada and September 11.

However as I have said many times, we cannot dismiss that possibility. This is an international investigation that involves thousands of leads and a number of arrests, some here in Canada.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, no one is jumping to conclusions. The evidence is pointing to the conclusions.

There is more on the Canadian connection. France has demanded the extradition of Abdellah Ouzghar, an associate of Ahmed Ressam. Ouzghar has been identified as a ringleader of a passport forging operation.

Canada was deliberately chosen because of the ease in which to pull off such an operation. Does the government admit the terrorists are using Canada as a venue of opportunity because of its lax laws?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): It is a pity, Mr. Speaker, that my hon. colleague continues to wish to criticize our police and immigration. The fact of the matter is, we have one of the safest countries in the world. As I have said a number of times, and it is obvious my hon. colleague has big trouble accepting this, there is no direct link between Canada and the September 11 attacks.

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[*Translation*]

HEALTH

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, an agreement was reached yesterday between Bayer and the Department of Health to ensure the supply of drugs to treat anthrax. Yet, we have learned that the minister also plans on respecting the contract with Apotex and will pay this company the sum of \$1.3 million.

After making taxpayers foot the bill for his mistakes in the Airbus saga, does the minister realize that, once again, taxpayers will end up paying for his mistakes, and that this is unacceptable?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have now what we always wanted, a safe and secure supply of the drugs needed.

One week ago, Bayer stated clearly to Health Canada officials that it could not provide the drugs. We now have them because we reached an agreement, and Bayer is committed to providing the drugs when they are needed. This is a good result for the health of Canadians.

• (1435)

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister now says that he is not responsible for the decisions that were taken. He is hiding shamelessly behind his officials and citing public health reasons to justify his haste.

Since Bayer confirms that it could have met the demand, will the minister continue to assert that his quick response was for public health reasons?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, officials from my department acted immediately after having heard from Bayer that it could not provide the drugs needed. It is clear that the officials made a mistake, but it was made in good faith and to protect the health of Canadians.

I support my officials. I share their commitment to the health of Canadians. We will continue to protect that health aggressively.

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[English]

ANTI-TERRORISM LEGISLATION

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the anti-terrorism legislation provides for the unrestricted right of the Minister of Justice to hide information held by the government about a Canadian citizen, simply by a stroke of a pen, by issuing a certificate.

Why will the minister not amend the legislation to permit the privacy commissioner to review her decisions in confidence so that Canadians can be assured that the minister is acting in the interests of national security and not partisan Liberal politics?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already explained on a number of occasions in the House that the power provided to me to issue a certificate is one that would be used in limited circumstances and in relation to highly confidential information related to international relations or national security.

I am aware that Mr. Radwanski, the privacy commissioner, was at committee this morning and in fact has suggested an amendment. My officials have not had the time to review it, but I will say that I think the approach of the privacy commissioner speaks to how responsibly witnesses are taking this important task before committee and I thank Mr. Radwanski for directing his—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Provencher.

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the APEC inquiry pointed out the secret abuse by the Prime Minister's Office in interfering with police operations. The privacy commissioner today expressed his concern over the absolute power granted to the minister.

In view of the abuses by the Prime Minister's Office at APEC, I am thankful that the minister will look at the issue of the certificate. Will she also look at correcting the abuses in respect of APEC and

Oral Questions

ensure that the Prime Minister's Office no longer interferes with police operations?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I completely reject the premise of the hon. member's question. I think what he has asserted is most unfortunate and in fact verges on the outrageous.

Let me reiterate for the hon. member that the power given to the attorney general to issue a certificate is a very limited one and for very limited purposes. However, as with other provisions of this legislation, I will be very interested in the advice and recommendations of the committee. In fact if there are ways that we can improve the legislation to achieve our objectives, we are open to considering them.

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[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister said on Friday that the opposition puts the health of Canadians behind the interests of certain companies.

It is in fact exactly the opposite and the Minister of Health got caught in the act.

Will he acknowledge that it was he who put the interests of a pharmaceutical company ahead of the interests of the public and of the health of the public?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the sole concern of Health Canada and of the Minister of Health is to protect the security of Canadians, and we did.

A week ago, we discovered we could not obtain the drugs needed. We acted responsibly. We have now resolved our differences with the companies and have taken the steps necessary to protect the health of the public.

• (1440)

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all that, after wasting \$1.3 million of taxpayers' money. Some responsibility is called for.

How can the minister, who says he has the health of Canadians at heart, make such a claim when he was preparing to give them drugs that had not been approved by Health Canada, while approved and effective drugs were available?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I simply said we have now done what was needed in response to the situation.

Oral Questions

[English]

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the solicitor general how two suspects arrested in Fort McMurray last week for possession of fraudulent documents and suspicion of terrorist activities were able to pass an RCMP criminal background check required for employment when they were not even allowed to legally seek employment in Canada.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague has indicated, these individuals have been arrested.

It involves an investigation and my hon. colleague is fully aware that I will not comment on an ongoing investigation.

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that is an absurd answer.

Given all the assurances that we have heard in the House this morning about the security of Canada's border entry points, how did these individuals gain entry into Canada given their long criminal record and even outstanding warrants for their arrest in Canada?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members opposite have heard me say on a number of occasions that we are working very closely with the Americans as well as with law enforcement agencies in Canada.

Let me explain to the members what this means. When the RCMP says it cannot comment because there is an investigation and the FBI says it cannot comment because there is an investigation, surely they would recognize that there should not be a comment, because we do not want to jeopardize an investigation. If they were being responsible, they would understand that.

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AIR CANADA

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport has told the House that the government supports a private sector solution to the challenges facing Air Canada. Could the minister please tell the House what he intends to do to support this idea?

Hon. David Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know we have been working very closely with the airlines since September 11.

In particular, to assist Air Canada to secure more investment from the capital markets the government today agreed to introduce amendments to the Air Canada Public Participation Act, which would see the elimination of the single shareholder limit. Notice of that bill will be given this evening.

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TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, funding for public transit makes good sense especially in terms of reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and meeting our Kyoto commitments.

Municipalities and now even the provincial government in Ontario have agreed to put money into this program.

Yesterday the transport minister refused to meet the commitments he made in the past and he will not come to the table and contribute. Why will the minister not meet his commitments? When will he participate in this type of program?

Hon. David Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I might remind the hon. member that in the red book we talked about forging a partnership with municipalities and the provinces to assist with municipal transit. Work is ongoing, particularly in committee, led by my colleague from York West.

Let me be clear here. The Ontario government ended funding in 1998. It used to pay 75% of capital funding and 50% of operational funding. It has come back with 33 cent dollars and then expects the federal government and municipalities to pick up the slack. That is just not good enough.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the mayor of Ottawa was quoted as saying that this minister, referring to the Minister of Transport, made speech after speech across this country, including here in Ottawa. He gave the commitment that he would be at the table if the province was at the table.

Now he has reneged on it. I can only hope that the finance minister will take up the slack and honour the commitment. So I ask the finance minister, will he?

Hon. David Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I never thought that I would see a member from the NDP being an apologist for the Harris government and its scandalous treatment of municipalities on housing, on transit and in a number of other areas.

The government is committed to helping municipalities with housing and transit and we will do it in this mandate.

* * *

● (1445)

HEALTH

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, in an attempt to shield himself from prosecution by the Minister of Justice over the Ciprogate fiasco, the Minister of Health has used the excuse that he was only acting to protect the health of Canadians. If the minister really respected the Patent Act he would not be in another mess where taxpayers will have to pay twice for medication they could have obtained legally in the first place.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Are there any other cabinet ministers who have broken the law in their rush to play catch up following the events of September 11 or is the health minister the only one who has broken the law?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the premise of the hon. member's question is totally unfounded. He is wrong in reaching a conclusion that any ministers have broken the law. When one decides that the law has been broken there has to be a trial by a court, not the unwarranted assertion by a desperate member of the fifth and failing party.

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Health stated there were different versions of what happened when Health Canada approached Bayer to supply Cipro. Today the minister is stating that Bayer was approached twice and could not supply the drug Cipro.

If the minister has sorted out this mess, which incidentally is costing the taxpayers \$1.5 million, will he table in the House today after question period the correspondence that confirms the request to Bayer by Health Canada and Bayer's confirmation that it would not be able to supply this drug?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am telling the member and I am telling the House today that Health Canada officials have confirmed to me that on two occasions last Wednesday Bayer told them it could not provide additional Cipro.

The member is wrong in saying the taxpayers have had to spend money uselessly. The fact is, we are paying for any drugs we take and use. If we order more drugs from Bayer we will pay for them and we will use them.

The drugs that have been purchased from Apotex will be kept and, if necessary, they are available for use.

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IMMIGRATION

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. congress has indicated that it will be employing up to 7,500 new border police to protect America. From what? From Canada's lax immigration and refugee process.

The FBI has reported that there are anywhere from 50,000 to 70,000 undesirables in Canada right now who should be deported.

When will the minister stop hiding behind a plastic maple leaf card and a press release and start aggressively removing all those who may be a security risk to Canada?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, we do detain anyone where we have evidence that they pose a security risk to Canada and we keep them in detention as long as we have evidence to suggest that they are a risk. We move through the courts to remove them as quickly as possible.

I am the first one to say that sometimes those procedures take too long. That is why I brought forward legislation to streamline those processes.

The premise of the member's question is absolutely wrong. On the Canadian side of the border we have three times the resources in personnel than the Americans have at this time. What they are doing is actually going to—

The Speaker: The hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have spoken. There have been literally hundreds, even thousands, of letters of complaint by Canadians to their elected representatives. Obviously the

Oral Questions

workings of the immigration system do not have broad political support in this country.

Even British Columbia premier Gordon Campbell, a Liberal, is questioning the validity of the government and the claims of the immigration minister.

Why has the government not made it a priority to seek out and remove the thousands of people who should be deported from this country?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): In fact, Mr. Speaker, removals are a priority. Canada has a very good record of removal. Last year well over 8,000 people were removed. The number one priority for removal are those who are inadmissible because of criminality or security concerns and the second priority are failed refugee claimants.

Over the last five years there have been 45,000 removals. Of the people who were removed last year, some 1,700 were inadmissible because of security concerns. They were removed as quickly as we could do it.

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[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Was his decision to violate the Patent Act approved by cabinet, yes or no?

● (1450)

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, by taking a decision of this importance without cabinet approval, by taking a decision that is costing the public \$1.3 million and by taking a decision to violate an act of this parliament, will the minister admit that he committed three very serious errors of judgment, one right after the other?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker, absolutely not. I have already explained the measures taken by officials.

I ask the hon. member to recall the circumstances of last week, with the crisis situations in the United States and the concern here in Canada.

Officials reacted immediately, after being told by Bayer that it could not supply this drug.

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[English]

IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, too often we have seen bogus refugee claimants hopping from country to country shopping for a nation that will take them in. Too often that country has been Canada. Even the United Nations has called on us to act.

Oral Questions

Will the minister of immigration commit to reopening talks with the United States for a new agreement on determining from which countries both our nations will agree not to accept refugees?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, both the existing immigration law and the new immigration and refugee protection act known as Bill C-11 contain the provision for discussion of safe third country agreements.

In the past my department has initiated those discussions with the United States. For a number of reasons the United States at that time was not interested in concluding the agreement.

We have indicated our interest in those discussions. It is not the be-all and end-all as far as a solution goes but we do consider it one of the important methods whereby we can ensure that people are given a fair hearing at the first place where they arrive and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Blackstrap.

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, since September 11 it has become painfully clear that there is a need to agree as North American partners on what defines a refugee and how we determine what is a safe third country.

Will the Prime Minister commit to the House that harmonizing our refugee determination system will be part of his upcoming summit with the presidents of the United States and Mexico?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, the discussions our Prime Minister will have with his American and Mexican counterparts will cover a large number of subjects.

Certainly it is possible that this could be on the agenda, just as we may ask the United States what it is doing to tighten up and toughen up its system, bearing in mind the three million or four million illegal immigrants who entered that country from places other than Canada.

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL AID

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with bombs raining down on Afghanistan, U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell has rejected out of hand the idea of a Marshall plan, saying that a fairly modest contribution could be more than enough.

Does the Minister of Foreign Affairs intend to put forward a reconstruction and development plan that will meet the needs of Afghans, or does he feel that, because they are poor, reconstruction efforts should be modest?

In other words, is he prepared to spend as much on reconstruction needs as he is on bombs?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have already announced our contribution toward reconstruction plans for Afghanistan.

We will be working with our international partners because this is a project that will be very important.

It is clear that the first step is to root out al-Qaeda and the Taliban movement but there is no doubt that we will make a serious contribution to the needs of Afghanistan.

• (1455)

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, bioterrorism against our agricultural industries is a real threat. A report from the solicitor general on April 18 stated “There is now a growing awareness that the agricultural sector, that is, crops or livestock, has to be considered a potential target for terrorist attacks”.

Has the minister of agriculture ordered any new specific initiatives since September 11 to increase the security of Canada's agricultural industries?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has always been an emergency preparedness plan in case there is agricultural terrorism or a danger to our food supply, whether it be accidental or intentional. That plan has been reviewed since September 11. It is in place in case that unfortunate situation takes place so we can be prepared to act accordingly.

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[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Ms. Yolande Thibeault (Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for infrastructure for Quebec.

A year ago, the Government of Canada signed a memorandum of agreement with the government of Quebec concerning cost shared infrastructure projects involving the municipalities.

Given the very low number of projects that have already been accepted in Quebec, will the minister give us an overview of the status of applications?

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 her important question and would like to draw the public's attention to certain facts.

First of all, we are all aware of the importance of the infrastructures program, both for the communities and for job creation. We also know that the applications must be submitted to the province of Quebec.

At this point in time only 176 such files have been submitted to the federal government, and of that number we have approved over 100. I am told that there is a backlog of 1,900 on Quebec government desks.

What is the Quebec government waiting for before it passes them on to us to help us create employment?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Oral Questions

Mr. Martin Cauchon: It is my impression that this situation smacks of a government wishing to use this matter for political purposes.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the agriculture minister seems to be sleepwalking his way through this crisis.

Since September 11 the United States has announced \$350 million to keep its food supply safe. Today in the agriculture committee André Gravel of the CFIA could not name one new initiative the government has put in place to protect our agriculture industry.

Does the minister not see any need to be more active and initiate a new initiative to ensure we have a safe agriculture industry?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know when the hon. member is going to realize that Canada has the safest food system in the world.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has shown its vigilance and diligence through the use of its resources and personnel. For example in cases such as the foot and mouth disease situation this year, those resources are there. The emergency preparedness plans are there. We do not always have to spend more money to do a good job.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Andy Savoy (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in budget 2000 the Minister of Finance announced \$9 million to develop feasible and nationally acceptable sustainable development indicators. As a result the Minister of the Environment created the Canadian Information System for the Environment task force.

After consulting with Canadians the task force has released a report proposing the next steps to develop an integrated environmental information system. Could the Minister of the Environment tell us how these task force findings move us toward that goal?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the task force findings will of course go before provincial and territorial stakeholders for their views. We will however move forward as quickly as we can to implement the \$9 million made available in the 2000 budget by the Minister of Finance to maintain and establish a system which will measure significant progress on the environment. We will have improved capacity to collect, manage and use that environmental information.

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ANTI-TERRORISM LEGISLATION

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, Canada's watchdogs have clearly indicated the new anti-terrorism bill goes too far in denying disclosure of information to Canadians and that it is open to abuse. Both the privacy and information commissioners were clear and forceful in condemning the attempts at secrecy by the government.

Proposed amendments to Bill C-36, to the Privacy Act and the Access to Information Act give the government overreaching powers to, without explanation or oversight, refuse to disclose. Without sunset, this bank of information will be permanently lost.

Why is the government now using the security threat to try to justify a clampdown on the free flow of information?

• (1500)

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, the government is not involved in any clampdown on the free flow of information. We are charged with protecting Canadians and ensuring national security. The limited power provided to the attorney general to issue a certificate is in relation to a very discrete aspect of information involving international relations and national security. It is my view and the government's view that that provision is not only defensible but necessary to protect national security.

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HEALTH

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

In the ongoing struggle between corporate intellectual property rights and the public interest, I wonder if the events of the last few days have caused the minister any moments for reflection. Could he tell us whether in his party there is a rekindling of the flame that once burned, now extinguished, for the protection of Canadian public health interests against the rights of the multinational drug companies, or do the Liberals insist on pursuing the course that they have since 1993?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that our preoccupation is not with the profits of companies but with the health of Canadians. We act to secure the health of Canadians.

Yesterday we made an agreement to make certain that Canadians would have access to a drug they may need in the unlikely event of a biological attack.

Our bottom line is the health and security of Canadians and it will remain so.

* * *

[Translation]

AIR CANADA

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Air Canada and the union representing its non-flight employees reached an agreement to set up a work sharing program, which will need to be approved by the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Can the minister tell us if she intends to approve this agreement as soon as possible, and to do the same for the other categories of employees?

*Supply**[English]*

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to work sharing, I can assure the House that my department is working on a daily basis with Air Canada and its unions. I can tell the House that the information as we receive it we are reviewing quickly. There are also issues which remain on all sides that must yet be resolved.

We appreciate the importance of work sharing to the employees of Air Canada. We will work expeditiously to ensure that our response is in favour of the employees.

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HEALTH

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has insisted today that he is stockpiling the necessary drugs to combat the threat of bioterrorism. This is not the case.

Smallpox, unlike anthrax, is contagious. If the minister is so committed to stockpiling the necessary drugs, why has he not started buying the smallpox vaccine?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no more smallpox vaccine to be purchased in the world. Canada has a stockpile of 380,000 doses. Modern technology allows us to dilute that to vaccinate more people, but no one else in the world can buy more vaccine because it does not exist.

