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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, June 19, 2002

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 19, 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 Souris—Moose Mountain.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

TURNER FENTON SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to rise in the House today to congratulate the staff of Brampton Centre's Turner Fenton Secondary School on their receipt of the Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence, and in particular Ms. Patricia Mooney, a teacher at Turner Fenton, for receipt of the Certificate of Achievement.

The awards are presented by the Prime Minister in recognition of outstanding support for teaching excellence.

I know that my constituents of Brampton Centre join me in congratulating Ms. Mooney and all those involved in supporting excellence in education at Turner Fenton Secondary School.

* * *

DIVORCE ACT

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, every day I hear more tragic stories from frustrated fathers, mothers, grandparents, brothers and sisters who have been alienated from their children or siblings because of a divorce or separation.

Canada's Divorce Act is highly antiquated and it must be amended. Child custody and access must be replaced with a commitment to shared parenting. Except in cases of neglect or abuse, children should have access to both parents and parents should have equal rights and responsibilities. As it currently stands the justice system has a winner take all approach at the expense of many innocent children and extended family members.

This government is more concerned with child support guidelines and getting more money for itself than it is about the improved emotional well-being of children which would result from shared parenting. Over three years have now passed since the joint House-Senate committee presented its report "For the Sake of the Children", and except for endless delays and excuses there has been no action taken by the Liberal government.

Canadians deserve better.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Kyoto agreement will come into effect when developed countries whose combined emissions equal 55% of the total emissions ratify it. The countries of the European Union have already ratified, and Japan too.

Canada should drop the idea of seeking credits for clean energy exports and ratify Kyoto. Its signature could be enough to put Kyoto into effect. Waiting for developing countries to join is unrealistic. They have made it clear they have no intention of acting now. Instead, creating opportunities for improved energy efficiency, energy innovation and economic incentives in developing countries is the better approach.

By ratifying, Canada would give badly needed leadership in North America and assume its share of responsibility for the security of the global community.

* * *

•(1405)

SERPENT MOUNDS PARK

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Serpent Mounds Park of the Hiawatha First Nation became a national heritage site recently. This is a burial and village site that dates back to 58 BC. It is a site of great cultural and spiritual meaning for the Mississauga people of the Peterborough area.

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The text of the plaque in Ojibway, French and English reads “Two thousand years ago aboriginal people gathered nearby in large settlements in spring and summer to hunt, fish and collect freshwater mussels. Here for over three centuries these people built mounds to bury and revere their dead. These nine mounds and other closely related sites provide an exceptionally complete record of life at that time. The mound, shaped like a serpent, the only one of its kind in Canada, is over 60 metres long and almost eight metres wide. Mississauga people of this area are now the proud stewards of these ancient sites”.

I know members join me in sending best wishes and thanks to the Hiawatha First Nation.

* * *

CATHOLIC FAMILY COUNSELLING CENTRE

Mrs. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me today in extending congratulations to Catholic Family Counselling Centre in Kitchener-Waterloo which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

In 1952 the agency's sole counsellor helped 100 individuals and families. Today the centre boasts a dedicated staff of more than 50 employees who have helped more than 15,000 individuals and families this year alone.

Catholic Family Counselling Centre in Kitchener-Waterloo is a not for profit professional counselling agency whose team of passionately committed staff and volunteers sees its work as an expression of Christian caring through promoting well-being within individuals, families and the community. The non-denominational agency works hard to ensure everyone in Kitchener will enjoy a strong and healthy community for the next 50 years.

I extend warm wishes to Catholic Family Counselling Centre in Kitchener-Waterloo as it celebrates 50 years of caring.

* * *

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton Centre-East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Canada is not two founding nations, nor is it three, but is rather a work in progress begun by the aboriginal peoples, joined by Europeans then followed by those from throughout the world who have chosen to make our country their home.

June 21, the day of the summer solstice, is a symbolic time, a time of meaningful historical reflection, a time of importance to the aboriginal peoples of Canada. Friday, we will honour and give respect to National Aboriginal Day, a day that celebrates the unique, diverse and valuable contribution of the aboriginal peoples to the cultural fabric of Canada.

Each year it is a day to mark and celebrate their contributions and to recognize the different cultures of the aboriginal peoples of Canada. That day would be June 21, and was it first recognized in 1996.

This coming Friday let us celebrate National Aboriginal Day, a national day of respect.

CELEBRATE CANADA

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Celebrate Canada is a special time for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It is an opportunity like none other for Canadians to demonstrate their pride in Canadian accomplishments and their love for their country.

Celebrate Canada is an 11 day celebration beginning June 21 with National Aboriginal Day, covering St. Jean Baptiste Day on June 24 and culminating on July 1 with Canada Day. The theme of this year's celebration is a spotlight on 50 years of Canadian achievements.

Over the course of the last half century we have made our mark in various fields. We have shattered records. We have taken a leadership role to ensure the betterment of fellow citizens. We can be justifiably proud of the nation we have built together over the past 135 years.

Canadians throughout this great land are encouraged to celebrate, participate in the activities, show their pride in being Canadian, enjoy themselves and celebrate Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Kénogami curling club in my riding of Jonquière has obtained \$100,000 in phase 3 of the infrastructure program.

With this funding, the club, which was founded in 1920 and has over 300 members, will be able to renovate its four sheets of ice. The Kénogami curling club is affiliated with Curling Québec and is the oldest of the region's seven clubs.

This project, which was studied and recommended to Ottawa by the Government of Quebec, is evidence of the commitment of Quebec's department of municipal affairs to the development of sport in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region.

It is also tangible proof that an opposition MP is capable of obtaining funding for her region, contrary to what certain misinformed people may say.

* * *

● (1410)

[*English*]

CANADA-ONTARIO INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently the federal government provided a \$4.1 million contribution to the Canada-Ontario Infrastructure Program for the University of Waterloo school of architecture to be located in my riding of Cambridge.

Originally the brainchild of Jim Cassel, it was enthusiastically endorsed by Tom Watson, John Wright and Val O'Donovan who became the Cambridge consortium. These four business visionaries are the prime movers in the establishment of a worldclass architecture school in Cambridge. Remarkably, the consortium has already raised half the \$12 million required to convert the old Tiger Brand building to the new school of architecture.

I encourage the entire community, especially the business community, to support the consortium's fundraising campaign to transform Cambridge into a university city and make it the best place in North America.

* * *

PROVINCIAL MINE RESCUE COMPETITION

Mr. Andy Burton (Skeena, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, last weekend I attended the Provincial Mine Rescue Competition in Smithers, B.C. My riding of Skeena has huge potential for mineral exploration success as well as a past history of operations like Granduc, Premier and Cassiar, to mention but a few.

Competing in underground mine rescue on the weekend were teams from Quinsam Coal, Barrick Gold at Eskay Creek, and Boliden Westmin at Myra Falls. Open pit rescue teams competing were Fording Coal, Luscar Line Creek, Bullmoose, Endako, Highland Valley Copper, and Ash Grove Cement. Miners' first aid competitors were Luscar Line Creek, Elkview Coal, Bullmoose, Northgate Exploration with the Kemess Mine, Texada Quarrying, and Ash Grove.

All competitors proved their excellence and dedication to the development of the necessary skills required for mine rescue and first aid requirements at the mine site.

I congratulate all involved. Let us keep mining in Canada.

* * *

CANADA DAY

Mr. John Maloney (Erie—Lincoln, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for Canadians this has been a memorable year. As we reflect we can appreciate what a great deal we have to celebrate this Canada Day.

