



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 137 • NUMBER 150 • 1st SESSION • 37th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, February 27, 2002

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 27, 2002

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

[English]

The Speaker: As is our practice on Wednesday we will now sing O Canada, and we will be led by the hon. member for Crowfoot.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

CANADIAN MUSIC WEEK

Mr. Tony Tirabassi (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I share in the celebration of our music industry. February 27 to March 3 is Canadian Music Week and every year the creators, broadcasters and entrepreneurs involved in our music industry get together to share visions, celebrate successes and lay the groundwork for addressing the new challenges they face.

For many, names like Alanis Morissette, Marie-Jo Thériot, Barenaked Ladies, Céline Dion, Nickelback, Sarah McLachlan, Garou and other superstars define Canadian music. Canadian music as a whole is a great success story with Canadian songwriters and musicians from all corners of the country playing an important role capturing and reflecting the diverse Canadian experience.

I congratulate all participants in Canadian Music Week. Let us not forget that now more than ever it is important that all Canadians support our Canadian musicians by enjoying their music.

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• (1405)

MATTIE MCCULLOUGH

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this last week Red Deer, Alberta and Canada lost a truly great woman. Mattie McCullough died at age 92 and her great significance to our community was recognized last Saturday.

Mattie had many accomplishments in her life. She was a recipient of the Order of Canada, a long-time champion of education, president of the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association, honorary president of the Canadian Angus Association, holder of an

honorary doctor of laws degree from the University of Alberta, and many more. Most important was that Mattie was so humble, always willing to listen, and always providing a sharp analysis of everything political. At age 86 she even enrolled in a university class.

I first met Mattie when her Angus bull chased me and my biology class out of their pasture. From then on we became the best of friends.

Mattie was always excited about education. She mastered the computer and could not believe the new information she could get from the Internet.

Our community and Canada lost a true Canadian and we will miss Mattie McCullough.

* * *

2002 WINTER OLYMPICS

Ms. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, millions of Canadians followed our Olympic athletes on their road to gold. Thanks to the wonderful power of TV and radio, Canadians from coast to coast watched and listened as the CBC broadcast the thrilling performance of these extraordinary Olympians.

Our public broadcasting network deserves the highest accolades for its outstanding coverage. The CBC gave us a dazzling show of athletes performing at their finest hour, and by doing so drew the country together in a spirit of passion and national pride. It was a special time for all of us.

I congratulate the producers, the directors, the technicians and the announcers who made it all possible, who brought the Olympic Winter Games into our homes and entrenched them into our hearts. Just as we have every reason to be proud of our athletes, so too we take pride in the CBC which truly showed us what Canada is all about and what we are made of. I thank the CBC.

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2002 WINTER OLYMPICS

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a great pleasure to stand in the House today and congratulate the tremendous Olympic performance of our Canadian athletes, and in particular to acknowledge the contribution of Cape Breton's own Al MacInnis.

S. O. 31

As the senior statesman of the men's hockey team, Al's on ice performance was equalled only by his poise and leadership. Al has long been recognized for his tremendous skill but more so as a consummate team player. The pride and joy of Port Hood, Cape Breton epitomizes all that is good about sport and represents the truth that in our great country, Canada, dreams can come true.

I am certain that all Canadians are very proud of the entire Olympic contingent, but let it be known that none are more proud of their own than the people of Cape Breton.

* * *

[Translation]

2002 WINTER OLYMPICS

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, the Olympic flame went out, marking the end of the Salt Lake City winter games and the return of our Canadian athletes.

Among them, Tania Vincent and Amélie Goulet-Nadon, two young athletes from Laval, proudly came home with the bronze medal they won in the 3,000 metre short track speed skating relay. Tania Vincent had already won a bronze medal at the Nagano games, in Japan, in the same event.

Pascal Richard, who grew up in Laval, finished 15th in the skeleton event.

I join my fellow citizens of Laval in congratulating our Canadian athletes who, throughout the Salt Lake City games, made us share their Olympic dream.

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[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in less than three months two RCMP officers in Manitoba have been shot, one of them fatally. Just last week the home of another Winnipeg police officer was firebombed in a suspected gang related act of intimidation. In both shootings we know that some of the suspects were wanted for parole violations.

While criminals in Canada are increasingly more willing to use violence against our police officers, our solicitor general continues to accelerate the process of early release that will see more dangerous offenders released from his club fed style prisons. This not only defies common sense but it puts police at an unacceptable risk.

In order to restore public confidence in our justice system and to give police the support they need the Liberal government must act immediately to require criminals to earn their parole and to restore badly needed funding to our frontline police officers.

* * *

●(1410)

FILM INDUSTRY

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last night fans of the Canadian film industry were swept off their feet with the debut of *Men With Brooms* at the Museum of Civilization. Featuring Canadian film stars Leslie Nielsen and Paul Gross, *Men With*

Brooms has proven that our film industry is a strong player on the international stage.

I am equally delighted to congratulate the National Film Board and Winnipeg animator Cordell Barker for his second Oscar nomination for the short animated film entitled *Strange Invaders*. In 1989 Cordell Barker received his first Oscar nomination for the hilarious short film *The Cat Came Back*. This latest accolade amounts to the 66th Oscar nomination for the National Film Board over the past 63 years.

I am sure that all Canadians will join me in wishing good luck to the National Film Board and Cordell Barker as we await the Oscar award winners on March 24.

* * *

[Translation]

KIM ST-PIERRE

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my Bloc Québécois colleagues and myself, I wish to congratulate Kim St-Pierre, the goaltender for our women's hockey team, which won the gold medal at the Salt Lake City winter Olympics.

Kim St-Pierre, who is from Châteauguay, is the perfect example of an athlete who makes sacrifices to achieve her goal and who believes in her ability to reach the ultimate objective, an Olympic medal.

At the age of 3, Kim was already enrolled in figure skating. Later on, she discovered hockey and decided to make the necessary efforts to succeed in that sport. Kim was also an excellent softball and soccer player. Our gold medal winner wants to resume her kinesitherapy classes at the university as soon as possible. This will enable her to use her experience and to provide practical advice to our future athletes.

We are proud of her talent, her courage and her determination. Through her perseverance, she is showing that it is possible to achieve our goals and to fulfill our dreams. she is a distinguished ambassador for all Quebecers.

Bravo Kim!

* * *

[English]

MEDICAL HALL OF FAME

Mr. Joe Fontana (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we are honouring eight very special Canadians as they are welcomed into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame. These leaders and pioneers have contributed greatly to medicine in the areas of muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis, cancer treatment, cell biology, neuropsychology, disease treatment and genetic research.

The Canadian Medical Hall of Fame and museum is a national organization that was established in 1993 in London, Ontario to pay tribute to the Canadian men and women who mark the history of medicine and to inspire the next generation. To date the organization has honoured 49 of Canada's medical heroes.

I congratulate these eight laureates for their remarkable achievements. Their contributions have not only impacted the well-being of Canadians but have made an impact across the globe, and we thank them for their contributions. They too are the gold medallists of the world.

* * *

HARRY RANKIN

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute today to Harry Rankin, long-time Vancouver civic politician, lawyer and social activist who died yesterday at the age of 81.

Harry Rankin served the people of Vancouver and British Columbia well. He was a member of city council in Vancouver, first elected in 1966 and retiring after almost 30 years in 1993.

In his career he always spoke out on behalf of what he called the little guy. He was also a respected lawyer who had a reputation of going to bat in court for the underprivileged, for the labour movement and for civil liberties issues. He was a bencher of the law society as well.

My colleague from Vancouver East is a former colleague of his from Vancouver city council. Another former colleague from city council, fellow councillor Pat Wilson, said Harry Rankin "dominated Vancouver city politics for almost 30 years and at the peak of his influence there was no more articulate, passionate or effective champion of ordinary people at any level of politics".

Harry Rankin was a great Canadian and certainly all of us will mourn his passing. We extend our condolences to his wife Connie Fogal and to his family.

* * *

•(1415)

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today the Auditor General of Canada completed a one time audit of the Canadian Wheat Board. In her report she makes several recommendations that must not fall upon deaf ears.

However she was not permitted to examine all Canadian Wheat Board activities. Her audit was limited to the study of management practices. The auditor general was not permitted to examine the cost of the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly to farmers or the role and mandate of the board.

When will the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board commit to allowing the auditor general to conduct regular and full audits of the Canadian Wheat Board in order to allow western Canadian farmers to know how much the system is costing them?

S. O. 31

In Ontario the wheat producers have been required to market their grain through the Ontario Wheat Board. However in the last few years Ontario farmers have been allowed to market 20% of their own grain crop. Soon Ontario farmers will be allowed to market a third of their own crop outside of the board and eventually they will be allowed to market their entire production.

When will the minister, who is supposed to be representing western Canadian interests, give western Canadian farmers the same opportunity?

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[Translation]

GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT

Mr. Gérard Binet (Frontenac—Mégantic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois loves to stir up panic among seniors about the guaranteed income supplement. As soon as the report by the Standing Committee on Human Resource Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities was tabled, I took the initiative of informing seniors on their entitlement to these benefits.

My office received more than 425 calls, and after investigation it was found that only 5% of cases needed to be harmonized.

The Bloc Québécois loves to perpetuate myths among the population by playing on their vulnerability and insecurity, merely for political gain. This is unacceptable.

* * *

TAXATION

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, more and more Quebecers are realizing, with indignation, the unjust tax imbalance that is happening year after year between Ottawa and the provinces.

The Minister of Finance, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Prime Minister, all say this is a myth, that it does not exist. This is a fine illustration of the traditional hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil, of people who do not want to hear anything, see anything and most particularly say anything.

But this reality does exist and we have clearly demonstrated its existence. The reality is that the federal government has recorded an increase in receipts of some 45% since 1994-95. The reality is that the federal government has recorded \$13.4 billion in surplus funds in the first nine months of the year.

The reality of the provinces and of Quebec, however, is far less rosy. The sick are the first ones to fall victim to this scandalous situation.

Yet on the other side of this House, there they are closing their eyes, covering their ears and, if they do open their mouths, it is to distort reality.

Oral Questions

[English]

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during a Team Canada trip last week some of the premiers presented a letter to the Prime Minister opposing ratification of the Kyoto protocol. I was sorry to see that the premier of my home province was among them.

After our farmers have faced four years of drought, I would expect the premiers to show more concern about global warming. How many wells have to run dry each summer? How many lakes and rivers have to die? How many children and seniors have to suffer from respiratory diseases before Premier Hamm will consider our environment a top priority?

I urge all Canadians to press the premiers to support the Kyoto protocol so we can all breathe a little easier.

* * *

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, today British Columbia's forestry minister joined the chorus of softwood stakeholders calling for a united Canadian stand against the American attack on our softwood lumber industry. For months politicians, foresters and manufacturers have called for the Minister for International Trade to bring all of the stakeholders together to establish a single united position.

Although the U.S. is well organized and well prepared, we have never established our own Canadian bargaining stance. Instead each region has established its own direction. Never did the phrase united we stand, divided we fall apply so aptly. It is hard to imagine how an outcome that will be satisfactory to all regions can be concluded if all the stakeholders have not been brought together by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Even though there are only a few days left, I urge the minister to gather together all stakeholders to develop that one specific Canadian position for our bargaining stance.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in a report titled "Pain Without Gain" Canadian manufacturers and exporters warned today that ratifying Kyoto could lead to the loss of 450,000 jobs. Does the Prime Minister accept these figures and if so, how could he dream of ratifying the Kyoto protocol?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not accept those figures.

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister does not believe the former cabinet minister he himself appointed as head of the CBC.

Perhaps he will believe the government of the province most affected by Kyoto.

Alberta estimates that Kyoto could cost Canada 2% to 3% of GDP. That is \$25 billion to \$40 billion by the year 2010.

Does the Prime Minister believe Alberta's numbers and if so, how can the Prime Minister support the Kyoto protocol?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government wants to implement the Kyoto protocol and we have negotiated to improve it. We are still asking to have clean energy exports of Canada recognized. We are talking with the provincial governments at this time to reach an agreement between all the partners. We have to make sure that we make a contribution to ensure that the climate of the world improves in the years to come.

Mr. John Reynolds (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister does not believe Perrin Beatty and Ralph Klein, then perhaps he will believe Industry Canada.

Somebody said they are Tories. That may be true, but let me talk about Industry Canada and what it has to say. Industry Canada's studies show that Kyoto could cost Canada up to \$75 billion per year and lead to the loss of 4% of oil, agriculture and chemical jobs, 9% of natural gas jobs and 11% of electrical jobs.

Is shutting down the economy of Canada the Prime Minister's legacy for Canada?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is at this moment some discussion among the provincial governments and the federal government to look at all the facts.

There is the reality too that climate change is causing a lot of problems, for example to the climate in western Canada. Farmers there might pay a price in the future if we do not do anything about it.

We have to look at both sides of the problem. As usual, we will look at all the facts and make a decision in the best interests of all Canadians.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the only global warming is in the Liberal caucus these days.

[Translation]

Manufacturers and exporters have sounded the alarm. According to them, Kyoto could cost us 450,000 jobs. Even the slowest Liberal, such as the Minister of National Defence—if it were explained to him several times—should be able to realize the catastrophic effect this could have on our economy.

Why is this government so determined to ratify this dangerous protocol, without even getting the provinces' consent?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, regarding the comments from the opposition on party unity, we know that this party will soon have its fourth or fifth leader in eight years, so we have nothing to learn from them. There is also another party that has ended up back there in the corner.

Oral Questions

I would like to say that we are giving this problem serious thought. This is a very serious problem that concerns all Canadians. We have nothing to gain by trying to frighten people when we do not have all of the facts. When we do have all of the facts, we will make the right—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona.
[*English*]

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this caucus stopped fighting a long time ago. That is another thing the government stole from us.

It is not just Canadian businesses and provinces that are worried about Kyoto. It is the government's own figures. Industry Canada's 2001 report shows that to comply with Kyoto could cost up to \$75 billion and lead to massive layoffs in the oil, gas, agriculture, electricity and chemical sectors.

Does the Minister of Industry stand by his own department's figures?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has made clear, we are looking at all the perspectives in this issue and we will find the answer that is best for Canada.

The narrow view of the opposition looking only at one part of the problem just will not do. We are talking about the future of the planet, what is good for farmers and what is good for all Canadians. We will uncover the true facts and we will make the right decision.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the past, the Prime Minister tried to portray himself as the little guy from Shawinigan. He proudly told us how he defended justice and was close to the people. Today—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

• (1425)

The Speaker: Order, please. We must be able to hear the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie's question.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe: Soon, they are going to get up and say "*and you too, my son*".

Now that many of those with whom he claimed to be so close are seniors and hoping to receive the guaranteed income supplement which the government denied them, the Prime Minister is abandoning them. His government would rather help billionaires skip out on taxes than look after the country's poorest seniors.

In the name of justice, will the Prime Minister recognize the full responsibility of his government and see to it personally that these people receive the \$3.2 billion they—

The Speaker: The right hon. the Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I thank the leader of the Bloc Québécois for showing clearly that, in fact, we are still looking out for the less fortunate in

our society. Seniors and others in need have been a concern of this government for a very long time.

Those who qualify for benefits must receive them, and they will do so in accordance with the legislation passed by Parliament.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that being true, he must use the same logic.

When citizens owe the government money, the government goes back many years in collecting the money they owe. But when the shoe is on the other foot, when it is this government which owes money, and to the least fortunate members of society to boot, there is an 11-month cut-off.

Is the Prime Minister going to hand over all the money he owes, all the money of which the least fortunate members of society are being deprived, this \$3.2 billion, and make it retroactive, as he did with society's richest members? That is the question.

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will know that as part of the guaranteed income supplement, there has always been a provision for retroactivity. The supplement is determined and based on annual income.

I would also note that this particular retroactive principle is the same as that which is used in the Quebec family allowance.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during my recent tour of Quebec, I met hundreds of elderly people who are alone, poor and needy, and for whom the guaranteed income supplement is really not a luxury, but a necessity.

I am asking the Minister of Human Resources Development to give up her technical explanations and to answer a simple question: Do these people not deserve our compassion? The Bloc Québécois wants to help them. Does the minister want to help them too?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they deserve our support. That is why I am very glad to tell the House of the things we have done to ensure that Canadians have the information they need to participate in this program.

We sent out recently 4.5 million information inserts in old age security and tax forms. We have touched 250,000 people by providing them with information about the program. We have posters distributed in nursing homes, seniors organizations and with anti-poverty groups.

The hon. member himself congratulated me yesterday for simplifying the forms and making sure that Canadians have the information they need to participate in the program.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister, who is a man of my age, and whose riding is adjacent to mine, knows the sacrifices that these elderly people have made. Now, these seniors are trusting that we will help them.

Can the Prime Minister accept that these elderly, who are among society's poorest and who were treated unjustly, are not receiving their due? How can he accept to refuse to give them full retroactivity?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, working together to make sure that all of our constituents have the information they need to participate in the guaranteed income supplement is very important to us all.

The hon. member for Frontenac—Mégantic in his S. O. 31 talked about things that he is specifically doing in his riding to touch his constituents. I would hope the hon. member would take note of that and do the same.

* * *

MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is no point in beating a dead horse or beating around the bush. Canadians have lost confidence in the defence minister. Parliamentarians have lost confidence in the defence minister. Worse still, Canada's military has lost confidence in the defence minister from the front lines in Afghanistan to the most senior level of defence staff.

Why does the defence minister not put an end to this mess, do the right thing and resign his cabinet position today?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the cabinet, the Liberal Party and I have confidence in the abilities and the dedication of the Minister of National Defence.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for Canadians it is no longer a question of whether the defence minister lied or whether he is incompetent. It has gone way beyond that.

It is clear that the defence minister is not up to the task. He cannot go on cowering in the cabinet corner while the lives of military men and women are at risk from the front lines in Afghanistan all the way up to the senior defence level.

For the sake of their safety and Canada's honour, will the defence minister resign today?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. At the committee the member representing the NDP said clearly that he could not agree with the proposition that the Minister of Finance lied to the House of Commons.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: The right hon. member for Calgary Centre.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR): Now there is a Freudian slip, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We would not want any more Freudian slips. We will hear a question of privilege after question period. We do not have them during question period.

The right hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Right Hon. Joe Clark: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

Briefing notes for the minister revealed that the government was considering an American plan to put weapons into space. The memo also suggested to the minister that if he was asked, that he should keep the information secret, which should be easy for the minister.

Could the minister tell the House if Canada is having any discussions about space weapons with the United States, and do these discussions include missile defence systems?

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is opposed to the weaponization of space. Having said that, we do agree with surveillance programs, surveillance from space of earth, surveillance of space. We have been into those kinds of programs for many years and we have had discussions with respect to that.

With respect to ballistic missile defence, it has been said often that we have not been officially asked by the United States. We are following the progress of this matter. No decision has been made by that country and no decision has been made by this country.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, my question then is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Canada has long worked for a convention on the non-weaponization of outer space within the conference on disarmament. The defence briefing notes confirm that the United States is actively pursuing plans for space weapons in the next decade.

Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell the House if a joint working group has been struck between the Departments of Foreign Affairs and National Defence to establish a common Canadian position on the weaponization of space? Could he also tell us when this issue will be brought before parliament and when a clear position will be stated in parliament by one of the two ministers?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the right hon. member for his question because, as the Minister of National Defence stated very clearly, Canada's position has always been against the weaponization of space and we will maintain that position.

Surely the hon. member does not wish to suggest that we should not have conversations with our American allies. It is exactly in conversations that we can bring Canadian policies to bear. We will continue to insist with the Americans that we are against the weaponization of space. We will bring forward Canadian interests and Canadian values in our conversations with our American allies.

*Oral Questions***LUMBER INDUSTRY**

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister said that the U.S. president was looking into the problem of the softwood lumber dispute. However the clock is ticking and on March 21 the U.S. department of commerce will be issuing a decision on what duties the Canadian lumber industry may have to pay.

What assurances did the Prime Minister receive that real progress is being made to work out an acceptable solution prior to the March 21 deadline?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I first want to say that I made a little mistake a minute ago in confusing two good ministers.

I talked with the president yesterday and I was informed that some discussions would be going on today and that there will be other discussions later in the week.

The administration in the United States knows very well that we are very preoccupied with this problem. I say again that I am hopeful that there will be a resolution of this dispute within the next month.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would just remind the Prime Minister that he was preoccupied with this problem in November when he said that the problem would be fixed by Christmas. Now he is saying that he is hopeful a solution can be found.

I want to remind the House that in British Columbia alone 40% of its provincial GDP comes from forest industry exports. Tens of thousands of jobs are at stake. Nationally, this is a \$10 billion export business and it faces devastation as of March 21 if something is not done.

Will the Prime Minister make a personal trip to Washington to intervene and make the case for this very important Canadian industry?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I talk regularly with the president. I do not think he needs to see my physical presence. He knows about the problem. He knows we have a free trade agreement. He is supposed to be a free trader. He wants our resources in the United States. I keep telling him that we are happy to have free trade but not on a selective basis. We need to have free trade in all the resources of Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

EQUALIZATION PAYMENTS

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is preparing to consider, for purposes of calculating equalization payments, the Statistics Canada estimates on the value of residential capital stocks. Using this new figure will deprive Quebec, starting this year, of \$500 million in equalization payments.

Whereas the protocol for calculating the equalization payments terminates in March 2004, what is the Minister of Finance's

justification for again, as was the case for the Canada social transfer, unilaterally changing the rules in midstream?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has been no unilateral change. This change was made by Statistics Canada.

I have made an offer to the provinces, one accepted by Minister Marois, for their public servants to meet with Statistics Canada staff to discuss this. At the same time, we offered to spread the payments out over five years, if this discussion does lead to payments.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the minister has surplus money coming out of his ears. He has no need to add any more by destabilizing the public accounts of Quebec.

Does the Minister of Finance not find it indecent that his departmental officials insist on using this source of data, whereas it would have been very simple, and not prejudicial to Quebec, to have used the true market value of the housing available in the municipalities, a value that was even proposed by Gérard-D. Lévesque in 1987, who referred to the predators of federalism?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are two kinds of changes, changes to methodology and changes in the order of things.

For example, this time the economic downturn in Canada has meant a drop in equalization payments for Quebec.

In the same vein, in 1999 Quebec received an unexpected cheque for \$1.3 billion from the Canadian government.

* * *

[English]

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, there is one air carrier model in the world right now that is showing profit and it is low cost, short haul, no frills air carriers: Ryan Air of Ireland, WestJet of Canada and Southwest of the United States. In fact WestJet was the only profitable carrier in Canada last year.

Did the transport minister do an impact study on the government's \$24 air tax on low cost, short haul carriers prior to the introduction of the December 10 budget?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I explained yesterday, the government brought the air security charge in reflecting the costs that were to be incurred. At the same time, in discussions with the Department of Transport, a number of airports in areas where those security charges or the services would not be required were exempt.

The fact is that there will be a revision of these charges when we see how low factors are which obviously will give us an opportunity to examine the whole situation.

• (1440)

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, WestJet's profit is four passengers per flight. The minister did not give a clear yes or no answer. Did the government do a study or not?

Oral Questions

The finance minister seems more interested in his government's bottom line than in the fact that only one air carrier in this country is showing a profit and the government is going to put it six feet under.

Why is the government introducing a massive tax grab without having done one single impact study on it? Seven air carriers have died on this government's watch. Why is it so anxious to create an eighth death?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the government sought to do and was asked to do was to make sure that confidence could be re-established following the terrible events on September 11.

The government has stated that in the fall there will be a complete review of the charge to see how low factors have been affected and to see exactly how much money is coming in versus the expenses going out. We have made that undertaking to members of the finance committee. We have made it in extensive discussions with members of our caucus and with the Minister of Transport, and we intend to carry through on that.

[Translation]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the last federal budget, the Minister of Finance announced a new \$2.2 billion tax to improve airport security.

Yesterday, officials stated that no sectoral or regional impact studies had been done prior to this tax being imposed. What is more, stakeholders are unanimously opposed to this tax, which is devastating for airlines, the tourism industry and the future of the regions.

Given the difficulties that airlines are experiencing, particularly in the regions, how is it that the Minister of Finance could go ahead and blindly impose a tax without assessing its impact beforehand?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, following the terrible events of September 11, there was a drop in air travel, and it was very important that the government act as quickly as possible to restore confidence, which we did.

It is our intention to study the effects, and certainly this fall, we will see if the entire system needs to be reviewed.

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what are we to make of the comments of the Minister of Finance, who told us confidently that his tax on air transportation would have no negative impact, when they were not based on anything, and on no serious measure?

Is the Minister of Finance not really just bluffing with this sort of behaviour?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here in Canada—and in the United States as well—security taxes were imposed, which was very important in light of the events of September 11.

Now that the economy is starting to return to normal and air travel is starting to bounce back, we certainly intend to review the system again in the fall.

[English]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the horror stories about the lack of accountability and the secrecy that the government wraps itself in never ends.

Yesterday, before the health committee, the Auditor General of Canada admitted that she was not allowed to examine the spending of a minister's political staff even if there were concerns that they might be using tax dollars to buy drugs.

Will the President of the Treasury Board commit to immediately bringing forward legislation that closes this loophole and gives the auditor general the power to expose misspending of ministers and their political staff?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an issue which the member for St. Albert has raised before.

We issued guidelines to all departments on how to interpret the legislation, the Access to Information Act as well as the Privacy Act.

Not only is spending by ministers and their staff accessible, but individual privacy is protected as well. This was the nature of the guidelines issued to each minister.

[English]

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we cannot see a minister's expense account unless he or she releases it. The public cannot see the Prime Minister's agenda and the government has its own lawyers suing each other in order to enhance cabinet secrecy.

The auditor general pointed out this problem in the face of questions about the industry minister and his staff using tax dollars to further his bid for the Liberal leadership.

Will the Minister of Industry join his colleague, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and pledge to release his expenses and those of his staff?

● (1445)

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear. The spending of ministers and their staff is always accessible under the Access to Information Act.

But the Privacy Act must also be respected. We are basing this opinion on a Supreme Court decision. We must also respect the rule of law in this country.

*Oral Questions**[English]***FISHING INDUSTRY**

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, some scientists are reporting that cod stocks in the Gulf of St. Lawrence are showing no signs of improvement. As a result, representatives from the P.E.I. fishing industry are very concerned and they are expecting no cod fishery this year.

Could the minister give the House his views in terms of the scientific report? Could he also inform the House and the industry whether there will or will not be a moratorium on gulf cod this year?

[Translation]

Hon. Robert Thibault (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I wish to thank the member and all my colleagues in the gulf area for their interest in this matter.

[English]

He will recognize that it would be premature for myself at this time to make statements as to the stocks and as to the fishery or limit of the fishery for the summer period next season.

However I can advise him that we are holding our first round of negotiations with academic and industry sectors, after which we will publish the results on the cod stocks, the scientific data.

The FRCC will hold wide industry and community consultations and will be making recommendations to me, recommendations which I will consider more seriously before making a final decision.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. There is mounting evidence that Canada is losing revenue to tax havens. A recent security regulator's report found that the Canadian investment dealers are holding 13,000 accounts in OECD blacklisted tax havens. We have also seen the CIBC play with its profits to reduce taxes in this country.

Will the Minister of Finance show some leadership and hold talks with the provinces to create a national securities watchdog that would tighten regulations and require full disclosure of transactions with tax havens?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have, obviously as the hon. member knows, led on this file with the financial action task force and with IOSCO which is the international grouping of securities regulators. We have also had discussions with provincial authorities and we intend to continue them to exactly that end.

* * *

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. Prime Minister referred to the cost of not proceeding with the Kyoto accord. Could the government tell us, because we in the NDP have often felt that the government could make a much more forceful case for Kyoto than it is doing, if it is doing the cost studies of what it would cost to not ratify the Kyoto accord and could

it produce these studies so that we could combat the Canadian Alliance fearmongering on this and light a fire under the Minister of the Environment so he might actually get this accord ratified one of these days?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the studies, which are currently being done, are being done by a joint federal-provincial-territorial group with three private firms involved. The leadership of this group is the province of Alberta and the federal Government of Canada. The group expects it will be able to provide us with substantial information in April. We certainly hope that is the case.

However certainly by May we hope we will be able to provide some of the figures from this joint federal-provincial-territorial group led by the province of Alberta and the federal government.

* * *

GUN REGISTRY

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, since 1994 the Liberal government has been harassing law-abiding firearms owners, but it has been business as usual for criminals. Numbers from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics show that since the Liberal firearm registration act was passed in 1994, use of a firearm in murders has increased by 3% and in attempted murders by almost 20%.

Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent to target law-abiding citizens. Should the government not correct this mistake and direct future resources toward targeting criminals?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to live in a society which is indeed very secure compared with many countries in the world. As well, we have had the courage in the past to make choices about security in our society and the firearm registration system is one good choice that we have made as Liberals on this side of the House, and for which I stand.

Lately we have proceeded with some outsourcing so we can keep offering the Canadian population very good services. We believe in what we are doing. At the end of the day, it is to ensure that we continue to protect our society.

● (1450)

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, surprise, surprise, criminals do not register their firearms. Statistics clearly show that since the Liberals introduced the firearms registration act the trend of guns used in violent crimes is going up, not down.

Would the minister not agree that it is time to get tough on criminals who use firearms, instead of spending hundreds of millions of dollars to harass sports shooters, hunters and farmers?

Oral Questions

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very simply put, if the hon. member would read the budget and the Speech from the Throne, he would see that we have invested a lot of money to ensure that we protect our society. We proceeded as well lately with the enactment of new legislation to protect our society. Of course gun registration is something fantastic. We will keep working to protect Canadian society. This government has made a difference.

* * *

ZIMBABWE

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Robert Mugabe has ejected European election monitors, brutalized civilians by his state sponsored goon squad, terrorized opposition parties and the independent media. The fact is there is absolutely no chance for a free and fair election in Zimbabwe.

Given that the United States and the EU have imposed targeted sanctions, will the government do the right thing and next week at the Commonwealth ministers meeting call for the suspension of Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the Prime Minister will be attending the CHOGM meeting Australia. We have taken very positive steps to ensure that Commonwealth inspectors are present in Zimbabwe. We are working as much as we can with our African partners to try to ensure as much integrity as is possible in that election process.

I am confident that the Prime Minister, when he leads our delegation in Australia, will be able to work with our Commonwealth partners to find a solution to this terrible problem and guarantee the integrity of the Commonwealth in the process.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is the government's credibility that is at stake right now if it does not do the right thing and do it now. The fact of the matter is that 60% of the population in Zimbabwe are terrorized and too scared to vote. Our own Canadian election monitor, Bill Warden, who almost died in the last presidential election, said that there is very little chance that monitors will do anything.

Again, will the government do the right thing, call for the suspension of Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth, freeze the personal assets of Mugabe and his cronies and call for a travel ban on the same group, and do it now?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we speak of credibility, the hon. member has been active on this file for some time. I ask him, for the sake of his credibility and that of his party, to recognize what the government is doing. We are working within the system of the Commonwealth, and he knows that is the best place for us to be.

I am confident that when the Commonwealth meeting takes place in Australia, the Prime Minister will work with our colleagues in the Commonwealth for the best interests of the people of Zimbabwe and for the best interests of the Commonwealth.

[Translation]

MIRABEL AIRPORT

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Mayor Hubert Meilleur of Mirabel is concerned about the future of the airport. There are more and more persistent indications that Mirabel airport may be closed.

Can the Minister of Transport confirm whether in the foreseeable future there is any likelihood of Mirabel being closed down?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are not going to be closing Mirabel airport.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm the information that Air Transat is apparently preparing to move all of its flights to other Canadian airports, because 90% of their flights are night flights, thus lending credibility to the rumours of Mirabel airport's closing?

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for airport administration belongs to the Société des Aéroports de Montréal. I trust that the hon. member will direct his questions to the airport authority, as it is connected to the national policy on airports.

* * *

● (1455)

[English]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in 1991 Ranjit Gill, who is not a Canadian citizen, was convicted of committing a murder in Canada. A deportation order was issued immediately and immigration assured his victim's family that he would be sent packing as soon as he got parole. In 1998 they were told his appeal of the order had been dismissed. In early 2000 documents indicated that all avenues of appeal had been exhausted. He was paroled in early 2001 and remains in Canada to this day.

I will not ask the minister to comment on this case. I just want to know why it is so difficult to rid this country of violent criminals.

Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course I will not comment on personal cases, but I am very troubled about those kinds of situations. That is why, through Bill C-11 and regulations, we will have better tools to prevent those kinds of situations.

Oral Questions

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, not only does it seem we cannot get rid of these criminals, it seems as though we welcome them with open arms to boot. Tafari Rennock, a career criminal, was deported from the United States about two years ago. Last summer he was caught here illegally and filed a refugee claim while in custody. Apparently the Immigration Review Board was so impressed with his resumé, which included sexual assault, drug trafficking and robbery, that it accepted his claim.

Would the minister please explain how a known criminal entering Canada illegally from a safe country and in custody can be accepted as a refugee claimant?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope that the hon. member does not believe that anyone here is in favour of treating people's security lightly. In my opinion, the new law is a good one, and the regulations are well done also. I know that there is no political partisanship behind his question. Everyone shares the same opinion: we must ensure our society is safe, and that is what we are going to do.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Claude Duplain (Portneuf, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people in Quebec and in my riding have a question, and today I would like to share it with the Minister of Finance.

Quebecers who invest in the FTQ's Fonds de solidarité RRSP obtain a tax credit not only from the government of Quebec, but also from the Government of Canada.

Can the Minister of Finance give the House an idea of the amount of this tax credit for the Fonds de solidarité RRSP?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the end of 2001, labour-sponsored venture capital corporations had close to \$8.4 billion in assets.

The cost of the credit for the government is estimated at \$260 million for the year 2000 alone. That would be approximately 40% for Quebec's Fonds de solidarité.

I thank the member for Portneuf for his question, as it demonstrates the extent to which the Government of Canada is a partner in job creation in Quebec.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, approximately 50,000 children endured the terrible experience of parental divorce last year. Over three years have gone by since the special joint committee on child custody and access released its report called "For the Sake of the Children".

The joint report proposed changes to the Divorce Act, but after years of costly inquiries and hundreds of witness submissions, we have nothing but a fading promise from the former minister of justice and continued stalling from the new Minister of Justice.

Why is the minister forsaking the children?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will proceed this May to issue new guidelines in regard to custody and access. As well, we are working with the provinces and territories to review the possibility of proceeding with some reform to the legislation. Our standpoint will always be in the best interests of the children.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that the government is closing down the Saint-Hubert South Shore Technobase in the next few weeks.

Will the government launch in the coming weeks an inquiry into the operations of Technobase to determine why the money that was invested did not produce any results, and particularly, how this money was used?

Hon. Claude Drouin (Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I already mentioned in the House, two \$7 million funds created between 500 and 600 jobs.

If the member wants an inquiry to expose the good results, we are open to the idea.

* * *

● (1500)

[*English*]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, a few years ago the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development assured the House that any attempt to relocate the regional office of Indian affairs from Amherst would only be considered on the condition that native chiefs approved it. The chiefs then voted on the proposal to relocate the regional office and the vote of the chiefs was respected. They voted no and it was not moved.

Now the bureaucrats are at it again. Is it the minister's intention to still respect the vote of the first nations and not relocate the Atlantic regional office?

Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well that we asked for a report by an independent consultant to look at the efficiencies of the regional office in Amherst in the Atlantic province. That report has not been received and no decisions have been made at this point.

*Oral Questions***GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier today I had the pleasure to join the Minister of Public Works and Government Services at the awarding of a major contract in my riding to xwave Solutions Inc. Could the minister provide the House with some information as to what sort of services the company will provide?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indeed I had the opportunity this morning to be with the excellent member for Nepean—Carleton in his constituency to announce a \$32 million competitive contract to xwave Solutions Inc. to modernize the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency information system.

This is a part of the government online initiative. It is a great thing for the industry and it is a fantastic thing for all Canadians.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Larry Spencer (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, at the rate the government moves, the children will be adults before anything happens. Canadians are glad to hear that the minister appears to be willing to put down legislation. However, everyone is concerned that the government's bad habit of ignoring committee recommendations will once again raise its ugly head.

Would the minister commit to legislation adopting the recommendations in the report "For the Sake of the Children"?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, we will table child support guidelines this coming May.

With regard to the reforms, of course we have to look at the possibility of passing legislation, but as well we have to focus on the notion of services. We are working with the provinces and territories and we will make our decision known quite shortly.

* * *

[*Translation*]**MIDDLE EAST**

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Prince Abdallah of Saudi Arabia recently announced a peace plan which could, at last, provide a lasting solution to the conflict that has been raging in the Middle East for decades.

The main political leaders in the Middle East, Europe and even the United States have welcomed this initiative. However, everything remains to be done.

How does Canada intend to react to this initiative and bring its support, so that a solution can be found at last?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question, because it gives us an opportunity to point out that Canada has always tried to promote peace in the Middle East.

We accept the suggestions made by Saudi Arabia and we are examining the proposal. We are doing so from our perspective as this

year's chair of the G-8, and I can assure the hon. member that Canada will do its best to bring peace to that troubled region of the world.

* * *

[*English*]**SOCIAL PROGRAMS**

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Earlier this month 12 respected British Columbia NGOs filed a formal complaint with the United Nations committee on economic, social and cultural rights as a result of the massive cuts in welfare payments in British Columbia and a 40% cut in legal aid payments.

In view of the fact that Canada signed the international covenant in 1976 will the Canadian government investigate carefully this complaint and will it ensure that the government of British Columbia is in full compliance with our obligations under the UN covenant on economic, social and cultural rights?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows well that the government takes very seriously its obligations under international law.

We will certainly examine the allegations that he has raised and we assure the House that the government will work with the provinces to ensure that our international legal obligations are respected and enforced in Canada.

* * *

● (1505)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Percy Mockler, Minister of Transportation for the province of New Brunswick.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I would also like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of eight of the laureates of the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame.