There are vaccines being developed now. Many countries are moving to speed up the development of those vaccines. It may be that as a matter of prudence in the very unlikely event it may be needed, that countries should buy more of that when it is available. That is something we are looking at. The member should know it does not exist at this moment.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1505)

*[English]***SUPPLY**

ALLOTTED DAY—BORDER SECURITY

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the member which has to do with the stringency with which he would like to pursue the issue of terrorism in Canada and Canada becoming the venue or the springboard for these unsavoury people to launch themselves into another country.

I wonder if the hon. member could talk about that in some detail. He spent a lot of time talking about other things. In his response to my earlier question he said that we had all those safeguards now.

Does the hon. member know that some 27,000 of these people have gotten lost somewhere and we do not know where they are? Does he also know that people in Fort McMurray were discovered to have not one but a list of criminal offences against them. Does he

know that these people were able to find refuge in Canada when they should not have had refuge in Canada and should not have been considered to be refugees? They should not have qualified but nothing was done.

Does the hon. member know why this is happening? Is it because the government is not doing what it can do or is it because the legislation is wrong? If that is the case, why is C-36 not before the House to do some of the things we are talking about?

Our motion specifically deals with a new way of looking at protecting our country and making it safe from terrorists coming into this country in the first place.

Mr. Mark Assad: Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member asked this whole question previously, I mentioned that the officials of the department were looking into a lot of these aspects.

To get specifically to his question, there is no doubt that over many years there have been some claimants who did not show up for their hearings or whatever. Some may have left the country but we are not sure.

However Bill C-11 was designed to deal with some of these issues. As members know, when we had our parliamentary commission on Bill C-11, it was going to prevent many of these things. In other words, a lot of people who managed to get in by the back door did not take the front door. We are going to speed up the process in the future with Bill C-11, which will prevent a lot of people from exploiting the system by coming in through the back door.

A lot of the measures proposed by the member are already in existence. They will be even better under Bill C-11. It is just a question of time before we get all the aspects together and then we will be able to do a better job.

● (1510)

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the member appeared to acknowledge the fact that the majority of refugee claimants coming into Canada are from the United States. Does he think it is appropriate for Canada to give refugee consideration to people coming from the United States when they are already in a country known to be a safe haven?

Mr. Mark Assad: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent suggestion by the hon. member regarding the statistic I gave that 40% of refugee claimants in Canada came from the United States. Maybe we should look into that. Maybe some kind of arrangement could be made whereby if someone is coming from the United States they can claim their status there and not here.

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

The heightened anxiety and concern that Canadians have been feeling at the threat of terrorism is natural at this time, especially since we know what has been happening in the United States can virtually happen anywhere.

Our citizens need to know their government is taking the necessary legislative steps to combat international terrorism. With the introduction of the comprehensive anti-terrorism bill last week some of these concerns have been addressed. However much work remains to be done, particularly in the area of immigration and border control.

So far the government has attempted to brush off suggestions that we have a terrorist problem by pointing to the fact that none of the September 11 hijackers appear to have significant Canadian connections. However this argument ignores the fact that we have known for years that Canada has a major problem with terrorists using our country as a base for their activities abroad. This is a fact stated in the June 2000 CSIS report, in reports from national defence and by officials representing American intelligence agencies, the FBI and the CIA.

One can only ask why these terrorists would want to attack Canadian locations when they can safely use Canada as a staging point for their international criminal operations.

As friends and allies, we also owe our American neighbours some measure of protection from security risks beginning in Canada. There is no question that the Americans are very concerned about who is entering from their northern border, and justifiably so. They have already tripled the number of agents patrolling the Canadian-American border, a move that indicates they are extremely concerned about what measures we have or rather do not have in place on our side of the border.

The B.C. premier, Gordon Campbell, in a move supported by all other premiers but two, has called for a serious discussion with the United States about a continental perimeter that would protect the security interests of both countries and allow for the free movement of people and trade between them. The idea of harmonizing our laws and anti-terrorism operations is necessary if we are to continue a positive relationship with our most important trading partner.

The Liberal government's response so far on this issue has been to hide behind arguments that harmonizing immigration and refugee laws would be an infringement on our sovereignty and the core values of Canadians. Unfortunately, the Liberal government is trying to define Canadian by what is not American. However we have to think beyond this narrow scope and define our nation on our own terms. We must work together with all western leaders, linking our arms with a common strategy and with a common goal of defeating terrorism, not by simplistically defining our terrain with a line drawn in the sand.

For years it has been obvious to Canadians, it certainly has been obvious to members of the Canadian Alliance caucus, that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has had no serious thoughts of addressing the issue of terrorists entering and remaining in Canada via the refugee determination system.

A January 1999 report of a special senate committee on security and intelligence stated what most Canadian already know, that there are several indications that serious problems with our refugee determination system exist. Among the serious problems reported were the number of claimants who disappear, the perception that our system is leaky and our enforcement system is overwhelmed and the

Supply

perception that it is in the claimant's interest not to comply with our immigration rules, terms and conditions. Indeed, what the report states is that it is in the interests of claimant's to use criminal procedures to get into our country.

The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has done nothing to enhance training for customs officers. She has done nothing to give the appropriate resources to law enforcement officials. She has done nothing to detain refugee claimants who cannot prove their identities. She has failed to promptly deport refugee claimants who break the law in Canada.

● (1515)

The one thing the minister has done is she has attempted to deflect criticism from Canada's ridiculously open system by calling those who have constructive suggestions on how the system can be improved, anti-immigrant. It is statements like these that desperately demonstrate the minister's failure to carry out her responsibilities.

After years of inaction, last week she finally announced new, allegedly fraud proof identity cards for landed immigrants to be implemented next year. Unfortunately, terrorism and immigration experts already consider these new cards obsolete as they are not likely to pose any problem for terrorists intending to forge or reproduce them. The cards issued will not contain the security features, such as imbedded fingerprints already found on the U.S. green card, or iris identification.

Publicly available polling indicates Canadians recognize that these tracking features are necessary even if the minister and her department do not.

Beyond tracking capabilities, we must also have the means to detain those who wish to criminally abuse our refugee and immigration systems, those who arrive at our shores without proper documentation every year. Most, if not all, of the terrorists who have entered the country have done so by criminally using our generous refugee system. This was confirmed officially when the RCMP told a conference on October 17 that the modus operandi of all international terrorists entering Canada was, first, to claim refugee status and then, to move on to obtain welfare and medical benefits before turning to crime to boost their income.

How the minister can continue to deny this fact in light of such evidence remains a great mystery to me. Certainly she has the evidence of her own security agencies, including the RCMP, to tell her very clearly that she has a problem and that the steps she is taking are not adequate?

In conclusion, I would call on all members of the House today to recognize that significant improvements must immediately be made in terms of our border laws by voting in favour of the motion.

Supply

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity this afternoon to discuss customs and immigration issues. Canada has an obligation to encourage immigration. Having been given what we have in Canada it is only right to welcome refugees and immigrants to our country.

Most Canadians are descended from immigrants. My grandparents on my father's side came from Scandinavia. They looked for a country where they could have new opportunities. They looked at Canada and decided to come here. My mother decided in the 1950s that she would like to come to Canada. She emigrated from Scotland. She came here as a midwife and became a nurse. We all have immigration in our history.

If we are to have immigration we have an obligation to do a good job. I will ask a couple of questions this afternoon about whether we are doing a good job with our immigration policies. First, if we think we are doing a good job, could we not ask people in the general public what they think of our immigration policies? If we went to the public I am sure people would say our immigration policies are complicated and difficult to understand and that no one knows what the rules are.

People do come here. Last year 225,000 people tried to immigrate to Canada, 35,000 of whom claimed refugee status. People come here to stay because it is a good place to live and a safe place to live. We would like to keep it that way. I will take a few minutes to look at the present legislation to see if it would make Canada a safe place to live.

Bill C-11 has been introduced and is going through the process of becoming legislation. It seems well intentioned. My mother has a Scottish saying that members may be familiar with. She says the road to hell is paved with good intentions. This could be the government's statement of purpose on immigration legislation.

Bill C-11 tries to make the system workable but the government refuses to provide enough staff to make it workable. Bill C-11 tries to speed up refugee processing, or at least as the public sees it. The government's target includes referring refugees to the Immigration and Refugee Board within three days. However its processing time continues to be 90 days, the same as it has always been.

The bill does not address issues like out of date health standards or accountability of appointments, those of citizenship judges in particular. However the real problem with the immigration legislation is the problem at the heart of the Liberal government: it has no accountability.

Canadians are more concerned about the application of the present law than about having new laws. If people can come here, do damage and try to destroy the country, it justifiably causes fear among Canadians about what they may be doing. Montreal detective Claude Paquette said our porous immigration laws have turned Canada into "a Club Med for terrorists". CSIS head Ward Elcock has said that with perhaps the singular exception of the United States there are more international terrorist groups active in Canada than in any other country. This is a poor place to be second.

Yesterday I rode in a taxi from the airport with a young gentleman who was concerned about the things going on around the world. He

was from the Middle East. He said he came to Canada to have peace, not to have the dangers of that world come here. Canadians want to be safe.

Canadians are concerned that the system has been corrupted. We need to look at some of the major concerns Canadians have about failed political candidates being given appointments and jobs in the immigration system, a system in which immigration lawyers stand to make large amounts of money from people who cannot afford it, a system in which corrupt immigration advisers often try to take people's money away before they get to Canada.

To deal with these problems the Canadian Alliance has some suggestions. First, we need to take a serious look at a common perimeter security system with the United States. This is a simple and real opportunity to improve security for both Canadians and Americans. Simply put, it would increase security at our entry points. People cannot swim to this country. They come in through airports and the ports where our ships dock. We need a common perimeter security system.

• (1520)

Why do we need a perimeter security system? We need it for a couple of reasons. First, we need it for our own security and safety. This is the first duty of the federal government. Second, the United States has announced it will be requiring everyone leaving and entering that country to register when they do so. This will be done for several reasons. It will be done partly as a trade restriction, something we do not particularly need.

A couple of weeks ago one of the senators from North Dakota began using the security issue to try again to restrict agricultural products coming into the United States. Some of their bureaucrats and politicians are trying to use the issue to restrict things like softwood lumber and the ability of Canadians to work in the United States. We need to be aware that the United States is concerned about its own security. If we do not have a secure perimeter and cannot be trusted at our borders we will not be able to get through the U.S. border easily.

We have a second suggestion for the government. It should detain refugee claimants until it has properly identified them. That is common sense. We cannot simply let people go and collect their baggage when they arrive at and leave our airports. The Canadian people do not realize how the system is operating right now or they would be rising up and criticizing it.

Arrivals need to have verifiable documentation so the proper checks can be done. It is easy to do security and background checks on people who have the correct documentation. However those without verifiable documentation or who are questionable should be detained until we know whether they are safe. If they prove not to be safe they should be deported. Canadians do not find that unreasonable.

Here are some examples where stricter standards should have been applied. A convicted PLO terrorist lied to get into Canada. He currently lives in Brantford, Ontario, and has lived there since 1987. He is a failed refugee claimant but continues to avoid deportation through court appeals. If the government cannot deport a terrorist, whom can it deport?

A Toronto man who works at a grocery store has been positively linked to Osama bin Laden. He has been identified as a high ranking member of the Islamic terrorist group al-Jihad.

Ahmed Ressam, a failed refugee claimant, assembled bomb material in Burnaby, B.C., and tried to get into the United States. While he was fighting the Canadian refugee process it was discovered he was allowed to travel abroad for more terrorist training before returning to Canada.

A former terrorist wanted for questioning by the FBI for assisting in the bombing of an Egyptian embassy in the late 1980s is living in Canada.

How many other terrorists are hiding in Canada? One of the biggest concerns of Canadians is that the present inadequate screening system cannot tell them that.

One of the more bizarre examples of this occurred on October 7 when a plane arrived at Toronto's Pearson airport with an estimated 30 to 40 refugees from Pakistan and Afghanistan who had come through Germany, a safe third country. These people, I would suggest, were not refugees but rather immigrants. They were processed and released into the general public and immigration officials lost them. Where are they? More important, who are they? People cannot just disappear.

Immigration Canada has been left with insufficient resources to track these people down. Does the government have the will to protect Canadians, either at the beginning of the immigration process or when things go wrong?

John Thompson of the Mackenzie Institute, a Toronto based strategic think tank, says CSIS, our security agencies, immigration officers and police officers cannot act because they do not have the resources or the will behind them.

We have a couple of suggestions regarding customs. First, one of the ways to deal with the problems is to make customs officials full law enforcement officers. The government cannot decide what they are right now. They are expected to protect our borders but are only given the tools to be tax collectors. If our first line of defence is to be our customs officials let us give them sidearms and the equipment they need. If they are only to be tax collectors let us give them calculators.

We have a huge concern that customs officials are left without the proper training. In larger centres they are getting some training but in

Supply

smaller ones they have less access to the RCMP and little access to police support. They do not have access to quick response training and are often left out of the training schedule, especially lately regarding pepper spray and the use of batons. The people who most need protection and training are the last to get it.

● (1525)

The national vice-president of the Customs Excise Union, Gary Filek, said:

Canada Customs has been under a systematic process of deterioration and dismantling for approximately the last decade.

The Canadian Alliance is suggesting to the government that it restore Canadian confidence by setting up a common perimeter security network, that it detain new arrivals until it knows for sure who they are, that it limit refugee acceptance to real refugees, and that it make customs officials peace officers and give them the proper training and necessary tools to do their jobs.

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 will be sharing my time with my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway.

● (1530)

[*Translation*]

I am happy to be here today to speak about the role of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency and about the fact that our customs officers must be well trained to carry out their duties.

[*English*]

It is important to clarify for my hon. colleagues and members opposite that the customs component of CCRA is not a police force but rather a border agency that administers the Customs Act and 70 other acts and regulations on behalf of other government departments and agencies.

[*Translation*]

Since Confederation, the Department of National Revenue, now the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, has been responsible for collecting revenues for the Canadian government. Initially, it collected customs and excise duties. Later on, it began to collect individual and corporate income taxes.

Over the years, however, the mandate and activities of the department, which is now an agency, evolved significantly, largely in response to the new requirements of its clients.

At the present time, the agency collects 95% of federal revenues. Customs officers continue to collect customs and excise duties, to gather important import and export data, and to check the shipments and manifests of travellers and commodities. The agency also has a mandate to ensure a level international playing field for Canadian companies.

Each year, 111 million Canadians and 11 million commercial shipments from over 160,000 importers cross our border. The majority of these travellers and clients are honest and law-abiding. Accordingly, they must be processed quickly and efficiently.

Supply

It is true, however, that a—

Mr. Ghislain Label: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I would like to know whether we still have a quorum to validly debate in this House.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: I see a quorum and debate shall continue. The Minister of National Revenue.

Hon. Martin Cauchon: Mr. Speaker, it is, however, true that a few of these travellers and trade missions represent threats to the health, security and economic well-being of Canadians. We must be vigilant in order to detect and counter these threats. This was our reality before September 11 and it remains so today.

The mandate of customs within the agency is clear. It continues to be to protect the health and security of Canadians and to facilitate the flow of eligible travellers and trade missions.

Commerce and trade form the cornerstone of Canada's economy, and customs is the key to their vitality and continuity.

To ensure Canada's continued prosperity and security, I released the customs action plan in April 2000.

In proposing innovative solutions to today's problems, the plan ensures that our customs' processes will not stand in the way of Canadians' prosperity.

The action plan, which Bill S-23 will implement, provides for a complete risk management system integrating the principles of pre-arrival data input and a system of prior approval, all thanks to technology.

As the result of the events of September 11, it is all the more important to put this plan into action. It is vital to meeting the challenges facing us, including that of maintaining heightened security and ensuring economic stability at the same time.

[*English*]

The risk based processes contained in the plan are even more crucial to the security of Canada. With a few adjustments, I am proceeding rapidly to implement these changes so that our country remains safe while we keep its economy in good shape. The adjustments we plan to make involve the acceleration of several security related initiatives which will provide for \$21 million for new technologies and increased staff at our airports and seaports. Our focus on airports and seaports is necessary given the increased risk that exists at our external borders from threats such as terrorism and drugs.

In order to proceed with the implementation we have secured all party support for Bill S-23, which is the foundation for this plan. It includes, for example, new authorities for strengthening security at our airports by allowing us to receive advance information on passengers. With the legislation in place we would be able to proceed rapidly with the implementation of new services that Canadians need and deserve.

This is an investment we have made in a smarter border; however, this alone is not enough. Not only do we have to accelerate the protection initiatives, we must also expand our activities with the U.

S. to merge best practices and develop common programs. Canada and the U.S. need to have joint risk based programs at the land border and co-ordinated approaches at the external border. This would lead to dramatic efficiencies for commercial trade and strengthened defences against terrorism at our international airports and seaports.

Senior officials have already met to look at what we can do together to meet the challenges of our dual mandate of protection and facilitation of trade and travel. As I mentioned before in the House, trade and tourism are the lifeblood of our economy and customs is a key component in ensuring their vitality and continuity. While our dual mandate of protection and competitiveness may seem distinct and unconnected, they are in fact very much related.

The customs process is a continuum of linked activities that extend from admissibility decisions and examinations performed by customs officers at the border to post-release verification activities. This continuum is critical to the effective functioning of the customs program. The joint effort of all customs personnel is required to effectively assess and respond to risks posed by goods and people entering and exiting Canada.

