



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, October 25, 2001**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 25, 2001

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to four petitions.

\* \* \*

### AIR CANADA PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACT

**Hon. Don Boudria (for the Minister of Transport)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-38, an act to amend the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

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

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the delegation of the Interparliamentary Union, which represented Canada at the 105th interparliamentary conference held at Havana, Cuba, March 28 to April 7, 2001.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association which represented Canada at the meeting of the subcommittee on future security and defence capabilities of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly held in Germany from June 25 to 29, 2001.

Also pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association which represented Canada at the meeting of the committee of economics and security of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly held in Washington and Boston, U.S.A. from June 11 to 15, 2001.

[*Translation*]

### CANADA POST ACT

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-404, an act to amend the Canada Post Act (mail contractors).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to introduce an amendment to the Canada Post Act, which would enable all the little rural mail contractors to be exempted from section 13.5 of the Canada Post Act in order to have the ability to negotiate under the Canada Labour Code.

It is unacceptable that after 20 years of existence, Canada Post, which now has earnings in the millions and pays out some very substantial dividends to the government, would have a legislative provision allowing it to snub the demands of some 6,000 workers in Canada, people who in many cases are earning less than minimum wage.

This is unjust, when their employer is likely going to provide its sole shareholder, the federal government, with \$200 million in dividends this year.

The bill is being introduced on behalf of these workers.

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

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

**Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-405, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (parole hearings).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to introduce my private member's bill entitled, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, specifically with respect to parole hearings.

The bill would amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to permit a victim of an offence to read at a parole hearing a statement describing the harm done to or the loss suffered by the victim arising from the commission of an offence.

*Routine Proceedings*

The bill is a logical extension to the changes made to the criminal code in Bill C-79, the victim's rights act, adopted by the House in the 36th parliament.

Bill C-79 contained a provision granting victims the right to provide an oral or written statement at the time of sentencing.

It is my understanding that departmental policy does exist allowing victims of crime to present oral statements at parole hearings, however there is nothing expressly provided in statute governing the practice and policy can be changed at any time, as we know.

My private member's bill would guarantee victims the right to make an oral statement if they so choose. I look forward to debating the bill further in the House and I sincerely hope it gains the opportunity to be made votable.

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

\* \* \*

● (1010)

**PETITIONS**

## VIA RAIL

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition from the citizens of the Peterborough area who would like to see VIA service restored between Toronto and Peterborough.

The petition has support in 10 federal ridings: Haliburton—Victoria—Brock, Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge, Scarborough—Rouge River, Whitby—Ajax, Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, Oshawa, Markham, Durham, Northumberland as well as Peterborough.

People in all those ridings see the environmental benefits, the road safety benefits and the benefits to the business environment of the Greater Toronto area.

\* \* \*

## KIDNEY DISEASE

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have another petition which I would like to present. This is from citizens of the Peterborough area who would like to see the name of our national institute that is devoted to kidney research changed.

At present the institute is called the Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes. These citizens believe it would engage the public more and be more effective if the word "kidney" were included in the title.

The petitioners call upon parliament to encourage the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to explicitly include kidney research as one of the institutes of its system to be named the institute of kidney and urinary tract diseases.

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 68 and 70.

[Text]

Question No. 68—**Mr. Rick Borotsik:**

With regard to the communications branch of the Department of Agriculture: (a) what is its total budget for the 2000-2001 fiscal year; and (b) what did the April 6, 2001, EKOS Inc. research contract cost?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Communication branch budget for the fiscal year 2000-01 A-base budget was \$5,260,000.

The cost of the April 6, 2001, Ekos Inc. research contract cost \$77,688.63 for 12 focus groups held across Canada.

Question No. 70—**Mr. Rick Borotsik:**

What measures has the government taken to ensure that cross-border trade of agriculture products with the United States is not being disrupted following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** First, the government would like to express appreciation for the patience, co-operation and flexibility shown by producers, processors and distributors during this time of disruption following the terrorist attacks. Canada's overarching priority must be the safety and security of our borders and citizens. In view of the acts of terrorism, customs authorities in both Canada and the U.S. are more vigilant at ports of entry.

The government recognizes the importance of maintaining trade, while at the same time mitigating the risks related to the health and safety to the public. In the case of agricultural commodities, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, CFIA, works with customs officials by inspecting products for health and safety requirements, which facilitates the movement of all commodities, especially perishable shipments and live animals.

During the early days following September 11, when large backlogs existed, initiatives such as expediting shipping lanes for the above commodities were employed. Through the dedicated work and co-operation of customs officials, CFIA and other departments, delays at the border have now been largely eliminated and presently we are not experiencing undue delays. CFIA continues to work closely with U.S. counterparts to focus resources on high risk products and carriers as a first priority.

The CFIA's web page <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/> links to Canada Customs and Revenue Agency's web page, which provides an estimate of border delays to assist exporters in planning their shipments.

[English]

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### CANADA—COSTA RICA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-32, an act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Costa Rica, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

**Hon. Don Boudria (for the Minister of International Trade)** moved that the bill be concurred in at report stage.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.  
(Motion agreed to)

**Hon. Don Boudria** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to this important bilateral free trade initiative between Canada and Costa Rica on behalf of the Minister for International Trade.

I would like to offer our congratulations to several people: to our colleague from Ottawa Centre, the chair of the trade subcommittee, who held hearings on the bill; to our colleague, the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, who is the chair of the sugar caucus as it is called and who had some very important input, along with other colleagues, on the legislation; and, indeed, to all members of SCFAIT, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. I, on behalf of the minister, would like to thank both the opposition members and the government members for the good and co-operative spirit in which they worked on the legislation. We were able to move the legislation along at a very good pace. On behalf of the Minister for International Trade, we offer our thanks and appreciation for the work that was well done.

We are now in the final stage of debate on the Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement implementation act. I welcome the opportunity to address the House on this important matter.

However, before I get to the matter at hand, I would first like to say a few words about the impact of the terrible events of September 11.

Many Canadians find it difficult to believe there are those who claim that our country can return to business as usual. Our economy and the entire global economic system has been severely shaken by the tremendous human and economic losses we experienced last month.

As members know, many sectors have felt an immediate impact. The air transport, hospitality and communications industries, for instance, have been hit by a dramatic and sudden reduction in consumer demand. However, as you will no doubt recall, Mr. Speaker, in 1991 there was an economic slowdown related to concerns about international political instability. This was quickly followed by a decade of very strong growth.

### Government Orders

Today there are also reasons to have faith in the future. Governments of the free world, including our government, are taking unprecedented steps to combat global terrorism and improve security within their own borders. Economically, we know that our markets are resilient and that difficulties such as those experienced at the Canada-U.S. border crossing are starting to ease.

Together we can overcome the inertia of fear or worry and establish a new standard of normalcy now strengthened with a renewed sense of purpose.

While it may not be business as usual, we are certainly taking care of the usual business for the good of all Canadians. The free trade agreement we are discussing today is certainly an integral part of our efforts in that direction.

I would like to turn now to the benefits of the Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement.

The agreement in question would give Canadian businesses barrier free access to the small but dynamic Costa Rican market. We will see the immediate elimination of tariffs on most industrial products upon implementation. This includes some key Canadian export sectors, including automotive goods, environmental goods, prefabricated buildings and some construction products, such as steel products. The advantages do not stop there. In fact people right across the country will benefit from the agreement.

Some 94% of Canada's current agriculture and agrifood exports to Costa Rica would realize market access benefits. Significant gains would be realized for products such as french fries, peas, beans, lentils and other pulses, greens, fresh fruits and vegetables and processed food products.

While on the subject of agriculture and agrifood, it is worth noting that supply managed dairy, poultry and egg products are exempted from tariff reductions.

Tariffs on the remainder of goods would be gradually phased out over a period of either 7 or 14 years, depending on the type of product.

•(1015)

As a result Canadian exporters will gain an important advantage over their principal competitors in the Costa Rican market, including the United States, European and Asian suppliers. At the same time Canada will achieve a level playing field with Costa Rica's other preferential trade partners such as Mexico and Chile.

This really represents a win-win scenario in the best sense of the word. Of course Costa Rica also stands to gain under this agreement. One of the most important benefits for this small country is the asymmetrical treatment that the Canada-Costa Rican free trade agreement provides for.

As members know, this means that to take into account the difference in the levels of development and the size of the two economies, Canada will liberalize its market more quickly than Costa Rica. We sincerely believe that the government will demonstrate conclusively that free trade agreements can be negotiated between larger and smaller economies.

*Government Orders*

Clearly this will also serve to advance the debate taking place in the FTAA and how the interests of larger and smaller economies in the region can best be reconciled. As a result, the asymmetrical aspect of the agreement serves the broader interest of our country.

This is an important point because Canada's continued engagement within regional free trade agreements, such as the FTAA and the NAFTA, is critical to our collective economic prosperity and social well-being. After all, with a population of 800 million, the Americas is one of the fastest growing markets in the world in terms of consumers and growth in per capita income. Latin America and the Caribbean collectively boast a total population of nearly 500 million people and the region produces a GDP of approximately \$3 trillion.

The FTAA will create the conditions for greater prosperity for all participants. This widespread prosperity will in turn provide the poorer countries of the hemisphere with the resources to address such problems as poverty, crime, environmental degradation, threats to democracy and human rights.

In the end our efforts to liberalize trade on a multilateral, regional and, as in the case of Costa Rica, bilateral level all lead to the same goal: a more open rules based trading system. It is absolutely fundamental to the success of our economy that with a relatively small population in terms of our trading partners we have an open rules based trading system. This helps to promote such a system.

While the elimination of tariffs is at the heart of any free trade deal, the agreement between Canada and Costa Rica goes further in a number of key areas. For example, the Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement is the first bilateral free trade agreement including innovative stand alone procedures on trade facilitation which will reduce costs and red tape for Canadian businesses at the border.

This has special significance far beyond this particular agreement. Within the World Trade Organization, Canada has long been a leading proponent for binding rules and disciplines on trade facilitation. This agreement also includes a precedent setting framework for competition policy which could serve as a model for the region in the context of the free trade area of the Americas.

In fact, as a country that draws great benefit from foreign trade, Canada is working very hard to strengthen the rules based international trading system. That is why we strongly support the launch of a new WTO negotiation round. We are working closely with our trading partners, including the United States, the EU, Japan and key developing countries, to build support for new negotiations.

In this respect I have to note that when I represented our colleague, the Minister for International Trade, in Shanghai last June, I saw how highly respected he is personally by the trading partners in APEC in the leadership that he has shown. That leadership deserves to be recognized here today.

WTO members have many difficult issues left to resolve before the meeting scheduled to take place in Doha, but I believe that with political will on all sides we can make good progress in bridging the differences among members. A key to success in this area is to demonstrate to smaller countries that they stand to benefit from liberalized trade. Agreements like the Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement do just that.

● (1020)

To digress from my text for a moment, I know that in discussion with many groups in my own riding and in other parts of Canada, the support for free trade in this country is quite strong. It is in the order of some 70% to 75%. Much of it is based on the fact that Canadians expect that there will not be losers in free trade. The basic fairness of Canadians comes into play here when they say that they are for free trade. Most, with their eyes open, understand how it has benefited our economy. However, they expect that it will also benefit the economies of the developing countries of the world. I think that is the Canadian basic sense of fair play. Much of their support is contingent on us doing everything possible to ensure that, and that is exactly what we are working toward as a country.

If I could turn now to the somewhat contentious issue of side agreements in the areas of environment and labour. Until now I have only addressed some of the many economic benefits of this free trade agreement. While they are of course central, they are not the only advantages that flow from this agreement. After all, while pursuing the goal of liberalized trade, we owe it to future generations to ensure that this increased economic activity is also sustainable.

At the same time, as a progressive and democratic society we have a special responsibility to foster improved environment and labour standards in those countries where we do business. I am pleased to note that parallel agreements in both these key areas were also negotiated.

In light of the growing economic, environmental and social links between our two countries, both agreed that a commitment to environmental and labour co-operation, along with the effective enforcement of domestic laws, should go hand in hand with free trade. These parallel agreements will ensure that we not only reap economic benefits but important social benefits as well.

In fact, Mr. Juan Somaria, the director general of the International Labour Organization, recently stated in Ottawa that he supported side agreements and that Canada had been very creative in using these side agreements.

At a meeting of the trade subcommittee, I personally had an opportunity to explore this with the director general of the ILO. Some of our colleagues, specifically those in the New Democratic Party, are saying that we must have these environmental and labour agreements right in the text of our trade deals. Therefore, I put the question to the director of the ILO as to whether he supported that. Quite frankly, he said no. He said he supported and congratulated Canada very effusively for its creative use of side agreements. He said that we take what tools we have and make progress that way. I think it came as a bit of an eye-opener for the NDP members at that particular meeting.

*Government Orders*

On this same issue, I had an opportunity to attend a conference representing my colleague the Minister for International Trade where we talked about trade and the benefits to less developed countries.

Again, there are colleagues in this House who talk about EU and cite it as a very advanced organization in its trade and other practices. EU ministers are adamant that we not litter up trade deals by trying to include environmental and labour standards in those trade deals. It is best done in side agreements.

That is the view I believe of all parties in this House, save and except for the NDP. It is certainly the view of this government. It is the view expressed earlier this week by the director general of the ILO. It is important that his support and congratulation for Canada be noted.

For example, the Canada-Costa Rica environmental co-operation agreement includes obligations which provide for high levels of environmental quality and effective enforcement of environmental laws which promote open, transparent and equitable, judicial and administrative procedures. It provides for public accountability for those commitments to effectively enforce environmental laws. It will also seek to involve the public, as appropriate, in all aspects of the implementation of the agreement.

On the labour front, the two countries have signed the Canada-Costa Rica agreement on labour co-operation.

● (1025)

The main elements of this agreement include: coverage of industrial relations; employment standards and occupational safety and health; a mechanism allowing the public to raise concerns about the application of labour law in the other country; and development assistance to help the Costa Rican department of labour and social welfare improve its institutional capacity.

Unfortunately, time does not allow me to catalogue all the benefits of our free trade agreement. However I believe it is clear from the examples I have outlined today, as well as from the comments from many other members who took part in this debate on both sides of the House, that the Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement is another step in the right direction for Canada. Like other free trade agreements that came before, this one will contribute to Canada's long term prosperity as well as help us achieve our broader goal for international trade liberalization.

Finally, it represents a symbol of our faith in the future. The Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement is a definitive response to those who seek to sever the lines of communication between nations and retreat into a medieval isolation. Canada will never find itself among those timid souls. Free trade is as much about ideas and values as it is about goods and services. Let us increase such exchanges.

It has been an honour for me to speak on the debate today and to congratulate and thank those who participated on both sides of the House on behalf of my colleague, the Minister for International Trade. I welcome the support of all members of the House who surely must see the undeniable benefits of the agreement.

● (1030)

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to talk to Bill C-32, an act to implement the free trade agreement between Canada and the Republic of Costa Rica.

The purpose of the bill is to implement the free trade agreement with Costa Rica, the objective of which is to establish free trade between the two countries by gradually eliminating barriers to trade in goods and services.

I will put a summary at the front end, which is that this is not a controversial bill, with one singular exception. I believe, as the parliamentary secretary made reference to, that we have dealt with that quite adequately at committee. We tried very hard to make that a co-operative arrangement with the government. The compromise we came to hopefully will stand the test of time. This will be seen as time marches on. I will certainly be getting into that in some detail during my presentation.

The bill follows the free trade agreement with Chile in 1997 and NAFTA in 1994. One of the major stated purposes is to promote regional integration through an instrument that contributes to the establishment of the free trade area of the Americas, the so-called and so-named FTAA negotiations. This could be the first of several of these agreements with other countries in South and Central America.

Eighty per cent of what Costa Rica exports to Canada, primarily fruit, vegetables, coffee and coal, already enters Canada duty free. Canada was looking to expand its market for some specific things. Interestingly, french fries, metal structures, fish, paper products, auto parts, plastics, wood and agricultural products were among that mix. These products had very high tariff rates applied to them. One interesting example is french fries. Even though Costa Rica does not grow potatoes, it has a 41% tariff on imported french fries. This shows the need for tariff reductions on all kinds of fronts. That was very much a focus of these negotiations.

In 2000, Canada's total exports to Costa Rica were about \$86 million. In the same year we imported \$183 million worth of products from Costa Rica. These are Government of Canada statistics and I do recognize that there is some difficulty in identifying exactly what are the imports and exports because some of them flow through the United States and are attributed in that fashion.

The Canadian Alliance promotes free trade and the joint elimination of tariffs with our trading partners. We support securing access to international markets through the negotiation of trade agreements. We will vigorously pursue reduction of international trade barriers, tariffs and subsidies. Additionally, we will ensure that Canadians' concerns about labour practices, environmental protection and human rights are reflected in these agreements.

*Government Orders*

I did mention that there was one aspect of the bill that was contentious. I will spend some time making reference to it. It is an industry that is important to us. I am talking about the domestic sugar industry. Historically we have grown sugar beets in Canada in many provinces, and now, based on a closure of export opportunities with our trading partners, sugar is one of the most protected markets in the world. Canada has the most open market in the world for sugar.

● (1035)

What has transpired is that we have one sugar beet producing province left, which is Alberta. We have gone from seven sugar refineries not very many years ago to three. Those refineries have made major capital expenditures to ensure that they operate with world class efficiency.

We basically are supplying our own domestic industry with our own refined sugar. We are importing a lot of raw cane sugar. We produce beet sugar and have almost no export opportunity. For example our total export opportunity to the United States at this time is, I believe, 10,000 tonnes, which works out to one tenth of 1% of its total consumption. We are facing tariffs on exports to other countries in the Americas of anywhere between 50% and 160%. Our only protection for our domestic industry is an 8% tariff or about \$30 a tonne. It is a very small tariff and we do not subsidize our sugar industry in any other way.

As an example, Costa Rican sugar prices are about \$650 a tonne higher than world prices. What that really means is that Costa Rica can cross-subsidize any exports of its sugar anywhere in the world, including Canada. What this has done of course is create a lopsided agreement on sugar. In a sense we have sacrificed our sugar industry in many agreements. That is why our place in the sugar world has shrunk.

A very significant concern came forward from the refiners and the growers as represented by the Canadian Sugar Institute. They felt that although the bill would not be in itself a major problem because Costa Rica has no refining capacity, if the market provisions of this agreement were to be built into the ongoing negotiations with central American countries such as Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and so on, or with the free trade area of the Americas, we basically could write off our sugar industry. We would be doing that in a non-free trade environment because no one else is practising free trade. We believe in free trade but it has to be fair trade.

● (1040)

I will move on to some of the important parts of the agreement. We as a nation of 31 million people have entered into an agreement with Costa Rica, which has a population of less than 4 million, no military and longstanding democratic traditions and institutions. This is an important agreement because Costa Rica is very much viewed as a stable, democratic entity in that part of the world and one that we should be doing our utmost to do business with and to practise the purest of free trade with if we can.

Canadians have a lot of investments in Costa Rica. The Bank of Nova Scotia has 12 branches. Hollinger owns the newspaper *La República*. Canada has major solid waste treatment facilities, hotels and tourism oriented enterprises and Hydro-Québec is involved in a large hydro generating station in Costa Rica. Our total capital

investment is running at about \$500 million. I think investors have had generally pleasant experiences.

That gives a good summary of where we are. I will move now into the area of some of the things that would be exempt from tariff reductions under this agreement. Canada has a long tradition, under the Liberal government, of exempting some things from tariff reductions. They are simply not on the table. There is no change from that in this agreement. Exempted from tariff reductions from our perspective are beef, culture and our supply managed industries such as dairy, poultry and egg products.

The basic message is that when government negotiators negotiate a free trade agreement or any kind of international trade agreement, they do have to make choices. I believe, and I know others believe, that historically we have tended to sell out our sugar industry. This agreement is viewed as being no exception.

Our single protection for the sugar industry is an 8% tariff. As I mentioned, the lowest in the Americas is 50%, up to 160%, for all of our competitors. Canada is basically excluded from any ability to export beyond our boundaries for any significant amount of sugar. Nothing would change under this agreement. It is a very lopsided agreement in regard to our access to their sugar market. In the words of the industry, it is token access.

I would like to quote from the website of the Canadian Sugar Institute, which states:

● (1045)

The recently announced Canada-Costa agreement is a case in point. Costa Rica has a 50% tariff compared to Canada's 8% tariff, and supports its sugar production through high prices that are far above the Canadian and even the supported US price. Yet, Costa Rica is demanding approximately six times more duty free access than it is willing to give Canada during a transition period. Further, it will only grant access for a token amount of Canadian refined cane sugar (which makes up 90% of Canada's sugar production) and even that depends on Costa Rican sales to Canada. In spite of objections from the industry that this is both a bad deal and would set a dangerous precedent for the CA-4 talks (countries whose combined exports are 1.5 times greater than Canada's total production) and the FTAA, the government seems willing to accept these lop-sided terms.

It is referring to the Canadian government. The CA-4 talks are to be held with the Central American countries I referred to earlier.

This is what they were saying prior to the bill getting to committee. These are some of the other things and some of the background of the Canadian producers. There is only one beet sugar factory remaining in Canada. It is in Taber, Alberta. At one time beets were also grown and processed in Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec.

*Government Orders*

Canada has three refineries that process raw sugar. They are in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. In the past 20 years four other refineries have ceased operations. The total Canadian market for sugar is about 1.2 million tonnes. Beet sugar supplies about 10% of this amount. Of the remaining 1.1 million tonnes a small but significant portion is imported into Canada in a refined state.

Sugar is one of the world's most trade regulated commodities. Most countries severely restrict imports through a system of duties, quotas or other mechanisms. Canada is among the most liberal countries in the world with an 8% duty on refined sugar and free import of raw sugar.

Guatemala places a 160% duty on sugar imports. Canada is allowed to export only about 12,000 tonnes of sugar to the U.S. due to its quota system. This is sugar from beet sugar as restricted by country of origin rules. No other viable export opportunities exist for the Canadian industry. In other words we are locked into our domestic market.

I have covered the basics of the sugar situation fairly well. It is worth adding that the Costa Rican market currently does not include refined sugar. Only raw sugar is sold. The fact that we have gained entry into the Costa Rican market is academic from the standpoint that there is no current market. Its domestic prices are about \$650 a tonne more than world prices.

This leads to cross-subsidization. It also leads us to ask why would they import sugar if they have those kinds of domestic pricing arrangements.

I will go into this a bit further. Guatemala is one of the CA-4 countries. CA-4 will be the next set of negotiations on free trade along with the free trade area of the Americas. Guatemala's current sugar exports amount to about 1.2 million tonnes. That is virtually identical to the entire Canadian market.

The CA-4 countries, the four major countries in Central America, have current export surpluses in refined sugar of about 300,000 tonnes. That is without further investment in refining capacity or anything else. That is immediately available capacity. This could totally displace the entire western Canadian market, which is the most likely place for these exports to arrive because their ports are on the Pacific coast.

• (1050)

This is a major concern. One can understand why members of parliament from every part of Canada are receiving a lot of solicitation from sugar refiners, sugar growers and the Canadian Sugar Institute, and why they are taking the Costa Rica agreement so seriously.

If it were to be a precedent for the next negotiations we could see the sugar industry in Canada, a non-subsidized industry protected by a tiny tariff, swallowed up with a loss of 1,500 refinery jobs and about 500 grower jobs. I am not sure anyone would consider this to be free trade in the sense of unsubsidized industries competing with unsubsidized industries. It is not.

In the House of Commons we have something called the national sugar caucus to which the parliamentary secretary made reference. Some of the hon. members on the sugar caucus were also on the

committee which met earlier this week and heard witnesses representing the Canadian Sugar Institute, sugar refiners and beet growers.

At that meeting I tabled amendments to the preamble of the bill, not to the treaty, to give clarity to the fact that the sugar provisions should be seen as unique to the Costa Rica agreement and not as a precedent for the upcoming CA-4 negotiations or the free trade area of the Americas negotiations. What ended up deriving from discussions among all parties at the meeting was that I would withdraw the amendment if we could somehow build a similar thought process into the language of our report and a subsequent letter to the minister.

That is where we are. I can quote from the third report to the House of Commons which was tabled recently. I will outline the relevant paragraph. The Sub-committee on International Trade, Trade Disputes and Investment, which is an offshoot of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, is studying the bill. It stated:

The Sub-committee wishes to highlight the specific concerns of Canada's sugar industry and asks that their interests be taken into account in any future trade negotiations involving Canada.

That is what we did. I am hopeful the government and government mandated negotiators will take heed that those are the sentiments expressed by the all party subcommittee. It was done in the right spirit and with good intentions on all sides. It is an eminently correct way to proceed in our future negotiations.

• (1055)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois supported this bill at second reading. I refer to the Canada-Costa Rica free trade implementation act.

The member for Joliette, who is responsible for this matter, moved some amendments in committee. However, even though at second reading we supported the principle of the bill, we said we had serious misgivings. None of these serious misgivings were settled during committee deliberations so today we will vote against this bill at third reading.