Who can forget the Olympic gold medals of our skaters Salé and Pelletier and the men's and women's hockey teams, or the loonie under centre ice in Salt Lake City?

There have been many sentimental reminders of our ties with Great Britain such as Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee celebrating 50 years on the throne, of our own sovereignty with the 20th anniversary of bringing home the constitution, and also of the many ways we join the two as we celebrate 50 years of having a Canadian as Governor General.

Canada Day serves as a reminder of how fortunate we are to live and enjoy extraordinary blessings as citizens of this great nation. We are a people with a common ideal and identity bound together by the pride we possess for the place we call home: Canada.

The inscription on the statue of Sir George-Étienne Cartier located on Parliament Hill says it best: Above everything, we are Canadian.

I wish each and every one of my colleagues and all citizens of Canada a happy Canada Day.

* * *

G-8 SUMMIT

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, next week the eyes of the world will be on Canada as we host the G-8 leaders summit in Kananaskis.

S. O. 31

New Democrats urge the Prime Minister to show leadership on the critical issues of global poverty and famine particularly in Africa, the HIV-AIDS pandemic, militarization and the threat of nuclear weapons, and growing corporate rule and the loss of democracy.

We condemn the increase in criminalization of dissent in Canada and other G-8 countries and fully support the right to peaceful protest, including civil disobedience. We urge the government to allow full participation of journalists and third world delegates in events around the summit. Harassment at the U.S. border must end.

Members of the New Democrat caucus, including our national leader, will be joining people from across Canada and around the world in protesting the G-8's destructive corporate agenda that puts global profits ahead of people and the environment.

Finally, we voice our solidarity with the G6B alternate summit and together with them reaffirm that another world is possible.

* * *

[Translation]

THE MEDIA

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the firing of Russell Mills as editor of the Ottawa *Citizen* is just one more illustration of how harmful media convergence can be, and how unacceptable it is to the public. As a result, the public is being deprived of complete and impartial information, and as well journalists' rights to disseminate that information are being hampered.

These rights no longer exist when the Asper family's policy of "do as we say, or else" puts the most basic of freedoms at risk.

Moreover, muzzling freedom of the press can go very far. One need only think of journalist Robert McKenzie, who was invited to take early retirement from the *Toronto Star* because he spoke out in favour of investigative journalist Normand Lester, when the latter's best seller, *Le livre noir du Canada anglais* was released.

In order to protect the basic principles of ethics and the moral code of journalism, I, as a member of the standing committee on heritage call for an in-depth investigation into the ownership of the news media and for real action.

Oral Questions

●(1415)

[English]

ZIMBABWE

Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Zimbabwe police arrested and beat 70 people, including opposition MPs and trade unionists, who had gathered to commemorate anti-apartheid activists killed in the Soweto uprising. This is yet another manifestation of the state sanctioned violence, beatings, arrests and intimidation of opposition MPs, human rights activists, trade unionists and civil society generally. It takes place against a backdrop of impending crisis in Zimbabwe which is on the brink of a humanitarian disaster coupled with escalating political instability.

Accordingly, Canada should join with African countries like South Africa in putting pressure on Mr. Mugabe to cease and desist from all forms of state sanctioned violations of human rights; to put an end to a state orchestrated starvation policy while including the MDC in food and other distribution; to ensure the actual distribution of aid, and there is a need for massive amounts of food aid in which Canada can play a leading role, is taken out of the hands of Mr. Mugabe and put into the hands of churches, NGOs and other apolitical groups.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, the department of agriculture has recently participated with the Nova Scotia agricultural community in a program to address the significant changes in climate and the resulting drought in Nova Scotia.

By sharing expertise through the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, or PFRA, with Nova Scotians, the department of agriculture was able to act as a catalyst to encourage co-operation among government agencies and the agricultural community on key issues such as water sharing with the communities and also water quality.

The PFRA provided the industry with an opportunity to benefit from its expertise gained in the western provinces. The staff involved in this experiment demonstrated a rational and common sense approach to both problem solving and industry relations which was very helpful to the farmers of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Doug Bacon, the president of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, extends his appreciation for this assistance which will enable them to cope with the climatic change that the industry has experienced in the last five years.

The farmers of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture are very appreciative of these measures. They encourage the minister to expand this co-operation with Nova Scotia farmers by establishing a permanent agreement.

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

The Speaker: Order, please. Today, it gives me great pleasure to thank, on behalf of all the members, a group of students who worked with us during the past year.

[English]

We have enjoyed the services of this distinguished group of pages who have worked with us throughout the parliamentary year. I want to wish them the very best in their future studies.

I give them our thanks for the services they have performed for us in the House. I wish also that one day they will return to this place, whether it is as elected members, as people working at the table or in some other part of this great institution.

[Translation]

I thank you all and I wish you good luck for the future.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

●(1420)

[English]

THE MEDIA

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see the Prime Minister back among us. I hope he will give us some straight answers.

There is growing concern about political influence in the firing of the publisher of the Ottawa *Citizen*. In the last couple of days the Deputy Prime Minister refused on at least five occasions to say whether the Prime Minister or his staff had recent meetings with CanWest Global people.

Will the Prime Minister tell the House if he met privately with any member of the Asper family in the past three weeks?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last time I met with Mr. Asper it was at a reception and all the press was there. The leader of the fifth party was there. After, Mr. Asper said he did not want to stay with me and he had dinner with the Leader of the Opposition.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. We will want to hear the next question. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor. I would like a little order, please.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we all appreciate the Prime Minister informing us of a meeting that took place in front of the entire press gallery.

The Leader of the Opposition does not give out millions of dollars in lucrative advertising contracts. He is not part of a potential review of CRTC decisions affecting companies like CanWest Global to the tune of millions of dollars.

Oral Questions

I will ask again, did the Prime Minister, any cabinet minister or any member of his staff have any private meetings with CanWest Global officials or the Asper family during the past three weeks?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again in the House of Commons this week there was a very specific question about a meeting on Saturday morning at 24 Sussex. I was not at 24 Sussex that day. There was no meeting. I did not have breakfast with Mr. Asper or anyone in his family.

Last week opposition members made a big accusation about Harrington Lake being used. That was a lie. We gave the cheque. They have not yet apologized.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, there is still no straight answer to my question.

The problem is that the Prime Minister is not credible when it comes to issues of abusing power.

That is the government that has abused millions of dollars in lucrative sponsorship and advertising contracts. It is the Prime Minister who was involved in the silencing of a CBC reporter, Terry Milewski. It is the Prime Minister who called the Business Development Bank to influence its decisions. It is the Prime Minister who waged a petty war against the previous owner of the Southam chain, Mr. Black.

With this history, how can Canadians be sure that the Prime Minister did not abuse his power once—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last time I had lunch with the owner of Southam News it was at 24 Sussex with Lord Conrad Black. He has sold his asset to somebody else.

For those who pretend that I control the press, I have to say that I am not very successful at it. I read the press every day and some mornings I am a bit disappointed with those people but I never tell them.

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that these firings are “not my problem”. They are his problem. The government abuses power. The government has power over the media through its spending and regulation. Media critics of the government are fired.

How can Canadians be assured that the Prime Minister did not abuse his power to silence his critics? Were calls made from his department, yes or no?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the operation of newspapers are changed all the time. I remember when Mr. Black took over the *Citizen*. Some people who were very good in administration were asked to go. That happens all the time.

The same thing happened at the *Gazette*. Senator Joan Fraser was an editor at the *Gazette* and because she was not conservative enough, she lost her job but there was no cry from the opposition in those days.