Through the customs program, the agency is responsible for identifying inadmissible people, prohibited goods and controlled strategic goods. In addition to detecting and interdicting contraband and inadmissible people, customs inspectors are also instrumental in ensuring the administration of a wide area of trade related legislation governing the transborder movement of goods.

For example, in order to protect the health and safety of Canadians, inspectors: refer agricultural products and other commercial goods for inspection; sample denatured alcohol, other chemicals and gasoline; control the entry of dangerous goods such as hazardous waste; and refer goods for inspection that must meet Canadian standards.

● (1535)

[*Translation*]

In addition, we have recently established what we have called the increased powers of customs officers, which increase our response capability.

As I have said on a number of occasions in the House, customs officers, and customs in Canada are not a police force. In the present context, with the recent changes and the volume of work we must deal with daily, I think Bill S-23 provides us with all the information and tools we need to do an even better job for all Canadians.

Supply

[English]

Ms. Sophia Leung (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate regarding Canada Customs.

The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency is a border agency that manages the Customs Act and customs duties and regulations on behalf of the Canadian government. However, Canada Customs is not a police force. It has the important mandate of protecting the health, safety and security of Canadians and at the same ensuring that trade and travel flow freely at the border.

For one and a half years the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency has worked on the new customs action plan. It will modernize our customs system by introducing pre-approval programs for businesses and travellers. It has a dual mandate for trade and passengers so we can expedite low risk travellers and goods and focus on high risk shipments and passengers.

The CCRA is responsible for identifying inadmissible people and prohibiting illegal material such as drugs, firearms, obscene material and hate literature. We all know that the customs officers work on the front lines at the border. They have to specialize in the work and be specially trained. They are always peace officers with the power to detain and arrest individuals who commit illegal acts under the Customs Act.

Recently the Minister of National Revenue and I, with a team, visited the Douglas border crossing in B.C. It is a very busy area. One of the officers in a booth at the crossing demonstrated the computer technology used to pre-screen low risk car passengers to facilitate faster movement at the border.

With the passage of Bill S-23 in the House we would be able to apply specialized technologies to improve our security measures at the seaports, airports and land border crossings.

CCRA will introduce a new customs action plan with public support. Recently customs received additional funding of \$12 million for the application of new technologies and \$9 million for an additional 130 customs officers with special training.

Customs has an excellent state of the art training program which enables our officers to carry out their duties professionally and safely. CCRA has many dedicated and hard working officers to serve Canadians at the border, airports and seaports.

The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency will continue to serve Canadians as an innovative leader and a valuable partner. It is an organization that is essential to the government. I do hope my colleagues in the House will support Bill S-23.

● (1540)

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for her interest in this area. There is a very important issue considering the amount of business we do every day with the United States and how important the open border is to Canadians in terms of standard of living. I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary, because she is from Vancouver, if she has had discussions with the port authority in Vancouver to talk about issues such as the container business, which is of vital importance to the city of Vancouver.

It is the container business that makes Vancouver the first port of call for a lot of container traffic, traffic that has tripled in volume over the last seven years. How does the government intend to deal with security issues that the United States has with Canada in order to make sure that we can maintain the flow of container business into the United States in terms of having it pre-inspected by U.S. authorities so that it does not need to have an inspection again? How will we meet the security concerns the Americans have in order to facilitate that and maintain the amount of product shipped to the United States out of the port of Vancouver?

● (1545)

Ms. Sophia Leung: Mr. Speaker, yes, customs has been very active in discussion with the port authority over the last three years. Actually the Minister of National Revenue and I have visited there. They have demonstrated to us how a ship receives goods and how they use specially trained detective dogs so that any undesirable shipment of goods will be captured.

I thank the member for his attention to that. Certainly we are quite active and we are regularly in touch with the authority.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I know that in the riding of the member from the Liberal side there is a high percentage of immigrants from Hong Kong, from China and from Taiwan. I have certainly heard the broadcasts on Fairchild radio and have been for interviews myself in the Vancouver area.

I would like her to confirm that immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan, that is, genuine immigrants, are just as concerned as the rest of the Vancouver population with abuse of the immigration system and that there are just as many people pushing from the genuine immigrant community of Chinese for changes to the law as there are in the rest of the community in Vancouver.

Ms. Sophia Leung: Mr. Speaker, yes, we know that in B.C. there is a large Chinese immigrant population. They are from Hong Kong, Taiwan and China. The community is very interested in any possible abuse, but at this moment I think we all know that there are no guarantees with any group of people. There are people who will be questioned and detained while we go through due process in the meantime.

Mr. Richard Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Peace River. I rise on behalf of the people of Prince George—Bulkley Valley and indeed all Canadians who are concerned about their safety and security subsequent to the terrorist attacks of September 11 and some of the attacks that have taken place since that date.

We in the official opposition have been imploring the government to come up with a plan which will assure Canadians that their communities, streets and buildings will be safe wherever they go in Canada. We have been asking the government to make the official opposition and all other opposition parties in the House part of that plan.

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The government to date has refused to do that. As a matter of fact, for a great many days following the September 11 attacks the government was in virtual denial that Canada was at threat or could be at threat. It has only been recently that the government has actually recognized the fact that as an ally to the U.S. and other western countries and as a member of NATO we are at threat.

When it comes to the safety and security of our families and our communities, the government needs something to give Canadians which will make them feel the government has a handle on the very present threat. It has not done that.

I want to draw an analogy for a moment. We know from the evidence presented that people associated with terrorist organizations are living or have lived in Canada. There is ample evidence. I have some quotes that I will read from CSIS and from police departments. We know they are here.

Through its departments and its authorities the government has a responsibility to search these people out and hold them accountable for whatever activity in which they have been involved. If that means illegal activities in Canada, they would be tried under Canadian laws. If it means they have come from another country where they have been involved in terrorist activity and are subject to extradition, the government should be co-operating to the fullest extent with the countries seeking their extradition.

It is like cleaning up the nest. We should be doing that aggressively as a government because of the very real threat. If at the same time we are not taking measures to protect the perimeters of our country from more people coming into Canada, which in this case is the borders between Canada and the U.S. as well as the complete North American perimeter, the clean up job within will go on forever. The government has not put forward anything substantive to protect the perimeters of the country. That is what this supply day motion is all about. It starts out as follows:

That, as part of a continental perimeter initiative to secure Canada's borders and protect the security of Canadians and our neighbours, and to protect our trading relationships, this House calls on the government to:

(a) provide both immigration officers and customs officers enhanced training and full peace officer status to allow them to detain and arrest suspected criminals or terrorists at the border;

They cannot do that now.

● (1550)

We have heard in the House over the last couple of weeks that border guards cannot detain people whom they suspect of being either terrorists or involved in terrorist activity. They need to phone a police department somewhere to come and arrest them. That is very inefficient.

We have called on the government to move customs border officers out of tax collection. We know the Liberals love to collect taxes and this really goes against their grain. I am sure the former minister of national revenue cringes when I talk about taking people out of tax collection.

In a time of crisis like this one when we have a terrorist threat, would it not be logical to move these customs border officers out of tax collection and put them into a law enforcement department so that they would have expanded powers to deal with real threats?

I am sure people trying to sneak across \$200 worth of cigarettes that they are not allowed to bring across the border must be low in priority as compared to trying to detain and arrest someone who is maybe a terrorist threat to our country or to the U.S.

We also call on the government to take steps to detain all spontaneous refugee claimants appearing without proper documentation. This is not rocket science. It happens in many other countries. They should be detained until their identities are confirmed and they have cleared proper health and security checks. What is wrong with that?

These are logical steps that a government which recognizes there is a threat in the country would take, but it has not taken them.

Let me turn to safe third countries including the United States and members states of the European Union from which Canada will no longer accept refugee claimants. If people are fleeing from a country where they feel they are being persecuted or they are in danger to a safe country, why are they not seeking asylum or refugee status in countries that are members of the United Nations protocol on refugee claimants? Many people who come from another country into a safe country and use it as a stepping stone to Canada have ulterior motives. We have seen that.

I have a couple of quotes that will not be a surprise:

Canada is almost a welcome wagon for crime. Here it is much lower risk of detention and prosecution than in the United States and Europe.

That is not a surprise. It was stated by an expert on organized crime. Here is another statement referring to Canada:

With perhaps the singular exception of the United States there are more international terrorist groups active here than in any other country of the world

Is this written by someone who does not know? This is a statement by CSIS head Ward Elcock on March 3, 2000. It goes on and on and on:

Many of the world's terrorist groups have a presence in Canada where they are engaged in a variety of activities in support of terrorism including logistical support.

That is from another CSIS report. That is the agency which is supposed to advise the government if there is a threat from things like terrorism.

Mountains of evidence indicates that Canada has been a haven for criminals from other countries who have come here to commit criminal acts, including people who are associated with terrorist cells. They come to Canada because it is a wonderful place to work from. Despite all the evidence that has been presented to the government, it has been in denial. It has been acting in the most Pollyanna way possible: everything is all right; we will just hope that it goes away and for sure it will.

We have asked the government to allow us to be part of dealing with this real threat to the country. We are taking this initiative among many others to be part of it. Will the government let us be and will it adopt our supply day motion?

Supply

• (1555)

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, while the member was giving his presentation it reminded me of an editorial that appeared in the *Vancouver Sun* recently, from which I will quote directly:

The Liberal party, which vigorously courts the ethnic vote, has also been in favour of affording potential refugees the same rights as Canadians. But we're in a new war against terror, and this is no longer tenable...Ottawa should invoke the notwithstanding clause to stop foolish court decisions from jeopardizing our safety.

I wonder if it struck the member as it certainly struck me. He mentioned the Pollyanna attitude, the constant denial from the Liberal side of the House that there is any problem. The Minister of Finance went to a fundraising deal. CSIS warned him it was a problem but he still went. Now we have denial. They will not even mention CSIS warnings about the number of terrorists in our country. They are in a state of denial.

Has the member noticed the constant state of denial on the opposite side?

Mr. Richard Harris: Mr. Speaker, there are statistics and reports about terrorist activity and operations in Canada and illegitimate refugee claimants. People have come to this country, have committed crimes and have been deported. In one case I heard the other day it happened 27 times. When we talk to average Canadians about this they roll their eyes in disbelief at how a government could be so incompetent and disregarding of what is right and wrong. They wonder how a government could allow this to go on.

The only answer I can give them, because there is no common sense in any answer the government could give, is that they have a Liberal government in Ottawa. They should look at the history of what has been going on for years. It simply does not know how to react because its political activity runs headlong into the laws that govern this country.

If something happens when the Liberals are in power, the political philosophy always seems to win out at the detriment of Canadians and the country.

• (1600)

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask my colleague a question. He talked about ignoring the problem, but I think it may be more than that. It seems to me that it is actually a policy of neglect. The government has been in power for eight years and resources have been drained away from many of our security institutions.

The minister of fisheries is in the House this afternoon. He has given authority to his fisheries officers to be able to have flak jackets and sidearms to come to meetings with forestry officials in Alberta. They come to such community meetings with a show of force, and yet the government will not give our border security people the same support in terms of the ability to have sidearms.

Would my colleague care to comment on that aspect of security laxness?

Mr. Richard Harris: Mr. Speaker, the member from Peace River raises a couple of important points. Yes, the RCMP, CSIS and the port police have all had their budgets cut. Port police have pretty much been eliminated.

The government seems to think it is more important to put the RCMP in the national parks to protect the bears from people feeding them and things such as that. It says that only RCMP officers are competent to wear sidearms, certainly not forest rangers who wore them for years and looked after our national parks. It would rather take the RCMP away from fighting real criminals and put them in our national parks.

The description my colleague used of utter neglect is certainly true. The government just does not get it. The reason government members do not rise to ask me questions is that they do not have a response to realistic and true criticism. They do not know what to say.

I thank my party colleagues for allowing me to talk further about some of the neglect and mismanagement of the government particularly on security issues.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my colleagues have already commented on a number of the areas of neglect in security concerns. My colleague for Prince George—Peace River expanded on them.

I will go in a different direction this afternoon and talk about the motion and how it affects the business community in Canada and, therefore, our standard of living as Canadians.

The motion before the House today is one of common sense. These proposals should have been enacted a long time ago. The Canada-U.S. border is of vital importance to the Canadian economy.

It is an understatement to say that the events of September 11 changed everything. We must accept that things are radically different and that business as usual is not what it used to be. We must move quickly to develop appropriate strategies to move forward.

One of the key challenges facing governments in Canada and the U.S. today is how to best balance the need for increased security with the need to keep the economy moving. The new security concerns must be addressed, while allowing commerce, goods and people access to the North American market.

What is at risk if we do not adequately address the perimeter security issue and come up with a new border protocol?

Canadians understand that a new border protocol must be established to safeguard our standard of living. Fully one-third of the country's GDP is dependent upon trade with the U.S. Trade between the U.S. and Canada represents more than \$1.9 billion a day in business across that border. According to the Canadian Trucking Alliance, a freight truck crosses the Canada-U.S. border every three seconds.

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When the border was suddenly closed in the wake of September 11, Canadians and Americans became painfully aware of our reliance on the easy border transit. In a matter of hours, trucks were lined up for kilometres at border crossings across the country and the industrial and commercial interests of both of our countries felt the pinch. That is what is called an integrated society in business, which we have in so many areas between Canada and the United States.

Many industries, the auto industry in particular, operate on a just in time delivery system. Goods arrive by truck timed so they can enter the production process hours after being received. It is only hours, not days and months. Otherwise, whole assembly operations can be shut down and people sent home, something we witnessed after September 11. For businesses operating on a just in time delivery system, the border runs right through the middle of their auto assembly lines. The fear is that Americans will buy U.S. made components instead of waiting for Canadian parts that are stuck at the border.

Some foreign buyers have even demanded consignment inventories which will be financed by the selling company right up to the point where the buyer uses the goods, a direct increase in costs. In some cases, they are demanding that there be a big build up of inventory to offset for any slowdown at the border.

Business groups and provincial governments have made it clear that the preservation and efficient and secure trade across the border must be the number one business issue for the government. They have other concerns, like high taxes and low productivity, but they have said this is the number one issue that needs to be addressed.

Eight provincial premiers and two territorial governments have signed B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell's letter to the Prime Minister, which called for a continental security perimeter around North America by sharing information and collaborating to address all the aspects of the border, including security, immigration, trade and the movement of people and infrastructure.

A group of nearly 50 Canadian business associations and companies have joined forces behind the perimeter concept and are calling themselves the Coalition for a Secure and Trade Efficient Border. They are talking to their U.S. counterparts and demanding an in-depth discussion on the border between the two countries.

In addition to the current difficulties at the border, the coalition is concerned that the failure to ensure an open trading climate will result in significant future investments bypassing Canada and locating in the United States. Why would a business establish in Canada when 80% of their production is going into the United States, if the border will be a problem for them in terms of delays?

They have good reason to be nervous. The president of Honda Motor Company has said the Japanese company may have to revise its North American strategy, which has industry analysts warning that Honda's statement could foreshadow a move to direct future investment into the United States at the expense of Canada.

●(1605)

We talked about the port of Vancouver. It is concerned that tighter controls at the U.S. border pose a threat to the port's viability as a North American gateway, which by the way, was a hard won victory for the port of Vancouver not too long ago. It was chosen as the first

port of call for container ships coming in from China, containers that make their way to Chicago and other U.S. destinations by CN and CP Rail on another just in time delivery basis. It is concerned that if there are delays at the border, Vancouver may not be the port of call in the future. It may shift to Seattle because of the tight timing that is needed to deliver product.

Those fast, reliable rail connections to the U.S. mid-west are in jeopardy. Canadian National Railways has similar concerns to CP, because 52% of CN's business goes across the border into the United States.

Even more ominous, the commissioner of the U.S. immigration and naturalization services told the American senate just the other day that he plans to impose an entry-exit regime as part of the U.S. plan to beef up its borders. Under this system visitors will be required to be interviewed by U.S. customs agents and have their names recorded and confirmed when they enter or leave the United States. Canada fought off a similar measure two years ago, but after September 11 this will be much more difficult to avoid.

Obviously an entry-exit system would create enormous backlogs at the Canadian border. This is precisely what Canadian businesses have been worried about and why they are urging the government to start immediately on bilateral negotiations to discuss the security issues.

I welcome the plans for the Prime Minister to meet with the American and Mexican presidents to discuss a common security arrangement in North America. However, I wish he would meet with the business groups in Canada and his provincial counterparts before the meeting so that he can understand fully the gravity of this situation. What is at stake is the Canadian standard of living.

It is clear that in the current context it will not be possible to begin negotiations on strategies to eliminate border disruptions unless the Government of Canada takes immediate steps to address U.S. security concerns. That is the way the U.S. can send a strong message to Canada that it will not allow terrorists to come into the U.S. via Canada.

Recent steps, such as the creation of a cabinet committee to oversee domestic security issues, are steps in the right direction. However, this is not the time for foot dragging. The Liberal government does not seem to like the word perimeter. It raises the spectre of a bogeyman in some parts of the cabinet and caucus across the way. The normally sensible Minister of Foreign Affairs has branded the concept simplistic without bothering to flesh it out or even hear it. The Americans are talking about it and if we do not start to listen, the border will be closed down or delayed for Canada.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Business Council on National Issues, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Canadian Trucking Association, the Rail Association of Canada, as well as American business groups and the U.S. ambassador call on the government to listen carefully to these voices. Canadians recognize that our naive border and refugee determination process is part of the problem.

Canada has long enjoyed many benefits due to our geographic, political and economic proximity to the United States. Now it is time to take our responsibilities seriously to ensure that continues to be the case.