It is not that we do not support free trade, because I think everyone knows we do. However we support it on the condition that free trade does not lead to the stronger dominating the weaker. Free trade must improve the economies and the rights of all countries.

We had and continue to have three major complaints. The first is a matter of principle. Since the Bloc arrived in the House, it has protested as each new international treaty, trade agreement or convention comes to the attention of the House after the government had already reached its decision. We find this a rather backward way for parliament to operate.

*Government Orders*

The government cannot point to the British parliament in defence of this approach, which is neither transparent or consultative, either civil society or parliament, since, surprise, surprise, Great Britain has itself changed its approach and consults its parliament.

We find ourselves in a situation where our debates on the content take place after the treaty is signed. This is the case with the implementation bill before us. In the course of the debate in principle, the government side says “But you have the implementation act. You can vote on an implementation act”. Yes, but the problem is that although we can vote on it and against it we can do nothing to change it.

What is the point of a parliament that can only express views and not change anything? That is the situation in which the Parliament of Canada finds itself and this must change.

My former colleague, the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry, presented a private member's bill that was not selected for debate in the House. I presented the same bill. I hope that this time it will be deemed votable and a majority of members will have changed their minds so that this parliament can modernize the way it proceeds and can take into account, in its extremely important international dealings that affect the lives of Canadians and Quebecers, the notion of respect for consultation.

● (1100)

In addition to providing no opportunity for input, there are two other elements that we find completely unacceptable about this approach. The first is an obvious lack of transparency. The government is always saying that it is the best in the world when it comes to transparency, but when it talks about transparency it refers people to an Internet site. This is not what democracies consider transparency. Throughout Quebec and Canada many people are suffering because of this situation. There is a lack of transparency.

There is also the issue of disregard for provincial jurisdiction. When Canada signs these trade agreements or international conventions, not only is it acting within its own jurisdiction but it is also acting within that of the provinces. We cannot gloss over this.

However, this is not the reason we will be voting against the bill at third reading. We agree on the content of this implementation act, and we could vote in support of it after having the chance to speak eloquently to the issue. However, there are two other serious problems with this trade agreement and its content, and, consequently, the implementation act.

This free trade agreement with Costa Rica was signed on April 21, 2001, after negotiations conducted while preparing for the summit of the Americas that was held in Quebec City on the free trade area of the Americas, an issue that is still of interest to Quebecers and Canadians. Here again, if that free trade agreement is signed, it will have an impact on our lives.

During the preparations for the Quebec summit, the government stressed through, among others the Minister for International Trade, that it agreed with numerous observers that the way NAFTA, the free trade agreement among Canada, the United States and Mexico, deals with issues relating to foreign investments is not the appropriate way. The Minister for International Trade said, and I quote “Canada is not

advocating the replication of NAFTA investor state rules in the FTAA.”

The minister added “—and has not supported the proposals made so far by other FTAA countries to include such a type of dispute settlement mechanism”.

I can give the address of the Internet site where this quote from the minister is to be found.

At the same time that the minister was making that statement, he was negotiating to renew the free trade agreement with Costa Rica that had first been signed in 1998. He was very proud when he showed up with this renewed free trade agreement with Costa Rica. We noticed that the rules in the agreement between Canada and Costa Rica to settle disputes between investors and states are exactly the same as those found in NAFTA.

● (1105)

In committee, I pointed this out to the minister. He turned to his negotiator, who said “No, the member is mistaken. That is not the case. What we have renewed is a foreign investment protection agreement”.

Oddly enough, this foreign investment protection agreement, or FIPA as it is called, contains the very same provisions as chapter 11 of NAFTA, which many people with an active interest in free trade agreements oppose.

How can this be explained? Not too easily, and it is a big concern. It is why my colleague, the young and brilliant member for Joliette, brought forward an amendment on this issue in committee. He suggested that the bill be amended by replacing the wording in the agreement signed by the government with the following “dispute settlement, by providing for the repeal of article 12 of the agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Costa Rica concerning the encouragement and protection of investments”.

In fact, the important thing to understand, even if it seems complicated, is that, until 1993, all agreements signed by Canada with other countries were based on the principle that, when there was a dispute over foreign investment—if there was nationalization, a government policy, rules which seemed to prevent a company from setting up business, or a dispute of any sort—the rule was that the two states discussed the problem and, if no agreement was reached, they could take their case to a tribunal. That was for two states.

When NAFTA was signed by Canada, Mexico and the United States, this approach, which had been recommended by the OECD, by the way, was replaced by the principle whereby an investor who has cause to complain may bypass its state of origin and take its case directly to a tribunal.

This possibility, this capacity awarded to investors, has had disastrous effects on the role played by states.

*Government Orders*

With NAFTA we are beginning to see that the settlements coming out of these tribunals, which operated in a totally secret and discreet way until this summer's agreement and which does not change their intrinsic nature, make it possible for an investor to take the state in which he has invested before a tribunal which is all powerful. This is so much the case that private tribunals have in secret, without a third party being allowed to attend to listen in on the proceedings or make representations, made decisions that equated a governmental decision, to protect the environment for example, with a measure that would reduce profits.

• (1110)

This was very far removed from the principle of nationalization for which compensation was required. Loss of profit was considered as something for which the state should compensate. I believe everyone agrees on the effect of this. It is that businesses in countries needing investment, and some here in Canada as well, will launch huge suits, because they are allowed to do so, in order to get government policies withdrawn.

In Quebec, the public might perhaps tell the government "Paying for that makes no sense at all. Quebec is entitled to decide on its own policies, environmental or otherwise". The situation remains, however, that the fear of having to pay is going to be very great, and will run counter to the democratic power of a country. This will in my opinion be even more the case with the poorer countries, which are in greater need of foreign investment.

As for the famous NAFTA chapter 11, which sets out the principle of the investor's right to challenge a state directly, this principle must absolutely not be part of the free trade agreement of the Americas. If Canada is to act consistently with the statements of the Minister for International Trade when it renews agreements, often with developing countries, it must do away with this principle, which is tantamount to investor domination over states desperately in need of investments and often vulnerable.

Despite our speeches and our references to the Minister for International Trade, after debate on whether or not it was admissible, this amendment was rejected in the end.

There is also a third and different problem, to which our colleague from the Canadian Alliance referred, and that is sugar. This agreement opens the market to sugar from Costa Rica. This provision, if it were limited as we recommended, would not have provoked our opposition in and of itself, since the sugar that Costa Rica could export to Canada would not threaten the current situation in the sugar industry despite the fact that the industry has some concerns.

In Quebec, Lantic Sugar is located in Montreal. This is a world class refinery that employs 345 employees and has just invested \$100 million to modernize its Montreal refinery.

• (1115)

Workers came to my office to share their fears with me with respect to the talks that are currently underway with four other sugar producing countries in South America, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador.

Guatemala's exports of refined sugar alone represent 75% of the Canadian market. This gives us an idea of the size of Guatemala's sugar exports. We cannot blame this country for wanting to export its sugar, to the contrary. However, in Canada this refinery and the industry are telling us that they themselves are in a situation where they are prevented from selling products that contain a single grain of sugar in their exports to the United States. Even cookies have to be made with sugar substitutes rather than sugar. This shows how major the barrier is that they are facing.

What we and the member for Joliette proposed in committee were basically two things. We proposed an amendment that read as follows:

It is understood that the agreement must not serve as a model for future bilateral free trade agreements, and that all future negotiations on sugar must take place in a multilateral context and within the framework of the future Free Trade Area of the Americas.

I think that this amendment is easily understood. The Bloc Québécois and industry are not against continuing negotiations, but they must take place within a multilateral framework. The idea is not to open up markets to Quebec and Canada alone, but to have other markets open up at the same time. This amendment was ruled out of order.

Being very much pro-free trade, we are in favour of bilateral agreements with countries in the southern hemisphere. We therefore find ourselves in a situation where we would have liked to vote in favour of this bill. Given the fact that this agreement essentially reproduces the contents of chapter XI and given the government's refusal to provide assurances that this agreement will not be used as a basis for other bilateral negotiations before an attempt is made to sort out sugar exports within a multilateral framework, we are voting against the act to implement the free trade agreement at third reading to show that our concerns are serious.

In conclusion, I wish to say that the issue of opening up markets to southern hemisphere countries is fundamental. It is not a question of being opposed. It is also obvious that opening up markets in this way will not in itself improve the situation of southern hemisphere countries. The effects on the labour force will have to be considered.

It is incompatible with treaties that are negotiated in secret without consulting the public and without even making provisions, as was done after 1988 and during the 1988 discussions, for dealing with any negative impact, given that the expected benefits are so much greater.

• (1120)

We cannot ignore the real and serious concerns of industry workers. If we want to further develop this type of agreement, and we do, we must do it in an open fashion, through open consultation with the provinces, the workers and the public.

People in northern countries must realize that it is urgent for them to have access, through southern countries and, I should say, through oriental countries to the markets of the richest countries. In order to do so, the preparation work must be based on consultation and on results, so that we can indeed open up and allow for a better sharing of wealth.

*Government Orders*

Oddly enough, it cannot be said that opening up markets, even though everyone right now thinks it is the be all and end all, is the only factor that will ensure a better sharing of wealth. If, in those countries where wealth is growing there is no sharing of it, whether here, in southern countries or in the orient, there are people who will get richer. However, the gaps between societies will not be bridged.

One way that the European Union, among others, has found to help southern or eastern countries in its bilateral relations is to open up its market and buy the production but also provide real assistance by injecting money to promote diversification. We cannot complain about or regret the fact that some countries rely on a monoculture, that they sell only coffee or peanuts, and ignore history.

If today these countries only sell coffee or peanuts, it is because of what happened during the 19th century with colonial empires, where industries did what they wanted and countries that had a diversified production were transformed into countries relying on a monoculture.

It is absolutely necessary to recognize that southern hemisphere and Asian countries should diversify. Some are doing so rapidly and are becoming developed countries. However, those experiencing the most difficulty should be helped.

I would have liked to be able to say that at last parliament was consulted before the signing of a treaty. Perhaps some provisions would have been included in the agreement to reassure our workers and to inform the public about the needs of southern countries. Unfortunately, because this was done behind closed doors, without consultation, without transparency, we find ourselves in a situation where we can only say after the fact that we deeply regret the way things went, and this is what I am doing.

• (1125)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I wish to point out that starting with the next speaker, members' speeches will be limited to 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes for questions and comments, unless members indicate that they will be sharing their time.

[English]

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to Bill C-32, an act to implement the free trade agreement between the Government of Canada and the government of the Republic of Costa Rica.

It is not the intention of the New Democratic Party to support the bill. That should be of no surprise as we have indicated that previously. I will expand on the reasons in the next few minutes.

Bill C-32 and the Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement follow the North American Free Trade Agreement and the FTAA model of free trade that the New Democratic Party has consistently opposed because they put corporate rights ahead of human rights, the environment and democracy.

The side agreements on labour and the environment are insufficient to promote higher standards across the board in these areas. Costa Rica's record on labour is atrocious. We see no reason to make things worse.

The purported advantage of free trade in agricultural products is unproven. While Canadian farmers are not seeing the benefits of

increased imports, the livelihood of Costa Rican farmers is endangered by an agreement such as this one. Many must wonder how that would be the case.

The bottom line is that the specific agreements are set out with the right of the investors to make a profit. They are the ones who benefit from these trade agreements and they do not encompass a holistic approach to the well-being of a country, a community or an industry within a country.

My hon. colleague from the Bloc mentioned that colonialism in southern countries does not allow for diversification in some of those countries. Quite frankly we see that happening even within Canada where there is no diversity and as a result certain industries are suffering.

The Bloc will not be supporting the bill at third reading. I am pleased to see the Bloc come on side with the New Democratic Party's view that trade agreements are not okay if they do not encompass environmental rights, human rights and labour rights.

I know there were numerous members from the Bloc who went to Quebec City earlier this year, along with members of the New Democratic Party caucus. We listened to many people from southern countries who have seen the effects of trade agreements in their countries. They said that the effects were not always good and in some cases were detrimental.

According to the National Farmers Union, Canadian farmers and consumers have not benefited from increased agricultural exports, nor have farmers and consumers in the developing countries to which we export. The position of the governments of Costa Rica and Canada that it is a good deal for everyone is just not the case. There is no benefit when products go on the market at an extremely low cost. Flooding the world market with food prices far below production costs damages the ability of other countries to feed their citizens. That is exactly the case.

In Costa Rica in 1998 a flood of cheap imported grain drove the local farmers out of business. The number of farmers growing corn, beans and rice, the staples of the local diet, fell from 70,000 to under 28,000. Therefore it was not a good deal for everyone.

The problem with a number of the trade deals is that they put the rights of investors ahead of everything else. That is extremely important to the New Democratic Party because we represent a number of people who know that making a profit is not the only thing that counts.

• (1130)

New Democrats are not opposed to trade. Trade is necessary for strong economies, but not unfettered trade. Trade agreements must include labour, environmental and human rights. It is absolutely a necessity, and that is where we differ from the Liberals.

*Government Orders*

I was absolutely shocked as I listened to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade this morning. That is the Liberal member for London—Fanshawe. He referred to labour and environmental rights within trade agreements as littering up the agreements. He said “environmental rights and labour rights litter up the agreements”. That is like saying labour and environmental rights are garbage. That is not the case. The Liberal member for London—Fanshawe called environmental and labour rights garbage. If we refer to them as littering up an agreement, that is not good enough.

However this sets the scope of how the government tends to deal with labour and environmental rights. We have seen numerous environmental issues come before the House many times where the government uses tough talk but never follows through on environmental rights.

The government waves the ILO banner. Costa Rica and Canada would fall under the ILO banner; they would do everything it says. Frankly Costa Rica has implemented more of the ILO conventions than Canada.

Let me tell members about the history of labour rights in Costa Rica. Costa Rica is notorious for its persistent denial of labour rights, especially the rights of collective bargaining, association and strikes. In Costa Rica's private sector it is virtually impossible to form or join a trade union because of the hostility from employers and the government's unwillingness to enforce labour laws. That is Costa Rica's history. That is its position on labour rights yet it has introduced more of the ILO conventions than Canada.

We acknowledge that in some areas we have been able to succeed in having good labour legislation in Canada. We all know it is not automatically there. The reason those rights are maintained is the strong efforts of a number of labour unions, the number of people involved in social justice making sure that those rights are upheld, and the legal system built around that. Those things are not a given forever. Civil liberties are not a given forever in Canada. We are seeing that now with the anti-terrorism bill whereby our civil liberties would be jeopardized.

We must ensure strong legislation dealing with environmental and labour laws and the protection of privacy and civil liberties. We must fight for those things on a daily basis because they are not a given. It is crucially important that we do not accept willy-nilly every trade agreement the government comes up with.

My colleague from the Bloc mentioned how the deal was put forward. Negotiations on the trade deal began in June 2000 and the agreement was signed during the third summit of the Americas on April 23, 2001. It is coming before parliament as a *fait accompli*. Parliament did not even have a say in it. Really and truthfully we did not. The government went ahead and did what it wanted. It said the heck with every elected member of parliament, including its own members on that side.

I do not believe for a second that each and every one of them told the minister to go ahead and sign the deal. I do not believe they did not care or worry about our sugar producers or refineries in Alberta or Quebec. However that is what the government did. It went ahead and signed it, much like it did with the patent legislation.

● (1135)

The WTO ordered Canada to change its patent legislation and increase it to 20 years. We are now in a situation where we have huge drug costs. Drug companies were not suffering with a seven year patent. I acknowledge that there needs to be patent protection, but excessive patent protection jeopardizes the well-being of a country and its citizens. We are seeing that now.

These trade agreements should not be a *fait accompli*. A booklet was passed around and I chuckled when I read the comments. It was sent on October 24. It contains Canada's objectives for the fourth WTO ministerial conference. I laughed because, as my hon. colleague from the Bloc mentioned, there is never any consultation with the government. Everything is a *fait accompli*. The document is from the Minister for International Trade and it states:

The government continues to seek still better ways to inform a mutually beneficial dialogue with concerned Canadians. Citizen engagement on foreign and trade policy issues is the key to informed debate and decision making on public policy, and that has been an ongoing process.

Where is the informed debate? When do we go out and have a dialogue? Has anyone ever seen the government getting the views of Canadians and of members of parliament? The government throws something in front of Canadians and says this is the way it will be. We have to take it or leave it.

The government will not listen to any amendments put forth in committee. These are amendments that would protect industries within our country and protect human, environmental and labour rights. Is any of that there? No. The government does not care.

These documents are a waste of taxpayer money. They are not accurate, to say nothing of the fact that we have to get ourselves around the words “to inform a mutually beneficial dialogue”.

Trade agreements have not benefited our agricultural industry. I am encouraged by the fact that the member of the Canadian Alliance for Lethbridge is here. He pointed out that in February of this year any agreement with Costa Rica would lay the foundation for future negotiations on trade agreements. We know that to be true because the government is following along with NAFTA and the FTAA. The member went on to ask:

Will the government live up to a commitment it made to western Canadian beef producers when it was in western Canada last year that it will do nothing to destroy their industry?

Does anybody believe for a second that the government would live up to any commitment it made during the election? We have seen the government break one promise after another on a continual basis. We were promised infrastructure dollars, good environmental legislation, and support for our agricultural industry and grain farmers. Have we seen any follow-through? It has not been followed through for one second because the election is over.

The government pulled the wool over the eyes of Canadians once more. I will wager the government will not be able to do it in the next election because Canadians are not fools.

*Government Orders*

Canadian farmers are not fools. Farmers know that the government has not supported their industry. If they look at the facts they will know the government's position that trade agreements are good for farmers is not true. Farmers will see that. Farmers know that the government is not supporting the agricultural industry. The beef farmers in Alberta and refinery workers in Quebec will know that is not the case.

This is critically important. I challenge the Canadian Alliance. Every time it supports one of the government's trade deals it jeopardizes the agricultural industry in Canada. Every time it supports one of these deals without taking a stand it jeopardizes Canadian industries. It jeopardizes human and labour rights. If it supports the government then it is as detrimental to Canadian industries as the government is because it jeopardizes those industries in the same way.

● (1140)

I challenge the Canadian Alliance to say for once that the trade deal is not good enough and that it is not what is best for Canadian farmers. This trade deal does not include environmental rights, human rights or labour rights. I would hope that members within the House do not talk like the Liberal member for London—Fanshawe and call environmental rights and labour rights littering up an agreement. They are equally as important as any profit that will be made which will send a paycheque across some investor's table or some company's table. They are important for Canadians and they are important for people in those other countries.

We all know that Canada has a good standard of living for the most part and we do not want to jeopardize that. That is why there are those of us who fight hard to make sure that there is more to a trade deal than just profit and that there is a holistic approach to a strong, healthy economy and country. It is not just profit for one company.

There is more to it such as the value added industry that benefits the local economy. We all know that the little grocer down the road and the small and medium sized businesses need those industries because they benefit from the value added to those industries. We all benefit as a nation by paying our fair share in taxes and supporting each other and our social programs. There is more to it than just one company making a profit, such as everything that goes along with having those industries within our country and supporting those industries.

If something reads made in Canada it is an extra incentive for me to buy it because I know I am supporting an industry in Quebec or an industry from the east coast. If I see Manitoba potatoes in the grocery store, I will buy them before any others. That is what it is about. It is about supporting each other because that is how we maintain a strong country. However it is also about supporting the people in those other countries. I am not saying we should never buy their products; of course we should. We want to make sure that they have a chance of attaining the same benefits we have.

One of the classic quotes that New Democrats use is by J.S. Woodsworth who said "What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all", and we do. We want people in other countries who do not have some of the advantages we have to have those chances.

Will they have that chance when their governments do not enforce labour legislation or do not allow them the right to collective bargaining or to make a decent wage for the work they do? Will they have that chance when their governments do not ensure that their human rights are upheld or do not give their children a chance to have an education instead of being made to work at a loom or in the fields? We want the right to education for children. We want the right to social infrastructure. We want people in other countries to have the same benefits that we have in Canada.

The New Democratic Party is not opposed to trade. However we certainly are opposed to unfettered trade. We are absolutely opposed to trade that does not consider human rights, environmental rights and labour rights. We are not opposed to trade, not for a second.

Our national sport in Canada is hockey. Our Deputy Speaker's son plays for the Montreal Canadiens. However even in hockey there are rules. One team cannot be stronger than the other so it wipes out the other guys. There are rules in place involving a draft process so certain players cannot get all the cash and certain teams cannot get all the very best players. Imagine a team with Gretzky, Lindros—

**An hon. member:** Team Canada.

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais:** Team Canada, sounds great. Imagine one team with all the muscle and all the power. What does that do to the other guys?

● (1145)

They do not survive. That is the problem when trade agreements do not consider everything and when they do not consider the whole scope of how it will affect a country and the world.

Until the government comes up with trade agreements that include environmental, labour and human rights as equal to the profit of a corporation, it will not get the support of the New Democratic Party, and I am proud to say that.

**Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the member's speech. As she was denigrating the member for London—Fanshawe, she mentioned he had indicated that something in the agreement was garbage. I heard the speech of the member for London—Fanshawe and I did not hear that. I am sure the member is mistaken.

The member wants to talk as though no negotiations took place and the agreement suddenly fell out of the sky. The fact is the two governments dealt with environmental and labour co-operation. They go hand in hand with trade liberalization. That is tantamount to the agreement. It is not something that just happened. It is something that was negotiated between the two parties, keeping in mind labour and the environment and the side agreements on them.

If we look at the Canada—Costa Rica free trade agreement, we will see that it complements the environment and labour and strengthens both environment and labour management, while reaping the benefits of increased trade with Canada.

*Government Orders*

Her side is indicating that somehow this did not happen, that it all just came together and there were no negotiations that took place. Yet Canada is a trading nation and depends on trade to be a nation of prosperity, such as we have.

Would the member withdraw the words she put in the mouth of the member for London—Fanshawe? He is quite capable of defending himself, but perhaps she would want to think about that. Could she comment on that?

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais:** Mr. Speaker, quite frankly *Hansard* will show the comments of the Liberal member of parliament for London—Fanshawe tomorrow when he said that environment and labour standards were seen as littering up the trade agreement so that is why they should not be in there.

I never for one second said there were not negotiations. There was no debate in the House before the agreement was signed. That is the problem. That is the comment I was making.

Negotiations with another country before we have discussions in the Parliament of Canada leave out a very important group of people: the people of Canada and members of parliament who represent the people of Canada. When that deal was signed without it coming here first, that said “To heck with you. Your view isn't worth anything”. That has been a problem in the House.

Quite frankly on the issue of a side agreement for labour, human and environmental rights, when do those values become secondary to a buck? That is the problem with the government's position. They should not be side agreements. They should be an integral part of those trade agreements, which should state that if countries do not do certain things in the area of human, labour and environmental rights, we will not trade with them. They will not have access to our markets.

The problem is the government sees them as side agreements and secondary and we do not. The New Democratic Party sees them as of more value than a dollar, but definitely in those trade agreements they had better be on an equal footing.

• (1150)

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member used a hockey analogy to explain why she would be concerned about some trade agreements. In hockey, if one team scores more goals than the other team, one side gets all the points and the other side goes home with no points.

In trade, if a person for instance makes a hammer and sells it to another person for \$10, both sides go away better off. The person who makes the hammer gets the \$10 and the person who buys the hammer gets the hammer to make something.

Will the hon. member not acknowledge that trade actually benefits both sides no matter what, because both sides enter into a trade agreement voluntarily because it will leave them both better off?

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais:** Mr. Speaker, certainly I will comment. There is no question both sides can benefit, but both sides do not necessarily benefit, especially if we have a situation where one side decides it will ignore environmental, human and labour rights and pays someone 20¢ then sells the hammer for \$20. Someone is losing out and I would be willing to wager it is the person who is getting

paid the 20¢ or some child who is ordered to make the hammer. The child is paid 5¢ and the person who owns it is paid something else.

We agree it can benefit both. We are not opposed to trade and never have been. However, it has to be with some rules in place that make it fair for both sides.

Have Canadian farmers benefited overall? They can produce a product now but have to sell it for less than what it costs them to produce to survive. Do we want to wipe out our farming industry and say that we will not make a buck off the farming industry today, that we will let it go, then a few years down the road cry and say we have no farming industry in Canada? Will we say to heck with the small farmer? A big corporation from somewhere else can buy up all the farmland and make maybe an extra buck by not giving the same kinds of benefits to its local communities and those families who are an intricate part of our community within Canada. That is when it becomes a problem.

There is no question: it can benefit both but not if both sides do not play by the same rules.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the comments of my hon. colleague from Churchill. I was involved in some of the discussions dating way back to the 1988 election when that election basically became a referendum on free trade in the country and the pending free trade agreement with the United States specifically. When I listened to the NDP back in those days, and I am sure if I researched history long before that, I was left with the unescapable conclusion that if the NDP had its way, despite the hon. member saying she is not opposed to trade, we would never have had any free trade agreements signed, certainly in this hemisphere and probably in the world if the NDP was a factor in other countries. It is important that people bear that in mind.