● (1425)

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, there is still no yes or no.

Let me quote from a friend of the Prime Minister's, the former leader of the Liberal Party in British Columbia, Gordon Gibson, who said:

Let me make it very clear. I have...no criticism of the owners. I think we have a situation here where...CanWest has four billion dollars worth of debt, debt that has to be serviced or you'll go broke, where the federal government has power of life and death over the television interests of the empire, and where we have, as Jeffrey Simpson put it so beautifully this morning, an extreme vengeful and increasingly paranoid prime minister—

The Prime Minister has not given us a yes or no. Were calls made? Tell us, on Gordon Gibson, his friend, my friend, were calls made?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have not talked with Mr. Gibson and I never met Mr. Mills. I did not ask for his resignation from anybody at all. It is a decision that has been made by the owner of the Southam chain, just like decisions were made by the previous owner and the owners before.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on June 10, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services imposed a moratorium on the awarding of advertising, communication and opinion survey contracts to Groupaction until the RCMP investigation is completed. While this does not lend itself to interpretation, Groupaction is still in charge of all the advertising done for the Department of Justice, and there is nothing to suggest that this will change.

Could the Minister of Justice tell us why he completely refuses to comply with the moratorium imposed on the contracts to Groupaction by his colleague at public works?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice is complying with the directive issued by my colleague, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know why, yesterday, a departmental official stated that the Department of Justice still has contracts with Groupaction and that these contracts were not in any way affected by the moratorium. Will this public servant be called to order? How do we explain the discrepancy between the minister's comments and those of this official?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think I have no choice but to repeat what I said.

The Department of Justice, like all the other departments, which also received it, is complying with the directive issued by the Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what worries political observers the most in the whole sponsorship affair is the fact that the Prime Minister knew that things were awry for two years.

Oral Questions

Will the Prime Minister admit that he has a serious ethical problem because he did not act as Prime Minister, when anyone else would have been alerted by the situation and would have acted immediately?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman says the Prime Minister was aware of this matter for a period of over two years. In fact, all Canadians were aware of the matter because it appeared on the Internet and it was published in the *Globe and Mail*. It was hardly a secret.

Starting in 2000, 2001 and 2002 the corrective action that was necessary was being taken as required by the internal audit report.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once and for all, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services can talk all he wants about measures now being taken. The government has known about the problem for two years now; for two years, it did nothing, or almost nothing, with the exception of a few corrective measures. What we want to know is why did the government wait until we raised the issue here in the House before going ahead with audits and investigations?

Is this silence not a sign of benevolent collusion on the part of the government and the Department of Public Works and Government Services?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as soon as the internal audit became available in the fall of the year 2000, the appropriate officials began work on an action plan to respond in detail to the audit's recommendations. Those recommendations were responded to through the course of the year 2001, and in the spring of 2002 the internal audit team returned to these files to check to make sure that the appropriate corrective measures had in fact been taken.

* * *

G-8 SUMMIT

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Kananaskis is coming and the Prime Minister has aroused expectations that the G-8 will offer solutions to the marginalization of Africa in the age of globalization—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. Alexa McDonough:—despite the lack of meaningful input from the African people themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how the government can be so pleased about the lack of meaningful input from the African people themselves.

The people's summit, the G6B, also gets underway this weekend. Tragically, African delegates will be scarce. It turns out that the government does not want them here in Canada.

Could the Prime Minister explain why 58 out of 60 international delegates, mostly African, have been denied visas to enter Canada and participate—

• (1430)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague that we have due process. I am going to take a look, but we have some procedures to respect. It is nothing regarding any country in particular, but I am going to take a good look at it.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, sadly, the denial of these visas is further proof of the pathetic, top down, paternalistic approach to African development by Canada and by the G-8. It is despicable that African civil society, labour groups, NGOs and academics have had virtually no opportunity to shape the new African development plan. The predictable result is a plan that excludes the very communities and countries that are most desperately in need.

What possible defence could the government offer for this paternalism and exclusion?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon I gave four times more time to the union leaders who came from Africa. They were the guests of the CLC in Canada.

They congratulated Canada for this initiative and they congratulated me because I was in a position to tell them that we have decided that Africa is to be the main item of the summit at Kananaskis next week and nothing will deter the meeting from the objective to put Africa back on the map of the world where it should be. This initiative of Canadians was applauded by the leaders of all the—

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

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PRIME MINISTER

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, last March the ethics counsellor tabled documents showing that in 1993 the Prime Minister's personal company transferred the shares it held in the Grand-Mère golf course to a company identified explicitly as the Akimbo Development Corporation, yet there is no Akimbo Development Corporation registered in Ontario, in Quebec, or in the federal corporations database. On the record, the company named in the Prime Minister's napkin agreement does not exist.

Did the Prime Minister's company sell those shares in 1993? To whom exactly were those shares sold and in what jurisdiction is the purchaser incorporated?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think they are really running out of questions. They are back to 1993 when I acted exactly under the advice of the ethics counsellor.

Perhaps I can take the occasion to ask the leader of the fifth party if he will give the names of all the people who will contribute to his own retirement fund that is being set up at this time.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claims that his shares were sold to Akimbo Development Corporation.

According to the documents produced by the ethics counsellor, Akimbo never resold these shares to anyone else. However, in 1999, these same shares were sold to Louis Michaud by a third party, Park Inns Canada Ltd. How is it that Park Inns Canada was able to sell shares it never owned?

If there is a mandate or a record of sale to clear up this loose end, will the Prime Minister produce it?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said very clearly, I sold the shares I owned in the golf course before becoming Prime Minister of Canada, and I have nothing further to add.

I followed the advice given to me by the ethics counsellor to the letter.

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[English]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the public works minister has said that Groupaction's contracts were bad enough that he had advised the government not to take any more contracts from it. The problem is that the justice department has not stopped shovelling money to Groupaction. How many RCMP investigations will it take before that flow of taxpayers' money will stop?

• (1435)

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat myself. My department is complying with the requests made by my colleague, the minister of public works.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, why not before now?

Let me go back and quote the minister of public works. He said the following in a previous portfolio: I will call for a drastic reduction in the blatant abuse of taxpayers' money for political advertising at public expense.

For the last nine years why did this minister sit quietly when these abuses were going on day after day?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has asked me to deal with a situation that has arisen in this portfolio. I am performing that function on behalf of the Prime Minister and the government.

The task is to discover those cases where errors have been made to make sure they are clearly ventilated, to correct the administrative mistakes and to refer any matters that raise legal issues to the police. That responsibility is being discharged.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice tells us that he is complying with the directive issued by his colleague, the public works minister, who mentioned a moratorium on future projects. And the ongoing projects will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

I therefore ask the Minister of Justice whether his department still has a contract with Groupaction, not a new contract, but one which was signed before the request for a moratorium.

Does Groupaction still have a contract with his department?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the public works minister issued a directive, and the Department of Justice—like all other departments, I imagine—, is complying with that directive in every respect.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is clear.

There is a moratorium on new contracts.

Contracts which were already in place—and there were some in the Department of Justice—, were to be reviewed on a case by case basis. In the case of the Department of National Defence, they were terminated.

Were the justice department's contracts with Groupaction which were already in place terminated?

Is there right now, today, a contract between the Department of Justice and Groupaction? The question is clear. I do not want to know whether or not they are going to comply with directives.

Is there a contract today? Yes or no?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, the Department of Justice is complying with the directive issued.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Hon. Martin Cauchon: It looks to me like they do not want to hear the answer.

The Department of Justice is complying with the directive issued by the minister of public works.