We have had a 30% difference in lower productivity than the United States over the last 30 years. Our Canadian dollar has been sliding over that same period. We are already behind in terms of competitiveness. We cannot allow this border issue to put us any further behind or deny Canadian businesses access to the United States market. A huge population, 275 million people, need Canadian product, but they do not need it so bad that they will sacrifice security concerns to get it. They will start to source elsewhere if we do not react.

The ball is completely in the government's court. It has to make sure that our standard of living is maintained by addressing the security concerns that the United States have, as well as the very big concerns that Canadians have that their safety is not being jeopardized.

•(1610)

Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the hon. member for Peace River. It is obvious from his comments that he has not been following what Canada has been doing in terms of our border.

In fact, the hon. member probably is not aware of the blueprint on customs which was done some two and a half or three years ago when I was Minister of National Revenue. We wanted to use technologies at our borders, use our resources in the high risk areas and make sure that we worked with the Americans. Of course to do that we need to work with partnerships. We need to make sure the Americans also are on board so we can talk about protocols.

The business community has worked on this and has said that 40% of all the trade across our border is done with 100 companies. We were working on a protocol so that those companies, after their drivers had gone through security clearance, could drive across our borders, thereby improving the movement of goods and services across the border.

The hon. member also knows we had the Canpass which put people through a security check. Once their security was approved and once they were considered very low risk, they could move back and forth across our border. The problem was the Canpass only worked one way. One of the things in which I was very much involved was to have a common pass. The Americans had Instapass and we had Canpass. I wanted to have a common criteria so we could work together with the Americans.

A lot of work was done on that. I visited my colleagues in the states to work together in partnership. Our border system was made

Supply

pre-free trade and we had to move to post-free trade so that we could have protocols, use technologies and improve the movement of goods and services across the border. Unfortunately at that time the Americans were not as motivated as we were to adopt some of these new technologies, to move forward, to sign agreements and to sign protocols so that we truly could have movement of goods and services.

It is obvious that members on that side of the House and the hon. member have not been following this. He has not watched what has been going on. If he wanted go back we could give him the material that was completed. We would be happy to give him more documents.

Has the member looked at the blueprint for customs that was done some two and a half years ago? That is exactly what it talks about; the movement of goods and services across the border.

•(1615)

Mr. Charlie Penson: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to address that issue. There was substantial work done. We do not deny that, but we are very concerned. The member does not seem to realize that all the work that was done is now in jeopardy because the government has neglected the security issues that have concerned Americans for the full eight years it has been in office.

It was not just that the Liberals were misinformed. Their priorities were in different areas. They chose to neglect the security issues. They chose to ignore, underfund and cut back the budget of CSIS. They chose to cut back the budget of the RCMP.

We have one person in the country who has been here since 1984. He came here illegally. He was involved in a hijacking in the Middle East in 1971. He has never been able to be removed because of the appeal process at immigration and the immigration industry that has been built up. Those are the kinds of concerns that the Americans have.

All the good work that was done to develop border protocol is now in jeopardy because the United States has said that if we do not start to address the its security concerns, with 6,000 people killed by an act of terrorism, it will stop us by shutting down or restricting our border. So we better start to listen.

That is the message I have for the minister across the way. All the work that has been done is in jeopardy because of the neglect of the government.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be dividing my time with the hon. member for Halifax West.

I want to take part in this debate. This is important not only for the House but also for Canadians from coast to coast. It involves every individual and every family across the country in one way or another.

Supply

We should not take very lightly the fact that over 87% of our trade is done with our partner to the south, the United States, to the tune of about \$1.4 billion on a daily basis. The vast majority of that trade crosses the border by truck or train. On the other side of the equation, approximately 25% of American trade around the world is done with Canada. To a large extent we need each other as trading partners as well as neighbours and allies. We are countries that share common paths and interests, and a common future.

The terrorist attacks on September 11 changed the way we live and the way we conduct our business. Since September 11 I have asked myself as a Canadian what I want my government to do.

First and foremost I want my government to have the safety of Canadians as an objective. Second, I want to see what the government plans to do about ensuring the safety of Canadians. Third, I want to see the actual implementation of its plan.

In terms of objectives, planning and implementation, the government moved swiftly immediately after the September 11 tragedy. Within minutes the Prime Minister was on the phone to the American authorities through the embassy in order to communicate our concerns, our support and our strong condemnation of what took place. As well, every single government department was mobilized. A cabinet committee was established. The hon. member for Ottawa South, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is chair of that committee. He is doing a magnificent job. The government established that committee to map out a strategy and to plan a way to make Canadians feel safe and good about themselves and feel secure when they go to their place of work.

Planning has taken place. Recently legislation was introduced in the House. It is my hope that in the next week or so implementation will take place.

Let us not fool ourselves. The best and the strongest laws in the world will not save us from the terrorists from within unless we are vigilant in our own society. Unless we have a secure society from within, we will not be able to deal with this issue effectively.

• (1620)

The government has established a broad range of initiatives that will deal with the security issue on the internal side of things. We also have other responsibilities which deal with the issues that confront us from the outside and that is the issue of the border. That is why the motion by the Leader of the Opposition is before the House.

I have some major problems with the motion. If in talking about the perimeter the member is talking about a cedar hedge around Canada, the United States and Mexico, the answer is no. If he is talking about a common strategy to deal with the issues that confront Canadians, Americans, Mexicans and every member of the free world, yes.

The whole issue is how we should deal with the threat to our safety and security, and our sovereignty. The government has been exceptionally open and co-operative with our friends and allies the Americans in trying to deal with every aspect of the security issue that we have been faced with since September 11.

Let us not fool ourselves by putting a motion such as this one before the House. In paragraph (a) of the motion the opposition wants the government to “provide both immigration officers and customs officers enhanced training and full peace officer status”. Immigration officers and customs officers already have peace officer status. This part of the motion not only is out of order, it is irrelevant because we already have that. It is not relevant at all. It is redundant because we already do that.

In paragraph (b) the opposition wants to “move customs border officers out of the tax collection agency and into a law enforcement agency”. I want to share with my colleagues the fact that our customs officers enforce the Customs Act in addition to in excess of 70 other acts from other departments of the Government of Canada. They have other responsibilities as well. They ensure precisely the flow of goods and services and the mobility of legitimate people across the border between the two countries. That is specifically what they are there for. To move them away from what they are already doing, in order to put them in another section with other authorities frankly does not further the debate.

They already have authority under the act to identify people who are inadmissible and to detain them. As well, under the act they have the authority to stop the flow of prohibited goods, in particular chemical precursors, drugs and other items. This part of the motion is redundant too.

In paragraph (c) the opposition wants to “detain all spontaneous refugee claimants appearing without proper documentation until their identities are confirmed and they have cleared proper health and security checks”. That is already done under the act. In fact in 2000-01 in excess of 8,000 refugees were detained at the border an average of 16 days until such time as we were assured they did not pose a security threat to Canada. Furthermore in 2000 in excess of 20,000 potential criminals coming from the United States into Canada were stopped at the border as opposed to 14,000 criminals who were trying to cross the border from Canada into the United States.

One would wonder about the relevancy of the motion before the House today. I close with paragraph (d) in which the opposition wants to “create a list of safe third countries”. Under the act we could do that now.

Based on these comments I cannot support the motion. I will be voting against it.

• (1625)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Before moving to questions and comments on the speech by the hon. member for Ottawa Centre, 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 Acadie—Bathurst, Airline Industry; the hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, Airline Safety.

The hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

Supply

[English]

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have before me, and I have read for many years now, long before I was elected to the House, a total condemnation of our immigration policy. We have received a lot of criticism this way. We are not hearing it now.

Would the member not agree that the very fact the government panicked and brought in a new immigration policy is an open testament that the previous policy was sorely lacking?

Mr. Mac Harb: Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the member's attention that Canada is a nation of immigrants. We are a nation of immigrants and we have one of the finest immigration policies anywhere in the world. Our policy is continuously evolving to respond to the needs of Canadians and to fulfill our commitment on the international scene in conformity with the United Nations.

If the hon. member is asking, now that we have seen the crisis of September 11, that we shut the door and say that we will no longer accept immigrants, he is mistaken. Simply put, for every immigrant who comes to this country, on average three jobs are created. Immigrants by and large are hardworking people like the hon. member. People come here to raise their families and contribute to society. If we were to stop immigration, we would be doing a great disservice to Canada and its future.

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to comment on the motion before the House. The issue of how we receive and treat refugee claimants at our borders is one that has taken on a different sense of urgency in the wake of the tragic events of September 11.

Throughout the world the terrorist attacks in the U.S. forced a wrenching re-examination of many aspects of life and society long taken for granted. In Canada, as elsewhere, we have been compelled to rethink the ways in which our society functions. We are forced to carefully review and question such fundamental issues as how we protect our society.

Part of the questioning and re-examination has inevitably focused on how we deal with those who come to Canada as refugees.

There is no question that the attacks of September 11 were virtually beyond our capacity to comprehend. How can we make sense of such violence and callous disregard for innocent human life? Yes, we are shocked and horrified by these events but we must not let the terrorists drive us to take actions that result in a turning away from the very values that define us as Canadians.

One of those values is our longstanding commitment to welcome genuine refugees. Who we are as a people and as a nation has been substantially defined by the contributions of those who have come to our shores either as immigrants or as people fleeing injustice and persecution.

Our strength as Canadians is directly tied to the diversity of our society, a society that we have built together. Our world may have become more threatened since September 11 but we must not allow the current situation to lead us toward actions that we will later regret.

How then do we find a balance between ensuring that Canada continues to welcome legitimate refugees while also ensuring the safety and security of our society? That clearly is the challenge before us and the challenge all Canadians want us to grapple with. This balance is reflected in the government's new immigration and refugee protection act, Bill C-11.

Under the new legislation, the refugee determination process would be streamlined and it would enable departmental officials to suspend and terminate the processing of refugee claims where persons are determined to be a security threat. That is a very important change considering what happened last month.

The current Immigration Act authorized detention of a person considered a danger to the public or one who was unlikely to appear for immigration proceedings. Existing authorities also permit the targeted use of detention at a port of entry in cases where an individual's identity is in question or where there are security concerns.

Figures for 2000-01 show that some 8,790, almost 9,000, persons last year were detained under the Immigration Act. These numbers attest to the fact that our officials are being vigilant. We all, nevertheless, recognize the imperative to make our processes work even better.

Bill C-11 would also strengthen authority to arrest criminals and those who pose security threats. In addition, it would eliminate appeal rights in such cases and provide for a streamlined certificate process to remove security threats.

As the hon. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration outlined in her statement of October 12, the government is investing \$49 million to strengthen the capacity of her department to do its job. This includes \$9 million for additional staff for key enforcement activities like the examination and security screening at ports of entry.

These additional employees will also be carrying out detailed screening of refugee claimants who are already in Canada, along with increasing detention and deportation.

● (1630)

This investment in the safety and security of Canadians is part of an ongoing process. These new resources are in addition to ones identified in the 2000 budget for the citizenship and immigration department, funds targeted specifically for the enforcement program that is so important in this climate and in light of what happened last month.

Supply

I draw the attention of hon. members opposite to the \$1.8 billion that have been invested by the government in key departments and agencies, such as Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, CSIS and the RCMP, since budget 2000. This investment took place long before September 11, reflecting the government's commitment to provide federal departments and agencies with the tools they need to fight terrorism. This is a fight we must and will win.

The next important step we can take toward that victory is to pass the legislation when it is before the House.

Understandably, Canadians are concerned in these difficult times. We have entered into an era of world events without precedent but we must avoid the temptation to allow our fears to overwhelm us.

As we heard from our leaders, it is important to go out and shop and to go on with our normal lives. I read somewhere, and I think it is true, that the return to normalcy is the greatest affront to terrorism. That is the key. If we want to say no to terrorism, we have to live our normal lives. We have to carry on and be courageous, maybe hug our kids more often. We need to recognize the value and the preciousness of our lives more readily and more completely but we also need to go on with our lives.

Canadians are rising to the current challenge, as they have done in other periods of difficulty and threat, as we have seen too often in the past.

We are firm in our determination to work with the United States and our other allies to overcome the threat of terrorism. We are likewise determined to take the necessary steps that will increase the security of our borders and the safety of our citizens.

The Government of Canada has acted and will act to protect Canadians. Bill C-11 is a major step in honouring this commitment.

I could provide other examples of how this new legislation can and will address the very issues that the opposition has raised in its motion. However how we treat refugees and how we balance refugee claims with the largest security concerns of our society, are matters of fundamental importance. Let us not give the terrorists an additional triumph because we choose to act out of fear. Let us not give in to the temptation to diminish our commitment to welcome legitimate refugees.

The motion before us is neither necessary nor deserving of support. Let us instead stay true to our commitment to compassion and the values that define us as Canadians. Let us show the world that we have become stronger because of the challenge we face.

• (1635)

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague noted the issue of terrorism, how it has affected our country and the importance of getting on with business as usual. I have to admit even I, who enjoys shopping to great lengths, found it a bit much when the answer to fighting terrorism was that we should get out and shop and it will make everything better.

Apart from that, I do want to comment on the return to normality which, quite frankly, is important, and so is the fight against terrorism. My New Democrat colleagues and I strongly support the fight against terrorism but we do have concerns over the anti-

terrorism bill. We feel it would very severely affect the civil rights of all Canadians.

In that wish to return to normality, we want to see a sunset clause put into the anti-terrorism bill. After hearing my colleague's comments I had hope the member would also be willing to support such a clause so that, in Canada, we can return to normality in civil liberties for all Canadians.

Mr. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, when my hon. colleague mentioned getting out and shopping, it reminded me of a cartoon in one of the newspapers showing a gentleman at home reading the paper and when his wife arrives with a bunch of boxes he says "So how goes the war on terrorism?" My wife cut out the cartoon and put it on our fridge at home because we both enjoyed it.

I think my hon. colleague is right, in spite of the levity of what happened it is very important for us to return to normalcy. We must get on with our lives and get out and do our shopping. The greatest damage terrorism could cause is if we as Canadians were so terrorized that we stayed in our homes, that we did not go out, that we did not carry on with our lives and that we did not do the things that keep our economy going. We must continue purchasing, working, living our lives and going on vacations.

The vast majority of members of parliament travel on airplanes all the time and I do not think we feel threatened by travelling on airplanes. I think we have very safe airplanes and airports and a very good system that has been improved in the last couple of months. That is very important.

I want to address the concerns my colleague mentioned about the anti-terrorism bill, which of course is not part of today's opposition day motion but I am cognizant that this is an issue we have been hearing about. I know you are aware, Mr. Speaker, as is the hon. member, that the Minister of Justice and the Prime Minister have indicated their openness to hearing the views of the committee and members on this bill. It is important we take the time to go through the bill. Obviously there is some sense of urgency but at the same time we do not want too much urgency.

It is important to hear the concerns of members, to debate the bill and to discuss in full the options or perhaps some alternatives to the provisions proposed. The Prime Minister clearly indicated the other day that this government bill was being presented and that it was supported. However it is important to understand that an openness has been declared to hear from the House and members about the kind of things the hon. member has suggested she feels should be included in the bill.

I am certainly looking forward to seeing how this develops as the bill goes forward through committee, through report stage and in the third reading debate before the House.

• (1640)

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

Supply

I am pleased to rise in the House today on behalf of the people of Surrey Central on the opposition supply day motion regarding border security. Surrey Central, the constituency I represent, is one of the largest constituencies in Canada in population. It has a high population of immigrants. Also it is in close proximity to the U.S. border, so I will be making my remarks from the point of view of some practical experience and what my constituents who come to my office tell me. Therefore it will be a more practical point of view.

The motion asks the government to take action on a number of policy fronts. Victory in this war against terrorism depends as much on our immigration and border policies as it does on our defence, intelligence and other policies. Specifically, the motion asks the government to protect our borders and our trading relationships with the United States by providing immigration and customs officers with full peace officer status in order to allow them to detain and arrest suspected terrorists. It also asks the government to move customs officers out of the CCRA into a law enforcement agency.

Canadian customs officers not only process travellers and commercial goods but also monitor and control the importation of firearms, drugs and other goods. If they are to do their job of law enforcement they must be given the resources, training and powers of law enforcement officers.

If the mandate of the customs officers is to be tax collectors then they should be given calculators. If their mandate is to protect Canadians at our borders then they should be given guns. At this time they have neither calculators nor guns.

In the auditor general's April 2000 report, he noted that the students as well as the long time customs officers are deficient in training in immigration law, drug enforcement and vehicle examination. We know that rather than taking this issue seriously the government has hired part time students to monitor our border, without proper training and without proper tools and resources. The Liberal government, instead of giving them tools to do their job, have cut 488 customs and trade employees since 1994 even though their work has increased.

Next the motion calls for all spontaneous refugees without any documents or those who are hiding their identity to be detained until their identity can be established and verified and also their health checked so that they do not pose any health risks. If it is determined that they do not pose a threat to the safety and security of citizens of our country and that of our neighbours, only then should they be allowed to mix with the general population of the country.

The weak and arrogant Liberal government rejected a 1998 House of Commons standing committee report recommending increased use of detention to deal with undocumented or improperly documented refugee claimants. I am not talking about genuine refugees. I am talking about those who are posing as refugees but are bogus.

The motion asks Canada to create a list of safe third countries. We know that the United Kingdom does not allow refugees from safe third countries, like Canada, the United States and other safe countries in the economic union and others. A safe third country provision has been in law since 1989, but the government has failed

to designate any countries. We do not have a list of safe third countries.

The government insists on increasing police presence and powers inside Canada rather than at the border.