Also I need look no further than my province of British Columbia, where thank goodness the NDP was recently thrown out of office, to see what its economic policies do to an economy.

I find it almost hypocritical when the NDP talks long and hard about the downtrodden of the world. It has often remarked that we have to increase our aid to developing and third world countries, help out more with humanitarian aid and improve human rights. All of us would agree on that. On the other hand, every time a free trade agreement comes before the House, the NDP is opposed to it because it is not good enough.

I would ask the hon. member to comment on that.

• (1155)

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad I have the opportunity to comment. The New Democratic Party has never been opposed to trade. I would suggest to the member that he go back in history and also listen to numerous members of parliament or MLAs from the provinces. They are not opposed to trade. We are in favour of trade that considers more than just the dollar coming across the table. We are in favour of trade deals that consider human, environmental and labour rights. There is no question about it.

*Government Orders*

Regarding my colleague's comments about what happened in B.C., I suggest he look no further than the former Conservative government of Saskatchewan, under Grant Devine, that literally wiped out a province. The New Democratic Party then came in and built it up again so that it is now very strong and doing well. It had to come from a terrible time when the Tories literally wiped it out.

There is no question that provincial governments make their mistakes and have to own up to them. However, from a federal perspective, which is why we are here today, we recognize that trade agreements are important but not if we are willing to abandon human, environmental and labour rights of the people in both countries.

**Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague and friend the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River.

I would be remiss if I did not take a minute to respond to the NDP member who just spoke. She talked about the environmental and labour side agreements as being secondary. I remind the member that those agreements were negotiated in advance. She said we are ignoring them.

The Government of Canada has an opportunity to help the Costa Ricans. There is always improvement and they can learn from us. We cannot expect something to happen overnight. We enjoy about \$270 million annually in two way trade with the Costa Ricans. That can grow.

The NDP has argued against every single free trade agreement since I can remember as a child, and that goes back to the 1960s. The NDP is notorious for being absolutely opposed to trade.

Let us look at trade for a moment. We have had a number of free trade agreements. The 1989 Free Trade Agreement preceded NAFTA in 1994. Canada was successful in negotiating a free trade agreement with Chile in 1997. We are currently negotiating the free trade agreement of the Americas which would bring North America and South America into one free trading area with 34 nations by 2005.

We enjoy \$1.4 billion a day in two way trade with the United States. Forty per cent of our GDP in Canada comes from our trade agreements. One in four jobs in Canada is a result of free trade agreements negotiated by the Canadian government with other nations over the years.

We have an enormous trade surplus with the United States. It is not without its problems. We are all fully aware of them and the challenges. We are struggling with the softwood lumber agreement. There are challenges to overcome but we cannot just give up and say that we do not want trade because there is a certain issue.

Let us get more specific with respect to the Costa Rican free trade agreement. One major concern in the country is with respect to the sugar industry. It has been raised by a number of people. The member for Saint John used to have a sugar refinery in her riding but it closed a few years ago. They are concerned.

My hon. colleague and good friend the member for Lethbridge, when I was travelling with the minister to Costa Rica last spring specifically to deal with this, brought to my attention the issue of the

sugar beet industry in Taber. He asked that I bring it up with officials down there. I did that with the Canadian and Costa Rican officials.

In Canada the issue is with refined sugar. Those issues were raised. One of the biggest concerns of the Canadian sugar industry is not so much the free trade in refined sugar with the Costa Ricans but that it would be a template for the upcoming negotiations with the CA-4, the Central American countries of Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Canada is currently negotiating with them, and more specifically with Honduras, which already has a sugar refinery. There are some concerns.

I specifically met on numerous occasions, and as recently as Tuesday of this week, with Claude Carrière who is a senior official and chief negotiator for Canada on not only the Canada-Costa Rica agreement but also on the trade agreement with the CA-4 and the FTAA.

● (1200)

I should compliment him for the good work he has done. He has given me his assurances, and I am aware he has given them to others, that this is not a template, that this is not a model. It is important that this be read into the record. It is important as they negotiate the free trade agreement with the upcoming CA-4 that there be an exclusion with respect to refined sugar because that is the concern.

They have talked about other things with respect to refined sugar. Canada exports 12,000 to 14,000 tonnes of refined sugar from Taber into the U.S. a year. Of course that is because it is country of origin. We export 57,000 tonnes of premixed sugar products to the U.S. More specifically we are allowed to export 2,000 tonnes of non-originating sugar into Costa Rica and under this agreement that has been doubled. It has been increased to 4,000 tonnes so there are potentially new markets out there for our sugar producers. I acknowledge it is albeit whether the economics and the economics would warrant that but we will have to be aggressive in going after that.

Overall I want to come back to the free trade agreement. It is really good for Canada. On commodities for which there are tariffs on Canada's side, we lose those tariffs immediately on auto parts, prefab homes, various agricultural products and fish products. It is good for Canada but it is also good for Costa Rica.

We do not have a large amount of trade with Costa Rica, some \$270 million annually in two way trade and the Costa Ricans are looking to develop their economy. This is a win-win for both countries.

I applaud the member for Lethbridge and the sugar industry itself. They have done a very good job in educating parliamentarians on the industry's concerns. I applaud the government officials. This is one time that they have listened. They have addressed those concerns. They have given reassurances that in the CA-4 countries this will not be a template, that there will not be free trade in refined sugar. It is reassuring that they were listening.

*Government Orders*

Coming back to the NDP member's comments, it is almost unbelievable to listen to those members say that there are no environmental or labour agreements when in fact side agreements were negotiated to deal with them specifically. There is an opportunity for Canada as we increase our trade to share our information, to help the Costa Ricans improve their labour and environmental standards.

History has shown us that in every single free trade agreement we have entered into, it has been win win win for Canada. I cannot overemphasize that when there is \$1.4 billion of trade, 40% of our economy, going between Canada and the United States. One in four Canadian jobs depends on free trade. That is why it is critically important. The reality is we are going to a global economy. In places like Europe, the economic borders are evaporating and trade is opening up.

The members of the Progressive Conservative/Democratic Representative Caucus and I will be supporting this legislation. The concerns within the sugar industry were real. We have been given the appropriate assurances by the department that this will not be a template in the upcoming negotiations with the four Central American countries.

• (1205)

I look forward to the implementation of this legislation so we can continue to grow Canada's free trade with smaller nations.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me we learn more, and I am still learning, about the country of Costa Rica.

For decades, especially in the last decade or two, Costa Rica seems to have been a kind of beacon for democracy in Central America. We are aware of the problems that some of the neighbouring countries such as Nicaragua have had. It is a country that outlawed its military and does not have a standing army. It has actually been referred to as the Switzerland of Central America. I think we would very much want to have closer economic and trade ties with a country like that so that we could assist it in assisting other countries in the region.

As my hon. colleague has pointed out, we should not be doing what the NDP has done, which is to point out that the agreement is not perfect. What agreement ever is? We can be of immense assistance to the Costa Ricans in helping them to lead the way not only within their own country but within Central America itself.

My colleague has had the opportunity to travel with officials and other members from all parties to that region. He has had bilateral discussions with a number of those countries. Would he be willing to comment further on that?

**Mr. Gary Lunn:** Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely correct. As trade is increasing, Canada is leading. Canada has successfully negotiated the first free trade agreement with a Central American country that has a smaller economy, a nation probably similar in population, and it has done it in a very positive light addressing some of Canada's concerns.

There is a lot of work to be done in many of these countries. In many cases they have developing economies. We can share our information. We can help bring them along on labour and

environmental fronts. At the end of the day it is not only a win-win for the Costa Ricans but also for Canada as we open up new markets.

Canada is a very large country with the majority of its population very close to the 49th parallel, the southern part of the country. The reality is that we need to open up our trade corridors north and south. There are great markets both ways as we move into South America and Central America. Canada is leading in this respect as we move forward.

A good example is the free trade agreement that Canada has negotiated with Chile. Canada is the envy of many countries as we have successfully done this. While we are in a downturn in the economy our growth in trade with Chile has far surpassed that of every other country trading with Chile. Other countries have been in a negative cycle in trade with Chile. Canada has made a positive gain in this struggling economy. The numbers speak for themselves. In every single free trade agreement, trade grows. It creates jobs in Canada as well as in Costa Rica. Everyone can win.

I look forward to working on future free trade agreements, most important, the free trade agreement of the Americas. I think it will be great for Canada.

• (1210)

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to Bill C-32, an act to implement the free trade agreement between the Government of Canada and the government of the Republic of Costa Rica.

I must say at the outset, having sat in the Chamber and listened to some of the debate this morning, that it is as well very informative for Canadians viewing the debate at home. They can hear the different positions being put forward by the various speakers and parties on the issue of free trade, in this case with a very small country, certainly small as far as being viewed as an economic power is concerned. There is a huge disparity between the respective sizes of our countries, but nevertheless we are hearing various members representing their parties putting forward different perspectives.

I want to state for the record that I do agree with the hon. NDP member for Churchill in the sense that many times unfortunately we see in this place what I would classify as a flawed process. I think that was a big part of her angst about the agreement itself and about the other ways in which legislation comes in here. In that regard I would concur with her observations. All too often the government uses what many of us on the opposition side would view as a flawed process to arrive at legislation.

That should not necessarily detract from the fact that occasionally the government does get it right. Certainly I and the coalition believe that this is one of those cases where by and large the government has gotten it right with Bill C-32, the free trade agreement with Costa Rica.

*Government Orders*

I want to go back in history a bit. I am one of the few members from the coalition who ran in the 1988 election. That is where my personal history with free trade comes from. I think many in our country will remember, as I said earlier, that in 1988 our country was embroiled in an election campaign that became for all intents and purposes a referendum on free trade with the United States.

I remember, ironically enough in light of the fact that I am now involved in a coalition with the Progressive Conservative caucus in parliament, that at that time as a candidate for the Reform Party of Canada I found myself on stages throughout my huge rural riding of Prince George basically in line with the Progressive Conservative incumbent, who obviously was promoting free trade with the United States during that election campaign. Aligned against us during those all candidate forums were members of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party who were passionately and emphatically opposed to that free trade agreement.

There is a certain sense of irony, I guess, in that now it is the Liberal Party, and I congratulate its members and encourage them to continue to work toward more free trade with the Americas. They have in the past and I am sure they will continue in the future with more conferences and negotiations with countries. As my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands indicated, we are now on the very cusp of having true free trade throughout the Americas, a free trading bloc of 34 countries involved in a free trade agreement. I think of what a great thing that will be for all the countries.

It will not be without its problems. As my colleague also pointed out, coming from British Columbia, I will say that right now we are involved in a pretty serious situation with regard to the economy of British Columbia and by extension the economy of Canada.

• (1215)

The fallout from the demise of the softwood lumber agreement in March is just rocking our lumber industry to its very foundation, in particular in British Columbia, which constitutes the vast majority of lumber exports to the United States.

I had to point out that certain irony, because as I say, there are four members involved in our coalition, including the leader of the parliamentary coalition, the member for Calgary Centre, as well as myself, my colleague from Edmonton North, who was running for the rural Alberta riding of Beaver River at the time, and my colleague from South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, who ran in that election and well remember the debates that took place about the need for free trade. By and large, with the possible exception of the NDP, I do not think that many people are disputing the fact that the free trade agreement and the agreements which have flowed from it, such as NAFTA, more recently the agreement with Chile, and now the agreement we are going to enter into with Costa Rica, and we will hopefully expand beyond that, have been good for Canada.

Have we had problems? Of course we have had problems. Have some industries to a certain extent been affected detrimentally from time to time? Of course they have been.

By definition any agreement requires some give and take and some compromise, but that does not detract from the fact that overall it is the way to go. It is the way the world is going. It is the way the global economy is going. I think that ultimately it means that

producers who can produce the best product at the best price will be in that business and we can get away from this system where all governments around the globe are continually forced into a situation where they have to subsidize certain industries. Obviously we ultimately do not want to do that. We want to see countries that can produce the best product for the best price in that particular business.

Partly due to this bill coming before the House, it so piqued my interest that I started doing a bit of research on Costa Rica. My partner, Leah Murray, and I have had the good fortune from time to time to take educational trips to certain countries during the winter recess. We hope to do that this winter in Costa Rica and learn more first hand about that country.

As I was saying in questions and comments to my colleague, it seems that the more I have researched Costa Rica the more I have come to understand that it is really a beacon for democracy and has certainly been a pretty good example. There again, has it had and does it continue to have problems as an emerging nation in Central America? Of course, but by and large when we compare it to some of its neighbouring countries it has done a pretty good job of being the country that others around it can look to and model themselves after. I know it has welcomed hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguan refugees into the country because of the fallout of the civil war and other wars in that area. That in and of itself has posed some real problems for the Costa Rican nation, but in my understanding it is doing the best it can.

Just as a personal aside, one of the things I will do when I am there is visit with a cousin of mine who emigrated to Costa Rica quite a number of years ago and is operating his own business there. He is in a business whereby small local corporations contract with him to provide English language training for their staff. Why are they doing that? Obviously those business people can see the opportunities that are emerging in Costa Rica not only for themselves and in regard to the ability to make a profit, but also for the betterment of their employees and the people of that area. Certainly I will be interested to learn more about the businesses and companies that he is working so closely with.

• (1220)

As a final point, for those who are so opposed to free trade agreements and say that until everything is perfect we should not sign on to them, I only need to point to NAFTA. There were a lot of legitimate concerns expressed at the time, but look at what has happened to the country of Mexico. If we have this outpouring of concern for the less developed countries and want to help the people of those countries, I think we should look there. It is not a perfect system, but I think it is a lot better than the alternative, which is isolationism.

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I noted with interest my colleague's comments about being a Reform member running alongside a Conservative and being pretty much onside with everything. I do not think there is any question about it. There will not be any argument there. New Democrats have long maintained that there really is not a whole lot of difference between the alliance-reform and the Conservatives. Quite frankly, we would also maintain there is not much difference between them and the governing party. That point is made.

*Government Orders*

He commented on the benefits of the trade agreements. I would agree that there certainly are benefits to trade agreements. He talked about the English language and people in Costa Rica learning the English language in order to be able to carry on trade. That is really important and there is no question about it, but what happens when we have what supposedly is called free trade with, say, the U.S. and because the U.S. lumber industry does not want its industry to suffer in the U.S. it imposes a 19% tariff on Canadian softwood lumber? Where is that great free trade with the United States?

That is the problem with these deals. They are not there to benefit both fairly. It is usually the big guy with the big stick who wins out.

I would like his comment on the 19% tariff that the U.S. has imposed on softwood lumber from Canada.

**Mr. Jay Hill:** I thank my hon. colleague from the NDP for her observations and questions. I will not get into a debate about the differences between the old Reform Party of Canada and the Progressive Conservatives because that would use up all available time, plus pointing out the differences we have had in the past. I think that on a number of issues we continue to differ even today, but the great thing about a coalition is that we are allowed to differ and I would commend that to her for consideration.

At any rate, as far as the softwood lumber agreement is concerned of course there are some problems and she quite correctly pointed out the problems, as I did during my remarks. The fact is that we do have this outstanding problem with the United States. Part of the problem is that we entered into a softwood lumber agreement in the first place instead of having true free trade. That is what the industry is fighting for and certainly what I am in favour of. That is why I hope that whatever comes of the present negotiations will move us closer to free trade, which is sort of the opposite to the hon. member's argument because the problem with it is that we have not had free trade in softwood lumber. We have had these agreements and when they expire the Americans impose duties, tariffs, countervail and whatever against our product. Hopefully in the very near future we can solve that problem.

I have to agree with the member that free trade agreements by definition do not mean that we have to be less vigilant all of a sudden. We still have to be vigilant in regard to the problems that develop from them. They are not perfect, just as anything in life is not perfect.

• (1225)

**Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member commented on his election to represent Prince George—Peace River and the comments of the NDP. This morning the NDP took a run at the member for London—Fanshawe and actually turned his words around, which I guess must happen all the time in election campaigns. The NDP member indicated that the member for London—Fanshawe said something to the effect of littering up trade deals. In fact the member was quoting the EU ministers who were the ones who said that trade deals are best done not littered up by environmental and labour standards. He was quoting someone. I wonder whether the member could comment on the desperation of the NDP to score points by misconstruing members' words.

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, far be it from me to defend the NDP on anything, but I would point out to my hon. colleague that it seems to me that all of us in the House, probably all members at different times, could be judged guilty of misconstruing comments or twisting words around.

I would point out in conclusion that obviously these agreements are not perfect. I agree with the government in that I do not think it is necessary that standards for environmental or labour rights to protect those things have to be included and integral to the agreement itself, as the NDP seems to be hanging its hat on. I think it is sufficient that it be written in good, solid language and that it is in the side agreement that those rights will be protected and will be considered part of the free trade agreement.

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting time with my colleague, the member for Medicine Hat.

Besides being probably two of the best looking members of parliament, my colleague for Medicine Hat and I have something else in common. We are probably the sweetest because we have the only homegrown sugar industry in Canada. I preface my remarks with those comments.

I would like to get into some of the details of Bill C-32, the free trade agreement with Costa Rica. The main concern I and many of my colleagues on all sides of the House have with the bill is the sugar aspect. The bill follows the free trade agreement with Chile which was signed in 1997 and the North American free trade agreement inked in 1994.

Our party supports free trade as a means of maintaining a healthy economy by providing jobs for Canadians and improving the standard of living in Canada. We also believe that free trade is good for developing nations and provides stability in those nations as well.

One of the stated purposes of Bill C-32 is to promote regional integration through an instrument that contributes to the establishment of the free trade area of the Americas, known as the FTAA. It could be the first of several of these agreements with the other countries of South and Central America, and that is part of some of the concerns we have. I will get to that later.

We in the official opposition feel it is important to establish good trade relationships with these countries to encourage economic, social and democratic growth. Eighty per cent of what Costa Rica exports to Canada, goods such as fruits, vegetables, coffee and coal, already enters our country free of duty.

*Government Orders*

Canadian producers are looking to expand their markets for goods in Costa Rica. These are products such as french fries, metal structures, along with fish, paper products, auto parts, plastics, wood and agricultural goods. Many of these items currently face high tariffs when exported to Costa Rica, even though the populace has expressed an interest in them and the products are not economically produced within their own borders. The proposed trade deal would change all that. The proposed trade deal would benefit Costa Ricans by providing them with greater access to the products they cannot currently afford or manufacture on their own.

In the year 2000 Canada exported \$86 million in total trade to Costa Rica. In that same year we imported \$183 million worth of goods from that country. The bill would ensure that Costa Rica maintains an open access to all our markets while opening Costa Rica's door to Canadian producers and their high quality specialized products. The proposed trade deal would benefit both countries in that way.

The Canadian Alliance promotes free trade and, I want to emphasize this, the joint elimination of tariffs with our trading partners. We have seen in the past, particularly in our grain and oilseed sector, where tariffs and support were reduced in Canada when our trading partners did not reciprocate and this put our producers at a disadvantage. We do not want that to happen particularly in the sugar industry.

In this respect, our party has one particular and significant concern with the bill. If the Costa Rica free trade agreement, as described in Bill C-32, is used as a template for other FTAA negotiations, especially the CA-4 countries, we feel the Canadian sugar industry will suffer and suffer greatly. Canada already has one of the most open sugar markets in the world. Our import tariff on raw sugar stands at zero and our tariff on refined sugar is only 8%, one of the very lowest in the world.

Canadian sugar producers such as Lantic and Rogers provide almost enough refined sugar to meet the domestic needs of all Canadians. U.S. and Latin American tariffs on sugar range from 50% to 160%.

The Canadian domestic sugar industry employs over 2,000 Canadians. This includes the sugar beet industry and growers in my part of the world, in southern Alberta, and the refinery workers across the country.

One threat to Canadian domestic sugar producers comes from the four Central American countries, the CA-4 countries: Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras, because of their refining capacity and the subsidies they receive from their governments.

Twelve per cent of Canada's refined sugar is made from the sugar beets that are grown in my area. This is the only region left in Canada that grows sugar beets for refining in Canada. The rest comes largely from imported cane sugar which is refined and a small amount of refined sugar imported from abroad.

• (1230)

The three cane sugar refineries are located in Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto. They employ many Canadians and have been providing our country with the highest quality of refined sugar for years.

The jobs and economic impact of the current sugar market situation are not limited to beet growers and refinery workers however. Canada's low sugar prices have attracted substantial investment in Canada's food and beverage industry. These industries provide thousands of jobs at bakeries, biscuit manufacturers, dairies, fruit and vegetable canneries, confectionery manufacturers and so on.

By generating demand for goods and services, the sugar industry also indirectly supports a number of other economic sectors, including agriculture, natural resources, packaging, industrial machinery and transportation.

The industry has concerns with the sugar aspect of the deal with Costa Rica because of the precedent it would set for upcoming negotiations with other Central American countries. The industry has closed two plants in Canada since 1997 reflecting the competitiveness in the Canadian market and limiting export opportunities. The industry has been forced to be efficient and globally competitive, and it has done that. The industry has changed to meet the new competition in the world. The sugar market is very competitive. We have very little access to the U.S. market, our closest trading partner. I know my colleague will expand on that somewhat. However the industry has changed and shaped itself. I know the investment in the plant in southern Alberta has been in the tens of millions of dollars. The growers themselves have invested in new equipment and new methods. The industry is in tune and has made the changes necessary to stay competitive.

Import competition from Central America and other countries in the hemisphere has grown dramatically in recent years, even with Canada's small tariff. If new regional trade deals lead to the removal of Canada's refined sugar tariff in advance of WTO trade liberalization, the Canadian sugar industry may suffer. It may not even survive if we get out too far ahead of the rest of our trading partners.

Our members on the House of Commons trade committee, who saw that the issue could be a precedent setting trade deal with the other CA-4 countries, worked with people in the industry and people on the government side of the House. It is funny that when we are dealing with a trade agreement we cannot really make amendments. We either agree with trade or we disagree with it.

However we thought if we did not change the text of the trade deal itself, but put in the preamble that there is a concern and that this trade deal should not be used as a pattern for the other CA-4 countries, then that would put most of what we feared could happen to rest. Costa Rica itself does not have the capacity at the moment to greatly harm our industry but the other countries in Central America do. We have assurance from the chairman of the subcommittee on international trade and others that this will be added to the preamble. That will allow us to support the bill and we will.

*Government Orders*

We must remember that the whole idea of free trade is to benefit both parties. If we are going to ensure that a vital industry in Canada remains viable, then we need to keep that in mind when we open up the other trade deals in the rest of Central America.

I wanted to make that point. We support free trade. We support what it does and how it helps nations around the world. We wanted to make sure that our concern about the sugar aspect of this was brought forward, and it has been. We feel fairly comfortable, if it is followed through as indicated, that those concerns will be put to rest. We look forward to further debate.

• (1235)

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Lethbridge for the great speech. He made a great case for why, while we support free trade, we do have some concerns about the pattern we see developing with respect to how we treat sugar when it comes to dealing with the CA-4 countries in upcoming trade negotiations.

I want to start out by talking about free trade more broadly and simply make the point that free trade does raise the standard of living for all people. It does provide better working conditions. It does ultimately lead to a cleaner environment. It leads to higher wages. Everybody benefits when we engage in free trade.

Canada is a trading nation. Forty-three per cent of our GDP comes from trade. Canada, better than most nations and perhaps better than just about any nation in the world, understands the benefits of free and unfettered trade. It leaves people better off and provides higher standards of living, all those sorts of things.

While my NDP friends talk on the one hand about their belief that trade is good, on the other hand what we always see from them is rhetoric suggesting that trade is a disaster. I have yet to see the NDP members support any kind of trade arrangement. I do not think they have ever supported one, and that is unfortunate because in the countries they are concerned about, Costa Rica in this case, trade arrangements will allow those people, who in some cases are very poor, to become much wealthier. It raises their standard of living.

Probably the best example recently is Mexico when we entered into the NAFTA agreement. Mexico has seen its middle class increase dramatically. After years of having very wealthy people and a very large group of poor people, Mexico is now starting to see its middle class develop.

We have seen that same process occur in other countries. One of the best examples is India where a couple of hundred million people have now become part of the middle class. This has happened in many other countries around the world. Free trade is a very good thing.

The NDP member for Churchill who spoke earlier suggested that sometimes trade can be compared to hockey where all the talented players are on one side and the players who are not so good are on the other. She suggested that sometimes a big country will dominate a little country like a big team will dominate a little team in hockey. As I pointed out to her, the difference is that in hockey when one team wins the other team loses and the team that wins takes the two points and goes on to the next game. In trade both sides come out ahead because it is a voluntary exchange. The analogy I used was

that if someone produces a hammer and sells it for \$10, the person who buys it is happy because he or she gets a hammer and can use it for something useful. The person who gets the \$10 for the hammer is happy because he or she can use it for whatever. In essence, that is what trade is all about. Both sides come out ahead.

The member for Churchill offered some examples that are simply not the case. She wanted to know what would happen if some got 20 cents for it. I would say that the person is probably happy to get 20 cents if he or she were only getting 10 cents for whatever they produced before. People enter into these things voluntarily. They enter into them because it leaves them better off. Surely the member for Churchill wants to see people better off.