[*Translation*]

I will name each of the laureates and I would ask hon. members to withhold their applause until the end: Dr. Henry Barnett, Dr. Charles Beer, Dr. John Bradley, Dr. Brenda Milner, Dr. David Sackett, Dr. Robert Salter, Dr. Charles Scriver and Dr. Lou Siminovitch.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

The Speaker: Hon. members are invited to meet the laureates at a reception at 3.15 p.m. in room 216-N.

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 81(14), to inform the House that the motion to be considered tomorrow during consideration of the business of supply is as follows:

[English]

That, in response to Canadians' desire to save Canada as a sovereign nation and strengthen our distinctive contribution in the world, this House calls upon the government to reflect in its budgetary policy the New Democratic Party 12-Point Plan to Save Canada

This motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Halifax is votable. Copies of the motion are available at the table.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT

Mr. Gurbax Malhi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) I am pleased to submit two copies, in both official languages, of the 2001 Employment Equity Act Annual Report.

* * *

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) I would like to table, in both official languages, copies of the report of the auditor general with respect to the special audit conducted by the auditor general on the Canadian Wheat Board.

* * *

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 two petitions.

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34 I have the honour to present to the House the report from the Canadian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association concerning the workshop on ensuring accountability which was held in Nairobi, Kenya from December 9 to December 13, 2001.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Finance. Pursuant to its order of reference of Monday, February 18,

Routine Proceedings

the committee has considered Bill C-49, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on December 10, 2001 and reports the bill with amendment.

* * *

● (1510)

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-434, an act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby for seconding the bill.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to introduce the bill today. The bill would amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to permit an immigration officer to require a foreign national who has applied for a visitor's visa to provide security as a condition of the issuance of that visa. It would also provide for the immediate removal of the foreign national from Canada if the conditions of the visa or requirements of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act were not complied with.

The bill is a direct result of working with my constituents who have family members living abroad who have repeatedly been denied visitors visas for a variety of reasons. My bill would not of course eliminate the possibility of foreign nationals staying in Canada past their intended stay but it would provide legal means for their swift removal.

I am certain that my experience with my constituents is not isolated to my riding alone. I think there are many members in the House that frequently hear heart rending stories of how a certain relative wants to visit Canada for a special occasion but has been denied a visa.

My bill would give many families in the country the opportunity to enjoy family gatherings uniting loved ones from overseas. I look forward to debating the bill further in the House.

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

* * *

PARLIAMENTARY EMPLOYMENT AND STAFF RELATIONS ACT

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-435, an act to amend the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act (members' staff).

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege today to introduce a bill, seconded by the member for Churchill, to amend the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act. Most Canadians are probably unaware that parliamentary employees do not now enjoy full collective bargaining rights or full human rights protections.

Routine Proceedings

The federal court and Canadian Human Rights Tribunal employees have those rights. Surely it is time, in fact past time, that MP and senator staff members enjoy the very same full employment and human rights protections. The bill seeks to remedy this anachronistic, unacceptable and embarrassing injustice.

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

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The bill just introduced may possibly be out of order because it could be in violation of the Parliament of Canada Act.

The Speaker: I am sure if the bill has anything questionable of this sort the hon. member for Elk Island will prepare a point of order and raise it in due course. The bill has been ordered for second reading at the next sitting of the House which could happen any time in the next five years. The bill, after all, has to win a draw and so on. The member will have lots of time to prepare any argument he may have on a point like that, and of course the Chair is always accommodating and prepared to hear that kind of argument.

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ALLOTTED DAY MOTION

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find unanimous consent in the House for the following motion. I move:

That at the conclusion of the debate on the NDP opposition motion on Thursday, February 28 all questions necessary to dispose of this motion be deemed put, a recorded division deemed requested and deferred to the expiry of the time provided for government orders on Tuesday, March 12.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Does the government House leader have unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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PETITIONS

ANTARCTICA

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from Canadians who are concerned about Antarctica. These citizens live in places as far apart as Mile House, British Columbia and Peterborough, Bailieborough, Campbellford, Norwood, Omemee, Lakefield, Keene, Buckhorn, Grafton and Brighton, Ontario.

The petitioners point out that Antarctica is a pristine, scientifically valuable environment in need of protection and that Canada, despite being a polar nation itself, lags behind many nations as far as environmental initiatives in Antarctica are concerned.

They point out that the environmental protocol to the Antarctic treaty system presents practical guidelines concerning environmental

issues in Antarctica. They call upon parliament, representing a signatory country to the environmental protocol, to ratify all protocol guidelines in Canadian law.

• (1515)

[*Translation*]

MANOIR PAPINEAU

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition on behalf of several hundred people from Montebello and the regional county municipality of Papineau about the Louis-Joseph Papineau historic site, where restoration work started in 1995 has not yet been completed because of an access problem.

Petitioners ask Parliament to allocate the funds necessary to complete the work and acquire the space required to build a parking lot and a direct access road to Manoir Papineau historic site.

[*English*]

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, there is overwhelming evidence that many seniors are not able to meet the cost of living, housing, heating and nutrition on the basic old age pension security guaranteed income supplement presently being provided by the Government of Canada.

I am pleased to present a petition from hundreds of my constituents calling on parliament to review the old age security guaranteed income supplement program by instituting relief of at least 25% in basic premiums.

BILL C-331

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions today on behalf of the good people of Dauphin—Swan River.

The first petition, signed by people from across Canada, calls upon parliament to enact my private member's bill, Bill C-331, the Ukrainian Canadian restitution act to recognize the injustice that was done to persons of Ukrainian descent and other Europeans who were interned at the time of the first world war, and to provide for public commemoration and for restitution which is to be devoted to education and promotion of tolerance.

REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls on the Government of Canada to immediately enact legislation prohibiting the sale or exchange of any human embryonic or fetal tissue for human reproductive services.

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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. 103 and 106.

Government Orders

[Text]

Question No. 103—**Mr. Greg Thompson:**

Regarding religious references at events organized by the government: (a) has the government issued directives or other policy guidelines with regard to the use of prayers at such events; (b) have instructions been given by the Military to the Armed Forces Chaplains with regards to the removal of the terms “God”, “Jesus”, “Christian”, or other expression for the deity; and (c) if so under what authority?

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): I am informed by the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Department of National Defence as follows:

In response to (a), the government has not issued directives or other policy guidelines with regard to the use of prayers at government organized events.

However, under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, employees of different faiths have the right to freedom of religion.

In response to (b), neither the Department of National Defence nor the Canadian forces have directed military chaplains to refrain from using the terms “God,” “Jesus,” “Christian” or any other expression for the deity. The policy on public prayer services for the Canadian Forces Chaplain Branch was approved by the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy, and follows the guidelines of the Canadian Council of Churches on “Religious Ceremonies Involving More than One Faith Tradition”. The Policy is:

“Within the context of voluntary worship, either within a chapel or a field service or on board ship, chaplains are free to lead Christian worship according to their denominational tradition within the established practice of CF Roman Catholic or Protestant Chapels. Likewise in the context of ecumenical or interfaith worship where a number of religious leaders are participating, chaplains may conduct themselves in accordance with their denominational tradition.

Within the context of a public ceremony where the chaplain is the sole representative of all faith groups and where various faith groups and a wide range of beliefs are likely to exist, normally prayers should be inclusive in nature respecting the wide range of faith groups and believers who may be present. The religious celebrant is encouraged to be sensitive in the use of specific sacred faith formulas to allow for greater inclusivity.”

The policy encourages chaplains of the Canadian forces to respect the wide range of faith groups present at public services and be inclusive in the common expression of prayer. Nowhere does it admonish its chaplains to refrain from using expressions of prayer.

In response to (c) this is not applicable.

Question No. 106—**Mr. Werner Schmidt:**

What was the total amount spent in Canadian dollars by each Canadian embassy and consulate on wine products for the years 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000; and, for each year, what was the amount spent on: (a) Canadian produced wine and (b) foreign produced wine?

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): The financial management information system currently in use by the department is not programmed to identify wine product expenses.

[English]

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

The Speaker: The questions enumerated by the hon. parliamentary secretary have been answered. Is it agreed that the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[Translation]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-35 in the name of the hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore?

Motion No. P-35

That an order of the House do issue for copies of all documentation, including reports, minutes of meetings, notes, e-mail, memos and correspondence since 1997 within the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade pertaining to the Tulsequah Chief Mine.

Mr. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, considering the number of documents to be dealt with and translated, this would cost too much and take too long. Therefore I ask the hon. member to withdraw his motion.

The Speaker: In that case, the motion is transferred for debate. (Motion transferred for debate)

Mr. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1520)

[English]

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL TRADE TRIBUNAL ACT

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): moved that Bill C-50, an act to amend certain acts as a result of the accession of the People's Republic of China to the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to address the House today on Bill C-50, the legislation that will allow Canada to enjoy all of the advantages of China's accession to the World Trade Organization. Before I address the legislation directly, I would like to make some mention of the extraordinary events that took place in Doha, Qatar.

[Translation]

As you know, on November 14 of last year, Canada and 141 other members of the World Trade Organization, WTO, agreed to launch a new round of international trade negotiations.

Government Orders

I am very proud to say that Canada honestly met all its objectives in Doha. We met our objectives. The program of negotiations which will take place over the next three years will be advantageous to Canadians and to our economy. I am particularly pleased with the substantial progress made with respect to development, one of Canada's main objectives.

In fact, we got this point across so well that the new round has been called the Doha development program. This show of unity illustrates the desire of all members to take into consideration the interests of developing countries and to act accordingly.

But even though Doha was a great success, we must not forget that it only marked the launch of negotiations. The real work is beginning; it will take place over the next three years. I wish to assure the House that, as negotiations advance, Canada will remain transparent and open, both domestically and with its WTO partners.

Needless to say, the accession of China to the WTO is important on many levels. The WTO has just admitted the seventh largest economy in the world, one whose GDP was \$1.5 trillion in 2000. The ninth largest exporter in the world, with 3.5% of total world exports in 1999, has now joined the international trade system. A country of 1.3 billion inhabitants—one fifth of the world's population—has now become a member of the rule-based world trade system.

The WTO is an important global institution. It helps to set rules for international trade and to resolve disputes which arise between trading partners. But without China, a major and dynamic economy, the WTO was incomplete. With China's accession to the WTO, the trade system now makes more sense. But many might still wonder what it means for us as Canadians.

[*English*]

On a broad level, China's membership in the WTO confirms Canada's important position in both Canadian and international trade. China has officially accepted the WTO's internationally negotiated rights and obligations concerning the administration of international trade, including the fundamental principles of national and most favoured nation treatment, the settlement of trade disputes, and the continued liberalization of international trade.

In terms of market access for goods and services, the implications are significant, especially in the services sector. With respect to goods, today's accession means immediate and permanent tariff cuts on industrial and agricultural products. For industrial goods, upon accession tariffs will decrease in stages, such that by 2010 they will be roughly half of what they were in 1999. This is quite significant for our producers. Similarly, the simple average of tariffs on agricultural and agrifood imports into China will fall significantly by 2005. Indeed, for products in several other sectors tariffs will be eliminated completely.

China's services sector has traditionally been heavily regulated and protected and consequently has had minimal foreign participation. In this area, then, China's WTO membership heralds dramatic changes. All important services sectors will be opened to foreign investment with, in many cases, majority foreign ownership permitted within two to three years and, in some areas, wholly foreign owned subsidiaries within two to five years.

New market access conditions, changes in regulations and strengthened intellectual property rights will assure increased transparency and equality for Canadian commercial interests in all sectors in China, including insurance, telecommunications and banking.

In addition to the tariff cuts on agricultural and agrifood products I mentioned earlier, there will be other significant modifications to China's current quota system. To become WTO compliant, China's current import quota system is to be replaced by a system of tariff rate quotas, TRQs. The purpose of TRQs is to ensure that foreign exporters have access to a predictable, minimum share of an importer's market for goods. Under a TRQ, imports from any exporting country up to a fixed quota level enter at a relatively low tariff rate. A higher tariff is levied on any imports over this quantity.

China will eliminate quotas that currently apply to barley, soybeans, rapeseed or canola, peanut oil, sunflower seed oil, corn oil and cottonseed oil and subject them only to tariffs. The remaining existing quotas will be replaced with TRQs on agricultural products such as wheat, corn, rice, soybean oil, palm oil, rapeseed or canola oil, sugar, wool and cotton.

Another change will be that state trading entities that have monopoly import status on a number of commodities in China will have their privileges reduced or eliminated, effective today. China is committed to allowing prices for traded goods and services in every sector to be determined by market forces and multi-tier pricing practices for such goods and services will be eliminated.

Finally, I would like to touch on the implications for Canada's wholesale distributors. Within one year foreign service suppliers may establish joint ventures to engage in wholesale distribution of all imported and domestically produced products, with some exceptions. Majority foreign ownership will be permitted in two years and wholly foreign owned companies a year later. Foreign invested enterprises may now distribute products they have manufactured in China.

Government Orders

• (1525)

Normally negotiations to join the WTO usually affect only the acceding country, requiring it to make concessions and changes to its domestic laws and regulations. Amendments of Canadian legislation are normally not required. However, in the negotiations Canada and other countries sought and obtained the right to invoke China specific safeguards and to apply appropriate non-market economy rules in anti-dumping investigations on Chinese goods. The China safeguards differ from safeguards in other trade agreements in that they will be applicable only to imports from China, they will have a lower injury threshold and they will be temporary.

Legislative changes are necessary to integrate these provisions into the existing legislative framework. Amendments are also necessary so that while China makes the transition to a market economy Canada can continue to apply special price comparability rules to China in anti-dumping investigations. These amendments will allow Canada to implement fully the rights it obtained during the China accession negotiations. They are fully supported by industry and all the provinces of our country. All WTO members have the right to implement such measures.

[*Translation*]

We must not, however, delude ourselves into thinking that the accession of China will do away with all the difficulties being experienced by Canadian exporters. WTO membership will require radical changes in the structure of the Chinese economy and in the relationship between China's government and industry.

The commitments undertaken within the WTO will not materialize overnight. The process will be a slow one an uneven one, and will require WTO members to be vigilant. The tariff reductions will be carried out as planned but the more fundamental changes such as those to organizational structures, bureaucratic procedures, legislative and regulatory frameworks, and the political culture itself, will certainly require a bit of time.

The obligations binding China under the WTO rules and the related rights will reinforce and advance economic reform. Chinese exporters will be assured of definite and predictable access to foreign markets, and this will create employment and stimulate economic growth.

Liberalization of the investment rules, a more transparent regulatory framework and better access to export markets will attract foreign investors as well as the technology and employment that goes with them. In the long term, the enhanced competition in China will enhance the country's economic competitiveness and its productivity.

This all remains to be seen, of course, but the early signs are very encouraging. We will continue therefore to be vigilant and to ensure that Canadian exporters obtain the advantages agreed to as a condition of membership. Canada will make use of all available forums to ensure the respect of its rights under the WTO agreements and to ensure that China complies with its WTO obligations.

All WTO members share this same strong desire to ensure that China respects its WTO commitments. Affording it special treatment or special allowances because of its situation would undermine the fundamental principles of this organization, that is reciprocity,

transparency, predictability and applicability. We would thus weaken the institution we have been involved in building up for the past 15 years, since the start of the Uruguay Round negotiations.

So far, China's progress has been promising. A lot remains to be done, but everything is going fine right now. China's customs tariffs for 2002 have gone down as expected. A number of laws and regulations were amended to comply with obligations under the WTO, including the important rules on foreign providers of services such as insurance, banking services, telecommunications, that are of particular interest to Canadian exporters. The achievements are noteworthy and are evidence of China's commitment to the WTO and its international obligations.

However, there are a number of areas where China has weaknesses. Agricultural exports are still impeded by trade barriers which, incidentally, violate the obligations that China has taken on when it joined, on December 11, 2001—quotas on agricultural exports are still not available, while new regulations on food safety are vague and seem to put considerable constraint on foreign exporters. We are continuing to look at these concerns with our Chinese counterparts, in the hope of finding a solution as soon as possible.

As I mentioned during the WTO's ministerial conference held in Doha in November, a new round of negotiations known as the Doha development agenda has been launched. This is a significant achievement that will allow Canada to pursue its interests in market access.

China clearly voiced its support for this new round of negotiations. Like other WTO members, we expect China's negotiation platform to reflect its interests. Some of these interests will undoubtedly be similar to those of Canada, while others will be different. However, we are convinced that the full participation of an economy as important as that of China, which is in full expansion, can only strengthen the multilateral trade system.

• (1530)

There is unequivocal evidence that the institutional framework and the principles stated in the WTO agreement contribute to sustained economic growth. The implementation will undoubtedly provide long term benefits to China. Ultimately, Canada's economic and commercial interests in China will depend on the size and strength of that country's economy.

A long time ago, China was the world's number one economy because of its huge population. Its current growth rate suggests that it could reach that status again by the middle of the century.

I am convinced that our Canadian exporters will succeed there, as they have everywhere in the world, thus making our country a great champion of the global trade system.

Government Orders

•(1535)

[English]

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is ironic in speaking to the second reading of Bill C-50 that it is the hon. member for Vancouver Island North who should be speaking but guess what? The very qualified member is not with us today simply because it has to do with trade. It has to do with the breakdown in the WTO. I will come back to that later.

To complement what the minister said, whenever a company enters into a trade agreement there are two words that balance it. They both have five letters and they both begin with the letter *t*. One is trade and the other is trust. The two go together.

Opening up a trade agreement with a country as large as China means a great deal to both countries. It seems very appropriate at this time to recall that Canada does in the neighbourhood of \$11 billion worth of trade every year with China. That is about \$4 billion more than the total budget of the province in which I live. That gives some idea of what will happen with the implementation of the bill.

I agree with the minister. In the years to come the amount of trade with China will increase. However before we move on to more trade agreements, we are having severe difficulties in this country now with obligations, not Canadian obligations, but with other partners in the WTO and other partners in the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Let us examine the purpose of the bill. The bill will amend the existing Canadian legislation allowing Canada to fully implement safeguards and anti-dumping rights that were agreed to when China came into the WTO. The safeguards will enable Canada to take temporary measures to protect Canadian industries.

Agriculture is one of the biggest industries in Canada. It certainly is the biggest industry where I come from. This industry is no longer protected. It was initially when we entered the WTO. It was 15 years ago. We were guaranteed it was going to be protected.

The other purpose of the bill is that in the event surges of imports from China could cost some industry, there is an agreement between the two countries.

Trade should bring trust. If we are trading with a nation, we must trust that nation. The more we trade with a nation, the more commonality we have in many respects.

Some people will call this simply a housekeeping bill. However the issue of deepening Canadian economic consultations with parliament on Canadian negotiating strategy in forums such as the World Trade Organization and a free trade agreement has not always been adequate. In looking at this bill, I feel that has been accomplished.

Parliament should be involved in ratifying agreements. It is good because it establishes a new economic relationship for Canada. Hopefully we will have new relationships with other countries.

•(1540)

About 15 years ago we in western Canada were told that if we got rid of the Crow rate agreement the other countries in the World Trade Organization would get rid of their subsidies at the same time. Let us

make sure that is understood. Western Canadians were told if they gave up the Crow rate agreement on grain transportation which was guaranteed to them in legislation the other countries in the World Trade Organization, NAFTA and all the other agreements would drop their subsidies.