Second, there is no work pending with the group mentioned at the Department of Justice.

[English]

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we are still waiting patiently for the minister of public works to provide us with some specific information. He promised to provide that same information during committee of the whole two weeks ago and again a week ago after a question of privilege. Nothing has come forward yet and we are wondering how long we have to wait. His claims of being transparent and accountable really ring hollow.

I would like to ask the minister at this time, who sat on the cabinet communications committee that made these self-serving decisions that cost taxpayers millions of dollars?

Oral Questions

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to inform the hon. gentleman that the questions raised by him and a number of other members of the committee of the whole during my appearance on the estimates were all answered in writing earlier today.

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that sounds just great but he must have sent them through Groupaction because I have not seen the reports yet. They got stalled in the photocopier, I guess.

If the minister is now in this new era of joining with us to get to the bottom of this, will he also announce today a public independent inquiry to really dig to the bottom of this fiasco?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, further to the previous question, of course the appropriate process is for me to respond to all members of the committee of the whole, not just one. Therefore, the answers were delivered to the Table.

Having to do with the ongoing work, as the hon. gentleman knows there is a very thorough departmental review that is being conducted by Public Works and Government Services Canada. There is the fresh audit that will be undertaken by the auditor general on a government-wide basis. Wherever matters raise legal issues they are automatically referred to police authorities, and it has been amply demonstrated that this responsibility is being discharged. As well, the treasury board is re-examining all the governance framework to make sure for the future that all of these matters are properly handled and problems do not recur.

• (1440)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to the August 2000 public works internal audit report, work was invoiced under the production budget whereas it was part of the sponsorship administration contract for which communications firms were receiving a 12% commission. This is, in plain language, double billing.

How is it that a report stating in black and white that the government is being robbed can trigger the creation of a communication plan rather than incite the Prime Minister to roll up his sleeves and see that an end is put to this?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, quite to the contrary, the internal audit led to an action plan, not a communications plan, an action plan by the department to deal with every one of the auditor's recommendations, to address those recommendations and to implement the corrective action.

That action was taken progressively through the year 2001 and our audit team returned to these particular files in the spring of this year to confirm that the corrections were in fact underway.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can the Prime Minister explain that, in the days following the public works internal audit report, there was no meeting held with the offending companies to demand reimbursement of the sums they had overcharged the government?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has made it very, very clear, long before any changes were made with respect to the cabinet, that, first, administrative errors would be exposed and corrected, that wherever there were any overpayments full efforts would be made to recover those repayments, and that if there were illegal activity that would be referred to police.

That is the mandate I have been given by the Prime Minister and that is what has happened.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Saddam Hussein is a dictator who vigorously represses the rights and freedoms of his own people. He obstructs UN inspectors who want to determine if there is the manufacture or the storing of weapons of mass destruction within his territory. Also, he is implicated in harbouring terrorists and supporting terrorism.

A day ago, before the Minister of Foreign Affairs launched his anti-U.S. tirade about an unsubstantiated media report related to an alleged new policy on Iraq, did the Minister of Foreign Affairs call any of his U.S. counterparts to verify whether the media story was true or not?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no, I did not. I was asked to comment on a media story and I commented on it. I pointed out to the media when they asked me about that media story that in our view in Canada we prefer to work through multilateral international institutions which will enable us to guarantee the peace and security of the world, and that we must be very careful that we do not start unilateral actions which in fact will destabilize, because they may be copied by other regimes that may choose to use the same actions against us, which could be very dangerous.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians would be far more comforted to know that the Minister of Foreign Affairs would not risk starting some action without first confirming whether a media report was true. I find it astonishing that he did not do that.

Is there a new Canadian policy related to Canadian participation with its allies, including the United States, on possible intervention in Iraq if all the evidence is there that there is a clear and constant danger? Is there a new policy on that?

*Oral Questions***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find this a totally astonishing proposition by my friend opposite since he is constantly asking me questions every day in the House based on totally unfounded media stories.

I find this unusual. If this is the proposition to which we all will adhere I would like him to go back when he rephrases his questions and I will adhere to the same standard.

That said, I made it clear and the Prime Minister made it clear that the government will always adjust its policies when Canadian interests are threatened. We will do this in this circumstance. We will always do it and we will always act in the first interest of Canadians.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an estimated 60 million people in the southern African region are suffering from political upheaval and what has been described as the worst regional drought since 1992.

Could the Minister for International Cooperation inform the House how the Government of Canada intends to address this urgent situation?

• (1445)

Hon. Susan Whelan (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Hamilton Mountain is quite correct. We are deeply concerned about the worsening conditions in southern Africa.

Due to the urgent nature of this humanitarian crisis, Canada, through the Canadian International Development Agency, has pledged \$34.2 million to provide much needed food, medicine and other assistance to the region.

This contribution will allow us to build on our history of providing assistance to countries in southern Africa and to help those in need.

* * *

THE MEDIA

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know CanWest Global has done at least two big favours for the government. It has donated more \$250,000 to the Liberal Party and this week it fired the publisher of the Ottawa *Citizen* for being openly critical of the Prime Minister.

We also know that CanWest is lobbying for changes to the broadcast regulations in the form of cuts to Canadian content and increased advertising to improve its corporate bottom line.

Will the minister assure Canadians that the government will not further commercialize and Americanize our airwaves as a way of paying back CanWest for services rendered?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, absolutely.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP): Mr. Speaker, southwestern Ontario is currently under a smog watch, an occurrence that happens all too often.

A report released yesterday by the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation highlights the source of the smog. It found that the alarming amounts of deadly toxins being released by coal-fired power plants in North America is on the rise and is expected to increase by a full 50%.

To date the federal government has remained silent on the use of coal-fired power plants in Ontario and elsewhere. Could we have a commitment from the government to move for a moratorium in Canada and demand that the U.S. do the same?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has not been silent but perhaps the hon. member has not taken the trouble to listen. Let me repeat again for him today that we do not believe the program of Ontario power generation will lead to adequate reductions in emissions of pollutants from their coal-fired plants in Ontario.

We believe they will have to go further. The target we have is 39 kilotons. It is a target agreed to by Quebec, Ontario, ourselves and the Americans. We believe it is important to continue the program of reducing emissions of these smog causing chemicals because not only do they—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

* * *

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, in a letter to the ethics counsellor dated March 26, 2001, Deborah Weinstein, the Prime Minister's personal lawyer, stated that a partial payment was made in November 1997 on the 1993 debt owed to the Prime Minister's company, J&AC Consultants Inc., for the alleged sale of the golf course shares.

Could the Prime Minister table the cheque which would show the company that the payment was made to in November 1997? Would he table that cheque?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all these matters were gone into in great detail a year ago in the House and complete responses were provided by the Prime Minister and by his office.

The world has moved on. The House has moved on. It is time for the member and his party to move on to the real business of the nation.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, the *New York Times* published the key facts from the final report of the American investigation into the killing of four of our Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan.

Oral Questions

Given that the details are now in the public domain, will the minister make public the report of the Canadian investigation and, if not, will the minister at least provide the House with whatever information he has received from either General Dumais or Secretary Rumsfeld?

All Canadians, not just the U.S. and Americans, need to know the facts about this horrible situation.

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at 8 o'clock this morning General Baril deposited his report with our chief of defence staff. I will receive it within hours. I have instructed our department to move heaven and earth to release this report to the Canadian people at the earliest possible time.

My primary responsibility is to the families of those killed and to the Canadian people to get this information out at the earliest possible moment.