I want to talk specifically about Bill C-32, the Costa Rica free trade legislation.

As my friend said at the outset, we believe in this but we do have concerns about the sugar component. Why? Is it because we do not believe in free trade? We do believe in free trade, but the problem is that Canada is being opened up to the import of sugar from all kinds of countries, not necessarily through Bill C-32, because Costa Rica at this point does not have the capacity to send us refined sugar, but we are concerned that it might be a template for what will happen when we enter into negotiations with the CA-4 countries, like Guatemala, which have a big capacity to export refined sugar.

• (1240)

The concern is not that we would have that sugar coming here but that we also have access to the U.S. market. The U.S. is Canada's natural export market, but in the last number of years Canada's ability to export sugar has declined.

We produce sugar in this country. A lot of people do not appreciate that. There is a sugar beet industry in my riding and in the riding of my friend from Lethbridge. It produces a lot of very good sugar. Our sugar producers can compete with anyone in the United States which also produces a lot of beet sugar. We can compete with any of them. We have an excellent facility in Taber, Alberta, that has just been upgraded. Several million dollars have been put into it. We can compete.

The problem is that the Americans are protectionist on sugar and our government has not been able to crack that open. Not only has it been unable to crack open the American market, the amount of sugar we export to the U.S. market has shrunk from 55,000 tonnes a few years ago to 15,000 tonnes today.

In the end it is the decision of Americans. However the government has not done a good job of looking after the interests of our sugar producers. It has not made it a priority. The reason it has not done so is that it is a relatively small industry compared to, for instance, the supply management industries.

The government gets heat constantly from the United States and other countries about supply management. Instead of threatening a big industry like supply management our government trades off sugar. It does it over and over again. In the free trade deal there is no question that sugar was traded off.

*Government Orders*

The Americans are happy to protect it. They like protecting it because a number of senators and congressmen have the industry in their areas and want to protect it for political reasons. We have not pushed them too hard on the issue. However it is time for the government to find a spine and push the Americans hard.

I am glad to stand by the Americans at any time. We will certainly stand by them during their time of need. However today we are talking about free trade. The Americans are protectionist on this and other issues. Softwood lumber is another example. We could go through the list. It is time the government started to push them.

The government thinks sugar is a small industry and no big deal but it is a critical industry to the people involved in it. It is not important in terms of overall GDP but to the people involved it is their livelihoods. It is very important to them.

I urge the government to make cracking open the American market more of a priority. It should at least raise the quota back to the 55,000 tonnes we used to have. That is still not a lot, frankly. It was not a big amount of sugar to export relative to what we produced but it was three times better than what we export today. It is critical that the government take that into account when it sits with the Americans the next time because this is unacceptable.

In my riding and across the prairies it is a difficult time in agriculture. People know that. Sugar beets provide a real option for a lot of people. They provide a good livelihood not just for producers but for all the people who work at the facility in my riding.

If we cannot appeal to the government to make it a priority on the grounds that the sugar industry is important, we appeal to it on the grounds that farmers need options at a time when wheat prices are low and they do not have many options.

● (1245)

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to respond since my colleague referred to an analogy I made. In the point I was trying to make I referred to your son and the Montreal Canadiens in the same breath. It was in a good light, Mr. Speaker. I said that even in hockey we have rules. We have rules so that one guy or team is not so big and powerful that they have all the power in one area to the detriment of the other. That is the point I was trying to make.

That being said, I want to comment on how well Mexico is doing and re-emphasize that New Democrats are not in the least opposed to trade. We need trade for strong economies on both sides. Whatever countries are involved in the trading process it should be beneficial.

I will tell my hon. colleague a story. I was visiting Arizona a few years back and watching an American program. This is important because it deals with the issue of trade. On the program there was a representative of American companies that were doing business near Guadalajara, Mexico. The story talked about 200 dead women were disappearing found in the desert.

Women were disappearing going to and from their workplace. They were as young as 12 or 13 years old. Some 200 bodies were found over the course of a few years. People were imploring the companies to put some kind of system in place to bus the women to and from their residences and the workplace. These companies made a fortune

selling their products in Canada and the U.S. yet their representative said they had to have flexibility and be able to make a profit. He asked why they should have to put in a busing system.

They found the bodies of 200 Mexican women. Is that right? Is that a fair deal for everyone? Is that what the member's idea of free trade is all about?

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Mr. Speaker, that is indeed a tragedy; it truly is. No one likes to hear a story like that one. The question is: Where would the women go if the factories were not there? What would they do to support themselves? That is a legitimate question.

Does the hon. member have an answer to that? Where would they work if the factories were not there? How would they support themselves? How would they feed their families? That is my question to the hon. member.

Can the hon. member get up and tell us what trade deal the NDP has ever supported in the House? The hon. member claims she supports trade. What trade deal has the NDP ever supported in this place?

● (1250)

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais:** Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of good debate we need to have in the House. I will answer the question. Whenever we think the right or the opportunity to go to work is a licence to kill, something is seriously wrong. That is the problem. Yes, by all means they should have a job to go to. However with all due respect people said the same thing about the miners at Westray. They said if they had not had the mine to work in they would have had nothing.

Do we accept unsafe work conditions? Do we accept child labour? Do we accept death on the way home because we cannot put in safe social systems and safe transportation? Is that okay? No, it is not. That is where we differ. Yes, they should have the right to go to work. However they have a right to other things as well such as human rights, labour rights and environmental rights. That is where we differ. When the hon. member comes up with a trade agreement that has those things he will have the support of the NDP.

**Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to talk about the Montreal Canadiens. They are a great team. If one cheers for them or knows some who plays for them that is great.

I want to bring the attention of the hon. member for Medicine Hat back to the concern I have about Alberta's sugar production. The member has mixed up the U.S. free trade agreement with what we are discussing. This agreement is about Costa Rica and Canada.

Costa Rica would incur the same costs trying to export to the prairies or western Canada that western Canada would incur trying to export to Costa Rica, so there is some balance there.

*Government Orders*

I wanted to know a little more. Costa Rica has no refineries or beet sugar production whereas Alberta does, at least in the riding of the member for Medicine Hat. What are the member's fears? Could he expound on them a little? I am unclear on exactly what his fears and his farmers' fears are.

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what to say except that it is pretty unrealistic to think Alberta would start sending sugar to Costa Rica which is in Central America and is surrounded by all kinds of countries that produce tremendous amounts of sugar.

We do not oppose the idea of free trade but in a world of complete free trade everyone would obviously find their natural market. Our natural market for sugar is not Costa Rica but we would have a natural market in the United States.

That is the problem with bilateral deals. If we had rules based trade through the WTO things would find their natural level. Canada would trade with the U.S., which is obviously the right way to do things. It makes so much sense. It is the largest market in the world. The \$11 trillion U.S. market is right below our border. We should be trading with the U.S.

The problem with the bilateral deal is that it would give us some new free trade on the one hand but entrench a bunch of distortions on the other hand. It would make more permanent some of the problems that already exist between Canada and the U.S. It would give the government an excuse not to deal with an issue that really and truly affects the sugar producers in my region.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-32, the Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement implementation act, must be examined in the context of the debate that has already taken place regarding the current process for negotiating a free trade area of the Americas and in the context where clearly we are in the midst of a globalization process. I believe that the exchange we just witnessed between the NDP member and the Canadian Alliance member demonstrates this fact.

Currently it is clear that the Canadian government's strategy consists of multiplying bilateral agreements to speed up the process of economic integration with the continent and with the world.

We already have a free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico, NAFTA. We have a free trade agreement with Israel, and another one with Chile. This weekend the Prime Minister announced that there would be negotiations for an agreement with Singapore. We also know that the government is interested in negotiating a free trade agreement with four Central American countries: Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade recommended that the government enter into negotiations with the European Union to establish a free trade agreement.

This then is the context in which we must look at the bill before us, regardless of whether we are friends with Costa Rica or not. I think it is clear that the people of Canada, like those of Quebec, are friends of the Costa Ricans. This is not the issue. The issue is what we are getting in the Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement.

I think the position of the Bloc Québécois on free trade, like that of most Quebecers, is well known. We support it. We think it is an

excellent idea because it encourages countries, by opening their borders, to specialize according to the advantages they enjoy such as natural resources, human resources or capital. This increases the general productivity of our economies. What I mean by productivity is not working intensely, but more effectively, more intelligently. All of this generates additional wealth, which can then be shared, and the problem often lies here, in the equitable distribution of the resultant wealth.

We must face the fact. The world has never been as rich as it is now. At no other time in recorded history has the world been as rich. At the same time, we must acknowledge that globalization and free trade agreements have not reduced the gap between the rich and the poor. Quite the contrary, they have widened it. A certain set of qualifications and a certain mobility are needed to benefit from globalization, free trade and specialization. Unskilled workers, as this is all the more apparent in industrialized economies, are unemployed and underemployed, in unacceptable working conditions and living in poverty.

The same can be said for regions. If free trade is not guided by a number of rules about the creation of this wealth across the continent or worldwide, inequalities among regions and among various classes of people within countries will grow. Accordingly, all aspects of our life must be taken into consideration, not just the economic issues more directly linked by trade agreements, but also the various social, environmental, cultural and democratic aspects. If they are not considered we may end up, under the guise of improving economic activity, creating inequalities, eradicating cultures and violating democratic rights.

Returning to the hockey analogy, although I unfortunately missed the beginning of it, I again congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your son's choice.

At this time, the professional teams and leagues have systems to try to level out disparities. If the top team had its choice of players during the selection process, not only would their team keep getting better but the one in the cellar would stay there. Professional hockey leagues have therefore come up with a plan to share player talent around more fairly by letting the bottom team in the rankings have first choice.

• (1255)

This of the same sort of philosophical approach we would like to see used by the Government of Canada in the free trade agreements, particularly in negotiations for the FTAA, as well as in the upcoming WTO negotiations.

*Government Orders*

Unfortunately there was nothing on this in the Canada-Costa Rica agreement. The Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement is a first generation agreement, as is NAFTA, as are those with Chile and Israel. It does not take the social, democratic and environmental dimensions into consideration.

The only new reference I was able to find in this agreement is one to the WTO declaration of 1998 on fundamental rights. This reference, however, has no mechanism for application.

We must take into account these economic, social and environmental concerns. Quebecers and Canadians should have been consulted in a meaningful manner, but this was not done. All that was put at their disposal was a website where they could make comments. Some groups did receive 18 months ago a letter from the Minister for International Trade inviting them to express their views. However, no systematic consultation process was set up. At no time were parliamentarians involved in the process. Now the government is coming up with an agreement that is presented to us as a fait accompli, expecting us to blindly pass the implementing act. We will not.

I hope that the federal government will realize that it can never again put parliamentarians, Canadians and Quebecers before a fait accompli.

In this case and in future ones, if there is no true consultation process that includes parliamentarians, civil society and all Canadians and Quebecers, we will vote against these free trade agreements out of respect for our democracy.

The first fundamental flaw of the whole process leading to this agreement is that it was not transparent. Negotiations were not conducted following a monitoring of the whole process by parliamentarians.

The second element which in our opinion is a serious mistake in the Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement is the investment clause.

In its documentation, the Minister for International Trade tells us that nothing is changed in terms of investment and services. I realize that nothing has changed regarding investment and services. An agreement had already been negotiated in 1998 between the Government of Costa Rica and the government of Canada for the promotion and protection of investments.

In the Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement, reference is made to this previous agreement. Under the provision on investment, article VIII.2 reads, and I quote:

The Parties note the existence of the Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Costa Rica for the Promotion and Protection of Investments, signed in San José, Costa Rica, on March 18, 1998.

When we take a look at the 1998 agreement, what do we see? We see that the provisions of NAFTA's chapter 11, which we condemned here and the Minister for International Trade said he wanted to change, are all there.

I would remind the House that in the debate we led and are continuing to lead for the negotiation of the free trade area of the Americas, we do not want to see investment protection provisions similar to those in chapter 11 of NAFTA, which give multinationals

and private corporations too many rights over governments, states and the democratic will of peoples.

There were many problems with chapter 11, but I will mention just four: the definition of investments, which is far too broad; national treatment, which means that we cannot have a specific policy to further the economic development of a particular sector; the concept of expropriation, which is far too broad; and finally, the dispute settlement mechanism, which allows a company to go directly to an arbitration tribunal to challenge a government decision or policy. The agreement between the government of the Republic of Costa Rica and the Government of Canada contains these same provisions to promote and protect investments.

I will take the example of investments. The agreement reads as follows:

(g) "investment" means any kind of asset owned or controlled either directly, or indirectly through an enterprise or natural person of a third State, by an investor of one Contracting Party in the territory of the other Contracting Party in accordance with the latter's laws and, in particular, though not exclusively, includes:

- (i) movable and immovable property and any related property rights, such as mortgages, liens—;
- (ii) shares, stock, bonds and debentures—;
- (iii) money, claims to money—;

The list goes on.

● (1300)

The definition of investment is far too broad in the Canada-Costa Rica agreement, and it is inspired by the NAFTA definition.

Now as for the national treatment provisions, there is exactly the same clause as in chapter 11 and for expropriation exactly the same type of definition. I will quote from article VIII:

1. Investments of investors of either Contracting Party shall not be nationalized, expropriated or subjected to measures having an effect equivalent to nationalization or expropriation—

This is rather broad. Finally, as far as dispute settlement is concerned, I will quote from article XII:

2. If a dispute has not been settled amicably within a period of six months from the date on which it was initiated, it may be submitted by the investor to arbitration in accordance with paragraph (4).

Chapter 11 is found indirectly within the Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement and runs contrary to the commitments made by the Minister for International Trade when he stated that he did not want to see any equivalent of chapter 11 in the treaty on the free trade area of the Americas.

The final element that makes this agreement with Costa Rica unacceptable is the matter of sugar, as has been stated already.

In this case, there has been a unilateral liberalization of the sugar market on the part of the Canadian government without anything corresponding being done on the other side by Costa Rica or any of the other Central American governments that will follow later. There is no way I will be convinced that in agreements with Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras or El Salvador we will have what is not in the free trade agreement with Costa Rica.

*Government Orders*

In the case of Costa Rica under the agreement, the doors are now open to selling in Canada, with no applicable tariff, over 20,000 tonnes of refined sugar starting in 2003, and the volume involved will have no limits starting in 2009.

Canada is one of the countries, if not the country, that is most open to sugar imports. There is no tariff on raw sugar and there is a \$30.84 tariff on refined sugar, which is the equivalent of 8%. Our price for sugar is one of the lowest in the world, whereas the U.S. and the European Union have many protectionist measures that result in distorted prices on the world level.

In Central American countries such as Guatemala, the tariffs on refined sugar may be as high as 160%. We are opening up our market while there are no market opportunities for Canada in these economies. The previous speaker mentioned this and I agree with him.

The United States is the obvious market for our refined sugar industries, but there is so much protectionism that even though they consume ten times more sugar than Canada they import less.

The four countries of Central America that I mentioned produce 2.8 million tonnes of raw sugar, of which 1.6 million tonnes, half, is exported. Three hundred thousand tonnes of that is refined sugar. In total Canada consumes approximately 1.2 million tonnes.

Guatemala, for example, currently produces and exports 1.1 million tonnes of sugar per year or the equivalent of our annual consumption. In 2000, Canada imported 273,000 tonnes of raw sugar from Central America, compared to our exports of 110,000 tonnes, under the quota, to the United States, a country that consumes ten times more sugar than we do, as I mentioned earlier.

Our industry is competitive, but in a market where there is no price distortion. On the world market and in the United States and Europe, where protectionist measures are in place, such distortion exists. I refuse to believe that there will be a market for Canadian refined sugar in Costa Rica, Guatemala and Nicaragua. Why? Because of the rule of origin.

We would have to import raw sugar from Central American countries and refine it in Canada in order to sell it back to these countries. The transportation costs alone explain why it would be difficult to sell this sugar, notwithstanding the fact that they produce raw sugar themselves, and could develop their own refining capability.

In Montreal, 345 jobs are being threatened. This may not seem like a lot to the Minister for International Trade, but in the Montreal area, particularly in these troubled economic times, these are jobs we want to keep.

Why were the opinions of industry, the unions and opposition parties not taken into consideration on this issue, if "it is not true", as the Minister for International Trade said?

• (1305)

I personally presented an amendment to the Sub-Committee on International Trade, Trade Disputes and Investment to make sure that this provision would not be included in the future. It is true that in the current context Costa Rica is not a threat, but Guatemala is.

I presented an amendment to make sure that in future free trade agreements with Central American countries we would not have the provision that is included in this one. That amendment was rejected by the Liberals. Now they would have us believe that they care about the 345 workers at Montreal's Lantic Sugar. Come on.

I think this provision should have been left out of the agreement. We must negotiate the liberalization of the sugar market. My proposal to the Minister for International Trade is to put this item on the agenda at the negotiations on the free trade area of the Americas and also at the WTO. We want the liberalization of sugar at least at the continental level, if not at the world level, so that Canadian and Quebec businesses that are competitive can compete in a fair market in terms of the practices used.

Because of these three elements, namely the lack of transparency during the negotiations, the fact that chapter 11 is indirectly included through the agreement for the promotion and protection of investments, and the fact that Canada's refined sugar industry is put in jeopardy, the Bloc Quebecois will vote against Bill C-32.

• (1310)

[English]

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's comments. One is almost at a loss to know where to start, there are so many questions I would like to ask. I will follow up on a couple of brief observations if I might.

I take this opportunity to clarify some comments made by the member for Churchill and to ask my colleague from the Bloc for his opinion on labour agreements. Earlier today I quoted the president of the ILO who said that he supported the use of side agreements on labour and the environment. He not only supported them but applauded Canadian creativity in using that approach.

I referenced the EU ministers who at a meeting I attended a year ago on behalf of the Minister for International Trade indicated that they too did not want to litter up trade agreements unnecessarily by including labour and environment rights. This was the point I sought to make earlier. I believe I was misinterpreted by the member for Churchill but that has been clarified by some of my colleagues.

How does the member feel about labour and environment agreements in trade deals?

I am disappointed to hear my colleague talk about the proposed amendment he put forward in committee. He knows very well that when he put the amendment our side supported it. In fact his amendment was agreed to unanimously.

I will give him a chance to clarify. The next day he came to the committee with a substantially different amendment with no consultation on this side of the House. Obviously we could not support a substantially different amendment from my colleague. We try to deal in good faith so I will give the member a chance to clarify.

*Government Orders*

I point out that there is no Costa Rican investment to speak of in Canada. Canada has some \$400 million of investment in Costa Rica. These are protected by FIPA, a foreign investment protection agreement, which has been in existence since 1999.

I do not understand his fears in this regard. They are misplaced. It saddens me to think that the Bloc Québécois will vote against a bilateral free trade agreement with a developing nation, one that badly needs it. Does he really mean that?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paquette:** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary and I often attend the same meetings, but I do not think we see them the same.

With respect to the secretary general of the ILO, he said that the debate had taken place within the ILO on issues involving workers' rights within trade agreements and that no consensus had been reached for the moment. We know that it is a tripartite body.

I served as the secretary general of the CSN for eight years. I know, therefore, that within this forum many governments and unions and perhaps some enlightened managers think that an effort must be made to find a way to introduce dimensions pertaining to fundamental rights into trade agreements. They are working on this.

The International Labour Organization and the World Trade Organization must give thought to such things.

The tragic events of September 11 should give us cause to think. We cannot do things the same way any more. Much of the revolt in the world arises from the fact that trade agreements take no other dimension into account although they have an impact on society, the environment and democracies. The debate must therefore continue and the Bloc will support this debate.

Now as concerns what went on in committee regarding the amendment, I moved the same amendment in the subcommittee and in the standing committee. In the subcommittee, the chair declared it out of order. I looked into it in the course of the evening and came back with the argument that it was admissible. Finally it was allowed by the chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade and was voted on. I moved the same amendment twice. In the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, it was defeated by the Liberals.

It is also true that, in the subcommittee, and this will be in the report, I agree, out of desperation to a general proposal to ensure that, in future interests such as those of the sugar refining industry would be considered and that a multilateral perspective would be maintained during negotiations.

Specifically in the case of sugar, the Government of Canada should focus on multilateral negotiations to liberalize the sugar refining market.

I would like as my final point to say that we support free trade, but we must learn from past mistakes. Chapter 11 of NAFTA, and I think the Minister for International Trade agrees with many of our criticisms, cannot be repeated in new agreements we will sign.

In the case of the Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement, I would have expected Canada to reopen the agreement with respect to

the protection and promotion of investments in order to take into account the remarks made by the Minister for International Trade himself in this regard, but it has not.

I think it is time we gave a signal to the Liberal government. We will not sign and we will not go along with any free trade agreement that does not meet a certain number of conditions. I have mentioned three in this case. We do not feel that there was sufficient consultation. At no time were parliamentarians asked what they thought. Instead we are being presented with a *fait accompli*.

Second, the clause on investments contains elements of chapter 11. Third, I cannot in all conscience agree to jeopardize 345 jobs in the Montreal area by unilaterally liberalizing the refined sugar market.

• (1315)

[*English*]

**Mr. Pat O'Brien:** Mr. Speaker, surely the member knows that there is a sugar caucus in parliament chaired by my colleague from Etobicoke. The member knows that there have been representations on concerns about the sugar industry in Montreal and other parts of Canada by government members as well. They have been very forceful about that.

The member knows there was an agreement in committee that passed unanimously. It stated that we would pay close regard to the concerns of the sugar industry. There was wide consultation and opportunity to have input at that meeting. Those concerns were listened to and the committee, chaired by my colleague from Ottawa Centre, went out of its way to pass a motion stating that we would pay close regard to the concerns of the sugar industry in all parts of Canada. We attended the same meeting. Is that not the member's recollection of what took place?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paquette:** Mr. Speaker, once again, when I put forward my amendment to the effect that there were no similar provisions for Central American countries, the Liberals defeated it.

I therefore remain extremely concerned about the content of the Costa Rica agreement and the agreement to follow. Let us hope that negotiations for free trade agreements with the four Central American countries introduce a number of other dimensions absent from these first generation agreements. Once again, I remain extremely worried.

When I sat on the Sub-Committee on International Trade, Trade Disputes and Investment of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, we heard from representatives of Lantic Sugar and the Canadian Sugar Institute. They testified and I did not have the impression that all members of the committee clearly understood the extent of the problem.

**Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the committee drafted a unanimous report endorsed by Liberal and opposition members from all parties to improve the system used by Human Resources Development Canada for employment insurance. This is a unanimous report. The committee is chaired by a Liberal member, yet the minister ignored its report.

*Government Orders*

My colleague from Joliette tried to move an amendment. We did it in every committee. The Liberals have a majority and they use the steamroller technique to ram their bills through. The committee and the committee hearings are just window dressing.

When the Conservatives were in office, the Liberals vehemently opposed the free trade agreement.

In my riding there are lumber producers currently have a problem concerning lumber on the U.S. market. This issue is still not settled. We have problems and we are asking for a free trade agreement.

There are dairy producers who also have a problem. There are tomato producers, such as Charlevoix's Serres Lacoste, which also have to pay a surtax.

If today we sign an agreement with Costa Rica, we will have the same problem when the time comes to negotiate. I think that a free trade agreement should allow for the exchange of goods and services without restrictions.

● (1320)

[English]

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on Bill C-32, the implementation of the free trade agreement between the Government of Canada and the government of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Time after time the Canadian Alliance has said it is in favour of free trade. In that context we see this agreement as one step forward in the implementation of free trade, which we feel is the route to go for the prosperity of Canada.

I will be splitting my time, Mr. Speaker, with the member for Surrey Central.

One of the concerns raised by members on this side of the House was the impact on the domestic sugar industry. I am pleased to note that an agreement was reached in committee to say that this model would not be applied throughout the other free trade agreements, which paves the way for the Alliance to support the bill.

Our concern for the sugar industry still remains regarding future trade agreements that Canada might sign. We are putting the Minister for International Trade on notice that if future trade agreements are signed they should be more balanced in the interests of both countries.

I want to talk in general about free trade in the world and globalization. I just returned with the minister from the APEC conference in Shanghai last week where an interesting paper was presented by the government of Australia called "Globalization and Poverty". I hope my colleagues from the NDP and others will listen carefully to what the research said.

I will quote some statements from the document:

Globalisation—in the form of increased economic integration through trade and investment—is an important reason why so much progress has been made against poverty and global inequality over recent decades.

Good national policies, sound institutions and domestic political stability are also important...in reducing poverty.

Up to 1.2 billion people of the developing world's 4.8 billion people still live in extreme poverty, but the proportion of the world

population living in poverty has been steadily declining. Since 1988 the absolute number of poor people has stopped rising and appears to have fallen in recent years despite strong population growth in poor countries.

If the proportion living in poverty had not fallen, since 1987 alone a further 215 million people would be living in extreme poverty today. There is very strong evidence here. The very poorest countries now represent less than 8% of the world total population compared with just over 45% in 1970.