Let us look at what has happened. The industry in western Canada gave up that right. Yes, it was paid to do so. The payment it received was approximately one year's free freight. Since that time, for every bushel of grain produced on the prairies over a third of the price the farmer should get for the bushel has gone to transportation. As if that were not bad enough, the United States and the European common market have so abused the WTO that hundreds of farmers across the west are going broke.

As I mentioned at the outset, my hon. colleague from Vancouver North is not here because of the softwood lumber dispute. Thousands of Canadians are out of work. Negotiations have been going on probably for five years but intensively for six months. What has happened? Our gross national product has gone this way. What has happened as a result of these breakdowns? They have brought a lot of suffering to Canadians and particularly those in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba.

There are two important words: trust and trade. I hope the government recognizes it must be vigilant and protect Canadians. Even though we have signed treaties it appears, certainly where I live, that there is no protection whatsoever.

There are three main points in the bill that would establish safeguards in dealing with Chinese imports. First, product specific safeguards could be applied to any goods originating in China that were causing or threatening to cause injury to Canadian industry. That is a good point and it makes up a good portion of the bill.

Second, there is a safeguard in the bill to prevent one market from overflowing and flooding into Canada. That is a good safeguard.

Third, for the textile industry in Canada there are safeguards relating to textiles and clothing.

All these safeguards are built into the bill.

The Minister for International Trade listed some agricultural items while he was speaking but failed to mention one that strikes home with me. He failed to mention the pulse industry which has grown big in western Canada. On the Soo Line, one of Canada's busiest railways which is just north of the city of Estevan, farmers have built a huge pulse terminal which handles lentils, peas and all those things.

These farmers were rejoicing about Bill C-50 because it meant there would be more freedom to trade with China, one of their biggest customers. Canola farmers were excited about it because they would have an open market to their product from western Canada.

•(1545)

The United States has a farm bill before congress. If my understanding of the bill is correct, the pulse producers of western Canada would get it big time as have the wheat and barley producers.

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I am not sure producers where I come from are that concerned about Bill C-50. We on this side of the House and in my party feel it is a good bill because its safeguards are prudent. The problem in Canada is more on the other side of the House.

I am not saying Canada can match the subsidy levels of Great Britain or Washington. However what has the government done in the last five years to honour its agreements to settle issues in the World Trade Organization and NAFTA and protect Canadian industries? That is the question. The answer is absolutely zero.

We in my party support the bill and think it is good. More bills like it should be written and expanded to other countries. However it still comes back to two words: trust and trade. Softwood lumber producers and other producers in western Canada no longer trust the government to go to bat for them so they too can have livelihoods.

I will read from the Canadian Alliance policy statement:

We support a foreign policy that protects Canada's sovereignty and independence, promotes our national interests (political, economic and strategic), contributes to collective security and defence, promotes democratic principles and human rights—

Knowing the history of China, particularly in the last 50 years, let us hope for the sake of millions of people that this trade policy would result in an expansion of human rights in that great nation.

The policy statement continues:

We will pay particular attention to maintaining good bilateral relations with our most significant trading partners.

When I mentioned at the outset that the bill would mean about \$11 billion a year, we must be cognizant that close to \$2 billion a day goes between Canada and the United States. We are being strangled in Canada today because our neighbours to the south have chosen confrontation rather than co-operation in trade agreements.

As the minister pointed out, China once had one of the biggest and fastest growing economies in the world. It could again be the biggest within a few short years. We on this side of the House would join with the government in welcoming China into the WTO.

It is significant that the trade agreement with China would not hinder in one way or another the trade we currently have with Taiwan. That is a blessing. Although it cannot officially be a member of the WTO, Taiwan co-exists within its framework. Trade between Taiwan and mainland China grows each year.

● (1550)

We in my party are pleased to support the bill. However I am deeply disturbed, as are my colleagues on this side of the House, at the government's lack of attention to the softwood lumber issue in the last 5 years and to western agriculture in the last 15 years. These two industries have been vitally hurt by the government. I hope the government can see fit to do something within its power to bring back the original agreements of the WTO.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-50, which is at second reading.

In November, together with the Minister of International Trade and the member for Burnaby—Douglas, I attended the ministerial

conference in Doha, Qatar. The purpose of this conference was to bring about a new round of WTO negotiations, and it succeeded in doing so, incidentally.

At the same time, I was also present for the birth of a new world economic order with the accession of China and Taiwan to the World Trade Organization.

Bill C-50, an act to amend certain acts as a result of the accession of the People's Republic of China to the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, was introduced in the House on February 5.

Let us state up front that my party, the Bloc Québécois, supports the principle of the bill, as it is in line with our previously and clearly stated position in favour of China's accession to the WTO.

We believe that this new era of trade will promote China's development with respect to the international community.

We also believe that the opening of world markets to this unusual partner will accelerate reforms currently underway in China, and make it easier to raise the sensitive question of human rights and to defend human rights.

China's future partners, in the context of the World Trade Organization, have a great many expectations of the Chinese authorities on the issue of human rights. We have a moral responsibility to maintain pressure so that the Chinese people can achieve their full potential in freedom.

China's accession to the WTO prompts us once again to draw an interesting parallel between the globalization of markets and the equally fundamental, equally essential, and equally critical issue of international development.

I would like to take this opportunity today to reiterate the Bloc Québécois' position on increasing spending for international assistance to 0.7% of the GNP and on the creation of a social development fund for the Americas.

When we talk about the accession of such an important country to the WTO, it is important to give a few figures to help our understanding. China is currently Canada's fourth largest trading partner. Trade between China and Canada totalled \$15 billion in 2000. China is the seventh largest economy in the world and the ninth largest exporter. It is home to one fifth of the world's people—this is obviously a key fact. China was the largest economic power in the world not subject to WTO rights and obligations with respect to the administration of international trade, the resolution of trade disputes, and the pursuit of trade liberalization.

We can see the importance that China has with respect to international trade, and particularly the importance that it will have in the years to come.

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More than 15 years ago, in 1986, China indicated its desire to join the ranks of countries governed by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the GATT as it was then called. Negotiations to that end began in earnest in 1994.

Bilateral negotiations with interested WTO members had to do with specific barriers to market access. In November 1999, Canada and China concluded a bilateral agreement smoothing out these difficulties.

• (1555)

In addition, there are approximately forty similar agreements between China and other WTO member countries. Lengthy and difficult multilateral negotiations took place with a view to getting China to agree to make changes to its trade regime so as to bring it into line with the obligations flowing from the WTO accord. The WTO also held 18 meetings of the working group, which culminated on September 17, 2000 in a detailed general agreement on the conditions for China's accession to the organization.

The bill we are debating today gives effect to the rights of Canada pursuant to the protocol on the accession of the People's Republic of China to the World Trade Organization that came into effect on December 11, 2001.

The enactment will amend the Canadian International Trade Tribunal Act, the Customs Tariff, and the Export and Import Permits Act.

This will authorize the government to impose, under certain conditions and after an inquiry by the Canadian International Trade Tribunal, special trade measures to protect Canadian industries from injury or threat of injury that could be caused by imports from the People's Republic of China.

Special trade measures, commonly referred to as safeguards, will be available until December 11, 2013.

The text of the bill amends the Special Import Measures Act to allow the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency greater flexibility in conducting anti-dumping investigations related to imported Chinese goods when the price or the cost of production of those goods in China is not determined by market economy conditions.

Normally, the accession of a new WTO member country would not require Canadian legislation to be changed. However, in negotiating the conditions for China's accession, new rights were allocated to members. The amendments proposed in the bill are therefore designed to make these new rights part of Canadian law. They will, among other things, enable Canada, under certain circumstances, to impose new guarantees on imports from China and to apply the comparative pricing rules in anti-dumping investigations.

We should point out that all WTO member countries, moreover, are entitled to these same rights. Guarantees are common currency in trade agreements such as the WTO and NAFTA, and Canada already has legislation and regulations on their implementation.

In the event of sudden increases in imports causing or threatening to cause injury to the national industry, the guarantees allow governments to provide temporary support to the industries in

question, so that they may make the necessary adjustments to enhance their competitive position. This support may be in the form of import duties, quantitative restrictions on imports, or the imposition of tariff quotas.

There are, however, three new guarantees contained in the conditions for China's accession to the WTO: first, a guarantee per product, which may be applied to any product originating in China that causes or threatens to cause injury to Canadian industry because of increased imports; second, a guarantee of diversion, which can be used to prevent Chinese products the access of which to a market has been closed by a guarantee per product from flooding the Canadian market and causing injury to Canadian industry; and third, a guarantee that applies to Chinese clothing and textile imports.

It was also agreed during the negotiations on China's accession to the WTO that members could impose special conditions on China within the framework of anti-dumping investigations, with a view to determining whether the imports are being sold under unfair conditions, that is at a lower price than the cost of production or at the prevailing market price in the country of origin.

Canadian legislation provides for special rules when costs and prices in the country of origin are not determined by the market. However, existing criteria may not apply perfectly to the transitory nature of the Chinese economy. This is why WTO members negotiated special anti-dumping conditions for a period of 15 years, from the time that China joins the WTO.

So, the Bloc Québécois supports China's entry into the WTO. We firmly believe that the development of closer trade relations with the international community will help China's economic development. At the same time, we expect a reform with regard to human rights .

• (1600)

However, we are less optimistic than the Liberals, because we do not think that the opening up of the Chinese market is a cure-all, as the federal government seems to believe.

The human rights issue is far from being resolved in China, and we must continue to bring political and even economic pressure to bear. However, quite apart from the trade issue, there are other issues that are of concern to us, to Quebecers and to a large number of Canadians, including international development.

In fact, the hon. members for Joliette and Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay attended the world social forum in Pôrto Alegre and they know—and they show it regularly—that we can no longer talk about trade liberalization without being concerned about development. An increasing number of people are realizing this and are asking us to take into consideration this side of the issue.

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In Doha, we heard developing countries complain that the rules of the Uruguay Round did not help them develop. Let us not forget that, in 1999, the Canadian government supported the idea of a tax on financial transactions to help international development. Was that just a smokescreen or will the federal government promote this idea to reduce speculation and to fund development?

The concept of development assistance is crucial, both at the international and the continental levels. If the federal government really wants to show some leadership, it could, for instance, reintroduce the idea of setting up a development fund for the Americas, which was supported by Mexican President, Vicente Fox, and the leader of the Bloc Québécois.

This fund, which would help national economies in the Americas face the impact of economic integration in areas such as employment, infrastructure development, health, education, social and environmental protection, has gained strong support from the Quebec government, the FTQ, the CSQ, the CEQ, the Conseil du patronat du Québec, the Manufacturiers et exportateurs du Québec, the UPA, the Union des artistes, the Union des écrivaines et écrivains québécois, the Mouvement national des Québécoises et des Québécois, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, the Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale, the Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec and the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec.

So, where international assistance is concerned, Canada must set a deadline in order to reach the UN goal, which is to spend 0.7% of our GDP on aid to developing countries. But as we all know, as soon as the Liberals took office, they started making drastic cuts to international assistance.

For example, CIDA's budget has decreased 20% since 1993. In real terms, the drop was 30%. Therefore, the budget has been slashed by more than a quarter. The deepest of the cuts in CIDA's budget was 35% less than the 1993 budget.

Since taking office, the Liberals have cut \$2.7 billion from international assistance. According to an OECD study, Canada is now one of the least generous countries when it comes to international assistance. This will do nothing to increase the pride with which some of my colleagues quote UN figures, among others, about "the best country in the world".

The OECD's report ranks Canada 17th among 22 donor countries. In 1999, Canada was ranked 12th and, in 1995, we were ranked 6th. Canada currently contributes 0.25% of its GDP to international assistance, while the ratio back in 1992 was 0.46%.

Because of the fact that international development is important and essential for developing countries, because it is part of our collective responsibility, because this contribution is an integral part of our contribution to the world, of our shared sense of giving, and because it underscores, as such, the values that we defend as a society, Canada must increase its international development assistance to 0.7% of the GDP.

In closing, it is important to note that global economic development is achieved, obviously, through the development of international economic relations, and China's accession to the WTO is in line with this.

● (1605)

However, the flip side of the coin is just as important. Canada must have a greater presence and provide more international development assistance if we want to be known as more than just advocates of freer trade, and want to increase the standard of living throughout the world.

[*English*]

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak on behalf of my New Democratic Party colleagues on Bill C-50, the bill which would amend a number of Canadian statutes as a direct result of the accession of the People's Republic of China to the WTO agreement. Largely Bill C-50 is a housekeeping bill in that it seeks to amend the Canadian International Trade Tribunal Act, the Customs Tariff, the Export and Import Permits Act and the Special Import Measures Act, with the fundamental objective of protecting Canadian industries from being overwhelmed by new Chinese imports resulting from China's accession to the WTO.

These amendments are specific only to Canada's trade with China and they do not impact on trade with any other countries. I would point out as well that effectively as of December 11, 2001, the PRC formally acceded to the WTO after some 15 years of negotiations with member states. This legislation obviously does not in any way impact on the accession of China to the WTO. What it does is propose a number of changes to Canadian laws to deal with the reality that China is now a member of the WTO, and one of the most substantial members of the WTO. It is a country of 1.3 billion people, it has the world's seventh largest economy and it is the ninth largest exporter. It is clearly a very significant player.

There is no doubt that Canadian exporters are keen to gain increased access to this huge market, but a number of other Canadian industries are afraid that they may drown in the anticipated surge of Chinese imports. Member states, including Canada, conducted bilateral negotiations with China to determine the terms of trade which will come into effect with China's accession in an attempt to deal with a number of these concerns before China formally became a member of the WTO.

That is what this legislation is all about. It is in response to those bilateral negotiations between Canada and China as a result of China's accession to the WTO. Effectively it provides for the protection of Canadian industries during a transition period of some 12 years through the application of safeguard procedures. What are these safeguard procedures? They include such aspects as border restrictions on Chinese imports that cause or threaten to cause market disruption to Canadian industries. Essentially, if China and Canada cannot come to an agreement in cases where Chinese imports are threatening Canadian producers, Canada would be able to impose limits on Chinese imports in those sectors during this 12 year window.

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As well Bill C-50 would allow Canada flexibility in conducting anti-dumping investigations in China in cases where Chinese marketplaces are dictated by the Chinese government rather than by market forces. Under the rules of the WTO, if a nation sells its products in another country at a price which is effectively lower than the cost of production or at a price which is lower than the market price for the product in the producing country, that is what is called dumping of that product in foreign markets, including Canada. If a WTO tribunal agrees that dumping is occurring, it allows the injured country to impose a countervail, tariffs in effect, to offset the artificially low price of the imported product.

What is the impact of this legislation? First, we have to be clear that it will affect only the People's Republic of China, which by the way excludes Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. It only affects the bilateral relationship between the People's Republic of China and Canada. For some time the Chinese government has been anxious to join the WTO so it can increase its export potential. However, there is no doubt that the terms of China's accession will permit a significant amount of agricultural products to enter China, including those from Canada, which presents a real threat to Chinese agricultural industries and particularly to rural Chinese communities. There is a real concern about what the impact of this might be on those rural communities.

• (1610)

Poverty in China is already a huge concern, particularly in rural areas. President Jiang Zemin acknowledged earlier this month, on February 5, that some 30 million Chinese live in absolute poverty. However, the Asian Development Bank just last week claimed that the Chinese government has unofficially admitted that an additional 60 million Chinese live in what it calls "vulnerable poverty". Furthermore, under Chinese law migration from impoverished rural areas to the wealthier urban centres is strictly regulated. They cannot move. This accession to the WTO could have a very serious impact on poor people in rural communities in China.

Another area in which serious concern has been expressed with respect to the impact on China is the Chinese automotive industry. Reduced tariffs under the WTO agreement will mean that exports will very quickly flood the Chinese market. This again could mean a tremendous strain on Chinese workers. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has reported that 10 million Chinese auto workers are forecast to lose their jobs as a result of China's entry to the WTO.

That is just an overview of the impact and the purpose of the legislation, but I want to take a few minutes on behalf of my colleagues in the New Democrat caucus to raise some fundamental concerns, not only about the legislation but, more important, about the WTO itself and its agenda.

First, with respect to this legislation and China, I would note that China has an absolutely appalling human rights record. Whether one reads the reports of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Asia Watch, the United States state department reports or, indeed, those of a number of respected Canadian NGOs, it is clear that in a whole range of areas the Chinese record on human rights is deeply disturbing. Just recently there have been new allegations of severe crackdowns on Falun Gong practitioners, with arrests and brutal

treatment of Falun Gong practitioners as well as other religious leaders. Certainly that is something that I think all in parliament must be concerned about.

At the same time there are ongoing concerns about Tibet and the repression of religious freedom and the right to self-determination of the people of Tibet. I would note that in this accession process the Tibetan people effectively have been excluded. As the Canada Tibet Committee has noted recently, the Tibetan people have been excluded, have been shut out from the accession negotiation process. There is a real concern that under the Chinese accession to the WTO, Beijing authorities will use increased western investment as a two edged sword, first to consolidate their grip on the disputed territory in Tibet, and second, to exploit Tibet's natural resources.

At the same time concerns have been raised about CIDA's role in Tibet and its so-called poverty relief project that excluded input from the Tibetan government in exile and ignored recommendations submitted by the Canada Tibet Committee. There are real concerns here that have been ignored in the context of this trade relationship. I think we have to take the opportunity of this debate on China's accession to the WTO to put these concerns on the record.

With respect to the issue of workers' rights, this is an area in which China is perhaps one of the weakest countries in the world. China has shown total contempt for the rights of working people. In fact, in its accession to the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights, China filed an explicit exemption or reservation under article 8.1(a) of the convention. Article 8.1(a) is the article of the covenant whereby states party to the covenant undertake to ensure the right of everyone to form trades unions and to join the trade union of his or her choice. What did the Chinese government have to say about this? It filed a reservation which states:

The application of Article 8.1 (a) of the Covenant to the People's Republic of China shall be consistent with the relevant provisions of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, Trade Union Law of the People's Republic of China and Labor Law of the People's Republic of China;—

In other words, collective bargaining rights, the most basic and fundamental collective bargaining rights for working men and women in China, are completely denied. That has to be a concern when we speak of the accession of China to the WTO because, as we know, the WTO completely ignores the rights of working people.

• (1615)

It is interesting to talk about trade in the context of the WTO. I was present at Doha in Qatar in November of last year when the new round was negotiated, along with my colleague from Charlevoix and the minister, the parliamentary secretary and others. I think it should be very clear what happened in the context of that negotiation of a new round. Some of the most fundamental issues that the poorest countries, the least developed countries, were seeking to have addressed were ignored in that process, which was fundamentally undemocratic. There have been a number of excellent articles written about what took place there, the kinds of threats, the kind of bullying and intimidation, the kinds of inducements given to countries to ultimately force them into agreeing to a consensus for a new round.

Government Orders

It was our position as New Democrats, and the position of many of the NGOs who were present there, that before we launch a new round of the WTO we should be addressing some of the very serious outstanding issues, issues of existing implementation of commitments.