* * *

• (1450)

FEDERAL COMPENSATION

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the solicitor general if he could give his word that the city of Ottawa and its businesses will be compensated for damages incurred by protesters at the G-8 summit. He responded that he has and that he will continue to honour all responsibilities.

The fact of the matter is that Ottawa hosted the G-20 seven months ago and local businesses are still waiting for compensation, while in Quebec City many have had to take the government to court for compensation.

Will the solicitor general just say straight out to the people of Ottawa that he will compensate the city for losses suffered?

Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing I do know is that the RCMP is in charge of security. We can be very grateful for its ability to do the kind of work that is necessary. We should be congratulating the RCMP for making sure the protesters, the media, the delegates, the residents and everyone else involved will be safely and securely taken care of.

The RCMP is doing the best job that it can and we on the government side will ensure that it continues to do that good work.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP's performance is at a very high level. The government's level is lower than it can possibly be.

I will ask my question once again. Will the solicitor general promise the residents of Ottawa that the federal government will pay their bills?

Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the solicitor general and the government have always said that we will compensate wherever necessary for our responsibilities. We will continue to do that.

The hon. member opposite and that party should understand that we will do what is required when it is demanded.

We always support the RCMP. We always support safety and security. Security is always priority number one for the government.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in connection with Media IDA Vision's reimbursement of interest, the minister of public works and government services said "there have been no such discussions to my knowledge."

Yet, when money is owed to it by the unemployed or by taxpayers, the government is very quick to initiate recovery procedures, as well as to charge interest and impose penalty charges.

Can the minister explain to us why, once again, the government has a double standard, two different policies depending on whether the money owing is in the hands of the cronies of the Liberal regime or in the hands of the unemployed?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no double standard whatsoever. I think the hon. gentleman is misconstruing earlier remarks.

The Prime Minister has said that wherever there were overpayments, the government would seek to recover those overpayments.

On the matter of the interest charges, I have said that we are examining the legal basis upon which any payments, if they were in fact overpayments, could be recovered by the Crown.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the minister not feel it is immoral for the government to be rushing to get money back from the most disadvantaged, while it is not only rushing to meet with the companies that are buddies of the regime in an attempt to cover up their wrongdoing, but it has even neglected for two years to recover the interest earned by Media IDA Vision on the taxpayers' money? This is immoral.

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, overpayments in any circumstances are obviously not appropriate. Where they happen is a matter of contractual error or administrative procedures that have gone awry. They are obviously that much more serious. We are examining the legal basis for which we might be able to pursue recovery in the interests of the crown.

*Oral Questions***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, when the House is recessed for the summer and the Prime Minister and his cabinet ministers are flying around on the new luxury jets, our military will still be stuck with 40 year old Sea Kings. They will still be hitching rides with the Americans. They will still be making do with unsuitable equipment and too few soldiers.

Will the minister break with the tradition of past defence ministers, start putting the military ahead of Liberal Party issues and commit to an immediate defence review with input from parliament and from the public right across the country?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the defence review will take place very quickly and expeditiously.

As for the helicopters, we have been assured that the Sea Kings are safe. It is in the culture of the military that they never put their people into harm's way in helicopters.

At the same time, the government is committed to purchasing the right helicopter at the right price as soon as possible.

• (1455)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, members of our military know all too well about the Sea Kings and the story there. Canadians across the country know the reality of what is going on with our Sea Kings.

The minister did not answer the question as to when the review will be initiated. Will there be full input from parliament and from the Canadian public across the country? Only with that will we have a review that will be meaningful and helpful to the military.

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the review will be undertaken expeditiously and with consultations.

As for the safety of the Sea Kings, it is my first priority after parliament ends to go up in one so as to demonstrate my confidence in their safety.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Richmond, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Ji-Won Park, the 22 year old Korean exchange student who was brutally attacked while jogging in Vancouver's Stanley Park last month, remains in a coma with a massive brain injury. Ms. Park's visitor's visa will expire next week on June 27.

Could the minister tell the House what can be done to ensure that Ms. Park's immediate health care needs are not compromised by her immigration status?

Hon. Denis Coderre (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, usually I do not comment on specific cases because of the Privacy Act but due to the extraordinary circumstances and especially because of the tragedy, I would say that compassion is in order.

I want to assure British Columbians, the Canadian people and especially the Park family that we need to look at all the options before making any decision.

I can assure my colleagues that there will be no removal action against Ms. Park on June 27. Ms. Park and her family have all of our sympathy for their situation.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Prime Minister will attempt to give Canadians the impression that he cares about farm families. The truth is far different.

Canadians need to see through this Liberal shell game. The budget documents for this year show that he has already cut over \$675 million from last year's safety nets.

Will any announcement on agricultural funding do anything more than restore the \$675 million cut from last year's agricultural budget?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member has the patience to wait until an announcement by the Prime Minister and myself tomorrow, he will see that the government will continue to support agriculture and even more so than we have in the past.

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has joked that he will flip a coin to decide if he will help farmers fight against foreign subsidies.

This flippant remark shows his true colours. He simply does not care. Canadians deserve better. Grain, oilseed and other export dependent producers are hardest hit by rising foreign subsidies. Compensation should be targeted to these farm families.

The Prime Minister has refused to tell farmers and has refused to tell the provinces if he will direct funding to offset trade injury.

Will new agricultural funding be directly targeted to export dependent producers for trade injury compensation?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the opposition was not talking about agriculture, on many occasions I talked with the president of the United States and told him that it was completely unacceptable to increase by 80% the subsidy to farmers.

It is unfair for the good producers of Canada and the other nations of the world.

While the opposition was throwing dirt, we were doing the job for the farmers in this country.

Government Orders

[Translation]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the labour dispute which began at Vidéotron on May 8 has reached a complete stalemate. Worse yet, the employer is not hesitating to take advantage of shortcomings in the Canada Labour Code to use replacement workers, also known as scabs, a situation which threatens to cause tensions and aggravate the situation.

Does the minister realize that the lack of any real anti-strikebreaking legislation is what is chiefly responsible for prolonging labour disputes, particularly in the case of Vidéotron, and that by refusing to amend the Canada Labour Code, she is condoning and encouraging the use of strikebreakers during disputes?

• (1500)

Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will read the process established by employees and employers regarding replacement workers, because it is important that all members in the House be familiar with it.

The Canada Labour Code does not prohibit the use of replacement workers during a work stoppage. However, it does prohibit the use of replacement workers to undermine a union's representative capacity.

If a union believes that the use of replacement labour is illegal, it can file a complaint with—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

* * *

[English]

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently Western Economic Diversification announced \$1.4 million in funding to three high technology projects in Alberta. Could the Secretary of State for Western Economic Diversification please explain why these projects were funded and what benefits they will provide to western Canadians?

Hon. Stephen Owen (Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity yesterday at the University of Calgary to announce the payment of \$1.4 million for three non-profit projects which will help deliver the innovation strategy of the Government of Canada and western Canada.

One goes to Inno-Centre Alberta, which will develop its program of mentoring and build business support services to assist the development of high tech companies. The other \$400,000 will go to the development offices of the University of Calgary, Alberta, which will help increase knowledge based jobs in companies and the acceleration of the commercialization of innovative products and services across western Canada. It will also help diversify the local economy.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Justice has not immediately stopped shelling out taxpayers' money to Groupaction, perhaps it is because he is also the political minister for Quebec and does not want to lose this major Liberal Party donor.

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I said earlier that the Department of Justice is complying fully with the directive issued by my colleague.

When I hear the statements made regarding this issue, I think it would be difficult to go lower than this in politics.