The Australian document went on to say:

Most progress has taken place in developing countries that have reformed their policies, institutions and infrastructure to become the 'new globalisers'...During the 1990s their growth in gross domestic product per person was 5 per cent a year compared with 2 per cent of the rich countries... But far more serious problems confront the countries that have not integrated with the global economy—countries that account for up to 2 billion people. Often experiencing internal conflict and suffering poor government anti-business policies and low participation in international trade, these countries have not joined the process of globalisation, with the consequences of slowly growing incomes or even declining incomes and rising poverty.

The document says quite clearly that evidence produced over the last decade shows that globalization and free trade have been major instruments in moving people out of poverty, specifically in Asian countries. This is clear evidence why it is important to have free trade in the world.

● (1325)

The member for Churchill gave one example when she talked about 200 women who lost their lives while travelling. Yes, that is a tragic consequence. However, in the overall context of the situation, we must look at the bigger picture that has propelled people to move out.

The problem with these anti-globalization protestors, and the NDP, is they nitpick. The loss of 200 lives is extremely important, I am not saying that it is not. However, they nitpick small little things to put up barriers against free trade and globalization. Evidence shows that the majority of people have moved from the poor sections of the economy to better living standards.

In the APEC conference, which I attended with the Minister for International Trade, every country there talked about moving their economies into the global market. After years of experimenting with other forms, they see that as one of the key factors in helping their countries to move out poverty and improve the living standards of their citizens.

Twenty-one countries cannot be wrong, can they? They have looked hard at the results. They are the ones that have been governing for years. Yet we have the anti-globalization led by the NDP, that is the new mantra these days of anti-globalization, putting up barriers, supposedly for these poor people. I do not know for whom they talk.

*Government Orders*

All I know is that most of these NGOs and anti-globalization protestors, who supposedly live in rich countries and have great living standards, are trying to impose their will on other countries that want to improve their standard of living. The anti-globalization protestors are putting up barriers to stop the same people who they are trying to help, when all economic indicators and research point to the fact that free trade has assisted them in moving forward. I do not understand why the NDP is picking up that mantra.

In conclusion, the Canadian Alliance will support Bill C-32 in the context that free trade has been one of the engines of prosperity for Canada.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, clearly the hon. member has come back from the People's Republic of China and the APEC conference with his head full of corporate information about globalization and that it is good for everyone. I have heard this so often at committees, from the pharmaceutical companies that are pushing the idea of intellectual property rights and that this is somehow lifting people out of poverty.

If the hon. member had taken the time, whether it was in Quebec City at the summit of the Americas, or at APEC when it was in Vancouver a few years ago, or now in the People's Republic of China, to attend the parallel conference and hear from workers about impact of corporate globalization, he would know that the NDP is not nitpicking, or as he said, "small little things". We are defending the fact that workers have established, through these agreements, virtually no rights. Now we are looking at trade agreements, particularly the one before us today, that will do nothing to enforce and ensure the rights of workers in Costa Rica, or other countries where these agreements exist, to the basic human rights and labour rights to organize, to work in livable and decent conditions, to speak out and to associate. None of these things properly exist.

I am really offended that the member would somehow consider this to be nitpicking. He needs to go and do his homework. He needs to hear from worker organizations, both international and national. He needs to hear the very deep concerns that are being registered about these agreements and how they absolutely do not provide any adequate measures to protect workers in other countries.

I would ask the member to respond to that. Did he bother to take the time to find that out when he was at the APEC conference?

• (1330)

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to respond to the question. Let me tell the member that I grew up in a country that was in poverty. Today it is one of the poorest countries in the world.

I was there in August and talked to the people. I will say repeatedly that the NDP is nitpicking these little things because of the rhetoric being used. The members use so-called NGO groups who have similar interests and say they represent the people. If they went to those nations, walked the streets and talked with the people who have businesses, they would find out exactly what people want. They want prosperity.

Of course they want good living standards and better labour standards, but that will come through free trade and economic activity. It will not come through a central state government as the

NDP wants. I have lived in that country and have seen the labour standards. The standards that the NDP says are there do not exist.

Where it exists is where people have choices. They have the choice to go from business to business to raise their living standards. With this documentation and the usual NDP rhetoric about corporate interests, the member seems to forget every time that it is the economic activity minus the corporations. Corporations do not operate the major activities of the country. Major activities of the country are done by small and medium sized businesses. That is where economic prosperity comes from, not from large corporations.

I would suggest to the NDP to forget about a parallel summit, to go out and walk the streets and talk to the local people to find the answers.

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Calgary East for allowing me to share his time. I am pleased to rise on behalf of the people of Surrey Central to participate in the debate on Bill C-32 regarding the proposed free trade agreement between Canada and Costa Rica.

The free trade agreement implementation act tries to lay out the terms for a free trade agreement between our two countries by gradually eliminating trade barriers in goods and services. The bill follows the free trade agreement with Chile in 1997 as well as NAFTA in 1994. One of its stated purposes is to promote regional integration through an instrument that contributes to the establishment of the free trade area of the Americas, commonly called FTAA. It could be the first of several of these agreements with the other countries of South and Central America.

Eighty per cent of what Costa Rica already exports to Canada enters Canada duty free. Already our bilateral trade with Costa Rica has had an annual growth of 6% in the last five years with a 7% increase in exports and a 5% increase in imports. The agreement would further accelerate that growth. Canada is looking to expand its market for goods and services, many of which currently face high tariffs when exported to Costa Rica.

Costa Rica is not the problem, but the main risk is if this provision is extended to the CA-4 countries, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras. That is where I see a threat because of their refining capacity and because of the subsidies given by the governments in those countries. The domestic sugar industry has been asked to make representation at the House of Commons committee and to offer amendments to the proposed legislation.

After the bill was debated in committee some of our concerns were addressed. I opposed the bill at second reading. I commend some of the improvements made at committee because of the pressure from the official opposition, the Canadian Alliance members.

The bill now appears to support the Canadian Alliance policy regarding free trade. Reduction of tariffs should be done in stages, in step with other countries and not unilaterally. Canada reduced its tariffs prematurely on grain and this created many problems, as all of us know.

*Government Orders*

There is a concern that the government is putting our sugar industry at risk in order to reduce completely unjustified high Costa Rican tariffs on french fries and selected other exports.

We have one of the most open sugar markets in the world, with an import tariff on raw sugar at just zero and a tariff on refined sugar at only 8%. United States and Latin American tariffs on sugar range from 50% to 160%. For our domestic needs Canada produces enough refined sugar. In terms of exports, our only really viable market is the United States, which imposes strict quotas of 12,000 tonnes of sugar per year.

Other countries like Costa Rica hit us with very hefty tariffs when we export sugar to their countries. For example, Guatemala has a 160% tariff on sugar imports.

Canada currently has three sugar refineries to process raw sugar which, by the way, is down from seven 20 years ago. The Canadian domestic sugar industry employs about 2,000 Canadians. A 111 year old company, Rogers Sugar, in B.C., supports the livelihoods of 650 people and stands a chance that it will lose under this agreement.

As a footnote to the debate, the people of British Columbia have already been hurt through the government's bungling of softwood lumber, tomato dumping, the mining industry, fisheries, tourism, the film industry and some others.

•(1335)

Also losing may be some 450 farmers producing 140,000 tonnes of sugar each year, and we know that our farmers are already in desperate shape.

Rogers Sugar currently injects close to \$100 million into the Canadian economy through its operations in Vancouver and Taber, Alberta, providing high quality employment to their employees. Some people from my constituency are employed there as well.

Costa Rica does not currently use refined sugar so there is no possible benefit to Canada on this score.

There are some concerns that this agreement may stifle the operation of market forces by giving Costa Rica more access to Canada than Canada gets to Costa Rica. Trade should not only be free but also fair.

As we all know, a balanced free trade agreement usually helps to raise the standard of living for both partners through increased competitiveness and lower prices. Free trade, when done right, leads to lower prices for consumers. Who benefits? It is the consumer who benefits. Free trade must provide our firms with a level playing field in bilateral trading relationships with Costa Rica. Markets work best where government intervenes least. When the government does intervene, it must try to promote fairness and look at the whole web of Canada's trade relations with other countries. We cannot afford to be shortsighted. We must look at the big picture.

As I mentioned, though, the agreement does more than open the door for the exchange of goods and services with Costa Rica. It may act as a model for the whole FTAA framework. Regional trade agreements such as the FTAA should not conflict with our WTO agreements.

Despite the bill hurting our sugar industry somewhat, this agreement seems to be a step forward on several other levels. It includes some side agreements on the environment and labour. It demonstrates that free trade agreements can be negotiated between larger and smaller economies.

Canada has about \$500 million invested in Costa Rica. The improved access that we hope to gain with this FTA will give Canadian businesses an edge over foreign competitors who do not have preferential access to the Costa Rican market. We are getting access to the market. This market access will benefit about 90% of Canada's current agriculture and agrifood exports, so that is a big benefit.

Also, Canada exports goods and services of close to 45% of our GDP, which is almost half of our GDP. This is a high proportion in comparison to our major trading partners, so our success in international trade is important to sustain our Canadian economy, particularly during this time. Many SMEs, small and medium sized enterprises, in Canada depend on trade and the foreign market for their success and growth.

Therefore I look forward to the bill and I will be supporting Bill C-32 at this stage.

•(1340)

**Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will advise the Chair that I intend to divide my time with the hon. member for Vancouver East.

We have witnessed the most extraordinary spectacle in the House this afternoon: this unholy alliance between the Liberal Party, in particular the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade, and the Canadian Alliance. They are attacking the New Democrats. Why is it that they are attacking us? They are attacking us because we have the effrontery to actually speak out for human rights, to speak out for the rights of working people and to speak out for the environment, because we have the nerve to talk about the importance of democracy and putting the rights of democratically elected representatives of the people of this country ahead of corporate rights. What a shocking thing.

The hon. member from Calgary who spoke earlier on behalf of the Alliance said that we have to listen to the people from the south and that this legislation will be good for them. I wish that member had listened to the voices from the south, from Mexico, Colombia, Honduras, Peru, Brazil and elsewhere when they were in Quebec City speaking about the destructive impact of the existing trade deals on their people. Had he been at the women's forum in Quebec City he would have heard women speaking about the appalling conditions in the maquiladora zones in Mexico, the poisoning of workers from chemicals, the violence and the ruthless repression of the rights of working people.

*Government Orders*

The member from Calgary asks why we are nitpicking over workers' rights. I will tell him. Is it nitpicking to say that working people should have the right under ILO standards to organize and bargain collectively, the right to equal pay for work of equal value, the right to work free of discrimination and prohibitions? They should not have to work without any restrictions at all on child labour and forced labour.

What is it that the Liberal Party and the Alliance do not understand about the rights of working people? Or is it that they do not really care about the rights of working people? All they really care about is corporate profit. That is the bottom line for them.

We in the New Democratic Party oppose the legislation and we say that this Canada-Costa Rica bilateral free trade agreement is in fact part of what would lay the groundwork for a hemispheric agreement that would simply replicate all of the destructive impact of the existing NAFTA. We want nothing to do with that, certainly nothing that would increase the momentum toward a free trade area of the Americas, an FTAA.

Why is that? Too often Canada's trade policy has ignored social considerations, human considerations, the environment and the rights of workers and has put strictly commercial advantages for Canadian corporations ahead of all of them. There is no better example of that than chapter 11 of NAFTA. While chapter 11 of NAFTA is not explicitly included in the Canada-Costa Rica bilateral free trade agreement, it is in fact imported into that agreement.

[*Translation*]

I was a member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs when my friend, the hon. member for Joliette and Bloc Québécois critic on international trade, tried to move a very clear amendment to exclude chapter 11 from this Canada-Costa Rica agreement, but the government did not accept this fundamental principle.

• (1345)

[*English*]

We already know that the rights of working people in Costa Rica have been trampled on. It is virtually impossible to form or join a trade union in Costa Rica in the private sector because of the hostility from employers and the government's unwillingness to enforce its own labour laws.

We know that Costa Rica was the birthplace of the anti-worker Solidarista movement which set up employer sponsored associations in banana plantations to supplant bona fide trade unions. In the banana zone in Costa Rica working conditions are appalling and dangerous because of the lack of protection for workers using chemicals, resulting in the birth of genetically deformed babies, sterility, ill health and death among workers. In the private sector, Costa Rican workers are effectively denied any opportunity for collective bargaining whatsoever.

The Canadian Labour Congress and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, which represents 125 million workers worldwide, recently wrote to the president of Costa Rica, Dr. Miguel Ángel Rodríguez, expressing their concern about the situation faced by Costa Rican workers, especially those in the public sector.

What does the government say? The government says that it has great side accords. It says that it has a side accord on labour and on the environment. We have seen this movie before. We have seen the so-called side accords under the existing NAFTA and they are a joke. They do not protect workers and they sure as heck do not protect the environment.

When governments fail to enforce labour laws that protect such basic rights as the freedom of association, what is the recourse under the side agreement under NAFTA? They can make a submission to the national administrative office of a signatory government. What can that office do? It can recommend ministerial consultations with the offending government, and that is it. There is no respect for the fundamental rights of workers and no respect for the environment whatsoever, and that is continued in the Canada-Costa Rica agreement.

Far from expanding the principles of NAFTA, which put corporate rights ahead of democracy, ahead of the rights of working people, ahead of the environment and ahead of basic human rights, we should be replacing that agreement with a fair trade agreement.

We do not support the bill and we certainly do not support the extension of NAFTA into Costa Rica or anywhere else in this hemisphere.

I want to take a moment to say a few words about the impact of the bill on the sugar industry. I recently met with representatives of Rogers Sugar, a refinery that has over 200 employees in the Vancouver area located in the constituency of my colleague for Vancouver East. Many of those workers live in my constituency of Burnaby—Douglas.

Rogers has been around for about 112 years. It is a Canadian owned company. It provides quality union jobs to over 200 employees who are members of the Retail Wholesale Union. It contributes about \$33 million to the economy. I want to be very clear that the employees, the management of Rogers refinery, as well as others in the sugar industry across Canada, are deeply concerned about the implications of the bill for the survival of that industry.

If the bill in any way is seen to be a model or a template for negotiations with the so-called CA-4 nations of Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras, it will be very destructive for the sugar industry in Canada.

I was pleased that the foreign affairs committee made a recommendation to the government. The recommendation was not part of the bill but it was a strong unanimous recommendation that this not be seen in any way as a model.

Certainly, on behalf of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party, I want to make it very clear that we reject any extension of this Canada-Costa Rica agreement to the other countries I have mentioned. It could very well spell the end for the Rogers Sugar refinery.

S. O. 31

● (1350)

In closing, I would once again say that we as New Democrats have always supported a rules based trading system but what we have seen too often is that those rules benefit not working people, not small businesses, not the environment and not human rights. They simply hurt the poorest of the poor.

I have not even had the opportunity to speak to the implications the bill would have for agriculture. I would note that too often agri-business means that more and more small farmers, some of the poorest farmers in Central and South America, are being pushed off their land because of cheap imports coming in from the north. Certainly, that is not acceptable.

We have serious concerns as well about the impact of pesticides in the agriculture industry in Costa Rica but these concerns have not been addressed in the legislation. In terms of human rights and in terms of the implications for agriculture, the environment, the rights of the working people and for democracy itself, we say no to the legislation and we say no to the extension of the bill into any form of FTAA.

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after listening very carefully to my colleague's comments, my reaction is that here we go again. The NDP is the sole repository of all truth and virtue and if we do not happen to agree with the New Democratic Party of Canada we are somehow part of some unholy alliance. Well I guess 75% of Canadians are part of this unholy alliance because 75% of Canadians strongly support free trade.

I would like to ask my colleague to react to the comments of Juan Somavia. A few days ago I asked the director general of the ILO whether the ILO supported the inclusion of labour standards within trade agreements. I told him that the Canadian government did not think it was the way to go. Mr. Juan Somavia's answer was, and I quote:

For example, Canada is being very creative in this, through side agreements which are of a promotional nature. There are a number of ways in which the energy that has been behind this trade and labour standards debate can be channelled so we're making things happen.

—we have to run with the ball with the instruments that we have.

Mr. Somavia was very flattering toward Canada. He rejected out of hand the fact that we must enshrine ILO standards into trade agreements. I know the hon. member could not be present for that discussion but I have just quoted Mr. Somavia. I would like to know what the hon. member's reaction to that is.

I would also like to know what the hon. member's reaction is to the EU ministers. We often hear the EU cited by the New Democratic Party. What is his reaction to the EU trade ministers who have said that they reject putting labour agreements into trade deals, that they litter up the trade deals unnecessarily and that it is not the way to go?

Finally, why is the NDP against helping one of the poorest nations in the Caribbean area, a nation that needs trade not aid? Why does it oppose that?

● (1355)

**Mr. Svend Robinson:** Mr. Speaker, maybe the parliamentary secretary wants to ask the workers and the representatives of the workers in Costa Rica why it is they oppose the provisions of this so-called trade deal.

The hon. member asked a question about littering up trade deals with workers rights and environmental rights. The Liberal Party and the Alliance have a rather interesting notion of what constitutes litter. Is it litter to say that we believe that child labour should not be exploited in Costa Rica? Is it litter to say that we believe in the freedom of association of workers in Costa Rica? I do not think so. If the Liberal Party believes that is litter—

**Mr. Pat O'Brien:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Inadvertently or not, the member is certainly misquoting me. I am quoting the EU ministers—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I think we are engaging in debate and certainly not on a procedural point of order.

**Mr. Svend Robinson:** Mr. Speaker, if they think these basic rights are litter then they can defend that to the Canadian people. I think the Canadian people would accept our concept that if we can protect the rights of multinational pharmaceutical companies in trade deals through patent rights, we can sure as heck protect the rights of working people to organize and we can sure as heck protect the environment.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Burnaby said that I was nitpicking and I will repeat that he is nitpicking again. In reference to free trade and globalization the study stated:

The very poorest countries now represent less than 8% of the world's population compared with just over 45% in 1970. In countries that have embraced the opportunities created by integration with world markets..."

The member talked about the workers in Costa Rica. I repeat that the NDP is nitpicking. It will bring its people together but it will not go and talk to the people on the street who are benefiting from economic liberalization.

**Mr. Svend Robinson:** Mr. Speaker, which part of the fundamental ILO standards does the Alliance consider nitpicking? Is it the internationally recognized fundamental right to organize and bargain collectively? Is it the right to equal pay for work of equal value? Is it the right to work free of discrimination? Is it the prohibition of child labour and forced labour?

These are basic standards that New Democrats believe workers around the world should be entitled to. If the Alliance says it is nitpicking, it is a pretty sad commentary on its respect for working people.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

### SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

**Mr. Gérard Binet (Frontenac—Mégantic, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, small businesses are the pillars of Canada's economy and the largest source of job creation in the country.

*S. O. 31*

That is why it is important to highlight Small Business Week taking place across Canada from October 21 to 27, 2001. Organized by the Business Development Bank of Canada with the theme "The Power of Innovation Driving Small Business Growth", Small Business Week salutes the talents and accomplishments of small business owners and managers across the country.

Entrepreneurs in every sector in Canada are finding innovative ways to increase the productivity of their businesses. Small Business Week allows them to share ideas and information regarding innovative strategies that will help Canada play a leading role in the highly competitive world market.

Our thanks to the men and women of Frontenac—Mégantic who contribute to the prosperity of their region and our country.

\* \* \*

[English]

**POPPY CAMPAIGN**

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, October 27, I will be participating in the Calgary remembrance walk and parade to help kick off this year's poppy campaign.

The poppy campaign is perhaps one of the Royal Canadian Legion's most important fundraising events. The money raised from the sale of poppies helps to provide direct assistance to ex-service people who are in need as well as to fund medical appliances and research, and numerous other purposes.

The poppy is our symbol of remembrance for those who were killed during the wars. Let us not forget that these men and women paid the supreme price for the freedoms we enjoy today.

It was from the field of war that Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae penned the words of that famous poem: "In Flanders fields the poppies blow". These words take on a special meaning of significance on Remembrance Day when we pause to honour our war dead.

It is not enough for us to pay respects on Remembrance Day alone. I appeal to all Canadians to give generously to the poppy campaign so that our struggling veterans can live out the final years of their lives with respect and dignity.

\* \* \*

• (1400)

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION MONTH**

**Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, October is Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month which was started in the 1980s by the Independent Order of Foresters. During the month of October the Children's Aid Societies of Ontario are distributing purple ribbons to raise awareness of child abuse and neglect.

It is vital that we all take some time to reflect and become involved in efforts to prevent any form of child abuse and neglect in our society. No child deserves to fall victim to abuse.

It is for this reason that I encourage all members and citizens to wear the purple ribbon during the month of October in an effort to

raise awareness of child abuse and neglect. After all, as we have often said, the future lies in the hands of our children.

\* \* \*

**JAMES GLADSTONE**

**Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this morning at 11.30 there was a ceremony to pay tribute to the Hon. James Gladstone, the first aboriginal appointed to the Senate.

The ceremony included the unveiling of a bust of Senator Gladstone. Fred Gladstone, the senator's son, was in attendance as were Senators Dan Hays, Joyce Fairbairn and Thelma Chalifoux.

James Gladstone was born in 1887 near Mountain Mill, Alberta, and was a member of the Blood Band. He was appointed to the Senate in 1958 to represent Lethbridge, Alberta, and served for 13 years. As senator he co-chaired the joint committee on Indian affairs and fought for improvements for native people. His biography, *The Gentle Persuader*, was published in 1986.

I call on the House to join me today in paying tribute to the lifelong dedication and achievements of Senator Gladstone.

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**MEDICAL RADIATION TECHNOLOGY WEEK**

**Mr. Joe Fontana (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year Medical Radiation Technology Week will be celebrated from November 5 to November 9. Medical radiation technology is and will continue to be at the forefront of medicine in the 21st century as more procedures will be based upon the use of diagnostic imaging and radiation therapy.

Medical radiation technologists in all disciplines, like Elaine Buchner from London and other professionals from across the country, are frontline health care workers in a variety of settings such as hospitals, clinics, and labs. More of these professionals will be needed to meet the future needs of our citizens.

Recent large government investments in new diagnostic imaging and radiation therapy technology promises to benefit both the public and professionals involved with such state of the art equipment.

I ask the House to join me in recognizing Medical Radiation Technology Week and encouraging more of our young people to seek a career in radiation technology.

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**LITERACY ACTION DAY**

**Mrs. Carol Skelton (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today in recognition of the eighth annual Literacy Action Day. I had the opportunity this morning to meet with Don Pinay, a Yorkton tribal councillor and elder Irene Yuzicuppi from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network. These people are very concerned about literacy and are actively promoting literacy programs in their community.

Currently over 20% of Canada's population does not read well. There are many things that we can do in support of literacy: read to our children, volunteer with literacy programs and encourage those around us to be lifelong learners.

We tend to equate the ability to read with intelligence. This is not the case. We do not know what happened along the path of learning for those who struggle with illiteracy. We need to offer our support and encouragement to those who now desire to learn. I applaud those who are making the decision to become lifelong learners.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### MARC ALEXANDRE CHARTRAND

**Ms. Carole-Marie Allard (Laval East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at this moment, a funeral is taking place in a church in my riding of Laval East for a 17 year old adolescent, another victim of Quebec's biker gangs.

In fact, Marc Alexandre was killed in cold blood on Friday night at the entrance to a downtown Montreal bar. Bikers affiliated with the Rock Machine wanted to enter the bar before everyone else and were refused entry by the doormen. One of the bikers, in a fit of rage, drew his gun and fired. Marc Alexandre was mortally wounded.

There are no words to describe the pain felt by his family as they come to grips with the loss of their loved one. He is another victim of the criminal bikers.

Bill C-24 passed third reading in parliament on June 13. The measures contained in this bill would help eliminate or reduce the number of gratuitous crimes committed by these undesirables in our society. It still requires the approval of the other place.

In closing, on behalf of all my colleagues, I offer my sincere condolences to the Chartrand family.

\* \* \*

●(1405)

#### BLOCK PARENTS

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in this International Year of Volunteers, I would like to recognize the work done by people in my riding and more specifically those involved in the block parents program.

Originally intended to provide a network of safe homes so that children away from home could find help and shelter, the block parents program has broadened its scope to include seniors.

In 1977 the program was set up in my riding. Today there are over 900 safe homes in the area. This year volunteers came to the aid of some 20 people. They met over 600 seniors and over 11,000 children in their activities and school visits.

In this national Block Parent Week, I invite everyone to use this opportunity to become actively involved in the program. It is reassuring to know there will always be trustworthy people who will provide help.

[English]

#### LITERACY ACTION DAY

**Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I too rise to pay tribute to the eighth annual Literacy Action Day. Over 20% of Canadian adults face a major literacy barrier, and that is 20% too many.

I have long been an active advocate of improving literacy among Canadians both as a school board member and now as a member of the House. Recently I had the opportunity to participate in a resource announcement with literacy partners and 29 other Manitoba literacy organizations.

All these organizations are dedicated to helping adults overcome the gap that exists between their current reading level and numeracy level and their potential abilities for the workplace and the community. It is groups such as these that we need to continue to assist.