The poorest countries in the world, the least developed countries in the world, still too often are denied any meaningful access to markets in the north for their textiles and their agricultural products. Surely we should recognize that those products of the poorest countries must have an opportunity to be sold in our markets and the markets of the north without duties, without tariffs, in order to enable the desperately poor people of those countries to improve their standard of living. That was the promise that was made at the time the Uruguay round was concluded, but that promise has not been kept. What we have seen is a growing gap between the rich and the poor, and I say that this is the case both in Canada and globally.

There were other serious concerns as well. I have met with farmers, campesinos, in Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and elsewhere who have talked about how poor farmers have been driven off the land and have lost their livelihoods because of having to compete with heavily subsidized agricultural products from the United States. Clearly that is not acceptable and yet that is part of the WTO agenda. Similarly, the WTO is now launching a new round in some areas, which will be very destructive to least developed countries and to poor people throughout the planet. It wants to launch a new round on issues such as investment and competition.

What does that mean? Does it mean that we will see, within the context of the WTO, the kind of protection of corporate rights that we have seen within NAFTA under the investor state provision, chapter 11 of NAFTA? What it means is that the MAI, the multilateral agreement on investment, which was defeated a couple of years ago, is now coming back under another guise, the guise of negotiating so-called investment rules. We vigorously oppose those negotiations.

At the same time, there is pressure under the existing GATS agreement, the general agreement on trade in services, to go even further down the road of privatizing fundamental public services: health care, education and other public services. Once again, that part of the WTO agenda is something that we want nothing whatsoever to do with.

The WTO is very good at protecting corporate rights, very good at protecting the rights of multinational corporations, but why is it that while it can protect intellectual property and patents, it cannot protect and it seems it does not want to protect the most fundamental and basic human rights, the most fundamental and basic rights of workers, the eight core labour standards as recognized by the International Labour Organization? Why is it that the WTO cannot protect the most basic international environmental rights as well, the rights as set out in a whole range of multilateral environmental agreements?

•(1620)

In Doha each of those issues was raised: human rights, workers' rights and the rights of people to have a clean and healthy environment. In each case they were shot down by the WTO under that agenda. Yes, there was some very modest progress around one

of the most egregious breaches of the rights of working people, of poor people throughout the planet, particularly in Africa, Brazil and Asia, and that was on the issue of putting public health before the profits of multinational pharmaceutical companies under the so-called TRIPS agreement. There was a statement and it was a political statement. There was no amendment to the TRIPS agreement, but there was a political statement out of Doha saying that public health has to come first.

We welcome that, but unfortunately it does not go nearly far enough. It does not make it clear that those countries that have no manufacturing capacity whatsoever to manufacture affordable generic drugs should be able to import those drugs from other countries that can manufacture them.

I am calling today on the Government of Canada to make it very clear that we support unreservedly the right of those countries in a position to manufacture cheap, affordable pharmaceutical drugs, drugs that can deal with the epidemics of HIV-AIDS and tuberculosis and other epidemics, to make those drugs available to countries that have no manufacturing capacity. Surely the right of their citizens to have access to affordable drugs to fight these epidemics has to come before the right to profit of these multinational companies. That is still not clear in the context of the WTO.

For that reason as well we want to say that the accession to the WTO of China, while it is an important step in terms of including 1.3 billion people, still does not deal with the fundamental concerns about this undemocratic agenda of the World Trade Organization itself.

I want to say a word about Taiwan as well. I recently had the opportunity to participate in a forum of Asia-Pacific countries, some 24 or 25 countries of the Asia-Pacific region. During the course of that forum, a statement was made congratulating the People's Republic of China on its accession to the WTO. At the same time, when I attempted to include in that declaration from the Asia-Pacific forum a statement also congratulating Taiwan on its accession to the WTO, it was denied. The opportunity was denied by the People's Republic of China. This kind of heavy-handed thuggery by the People's Republic of China in terms of its relationship with Taiwan surely must be rejected, not only by parliament but by the Government of Canada as well. It is time we recognized that democracy is alive and well in Taiwan.

I had the opportunity and the great privilege of being able to participate as an observer in the recent December elections in Taiwan. It is a fiction to suggest that the People's Republic of China in any meaningful way represents the people of Taiwan. It is time that our government recognized that. It is time that our government recognized that the independent sovereign nation of Taiwan must be represented fully within international fora. I want to take this opportunity today, in the context of the debate on accession by China to the WTO, to call on our government to speak out much more vigorously to recognize the important role that Taiwan can and should be playing internationally in organizations such as the World Health Organization, the United Nations and other international fora as well. It is time that Canada ended its shameful acquiescence to the People's Republic of China in terms of its relationship with Taiwan. I hope that day will come sooner rather than later.

Government Orders

In closing, once again I want to say that because of our deep concerns about the undemocratic agenda of the WTO, because of the failure of the WTO to respect the rights of workers, to respect fundamental human rights and to ensure that the multilateral environmental agreements take precedence over the corporate rights of multinational companies, for all of those reasons, my colleagues in the New Democratic Party and I are opposing the principle of this legislation and calling for fair trade globally, not the kind of trade that the WTO is promoting.

• (1625)

As thousands said in Pôrto Alegre, Brazil just last month, un autre monde est possible, another world is possible, and it is that other world that we as New Democrats are striving for in the context of this debate today.

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I have talked this about China in the past. I pose a number of questions for him based on what China has done to its population.

Look what it has done with regard to the Falun Gong and Falun Dafa movement. Look at its occupation and displacement of the people of Tibet. It has trampled pro-democracy movements. There have been mass arrests, beatings, deaths and torture as a result of Tiananmen Square. Also, I am frustrated with our own government that Taiwan is not recognized in diplomatic relations.

The government gives the largest amount of our foreign aid to China which has been used to build railways into Tibet so Chinese troops can go there to suppress any type of effort by the people of Tibet to stand up against the occupation. As well, China is taking huge chunks of its budget and spending it on the development of nuclear and other weapons. It is the only nation on the face of the earth that I know of today that is keeling new nuclear submarines in the water.

Given all these things, I wonder whether we should be bending over backwards to make things easier for China with regard to World Trade Organization status or trade when other countries, which are far less expansionist and hurtful in southeast Asia, should be getting better treatment vis-à-vis China.

Mr. Svend Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that my hon. colleague from Calgary was unable to be here during the earlier part of the debate. I would have been most interested to hear his response to the comments of his colleague from the Canadian Alliance who was vigorously extolling the virtues of this legislation.

I have to ask this. Who is speaking for the Canadian Alliance? Is it the member from Saskatchewan who spoke earlier with a glowing defence of China's participation in the WTO or is it the member from Calgary who says it does not support this? It is just not clear to me who actually speaks on behalf of the Canadian Alliance on this issue.

Certainly with respect to the human rights issues raised by my friend, indeed I raised precisely those concerns earlier with respect to the treatment of Falun Gong practitioners, for example, and with respect to the ongoing, brutal repression of religious freedom in Tibet.

I also note that on the issue of the rights of workers in China, China has one of the worst records of any country in the world on the

issue of workplace health and safety. In the year 2000 alone more than 47,000 industrial accidents were reported in China. Its record is a shameful one. As the member from Calgary has quite properly pointed out, it is not at all clear to me that we should be rewarding that record.

As well, the member raised the issue of China's nuclear proliferation. On that issue we do not have to look just to China. We only have to look at some of the recent announcements by the United States with respect to national missile defence and some of the real concerns many of us have that this will lead to the weaponization of outer space, which is also a very great threat to world peace and security. We have to recognize that there are a number of threats in this area.

On the legislation itself, as I indicated earlier, my colleagues and I in the New Democratic Party are opposing the legislation. I would be most interested to know what the position is of the Canadian Alliance. Is it supporting the legislation or opposing it?

• (1630)

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the member's speech on the WTO acceptance of China. Like the hon. member, I have had the opportunity to travel China with the Canada-China Legislative Association. I am sure there are still a lot of issues that we are working on in terms of human rights and the migration of rural folks to the city. The same phenomenon is occurring in this country. However we do not live in a perfect world and I believe acceptance of China to the WTO is good for world peace.

It is the fourth largest trading partner with Canada. Thank God Canada took a positive position back 30 some odd years ago with China or else we would not be in this position today.

Perhaps the hon. member could answer this question. Is accepting China into the WTO good for world peace?

Mr. Svend Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I would not suggest that the acceptance of China into the WTO will promote world peace. There is no question that my party has long said there must be significant dialogue with China on human rights issues. I myself have travelled to China on a number of occasions and raised these concerns.

However we have to look at the impact of WTO policies in many other parts of the world. Are these policies that promote justice? Are these policies that promote economic justice? Are these policies that reduce the gap between rich and poor? No, quite the contrary. They raise that gap.

There is a real fear that in the context of China, particularly the poor and rural people will suffer from this. My colleague from Dauphin—Swan River said it is the same thing in Canada. He is absolutely right. In Canada we see that growing gap between the rich and the poor. It is precisely for that reason that we reject this neo-liberal model. We are calling for an alternative model of fair trade which will ensure there is not only trade, but that there is equity and that that trade promotes respect for the environment, promotes the rights of workers and human rights and reduces and ultimately eliminates the gap between rich and poor, hopefully.

Government Orders

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe the hon. member from the NDP just said what he did about globalization. The facts speak very clearly for themselves. Globalization is a way for countries to develop rules based mechanisms for human rights, the environment, labour laws and for removing the barriers to trade. Kofi Annan, secretary general of the United Nations, a person who is hardly considered to be right of centre, said that developing countries need is free trade.

Is the hon. member in favour of free and fair trade, which is what the WTO is trying to do, or does he want to pursue a socialist course of erecting barriers to trade around countries?

• (1635)

Mr. Svend Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I do want to pursue a democratic socialist course. For me the essence of democratic socialism is respect for fundamental human rights and respect for the opportunity of working men and women around the planet to have a more decent life.

When the hon. member talks about trade, the reality is these so-called trade agreements in many cases have nothing whatsoever to do with trade. For example, we have the whole issue of access to pharmaceutical drugs. The hon. member is a doctor so he should know about this. Under the provisions of the WTO, multinational pharmaceutical companies are trumping the rights of poor people to have access to desperately needed drugs to fight the epidemics of HIV-AIDS, tuberculosis and others. The WTO told us that we could not stockpile generic drugs so that they would be available quickly to Canadians once the patent period expired. That will cost Canadian taxpayers far more. We used to have some of the lowest priced pharmaceuticals in the world under compulsory licensing. This has nothing whatsoever to do with trade.

Ask the poor farmers in Chiapas, Mexico or in Pôrto Alegre, Brazil if so-called trade under the WTO has benefited them and they will tell us absolutely not. They have been driven off their land. We need another world than that.

Mr. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, the alternative to globalization is the erection of barriers to trade. My question for the hon. member is very simple. He knows full well that in Mexico and Brazil trade has actually improved the lives of some of the poorest people. Does he believe that the health and welfare of the people of Mexico is better after NAFTA or before NAFTA?

Mr. Svend Robinson: Mr. Speaker, the evidence is very clear. NAFTA has been a disaster for working people in Mexico, in the United States and in Canada. Just ask the women working in the maquiladora zones in Mexico, or the campesinos working in Chiapas, or the people of the town of Guadalcazar, Mexico who were told that they had to have a toxic waste dump in their community under chapter 11 of NAFTA.

NAFTA has been a disaster for working people in all three countries.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the

time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester, Foreign Affairs.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-50, a bill that would allow Canada to adapt its regulations and laws to accommodate the accession of the People's Republic of China to the WTO.

I always listen to the arguments of the hon. members because they make me think and then I add a lot of comments to my notes. I always end up with a mess on my page because I have so many notes.

Certainly whenever I hear somebody say, and I have heard this often today, that this is a housekeeping bill, I wonder if it is a housekeeping bill. In this case it is not a housekeeping bill. The bill amends many acts of our Canadian legislature. It would do a lot to provide protection for Canadian industry and would eventually affect human rights in China and probably in other countries. The bill, if passed, will have a major impact on many of us.

It is rather ironic that we are talking about the accession of China to the WTO when, as we speak, the deputy minister for international trade is in Washington with six officials from six provinces to discuss softwood lumber issues which have come to an impasse.

When the negotiators wrote the NAFTA agreement and made all the arrangements that would give us free trade with the United States, I wonder if they predicted that the domestic laws in the U.S. would throw up so many hurdles to our trade in Canada.

I come back to this being a housekeeping bill. I am wondering what things we are missing and what the impact will be from this in three, four, five or even ten years and from the things we overlooked, the things we thought we had.

Certainly with the United States we thought we had free trade, but because of the domestic laws and the tools available to the U.S. industry and the reluctance of the U.S. government to take a leadership role and get a handle on this, it is now trying to rule what we in Canada do in our forestry industry.

All these trade bills and agreements have far reaching impacts and are not just housekeeping bills. When we are talking about dealing with a country that has 40 times the population of Canada, it is hard to imagine the imbalance of trade. We all know how difficult it is and all the problems we have with our trading partner, the U.S., and it only has 10 times our population. China has 40 times our population and there will probably be 40 times the problems as this trade agreement proceeds.

Government Orders

As the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas said, there are human rights aspects to this agreement. I am sorry he is not here to hear this part of the discussion because he and I were on a human rights mission in Colombia last week. Colombia's huge problem is the drug trade. Part of the problem with the drug trade is that there are no options for the farmers in the jungles and fields where they have their cocaine. If it had more trade and a more advanced economy the people would have more options to get out of the drug trade, which would have a big impact on that country.

One of the big issues at that time, which was presented to the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas, myself and other members of the committee, was that the country needed new opportunities for trade and new opportunities for the economies to grow. Trade agreements such as this are the way to do that. They are not perfect. We cannot just snap our fingers and suddenly impose human rights issues to meet our human rights approaches to change in either Colombia, China or anywhere else. The only way we influence these societies is if we do trade and communicate with them and make their citizens aware of the options to a way of life.

I often think of the Middle East and the fact that the people in some of the countries that have a repressed society are now seeing the optional standards of living that are offered by other countries around the world. That is creating stresses and strains in those countries which has resulted in a lot of the conflicts and differences we have unfortunately experienced.

● (1640)

Bill C-50 would change our rules to accommodate the accession of China to the WTO. It is an interesting process that has been going on since 1986. An agreement has been reached for China to enter the WTO. The agreement will help our agricultural industries and manufacturers to access this market, which is a closed market, to a great extent. These rules will help us to enter their markets, which again is 40 times larger than our market, while at the same time provides some protection for our own industries which feel threatened by this trade arrangement, as evidenced by many of the presentations made to our committee.

The textile industry is concerned that China could actually have 100% market share, whereas now the market share is divided among perhaps 20 countries. However certain specific items that were brought to the committee's attention could eventually be totally supplied by China.

It is interesting to see how these agreements evolve and the things that are involved with them. For instance, China had to change a lot of things to become a member of the WTO. One of the things required of China was transparency. All its trade related laws and regulations had to be published and available to the other WTO partners prior to their implementation so that the other countries and other members of the WTO could influence those changes. I am sure this is a whole new ball game for China and a healthy and positive step.

Domestic and foreign companies that are affected by trade related, judicial and administrative decisions can now request formal reviews. This is a new opening for China and will create public awareness by the business communities in China and Canada about the different cultures and standards.

Product standards and related procedures are to be imported and brought into line with international practice. That makes sense. It will bring costs down for consumers, make products more competitive and allow us to enter China's market and China to enter ours. Canadian companies that are competitive will be able to compete.

The requirements previously imposed on foreign investors will be eliminated. Canadian investors, for the very first time, will be able to invest in a more open market and in different aspects of the Chinese economy. That will establish lines of communications and connections between our two societies, two philosophies and two cultures. It also has to be a positive move with respect to human rights and standards of society.

China will be required to meet these requirements and abide by them, although in some cases I note that the American congressional study identified certain areas where China has not been very consistent and that its track record for following through on agreements has not been very good. We will have to follow up on that to ensure that they do, as will, I am sure, the WTO.

As Canada's fourth largest trading partner and having 40 times our population, having access to China's market has to be a positive move for the Canadian economy. Canada's duties and tariffs have not changed for China. The committee was comfortable with some of the witnesses' concerns. Some of the increases in imports that are expected by some of the industries will not occur because of the lack of change in imports and duties. However, we will be following up on the red flags that have been raised.

Growth sectors for Canada include cultural industries, environmental technologies, financial services, specialized machinery, auto parts and plastic goods. That is a wide array of products and opportunities for Canada to a market with a population 40 times larger than Canada's population.

Safeguards have been put in place. I hope the government has done a satisfactory job in making sure the regulations and safeguards are bulletproof because we are finding out that where we thought we were safe and protected in other trade agreements, we were not. The best example right now is with the United States which is trying to impose its forestry practices on Canada. As a result, thousands of Canadians in the forestry industry are out of work. Once again, we thought we had free trade with the United States but we do not.

● (1645)

Another positive aspect is that China will be forced to upgrade its economy to international standards and eliminate unaccepted practices that have gone on for many years, which would not be acceptable in most other societies or cultures.

We are optimistic that by creating public awareness and opening lines of communication, we will be able to influence the standards of human rights and democracy as a part of the trade issue. Human rights and democracy cannot be separated. They are tied together. Perhaps some would rather not have them tied together, but they are.

Government Orders

I noted earlier that the Chinese track record for abiding by agreements and trade negotiations is not stable. A U.S. congressional committee recently stated that China has broken every agreement made with the U.S. in the last 10 years.

The process for invoking safeguards provided by the bill is convoluted and lengthy. Again in context with the softwood lumber, the Canadian softwood lumber industry has no protection. The safeguards we thought were there are not because the domestic laws and avenues available to the U.S. industry have created havoc in Canada over the softwood lumber issue.

It has been suggested that privatization in China has already driven up unemployment. When this happens there can be a backlash. It could end up in civil demonstrations or even worse. Any time an economy changes dramatically, as we learned from the Russian experience, it must be done slowly and incrementally. Countries like Canada, the United States and other major economies must help these countries adjust from their current processes to a market based economy.

We support the bill in principle. We certainly support having China join the WTO. We are skeptical about some the aspects of the bill simply because we have been surprised before and are paying a huge price for it. We hope it will induce further communication between our two societies and raise awareness in the citizens of China of optional lifestyles. Hopefully it will lead to improvements in both of our economies and in democracy and human rights in China.

• (1650)

Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the comments of my friend. I am glad to hear his high level of support for this initiative.

He made some reference to the ongoing saga of the softwood lumber dispute. I note to him that the problem in this file is that the free trade agreement is not being respected, and that really is the problem.

In referring to human rights, my friend mentioned that these agreements were not perfect. This is exactly the case. Unfortunately, we can have a free trade agreement, be it bilateral or trilateral as NAFTA or the WTO, where a country cannot live up to its obligations. That is the reality. We do not have and probably never will have a perfect trade agreement.

I would like to ask my friend two questions. First, given such shortcomings and such problems which crop up from time to time, such as softwood lumber, and no doubt will crop up under the WTO, does he not think that a rules based trading system is by far the best way for a country to go, particularly Canada? Canada is so dependent on trade for its economic success.

Second, I would like to give him an opportunity to comment on the Kofi Annan comment made by one of my Alliance colleagues earlier, and I will add to that comment. Mr. Annan said that globalized and liberalized free trade, and he quantified it, would mean as much as \$150 billion for the developing nations of the world.