* * *

FERRY SERVICES

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning, federal officials met with regional representatives, who want a solution to the interruption of the ferry services between Trois-Pistoles and Les Escoumins caused by the negligence of the Department of Transport.

Can the Minister of Transport tell us if this meeting resulted in a solution to salvage the 2002 summer season, and will he authorize the complete repair of the wharves to ensure that ferry services are maintained? Will the minister finally behave like a responsible owner?

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, safety is a priority of the department.

A number of options are currently being examined, and negotiations are continuing in the very short term. We hope to reach a compromise that will meet users' needs. In the meantime, two other ferries are in operation between Rivière-du-Loup and Saint-Siméon, and between Forestville and Rimouski.

I am very confident that an adequate solution will be found.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SPECIFIC CLAIMS RESOLUTION ACT

The House resumed from June 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-60, an act to establish the Canadian Centre for the Independent Resolution of First Nations Specific Claims to provide for the filing, negotiation and resolution of specific claims and to make related amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Order, please. It being 3 p.m. the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-60.

Call in the members.

● (1510)

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

(Division No. 374)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bagnell	Barnes (London West)
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bellemare	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Binet	Blaikie
Bonin	Borotsik
Boudria	Bourgeois
Bradshaw	Brien
Brisson	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Caccia
Calder	Cannis
Cardin	Carignan
Carroll	Casey
Castonguay	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chrétien	Clark
Coderre	Comartin
Copps	Cotler
Crête	Cuzner
Desjarlais	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepola	Doyle
Dubé	Duplain
Easter	Eggleton
Eyking	Farrah
Frulla	Gagnon (Champlain)
Gagnon (Québec)	Galloway
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godfrey	Godin
Goodale	Graham
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Harvard
Harvey	Hearn
Hubbard	Ianno
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)	Knutson
Laframboise	Laliberte
Lalonde	Lanctôt
Lebel	LeBlanc
Leung	Longfield
Macklin	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marceau
Marleau	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Masse	Mathews
McCallum	McDonough
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan	McTeague
Mitchell	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Owen
Pacetti	Pagtakhan
Paquette	Paradis
Patry	Peric
Perron	Peschisolido
Pettigrew	Phinney
Picard (Drummond)	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Plamondon	Pratt
Price	Proulx
Provenzano	Redman
Reed (Halton)	Regan
Richardson	Robillard
Robinson	Rocheleau
Rock	Roy
Saada	Sauvageau

Scott	Sgro
Shepherd	Simard
Speller	St-Hilaire
St-Jacques	St-Julien
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart	Szabo
Thibault (West Nova)	Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)
Tirabassi	Tonks
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Government Orders

NAYS

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Bailey	Breitkreuz
Burton	Cadman
Casson	Chatters
Cummins	Day
Duncan	Epp
Forsyth	Gallant
Goldring	Hanger
Harper	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Jaffer
Johnston	Mayfield
McNally	Meredith
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Members

Allard	Asselin
Bonwick	Caplan
Dalphond-Guiral	Duceppe
Fournier	Fry
Lee	Loubier
Ménard	Savoy
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The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, government orders will be extended by 10 minutes.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS CALENDAR

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 28(2)(b), I have the honour to table the House of Commons calendar for the year 2003.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

● (1515)

*[English]***ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 32(2) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of three annual reports. One is the implementation committee annual report on the Gwich'in comprehensive land claim settlement. The other is the implementation committee annual report on the Sahtu, Dene and Metis comprehensive land claims agreement. The third is the 2000-01 annual report of the Inuvialuit final agreement implementation co-ordinating committee.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I move that the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans presented to the House on Tuesday, June 11, be concurred in.

I thank the House for allowing me to move this important motion. It comes on the coattails of the good work of the hon. member for St. John's West. He moved a similar concurrence motion of one of the best reports that ever came out of any committee in the House in recent years. I am speaking of the report entitled "Foreign Overfishing: Its Impacts and Solutions", which made a number of recommendations to help address the incredible overfishing problem off the Atlantic coast.

This overfishing is having a profound impact. Most people do not realize this but a census published a short time ago showed that every federal riding in Newfoundland and Labrador has suffered a loss in its population. Much of that is because of a lack of opportunities in the fishery which has been taken away because of overfishing. It is a serious issue not only for the fishery but for the whole province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the country. As the population of Newfoundland and Labrador declines because of overfishing, then the burden on taxpayers in the rest of the country becomes even greater.

Something the census did not show was that most of the people who are leaving Newfoundland and Labrador are young people. They are the people who would make our provinces in Atlantic Canada grow, especially Newfoundland and Labrador. They are the people who would buy houses and create new businesses. They are the people who would raise families. Without this whole generation of people this issue creates even more profound social and cultural problems.

Much of the problem comes from overfishing outside of Canada's 200 mile limit. The committee came up with a sensible and totally unanimous recommendation suggesting that Canada become the custodian of the area outside the 200 mile limit that is now controlled by members of NAFO. This has proven to be a total failure as far as enforcement goes.

As recently as last week another ship was inspected. It was caught breaking fishing rules outside of Canada's 200 mile limit. This 200 mile limit issue is flaunted because it provides these ships with safety because there is no enforcement. NAFO enforcement can register the problem, but it cannot enforce it and impose penalties or fines. That is left up to the home country of the ship involved.

In this case it was a Russian ship that was sent to Spain and who knows what will happen. We can bet that ship will be back overfishing again shortly, taking away the jobs and livelihood of Canadians because there is no enforcement beyond the 200 mile limit. The NAFO agreement has failed in that there is no enforcement. It has no teeth to provide protection for us or anyone else.

The committee's main recommendation was that Canada extend custodial management beyond the 200 mile limit. NAFO would create the rules. It would identify quotas for fishing, but Canadians would enforce them. There would be enforcement for the first time ever. This again is on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks, an important part of the fishery where the 200 mile limit extends beyond our jurisdiction and where there is effectively no control.

This started out as a good thing when countries formed NAFO. They thought there would be some enforcement and control over overfishing, but it has proven ineffective and a failure.

The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, NAFO, was organized in 1978 to provide for conservation and management, but again that has not worked. It will not work until there is enforcement and an organization with a real interest in it like Canada and Canadian enforcement agencies that can understand the impact.

European countries come to Canada and it does not matter to them what happens off our shores. It does not matter to them what happens to our fishery inside or outside the 200 mile limit. They come here to get as much fish as they can. There is no honouring of agreements and no respect for our concerns, our people, our culture and our thousands of fishermen and plant workers who are now out of work because of this situation.

● (1520)

The committee did a lot of work. It had excellent members and came up with a unanimous set of recommendations. It is time for the House and the minister to accept the committee's recommendations. It was surprising when the minister refused to accept the recommendations before he even read the report.

I noticed that the minister of fisheries in Newfoundland applauded the committee for its good work but the minister of fisheries in Ottawa did not even take the time to read the recommendations. They are simple and clear recommendations. The summary of the recommendations is on one page, so anyone can understand them. If the minister took a few moments he could read this one page and know what the committee worked on and what conclusions it arrived at. They are simple recommendations and I will run through them.

Recommendation number one is that observer reports would be more transparent and would be submitted in a timely fashion instead of the process now where they are clouded and delayed, and no one is held accountable.

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Recommendation number two is that the Government of Canada amend the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act to implement the custodial management of fisheries resources on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap. This is the most important one which would provide once and for all an enforcement body of Canadians with an interest, knowledge and understanding of the situation that would enforce the rules outlined by NAFO and the quotas.