● (1645)

I want to make it clear that the Canadian Alliance supports immigration. Our policy declaration clearly states:

—we see Canada as a land built by immigrants, and will continue to welcome new immigrants...We affirm Canada's humanitarian obligation to welcome genuine refugees—

The motion is designed to put an end to the practice of people destroying their documents in transit so that they cannot be deported. According to the auditor general, 60% of the refugee claimants who come to Canada and apply for refugee status come without any documents.

By asking for the tightening our immigration laws, we are calling on the government to get up to speed with international developments. Other countries are tightening their immigration laws, particularly after the incidents of September 11. If Canada does not do likewise it will continue to be a safe haven for people who want to break the law. We certainly risk being shut out of trade relationships with our largest trading partner, the United States of America. We do well over \$1.5 billion a day in trade with the Americans. The United States accounts for approximately 82% of Canada's exports in goods and services. We learned today that the Americans are planning to implement section 110 of their immigration act, which would impose entrance and exit restrictions on people moving into and out of the United States. Section 110 would cause some serious problems.

How did we reach this position? Because of the weakness and arrogance of the weak Liberal government. With a recession looming, such a restriction imposed by the Americans could have a devastating effect on Canada's economy. When the Alliance proposed a motion on September 18, I stood in the House and said that the U.S. congress would move with or without us. I am sorry to say that once again I have been proven right.

The motion also continues the Alliance's long term commitment to national security, robust law enforcement and a strong Canadian armed forces. With its cuts to each of these areas, the Liberal government has left us vulnerable. The motion seeks to correct this oversight.

Another area is our frontline offices and our foreign missions. I commend our officers in foreign services for their dedication and hard work. They have their own problems, which I will talk about some other day, but I want to mention corruption in our foreign missions.

We have read in the newspapers, and there are documented reports, that about 2,200 blank visa forms were stolen in Hong Kong and 788 taped computer files were altered. Who did it? Why did they do it? Because they will sell them to organized criminals. Unwanted people who are a threat to Canadian security will abuse our system.

Supply

We also know that money has been stolen from many Canadian embassies. Bribes have been taken by our officials who issue visas. I reported a case in which action was taken. The authorities found out that corruption was taking place and bribes were being taken in New Delhi and Islamabad, so they fired some locally hired employees. Many investigations are continuing. The government should also pay attention to that issue. Foreign officials who are monitoring our immigration policies abroad are our front line of defence.

In conclusion I would like to say that organized crime and terrorism are two different things but are interlinked. Now, because of the incidents of September 11, there is a knee-jerk reaction and we are focusing on terrorism, but I remind the government that it should integrate its resources and policies. We should not leave organized crime out of it. Organized crime is latent, invisible and hidden, whereas terrorism is explicit and its effects are evident. I would remind the government that there should be a synergy and an implementation of resources to combat these two areas.

• (1650)

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the speech given by my colleague, when he was talking about crime it made me think about B.C.'s Liberal premier Gordon Campbell who is not very popular with members on the government side. I wonder if the member has noticed that they never use his name. They never talk about the Liberal premier from B.C. because of course Gordon's positions are completely in common with the Canadian Alliance policies and in fact could even be called reform policies.

One of the things that Gordon Campbell has been talking about in the last few days in connection with crime is the outrageous release on bail of a suspected terrorist in Vancouver. The U.S. law that has been introduced on terrorism restricts the bail that can be granted to people who are suspected of terrorism. The judge in Vancouver took the position that because the person had not run away before September 11 he therefore would not skip the country now. That is totally ludicrous. Anyone knows the whole situation has changed now. Gordon Campbell criticized the judge and then the judge criticized Gordon, and Gordon said he was sticking by his guns, that it was a bad, stupid decision.

I wonder if the member could comment on the need to restrict bail, perhaps in the bill that is being run through the House now.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his keen observation. He is a very keen observer in many areas and has been highlighting some of the weaknesses of the government. He has done a perfect job as critic many times.

He made a valid point. The hon. member mentioned bail. I will not comment on the particular bail because the issue may still be in front of the courts. However, in general and from a broader perspective, the government is very lenient and our policies are very lenient. The amazing thing is that our overall policies, which we derive from the Liberal government, are policies of reverse onus. That is very wrong.

When prospective refugees come here we want them to prove that they are genuine refugees. Why does the government not do its job? Similarly when terrorists and criminals are arrested, why would we believe only reverse onus? I think that there is a fundamental flaw in

the vision, or I would say lack of vision, of the Liberal government, and I do not know how to correct its vision. We cannot do that. The government has been so weak and arrogant that I do not know where we stand.

• (1655)

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I want to discuss the topic tonight and the motion as it relates to the people of my constituency, which is in southeastern Saskatchewan. We share miles of border with the United States. We touch two states, Montana and North Dakota. My constituency probably has more points of entry, nine of them, than any other constituency in Canada.

The events of September 11 have touched rural Saskatchewan. They have even touched my constituency. Last week we had our first anthrax scare.

If the government were doing the right thing with radio, TV and newspapers, ads should be going out explaining to people how to react if they open their mail and white powder falls out. It has not done that. Not only has it not done that, but it has not warned people. It has not warned the hoaxers and the pranksters of the penalty for becoming involved in such an act.

Great Britain and the United States have enacted legislation to deal with hoaxers. In both cases it is automatic jail time. We are one week away from celebrating Halloween and no doubt there will be hoaxers scaring people. The government should show people what it is doing to curb the epidemic which has already killed people in the United States.

People are concerned about our military, which has gone overseas. In the U.S. and the U.K. this is a time of war. War has not been officially declared, as Canada did in 1914 and 1939, but the question that is being asked is simply this. During this war on terrorism will our service personnel, if they are harmed, hurt or even killed, have the same benefits as they would have if the nation declared war? The government has left this question completely wide open.

For the last eight years Canadians have read almost weekly in every paper across Canada about the problems in our immigration system. We have heard a lot today about them. I would like to cite some figures so that people watching get an idea of what this party has been talking about since 1993. Between 1993 and 1997 over 99% of refugee claimant applications were deemed eligible to go through the refugee determination process.

In other words they would come to the border, apply for refugee status, and 99% came in. Once these applicants appeared before the refugee board it took an average of 2.5 years to go through the appeals process to reach a final determination. During that period of time only 22% of rejected applicants were confirmed to have left the country. The story is all there.

Supply

●(1700)

This country became blinded to what was going on. The government would not listen to experts from around the world or from those within our own country. It allowed this to go on and now Canada has established a reputation which will take a long time to cure.

There are many things we can do to co-operate with our neighbours, not just in forming the shield of protection around North America but we could take a look at border crossings.

Last week I visited two of the nine border crossings in my riding. Officials were busy preparing and changing for the onslaught that may be coming. We were on the Canadian side. The U.S. announced that it will be asking people to report not only upon entry into the U.S. but also as they leave the U.S. This is something entirely new and I wonder why the U.S. is doing it.

For example, if people come from the U.S. into Canada they traditionally do not stop at U.S. customs. They stop at Canadian customs. If they want to make a run for it, and that has happened, the only choice the poor Canadian customs officer has is to phone the closest detachment of the RCMP.

I have border crossings in my constituency where it would take an RCMP officer an hour to get there because the detachments have all been halved by the government. If it was a three man detachment, it will now have one officer or maybe two. If it was a four man detachment, it will only have two officers.

Canada is ill prepared. All the border crossings or ports of entry, as we call them, in the United States are manned 24 hours a day. One of the reasons the U.S. is pleading to have individuals stopping in both directions is that it cannot trust the Canadian immigration system any more. We should be ashamed that we have sunk to a low level.

The U.S. did not withdraw, as one of the members indicated, the Canpass card. Many people in my constituency have Canpass cards. It is a simple card for a select group of people that can pass back and forth with no problem.

The Canadian government panicked and cancelled the cards but the United States did not. Many of my constituents go to school in the United States and some of them work there. Many were born in the U.S. simply because they were closer to a hospital there. The Canadian government panicked and put a wall up against the very people it trusted to have the Canpass card in the first place.

Canada and the United States need to work together on the trucking industry. We have horrendous long lineups. There is a tremendous extra cost and time wasted by drivers. Canada to date has made no attempt to meet with its counterparts to discuss these border stoppages. Trucks line up and wait for an hour or sometimes three. All of that is costing us dearly. It is costing truckers a lot of money and it will cost Canadians a lot of money.

Yes, we can co-operate with the United States in many areas and we should. It wants to co-operate with us. We need to recognize that we are a continental country. We need to recognize that we have not done our share with regard to immigration and the terrorists who lived in our country.

●(1705)

I saw some T-shirts the other day. I wanted to buy one but they were all sold out. It said "God Bless North America". It is time for Canadians to be a bit humble and say, no, we have not lived up to where we should have been going and we will co-operate fully with the motion so that we can have a safe North America in which to live in.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I must say that the member who just spoke asked one of the most pointed questions of the entire debate today. He asked why the Americans were set to impose this new rule at the Canadian border. That is one of the most telling questions asked today.

I heard members on the government side say that if the U.S.A.'s rules were that great it should have prevented the terrorists from getting in. Has the member thought of this?

If I were a terrorist coming from another country and I wanted to go to the United States I would come to Canada first. I would receive free welfare, medical and dental benefits as well as a free apartment in which to live while going through all the appeal processes with my legal aid counsellor. I would be able to get good forgeries of Canadian documents from the print shop in Toronto so that I could get across the border into the United States and no one would even know that I was there illegally. Has the member thought that through as well?

Mr. Roy Bailey: Madam Speaker, I am very proud to be a Canadian. I also recognize what has been going on in this country for the last nine or ten years: forgery, corruption and illegal immigrants. We stood here and took a lot of flak because we kept reporting this. I am glad nobody yells across the way that I am anti-immigrant. Nobody in my constituency would ever believe that.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I visited Fort Erie recently. It is a very busy border crossing. I was pleased to see the workers there doing the very best they could with what capabilities they have. It could be much better.

I am a firm believer that if we want to find out how the job is going and what we can do to make it better, we need to talk to the frontline people that are doing the work. I would like to inform the House and the member that I was denied the privilege of meeting with any of the frontline workers. It was not allowed.

My colleague from British Columbia who was with me was also denied the privilege of meeting with the employees. We were not allowed to meet with them either in a coffee room during their break or during a smoke break.

I saw a directive from Canada customs and there is a warning that states that employees should refrain from making any direct, or through a third party, public pronouncements critical of federal policies, programs and officers or on matters of current controversy.

In the final part of the directive it states that in the event they do not abide by this directive, they will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Supply

These people are not very anxious to speak to us because their jobs would be on the line. They send me e-mails. I get hundreds of e-mails asking me not to use their names because they will probably lose their jobs.

This is Canada. This is supposed to be a democracy. I have never seen such nonsense in all my life. The government ought to be ashamed of itself for having brought itself to the point where it is warning its employees, such as prison guards, border guards and police forces, that they cannot speak out about their jobs or they will lose them. That is not a democracy. That is the worst kind of dictatorship I have ever run across in my life. Would the hon. member like to comment on that?

Mr. Roy Bailey: Madam Speaker, over the years when I have gone to my ports of entry I have always been received very cordially by both sides. That was the case last week. Perhaps they had not received this directive as yet.

I do know of the letter my colleague has spoken about. When a customs officer with many years of training and service opens a file and shows the people he has tried to apprehend without any protection, I can understand what my colleague is saying. If individuals are employees of Canada customs it does not mean they have to zipper their lips.

• (1710)

Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Oak Ridges, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the few minutes remaining in the debate, I would like to make a few comments with regard to this important issue.

There was a suggestion made by the member for Okanagan—Coquihalla that somehow we on this side of the House would call the measures outlined in the motion draconian.

Personally, I would suggest that individual initiatives that have been presented have some merit and that is what the government is acting on. The Canadian government does not want North America to be anything but a secure place but the decisions must be made by Canadians for Canadians. We must ensure that our policies and procedures are complementary, that we are not working at cross purposes with the United States, and that we do not sacrifice our sovereignty.

In recent testimony at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration the commissioner of the RCMP claimed he was strongly in favour of the perimeter initiative put forth by the Canadian government. He believes that our border officials already are setting the standard.

All Canadians can be proud of the security measures enforced by our immigration and customs officers at the Canada-U.S. border. Indeed the United States ambassador, Mr. Cellucci, recently commented that his government is very impressed with the co-operation between our two administrations and the work being done in Canada to increase security in its immigration procedures.

Canada deploys immigration and customs officials at the border in numbers that are comparable to those of the United States. Both countries have increased these numbers and are on an enhanced security level since September 11. Last year alone, Canadian officials stopped 21,000 criminals from entering Canada from the

United States while the American agents stopped 14,000 criminals from entering the U.S. from Canada.

The commissioner of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service recently praised Canada's security efforts. He noted that Canadian officials helped arrest half of the 8,000 criminal aliens caught in the first six months of this year. This is despite the fact that the U.S. has eight times more agents on its Mexican border. He credited the success to Canada's "excellent system" of information sharing with the American authorities.

Under Bill C-18 passed in 1999, customs officers were given officer powers to arrest and detain individuals suspected of having committed offences under the criminal code, such as impaired driving, child abduction, or those with outstanding arrest warrants. Officers will complement the work of police forces by bridging the gap between the time an officer detects a criminal code violation and the time when police can arrive and intervene.

When proposing the bill, the minister at that time stated on May 13, 1998:

By expanding the scope of their powers to include violations under the criminal code, we will enhance the overall safety and security of Canadians.

Given that Canada customs officers already have the powers necessary to enhance the overall safety and security of Canadians, there is no reason to move Canada customs officers out of the tax collection agency and into a law enforcement agency.

With regard to the issue of detention of refugee claimants, as part of the \$280 million anti-terrorism plan, the government recently invested \$49 million to accelerate the Department of Citizenship and Immigration's ability to complete an increased security strategy.

Of this new money, \$17 million is going to the security screening of refugee claimants. Because of the new security concerns, all refugee claimants must go through interviews and examinations upon their arrival. These include indepth questioning, checking the claimant's information against various databases, taking the claimant's photograph and fingerprints, and keeping all travel documents on file. If the claimant is considered to be a security risk, he or she is detained.

In 2000-01, 8,790 individuals were detained on the average of 16 days. Due to the increased state of alert and more intense security screenings, CIC officials expect there will be more detentions in the future.

It is important to note that when we are making decisions, we are making them in Canada's interest. I am always concerned that our friends across the way would like us simply to be absorbed by the Americans in their approaches.

• (1715)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): It being 5.15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forth with every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): In my opinion, the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Call in the members.

• (1745)

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

(Division No. 153)

YEAS

Members

Abлонczy	Anders
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Bailey
Benoit	Breitkreuz
Burton	Cadman
Casey	Casson
Chatters	Cummins
Day	Duncan
Elley	Fitzpatrick
Forseth	Gallant
Goldring	Gouk
Grewal	Hanger
Harris	Hill (MacLeod)
Hilstrom	Jaffer
Johnston	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Manning
Mark	Merrifield
Mills (Red Deer)	Moore
Penson	Peschisolido
Rajotte	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Reynolds	Ritz
Schmidt	Skelton
Solberg	Sorenson
Spencer	Stinson
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews	Wayne
White (North Vancouver)	Williams
Yelich—53	

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	Assad
Augustine	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bagnell	Baker
Bakopanos	Beaumier
Bélangier	Bellehumeur
Bellemare	Bigras
Binet	Blaikie
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Bonwick	Boudria
Bourgeois	Brien
Brown	Bryden

Bulte
Caccia
Cannis
Cardin
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Coderre
Comuzzi
Cotler
Dalphon-D-Guiral
DeVillers
Drouin
Duceppe
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Folco
Fournier
Gagliano
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gauthier
Godin
Graham
Guay
Harb
Harvey
Jackson
Jordan
Karygiannis
Knutson
Laframboise
Lalonde
Lastewka
LeBlanc
Leung
Loubier
Macklin
Malhi
Manley
Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McDonough
McLellan
Ménard
Murphy
Nault
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Paradis
Patry
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Pratt
Proctor
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Richardson
Rocheleau
Roy
Savoy
Scott
Sgro
Speller
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Tonks
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Valeri
Wappel
Whelan
Wood—179

Supply

Byrne
Calder
Caplan
Carignan
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Comartin
Copps
Cuzner
Desjarlais
Dhaliwal
Dubé
Duhamel
Easter
Eyking
Finlay
Fontana
Fry
Gagnon (Québec)
Galloway
Girard-Bujold
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Guimond
Harvard
Hubbard
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Laliberte
Lanctôt
Lebel
Lee
Longfield
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
O'Reilly
Paquette
Parrish
Peterson
Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Plamondon
Price
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Robillard
Rock
Sauvageau
Scherrer
Serré
Shepherd
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Steckle
Stoffer
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tobin
Torsney
Ur
Vanclief
Wasylycia-Leis
Wilfert

PAIRED

Members

Assadourian	Asselin
-------------	---------

Supply

Barnes
Bevilacqua
Cullen
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Perron

Bergeron
Crête
Desrochers
Minna
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)-12

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

[*English*]

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: Mr. Speaker, I slipped in late but I wanted to be on the record that I support the motion before us today.

The Speaker: Is it agreed to include the hon. member's vote in favour of the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There is no agreement but the hon. member has made his point.

* * *

CUSTOMS ACT

The House resumed from October 19 consideration of Bill S-23, an act to amend the Customs Act and to make related amendments to other acts, as reported (without amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions on the report stage of Bill S-23.

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion will also apply to Motion No. 2.

[*English*]

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find consent in the House that those who voted on the previous motion be recorded as voting on the motion now before the House, with Liberals voting no.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. John Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, members of the Canadian Alliance will be voting yes on the motion. We would like you to include the member for Saskatoon—Wanuskewin.