My Alliance colleague asked my NDP colleague from Burnaby—Douglas the question and unfortunately he ducked it, as he did when I asked him. I have never heard that party attempt to answer the question. What is the reaction of my colleague from the PC/DR coalition to the comments of Mr. Annan?

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, I am very glad that the parliamentary secretary asked me a question because I have a question for him. If he gets a chance, I would like him to give us the answer.

It is a simple question about China. I would like to know which six provinces are represented in the United States, in Washington, on the softwood lumber issue. I could not find that out.

Moving on to the question the parliamentary secretary asked me, I totally believe in rules based trade. I not only believe in it because of trade issues and because it provides consistency and usually an appeal process, but because it is just a natural way to do business. It ends up extending into human rights issues and rules based societies. I do not believe that in this day and age we can remove human rights from trade issues completely. They are affected by each other.

As far as Kofi Annan's comments are concerned, I can think of specific cases where people are asking for more opportunities and more broadly based economies which would result from free trade and trade agreements.

Going back to Colombia, many of the people in the drug trade business say "We will get out of the drug trade business if there is an option, but there is no option for us. Give us other options. Let us do anything. Give us other opportunities, other ways to make a living, so that we can feed and educate our children". However, there are no other ways so they resort to the drug trade.

I certainly look forward to the parliamentary secretary's answer to my question.

• (1655)

The Deputy Speaker: Before we get to that, we are going to see what the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca wants to ask you.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was in Colombia and saw what was there.

I would suggest to him that the farmers are having difficulty exporting because of trade barriers. Trade barriers were one of the major obstacles for Colombian farmers to grow something other than coca.

Does the hon. member agree that what needs to be done here in North America is reduce the consumption of drugs? Probably that is the most effective way in which we can reduce that bloody conflict in Colombia that has claimed more than 30,000 lives over the last 20 years.

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, certainly trade barriers are a problem for Colombia. However, Colombia has so many problems it would be hard to say that is the key problem.

Government Orders

The farmers in Colombia also suffer from a lack of transportation. They suffer from thugs and criminals who impose themselves on them, threaten them, put fear in their lives and direct their operations in many ways, despite what I think are tremendous efforts by the Colombian government with limited resources to combat that.

Certainly in Colombia there are a lot of problems to address. One of them is trade barriers. At the moment there are much bigger problems to deal with and I hope Colombia is successful in dealing with them.

Mr. Pat O'Brien: Mr. Speaker, I almost thought I was back in question period when my colleague asked me a question even though I had not given a speech.

In the spirit of the co-operation I have enjoyed with my colleague and friend across the way, I will confer with our officials and report to him this day exactly which provinces are represented because as always, I would not want to give him any inaccurate information.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Calgary West.

I have a great deal of difficulty with the bill but I support it. My party supports it. Our hope is that the removal of trade barriers and the inclusion of China in the WTO will add to a liberalization of the country and an improvement in human rights within that country.

China represents one-fifth of the earth's population. It is our fourth largest trading partner. It has the largest economy not currently in the WTO.

Part of the reason we would like to see the removal of trade barriers is that trade does not necessarily confer a moral agreement with the regime in power. Trade exists between individuals and firms. We cannot confuse our moral condonement of a nation's policies and behaviour with a desire to increase bilateral trade. Our hope is that when we look at this in 20 years we will see that the improvement of trade has actually increased discourse between cultures and individuals and that it has managed to liberalize the political environment within China.

One of the primary faults in geopolitics is the belief that there is only one superpower, the United States. I believe that is a myth. China's behaviour could best be summed up in a comment made by Sun tzu, the famous Chinese philosopher. He said that one of the best ways of displaying strength is to show a rather benign and weak front to an opponent but behind that, to develop an extraordinary amount of strength.

China has been doing that for some time. Not only has it had a super heated economy but it has had a super heated military machine. While we have been looking at other problems around the world, China has been developing ballistic missiles and nuclear capabilities. It has been purchasing and producing large scale armaments, including aircraft carriers which will enable it to extend its reach abroad. This is often denied and ignored in international foreign policy.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister with our allies must pay close heed to this behaviour in future dealings with China. We simply cannot ignore it. It is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Some people have articulated very well what China has been doing over the years.

China's behaviour is another matter. If we look at the Spratly Islands, Taiwan and Tibet in particular, which my friend and colleague will discuss, China has displayed repeatedly an absolute utter neglect for the basic norms of human rights that Canadians and the international community hold dear.

China is among the worst abusers of human rights in the world. Tibet is a case in point. In the 1940s China annexed a good chunk of Tibet and was responsible for the murder of tens of thousands of innocent Tibetans. The Chinese murdered thousands of monks and nuns and burned down almost all the 6,400 monasteries in Tibet. It was an act of cultural genocide. This is something the international community has chosen to pay little heed to.

It is instructive to judge a country's future by looking at its past. The repressive regime in China thinks very little of human rights or human life. Today it continues to abuse the basic human rights of people in Tibet. In fact, 74% of the political prisoners in Tibet held by the Chinese are nuns and monks. It is a case of overt religious oppression by a repressive regime.

Other members have mentioned this eloquently both inside and outside the House. The government could have spoken more forcefully on this issue. The government could have been more aggressive by bringing the issue to international fora such as the UN but it has chosen not to.

● (1700)

It is sad, because if we do not discuss these egregious abuses of human rights, in a way we become party to them. We have seen many cases in history where our neglect to examine abuses of the basic human rights of people has caused widespread traumatic problems for all of us.

Fair trade is good, but we simply cannot ignore the situation on the ground. The saving grace in the liberalization of trade is perhaps the response of the more hard line members of the Chinese regime, those who would wish to support and continue the status quo. They are against the normalization of trade between countries. That fact gives me hope that what we are trying to do is the right thing, that it will improve human rights, liberalize the country and ensure that the basic human rights of Chinese people will be improved and not worsened and that by liberalizing trade we are not part and party unwillingly and unwittingly to a worsening of human rights.

The militarists and reactionaries of China oppose the liberalization of trade. They correctly see it as a threat to their repressive regime. My hope is that in the engagement of trade we also put in conditions that China cannot engage in human rights abuses on one hand while engaging in the normalization of trade on the other.

Government Orders

In the discussions on including China in the WTO, it was very interesting to see the behaviour of China. China tried to introduce a number of loopholes through which it could be included in the WTO if it were to adhere to the spirit and meaning of the WTO. That is a vague and open-ended statement if ever there was one. We cannot tolerate that. China has to adhere to the same human rights norms that we, the United States and all parties to the WTO must adhere to. It is not an either/or situation. It is a condition upon China being introduced and becoming a full, respected member of the WTO.

China must not engage in behaviour that will compromise the regional security in that area. I mentioned the Spratly Islands, Taiwan and Tibet. The international community cannot turn a blind eye to that type of behaviour. Nor can it turn a blind eye to the acquisition of ballistic missiles, nuclear capable technology and the expansion of China's military hardware.

I find it remarkable that the government chooses to give aid to China, a country that is spending hundreds of billions of dollars on improving and expanding its military capabilities. I do not think Canadian taxpayers want to see their hard earned money sent under the guise of official development assistance to a country like China, which is one of the largest economic powers in the world, to build up its military hardware. That is not why we help underprivileged countries. The government should stop its official development assistance to China immediately.

I strongly encourage the government to speak out more forcefully against the human rights abuses against the people of Tibet and China's egregious abuses of the norms of international security when it rattles sabres against Taiwan. The only resolution to the Taiwan-China situation will occur through peaceful negotiation. Sabre rattling against Taiwan or the Spratly Islands only causes concern for the international community as well as for the region.

In conclusion, our party supports the inclusion of China in the WTO but it is not support at any cost. The Canadian Alliance will be paying close attention to the behaviour of China on human rights and religious freedoms and in engaging in fair trade, not the abusive trade practices of the past.

• (1705)

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I commend my hon. colleague from Esquimalt for his eloquent remarks. He is well esteemed in this place as one of its principle and most consistent voices in defence of human rights. I associate myself strongly with his critique of the policies of the People's Republic of China.

However I am not entirely persuaded by my hon. friend's argument that passage of Bill C-50 and the accession of the People's Republic of China to the World Trade Organization would lead to an improvement of the human rights situation. I am not entirely persuaded it would end the cultural genocide in Tibet or stop aggressive militaristic Chinese foreign policy vis-à-vis Taiwan.

Does the hon. member not think granting the dictatorial Chinese communist authorities treasured access to international markets would reward them for perpetuating a system based on denial of human dignity and violation of human rights? Does he not think it perverse to reward the Chinese government with economic

opportunity before it has shown concrete steps toward ending the repugnant practices to which his speech referred?

Mr. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for his question. It is an essential moral question I struggled with regarding Bill C-50. I do not know the answer. As I said in my speech, we must look at it 10 years down the line to see if it has worked. My hope and prayer is that it will.

I take some solace in Bill C-50 because the most hardline supporters of the despotic regime in China are those most opposed to the liberalization of trade. That fact alone gives me hope that by liberalizing trade and increasing discourse between China and the free world we would be able to improve the norms of human rights within China.

Do I think it would change the situation in Tibet overnight? I absolutely do not. Nor do I think it would change in the intermediate term. The only way to change the situation in Tibet and China is by fostering repeated and increasing discourse between the free world and China. We need to break down barriers and strengthen the Chinese middle class. We need to make the young and the middle class in China understand that basic human rights are fundamental to the security of a country. We need to show them that respect for human rights in other countries is fundamental to the strength of China as a nation. My hope is that this will occur.

As I said in my speech, liberalizing trade would not give tacit moral approval to the Chinese regime. Trade is a discourse between individuals and firms. We could use other measures to express our dissatisfaction. If China took a hard turn toward becoming more despotic we could use WTO trade levers against it. I hope the government has the courage to do that. Members of the Canadian Alliance would be pushing the government to do it.

• (1710)

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has touched on a lot of the issues. I will address an issue I did not hear in his speech.

The People's Republic of China is using our foreign aid to build a railway from its interior regions to the area that used to be known as Tibet, an area which was significantly larger before the turn of the last century. If we look at atlases from that period Tibet was probably three times the size of the area China recognizes today. Canadian foreign aid is being used to build a railway so Chinese troops can be sent to suppress potential independence movements in Tibet.

Mr. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, China has annexed over half the territory of Tibet. Not only that has happened. In the World Bank there was a proposal to move large numbers of Chinese people into eastern Tibet. It is an issue many of us in the Canadian Alliance have fought hard against and put a freeze on for the time being.

As a party we are completely and unequivocally opposed to the use of Canadian taxpayer funds for the abuse in any way, shape or form of the Chinese people or the aggressive extraterritorial actions of the Chinese regime.

Government Orders

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in response to the question of the member for Calgary Southeast regarding China's accession to the World Trade Organization, Bill C-50 would implement safeguards and anti-dumping rights so we could protect Canadian industries in the event there were surges of imports from China that could cause injury.

Bill C-50 raises a number of difficult moral questions. I am generally a big believer in free trade. That being said, we jeopardize free trade when we allow countries to wipe out our ability to produce strategic goods by flooding us with cheap products of their own. Such is the case with microchips, precision small ball bearings and whatnot. We do not want to lose our ability to produce the things that are essential for the security of our economy. That is where I draw the line.

The hon. member for Calgary Southeast and my other colleague raised another moral quandary. It is tough to imagine a country with a worse record than China with regard to human rights issues, expansionism or militarism. China is probably the single greatest human rights abuser in the world today. We need to consider whether a country like China should receive the open trade policies and foreign aid Canada condones giving it.

First, let us take the Falun Gong or Falun Dafa movement. It exists outside China, but those who practice it inside China are detained without trial. They suffer beatings. They have died in massive numbers in custody. They have had their tapes and printed materials confiscated and destroyed. What has it all been for? The pacifist group is today's moral equivalent of Mahatma Gandhi. It is persecuted in China because it has a larger potential support base than the communist party. That is the chief reason Falun Gong practitioners are persecuted.

I am not raising these questions only with regard to what goes on in China. I am talking about what China's embassies, missions and consulates in other countries do to Falun Gong practitioners on behalf of the policies of the People's Republic.

Canadians living here have had their business dealings interfered with. Officers of the People's Republic of China have gathered information about them and communicated with their families back home to apply pressure. The issue goes above and beyond anything China is doing within its own territory or to its neighbours. It is affecting people here in Canada.

With regard to Taiwan, some hon. members have talked about China's gunboat threats, patrols and exercises in the Formosa Strait. During the Taiwanese elections Chinese military leaders bragged about two stage rocket technology with a range that could hit Los Angeles. Let us imagine conducting an election campaign next to a massive nation with a population of 1.3 billion and one of the largest armies in the world. Let us imagine it rattling sabres and talking about how it could storm not only you but the biggest ally that could ever hope to defend you. Compared to that, other issues seem benign.

China does not recognize the independence of Taiwan. It fights diplomatic recognition of Taiwan whenever it can. I will go on record in this place as saying I support the Canadian government getting off the fence and giving Taiwan full diplomatic recognition.

•(1715)

It goes on from there. In 1997 Hong Kong went back to Chinese control. What have we seen since? Hundreds of thousands of people have fled Hong Kong and come to Canada for refuge. One might ask why. It is because there has been a chilling of freedom of the press and a suppression of freedom of speech.

The main Chinese population which happens to be Han is flooding Hong Kong. According to estimates anywhere from 200,000 to 500,000 Chinese of Han ethnicity have flooded into Hong Kong to try to drown out what was a symbol of free trade and free enterprise. Cantonese, the language commonly spoken on the streets of Hong Kong five years ago, is giving way to Mandarin.

As one of my hon. colleagues mentioned, China's military is building aircraft carriers. It is trying to develop three stage rocket technology for intercontinental ballistic missiles. It is still putting new nuclear submarines into the water.

With regard to Tibet China has seized the Panchen Lama, the person who would succeed the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama is exiled. He must operate out of a base in northern India at the Dip-Tse-Chok-Ling monastery among other places.

My hon. colleagues have talked about religious repression, the murders of tens of thousands of monks and nuns, foreign aid being used to build railways so the Chinese can suppress Tibetan independence, and the flooding of Tibet with members of the Chinese Han population as a form of territorial expansion.

Within its own population China enforces its one child policy by forcing abortions on women at the end of a bayonet.

With regard to student democracy movements, we all know what happened in Tiananmen Square where tens of thousands of students were arrested and many were killed.

Not a single one of these activities should be supported, condoned, or given any form of reward. It is troubling. Edmund Burke said evil triumphs when good men do nothing. Turning a blind eye to the activities of the People's Republic of China toward its neighbours, its own citizens and the operations of its missions, consulates and embassies overseas would be a grave mistake. Its activities should not be rewarded or condoned. We should not treat them lightly as though China were just another peaceful neighbour.

China has territorial expansionist aspirations. Such things should be checked. With regard to free trade policies we should be helping countries like India. India's one billion population and non-expansionist behaviour would make it a far better trading partner than a regime like the People's Republic of China.

•(1720)

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I was not intending to speak to this bill until I realized a few moments ago that it was on the order paper. I join my colleagues from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca and Calgary West in expressing grave concerns about the bill before the House.

I say that as somebody who is often accused of being a knee-jerk free trader, somebody who believes implicitly in the idea of free trade between civilized nations. We have much to look at in the past 50 years in terms of the improvement of living standards throughout the world by the expansion of the circle of exchange and enterprise permitted by free and orderly trade between countries.

However, free and democratic countries such as Canada and the United States must realize that free markets in and of themselves are not a panacea to all political and economic problems, particularly when it comes to regimes such as the communist dictatorial regime of the People's Republic of China whose very premise is the denial and denigration of the dignity of the human person.

My colleagues from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca and Calgary West have itemized some of the atrocious abuses committed against human rights by the PRC authorities. It includes the 50 year campaign of cultural genocide in Tibet which has virtually destroyed a people, their culture and their faith and a contemporary campaign against a relatively small and innocuous group, Falun Gong.

However there are other groups which are persecuted in China who receive less notoriety in the west. They receive less press coverage perhaps because we have for some reason less sympathy. The Chinese government has a very deliberate campaign of religious persecution. It persecutes religious minorities, in particular Protestant churches and Catholics loyal to the Pope, namely fully communicating Catholics.

The Chinese constitution ostensibly permits freedom of religion but only for those who practise religion in institutions, that is, in churches formally recognized and ordained by the state which itself excludes most people of faith who refuse to allow their faith to be exercised under the ambit of the state.

Let us make no mistake about why this is. We are talking about a communist regime whose official creed is atheism. It has an official established religion, and that is the rejection and denial of God. When individuals choose to assert their relationship to God, the government intervenes, crushes them, arrests them, throws them into forced labour camps or throws them into prison.

I recently read an autobiography of a humble Chinese Catholic priest who spent 35 of the past 40 years in a series of Chinese labour camps and prisons. He was forced to do disgusting labour of the worst kind and living in the most deplorable circumstances. His experience is not uncommon in the People's Republic of China.

Last week the Vatican released the names of 33 bishops and priests who were detained or are being kept under strict surveillance and forbidden to worship. These are people who were arrested in the last couple of weeks. It is estimated that there are several thousand Protestant and Catholic clergy in similar situations. President Bush during his trip to China made this clear during his time in that country.

For example, Father Lu Genjun, a 39 year old underground Roman Catholic priest was arrested two months in Heibei province and has now apparently been sentenced to three years in a labour camp. His crimes were receiving theology training, being ordained a Roman Catholic priest, refusing to recognize the patriotic association

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which is the bogus shadow Catholic church contrived by the communist authorities and conducting evangelization.

• (1725)

This kind of thing happens on a daily basis in China for those who seek to publicly express their most deeply held conscientious faith convictions. My hon. colleague from Calgary West talked about the ugly side of the Chinese single child population policy which includes documented cases of forced abortions and sterilizations.

China is ordering one of its remote poverty stricken regions to commit at least 20,000 abortions by the end of the year. This is the state creating an abortion quota. This has been documented by Steven Mosher of the Population Research Institute and formerly the *Wall Street Journal*. Chinese population authorities, who by the way are funded in part by the United Nations fund for population activities, which in turn is shamefully funded by our own CIDA, set up population control tents in remote provinces in smaller communities. They do a survey and if people there have been having more than their quota of a single child, the authorities will go from house to house and arrest and round up women who may be pregnant with a second or third child.

There are documented and in some cases filmed experiences where mothers have been taken to these so-called population control tents and forced to undergo abortions or sterilizations. This is the kind of regime that we are dealing with.

Steven Mosher, who has written books and articles about this for western journals has said:

If medals were given to nations for committing human rights abuses, China would win the gold every time.

Before we approve the bill I hope that we are fully conscious of the kind of regime which we are seeking to reward with greater economic trade benefits through accession to the WTO.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[*English*]

REFUGEES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): I wish to inform the House that there is an error in the text of Motion No. 422 in today's Order Paper. The motion suggests changes to paragraph 101(1)(e) of the Immigration Act and not 101(7)(e). I regret any inconvenience this may have caused hon. members.