Recommendation number three is that the Government of Canada inform NAFO and its contracted parties that Canada will withdraw from NAFO and proceed with the implementation of this management of the nose and tail of the Grand Banks no later than one year following the September 2002 NAFO meeting. It puts a deadline on it. It makes sense because it cannot go on forever.

Recommendation number four is that the Government of Canada conduct a targeted public information campaign to increase public awareness of violations of NAFO.

Recommendation number five is that Canada make clear that it is prepared to use the provisions of Bill C-29 against NAFO members who have not ratified the UNFA, and that in the case of NAFO members who have not ratified UNFA, Canada is prepared to use the provisions to ensure conservation.

These are basic, common sense recommendations. The House should ratify the committee report and the minister should implement it as quickly as possible.

I live in Nova Scotia. There are communities up and down the coast of Nova Scotia that have been devastated by overfishing, both within the 200 mile limit and beyond the 200 mile limit. We cannot talk about fishery devastation without mentioning Canso, a little town in the riding of the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough that recently lost its fish plant, the main employer in the whole community. It has shut down and the town will be devastated.

It is a terrible example of what happens when this fishery crisis hits a small community. People are already moving out and a lot more will move out as the school year ends because there are no opportunities for the fish plant workers. There are no opportunities for the fishermen and fisherwomen. There are no opportunities for the young people graduating from school now. They have no choice but to leave.

This again puts a bigger burden on the people who remain. It guarantees there will be no future. If there are no young people, there is no future. There are no future small businesses. It puts in jeopardy the schools and the health care institutions. Everything is in jeopardy when this happens. That is why the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough has worked so hard trying to convince the minister of fisheries to help, and the minister has not helped even a little bit.

This is a renewable resource if it is managed right. It is not like an exhaustible resource. The member for St. John's West pointed out the other day that this resource can be renewed and be there for decades and hundreds of years for future generations of people along the Atlantic coast to earn their livings, create their communities and

protect their culture. However no one is protecting the resource. It is a renewable resource that should be protected and it is not.

● (1525)

The committee's report would take steps to guarantee that the renewable resource is protected and would stay there. It would allow for careers for our young people. It would also allow for the culture of our communities and the population to remain. Without this protection all these communities along the Atlantic coast would be hurt.

It was surprising when the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans rejected the report without even reading it. The minister has a responsibility to at least respect the work of the hon. members on the committee who worked so hard to develop these recommendations. They travelled from coast to coast, town to town and village to village. They met with unions, fishermen, mayors and councillors. They did a great deal of work. To table the report and have it whisked off the table is disrespectful and disappointing to say the least.

We urge the minister to reconsider his approach to this. Rather than state all the reasons it cannot work, he should say that perhaps we can make it work. Perhaps we could take a risk. The government does not take many risks but here is a chance for it to take one.

Why does he not go to the NAFO meetings in September, put this position forth and stand up and be counted rather than say we cannot do this or that because we have never done this or that? It is time to do something new and different or our fisheries will be completely devastated. It is hard to believe that we are still talking about overfishing after what the country has been through since the early 1990s and the trauma that the provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia have gone through with the cutbacks and restrictions.

When the cutbacks first started we thought it was a delay and if we waited two or three years the fishery would come back. Here we are 10 years later still talking about overfishing. It is hard to believe we are doing it. No other country in the world would allow that to happen.

The answer is here. The minister does not even have to think. All he has to do is read one page and then implement the recommendations. It makes it real easy for him. All he has to do is read the one page of recommendations. The answers are there to resolve this issue.

We urge the minister to think about the impact on villages, communities and workers all along our Atlantic coast and say that perhaps it is time we did something proactive. Rather than say we cannot do anything, perhaps it is time to take a risk, to take a stand at the NAFO meeting in September, and say we will do this and then do it.

● (1530)

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was interested in hearing the comments from the member for Cumberland—Colchester on the report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

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One has to be at least half fair to the minister. The member is suggesting that the minister has rejected the report out of hand. There was a media story to that point. We have to be fair to the minister. As we said in the report the government has 150 days in which to respond to the report. I would hope it responds quicker than that and that over that period of time the minister takes a much different position than he was alleged to have taken in the media report. I have a couple of questions for the member for Cumberland—Colchester.

One of the key recommendations was that we need to implement custodial management over the nose and tail of the Flemish Cap. The way that we would do that would be through the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act. Is the member saying that he would be in favour of making amendments to the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act to accommodate coastal management?

The member comes from Nova Scotia not from Newfoundland and Labrador. Can the member outline some of the benefits that might accrue to his own area as a result of the increased economic activity, et cetera, that might occur as a result of not allowing the fisheries to be decimated by these foreign fleets, as is happening now?

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the member for Malpeque as the chair of this committee that drafted the report. I was not on the committee. Nor was I even closely associated with it. However, every rumour, every story we heard about the work of the committee was that all members from all parties worked well together toward a common goal. It has a reputation for being an excellent committee.

The member wants me to be half fair with the minister, which I will be. However, to say that it will take 150 days automatically puts it beyond the September meeting of NAFO and then we will have missed a big opportunity. All he has to do is read one page, the recommendations. Surely the detail and the backup are there, and it will not take five months to read.

Again, the key is not to miss the opportunity for us to present our case at the September meeting of NAFO, which we will have a long time to wait to have again.

To answer the question if we would support amendments, yes, we will support whatever it takes to put in the recommendation of the committee for custodial management.

However, there will be an impact on my area and my province more than my riding. I have a fishery on the Northumberland Strait and one on the Bay of Fundy. They are really interesting inshore fisheries. The most interesting part of my whole riding is the two fisheries and the differences between them. My whole area is involved directly with the fisheries and with processing. We are involved even with things like wharves, which are so important. They will all be affected by this.

With the protection of the custodial management process, these organizations and communities can be sure that their resource will be protected and there for the future. Therefore, it is very important that we proceed with this. For sure it is very important to Nova Scotia to proceed with custodial management.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend for bringing this

motion forward. The issue is actually quite a simple one. The fishery was closed in 1992 because of a serious depletion of the cod stocks. That is the simple fact of the matter. The fear then was that the stocks were close to extinction. What we have now, 10 years later, is not a recovery. There is no recovery in the stocks. In fact, scientists will tell us that the stocks may be even more seriously depleted now than they were when the moratorium was brought forward. The situation that faced the committee was how to respond to the declining numbers of stocks when the fishery had been closed for 10 years.

Back in the mid-1990s the committee met, discussed the issue and suggested to the government at that time that it take more severe action and a more aggressive stance in defending the fish. What we have seen since then is a heavy reliance on NAFO and on the procedures that are inherent in that organization. The fact of the matter is there has been a complete failure by NAFO to act in a responsible way and to ensure that its member states are obeying the law. All this has occurred at a time when the Canadian fleet has been tied up to the wharves to protect the fish within our 200 mile limit.

As the House knows full well, fish cannot pick out the picket fence at the end of the 200 mile limit, so they freely cross back and forth through these international waters. It is no good for the Canadian fleet to be tied up when the communities in Newfoundland will suffer if there are fishermen who are illegally exercising their option to pursue the fishery at will outside the 200 mile limit.

The issue here was how to protect those stocks, not just the stocks of the nose and tail of the Grand Bank but all of the stocks which freely cross into the 200 mile economic zone of Canada. That was the dilemma that faced the committee.

We have tried the NAFO issue. Canada is being marginalized in NAFO. The member states do not want to pay attention to us. They do not understand the real concerns that we have, not just in furthering our own interests but in protecting the fisheries resource. That is the issue behind custodial management. Canada is not just saying that it will take this over lock, stock and barrel and claim the water column for its own. We are saying that we want custodial management to protect the fisheries resource for all user groups, those with an historical attachment to it.