There are delegations here today comprised of people from every province and territory to highlight the issues related to literacy. It is important that as parliamentarians we take this opportunity to sit down with them so that we can talk, plan, learn and work together in a co-ordinated effort to ensure that all Canadians are full participants in our society.

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#### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce is asking the federal government to implement two important resolutions presented to it by the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce.

The first resolution asks the federal government to make permanent its spousal employment pilot for highly skilled workers. Allowing spouses and partners to seek employment in Canada attracts the best high tech workers from around the world and brings their considerable talents to the flourishing technology sector in the Okanagan.

The second resolution calls for the federal government to provide tax incentives to businesses and individuals who buy ultra low emission vehicles. Kelowna is the home of Dynasty, a maker of electric cars and a leader in environmentally sound technology.

I encourage the federal government to work with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce to make these resolutions a reality and to support the dynamic economy of the Okanagan.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### LITERACY

**Mme Raymonde Folco (Laval-Ouest, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to inform the House that October 25 is International Literacy Day.

Literacy affects just about every aspect of our life. It is the key factor in the growth and development of individuals and in the economic success of our country.

*S. O. 31*

In addition, Canadians know that good reading and writing skills represent a powerful key to many learning situations.

[*English*]

It is essential that all Canadians reach a high enough level of literacy to meet the current and future needs of the job market and the knowledge based economy. This is why skills acquisition and continuous learning are key priorities for our government.

[*Translation*]

I sincerely hope that my colleagues in the House will join with me in congratulating all those who help make Canadians more literate.

\* \* \*

• (1410)

[*English*]

#### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I bring to the attention of the House the announcement the other day of the compensation package for our remaining Buchenwald veterans. These veterans were Canadian airmen who were shot down in World War II.

Instead of being placed in a regular prisoner of war camp, the German government at the time placed them in a concentration camp. Many lives were lost as a result. After 56 years these brave men and their families have received the compensation and recognition they were fighting for and so rightfully deserve.

The other day the remaining 15 survivors and some of their spouses received that recognition from the German government and our Department of Veterans Affairs.

On behalf of the New Democratic Party and parliamentarians all over Canada we thank the Minister of Veterans Affairs and his department for bringing this issue to a final resolve for our veterans and their families.

On behalf of our colleague, Gordon Earle who served the House from 1997 to 2000 from Halifax West—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Châteauguay.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

#### 2006 GAY GAMES

**Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this morning we were proud to learn that Montreal will be hosting the seventh Gay Games in 2006. This major international event will afford Quebec the opportunity to show off its skill in organizing a major event.

More than 24,000 participants will congregate in Montreal for this event. The Montreal region will be hosting not only the athletes but over 200,000 visitors from all over the world, with an economic and tourism impact of some \$150 million.

Its selection is the result of the social, economic and sporting contribution of the gay community of Montreal and Quebec. With its highly professional presentation, the organizing committee was able to win out over all competitors' bids for the games.

The Bloc Québécois congratulates the Montreal organizing committee on its exceptional submission.

Bravo and good luck to everyone.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

#### HARBOURS

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, ports and harbours across Canada are in desperate need of a cleanup. In my own city of Halifax untreated sewage has been dumped directly into the harbour for over 250 years.

As the major centres of commerce, transportation, tourism and recreation, harbours are the lifeblood of their cities. Years of neglect and inaction have taken a substantial toll on our harbours, but it is not too late.

We need the Government of Canada to take a leadership role in harbour cleanup. Halifax Harbour would make a perfect test case for other remediation projects in cities like Saint John, Toronto, St. John's and Sydney, to name a few.

I call on the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Industry to work together to bring forward a national harbour cleanup initiative starting with Halifax to ensure that Canadians now and in the future have safe and clean harbours.

\* \* \*

#### IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, in the past week the minister of immigration has done little to ease the concerns that Canadians have about their immigration system. We have asked her pointed, clear and concise questions yet she insists upon giving vague, cloudy and rambling answers.

This week alone I was nearly shouted out of the House for asking who the 3,989 individuals were that the minister herself signed into the country. These people were not allowed to enter without her special permits. Were they criminals? Were they terrorists? We may never know.

I also asked about the 27,000 people with deportation warrants issued against them and what the minister intends to do to locate and deport these people. I am still waiting for that answer.

When will the minister admit that she just does not know the answers?

\* \* \*

#### LIBERAL GOVERNMENT

**Hon. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker,

It was eight years ago today  
When Canadians had their say.  
After many tumultuous years  
Many were brought to tears.

There was \$42 billion in debt  
From the Tories you say? You bet!  
So the choice was clear.  
Time for a change. Hear, hear!

So after eight years of prosperity,  
An opposition in anonymity,  
Canadians are truly proud  
As they say to the world out loud

Canada is the best,  
Clearly better than the rest.  
But in a typical Canadian way  
We leave it to others to say...

Eight years of Liberal success  
Hip hip hooray!

\* \* \*

### CHALK RIVER LABORATORIES

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the government's broadcasting corporation has repeatedly run a video of fighter planes flying overhead, giving Canadians a false impression that our airspace and vulnerable facilities are fully protected.

One facility of particular concern to my constituents is Chalk River Laboratories, which has several nuclear reactors that produce over 70% of the world's medical isotopes and provides the research and support for Canada's nuclear power plants.

It was revealed during expert testimony in the defence committee that the only reliable way to protect a nuclear power facility from air attack is with on-site anti-aircraft batteries. The Liberal government has instead downsized CFB Petawawa to an area support unit and eliminated a standard operating procedure between the base and Chalk River in the case of nuclear emergency, including evacuation and containment protocols.

The attacks of September 11 were real. The threat of a terrorist attack is real. When is the government going to start taking concrete steps to ensure the safety of Canadians?

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## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

•(1415)

[English]

### HEALTH

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is only appropriate that we begin today's question period by acknowledging the Prime Minister's eighth year as Prime Minister.

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

**Mr. Stockwell Day:** If he is considering another four more years, we welcome that.

### Oral Questions

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

**The Speaker:** We have a limited time for questions. I think we should get on with the question.

**Mr. Stockwell Day:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health should bring the controversy to an end by clarifying a few things.

He is saying that junior officials in his department made a very controversial decision and action to break the patent law, to put in a huge order for an amount of drugs that already were available and had been provided, that he already had. He is putting it all on these junior officials.

I would like to ask him very clearly, did he himself or his office know that these so-called phantom junior officials were taking this very controversial action?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** No, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues wanted to have some clarity of the facts. The clarity of the facts has been provided. The facts are now crystal clear. The chronology has been provided by those who were involved. It is in written form and the other side has it.

I hope the other side is now able to appreciate where we are. This time last week we did not have a secure supply of a drug Canadians may need. We now do. We have it at a cost which we got Bayer to reduce to match the American prices. Canadians will not be spending one cent more than they need to for this protection.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, there is a problem here. The minister insisted that Bayer provide the drugs immediately, while he allowed Apotex until November 8.

Why this favoured treatment for Apotex?

[English]

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear. They have been disclosed in full to all members of the House. It is clear from those facts that Health Canada officials acted in the best interests of Canadians to get the kind of protection they need in these circumstances.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the official opposition gave the minister the opportunity to put all this controversy to an end by asking that documents be tabled showing that these mysterious telephone calls took place which Bayer denies. He released not here in the House of Commons but to our media friends certain affidavits, but all the names are blacked out. There is no way of checking.

I am inviting him, since he does not trust us in the House of Commons, to give those names to our friends in the media, we trust them, so that they can follow up and see if in fact these telephone calls took place.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of targeting specific individual officials of Health Canada who are doing their job in good faith. This is not about a witch hunt by the opposition parties, or anyone else for that matter, against individuals in Health Canada. This is about the protection of Canadian health security. The government and this minister will always act aggressively to protect the health of Canadians. That is our priority.

• (1420)

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, what this is really about is telling the truth and upholding Canadian law.

Yesterday the Minister of Health conveniently left out that Health Canada had already purchased 800,000 Cipro pills from Bayer. But in response to my question yesterday, the minister said he needed one million more, which he claimed Bayer could not supply. Therefore he broke the Patent Act.

Given that the minister has now accepted he must deal with Bayer, has he placed the order for those additional one million pills he so desperately needed last week?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is an odd situation. We have a big pharma company that is more interested in the bottom line than in the health of Canadians and we have an opposition party over there that is more interested in partisan politics than in talking about the real issues confronting the country.

The facts are clear and they make clear that Health Canada did its job.

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister told us the situation was so urgent he had to break Canada's patent law by ordering those one million pills from Apotex. However, the minister knew that Apotex could not deliver until November 8. Meanwhile, Bayer has the pills in stock at its Toronto facility right now.

If it was so urgent last week, urgent enough for the minister to break Canada's patent law, why has the minister not placed the order for those one million pills with Bayer?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Bayer has now given us the security of access to those pills. It was not available one week ago. It has promised in writing we could have them on demand. That provides the kind of health security Canadians need.

The reality is we are focusing on protecting Canadians' health; they are after partisan political points.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health encouraged Apotex to produce a drug in violation of the law, apparently in good faith.

Normally the Minister of Health, a former attorney general to boot, should have denounced the illegality of the transaction but that is not what he did.

Will the Minister of Health admit that by condoning an illegal contract he was acting more like a former attorney for Apotex than a former attorney general?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that an error was made in good faith. Accordingly, we have resolved the dispute with Bayer. It is also clear that one week ago Bayer said it could not provide the necessary drugs.

We now have a secure supply of the drugs necessary to protect the health of Canadians. That is our priority.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health says that it is clear. I would like to see an accused tell a judge that it is clear that he broke the law in good faith and is therefore innocent. That is ridiculous. It is not a defence.

What I find surprising is that not just the Minister of Health, but his officials, cabinet, Liberal members and even the Prime Minister are saying that there was nothing wrong done because it was done in good faith.

Is this not encouraging people to break the law, to conduct themselves illegally? How can the government just break the law?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I greatly admire the member's devotion to the laws of Canada but I must say that if officials erred, they did so in good faith. The dispute with Bayer is now resolved.

In the meantime, we have ensured that the necessary drugs are available for Canadians and that is what is most important.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister congratulated his Minister of Health on his handling of responsibility in the Apotex affair.

Does the Prime Minister realize that his congratulating the minister sends the following message to generic drug producers. "Manufacture and stockpile drugs illegally. It will be worth your while"? That is what he is telling them.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I must make it clear to everyone that it is very important for the government to take steps to ensure that in the event of a crisis the necessary drugs will be available to Canadians. This is what the minister has done.

Today it is clear that the drugs required are available in sufficient quantity in Canada, thanks to the actions of the Minister of Health.

• (1425)

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the president of Apotex himself says he asked the departmental employee who contacted him whether he had the go ahead from the Commissioner of Patents to proceed with the order. Clearly that was never obtained.

How can the minister plead that he made an error in good faith when this was instead a deliberate, wilful and fully informed action that was against the law?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** They acted in good faith, Mr. Speaker.

*Oral Questions**[English]***PATENT LEGISLATION**

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister.

The NDP begs to differ with the spirit of question period. The Minister of Health is not the problem. He will move on to another political disaster sooner or later. The problem is the law and it needs to be changed.

We have seen the moral inadequacy of the law, not just in respect of what happened in Canada but in respect of what happened earlier with the availability of AIDS drugs in Africa.

Would the Prime Minister commit to the House today to review Canada's commitment to these kinds of laws because they are proving inadequate in emergencies and other kinds of situations?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I realize that the hon. member has been in a disastrous situation for the last 20 years being a member of the NDP.

I just want to say that at this time the laws are in place. The minister needed that. There is a possibility under the law to have an exemption that was not asked for and should have been, but it is provided in the law so that if there is an emergency, we can turn to somebody else to get the pills.

It was done exactly that way in good faith by the Department of Health.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I remember being on the same side of the House with the Prime Minister when he was criticizing the very law he just defended.

Could the Prime Minister tell us why his Minister for International Trade, in respect of talks having to do with the trade related intellectual property rights talks, is siding with the United States when the big multinational drug companies are trying to stop the easy flow of generic drugs into developing countries? Why are we doing that when we have just experienced how difficult those patent laws can be for public health?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. Canada is playing a leading role on TRIPS discussions we are having at the WTO. We have been working very hard at clarifying some elements in the existing TRIPS to allow for good flexibility in terms of emergencies like HIV-AIDS, TB and malaria to actually accommodate these countries in the existing agreements. We hope that in Doha we will be able to have that in the draft ministerial statement.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has a personal history with Apotex. In 1984 he was its legal counsel. In 1994 when he was the Attorney General of Canada, he intervened in a lawsuit involving Apotex. In 1997 his conscience twinged and he had a little chat with the ethics commissioner. What was that about? It was about Apotex.

Now the same company gives up \$1.5 million after what, a late night meeting with a Health Canada order clerk?

Is the minister the only one left who does not understand that there is an apparent conflict of interest in his dealings with Apotex?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my law firm acted for generic drug companies including Apotex from time to time just as it acted for brand name companies from time to time.

The member knows I was not involved in the decision to purchase from Apotex in this case. If this member has a specific allegation to make about me and conflict of interest in this case, let him make it. If not, let him stand down.

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, this morning the Minister of Health told me to shut up. I will not shut up.

*[Translation]*

The evidence is piling up. It is now clear that the Minister of Health has, in the past, had a sometimes close relationship with Apotex.

This morning I asked the minister if he had informed the Prime Minister about his previous connection with Apotex but he refused to reply. Instead, he panicked.

Could the Prime Minister tell us whether he was advised by his minister that the latter's relationship with Apotex might create the perception of conflict of interest, even before the Minister of Health broke the Patent Act?

● (1430)

*[English]*

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I wish the member would take my advice. If he has some allegation to make about me and my conduct, I wish he would make it specifically here or outside the House. If he does not have an allegation to make then he ought to remain quiet.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the health minister, who is a former minister of justice, seems to have trouble respecting the rule of law or any rules. He violated Canada's law by ordering an illegal supply of drugs. He also violated a mandatory directive which controls government spending. His illegal order grossly exceeded even the approved limit allowed if there is a pressing emergency.

How can Canadians trust a lawbreaker to protect them?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, I did not order these drugs. It was done by officials acting in good faith. As to what Canadians ought to have confidence in, Canadians will look at this spectacle on the opposite side of the House and wonder just what they are thinking over there.

Canadians want to know that we are concerned with protecting their health and getting on hand medications we may need in times of emergency. From that perspective I wonder just what the opposition is talking about.

*Oral Questions*

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday it was that minister who stood behind a microphone and said “I am in charge”. Now he is saying “I did not even know what was going on”. Which one is it?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Health Canada will always be there acting aggressively to make sure the health of Canadians is protected. Unlike the other side of the House, which is interested in scoring cheap, partisan points, we are focusing on what truly matters to Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance announced a budget for the beginning of December but, at the same time, he said that we should not expect direct support measures for the economy.

We agree that we must avoid any deficit but will the Minister of Finance recognize that he has the means to act and that this is not the time to use all the surpluses for the debt, but to allocate the majority of them to economic recovery?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is in fact what we have always done.

If we look at the tax reductions, which are substantial, at the infrastructure program and at the investments made by the government, we can see that we have always invested in measures that promote economic growth and job creation for Canadians.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if the minister wants to live up to his claims, will he pledge in his next budget, so as to be effective, to transfer more money to the provinces for health and education, now that would be effective, to have targeted measures to stimulate the economy, as proposed by the Bloc Québécois in its plan of October 3, that would also be welcomed, and to pay off the debt?

The minister can do all that and still avoid a deficit. We think that if there are no structuring measures in the next budget the minister will have failed in his duty.

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will definitely have a debate on the measures to be taken, before and after the budget.

The hon. member will have the opportunity to make suggestions and I anticipate that he will. However I hope that these will be very targeted and detailed suggestions because we have no need for empty words. What we need are detailed proposals and concrete measures.

\* \* \*

[English]

**NATIONAL SECURITY**

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, provincial premiers, business leaders and the U. S. ambassador to Canada have been urging the government to develop a continental security perimeter in order to secure our trade.

The foreign affairs minister met yesterday with Tom Ridge to discuss border delays and domestic security issues. My question is for the foreign affairs minister. Did he discuss the concept of a continental security perimeter and if not, why not?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we did talk about the importance of assuring both the citizens of Canada and of the United States that they live within secure borders. We also discussed at great length the importance of the border as an economic measure of great importance to both Canada and the United States.

We agreed we would continue to work closely together to ensure that the border remains as open as can possibly be.

● (1435)

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is obvious the U.S. is more concerned with domestic security than international trade. Earlier this week U.S. immigration officials announced that exit and entrance controls would be implemented at border points within two years. This would create incredible backlogs inflicting a death blow to Canadian exports.

The minister has stated that no new security measures have been requested of Canada by the U.S. However, did Tom Ridge assure the minister that the exit and entrance controls announced by U.S. officials this week would not be implemented?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a close reading of what was referred to earlier this week indicates an intention to transfer existing paper records collected at border points to electronic records; nothing more than that.

However, if indeed such measures were to be introduced, of course it would be of concern. We indicated clearly to Mr. Ridge how important it was, and he acknowledged that, as a former governor of Pennsylvania, by the way, to ensure that both goods and people pass freely across the Canada-U.S. border.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, one of the key aspects of an employment insurance program is that it works and meets the needs of workers who become unemployed, particularly in crisis periods.

The Standing Committee on Human Resources Development made 17 unanimous recommendations to the minister, who rejected every one of them.

Does the minister realize that there is a crisis, that she has tools with which to act and that she is refusing to use them?

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, and Canadians can count on a reliable and effective employment insurance program that has been around for 60 years.

*Oral Questions*

Employment insurance is designed to adapt quickly and automatically to local labour market fluctuations. Eligibility is reviewed every four weeks, based on the latest unemployment statistics.

[English]

The system is there and it is working for Canadians.

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, given the promises made by Liberal ministers from Quebec, the unanimous recommendations made by the committee, the decline in the economy and a \$6 billion surplus forecast for 2001-02, how is it that the minister can still say no to women, no to seasonal workers, no to young people and no to older workers, in other words, to all those who are waiting for real measures in these difficult times?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary. As a result of the fiscal measures the government has taken, the employment insurance program is there now for Canadians should they need it.

The system is flexible. Every four months it is reviewed. If there is so much as an increase of one-tenth of a per cent in unemployment, the system changes. Entrance requirements are reduced and the benefits duration is elongated. The system is designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of Canadians.

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#### CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the government is trying to reassure Canadians that all is well with Canada-U.S. border crossings. Even backbench Liberal members of parliament know differently.

The Canada Customs and Excise union is floating an excellent proposal for major commercial preclearance facilities in British Columbia, Quebec and Ontario in partnership with U.S. customs. Will the government work with the union to make this happen?

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said many times, we have developed over the past few years a customs action plan. As I said as well, we went through a period of consultation in which we consulted with the union. I have met lately with the president of the union. Just before question period I was on the phone with the president of the union.

Our aim or goal today is to make sure that we put in place a border open for trade, a border for economic development, because customs has to be seen as an economic development tool. As well we have to make sure we work in co-operation with the United States. This is what we are doing.

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, our security minister goes to the U.S. basically empty handed. Our commercial traffic is suffering and this is a proposal that could be done in partnership with the Americans. It is urgently required, not consultations.

The U.S. is spending a billion dollars to tighten the Canada-U.S. border. We already have U.S. customs passenger preclearance through Pearson and Vancouver airports and other places. When will the government adopt this proposal?

• (1440)

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would have a look at the reform, he would know it is already in place. We have some pilot projects at the land border respecting the crossing of goods and people, for example Canpass and Nexus.

We are working at this point in time, and my colleague in Washington talked about it yesterday, to ensure that we will resume those programs. More specific, we would like to resume Nexus which is a joint program, a harmonized program.

Apart from that he would know as well that indeed we are talking about preclearance using a new technology customs zone at airports and plenty of good things that will ensure we have an efficient border.

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#### TERRORISM

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting which was postponed earlier this month would have provided an opportunity for Commonwealth leaders to discuss measures for international co-operation against terrorism.

Has the Commonwealth taken any steps since the postponement was announced to address the terrorism issue?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, earlier today the Secretary General of the Commonwealth issued a very clear and strong statement against terrorism on behalf of Commonwealth leaders.

This follows the suggestion that went to him, to the incoming prime minister of Australia, the incoming chair of the Commonwealth Heads of Government, and the outgoing chair, the prime minister of South Africa, from our Prime Minister recommending a strong statement. We are pleased that it was adopted.

It is yet one more step along the way to building the broadest possible coalition against terrorism.

*Oral Questions***AIR CANADA**

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government is scrapping the 15% shareholder limit in Air Canada. Given that industry analysts are telling us that there are no large investors waiting in the wings to buy shares in Air Canada, will the Minister of Transport admit that the move is simply a substitute for taking substantive measures to help the airline?

Why will the government not consider significant proposals that will actually have some effect, like lower airport lease fees, lower air navigation fees and workplace stabilization plans such as those suggested by the employees?

**Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it has become quite apparent over the last few weeks that the 15% single shareholder limit under the Air Canada Public Participation Act provides a constraint on Air Canada's ability to raise equity in the markets. That is why we have taken the position to introduce the bill today that will eliminate the particular provision.

We are advised by our financial advisers there will be people in the country who will come forward to take an equity stake now that the changes will be passed by parliament.

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**TRADE**

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the trade minister will know that western Canadian premiers met last August with governors from 18 western states. The Canadian government kindly prepared a briefing book for our premiers out west that contained messages and talking points on everything from P.E.I. potatoes to greenhouse tomatoes to Great Lakes water.

Strangely absent from the notes, however, was any reference to the growing disparity between grain and oilseed producers and prices because the government will not match U.S. support payments.

Why were matters such as export subsidies and domestic support for grains and oilseeds not given any profile whatsoever by his department in the briefing to western Canadian premiers?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly trust enough the premiers of the western provinces to understand these issues very well indeed. Our determination for promoting at the WTO a reform in agricultural trade is loud and clear and is there all the time.

We often work with the Americans at the multilateral level, hoping that it will also help our farmers in competition with the Americans, while they will have to respect this important structural reform that we want in agricultural trade.

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**HEALTH**

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has referred defensively to politically motivated witch hunts, which is quite ironical and cynical coming from the architect of the ongoing Airbus investigation.

The Minister of Health felt compelled in 1997 to consult with the ethics counsellor about his potential conflict of interest due to a prior connection with Apotex.

However, if the Cipro kid wants to be consistent and credible, can he tell us if in 1994, when he was the attorney general and his department and Apotex were together before the Supreme Court of Canada, he consulted with the ethics counsellor about his then potential conflict of interest?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, when I was attorney general I told my officials I would disqualify myself from any involvement in any litigation involving Apotex because I had acted for the company.

I have behaved myself since I have been in public life, entirely in compliance with the highest standards of ethics. I say to this member, as I say to the rest of that party, if they have anything to allege against me let them come out and say it. Otherwise it is offensive to listen to these types of questions.

● (1445)

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, I thought we were saying it.

There he was, the sixties hippie, the eighties lawyer and now Minister of Health. He should always obey the law but he broke the patent law and failed his number one responsibility. Then he said that there was no national emergency, and then he blamed it on his officials. Now he has been caught in a glaring conflict of interest.

In all these incarnations, why has this minister not learned that when he breaks the law he pays the price?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this member is wrong in everything she just said. The easiest way of dealing with that absurd question is to say no.

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**TERRORISM**

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the Algerian armed Islamic group had a 20 member terrorist cell operating in Montreal for years. It included Ahmed Ressay, who was finally arrested by American authorities when he attempted to cross the border with his bomb making material. We have now learned that although French authorities continually advised Canada of this group's terrorist activities the government did nothing to assist in their arrests. Why?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think in the Ressay case my hon. colleague is fully aware that the American government thanked the RCMP and CSIS for the part they played in that case.

My hon. colleague is also well aware that CSIS and the RCMP work with all the police and security intelligence agencies around the world.

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the only thing I remember is the astonishment of the judge who remarked on the procedures of the RCMP and the member's department in that case.

While other countries assisted the French in carrying out arrests when some of these terrorists finally left Canada, Canada only frustrated French efforts to put an end to the activities of this terrorist group.

Were French sources correct when they advised the media that Canada closed its eyes to this terrorist activity in order to buy peace with these terrorists?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that an hon. colleague would make such a statement in the House of Commons. I am really disappointed.

The fact of the matter is that my hon. colleague is well aware that the attorney general of the United States and the director of the FBI thanked CSIS and the RCMP for their co-operation and support in this case and in many other cases.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### AFGHANISTAN

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are receiving contradictory information on the number of civilian casualties in Afghanistan. Reuters is reporting that the International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that the numbers are low but the UN representative in Islamabad is concerned that they are on the rise.

Did the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was in Washington yesterday, have any discussions with his American hosts about this? Does he have other information he could share with us on this troubling matter?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, all the discussions I had yesterday with my counterparts had to do with matters of security. I hope to speak with the U.S. secretary of state later today before leaving for the Middle East. I am certain that I will have an opportunity to speak with my counterparts in the Middle East and Asia about the situation in Afghanistan after the war.