• (1750)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Brien: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois present at the last division vote in favour of this motion, with the addition of the hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, the members of the New Democratic Party present will be voting in favour of this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, all members of the opposition coalition present will vote yes to the motion.

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 154*)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Bailey
Benoit
Blaikie
Breitkreuz
Burton
Cardin
Casson
Comartin
Dalphond-Guiral
Desjarlais
Duceppe
Elley
Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)
Gallant
Girard-Bujold
Goldring
Grewal
Guimond
Harris
Hilstrom
Johnston
Laframboise
Lanctôt
Loubier
Manning
Mark
McDonough
Merrifield
Moore
Penson
Picard (Drummond)
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Roy
Schmidt
Solberg
Spencer
Stinson
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews
Vellacott
Wasylcyia-Leis
White (North Vancouver)
Yelich-95

Anders
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bellehumeur
Bigras
Bourgeois
Brien
Cadman
Casey
Chatters
Cummins
Day
Dubé
Duncan
Fitzpatrick
Fournier
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gauthier
Godin
Gouk
Guay
Hanger
Hill (Macleod)
Jaffer
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lalonde
Lebel
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Marceau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Ménard
Mills (Red Deer)
Paquette
Peschisolido
Plamondon
Rajotte
Reynolds
Rocheleau
Sauvageau
Skelton
Sorenson
St-Hilaire
Stoffer
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Venne
Wayne
Williams

NAYS

Members

Adams
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Baker
Beaumier
Bellemare
Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Brown
Bulte
Caccia
Cannis
Carignan
Castonguay

Alcock
Assad
Bagnell
Bakopanos
Bélangier
Binet
Bonin
Boudria
Bryden
Byrne
Calder
Caplan
Carroll
Catterall

Cauchon
Charbonneau
Comuzzi
Cotler
DeVillers
Drouin
Duplain
Eggleton
Farrah
Folco
Fry
Galloway
Graham
Harb
Harvey
Jackson
Jordan
Karygiannis
Knutson
Laliberte
LeBlanc
Leung
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marleau
Matthews
McCormick
McLellan
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
O'Reilly
Paradis
Patry
Pettigrew
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Robillard
Savoy
Scott
Sgro
Speller
St-Julien
Steckle
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Tonks
Ur
Vanclief
Whelan
Wood-139

Chamberlain
Coderre
Copps
Cuzner
Dhaliwal
Duhamel
Easter
Eyking
Finlay
Fontana
Gagliano
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Harvard
Hubbard
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Lastewka
Lee
Longfield
Macklin
Malhi
Manley
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Murphy
Nault
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Parrish
Peterson
Phinney
Pillitteri
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Richardson
Rock
Scherrer
Serré
Shepherd
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tobin
Torsney
Valeri
Wappel
Wilfert

PAIRED

Members

Assadourian	Asselin
Barnes	Bergeron
Bevilacqua	Crête
Cullen	Desrochers
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Minna
Perron	Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)-12

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 lost. Consequently, Motion No. 2 is also lost.

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.) moved that the bill be concurred in at report stage.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Supply

FOREIGN MISSIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ACT

The House resumed from October 22 consideration of the motion that Bill C-35, an act to amend the Foreign Missions and International Organizations Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the previous question.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the previous question at the second reading stage of Bill C-35.

[*English*]

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find consent in the House that those who voted on the previous motion be recorded as voting on this motion, with Liberal members voting yes.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. John Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, members of the Canadian Alliance and the member for Saskatoon—Wanuskewin will be voting nay to the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Brien: Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour of this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP are voting no to the motion.

Mr. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, members of the opposition coalition vote no to the motion.

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 155*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	Assad
Augustine	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bagnell	Baker
Bakopanos	Beaumier
Bélanger	Bellehumeur
Bellemare	Bigras
Binet	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Bourgeois
Brien	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Caccia
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Cardin
Carignan	Carroll
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Charbonneau	Coderre
Comuzzi	Copps
Cotler	Cuzner
Dalphond-Guiral	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Drouin
Dubé	Duceppe
Duhamel	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Eyking	Farrah

Supply

Finlay
Fontana
Fry
Gagnon (Québec)
Galloway
Girard-Bujold
Graham
Guay
Harb
Harvey
Jackson
Jordan
Karygiannis
Knutson
Laframboise
Lalonde
Lastewka
LeBlanc
Leung
Loubier
Macklin
Malhi
Manley
Marleau
Matthews
McCormick
McLellan
Ménard
Murphy
Nault
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Owen
Paradis
Patry
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Regan
Robillard
Rock
Sauvageau
Scherrer
Serré
Shepherd
St-Hilaire
St-Julien
Steckle
Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)
Tirabassi
Tonks
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
Valeri
Venne
Whelan
Wood-171

Folco
Fournier
Gagliano
Gagnon (Champlain)
Gauthier
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Guimond
Harvard
Hubbard
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Keyes
Kraft Sloan
Laliberte
Lanctôt
Lebel
Lee
Longfield
MacAulay
Mahoney
Maloney
Marceau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Mitchell
Myers
Neville
O'Reilly
Paquette
Parrish
Peterson
Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Plamondon
Price
Provenzano
Reed (Halton)
Richardson
Rocheleau
Roy
Savoy
Scott
Sgro
Speller
St-Jacques
St. Denis
Stewart
Telegdi
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tobin
Torsney
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert

Penson
Proctor
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Ritz
Skelton
Sorenson
Stinson
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews
Wasylycia-Leis
White (North Vancouver)
Yelich-63

Peschisolido
Rajotte
Reynolds
Schmidt
Solberg
Spencer
Stoffer
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Vellacott
Wayne
Williams

PAIRED

Members

Assadourian
Barnes
Bevilacqua
Cullen
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Perron
Asselin
Bergerson
Crête
Desrochers
Minna
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)-12

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find consent in the House that the vote on the previous motion be applied to the vote now before the House.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(*Division No. 156*)

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Benoit
Breitkreuz
Cadman
Casson
Comartin
Day
Duncan
Fitzpatrick
Gallant
Goldring
Grewal
Harris
Hilstrom
Johnston
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark
McDonough
Mills (Red Deer)
Anders
Bailey
Blaikie
Burton
Casey
Chatters
Cummins
Desjarlais
Elley
Forseth
Godin
Gouk
Hanger
Hill (Macleod)
Jaffer
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Manning
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Merrifield
Moore

YEAS

Members

Adams
Anderson (Victoria)
Augustine
Bagnell
Bakopanos
Bélanger
Bellemare
Binet
Bonin
Boudria
Brien
Bryden
Byrne
Calder
Caplan
Carignan
Castonguay
Cauchon
Charbonneau
Comuzzi
Alcock
Assad
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Baker
Beaumier
Bellehumeur
Bigras
Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Bourgeois
Brown
Bulte
Caccia
Cannis
Cardin
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Coderre
Coppes

Cotler
 Dalphond-Guiral
 Dhaliwal
 Dubé
 Duhamel
 Easter
 Eyking
 Finlay
 Fontana
 Fry
 Gagnon (Québec)
 Gallaway
 Girard-Bujold
 Graham
 Guay
 Harb
 Harvey
 Jackson
 Jordan
 Karygiannis
 Knutson
 Laframboise
 Lalonde
 Lastewka
 LeBlanc
 Leung
 Loubier
 Macklin
 Malhi
 Manley
 Marleau
 Matthews
 McCormick
 McLellan
 Ménard
 Murphy
 Nault
 O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
 Owen
 Paradis
 Patry
 Pettigrew
 Picard (Drummond)
 Pillitteri
 Pratt
 Proulx
 Redman
 Regan
 Robillard
 Rock
 Sauvageau
 Scherrer
 Serré
 Shepherd
 St-Hilaire
 St-Julien
 Steckle
 Szabo
 Thibault (West Nova)
 Tirabassi
 Tonks
 Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)
 Valeri
 Venne
 Whelan
 Wood-171

Cuzner
 DeVillers
 Drouin
 Duceppe
 Duplain
 Eggleton
 Farrah
 Folco
 Fournier
 Gagliano
 Gagnon (Champlain)
 Gauthier
 Goodale
 Gray (Windsor West)
 Guimond
 Harvard
 Hubbard
 Jennings
 Karetak-Lindell
 Keyes
 Kraft Sloan
 Laliberté
 Lanctôt
 Lebel
 Lee
 Longfield
 MacAulay
 Mahoney
 Maloney
 Marceau
 Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough East)
 McTeague
 Mitchell
 Myers
 Neville
 O'Reilly
 Paquette
 Parrish
 Peterson
 Phinney
 Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
 Plamondon
 Price
 Provenzano
 Reed (Halton)
 Richardson
 Rocheleau
 Roy
 Savoy
 Scott
 Sgro
 Speller
 St-Jacques
 St. Denis
 Stewart
 Telegdi
 Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
 Tobin
 Torsney
 Ur
 Vanclief
 Wappel
 Wilfert

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
 Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
 Benoit
 Breitzkreuz
 Cadman
 Casson
 Comartin
 Day
 Duncan
 Fitzpatrick
 Gallant
 Goldring
 Grewal

Anders
 Bailey
 Blaikie
 Burton
 Casey
 Chatters
 Cummins
 Desjarlais
 Elley
 Forsteth
 Godin
 Gouk
 Hanger

Private Members' Business

Harris	Hill (MacLeod)
Hilstrom	Jaffer
Johnston	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Manning
Mark	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough	Merrifield
Mills (Red Deer)	Moore
Penson	Peschisolido
Proctor	Rajotte
Reid (Lanark—Carleton)	Reynolds
Ritz	Schmidt
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	Spencer
Stinson	Stoffer
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Toews	Vellacott
Wasylycia-Leis	Wayne
White (North Vancouver)	Williams
Yelich-63	

PAIRED

Members

Assadourian	Asselin
Barnes	Bergeron
Bevilacqua	Crête
Cullen	Desrochers
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Minna
Perron	Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)-12

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

The Speaker: It being 5.55 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1755)

[Translation]

ARMENIA

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ) moved:

That this House recognize the Armenian genocide of 1915 and condemn this act as a crime against humanity.

She said: Madam Speaker, it is with some emotion that I rise this evening to begin this first and only hour of debate on Motion No. 328, which reads as follows: "That this House recognize the Armenian genocide of 1915 and condemn this act as a crime against humanity".

It is on the strength of the support of the parliamentary arm of the Bloc Québécois and with the support of many colleagues of all political allegiances that I speak to members in the hope of drawing their attention in this House so that all together we finally, may act responsibly, with compassion and justice.

The term "genocide" at the heart of this motion was used for the first time by Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin, who said, in 1943:

By "genocide" we mean the destruction of a nation or an ethnic group...In general, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation. It means, rather, a co-ordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.

Private Members' Business

Two years later, in 1945, the term “genocide” was included in the indictment by the Nuremberg tribunal at the trial of Nazi war criminals. It provided that the accused “...conducted deliberate and systematic genocide, viz., the extermination of racial and national groups, against the civilian populations of certain occupied territories...national, racial or religious groups”.

A few years later, in 1948, the term “genocide” was given a legal definition by the convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide, which was ratified by Turkey just 50 years ago this year. Its use by governments in the recognition of the tragedy suffered by the Armenian people is not without significance, as is the refusal to apply it.

Did the Armenian genocide occur? Some people deny it. However, internationally renowned historians, whose reputations are beyond doubt, confirm that the events of 1915 and 1916 were indeed genocide.

Indeed the operation planned by the prefect of the Constantinople police, Bedri Bey, for the night of April 24-25 was intended to eliminate the Armenian elite. On that night and during the days that followed, some 600 persons, intellectuals, writers, poets, journalists, physicians, priests and lawyers were imprisoned, gagged and unable to alert international opinion to the massacre being prepared.

Arnold Toynbee, a world renowned British historian, estimated that two out of three Armenians living in the Ottoman empire were killed or died while being deported. The final death toll was 1.2 million. Yves Ternon, author of *Les Arméniens: histoire d'un génocide*, also estimated that two-thirds of the Armenian community was killed, although he based his figures on the official Ottoman census, which listed the number of Armenians living in the Ottoman Republic in 1914 at 1,295,000.

In 1919, Turkey's minister of the interior placed the number of dead at 800,000. Nowadays, the figure given by Toynbee is used.

The Armenian genocide did indeed take place. It was deliberately and knowingly orchestrated by a government which, in an enactment dated May 27, 1915, authorized the deportation of the Armenians, thus giving the insidious go ahead for the massacre of over one million people. The deportation was a legal cover and orders to execute were given in secret.

I would like to read a few lines from a letter addressed to U.S. President Wilson by a German Red Cross officer named Armin Wagner:

After depriving them of leaders and spokespersons, the executioners drove the populations out of the cities at all hours of the day and night. Groups which had numbered in the thousands when they set out from their homeland in Upper Armenia were down to a few hundred upon arriving in the outskirts of Aleppo, but the fields were littered with corpses.

The deportees were forced onto the highways until thousands were reduced to hundreds, and hundreds to a small band, which was still hunted down until it no longer existed. And then, they had reached their final destination.

When one knows that the ultimate destination of the deportees' long journey was the Deir Ez Zor desert in Syria and not the lush banks of the Euphrates, how can one not see that the purpose of this deportation was none other than the final solution, death?

How can survivors of this massacre be expected to forget? Seeing the calm tenacity with which they seek to have the Armenian genocide recognized, Hitler's cynicism just a few days before the invasion of Poland by troops of the Third Reich, can only horrify us.

● (1800)

In fact, in front of his staff on April 22, 1939, Hitler did not hesitate to ask if anyone still remembered the extermination of the Armenians.

Foreshadowing the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide is the first genocide of the 20th century. There is no excuse for refusing to use the term “genocide” to describe the terrible catastrophe that the Armenian people experienced in 1915-1916. Many parliaments have recognized this genocide, including the parliaments of Russia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Lebanon, Belgium, Argentina, Uruguay and Australia.

The European parliament and the UN Commission on Human Rights have also recognized it. More recently, on January 18, 2001, it was France's turn. Legislation was passed unanimously by the national assembly and the Senate.

In North America, the states of California, Delaware, Massachusetts and New York have also recognized the genocide. The Quebec national assembly and the legislature of Ontario have done the same. Given that the populations of Quebec and Ontario combined account for 60% of the population of Canada, it is hard to understand why Canada still refuses to describe the Armenian genocide as such, and refers to it instead as a tragic event.

Why is the Canadian government so cautious? One can only speculate. Perhaps the Armenian diaspora living in Canada does not have enough demographic clout. There are more than 100,000 Armenians living in Canada; 60,000 of them are in Montreal and Laval and the rest live in the Toronto area.

Being lucky enough to live in close proximity to the Armenian community in Laval, I can say, to their credit, that they have done a wonderful job of integrating into their host community. They have every reason to be proud of their social and economic contributions.

The reputation of the Armenian community in the arts is well established. Take the example of Maryvonne Kendergie, a well-known musicologist who, through her teaching and boundless energy, has made a major contribution to the field of contemporary music.

Filmmaker Atom Egoyan, whose talent is celebrated, joins other renowned artists such as conductor Rafi Armenian, soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, violinist Catherine Manoukian and Yousef Karsh, the extraordinary photographer who took the famous picture of Winston Churchill.

I believe we owe it to Canadians and Quebecers of Armenian origin to officially recognize the genocide of 1915. Is it completely farfetched to think that some diplomatic reservations based on economic considerations might weigh in the balance? If so, how can we explain the numerous European countries in relative proximity to Turkey having had the courage to do so? And what about the European parliament, which after recognizing the Armenian genocide on June 18, 1987, reaffirmed in connection with the discussions around Turkey's membership in the European Union the necessity for the latter to recognize the Armenian genocide.

Moreover, paragraph 10 of the resolution passed November 15, 2000, contains the following:

Calls, therefore, on the Turkish Government and the Turkish Grand National Assembly to give fresh support to the Armenian minority, as an important part of Turkish society, in particular by public recognition of the genocide which that minority suffered before the establishment of the modern state of Turkey.

Is Canada going to wait until Turkey recognizes this reality before adding its voice to those of the other parliaments?

Since 1993, the question of genocide has been debated a number of times before this House. The Bloc Québécois position has always been clear. It has made us the target of objections from the Turkish embassy. It is was easy to imagine what comments were directed to the party in power. I have trouble, however, believing that a country like Canada, whose commitment to human rights is well known, would bow to diplomatic representations on something of such gravity.

It is noteworthy that, following the adoption of its legislation by the French national assembly, the government of France stated that it made a clear distinction between the Ottoman empire and contemporary Turkey.

After the political recognition by the various states and international organizations, I would like to touch on another recognition before I close. This was the position of Pope John Paul II. On November 27, 2000, the Pontiff signed a final declaration on the occasion of the visit to the Vatican of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, whose apostolic church comprises seven million faithful. The text could not be any clearer. The following are just a few excerpts from it:

The extermination of a million and a half Armenians, generally considered genocide, and the annihilation of thousands more under a totalitarian regime are tragedies which must still live on in the memories of the present generation.

• (1805)

In these troubled times, the recent visit to Armenia by Pope John Paul II, which coincides with the 1700th anniversary of the adoption of Christianity by Armenians, has a very special significance.

Some were disappointed that the Pope did not use the term "genocide" in his sermon at the mausoleum. He preferred to use the expression "Metz Yeghern", the great catastrophe. For 86 years, these words have described, among Armenian families, the 1915 genocide.

The international press reported on the intense emotion that could be felt when Pope John Paul II read the names of the 29 martyr cities of the genocide, including Ani, Marach, Var and Mouch.

Private Members' Business

It goes without saying that this visit by John Paul II was criticized by the Turkish diplomacy, which expressed to the Vatican ambassador in Ankara its "consternation following the condemnation by John Paul II of the Armenian genocide".