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance) moved:

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That, in the opinion of this House, the government should make regulations under paragraph 101(1)(e) of the Immigration Act with the effect that people claiming to be refugees pursuant to the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees will not be admitted for consideration of their claim from the following countries: the United States, New Zealand, Australia and all countries that are members of the European Economic Union.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to discuss my private member's Motion No. 422. I would first like to express my disappointment that the motion was deemed non-votable, especially when business can come from the other place without ever having to enter into the lottery and is instantly made votable.

I dare say that public safety and secure borders are more relevant to most Canadians than creating a national horse or setting aside a day in honour of a former prime minister. That is not to suggest that those issues do not have merit. They certainly do, but we must get our priorities straight in this place.

That being said, the motion states:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should make regulations under paragraph 101(1)(e) of the Immigration Act with the effect that people claiming to be refugees pursuant to the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees will not be admitted for consideration of their claim from the following countries: the United States, New Zealand, Australia and all countries that are members of the European Economic Union.

The issue of refugees coming to Canada has been of significant public concern for decades. If average Canadians were asked what they thought about Canada's refugee system we would find they are very proud of the fact that we have assisted tens of thousands of people who are genuinely persecuted in foreign lands. I also think we would hear that people are tired of Canada's generosity being taken advantage of by fraudulent refugee claims.

My motion would virtually eliminate the practice of silent shopping and the use of our refugee system as a back door immigration method. This would help offset public opinion that in one survey says 70% of Canadians agree that many people claiming to be refugees are not real refugees.

It is vital for Canada to continue its tradition of helping those less fortunate and I truly believe that. I believe that if Canadians were able to see that only genuine refugees were being admitted those attitudes would greatly change. It is as equally vital that Canadians not feel used. By prescribing certain nations as safe third countries the government would restore a lot of confidence in Canada's refugee system.

Before addressing the motion I would like to congratulate the government for entering into an accord with the United States that would implement one aspect of my motion. It was only shortly after I gave notice of my motion that the former immigration minister announced that Canada and the United States would be entering into a safe third country agreement that would turn back refugee claimants coming from either country.

This is especially significant considering that the majority of asylum seekers come to Canada through the United States by using its visa system as a staging ground to enter Canada for an easy refugee claim. Unfortunately all we have at this point is some talk. We have no agreement yet.

I would now like to address why it is important to list all western democracies that adhere to and are signatories to the United Nations convention on refugees. One immigration policy expert, James Bissett, who spent several years in the civil service, says Canada could reduce bogus claims by 40% if it adopted a safe third country rule across the board. Thus Canada would stop accepting refugees who travel to Canada via the United States or other modern, liberal democracies where they clearly face no threat of persecution.

This is what my motion suggests. Canada is a destination of choice for refugee asylum shoppers because it accepts up to 60% of all claimants compared to 28% in the United States and only 10% in Europe. This rule would force claimants to make their case in the first country they land in rather than the most likely country to accept them.

The member for London North Centre, the Liberal chairman of the all party committee on border security, said the two countries must put a stop to economic migrants who claim refugee status after gaining legal entry into Canada. He said:

If you are coming from a safe third country, that is, the United States, you are not being persecuted and you are in that country, why do you want to make a refugee claim here? We should be able to deport them and send them back to the United States. What the United States wants to do with them is their own problem. It shouldn't become our problem.

What many Canadians do not recognize is how expensive it is to allow people coming from safe third countries to make a claim in Canada. It cost Canadian taxpayers more that \$21 million last year just to provide free lawyers for refugee claimants, many of whom entered from the United States after their visitor, work or student visas expired.

● (1735)

The costs do not include welfare and health care spending to accommodate refugee claimants. With both our health and welfare systems strained to the breaking point, it is ridiculous to continue allowing people to come to Canada to make a refugee claim when they could have made that claim in the first country in which that they landed.

Critics of a motion such as mine will say that I am being cold and heartless. That could not be further from the truth. I am very proud of the role Canada plays in assisting people with nowhere else to turn, those who are genuine refugees. It is an unfortunate reality, however, that we have also become the destination of choice for asylum shoppers.

If my motion had been deemed votable and subsequently passed in the House of Commons, the government could have virtually put an end to the practice of asylum shopping and sharply curtailed queue jumping, leaving room for our overtaxed refugee determination system to focus on people truly in need of Canada's assistance.

This of course raises the question of who is in need of Canada's assistance.

Private Members' Business

Canada expects to receive 45,000 refugee claims by the end of this fiscal year, up from 38,000 last year, of which only 8,000 of the claimants are government sponsored. Are 45,000 claims that are expected to arrive not a truly disproportionate number to the 8,000 that have been pre-screened and known to be genuine refugees long before they came to Canada?

If we did not have so many people constantly showing up at our doorstep, imagine the relief we could provide to refugees in camps around the world where people have no hope of ever finding asylum because they are the poorest of the poor.

The majority of the 45,000 asylum seekers will come through countries where they could make claims but have chosen to come to Canada, most likely because it is widely known that if they make it to Canada they are all but assured of having their claim accepted and if it is rejected, it is also widely understood that one will never get deported.

It is very clear to anyone in the world that Canada does not have the wherewithal, nor perhaps the political will, to deport failed refugee claimants or even dangerous criminals. This point is made very clear by the fact that Canadian immigration officials have no idea where over 27,000 failed refugee claimants are, even though they have been ordered deported.

If the government were to list all the countries that are signatories to the UN convention on refugees, our immigration system could put far more focus on removing undesirables from this country instead of simply losing them and not knowing if they have or have not left the country.

Let me take this one step further. If we had implemented the safe third country strategy in time, we would likely not have had to deal with the likes of Tafari Renneck, a violent fugitive who was deported from the United States for sex offences and was later granted refugee status after slipping into Canada.

When Canadians read regular news stories like this one, they certainly do not feel safe, especially considering the recent terrorist attacks on America. If we are willing to provide a safe haven for violent sex offenders, who else are we willing to harbour?

What is worse is how this looks to our allies. Since the terrorist attacks on September 11, despite all its bristle and the introduction of Bill C-36, the Anti-terrorism Act, the federal government has stubbornly refused to acknowledge that our overly generous refugee system poses a major threat to our country's security and to that of our American neighbour.

Last year, we know that more than 45,000 asylum seekers arrived in Canada. Most of them were smuggled into the country by international criminal organizations that, in turn, brought these people through safe third countries. I would point out that many of these smuggling problems would be solved if we listed all western nations as safe third countries. After the events of September 11, it is inexcusable not to list all UN signatories to the refugee convention as safe third countries.

However, even more alarming is the knowledge that since the attacks against New York City and the Pentagon last September, more than 15,000 asylum seekers have entered Canada. Of these,

close to 2,500 have come from terrorist producing countries, like Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Somalia, Algeria, Albania and Afghanistan. An additional 870 have arrived from Sri Lanka, almost all of them undoubtedly Tamils.

That is certainly not to suggest that all of these claimants are bogus. However, some could quite easily be members or supporters of various well-known terrorist organizations, like al-Qaeda or the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The LTTE is one of the deadliest terrorist organizations in the world and is banned in Britain and the United States. I would suggest that if Canada had already proscribed the countries mentioned in my motion, this number would be significantly smaller and there would be far fewer opportunities for terrorists and criminals to slip through undetected.

Even if we were to disregard the current events, the reality is that when an illegal entrant arrives on Canadian soil and claims to be a refugee, there is very little chance that the individual will be removed, as I have already mentioned; remember the 27,000 deportees missing.

● (1740)

Unfortunately, this is especially true of serious criminals and terrorists because their removal frequently means they would be required to face justice in their homeland. Any thought of removal in such cases runs up against formidable obstacles. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies not only to Canadian citizens but also to anyone on Canadian soil whether in Canada legally or not.

In addition to the charter protection, even the most outlandish allegation that the individual might be mistreated or tortured will guarantee months, if not years of litigation. After several years of reviews, appeals and rehearings, the individual's own country will often refuse to accept the person back. Canada has been stuck with a number of these cases.

It would be easy to go on about this issue but I am allowed only so much. More important, I am looking forward to what my colleagues have to say about my motion. As I said before, it is unfortunate that this motion is not votable especially because the government appears somewhat warm to the idea of implementing safe third countries in our immigration policy.

Mr. Mark Assad (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, I would like to start by pointing out that the government cannot support the motion by the hon. member for Surrey North. It is not that we are fundamentally opposed to the underlying notion. We agree that asylum seekers should make their claims in the first country that they can.

We do not agree that Canada should take unilateral action. We do not believe that a responsible member of the international community should return refugee claimants to the last country they passed through with no thought to the implications for either the individual or the third country to which the person is being returned. Aside from the many legal and human rights questions that idea raises, it would not help our relations with those other countries.

Private Members' Business

Let us start from a basic point. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, which the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration just announced will be implemented on June 28 of this year, authorizes the Government of Canada to create a list of countries to which refugee claimants can be returned in safety and to pursue the claim. This is not a new provision. Variations on the idea of protection in safe third world countries have been in Canada's immigration legislation since 1989. The approach is inconsistent with our obligations under the Geneva convention on refugees.

[*Translation*]

Our new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act allows Canada to enter into what are commonly called safe third agreements with other countries. To do so, we are obliged to consider some key factors.

First, is that other country a signatory to the two major conventions on refugee protection and torture? Second, are that country's refugee claim policies and practices in keeping with its obligations under the two conventions? Third, what is its human rights record? And, finally, does that country have an agreement with Canada on the sharing of responsibility for refugee protection?

In essence, all this is designed to make sure that refugee claimants get fair and impartial hearings at the first reasonable opportunity. None of this is designed so that countries can evade their responsibilities under domestic law and international agreements.

Without a doubt, the best way for Canada to guarantee that we will achieve our policy goals is by developing agreements on sharing responsibility for refugee claimants with other countries.

There is a precedent for that kind of agreement. Member states of the European Union have established a responsibility sharing agreement through their Dublin convention. So, what about the United States then?

• (1745)

[*English*]

In fact, the Government of Canada has pursued the idea of a responsibility sharing agreement with the United States. Back in 1995, officials from both governments built on three years of discussions to create a draft memorandum of agreement that would have established a safe third country process for Canada and the United States. However since the Americans were more focused on implementing changes to their own refugee system, they were unable to move forward. By 1998, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the attorney general of the United States decided that it was not practical to move forward at that time.

However that does not mean this idea has been shelved. To the contrary, just last December the United States and Canada signed a joint declaration for the creation of a smart border for the 21st century. Renewed work to develop a responsibility sharing agreement on refugee claimants is a major commitment to that. These measures contained in the 30 point action plan are regarded by both governments as matters of the highest priority. That brings me back to the substance of the motion.

The operative words in what the government is doing are co-operation and shared responsibility. Those are not operative words in

the motion of the hon. member. The motion calls for Canada to make a list of countries and then start unilaterally sending people back to those countries with no certainty that they could pursue a refugee claim. It pictures a one-way street. As well, this is a key issue for the protection of refugee claimants. For Canada to unilaterally return claimants to a country they have transited en route to Canada could deprive the claimant of the right to make a claim, which we want to avoid.

[*Translation*]

Canada will get nowhere if we move forward unilaterally. Given the Americans' fully understandable concerns about security, does the hon. member really believe that they would cheerfully welcome Canada just sending back claimants who had passed through the U. S.?

And this is not just about their feelings. It is about their laws. American law is also open to the idea of safe third country protection, but only on the basis of an international responsibility sharing agreement. The U.S. government would not view unilateral Canadian action as consistent with efforts to jointly manage our common border.

The reality is that the movement of refugee claimants goes both ways. People come through the U.S. to get to Canada. Others arrive in Canada as a way station to the United States. So, both countries need to work together on this.

Both our countries appreciate that the status quo encourages people smuggling and other irregular movements of people across our shared border. The lack of a shared process weakens public confidence in the refugee determination system.

So the obvious direction is a responsibility sharing agreement for refugee claimants that would provide a clear and transparent basis to better manage movements between the United States and Canada. And we will not get there if Canada takes a knee jerk response that ignores the interests of the United States. It will not be helped if we avoid working out a fair and effective system that meets the needs of both countries.

So, at a very simple operational and international level, this motion will not work. However, it would demonstrate other flaws almost immediately on implementation.

Private Members' Business

• (1750)

[*English*]

The motion is based on an appealing idea; that people should make a refugee claim at the first reasonable opportunity. It reflects the view the government holds that people should not shop around from country to country for protection. However, it is fundamentally flawed. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration says this without drawing any negative assessment of the claims processes in the countries mentioned in the motion under debate. It is a motion that is basically problematic.

The way forward is through bilateral agreements. The way forward is through collaborative efforts that meet international standards of protection for refugee claimants as well as domestic expectations. That is the path the government has chosen and that is the path we intend to follow.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is opposed to motion Motion No. 422 because the choices we make are first and foremost societal.

Is it from this perspective that we will deal with this motion aimed at barring from Canada any refugee claimant who might have made the mistake of setting foot in the United States, Australia, New Zealand or any European Union country before showing up at our border.

Refugees are trying to escape bloody regimes or situations where their life and the lives of their family are at risk. It is our duty as a modern and democratic society to show our openness and generosity in the way we treat those who consider Canada a haven of peace and security. These values are just as fundamental for Quebecers as for Canadians. It is incumbent on us to welcome those who are desperately seeking a peaceful and safe place to live.

The rights of refugees must be respected, in spite of demands for increased security, which seems to be the rationale for this motion. The Alliance member wants to amend the current Immigration Act to deny consideration of claims by refugees coming from countries listed in the amendment, which are considered safe.

Therefore the member wants Canada to suspend the Geneva convention on the protection of refugees. The Bloc Québécois rejects this demand both with regard to claimants born in the countries listed and those who, coming from elsewhere, transited through any of those countries.

The notion of safe third country which underlies motion Motion No. 422 can be summed up as follows: the refugee claimant must necessarily ask for asylum in the safe country he transited through in order to get to the country where he wants to make his claim. Otherwise, he would be turned down flat.

For instance, if someone coming from Iraq or Zimbabwe were to go through the United States to enter Canada, his refugee claim would be automatically rejected; it would not even be considered in Canada because this individual should have claimed refugee status in the United States, which is considered a safe third country. This individual would not have the right to appeal in Canada.

The notion of safe third country raises some concerns. Some countries do not have the same criteria for the selection of refugees, even though they generally abide by the provisions of the convention. However, the high commissioner for refugees is very clear: for such a mechanism to be acceptable, one must first ensure that, in those countries, refugee claimants have indeed access to procedures allowing them to exercise their rights.

The motion says "all countries that are members of the European Economic Union". How can such a broad list be proposed, particularly since some European countries just recently signed the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and are not very familiar with all the obligations it imposes upon them. The adoption of a list of safe third countries as proposed in Motion No. 422 is unacceptable, because we refuse to have refugees sent to a country that does not have the same criteria as we do or does not comply with the convention.

The notion of safe third countries presupposes that an agreement has been ratified between Canada and these countries, but no such agreement exists at this time. The unilateral list proposed by my colleague from Surrey North was established without these countries being invited to take part in negotiations on that issue, and such an agreement cannot be entered into without careful consideration. Motion No. 422 establishes a list without any formal process, which brings me to say that the Canadian Alliance's proposal is rather simplistic.

• (1755)

To explain the serious reservations we have concerning the notion of safe third countries, it would be appropriate to briefly remind members of certain major differences between the policies of Canada and the United States with regard to the refugee status determination process, differences which surely reflect the values of our neighbours to the south.

The biggest difference between the two countries is that, in the United States, the immigration tribunal hears refugee claims under an accusatorial process. An attorney is there to oppose the claim on behalf of the U.S. government. In Canada, the process is considered non-accusatorial. A refugee hearing officer is there to question witnesses and help the tribunal reach a decision.

Another major difference is that claimants without documentation are systematically detained in the United States. In Canada, detention is considered exceptional. As the U.S. has hardened its refugee policy for security reasons, we can say that being granted refugee status in the United States clearly becomes quite an achievement.

Moreover, adoption of a safe third country policy would deprive us of the power to direct our own refugee policy, harmonizing it with U.S. policy, for instance. Canada's policy on refugee claimants would be based on the U.S. policy and would be subordinate to it. It is a source of pride to us that Canada's policy differs greatly from that of our neighbours to the south when it comes to certain countries. Cuba is a good example of this.

Promoting the notion of a safe third country means making Canada's refugee policy subservient to that of the Americans. It is surprising that an Alliance MP would be promoting such a loss of Canadian sovereignty, in this case relating to refugee protection.

Private Members' Business

Many refugee claimants pass through the U.S. to come to Canada, an estimated 40%. Thus in 2000-2001, more than 11,000 people seeking asylum passed through the United States to get here. Our neighbouring country is often an unavoidable stop on the way for someone wanting to make a refugee claim in Canada.

Why choose Canada? There are many reasons. Certain individuals may prefer to claim refugee status here for personal reasons, for example because they have family here or because they are francophones. Moreover, Canadian values such as generosity and compassion are attractive. Contrary to the United States, Canada permits access to legal aid and social welfare or allows an individual to study or to work during the refugee status determination process. In a lot of cases, the transit country is only instrumental.

Those who flee their country seldom have the opportunity to choose their itinerary. They have to use the means available to them when the situation is urgent. Closing Canada's door to those refugee claimants who have been unfortunate enough to come here via the wrong country is abandoning the attitude of openness that is characteristic of this country and its people. This motion really sounds like "no, not in my backyard".

The motion before us is disturbing in many respects. Members certainly know that countries have allies for better and for worse. Such is the case with the United States. Throughout history, because of their interests in certain countries, the United States have often supported, openly or not, discredited dictatorships. Chile is a case in point.

In the early 1970s, General Augusto Pinochet, with the blessing and support of the United States of America, removed the democratically elected President of Chile, Salvador Allende, with a military coup d'état. Following the assassination of the Chilean leader, a great many people fled the country for fear of physical reprisals.

More than 7,000 Chileans and other Latin American refugees were admitted to Canada since 1973. Had we passed a motion similar to Motion No. 422 prior to the overthrow of the democratic Chilean government, it would have been impossible for these people to have found refuge in Canada. How many of them could have trusted American intelligence services, filed an application and have it accepted in the United States, when this country had supported the repressive machine in Chile?

This parliament must respect the necessary balance between the need for security and Canada's obligations toward immigrants and refugees. Canada, as a part of its duties and responsibilities as a democratic society, must be open to immigrants and refugees.

• (1800)

Painting all refugees as a den of potential terrorists is an attack against democracy, because it is often their struggle for democracy that forces them to seek exile and to flee dictatorships and escape from regimes of terror.

In closing, by opposing Motion M-422, we are standing with those who are the most oppressed, we are being true to our values, and we are choosing to defend freedom.

[English]

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I also am pleased to have an opportunity to participate in the debate on the motion presented by the member for Surrey North. Although, as he will likely assume, I will be opposing the motion, let me first commend the member for bringing forward a positive suggestion to deal with a difficult situation.

I recognize that all of us in the House are struggling with the responsibility we have to find the right balance between ensuring that Canada's security is preserved and enhanced and respecting human rights and liberties. I also believe the motion is presented in the context of striking the right balance between our international obligations as a country under the universal declaration of human rights and the 1951 refugee convention and our obligations and our need to respond to the problems of irregular migration and human trafficking. There is no question that we are dealing with a phenomenon that must be tackled by parliament, by legislators everywhere, and I respect the contribution of the member.