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, these are not the only contradictory messages we are receiving.

Conflicting versions are coming from Mr. Bush's own entourage. According to defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the Taliban is putting up more resistance than expected. According to secretary of state Colin Powell, the conflict will not go on for very long.

When he speaks to Mr. Powell, will the minister try to get some information and report back to us? The outcome of this conflict hinges on the answers.

• (1450)

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will certainly discuss the situation in Afghanistan with the secretary of state when I have an opportunity.

#### Oral Questions

I must say that it is not surprising that there is some slightly contradictory information, because this is a very complicated situation in which it is difficult to obtain precise information.

I am certain that in time we will have all the necessary information.

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[English]

#### NATIONAL SECURITY

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP under the Liberal government has suffered unprecedented cuts, with \$175 million slashed from its budget and 2,200 job losses. How can the solicitor general boast about his new funding when RCMP detachments across the land are left begging for more money and adequate personnel?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said a number of times to my hon. colleague, the government, including the last budget and since, has put \$2 billion into the public safety envelope. Just in the last couple of weeks the government put \$100 million into policing and security intelligence agencies to make sure this country remains one of the safest countries in the world to live in.

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, how can the solicitor general brag about his paltry increases to the RCMP? The reality is the RCMP has faced a decade of cuts and lost personnel. He is the solicitor general who gutted its resources. The remaining members are spread too thin and are left begging for adequate resources.

With the responsibilities expanded, does the solicitor general not understand that stable, long term funding is essential, especially with the added threat of terrorism?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not just sure what my hon. colleague does not understand. He had special sources informing him yesterday.

What I am saying is that this government put \$2 billion into the public safety envelope. The commissioner of the RCMP has indicated quite clearly he has the resources to fulfil his mandate. The director of CSIS has indicated it has the funding to fulfil its mandate. What does my hon. colleague want?

\* \* \*

#### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Tony Tirabassi (Niagara Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today's businesses, large and small, have become reliant on numerous technologies for their very existence. In keeping up with the ongoing changes and the speed with which changes occur, could the Minister of National Revenue explain what new initiatives the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency is undertaking in support of Canadian businesses?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency of course offers the business community a wide range of services online. Today I am pleased to report to the House that we have launched a new website for businesses called business registration online. It provides the opportunity to businesses to register for certain programs of Canada Customs and Revenue Agency and the government of Nova Scotia and the government of Ontario. This is a good initiative for the business community and this is what we can do when we work in co-operation.

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**NATIONAL SECURITY**

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, at the public accounts committee the commissioner of the coast guard admitted that unless a ship approaching Canada voluntarily announces its pending arrival the coast guard has no way of knowing who is approaching our shores.

My question is for the minister of fisheries in the Government of Canada. What assurance can the government give to Canadians that we are safe when no one has any idea what criminals may be reaching our shores?

**Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report to the House that we have adopted the same regulation as the U.S. in that all ships that come to Canadian ports are now required to provide 96 hours' notice, not 24 hours as in the past, so we can provide better security on our waters. This is a substantial increase and is very consistent with what the U. S. is doing.

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, that is a voluntary announcement, not a required, supervised, "we found you" announcement. The coast guard has also been short \$150 million a year for so many years under the Liberal government that it will need \$2 billion to get the ships out to sea and out of dry dock.

Will the Minister of Finance tell us that there will be money in his upcoming budget to get the coast guard up to shape and doing the job properly?

• (1455)

**Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, obviously the hon. member has not been following what has been happening in the coast guard. In fact the finance minister provided just last year \$115 million to the coast guard to make sure that we can do the job.

The hon. member should spend more time reading the budgets and following closely instead of asking us questions before he has done his research.

[Translation]

**CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS**

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, *L'Action nationale*, which has been publishing for 85 years, is at risk of losing its right to issue tax receipts for donations.

According to Revenue Canada, "this publication does not meet the criteria for charity status". It has had that status since 1967, and now Revenue Canada is withdrawing it.

Can the minister explain to us why *L'Action nationale* should have to lose its charity status, while he has not taken the same attitude toward the Council for Canadian Unity, which benefits from such a privilege?

**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 can indeed confirm that this organization had its charity status withdrawn this past June.

As for any specific questions concerning it, I would like to point out that this is confidential information—

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

**Hon. Martin Cauchon:**—under section 241 of the Income Tax Act.

I would also like to point out that the minister responsible for the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency does not intervene in decisions of this kind.

\* \* \*

[English]

**APEC**

**Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on October 20 and 21 Asia-Pacific leaders met in Shanghai to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.

Some media reports characterized the APEC statement on counterterrorism as weak. Would the Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific please tell the House what was achieved at the summit?

**Hon. Rey Pagtakhan (Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the APEC leaders in fact issued a strong and unprecedented political statement unanimously condemning the terrorist attacks in the United States.

They committed themselves to enhanced co-operation on counterterrorism in very specific ways under the UN charter and other international laws. They in fact indicated in the statement that the APEC leaders are very much against terrorism.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Health did not know what he was doing in the Apotex affair why was he not advised that he was breaking the law by the minister responsible for patents, the Minister of Industry?

*Business of the House*

Was it because this minister is also unaware of the law or was there another reason why he left his colleague to bear the cross?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this member, like his party, seems to be learning the facts slowly so let us go through them again.

A week ago Canada did not have a secure supply of or access to the drugs we need. Now we do. We got Bayer to reduce the price to American levels. We also made sure that Canadians did not pay a cent more than they had to to get the drugs they need. The opposition knows from the facts that Bayer could not give us the drugs when we first asked.

Those are the facts. The member should remember them.

\* \* \*

**HOUSING**

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a federal investment in social housing in the order of 30,000 to 40,000 units, which is what every national group agrees is needed, will produce 46,000 jobs immediately, increasing to 90,000 jobs in five years.

I would like to ask the finance minister now that he has finally agreed to a budget, first, will he honour his commitment to poor Canadians and not leave them out in the cold, and will he commit to such a housing program not only to help people who are homeless or poorly housed but as a sound economic investment in the country with good jobs?

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the last election we promised that we would house Canadians, as we always have. We committed \$680 million in the Speech from the Throne on negotiating with the provincial ministers. As a matter of fact, we have a meeting at the end of November in Quebec City with all the provincial and territorial ministers of housing. I hope by then we will have a national housing program to which Canadians can look forward.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

[Translation]

**PAY EQUITY**

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we learned this week that, after delaying the appeal for over nearly a year, the federal court will finally hear the case of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, which is trying to obtain recognition of the right of some 6,000 public servants to pay equity payments.

Will the President of the Treasury Board stop using legal means to prevent her own employees from being entitled to pay equity and does she intend to see they get justice by paying them their due?

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in our system of public administration, there are various employers.

Treasury Board is the employer for many public servants, but there are separate employers as well. Clearly, the settlement applied only to employees belonging to Treasury Board.

If separate employers can prove that a pay equity problem exists within their organizations, we will provide financial support.

\* \* \*

[English]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, in light of the very serious and deliberate breach of our Canadian patent laws, has the Minister of Industry instigated a full inquiry into the Apotex fiasco? Who will be charged?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member had better get some legal advice. Any problem with the Patent Act was resolved when the company came to the table and entered into the agreement with Health Canada. By the way, that agreement makes sure Canadians will get access to the drugs they need, which of course is the last thing on the minds of the people on the Alliance side.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the official opposition would like to ask what the business of the House is tomorrow and for the following week.

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the deputy opposition House leader for her question.

I will report to the House that this afternoon we will complete third reading of Bill C-32, assuming we can complete this legislation, which is the Costa Rica trade bill. A little later today there will also be a royal assent on Bill S-23, which is important for national security.

On Friday we will debate report stage and third reading of Bill C-34, the transport tribunal bill.

Monday shall be an allotted day.

On Tuesday we will debate report stage and third reading of Bill C-31, the export development bill. This will be followed by a motion respecting the name of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

On Wednesday we will debate second reading of the Air Canada bill that was introduced earlier this day.

On Thursday we hope to deal with report stage of Bill C-10, respecting marine parks.

*Government Orders*

● (1505)

**PRIVILEGE**

## FIREARMS ACT—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** On October 17, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville raised a question of privilege concerning the failure of the Minister of Justice to comply with the provisions of the Firearms Act dealing with the making of regulations.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member appealed to the Chair to ask the minister when her notice of opinion would be tabled in the House.

[*English*]

Before the Chair was able to return to the House with a ruling, the minister tabled her notice of opinion concerning regulations amending the firearms fees regulations. I refer all hon. members to the Journals entry of Tuesday, October 23, 2001.

I therefore consider the matter closed.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I have examined the minister's statement and I really see no compelling reason given by the minister for the urgent changes that she made two hours after the terrorists hit the World Trade Center. This appears to have been a political priority, not a public safety priority.

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**THE ROYAL ASSENT**[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

October 25, 2001

Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable Louise Arbour, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in her capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 25th day of October, 2001, at 3:30 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to a certain bill.

Yours sincerely,

Michèle Lévesque  
Deputy Secretary  
Policy, Program and Protocol

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**[*English*]**CANADA-COSTA RICA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT  
IMPLEMENTATION ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-32, an act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Costa Rica, be read the third time and passed.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to continue the debate where my colleague from

Burnaby—Douglas left off on Bill C-32, an act to implement the free trade agreement between the Government of Canada and the government of the Republic of Costa Rica.

In listening to the debate earlier I felt offended that members of the Canadian Alliance lobbed at the members of NDP that somehow we were nitpicking and attaching our debate to small things, such as defending the rights of workers, whether they were in Costa Rica, Canada or any other country. As the debate continued, the parliamentary secretary wanted to know why the NDP was opposed to helping one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere. Presumably he meant Costa Rica.

The NDP is absolutely in favour of helping one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere. In fact, this party has had a very proud and long tradition of promoting international solidarity, economic investment and aid and development. We have pressed the government to meet its commitments through the red book and in other areas over many years.

However the debate today is really about who this trade agreement will help. I would challenge the parliamentary secretary to produce the evidence as to how this particular free trade agreement will help poor people in Costa Rica or, for that matter, workers in Canada.

Like other members in the House, I have also received information from workers and management from Rogers Sugar which is located in my riding of Vancouver East. I want to tell members of the House, particularly the government members, that there is a huge concern about the impact of this trade agreement on Canadian companies and the sugar industry.

In June of this year I met with a joint delegation of labour and management representatives from Rogers Sugar. Anyone who knows about labour management issues will know that it is not usual for labour and management to come together. However in this case it was a joint delegation because the several hundred people who work at the plants as well as the management of Rogers Sugar are very concerned about the impact of this agreement.

● (1510)

In fact when they wrote the Prime Minister to express their concern they received the following response. In a letter dated April 26, the Prime Minister said that in any free trade negotiation it was necessary for each side to consider compromises in the interest of reaching an agreement which was fair overall. In the case of Costa Rica, Canada recognized that the differences in the level of development of our two countries would need to be reflected in the final agreement.

He then went on to say that the agreement negotiated provided opportunities for exporters in both countries to explore new markets, including opportunities for some Canadian sugar exporters to sell to Costa Rica.

This is absolutely contrary to the evidence and information that has come before us. The fact is that if the tariff were eliminated, Canadian refineries would be exposed to competition from Costa Rican refineries without the prospect of better access to that market for our exporters, contrary to what the Prime Minister said.

*Government Orders*

The reality is there is virtually no market for refined sugar in Costa Rica or elsewhere in central America. Granting duty free entry for refined sugar from Costa Rica and we believe, eventually from Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and especially Guatemala, will end up eliminating a significant portion of a long-standing Canadian industry. We have to be incredibly concerned about that.

If we could look at what the NDP has articulated in its position, it is precisely because of this race to the bottom. It is another example of the lowest common denominator approach that opens the door to job flight from countries, such as Canada, where there are tougher, more progressive legislation.

It is not just about protecting jobs in Canada, although that is very important. It is also about protecting and encouraging high quality jobs in other parts of the world. We have heard a lot of debate today in the House about how this agreement will lift people out of poverty. We heard from the Alliance that globalization has moved people out of poverty. We heard that the trickle down theory is working very well.

Again, there is ample evidence to suggest that these trade agreements have done nothing to improve the lives of working people. These trade agreements have done nothing to improve the quality of our environment or the quality of social conditions that exist in many countries.

Members of the NDP take a very principled stand. This is not about being opposed to trade agreements per se on any grounds. It is about being in favour of trade agreements that protect our environment, that protect quality social conditions for people and that enshrine and protect worker rights.

To go back to the situation in Costa Rica, because that is the agreement before us, one of the things we should be concerned about is the development of export processing zones in Costa Rica, of which there are nine. One thing that is taking place, particularly in the textile industry, is that companies increasingly are hiring workers at home where they are not protected by labour laws nor are they covered by social security, holidays or job security.

We have to ask critically whether the agreement actually is helping one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere or whether it is conferring greater rights for greater profits for large corporations. Basically the workers get left behind at home with absolutely no protection.

There is information on the record, and it is available for any member to see, that private sector employers have ignored the ILO recommendations that workers, particularly in the private sector, have been denied the right to organize. They have been denied the right to basic, safe working conditions. They have been denied the right to decent wages.

It becomes very clear that the trade agreement is not in the interests of poor people in those countries. It is not in the interests of protecting our environment. I feel proud that as an NDP caucus we understand this and stand in solidarity with international labour movements, with the labour movement in Canada and with NGOs that have done analysis on this and have participated in things like the people's summit at the summit of the Americas in Quebec City and the people's summit in Vancouver at the APEC conference.

It is through those forums that the issues affecting workers have come to the forefront. As we know, that debate has not taken place in the House. We raise day after day the fact that the summit of the Americas was not brought forward to the House for any kind of democratic vote. These agreements affect all of us. They affect our local communities and the workers in my riding of East Vancouver but the House has not participated in any kind of democratic vote about whether or not we should be adopting the FTAA for example.

The NDP is not nitpicking. The NDP is not opposing the agreement because we are opposed to free trade or any trade agreement. We are opposing this agreement because we see it as nothing more than continuing the sellout of Canada. We see it as a continuation of a policy from the government that actually is abandoning the basic human rights and the basic human dignity of workers in Costa Rica.

I am very glad that the workers I met with from Rogers Sugar understood that they were standing in support of the workers in Costa Rica. They did not see it as just an issue of protecting their jobs and their turf. They understood that this race to the bottom not only affected them but also the workers in those other countries.

I am glad the NDP is opposing this trade agreement. It is a bad trade agreement both for workers in Canada and for workers in those countries.

• (1515)

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the comments of the hon. member for Vancouver East. I listened to her say that we should have democratic votes in the House about these things.

It strikes me that the NDP has refused to recognize democratic votes that have taken place in elections in the past few years. It refuses to recognize that in the last two or three election campaigns the vast majority of Canadians voted for parties that support free trade and the expansion of our ability to trade around the world. This would allow products from other countries to come into our country without tariffs or with lower tariffs so that our consumers can get access to goods and services from around the world at reasonable prices.

It seems strange that a party that talks about its concern for consumers and ordinary people is not interested in ensuring we are able to get goods and services at low prices.

At the same time it surprises me that the NDP refuses to recognize that with this agreement there are side agreements on environment and labour. The two governments involved in the agreement believe environment and labour co-operation should go hand in hand with trade liberalization. That is a fundamental element of Canada's foreign policy.

The environment agreement in this case would commit the parties to provide for high levels of environmental quality and the effective enforcement of environmental laws. It would provide for technical co-operation to strengthen environmental management systems. It would seek to expand public participation in environmental policy-making.

*Private Members' Business*

That is important for both countries. It is important to Canada and to Costa Rica that the public is involved in these processes and that they are not just handed down. The people must have a chance to take part in the discussion about the development of these important policies.

It goes without saying that the labour and environment side agreements are important complements to the Canada-Costa Rica free trade agreement. All I have heard today from members of the NDP is how terrible it is that we are not dealing with the environment. They say that we do not care about the environment or about labour. They seem to deny and ignore that in this case there are agreements on those very things.

Will the hon. member explain to us how the NDP can refuse to accept the decisions of the electorate in democratic votes in Canada's last three elections?

• (1520)

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question but let us not forget our history. In the election of 1988 more Canadians voted against the beginning of the free trade era than voted in favour.

If the hon. member would care to look at the history of his own party he would probably remember that the party of whose government he is a part was opposed to the original free trade agreement. If we want to talk about democratic expression, a majority of Canadians voted for members of parliament and parties that were opposed to that agreement.

Since that time, if we look at information that came out before the summit of the Americas, there has been growing opposition from Canadians to what these trade agreements represent. There is a growing realization and understanding that these trade agreements are nothing more than huge giveaways to multinational corporations that are able to move capital across borders and disregard the rights of workers, the environment or social conditions.

The member says that there are all these sidebar agreements. The sidebar agreements are not worth the paper they are written on. The CCRALC does not oblige a government to enact or maintain labour laws of a high standard. It only requires that a government enforce the labour laws it enacts.

When the minister was in central America earlier this year he was quoted in the local press as promising that Canada would not use environmental and labour legislation as a barrier to trade deals.

We must ask what the government's real agenda is in this regard. Is it to raise the standard of living for people in these countries or is it to confer enormous rights on the corporations and leave people at the mercy of the employers?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** 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 Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

• (1525)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** The division on the motion stands deferred until Monday, October 29.

**Ms. Marlene Catterall:** Madam Speaker, discussions have taken place among all parties and there is an agreement pursuant to Standing Order 45(7) to further defer the recorded division just requested on third reading of Bill C-32 until the end of government orders on Tuesday, October 30.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Is there consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** The division on the motion stands deferred until 6.30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 30.

**Ms. Marlene Catterall:** Madam Speaker, I believe you would find consent in the House to see the clock at 5.30 p.m. so the House may proceed to the consideration of private members business.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### NATIONAL RIVERS DAY

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York North, Lib.)** moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should recognize the first Sunday of June of each year as National Rivers Day.

She said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to rise to speak to private member's Motion No. 382. I was pleased to take on the motion from my hon. colleague from Vancouver Quadra after he was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice.

The idea for a national rivers day originated in British Columbia where on the last Sunday in September of each year B.C. Rivers Day is celebrated.

*Private Members' Business*

B.C. Rivers Day started in 1980 with a single clean-up event along the Thompson River involving about 40 people. While the event that year was small it was nonetheless a great success in terms of the amount of garbage and debris that the small group of dedicated people removed from the river and its banks. As a result of that effort the group decided to plan a few more events the following year.

Thus began the long journey of B.C. Rivers Day. It has now snowballed to a point where this year more than 100 events took place involving an estimated 45,000 people. It has become the largest river related event of its kind in North America. It has become popular for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the concern of British Columbians for the state of local waterways.

By demonstrating their strong support for B.C. Rivers Day British Columbians are poised to embrace a similar national celebration of our rivers as I believe all Canadians will.

B.C. Rivers Day attracts participation from recreational clubs, conservation organizations, community groups, schools and local governments. Almost 350 organizations were involved last year. Virtually every local government proclaimed it, as did the province itself.

Every year this diverse collection of groups hosts a variety of events across the province, events that celebrate the cultural, ecological, historical, aesthetic, spiritual and recreational importance of B.C. rivers to the people of that wonderful province. Most of these events involve volunteers who contribute their time and energy to make a positive difference to the health of B.C. rivers. Their activities also benefit the local communities that take part in the celebrations.

I will list some examples of activities that took place this year, activities such as river cleanups, art exhibitions, interpretive walks, workshops, tree plantings, canoe trips, readings, slide shows, educational paddles and the Whistler Fishtival.

In the midst of all this fun, important public education is taking place. While B.C. Rivers Day offers people the opportunity to get out and experience the province's spectacular river heritage, it also brings attention to the need for better river management. Some organizers view B.C. Rivers Day as a vehicle to raise awareness about the threats facing local rivers. Others use it as an opportunity to showcase success stories. Often these perspectives can be combined into one event.

The intent in establishing B.C. Rivers Day was to celebrate the province's river heritage and promote the natural, cultural and recreational values of its waterways.

The intent of national rivers day should be the same. Canada has a long and rich river heritage. A national rivers day would be a fitting way of commemorating it. I suspect that the same kind of support and enthusiasm we have seen in British Columbia will unfold across the country as national rivers day picks up steam in the years ahead.

I share with all Canadians a deep love and respect for our rivers. As members may recall, I helped bring Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to Ottawa last year to speak to members about his experiences with the U.S. organization Riverkeeper. The story of Riverkeeper's efforts to

rehabilitate, protect and preserve a long list of rivers all over the United States has inspired people around the world including here in Canada.

I have had the honour of working with Mr. Daniel LeBlanc who was the first riverkeeper in Canada. Mr. LeBlanc and his associates have worked long and hard to improve the condition of the Petitcodiac River in New Brunswick. I hope recent announcements mean that progress is being made.

Closer to home, or at least to the House, Canada now has a riverkeeper for the Ottawa River.

• (1530)

Members may have seen the Canadian riverkeepers broadcast on the CPAC channel.

While the riverkeepers are relatively new, Canadians' awareness of and concern for our rivers is longstanding. I am sure all my colleagues in this place would agree that rivers have a tremendously important role in the history of Canada and always will. They connect us to both our past and our future. Hugh MacLennan wrote the following in 1961:

Incredible though it sounds, the canoe parties which used to leave Montreal in the late eighteenth century were able to paddle nearly all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Their portages were many and exhausting, yet few of them were longer than three miles. So it came about, thanks to the maze of lakes in the Shield, that Canadian waters would be used as an east-west lateral avenue from the St. Lawrence to the Pacific above the American border. That is why it is accurate to say that without the rivers, the early nation could never have survived. The plains and British Columbia would have been fatally severed from the older communities of the Canadian east.

Canada's rivers are Canada's veins, Canada's arteries, Canada's highways, Canada's stories, Canada's history. In fact, they are Canada.

I am sure most members would agree that increased public awareness of rivers and watersheds is a noble objective. We know there is great public interest and willingness in river and lake cleanups. In my riding of York North, for example, people in the community have exerted great efforts on helping to clean up Lake Simcoe and on river conservation projects.

A national rivers day would also increase the public profile of the Canadian heritage rivers system. Established in 1984, the Canadian heritage rivers system is a co-operative program developed and run by the federal, provincial and territorial governments.

The objectives of the program are to give national recognition to Canada's outstanding rivers and to ensure long term management and conservation of their natural, cultural, historical and recreational values. There are currently 38 rivers with a total length of more than 9,000 Kilometres on the Canadian heritage rivers system.

*Private Members' Business*

The Canadian heritage rivers system seeks to give national recognition to the important rivers of Canada and to ensure their future management in such a way that the natural and human heritage which they represent is conserved and interpreted, and the opportunities they possess for recreation and heritage appreciation are realized by residents of and visitors to Canada.

Through the board secretariat and working with other federal agencies, national co-operating and non-governmental organizations, Parks Canada publicly works hard at promoting the system as a national program, a national responsibility.

Canada's rivers are not only keys to the understanding of our country's natural and human history. Virtually all of the nation's fresh water eventually flows through rivers into five different salt water bodies: the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic Oceans, Hudson Bay and into the Gulf of Mexico. Our river system, thereby, cannot be separated from the larger bodies of water into which they flow.

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## ROYAL ASSENT

A message was delivered by the Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Deputy to the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

*And being returned:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate chamber, the Deputy Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bill:

Bill S-23, an act to amend the Customs Act and to make related amendments to other acts—Chapter No. 25.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

### NATIONAL RIVERS DAY

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is wonderful to see royal assent on a bill of the House. It is my wish and dream that perhaps this motion will receive royal assent as a bill as well.

I would like to close with a quotation from T.S. Eliot that speaks beautifully to our propensity to ignore and often neglect nature personified here as the river:

I do not know much about gods; but I think that the river  
Is a strong brown god—sullen, untamed and intractable.  
Patient to some degree, at first recognised as a frontier;  
Useful, untrustworthy, as a conveyor of commerce;  
Then only a problem confronting the builder of bridges.  
The problem once solved, the brown god is almost forgotten  
By the dwellers in cities—even, however, implacable,  
Keeping his seasons and rages, destroyer, reminder  
Of what men choose to forget. Unhonoured, unpropitiated  
By worshippers of the machine, but waiting, watching and waiting.

T.S. Eliot's image of the river as something we have used solely for our own purposes and, distracted by the technological age, failed to honour, is one some may differ with, especially those who work on our rivers or who are more connected to our rivers than many of us are.

Nevertheless, we all need to be reminded of the value of these waterways. Therefore I ask my colleagues: Would an annual day spent celebrating rivers not serve all of us well? The creation of a national rivers day would afford a wonderful opportunity to encourage public awareness and involvement in stream and river management, in cleanups, in river heritage and so much more.

It would represent a powerful step in the protection and preservation of Canadian rivers and watersheds, one that would be organized and implemented by communities and local groups. It would highlight an environmental issue of great concern to Canadians for freshwater rivers are linked to healthy fishery, healthy forests and healthy communities.