It is certainly no coincidence that, on October 7, John Paul II beatified Archbishop Ignazio Maloyan, the Armenian Archbishop of Mardin, Turkey, who was killed with 400 faithful during the 1915 genocide.

The pope said "Faced with the dangers of persecution, the blessed Ignazio did not make any compromise. Let his example inspire those who, today, want to be true witnesses of the Gospel".

Six weeks to the day, America and the whole world found themselves in the eye of the storm. Through very well orchestrated actions, terrorism fully showed its anger and hate with total disregard for innocent victims and their grieving families.

The purpose of these actions was to destabilize our capitalist society. Since then, our outlook on things has changed, because beyond the actions, we have a duty to understand, so as to fully assume our responsibility to the poor on this planet.

In 1915, a deliberate action effectively destroyed a community to destabilize the Armenian society.

I call upon the will of my colleagues so that we finally recognize the Armenian genocide.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, prior to speaking this evening, I would seek unanimous consent of the House for a motion. I move:

That the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration be authorized to travel to Vancouver, Winnipeg, Windsor, St. John, New Brunswick and Montreal from October 29 to November 1 in relation to its study on security at ports of entry in Canada and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

(Motion agreed to)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1810)

[English]

ARMENIA

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for sharing her views concerning the events of 1914 to 1925, during the closing years of the Ottoman empire, which claimed so many victims and had such a devastating impact on the Armenian people and other peoples in the region.

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It was a period of history when so many atrocities were committed. Our previous debates and the moving addresses made in the House by a number of members have given many of us a better grasp of the magnitude of those events and of the suffering endured by Armenians and other groups who were displaced by the millions.

Members may recall that on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Armenian tragedy of 1915, the Prime Minister spoke to Canada's Armenian communities in these terms:

Canada recognizes and deplores the fact that a great number of Armenians were killed during the wars which marked the end of the Ottoman empire and extends its sympathy to the Armenian Community. Following the war, numerous displaced Armenians came to Canada and their contribution, as well as that of their descendants, has greatly enriched Canadian society. It is my hope that the memories of the past will serve to remind us of the importance of tolerance and respect for the diversity of our people.

Members may also recall that on June 10, 1999, following comprehensive consultations, the position of the Government of Canada with regard to these events was set out in a statement made in the House by the hon. member for Halton speaking on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The hon. member stated:

—we remember the calamity inflicted on the Armenian people in 1915. This tragedy was committed with the intent to destroy a national group in which hundreds of thousands of Armenians were subjected to atrocities which included massive deportations and massacres.

May the memory of this period contribute to healing wounds as well as to reconciliation of present day nations and communities and remind us all of our collective duty to work together toward world peace—

Both of the above statements demonstrate that we share the memory of the suffering during this painful period. We have not forgotten. It is indelibly etched in our minds. During the debate on the Armenian tragedy in 1996, the House adopted a motion recognizing the week of April 20 to April 27 each year as a week of remembrance of the inhumanity of people toward one another.

The government has shown in previous debates and continues to show today that it attaches a great deal of importance to ensuring that the memory of this human tragedy is never allowed to fade from our collective conscience. It is important that knowledge of this event and of other calamities throughout the 20th century be kept alive and passed on to future generations. Remembering these events should also prompt us to further develop international mechanisms for preventing them from recurring and promoting reconciliation, which is crucial to achieving everlasting peace and a new start for all.

From this perspective, our country is a symbol of hope for humanity. In Canada, people from all over the world suffering from oppression, displacement and damaged dignity have found and continue to find refuge and comfort, an oasis of tolerance, sharing and understanding. These people who have been displaced, including people of Armenian descent, have succeeded here in rebuilding their lives in a safe place where individual freedoms are protected in Canada.

Canada is a land of hope, of renewal and of reconciliation and we are all working very hard, especially in these times, to ensure that Canadian ideals and values, such as tolerance, democracy and supremacy of law, are reflected in the work of international organizations and in the tools developed to prevent any recurrence of the horrors of the past.

●(1815)

We are not alone in defending these ideals, of course, but it is something we do naturally because we live in a tolerant society, a society where the diversity and differences of people from around the world is not only allowed but protected, promoted and, I might say, celebrated.

Our regular participation in peacekeeping missions around the globe is clear testimony to our desire and determination to make a concrete contribution to shaping a world where reconciliation and tolerance can replace hate and intolerance.

It is essential, indeed I would say it is our duty, to work tirelessly to promote multiculturalism throughout those parts of the world where its acceptance is precarious because we can use Canada as a shining example.

Today more than ever we must strive to promote tolerance and reconciliation among peoples so that the horrors of the past, like the tragedy suffered by the Armenian people, are never repeated.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on private member's Motion No. 328 which states:

That this House recognize the Armenian genocide of 1915 and condemn this act as a crime against humanity.

I appreciate the sentiments, the emotion, the remembrance and the sense that is at the heart of the motion.

Earlier I had the opportunity to speak on the same issue through a motion moved by the hon. member for Brampton Centre who did a great deal of work on this issue. He even caused the matter to go before the Canadian heritage committee and forced the committee to issue a report.

A delegation from Canada's Armenian community visited me in my House of Commons office. I also received information from the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations. I highly appreciate the interest expressed by both communities—

Mr. Jim Karygiannis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to adopt the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Is there unanimous consent to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal: Madam Speaker, I was saying that I highly appreciate the interest expressed by both communities in the work we do as parliamentarians. This is a very emotional and controversial matter. I have had the opportunity to visit both Armenia and Turkey. My heart goes out to the families and the survivors of this dark era in human history.

There has been more loss of life on this planet due to man made wars than to natural calamities. We all sadly remember the genocide in Rwanda and Burundi. We know of genocide and ethnic cleansing in the name of civil and ethnic wars. Humankind should learn from the horrible experiences of the past and make sure they are not repeated.

I also took part in a private members' debate on a motion asking the Liberal government to cause the British crown to present an official apology to the Acadian people for the wrongs done to them in its name between 1755 and 1763. That debate went nowhere.

Today I rise with misgivings about what the Liberal government will do in this debate. I regret that I cannot be more positive in my outlook, but I do not want to try to fool anyone and I do not want either the Turkish or the Armenian communities to be hoodwinked by this Liberal government with its weak backbone.

I want to be very clear from the outset that the government will not recognize the Armenian genocide of 1915 or apologize to anyone for anything done wrong in Canada or abroad. There are many examples in Canada which I would like to refer to the House. Let me remind the House of the 1914 incident involving 376 ship passengers who were British subjects and arrived on the ship named *Komagata Maru*. They were not allowed to land on Canadian soil because of an exclusionist immigration policy based on race and country of origin.

The policy had its origin in the 1880s when the Canadian government first imposed a head tax on Chinese immigrants. The government erected a variety of barriers until 1962.

The passengers of the *Komagata Maru* thought they had the right to enter Canada because they were British subjects. Ninety per cent of the passengers on the ship were Sikhs and the rest were Hindus and Muslims, all from Punjab state in northern India.

Sikh soldiers had served throughout the British Empire. They thought that they should be able to work wherever the British flag was flying. After two months of detention in Vancouver harbour, the government brought in the cruiser HMCS *Rainbow* which aimed its guns at the *Komagata Maru*. The ship was escorted away, with 352 passengers still on board. It was a bitter and disappointing moment for the friends watching the ship disappear. A voyage that began on April 4 did not end until September 29 in Calcutta, India, where the police opened fire and killed 19 of those passengers. Those remaining were arrested.

In a more tolerant Canada, the *Komagata Maru* remains a powerful symbol for Sikhs and one that other Canadians should understand. As a consequence we are beginning to reassess our past. Giving attention to the *Komagata Maru* is part of the process. Do we think that this government will offer an apology to community members for the *Komagata Maru* incident? I do not think so.

• (1820)

How about the Chinese internees who are demanding an apology, along with 10 or so other groups? Promises for apologies and recognition have been used to buy political votes. Both the current Prime Minister and Prime Minister Mulroney also promised to offer redress to the Ukrainians and both have failed to do so.

Let me also mention an exchange that took place in the House of Commons about an apology in regard to the Canadian government and the internment of Japanese Canadians during the second world war. Prime Minister Trudeau said on June 29, 1984:

There is no way in which we can relive the history of that period. In that sense, we cannot redress what was done. We can express regret collectively, as we have done. I do not see how I can apologize for some historic event to which we or these people in

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this House were not a party. We can regret that it happened. But why mount to great heights of rhetoric in order to say that an apology is much better than an expression of regret? This I cannot too well understand.

Why does Mulroney not apologize for what happened during the Second World War to mothers and fathers of people sitting in this House who went to concentration camps? I know some of them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. John Cannis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I stayed in the House with great interest to hear the issue that we are supposed to be discussing, that being the motion on the Armenian genocide. I am greatly saddened, but I am not hearing any of that. If the hon. member can put the motion back on track I will stay. Otherwise I am wasting my time.

• (1825)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I am sure the hon. member for Surrey Central is getting back to the main motion before the House.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal: You are right, Madam Speaker. I am coming back to the point, but I am giving some examples of what happened and how the issue was addressed.

To continue, Prime Minister Trudeau at that time said:

They were not Japanese Canadians. They were Canadians of Italian or German origin, or some old French Canadians who went to jail—

—I do not think it is the purpose of a Government to right the past. It cannot re-write history. It is our purpose to be just in our time, and that is what we have done by bringing in the Charter of Rights.

Also in 1994 a conversation took place in the House in which the minister for multiculturalism at the time summarized the government's position. She said:

Seeking to halt the wounds caused by the actions of previous governments...We share the desire to heal those wounds.

The issue is whether the best way to do this is to attempt to address the past or to invest in the future.

Since my time has almost expired I will say that the hon. member is facing unfavourable odds in terms of having the motion passed by the House. The behaviour of the prime ministers past and present does not bode well for the fate of the motion.

Moreover, if it is decided that we need to consider the wider implications of this issue, what happens if we decide in the debate today that recognition ought to be given to the Armenian genocide? Does it mean that the other long ago wrongs perpetrated against other groups are also to be regarded as the collective responsibility of the Canadian people?

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is my great pleasure this evening to have an opportunity to address Motion No. 328 that is before parliament.

[*Translation*]

I wish to thank the member for Laval Centre for bringing forward this motion.

[*English*]

I am very pleased on behalf of my caucus and of my party to speak solidly in support of this motion, which reads:

That this House recognize the Armenian genocide of 1915 and condemn this act as a crime against humanity.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

This motion is jointly supported by the member for Burnaby—Douglas, the NDP foreign affairs critic.

[English]

Canada has an obligation to recognize the Armenian genocide not just as a calamity or a tragedy but as a genocide. I was stunned to hear the Liberal member who spoke to the motion this evening repeatedly referring to the Armenian genocide as an event. It is past time we recognized the Armenian genocide for what it was: a genocide. Let us not hear any more euphemisms.

Over 1.5 million Armenians were murdered in the genocide which took place between 1915 and 1923. Barbaric acts took place during this period. Mass murders were committed in Constantinople or, as we know it today, Istanbul. There were unwarranted arrests and wrongful imprisonments. There were massive deportations of the civilian population, rapes, abductions and forced religious conversions.

The Armenian genocide was the first genocide of the 20th century and sadly not the last. Since then we have witnessed genocide in other parts of the world: the Nazi Holocaust of World War II, the genocides in East Timor, Rwanda, Cambodia and elsewhere. It is only by acknowledging the wrongs of the past and understanding our history that we will avoid such horrors in the future.

Sadly Canada has yet to officially recognize the Armenian genocide even though the United Nations did so 53 years ago as far back as 1948.

New Democrats have been pleased to work side by side with the Armenian community to seek this recognition. We are proud to continue to do so but it is heartbreaking. It is unacceptable that Armenian Canadians continue to have to plead with the Liberal government for recognition of the genocide yet only by doing so will people be able to get on with the healing.

I have met with representatives of the Armenian genocide community. I did so when they were here again this year on April 24, the day we have set aside to commemorate the Armenian genocide. They told stories. Several among them were orphaned and raised by people not known to them who took them into their care because they had lost their parents and grandparents.

I was pleased to be interviewed on the *Horizons* television program in Toronto about the continuing struggle to gain official recognition of the Armenian genocide by the Government of Canada. It is wrong for that community to have to continue putting its case to the government. It is time we corrected that wrong.

I was pleased earlier today to hear that the Minister of Veterans Affairs has finally announced compensation for the 15 surviving Buchenwald vets. This was long overdue. These gentlemen are aging rapidly. Thank goodness the government has finally seen fit to acknowledge the horrifying situation the Buchenwald vets faced. It is time to do the same and recognize the Armenian genocide for what it was.

Earlier this year the member for Burnaby—Douglas asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs a straightforward question. He asked if

the Liberal government would finally stand and officially recognize the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians in 1915 as genocide. What answer did the Minister of Foreign Affairs give? He gave an insulting non-answer. He insulted the entire Canadian Armenian community.

I am currently circulating a petition on the issue which I intend to table in the near future, a petition that calls upon parliament to, first, officially acknowledge the Armenian genocide; second, condemn all attempts to negate the genocide in accordance with the United Nations convention for the prevention and repression of genocide; third, to designate April 24 as the day of annual commemoration of the Armenian genocide; fourth, to press the government of Turkey to acknowledge and recognize the genocide; and, fifth, to help develop understanding, heal wounds and move forward the process of reconciliation among all Canadians about this tragedy in accordance with the Canadian tradition of promoting human rights, peace and the rule of law in international affairs.

● (1830)

This year commemorates the 1,700th anniversary of the Armenian church. We celebrate the Armenian people's rich cultural and religious history. It would be entirely appropriate in this anniversary year to finally recognize this genocide.

I was recently given a book of essays and poems entitled *The Armenian Genocide: Resisting the Inertia of Indifference*. I think what we see from the government is exactly that, the inertia of indifference. This book was written by Lorne Shirinian and Alan Whitehorn. Let me quote briefly from a poem contained in the book, "Remembering Genocide":

We must remember.
Remember and learn.
Remember and tell.
But also remember and live.
And some day, remember and forgive.

Tonight I call on the House to heed those words.

In closing, I seek the unanimous consent of the House to make this motion votable, so that it is clear that as a House we remember the Armenian people, and we acknowledge this genocide and will not forget it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The House has heard the member's request. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to enter into the debate on private members' Motion No. 328. I commend the member for Laval Centre for bringing the motion forward. We had a discussion earlier about the issue. It is very clear how strongly she feels and how committed she is to the cause.

We recently had another debate similar to this on a motion brought forward by the member for Brampton Centre. We had the same debate with him as well. There are certainly a lot of strong feelings about this issue.

The whole debate surrounds the terrible massacre of human lives between 1915 and 1923, with estimates in excess of a million and a half men, women and children who died. There was violence, deportations, internments, mass murders and all kinds of atrocities we in the House can hardly imagine.

To put it into perspective for me, we were all so moved and concerned about the September 11 tragedies in the United States. For every person killed in the United States in that horrible terrorist act, 250 people died in the period from 1915 to 1923. The Armenians were the victims. To put that into perspective, the disaster was 250 times worse than what we experienced in North America. We cannot imagine what these atrocities were like and what families and people lived through. We cannot imagine parents and grandparents seeing their families wiped out through mass murders, atrocities and deportations.

Obviously the events between 1915 and 1923 were terrifying and horrifying. They resulted in the terrible deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. The Armenian people were the victims and suffered greatly, more than anyone else.

The opposition coalition abhors any mass slaughter or killings, whether they occur in Rwanda, the Middle East or Europe and by any country or any group. It is important that we remember these issues. This is exactly what the motion is doing today. It is helping all of us understand and learn about issues we have never been exposed to before. Personally it has been a learning curve. I appreciate the input by all the members who have shared their thoughts with me and the House.

Perhaps by discussing these issues and bringing them forth continually we will maintain public awareness. The healing process and reconciliation will be helped by the fact that we in the Canadian parliament are discussing these issues. Perhaps these discussions and motions will help avoid such atrocities in the future, although recent events are not very encouraging.

● (1835)

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Scarborough Centre. I had an opportunity recently to call the Minister of Foreign Affairs regarding the Pontian genocide. The minister said to me that he could not comment as he was not born at that time. Even today the parliamentary secretary to the minister told me to get real. I would like to get real.

I have in my hands the November 1922 issue of *National Geographic*. There is a picture called "The children of Smyrna" and it states that "This was a photograph taken shortly before the recent holocaust".

I also have in my hands the November 1925 issue of *National Geographic* and it states "Dynamiting the walls and buildings along the quay along the Smyrna fire". On page 558 of the same issue it states "Boat loaded with refugees leaving the railroad pier at Smyrna". On page 559 it shows American sailors moving refugees on hand tracks to Smyrna. On page 562 it states "Weeding out men for deportation, Smyrna" and on the same page there is a picture of a member of my family. On page 565 it states "Ghouls fishing for bodies after the Smyrna disaster".

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This issue has pictures of people looking for loaves of bread. On page 578 there are people with lists of names looking for people. On page 580 it shows people raiding trucks in order to have bread. On page 587 a picture caption states "Housekeeping in a refugee barrack at Saloniki".

For my colleague who says I should get real I have to tell her that I was born in one of those shacks because my parents were part of that history. This is not "I wasn't born then"; this is reality.

We have a duty to stand and recognize what happened, not coat it with smooth words. We have a duty to make sure that atrocities like that do not happen again. We sent people to Kosovo and today we are engaged in Afghanistan. What is different from what I see in these pictures from what I see in Afghanistan?