However, speaking on behalf of other members in my caucus, let me say that we oppose this recommendation for a number of reasons. I will start by indicating to the member that I believe some of these recommendations we have been receiving since September 11 have been an overreaction to the horrific developments of that day. We are all searching for ways to come to grips with that tragedy without overreacting and putting aside our valued programs and our treasured principles.

I believe that in the course of events since September 11 we have perhaps unwittingly, sometimes deliberately, targeted and singled out refugees as the crux of the problem. In fact, through the media and commentaries on issues pertaining to September 11, we have allowed for such statements as "Canada is a haven for refugees" and, by implication, refugees are terrorists.

The most important thing we can do today is to say unequivocally that under no circumstances, by no means, are this government and this country going to promote or perpetuate any such mythology that is harmful to genuine refugees who are seeking protection and asylum here. It is contrary to the facts of the situation as we know them in terms of refugees and it is certainly not an answer to the threat of terrorism in our society today.

The situation has been presented to us most succinctly by Judith Kumin, who is the representative in Canada of the UN's high commissioner for refugees. She reminds us of our commitment and obligations under the Geneva convention and has clearly stated that the bottom line for all of us as we review our policies, prepare regulations and develop programs is that no one should be returned to a country or territory where his or her life or liberty would be at risk. She also said that it is very important for us as Canadians to ensure that refugees are given a fair hearing.

The motion before us would deny refugees the opportunity to come to this country, make their claims, have their cases heard and the merits of the cases judged in terms of the facts. To eliminate 16 countries because they are deemed to be safe countries is just contrary to our policies and practices.

Private Members' Business

• (1805)

Let me say to the member who has presented this motion that Canada's policies have been considered by many to be tough and relevant to the task at hand but they do need some major resources and attention in terms of their application.

Our country has to honour the convention by ensuring that every person coming into the country is able to make a claim. Obviously, given the facts and given the situation, there are always some bad apples in the mix. There are always some who use a system to gain entry, but by and large we are talking about genuine refugees who desperately need to seek asylum in Canada. Their claims have to be honoured.

There are three factors the member must take into account in dealing with this motion. One is that there are differences in foreign policy between Canada and the United States. My colleague, the member from the Bloc, has already hinted at some of those differences.

For example, some claimants come to Canada because they know they will not be considered seriously in the United States. Between 1986 and 1990, 26% of claimants coming from Nicaragua, leaving a left-wing government, were accepted in the United States. In the same period about 2% of claimants coming from El Salvador escaping a right-wing government were denied access to the American system.

There are differences in foreign policy that must be looked at. There are reasons that immigrants choose to come to our country, having come through the United States or any other safe third country. We must respect each case on an individual basis.

We as parliamentarians cannot ignore the cultural links and family connections as people pursue asylum and why they choose Canada. We are talking about refugees who are trying to get their lives in order, trying to find safety and security. They end up choosing Canada because of cultural and linguistic connections and family and neighbour support. Those reasons cannot be discounted.

Canada is very much seen as an end of the line country. That cannot be discounted and disregarded in this debate. The idea of a safe third country probably is used by the government—and I will not say it is used by the member in terms of this motion—as a way to reduce the number of refugees that are lined up at the gates and who have presented claims.

Sometimes we think we have such a great problem in the backlog that we have to resort to extreme actions in order to deal with it. There are all kinds of ways to deal with the problems we may have with backlogs. There are other ways to deal with the possibility of some people using the refugee system to gain entry.

We can enforce the laws as they now exist. We can ensure there are proper resources for the timely processing of immigrants and refugees. We can increase the number of overseas officers. We can enforce measures against human trafficking. We can train immigration control officers in culturally specific behaviours. We can introduce refugee protection measures into our international agreements to avoid refolement of refugees who may be rejected.

We can do it in a number of ways without violating our historic role of offering asylum to people in need of protection. We can do it without violating the spirit of the UN convention on refugees. We can ensure that we are vigilant and determined to protect people in the face of danger and in the case of dislocation from their homes.

I thank the member for bringing forward this motion. I have to say quite honestly that we cannot support it. We have to work together to find solutions that will strike the right balance in standing up for our historical role in terms of refugee protection, offering civil liberties to all people in Canada and at the same time dealing with changes in global human migration and the threat of terrorism.

• (1810)

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the PC/DR coalition, I am pleased to take part in this debate. Let me first congratulate the member for Surrey North for the motion, which I will read so that we will remember it:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should make regulations under paragraph 101(7)(e) of the Immigration Act with the effect that people claiming to be refugees pursuant to the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees will not be admitted for consideration of their claim from the following countries: the United States, New Zealand, Australia and all countries that are members of the European Economic Union.

The member's motion, in calling for Canada not to consider refugee applications from developed countries, goes against Canadian values which promote open access to all people of the world. The PC/DR coalition cannot support the motion.

The motion is a simple solution to a very complex problem. It calls for Canada to implement the safe third country solution for refugees. In other words, if the applicant came from a safe third country, then he or she is already deemed to be safe. Unfortunately, Canada must negotiate an agreement with each and every safe country in order to return refugees to that country.

Canada at present does not have an agreement with the United States where over 40% of our refugee claimants originate. One solution to deal with this would be to do what the Americans do, which is to accept applications from refugees for refugee status but the applicants themselves must stay in the country of application while the application is being processed.

For example, if a Canadian was applying for refugee status in the United States, he or she could enter the country, submit an application form but then would have to return to Canada and later be recalled to the U.S. to deal with the application. This would probably resolve a lot of outstanding issues we have in our country.

When refugee claimants set foot on Canadian soil, they receive near citizenship status before any clearances are made. The majority of our refugee claimants fly to Canada. The second most popular point of departure is England. Another solution would be to not allow paperless, non-identifiable claimants, in other words asylum seekers, off the airplane.

The PC/DR supports a safe third country solution. Where we differ is that we accept refugee applications while the applicants remain in a safe country. That is our different point of view.

Private Members' Business

On the issue of refugees, let us have a reality check in terms of the world. There are over 14 million refugees in the world. All Canadians agree that Canada, being a country of compassion, must do its part.

The UNHCR is the principal intergovernmental organization tasked with addressing the protection and assistance needs of the world's refugees. Canada's support for the UNHCR is not only financial but it is also expressed through the protection and promotion of UNHCR's mandate. The protection programs which include resettlement from abroad and granting protection to inland asylum seekers are an important contribution to international burden sharing and refugee protection.

The government's 2002 plan for refugee intake has a projected total of approximately 23,000 to 30,400. The breakdown is: government assisted refugees 7,500; private sponsored refugees 2,900 to 4,200; refugees landing in Canada, and this is predominantly the area we are talking about, 10,500 to 15,600; and dependants from abroad 2,100 to 3,100.

• (1815)

When one sees the number of refugees in the world and relates that to the actual number that enter Canada even as asylum seekers, the numbers are fairly small.

I believe that Canada wants a system that is open and accessible to bona fide genuine refugees. Canada wants a system that screens out the human traffickers and international criminals. Another solution to Canada's dilemma would be for Canada to accept more refugees from UNHCR refugee camps around the world thus reducing walk-ins.

This past Tuesday at the immigration committee hearings, a witness representing the shipowners stated that our refugee system encourages ship crews and stowaways to jump ship. I agree. There is no doubt that Canada is perceived as easy pickings for the asylum seekers of the world. Canada at times is too generous. Our screening system is too lax. At times we put international perception above national security.

In closing, the solution to our refugee problem is not to penalize legitimate, genuine refugees and close the door totally. We need to do our job. We need to do the proper screening both overseas and at home. Our system is overworked and short on manpower and technology. We need an effective internal security program in CIC which will prevent fraud and which will also prevent the theft of passport documents and IMM 1000 forms, as was reported in the paper recently.

Canada was built by immigrants. Let us not forget that. Refugees are immigrants. We need to welcome them to Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby will have the floor for five minutes before we go to the concluding remarks by the hon. member for Surrey North.

• (1820)

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to the House on my hon. colleague's motion with respect to third safe countries.

Those who flee their countries seeking a better life do so because they are in search of refuge from the way they have to live. We have heard that there are some 100 million people on the move because of economics and war. These refugees are looking for somewhere to be safe and to start a better life without the worries and strains that plague them in their countries of origin. People are seeking democracies and the benefits that come from democracies.

Canada received 22,834 refugees in 1998, 24,392 in 1999 and 30,044 in the year 2000. However, more frequently now we see refugees landing in our country and it may not be their country of choice. We are seeing a system of country shopping. They proceed to locate in Canada claiming to be refugees and are basically shopping for a country. The refugee system is being used to supplant the orderly immigration laws and systems.

The third safe country provisions are common in Europe, where the Dublin convention provides for any European Community member state to retain the right as part of its national law to send an applicant for asylum to a third state in compliance with the provisions of the Geneva convention. Australia also passed similar laws with the border protection legislation amendment act in 1999, which introduced provisions against foreign shopping and third safe country provisions similar to those in place in many European countries.

The majority of asylum seekers enter Canada through the United States, perhaps 40% or so, and we have heard figures like that, so if Canada were to enter into an agreement with the United States it would reduce significantly the burden on our refugee determination system. Similarly, if we were to enter into agreements with the European Union countries we would see a further reduction in the number of spontaneous refugee claimants or what I call surprise arrivals.

These country shoppers would be forced either to seek refuge in the country they arrived in or to apply for legitimate immigrant status through the proper channels. If it is conceivable for other countries to enact these laws, why can we not do this in Canada? The rationalizations we have heard and the hand wringing we have seen from the government speaker, the Bloc and the NDP must sound absolutely incredible, if not pathetic, to concerned Canadians.

It is a well known fact that Canada is one of the top choices in the world for individuals seeking refugee status, because capacity creates its own demand. We are a soft touch and we are vulnerable. In the larger sense we currently have so many difficulties with the immigration system in its present state that to have safe third country legislation certainly makes eminent sense. It would provide great relief to an overburdened bureaucracy trying to fulfil its duty under the law. The idea of having third safe country legislation makes good managerial sense. The fact that the Liberal government has not already introduced such an effective tool only helps to reinforce the fact that the Liberals really cannot sufficiently manage the business of the country.

Adjournment Debate

At the House Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration we discussed this. The committee heard that many refugee claimants come to Canada through the United States. For the past few years approximately one-third of claimants entering the Canadian process have had the opportunity to claim asylum in the U.S. but instead chose to come to our country. In the fiscal year 1999-2000, 10,967 asylum seekers embarked from the U.S., representing 34% of all refugee claims. In 2000-01 over 11,000 claimants entered from the U.S., which is 37% of that year's total claims.

The committee also heard about great difficulties around that problem. The IRB chairman, Peter Showler, gave evidence at the committee and somewhat addressed the differences between the Canadian and American refugee determination systems. Among other things he told us that for nationals from some countries it may seem easier to obtain permission to enter the United States first, but the ultimate destination is Canada.

As a result of the committee looking at this issue, the committee came up with a recommendation which stated:

The Committee recommends that:

While maintaining Canada's commitment to the Refugee Convention and our high standards in respect of international protection, the Government of Canada should pursue the negotiation of safe third country agreements with key countries, especially the United States.

•(1825)

That is what the committee said, but all we hear are rationalizations. The government cannot seem to get it done. We hear excuses. The hand wringers give us all kinds of alternatives about why this motion cannot be supported, but I am saying that Canadians are watching the ability of the government to deliver on the rhetoric. We will watch this new minister to see if he has the courage or the capability, with his cabinet colleagues, to get this done.

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will wrap up by illustrating a few points on how our system is abused.

I will cite five cases. One is the case of a Nigerian who was deported from the United States after spending more than a year in a U.S. jail for importing heroin. Another is the case of a former refugee from El Salvador who was convicted of numerous criminal offences, including breaking and entering and assault. Then there is a man from the former Yugoslavia who was sentenced to four and a half years in a Canadian prison for trafficking and possession of drugs. There is also a refugee claimant from Honduras who walked into British Columbia after being deported three times from the United States following three jail terms for trafficking cocaine under assumed names. There is the case of an HIV positive Guatemalan refugee who was twice convicted of trafficking drugs in British Columbia, once after being caught with 42 rocks of cocaine.

Apart from being convicted criminals, these men have several other things in common. First and foremost, they would not have gained access to the country if there had been effective safe third country practices in place.

Second, they were all determined by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to be a danger to the public and were thus subject to deportation. In each case, the federal court overturned the ruling of

the immigration department for exactly the same reason: the men were not provided with written explanations, called reasons, for the so-called danger opinions issued against them. Most of these men will remain in Canada while their cases work through the courts in an appeals process that may keep them living at taxpayers' expense for years to come.

Other countries learned long ago that it is essential to prevent illegal entrants from accessing the refugee determination system if they are not coming directly from the country where they claim persecution. They must be stopped at the point of entry and quickly removed. Dozens of countries are already doing this, making Canada a very attractive destination, for obvious reasons.

The rationale behind the idea of a safe third country is that genuine refugees fearing persecution will apply for refuge in the first safe country of arrival. Unless they have a good reason why they could not have applied in that first country, they are refused access and returned to the country from which they came. Might I say that a good reason is not that of coming to Canada to take advantage of our lenient and, I might add, litigious refugee determination system.

Article 31 of the UN convention makes a distinction between imposing a penalty on refugees entering illegally who come directly from a territory where they are threatened and those who enter illegally but are not arriving directly from the country of alleged persecution. Thus the convention itself recognizes that difference and we would not in any way be working against it.

I will close by reiterating the fact that I am truly disappointed that the motion will get only one hour of debate and will not have the opportunity to be voted on by all members of the House, which brings me back to my opening remarks about private members' business. Last week we voted on two private members' bills which were automatically made votable because they originated in the other place. As elected representatives of the people of Canada, I believe most if not all of us bring forward legislation that is important and relevant to our constituents. We must speak up about the way in which our private members' business is handled.

[*Translation*]

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

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, on November 6 I asked a question of the Minister of Foreign Affairs about concerns that came to our attention on the foreign affairs committee regarding 600 unfilled openings in the foreign service.

Adjournment Debate

Foreign service officers are very important people at this time of our country's history as far as security, exports and immigration are concerned. They are our front line people.

A report has indicated that there are a large number of unfilled positions. At committee, the deputy minister of foreign affairs confirmed that there were insufficient funds to fill those positions. He also confirmed that there were insufficient funds for a reasonable increase in pay for the currently employed foreign service officers. He acknowledged that valuable employees who play such an important role were being lost.

In this time of questionable security, they are the front line people. These people know what is going in countries which may or may not have threats or people who are threats to Canada. These people decide who can immigrate to Canada. These are the people who do the screening. These are the people who help our exports which are so important to us. There are all these vacancies.

The minister stood in the House and in answer to my question he did not dispute my statements.

For a long time Canada has had the highest quality of foreign personnel. They are the people who maintain our excellent reputation around the world. If there are so many unfilled positions, we will not be able to maintain that reputation. We will not be able to be involved in human rights issues, trade issues and all the other issues that those people deal with.

The only reason given is that there is not enough money. In the middle of all this the Prime Minister appointed Mr. Gagliano to the ambassador's position in Denmark and is paying him \$170,000 a year. He has no experience, no training, nothing. There is enough money to pay him \$170,000 but not enough money to pay foreign officials.

Will the minister secure the funds to fill all the openings in the foreign service? Will the minister increase the earnings of our foreign service staff to a reasonable and competitive level so that we can retain our high quality staff?

• (1830)

Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I know that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is also concerned with the situation the member has described.

The demands on members of Canada's foreign service have increased since the events of September 11. This is true for employees at headquarters but perhaps even more so for employees at Canada's different missions abroad, especially in those countries where the risk to personal security has increased.

The government in its latest budget has allotted \$22 million for the fiscal year 2002-03 and \$20 million for subsequent years to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. These funds will enable the department to enhance its ability to monitor and assess developments in key regions as a result of new security demands emerging out of the campaign against terrorism.

I am pleased to inform the House and the member that 64 new positions will be created to increase Canada's presence in the Middle

East, the United States and central Asia. These new positions are directed at addressing security and counterterrorism objectives and concerns in areas of potential instability. They will also allow us to add to our ability to provide consular services abroad and to increase our focus on U.S.A. congressional relations and enhanced media advocacy responsibilities in the United States.

[Translation]

As for the 600 unfilled openings in the Canadian foreign service abroad, it is a bit farfetched. In fact, only 41 out of 999 foreign service positions are vacant. In absolute terms, there are only 95 unfilled permanent positions out of 999 full-time jobs, or 9.8% of the total. This shortage has built up over several years.

Our annual recruitment campaign to fill vacant positions is underway, but the recruitment process for foreign service is complex and takes a whole year. It is hard to quicken our recruitment efforts.

Nevertheless, we expect to hire some 100 new foreign service officers this year through our post-secondary competition. The 300 positions mentioned by the deputy minister of foreign affairs before the committee referred to the whole department and all job categories, including department jobs here in Ottawa that are not part of the foreign service. I thought it was important to make that point.

This situation is not unheard of for a large organization like the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Also, regular staffing action has been taken, or soon will be, to fill these jobs.

• (1835)

[English]

Regarding wages, while negotiations between the treasury board and the PAFSO officially broke down last September, I am aware that informal discussions have taken place in recent months with a view to try to reach an agreement without going to a conciliation board.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and his colleague, the Minister for International Trade, just wrote to the President of Treasury Board Secretariat to emphasize the importance they attach to efforts to reach an agreement with the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers, PAFSO, which would acknowledge the important work of the foreign service officers. It is hoped that the proposed restructuring of the foreign service group from two to four levels will enable the department to offer a better career path with salaries that would compare favourably to those of other groups in the public service.

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, I do not know how to respond to the parliamentary secretary because she disputes the numbers I used. However, when I first posed my question to the minister, he said "I find it difficult to take issue with the points the hon. member has made". Therefore, I have to stand by my numbers based on his concurrence.

Adjournment Debate

I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary another question. She referred to the hardworking, quality staff and the fact that they were working toward a better career path. I would like her to address the following situation.

If she were a foreign service officer with the goal of becoming an ambassador and she had worked hard toward that for a small rate of pay relative to other comparable jobs, how would she feel if all of a sudden the Prime Minister appointed Mr. Gagliano as ambassador at \$170,000 a year?

Mrs. Marlene Jennings: Mr. Speaker, my personal views will be heard quite well when the foreign affairs committee examines the credentials of the new ambassador to Denmark, which I believe is on March 19. The date is to be confirmed.

The work of our foreign service officers is very important. The Minister of Foreign Affairs did in fact agree that the situation of the low salaries and the working conditions is very preoccupying. I did not have a chance to complete my statement on that, so I will do so now.

There is a proposal that the foreign service group be restructured from two to four levels which would enable the department to offer a better career path, with salaries that would compare favourably to those of other groups in the public service. Similarly, there is a study on the conditions of service for foreign service officers in comparison to those offered by other countries, international organizations and the private sector which we will receive in March. This should bring new ideas on how to acknowledge the experience and competencies acquired by our foreign service officers.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Orders 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.38 p.m.)

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