It would contribute to the illustration of Canadian history and identity. It would provide an opportunity to bring Canada's river constituencies closer together on tangible projects nationally, regionally and locally. Above all, a national rivers day would be a new source of pride for Canadians.

For these reasons I believe a national day of celebration would be appropriate and well deserved. I look forward to hearing the comments of my colleagues on this motion.

● (1545)

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, my constituency name is a Cree word that means a place of peace, a place where you do not feel threatened or inhibited. It is a beautiful word. My constituency is right on the banks of the Saskatchewan River.

I enjoy rivers. I happen to live not that far from a river, the mighty Saskatchewan. Throughout my growing up years I had the opportunity and privilege to canoe on rivers, lakes and bodies of water throughout our country. There is always something calming and tranquil about being around rivers and streams. I appreciate what the member across the way has done today. I want to thank her for giving me an opportunity to walk down memory lane and have a nostalgic look at what some of those bodies of water have meant to me in my life.

There is some merit in recognizing the value of lakes and waters in our country. These days more than ever we need to be concerned about properly stewarding and sustaining this life-giving water. We should not be squandering water. We should be passing this commodity on to our children.

*Private Members' Business*

In the main, I would be supportive of the motion before us today. However, some questions have to be asked as we proceed.

We have a unique situation with a national rivers day when so many other days and weeks are proclaimed throughout the course of the calendar year. I have a few pages here in respect of the beautiful national parks in Canada. Many of those parks have rivers and bodies of water in them.

I noticed as well that a United States senate resolution introduced in May 1998 is something akin to what is being proposed here. As to the dollar cost I am not sure what is involved in the United States. This is one question I would raise in respect to the motion. It is inevitable when we put something into law. What is the dollar figure? I am not sure what is in the mind of the member. However our neighbour the U.S.A. has a similar resolution.

I am aware of some of the events in our annual calendar. February is black history month and Canadian radio music month. There is nothing in particular for March.

In April there is national wildlife week. Of course we have Good Friday, Easter and Easter Monday. There is also earth day, national volunteer week, world book and copyright day, Canada book day, and international dance day.

In May we have named some more days as well. The calendar is pretty full when we think about it. We are soon going to run out of days, weeks and months. In May we have world press freedom day, national forest week, the international day of families, world telecommunications day, international museums day, Victoria Day of course, aboriginal awareness week and national access awareness week.

These are a lot of good events actually. There is probably no end of other days we could put on our calendar with respect to honouring and recognizing some very good events.

In the month of June there is Canadian environment week and national public week. World environment day is on June 5. National aboriginal day is on June 21. We also have Saint-Jean-Baptiste day, national armed forces day and so on.

On July 1 we celebrate Canada Day. I will not go through July and August. I am skipping some of the lesser known days.

In October there is the international day of older persons, international music day, national family week, Thanksgiving, national citizenship week, persons day, United Nations day and world development information day.

In December there is the international day for the abolition of slavery, the international day of disabled persons, volunteer day for economic and social development, national day of remembrance and action on violence against women, and human rights day. Then we round out the year with Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

There are some very good days. I am sure the House has been enlightened by the plethora of days and weeks.

● (1550)

There have been numerous statements in the House when these days have come up, such as our national flag day, which is very

important. It is the day on which we recognize the very important symbol of our country. Members of parliament typically make statements in respect of it and things are done across the country to honour the day.

There are other days such as natural resources day. I notice that some of these days are sponsored by associations and are not necessarily proclaimed by the House. For example, national forest week is sponsored by the Canadian Forestry Association. It is possible for various groups, agencies and organizations to promote to the Canadian public and the country at large some of these very important ideals and concepts. That is appropriate. The initiative taken by individuals is not a bad thing in respect of these things. We have Elizabeth Fry week and mental illness awareness week.

Fire prevention week is a little special this year because of what has happened in the United States of America and the heroic actions of firefighters laying down their lives in New York.

This year it was more moving and stirring for me when I was presenting medals and awards on behalf of the lieutenant governor in the city of Saskatoon. We hope we never have to use the services of these good people but sometimes they do put their lives on the line. They risk life and limb in carrying out their duties.

Other events include national marine day and national mining week. As I said before some of these are supported and sponsored by industries and not by the House. I appreciate that because I do not think everything has to generate from this place, that this is the fountainhead of all wisdom and initiative in our country. I am appreciative when certain agencies and associations do that kind of thing.

I appreciate the member's effort in bringing forward this motion. I appreciate the waters across our country. I and my party certainly are of the view that from an environmental perspective we need to be protective and watchful. We need to sustain our rivers.

I am a little careful sometimes in making a commitment on these things when I do not know the price tag. If the motion is about various groups across the country promoting it on a voluntary basis by way of newspapers and other publications and stirring up activity in schools, clubs and organizations, then I would be for it. I would be a little more reluctant if it meant big buckets of money and lots of dollars being sent out all over the country when it could be better spent in other areas.

If the motion is about an initiative to play up the importance of rivers, riverways and waters in Canada and maintaining and preserving them, then I certainly support that. I appreciate the motion the member has brought forward.

*Private Members' Business*

•(1555)

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, PC/DR):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to participate in the debate on the motion regarding a national rivers day. I commend my colleague from Ontario for bringing the motion forward. She began her speech by talking about the things that are happening in British Columbia with rivers day. That of course is the province I represent and it is a pleasure to add my voice on behalf of the Coalition.

Within my own riding of Dewdney—Alouette, which encompasses Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge, Mission, Agassiz and Harrison Hot Springs, there are a lot of rivers. Actually the Alouette River is one of the reasons the riding is called Dewdney—Alouette. Many people ask me what the name means. They are uncertain as to where the riding is because it could be almost anywhere in Canada. Some people think I am from Quebec because of the name, Alouette River. It is mainly based on the name of the Alouette River and Alouette Lake that are in the west end of the riding.

With respect to the Alouette River, a number of activities happen on rivers day every year, a number of which I have had the opportunity to participate in. I want to commend the folks who are involved in rivers day in British Columbia, particularly in Maple Ridge in my riding. A lot of fine events happen every year on rivers day.

I would like to spend a few minutes bragging about the Alouette River Management Society. It is referred to as ARMS and was formed in 1993. The primary focus of ARMS at that time was the attempt to increase the base flows from the Alouette dam. This goal was achieved in 1996 when the base flow was increased fivefold. It was quite an accomplishment.

Since then ARMS has become involved in almost all aspects of watershed stewardship, including inventory and monitoring, habitat restoration and lobbying for the protection of aquatic habitat. Its members are extremely active in the community and often attend private properties in order to assist landowners with the implementation of sound stewardship practices on their land. They should be commended for that because they not only believe in stewardship, they practise it. They help others take care of an important resource and part of the community, the rivers in our riding. Of course these things happen throughout B.C. and I believe it would be a good thing if this model were used in other provinces. I am sure there are other societies similar to ARMS.

ARMS has also been able to have a very good relationship with the local media. Quite often we see articles in the local paper about its activities and the good work it is doing. I commend its members for that and because of that they have also been able to educate and inform a considerable number of people very quickly.

ARMS is based at the Rivers Heritage Centre in East Maple Ridge. Its goal and stated purpose is to be a source for community stewardship information and direct advice. Some of the activities at the centre have included training in stream keeping, workshops dealing with sustainable development practices, school field trips and hosting public events.

There is a board of directors and over 300 members in the society. They have done a lot of good work in the riding, in the Maple Ridge

area in particular. I commend them for that. That is very fitting given the topic of the motion before the House today.

The Fraser River is a major river within my riding. It is one of the boundaries of many ridings in the lower mainland area. That is very important not only in my riding but in the surrounding ridings of my colleagues in the lower mainland area and upper Fraser valley in British Columbia.

•(1600)

My colleague who brought this motion forward mentioned some of the other activities that happen in British Columbia on rivers day. It is a way to connect average, everyday citizens with the importance of rivers, and that is a good thing.

We may be debating to have a special day set aside for rivers as a heritage motion one day but it is more than that. It crosses into the environmental side of things as well. Rivers are a very important resource for communities throughout the country. It is incumbent upon us to demonstrate this notion of stewardship whenever we are dealing with our environment, and in particular when we are talking about rivers.

If we do not have organizations like ARMS or individuals involved in the process of taking care of the smaller creeks which feed into larger rivers, or the larger rivers themselves, we will not have sustainable creeks and rivers. The environment could be damaged and all kinds of other unintended consequences could result.

I support my colleague's motion that was brought forward today. There was a lot of talk about the Niagara River a few months ago. Members in the House may recall the particular debate about the north-south flow of that river. It is in my colleague's province of Ontario and she may want to expand on that in her closing comments. In all seriousness it is a good idea to have a day in recognition of our rivers.

My colleague from the Alliance mentioned that we would have all kinds of days that would acknowledge different things and went through a very long list. Should that discourage us from taking the action that would have a positive effect on our communities?

We want to see the kinds of things that I mentioned happen within communities across Canada. Those are the kinds of activities that will enhance and sustain Canada's river system. To have a day to acknowledge rivers is a positive thing because it would draw attention to that area and would hopefully spark other groups getting involved in the same kinds of activities within their local communities.

I commend my colleague on her good motion and I commend the group in my riding, ARMS, on its good work in Maple Ridge.

**Mr. Stephen Owen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to rise in support of the motion put forward by my colleague from York North. We celebrate B.C. Rivers Day annually in British Columbia.

*Private Members' Business*

I recognize and appreciate the comments of members opposite, particularly my colleague from British Columbia, the member for Dewdney—Alouette. His constituency shares the border of the mighty Fraser River that runs through both our constituencies. As it passes my constituency of Vancouver Quadra it also passes West Point Gray and then flows into the Pacific Ocean.

The Fraser River is of particular importance to us as we consider the importance of having a national rivers day. It exemplifies more than any other river in the country the wonderful words from the poem of T. S. Eliot as quoted by my colleague.

We have a T. S. Eliot of sorts in British Columbia. His name is Mark Angelo. Mr. Angelo was the originator and energizer of the concept of B.C. Rivers Day. He was the long time member and leader of the outdoor recreation council of British Columbia. The council brings together dozens of different outdoor recreational environmental groups and tens of thousands of British Columbians who enjoy themselves throughout the year by teaching and instructing us. It helps to protect the outstanding recreational environmental values of British Columbia and has been the leader and energizer of the very successful B.C. Rivers Day.

Indeed the Fraser River has stimulated one of the most interesting governance institutions in our country, the Fraser Basin Council. The Fraser basin and all the tributaries that run into the Fraser River take up approximately 60% of the land base of British Columbia. This makes it a tremendous catchment area. It covers first nations traditional territories and dozens of municipalities. It attracts the important attention of all levels of government, whether municipal, provincial, federal or first nations.

Until very recently the president of the Fraser Council was Iona Campagnolo, a former member of the House. She was later sworn in as lieutenant-governor of British Columbia. She led the Fraser Council as a new form of governance which combined the mandates, the energies and in many ways the resources of all levels of government, whether federal, provincial, municipal or first nations, that are within the catchment area, the watershed of the Fraser River. Those are some of the important issues in British Columbia to focus upon in terms of the wealth of our rivers.

As Canadians we know how lucky we are to live in one of the world's most beautiful countries. How well do we know what makes our country such a unique place? How many of us know that Canada has the world's longest coastline but, more important, holds the globe's greatest reservoir of freshwater? Our hydrographic wealth is such that it is perhaps impossible to determine exactly how many rivers flow in Canada and how many flow into the Fraser River.

I had the opportunity to take part in a ceremony which recognized the restoration and regeneration of spawning in a river through the beautiful Pacific Spirit Regional Park which is in the constituency of Vancouver Quadra. It is part of the traditional lands of the Musqueam Band that worked thousands of hours of volunteer time with the Suzuki Foundation of British Columbia to restore that spawning stream which had lost its vital potential.

• (1605)

The true importance of our rivers cannot be measured in their number or in their kilometres of length, width or cubic metres of

flow. Rivers are part of Canada. They have opened up the country to the successive generations of people who lived here for thousands of years. They have helped us become one of the great success stories of the 20th century.

Whether our ancestors explored this land in birchbark canoes or came here in French caravels or British square-riggers or whether we first saw the splendour of our natural heritage from the airplane that brought us or our forefathers to Canada, we know that rivers are part of the history of Canada and will continue to shape the future of its citizens.

My hon. colleague opposite informed us in a very interesting way of the number of national days that we celebrate in Canada. I am not sure if it was his underlying intent but it certainly had the impact on me of demonstrating what a gap we have in not having a national rivers day in Canada. I thank him for pointing out that oversight and for his support of the motion to make sure we plug that gap.

Perhaps no other country in the world owes so much to its rivers. Perhaps nobody more than this generation of Canadians should want to repay that debt. Our rivers need us today as much as we needed them in times gone by.

That takes us to the most important part of something like a national rivers day. We have celebrated B.C. Rivers Day for over 20 years now. My colleague from Dewdney—Alouette and I have had the great pleasure of taking part in B.C. Rivers Days events. It brings together thousands of people and helps us to become educated, energized and determined to ensure that what has been damaged is restored and what is still healthy remains so for the wealth and health of Canadians.

Our government is very proud of what has been accomplished in favour of our national parks, national historic sites, heritage rivers and marine conservation areas over the past few years. Let me mention a few of the accomplishments.

They are: the appointment of the expert panel on the ecological integrity of Canada's national parks, followed by plans to implement most of the 127 recommendations of the panel; the creation of 7 new national parks, including 3 extraordinary parks in the remote reaches of our Arctic; the approval of 14 new designated Canadian heritage rivers and the nomination of 4 candidate Canadian heritage rivers; the setting aside of pristine spaces in the Gulf Islands of British Columbia, an essential part of Canada's Pacific marine heritage legacy; the inclusion of Middle Island in Point Pelee National Park; and the creation of the new National Parks Act with ecological integrity as the paramount priority.

*Private Members' Business*

Other accomplishments are: the introduction of the new national marine conservation areas legislation; the first marine park in the Saguenay-St. Lawrence region; permanent caps on commercial development in national parks and fixed boundaries for all park communities; 90% of Canada's Rocky Mountains parks designated as wilderness areas; legislation creating the Parks Canada agency; the first national historic sites system plan; the honouring of historic achievements of aboriginal peoples, Canadian women and ethno-cultural communities; the commemoration of over 150 national historic sites across Canada; the creation of urban discovery centres to connect Canada's students to their natural heritage; the involvement of thousands of students in British Columbia on B.C. Rivers Day, which presents the promise of education, energy, awareness and support from our youth across the country for a national rivers day; and the commitment in red book three to expend \$130 million on new national parks and ecological integrity over the next four years.

These many accomplishments of the last few years have been led by the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

The sponsor of the motion has rightly singled out among the many initiatives taken by Parks Canada those that aim specifically to protect and enhance our national rivers system and our marine conservation areas. I believe national rivers day would help immensely to publicize these efforts and build support for them. It would also provide an opportunity to bring Canada's river communities closer together on tangible projects nationally, regionally and locally.

I take great pride and honour in endorsing the motion and I hope all members of the House will give it their full support.

•(1610)

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I too want to commend my colleague from across the way for bringing forward the motion, which I believe was seconded by my New Democratic Party colleague from Burnaby—Douglas.

National days have been mentioned when we sometimes joke about how we are running out of days. There are 365 days in a year and we are starting to run out of days that we can use to name something to honour, whatever it may be. I think we need to reflect on that. As much as it seems that it is just one of those things we do all the time, I have to admit that I find myself paying special attention now when I hear whatever particular day it is. The fact that it gets additional public recognition makes a difference as to how we look at it.

I think of March 8, international women's day, and the impact it has had on me. I was nominated for the first time for my party on March 8. There are numerous days like that which cause us to think and reflect on things that are very important and near and dear to us.

Our national rivers system is near and dear to all of us and unfortunately we sometimes do not see that. There are a good number of Canadians who never so much as get near the water. They are either just travelling down the highway or heading off on a sidewalk to work. Some people never get the opportunity to be by the rivers or, if they are very lucky, to be on a boat or a canoe on the river system. This is something that needs to be experienced.

I have had that pleasure within the riding of Churchill and pretty much most of Manitoba, both on land and water. There is a tremendous number of waterways and rivers within the riding of Churchill.

I will make a point of commenting on the Bloodvein River which is one of the heritage rivers mentioned previously by my colleague. I did not know about the heritage rivers system until I became a member of parliament and was reading about the Bloodvein River. I was truly impressed. The more I studied the heritage rivers system and the Bloodvein River flowing through Manitoba and Ontario, I recognized the impact it had on the Bloodvein First Nation and how they worked with the river. To this day they take great pride in the Bloodvein River and its tourism potential. For anyone listening, it is a fantastic canoeing river and a truly enjoyable experience.

As well, in the northern part of my riding there is the Grass River system. This is another fantastic canoe trip with waterfalls along the way. It is a wonderful system within the riding and truly another enjoyable tourist attraction.

Water, as a river or a lake, has the potential to be very soothing and very powerful, like the rivers in our country. They are very peaceful, but when the floods come they literally have the power to rip a community apart. The waters need to be respected and we need to show that respect environmentally. We can do good for the rivers and the rivers can do good for us.

I would like to comment on how we tap our rivers for other sources of industry. In my riding we have the great opportunity of hydro developments. The hydro projects within the Nelson River system in Manitoba have brought a lot of good opportunities and a lot of prosperity to the communities around them as well as to the province of Manitoba, but there have been problems as a result of hydro projects on the rivers. I tie that to the fact that we have to respect the river so we are not destroying what is there, so we are protecting it for communities around it.

I appreciate my colleague bringing forward the motion. I know the motion is not votable but it certainly has garnered the support of members here today.

•(1615)

I would hope that members will all continue to show that support in some manner so we can go ahead, whether the motion is votable or not, at some other point to officially name a national rivers day. It would cause Canadians to reflect upon the importance of our river system, the benefits to us, and the important need for our country in general.

**Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I too wish to give my support to the motion in favour of a national rivers day.

*Private Members' Business*

There are indeed many reasons to support this initiative. Many of them have been touched upon by those who have spoken before me, but I too am motivated personally by the conviction that too many Canadians have only a vague idea of the natural splendour and unique character of our rivers. A national rivers day would go a long way to helping us better appreciate this facet of our country.

For example, in Canada there are now 38 heritage rivers. More are being added to the system each year. Among rivers that already have been designated and nominated from east to west we find the following.

In Newfoundland there is the Main River, one of the last wilderness rivers on the rock, and the Bay du Nord River, where countless brook trout, ouananiche and Atlantic salmon wait. On Prince Edward Island there is the Hillsborough River, which begins on the south shore of the island and winds inland through rich farm country to its sources near the white sand beaches of the north shore, and the Montague—Three Rivers, an unspoiled intermixture of fresh and salt water marshes, beaches, forests and communities interwoven by this river system.

In Nova Scotia there is the famous Margaree River, whose clear, icy waters and deep pools provide a haven for spawning Atlantic salmon and trout, and the Shelburne River where we can see the last old growth stands of white pine, red spruce and hemlock in Nova Scotia. In New Brunswick there is the St. Croix River linking shimmering lakes to the surging tidewaters of the Bay of Fundy. There are also the Sackville River and the Upper Restigouche River, where the salmon is still king. In Quebec there is the Jacques-Cartier River which cuts into the magnificent valley of the Jacques-Cartier and splits the spruce covered plateau of the Laurentians.

In Ontario the French and Mattawa Rivers formed a vital link in the fur trade route from Lachine, near Montreal, to Lake Superior and the northwest. St. Mary's River is an historic waterway which begins tumultuously, tumbling over rapids, where native people traded and fished for thousands of years and on past the power dams, factories and urban parks of the twin cities of Sault Ste. Marie in Ontario and Michigan. Lock and canal building started here as early as 1798, and in 1895 the Canadian lock was the most advanced in the world.

Also in Ontario there is the historic Rideau waterway, winding 202 kilometres from Kingston to Ottawa, the oldest continuously operating canal system in North America. There is the Missinabi River, a silver thread of unspoiled wilderness, was used by the Ojibway, the Cree and later the voyageurs as the main trade route linking Lake Superior with James Bay. There is the Detroit River, passing through the largest metropolitan area, Detroit-Windsor, along the world's longest undefended border. The Grand River is in the heartland of southern Ontario. The Humber River is in the backyard of more than four million people. The Boundary Waters—Voyageur waterway is a paddler's paradise flowing through rapids, waterfalls, gorges, cliffs, beaver dams and innumerable lakes. The Thames River is the most southerly major river in Canada, flowing 273 kilometres through the cities of London and Chatham to Lake St. Clair.

In Manitoba there is the Bloodvein River, where red ochre pictographs of bison, human figures, hands and power symbols

grace overhanging rock faces along a course that slashes through the Canadian Shield, slipping and sliding over 100 sets of rapids on its journey to Lake Winnipeg.

Also in Manitoba there is the Hayes River, which served as a route for Manitoba's first nations long before Europeans arrived and later became the main route from York Factory on Hudson Bay to the interior of western Canada for fur traders, settlers and explorers from 1670 until 1870. There is the Seal River, named for the harbour seals, normally marine creatures that are found up to 200 kilometres upstream from Hudson Bay.

In Saskatchewan there is the Churchill River, a succession of shimmering lakes interconnected by rapids, waterfalls and short stretches of river. It was the main water passage to the Canadian northwest for early explorers.

● (1620)

The Clearwater River in Saskatchewan and Alberta was the main route to the rich fur country of the north. The Fraser River in British Columbia is British Columbia's largest river, is the longest river in the Canadian Heritage river system and is the greatest salmon river in the world.

It seems, as usual, that we have all the greatest and the best references both in the east and west to the salmon rivers. However I am sure that for both sections of the country the feeling of pride in their salmon is well deserved. Fortunately we do not have to have a contest between our Atlantic and west coast salmon so the issue stays with the rivers.

There are the Athabaska, Kicking Horse and North Saskatchewan Rivers.

In the Yukon there is the Alsek River. Then there is the beautiful South Nahanni River, which is in the Arctic in the Northwest Territories.

I will leave the balance of the time to the member who most deserves that time, for her to explain a little further why she has come forward with such an excellent motion and such an excellent idea.

● (1625)

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all of the members who took part in the debate this afternoon on this motion. I appreciate hearing the words of the member from the Canadian Alliance Party from Saskatoon-Wanuskewin.

To address his concern about cost, it is a simple matter of declaring this as a national rivers day. What we have to think about are the wonderful opportunities in our communities, for example, around community economic development. There are a lot of festivals, fairs and opportunities for local merchants to be involved with the community in the clean up, promotion and celebration of our rivers.

To the member of the PC/DR coalition from Dewdney—Alouette, I was very heartened to hear about the work of his local community organization. It is not only just the national rivers of Canada that we would be celebrating, we would also be celebrating the work of our community members.

*Private Members' Business*

To the member whose motion this originally was, the member for Vancouver—Quadra, I would like to thank him very much for giving me the opportunity to move the motion in the House. The Fraser Basin Council, of which he spoke, is a very important opportunity that looks at how people, different levels of government and first nations can all work together. Our rivers in Canada connect us through our activities and the projects that we undertake to preserve them.

I would like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for her wonderful description of some of the major rivers in Canada. I appreciate her fine support and would like to mention to the House how much we miss her on the environment committee now that she has her new duties.

To the NDP member for Churchill, as a member who represents a northern community, it is so vitally important to remember the contribution that the northern rivers have made to our communities in the south through the advances of the early explorers. Imagine setting out on a vast expedition onto one of those northern rivers. What an exciting, exhilarating experience that must have been. It is so important to our history, to the economic development of our country and indeed to our natural heritage.

It is often said that people always remembers the first time they see Lake Superior. I grew up on Lake Superior. It is an incredible expanse of water. It is an image that never leaves one's mind. A variation on this is what the writer Lynn Noel said:

The first river you paddle runs through the rest of your life. It bubbles up in pools and eddies to remind you who you are.

I am sure those of my colleagues who have paddled would agree.

The member for Churchill talked about the soothing qualities of our rivers. I remember as a child the creeks and the rivers that I paddled on and their cool, quiet shores with their leafy vegetation crowding the water's edge. There are many times in this place and related to this place that I look to that image for some soothing and calming.

The same rivers that have so informed our lives and speak to the very soul of us as a nation can inform the lives of others. Therefore, let us celebrate them. Let us once a year talk about rivers, clean up rivers and float down rivers. Let us swim in them, paint them, read by them, plant trees by them, sing by them, dance by them, learn from them and enjoy them. Let us honour them as they honour us.

I have included some of my favourite words from poets to best describe our understanding and feelings of rivers. A favourite prime minister of mine, Prime Minister Trudeau, wrote in "The Exhaustion and Fulfillment: The Ascetic in a Canoe" the following:

I know a man whose school could never teach him patriotism, but who acquired that virtue when he felt in his bones the vastness of his land, and the greatness of those who founded it.

● (1630)

I believe that formal recognition of a national rivers day can help people come to such a place and it is a journey we should well consider. Unfortunately, the motion is not a votable motion. Therefore, I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to declare this a votable motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Is there unanimous consent of the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**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.

It being 4.30 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 4.30 p.m.)





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