Yes, I will get real. This is why, along with my colleague from Scarborough Centre, I seek unanimous consent to accept this motion to make sure that events like this will not cause people to say I was not born then or it did not happen. We cannot say it was not part of history. It was documented by *National Geographic*. There was nothing better. Today we depend on *CNN*. At that time we depended on *National Geographic*.

● (1840)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to add my voice to those speaking in support of having the Government of Canada, and this parliament in particular, recognize the genocide of the Armenians perpetrated by the former Ottoman empire in 1915.

The facts of the genocide are public knowledge. They are certainly well known to this House, since this is not the first time we have debated this subject. There have been other debates on other motions, which have unfortunately been defeated in a vote.

It is important to recall that this genocide was not the last of its kind. By recognizing that the Ottoman empire of the time engineered the genocide of thousands of women and children by leaving them to die of hunger and of their wounds in the Turkish desert, Canada's parliament could recognize one of the great genocides of this century, not the only one, unfortunately, but one of the major ones.

I believe it is up to parliament to show its colours, to show that the genocide committed by the Ottoman empire is unacceptable to a country like Canada and to show that the Parliament of Canada deplores this event, if I may call it that, in its most negative sense. Let parliament therefore show not only how much it deplores an event like the one a few years ago, as in Rwanda, and the one many years ago in fascist Nazi Germany, but that it deplores as well other events of importance to the Armenian people and those of Armenian origin who are now Canadian citizens.

Private Members' Business

It is important in my opinion to resolve this debate once and for all. Other countries have passed motions. The French government and senate have adopted a motion. I know other governments have done so too.

We in Canada must show our fellow citizens of Armenian origin that we understand what happened, that we recognize that Armenians were murdered in 1915 in the Ottoman empire. We must, once and for all, stand on the side of the righteous, and the Parliament of Canada must pass the motion by the member for Laval Centre.

[*English*]

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the few moments I have I want to make some comments in this debate.

I was very pleased that most of the members I listened to stuck to Motion No. 328 on the Armenian genocide. It was very sad for me to hear the member for Surrey Central use such examples especially in such difficult times as these when the world is fighting terrorism. In the United States there are no Republicans or Democrats, and in this country there should be no Liberals or Conservatives or NDP or whatever that party is called. It is all of us collectively together. That is why I was so pleased when I heard the member for Halifax so eloquently make her position. She did not criticize the government for this or that but she came right to the point. I thank her for that.

I want to thank the member for Cumberland—Colchester as well who so eloquently said that this is the time for reconciliation. That was the most important word. Many nations in the past have erred. As the saying goes, he who is without sin, let them cast the first stone. We have all made mistakes. It is in learning from our mistakes that we will go forward. Several years back we discussed this issue and we were no closer then, but today we have moved that agenda forward. We are using the words “genocide” and “atrocities”. We have moved beyond where we were five, six or seven years ago.

Some horrendous activities took place in South Africa over many years. There was a truth and reconciliation commission. Everyone came forward to kind of cleanse themselves and say “Yes, these things did happen, but now let us draw a line and move forward and learn from those mistakes”.

Were there atrocities that took place in 1915 and 1912? Funnily enough it was all in the same area. It all happened at the same time. It happened to be the Armenians on one side and the Pontians on the other. What has the Pontian community done nowadays? It has erected a monument in the former borough of East York, which is now part of the megacity of Toronto, commemorating the lives that were unfortunately and sadly slaughtered, et cetera.

Today I know the Greek Canadian community, the Pontian community go once a year to pay homage to those people. The other day we were celebrating. I had the opportunity to be at a function to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Republic of Armenia. Who could have imagined that 15 or 20 years ago? There is progress in itself. When I saw the young children and the seniors, I thanked them for the performance and the many people that have contributed to the development of building a nation.

That is why I was sad when the member for Surrey Central, who in my view did nothing but exploit a situation that we should focus on, went back and said what happened in Canada's history. Sure mistakes were made. Mistakes were made in the United States of America. Mistakes were made in Germany. Mistakes were made in other parts of the world. That was not the issue tonight and that is what has upset me.

In closing I want to thank each and every member who stood up and focused on the motion. That is what it was all about, and not to exploit and use certain examples in our history in Canada. I want to thank the Armenian Canadian community who have contributed so much to the development of nation building in Canada.

● (1845)

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Madam Speaker, I must say that one of the greatest honours I have had in the House of Commons was when the member for Cambridge held an evening here with the Armenian community. A stamp was displayed by Canada Post in honour and recognition of the Armenian community. Anyone who was there that evening will agree what a wonderful event that was.

The colour, the history and the culture of the Armenian community are things we as Canadians should value and recognize in a historical context. It is an outstanding contribution to Canada when we consider the people's history. My wife's uncle who lives in California is Armenian. I will be sending him a copy of the tape of this evening's proceedings because he himself would like to see this country move forward on such a motion.

I would like to ask for unanimous consent of the House to make this valuable motion votable. If it is made a votable item I believe it will have almost unanimous consent of the House. Then we could tell the Armenian community in Canada and in the world that we truly care about them and respect the historical wrongs of the past. Maybe by making it a votable motion we could put some closure to their file.

I ask for the consent of the House to make this motion votable.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Madam Speaker, all of today's speakers have demonstrated their sensitivity to the Armenian genocide, even if they did not all use that term, regretfully, but I am appreciative of their participation in this debate.

I am sure that, had this motion been votable, it would have obtained the support of the majority of MPs. Unfortunately, on several occasions voices from the government side have prevented parliament from expressing its view on a motion that, apparently, interests all members of this House.

I profoundly regret what I would term an “insufficient view of reality”, the view of those in power.

Adjournment Debate

The genocide of April 24, 1915, is a reality even if certain people wish to deny that reality. The planning that led up to it, the number of deaths that resulted from it, the eyewitness accounts, the research by competent historians, the political recognition by a number of states and multinational organizations and by the Vatican, all of these realities fully justify the appeal made on March 24, 1998, by Robert Kotcharian, prime minister of the Republic of Armenia at that time.

He called for international recognition of the genocide, which was not, and I quote “the tragedy of the Armenian people only” but a tragedy for “all of humanity and a heavy burden for the Armenian people because it has gone unpunished and, worse yet, has not been condemned as it ought”.

The time has come for Canada to respond to this request because only international recognition of the genocide will allow this painful wound to heal, thereby promoting reconciliation. It is up to all of us to remember. The Armenian people are very conscious of this fact, and Robert Agazian, who travelled to Armenia to celebrate the 1,700th anniversary of the establishment of Christianity last September, attests to this. He said:

When I come here, alone or with pilgrims, I am always very moved. I am reminded of my parents, my grandparents, of all of our families that were separated and scattered around the world randomly due to the exodus and the convoys. I am also reminded of all of the stories told and heard, all of the accounts that I have read and that describe the tragic events of our Armenian history. In coming here, I am fulfilling my duty to remember and I am expressing my desire for justice.

Regardless of where they live, Armenians recall this painful wound. I would like to say to them today that these memories contain life. Without them, the events that nourish our existence become lost beyond the limits of the consciousness. The respect they have for their history and for freedom is an example for us all, because it is the memories of the living that push back the boundaries of death.

Émile Henriot wrote “the dead live on in the memories of those they leave behind”. I thank them for their faithfulness to their people.

• (1850)

[*English*]

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

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*Translation*]

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Madam Speaker, on September 26, I asked a question in the House about the airline industry.

My question was for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Since there were going to be layoffs, I asked her what she intended to do to help airline employees. The surplus in the EI fund stood at about \$43 billion.

The minister replied as follows:

That is why my deputy minister met yesterday with officials from Air Canada to discuss precisely this fact; the programs and services that can be made available to the company and, most particularly, to its employees.

The minister went on to say “The employment insurance program is strong and sound”. If it is strong and sound, could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Human Resources Development tell the House what the minister has done since September 26 with respect to a job sharing program, since she had tasked her deputy minister to look into this?

I would also like to ask if, by chance, she sent her deputy minister to Alcan where 3,670 employees were just laid off? What will they do back home? I am not talking about 3,000, 2,000, or 1,000 people. Yesterday I heard about a company called Méga Bleu that has 8,000 pounds of blueberries that cannot be shipped to the United States because of the events of September 11. On Monday morning it laid off 40 people until further notice.

What is the government doing to help these people with its strong and sound system? More important, can the parliamentary secretary tell us what the minister will tell us this week when in committee all of the parties agreed that the number of hours to be eligible for EI should be reduced from 910 to 700? This measure could help people in the regions where these layoffs took place.

We are talking about thousands of people being laid off. We have a strong and sound system but people cannot apply for employment insurance because they only have 700 or 750 hours accumulated. How is it that the government can be insensitive to this situation?

I hope the Minister of Human Resources Development has had an opportunity to examine her conscience since September 26. I have heard that in Newfoundland even Liberal members were saying that the minister was not sensitive to workers who lose their jobs, when we have a program that belongs to the workers and employers that contribute to it.

I am still waiting for an answer. We have asked the question on numerous occasions in the House. When it comes to the money that belongs to the workers, is the minister ready to give it back to those who contributed it especially since we have a strong and sound system?

Adjournment Debate

I would like to hear the answer from the parliamentary secretary to the minister. Is the department more aware of the situation and have any steps been taken regarding job sharing programs for those who have lost their jobs in the airline industry, at Alcan and in other sectors across Canada?

•(1855)

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the matter raised by my colleague for Acadie—Bathurst is certainly important, not only for him as the representative of the people of Acadie—Bathurst but for us in government.

I can tell him, and I think he already knows, that the Government of Canada is always concerned when workers lose their jobs. I would assure my colleague that the officials of the Department of Human Resources Development have worked with and continue to work on a daily basis with employees of the airline and with the union and employers to come up with solutions and ensure that the employees affected have recourse to all the programs and services provided by HRDC.

Speaking of Air Canada as one example of many—and I stress that—the department and we are in daily contact with Air Canada. The Minister of Human Resources Development has personally met the representatives of the unions affected and those of Air Canada and has assured them that we will work with them so the employment insurance plan will help those employees laid off.

We are currently working with the employees, the unions and the employer to be sure that the members and employees of Air Canada get the benefits they are entitled to as effectively as possible.

I must say that not only are we working with them but under HRDC's program we visit the company's premises. Departmental employees do this in order to get information to employees as quickly as possible.

HRDC offers several forms of assistance to employees and to employers in cases of mass layoffs. As I have just said, we visit the employer's premises or a mutually agreed upon location in order to help employees fill out their EI application.

Since we are on site, we can gather the necessary information and process applications as soon as possible.

Discussions with company representatives—I am speaking here of Air Canada, but this can be multiplied by a number of companies, which are almost in a free fall right now, given the number of employees they are laying off—and unions focused on work sharing mainly as a way of offsetting the impact of the present economic downturn and reducing the number of layoffs.

Just to refresh the hon. member's memory, work sharing allows employers to deal with cutbacks without resorting to layoffs. It entails a reduction in the work week and a corresponding reduction in salary. For days not worked, HRDC will see that workers receive EI benefits, which partially compensates for the reduced salary they are receiving from their employer. Work sharing therefore benefits workers, because they do not have to go through the difficult experience of being laid off.

Although they receive a reduced salary from their employer, they also receive EI benefits and can continue working, which is obviously important. This also allows workers to maintain their professional skills.

I am certain that by demonstrating goodwill and flexibility, we will be able to conclude work sharing agreements with the airline industry.

Our priority right now is to ensure that employees who have received a layoff notice and who must rely on the EI system can receive all the benefits—

•(1900)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst for a brief reply.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Madam Speaker, my question was whether there had already been a job sharing arrangement.

As regards what the hon. member said about job sharing, I can say that, when I was working at the Brunswick mine in 1978 we had a job sharing program. I know what job sharing is about. I am a former union staff member, and we used job sharing arrangements on a number of occasions.

Work is shared. One person may work for three days and be laid off for two days, during which time he or she collects employment insurance to make up for the shortfall. In other words, the workers' salary is topped up so that they do not lose money.

My question does not concern only Air Canada but other airlines as well. Time has passed. Now there is Alcan and other companies. What is the federal government doing for all the companies that are laying people off? As I said earlier, what is it waiting for to take action through a sound and aggressive employment insurance program to help workers and perhaps at the same time provide training programs to people so they can—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): I am sorry but I must give the floor to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is very familiar with the work sharing programs between the Department of Human Resources Development and employers, employees and unions.

Again—and the hon. member said it himself—we hope that employees, unions and the employer, Air Canada, will agree to operate on the basis of this program, which has worked for other companies.

I cannot provide more information at this point since the players involved met today and will surely meet again tomorrow, precisely to discuss this issue. There is no answer to give because discussions are progressing well. We hope to be able to give a positive reply, but I cannot provide any answer at this point, even though I would love to be able to.

As regards the question of my hon. colleague, question concerning the reply that the minister is to provide by the 26—

Adjournment Debate

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore.

[English]

AIRLINE SAFETY

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Madam Speaker, yesterday I raised the same issue on the late show regarding airline security. I asked the government if it would accept full responsibility for pre-flight screening of hand luggage and passengers. This is now handled by the airlines.

As I said yesterday, at the Ottawa airport there is a big sign before people go through the x-ray machines which says "Airport security is an airline responsibility". As a former airline employee, for years I have been saying that this should be the responsibility of the government. Now with the events of September 11, one would assume that the government would finally figure out that it is its responsibility. The government should have full control over training, employment and the standards that are adhered to in pre-boarding flight screening.

I asked another question yesterday, which did not receive an answer, with regard to the x-raying of all check-in baggage and cargo prior to entry onto an aircraft. This is still not happening. There is nothing stopping a terrorist from getting on board an aircraft with checked luggage which has something inside it that could do great damage to the aircraft while in the air. I could check in all kinds of paraphernalia in my suitcase and board the aircraft. I will be checked, my hand luggage will be checked but my check-in baggage will not.

When will the department start x-raying all luggage, materials and cargo going onto the aircraft prior to departure?

I also asked about removing metal cutlery from the aircraft, such as serrated knives. I give the minister and the airlines credit because they did remove those articles from the aircraft. In fact, some of the airlines removed the entire meal service. That ended that problem.

My questions are straightforward. I ask my hon. colleague to put down the notes he got from the department. He is very capable of speaking for himself. Will the government accept full responsibility and full costs for employment and training airport security? Will the government implement a program to x-ray all luggage and cargo prior to departure of the aircraft?

• (1905)

[Translation]

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to provide my colleague from Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore with a response to her question of September 24.

I would like to point out that since September 11 the entire matter of airport security and safety has constituted an extremely important issue for the government as whole.

Since September 11, a number of measures have been announced by the minister as circumstances have dictated. The government has announced numerous measures which contribute to enhancing security and safety.

It must not be forgotten, however, that a few months before the events of September 11 the International Civil Aviation Organization gave Canada a top rating in terms of security and safety.

ICAO said that Canada's methods for ensuring security and safety were unparalleled. I would therefore like to point out to my colleague that we were not starting from scratch.

It is important to point out as well that the government did react after the events of September 11. In response, Transport Canada issued a directive on September 12 for the confiscation of certain articles at preboarding check points. If members of the general public attempt to get around this directive by attempting to get past check points with knives and other sharp objects, charges will be laid.

I would like to reiterate that we were not starting from scratch in the field of safety and security. Throughout this whole assessment, this whole process, we have come to the realization that other objects, such as the cutlery provided by airlines for meals, will need to be evaluated even more carefully.

These revised directives were made public September 21 to provide further direction for the industry regarding passengers and carry on baggage. These security measures were implemented to allow us to find and confiscate any dangerous objects and weapons aboard aircraft and in restricted areas of airports. The discovery of such objects on aircraft or in restricted areas must be reported immediately to the police and to Transport Canada officials.

Increased security measures have also been issued regarding food serving utensils provided by airlines.

To this effect, I would like to specify that knives with serrated edged blades, like a saw blade, are banned from aircraft, and this ban has been extended. However, butter knives with blunt blades and ball tipped points or plastic knives are still permitted on board aircraft for meals served in flight. This approach is consistent with that of the United States on this issue.

With the help of the airlines and airports, Transport Canada continues to ensure that these heightened measures are appropriate and can be implemented effectively.

We will continue our momentum to further increase the safety and security of travellers.

I would also like to point out to my colleague that everything to do with security and the standards applied are checked daily by Transport Canada.

Since the events of September 11, the minister has answered all the questions in the House every day. He took part in the emergency debate we had. He appeared before the Standing Committee on Transportation to answer all questions raised by my colleague and by others.

Adjournment Debate

● (1910)

[English]

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his partial answer to my question. I appreciate the fact that the minister has made himself available. Still, this is two days in a row and it is a simple yes or no answer.

I will water the question down a bit to make it easier for the government. Will the government at least indicate to the airlines that it will look at assuming full costs, full control and full employment of all employees and all security levels at airports in Canada?

Right now pre-board screening goes to a tender process and 99% of the time it goes to the lowest bidder. We are asking these people to be at the same level customs officers are at now which, by the way, is handled by Transport Canada or Revenue Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. André Harvey: Madam Speaker, tens of millions of dollars have been announced. Again, in recent days, \$79 million was announced to improve the equipment used in airport safety and security.

Clearly Transport Canada will continue to define the standards surrounding the application of the measures that must be taken with airports. Transport Canada will continue to assume its responsibilities in order to continue to improve a system that was considered just about perfect in the world.

It must be remembered that international agencies have rated our security and safety system as one of the best in the world and unparalleled. It is true it is not perfect. It is easier to be perfect in opposition than in government. That is not a criticism. It is a fact.

In short, we will continue to examine things. Every day, the Minister of Transport will look at the situation with all his collaborators, within the department, all of the airlines and those responsible for security.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.13 p.m.)

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