I would like my friend from Cumberland—Colchester to respond to that very clear issue and statement of the fisheries committee that the intention is to preserve the fish for all nations that want to harvest it and that have been harvesting it for so many hundreds of years.

● (1535)

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I was in the House in 1991-92 when the moratorium was imposed. We all assumed it would be a moratorium for two or three years then the fish would come back. Here we are 10 years later and we are still talking about it. The reason we are talking about it is because of the overfishing, particularly beyond the 200 mile limit.

The fishermen in my riding are incredibly responsible because they establish their own limits. In fact for lobsters they establish their own carapace sizes which are higher than the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. They monitor and police it themselves. That way they preserve the resources.

That is exactly what the committee is talking about. All it wants is for Canada to enforce the rules and quotas that are established by NAFO. Presently each home country may or may not regulate them to the same standard. We want Canada to be the enforcement agency, the police department, to enforce the rules that are written by NAFO and enforce the quotas that are established by NAFO; not to have a dozen countries doing it but one country to preserve the resource for all countries.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair takes notice that there will be resumption of debate on this matter, with the hon. parliamentary secretary having the floor.

There have been interventions from both sides of the House asking the Chair if it would be possible to do petitions. Is there a willingness to facilitate petitions, understanding clearly that as soon as petitions are done the floor will be granted to the parliamentary secretary to continue the debate on the report before the House under motions?

Some hon. members: Agreed

* * *

● (1540)

PETITIONS

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize some constituents of mine, those of the Bethel Baptist Church, who have collected 55 signatures. The petitioners would like to strengthen the laws concerning child pornography. They would like to send a strong message to pedophiles that we must protect our children against those who would exploit them. They are particularly concerned with the recent B.C. supreme court decision concerning John Robin Sharpe.

I would like to present these on behalf of Enid Slack and everyone in the country who would like to deprive pedophiles of the tools.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to table today under Standing Order 36 identical petitions on behalf of the hon. members of Provencher and Nanaimo—Cowichan.

These petitions condemn the use of child pornography and the inadequate application of our child pornography laws by the courts. The petitioners call upon the government to take all necessary steps to protect Canadian children against pedophiles, child pornographers and others who exploit them.

These petitions have been signed by over 1,500 concerned citizens from across Canada, largely from the ridings of Provencher and Portage—Lisgar in Manitoba and Nanaimo—Cowichan in British Columbia.

[*Translation*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by 847 people, in addition to the 1,755 others who have already signed it, calling on the government to pass a motion to use all its diplomatic, political and economic

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channels to get the case of Kimy Pernia resolved by the Colombian authorities, and to end the massacres of the Colombian people.

At the people's summit held in Quebec City in April 2001, Kimy Pernia, an aboriginal guest from Colombia, condemned the situation of exclusion and violence, of which the members of his community, Embera Katio del Alto Sinu, are victims, particularly at the hands of the death squads, which are paramilitary groups close to the Colombian army.

Upon his return to Colombia, Kimy Pernia was abducted by the paramilitary and has now been missing for one year. This crime against humanity is connected to his coming to Quebec City and taking part in the international forum.

I call on all those who took part in the people's summit to show their solidarity with Kimy Pernia. A march was held in Quebec City on June 1 to obtain his release. His friends and family are very worried and upset by his disappearance.

[*English*]

REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 36, I have several hundred signatures from Essex county in southwestern Ontario.

The petitioners are requesting the Parliament of Canada to ban human embryo research and direct the Canadian Institutes for Health Research to support and fund only promising ethical research that does not involve the destruction of human life.

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Jerry Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by several people. The petitioners ask parliament to repeal Section 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act.

JUSTICE

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have several petitions. I presented petitions personally to the minister yesterday. The petition I present today asks the Minister of Justice for a timely review of the Steven Truscott case. As we know, he was 14 at the time when he was sentenced to death. The petitioners want a judicial review of this case and they want it done in a timely fashion.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues, I would like to present a petition today from my riding. The petitioners were motivated of course by the John Robin Sharpe decision on child pornography.

The petitioners call upon parliament to protect our children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all materials which promote or glorify pedophilia and sado-masochistic activities involving children are outlawed.

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JUSTICE

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present a petition on behalf of the constituents living in the towns of Wallaceburg and Dresden in the riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex. The petitioners call upon parliament to ask the Minister of Justice to undertake a thorough re-examination of the Truscott case within a reasonable time period and to ensure that justice be restored to Mr. Truscott.

• (1545)

GASOLINE ADDITIVES

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present a second petition on behalf of the constituents living in the riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex. The petitioners call upon parliament to protect the health of seniors and children and to save our environment by banning the disputed gas additive MMT as it creates smog and enhances global warming.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Andy Burton (Skeena, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 36, I am tabling a petition today from a number of residents of the Queen Charlotte Islands in my riding of Skeena. Similar to numerous petitions tabled recently, this one calls upon parliament to protect our children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all materials which promote or glorify pedophilia or sado-masochistic activities involving children are outlawed.

Mr. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have two petitions from my area. The petitioners are concerned about child pornography and they call upon our courts and justice system to be more aggressive in addressing this issue.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the members of the Anglican Church of Canada who reside in the Anglican diocese of Huron in the province of Ontario, I wish to submit a petition for the case of litigation involving the Mohawk Institute and the Anglican diocese. The petition calls upon parliament to resolve this issue of residential school litigation outside the court system before further ruin is brought upon the diocese of Huron and the Anglican Church of Canada, as \$1.5 million has gone to legal fees already with no resolution to the situation.

JUSTICE

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of citizens of Canada. The petitioners believe that an injustice was done to Steven Truscott, that the case should be re-examined in a timely fashion and that justice should be restored.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of the citizens of Canada, mainly from the Guelph area. The petitioners call upon parliament to ask the Minister of Justice to undertake a further re-examination of the Steven Truscott case within a reasonable time period and to ensure that justice be restored to Mr. Truscott.

The Deputy Speaker: If there are no other petitions, I would like to thank all members present in the House for their co-operation. We

will now go back to the business before the House prior to tabling petitions.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Bill Matthews (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate today in this discussion on the standing committee report on the nose and tail and the Flemish Cap of the Grand Banks and foreign overfishing.

At the outset I want to commend the chair and the members of the committee for doing a fantastic job. They went about hearings and spent a considerable time compiling a report. As other members have said prior to my speaking today, they deliberated long and hard to come up with a report to adequately deal with the very serious problem affecting the livelihoods of many rural communities in Atlantic Canada but specifically rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I represent a riding in Newfoundland and Labrador, the southwest coast, that has been decimated because of the devastation of our cod stocks. As the member for Cumberland—Colchester said, the moratorium was imposed in 1992 and everyone thought that by now we would have seen a significant rejuvenation and regeneration of our cod stocks, but it has not happened. In all fairness there are a number of reasons for that, but certainly a very important factor has been the flagrant violations by members of NAFO, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization. There have been flagrant violations year after year.

This year NAFO is celebrating its 25th anniversary. There is an upcoming meeting in Spain in September. What the committee really wanted to do was arm the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the government with a report to give some leverage and some ammunition for trying to deal with this very serious problem. A number of countries that form the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization have been identified as violators for many years.

One of the biggest weaknesses of the NAFO arrangement is known as the objection procedure. NAFO has a scientific council that analyzes and assesses the fish stocks in the NAFO regulatory areas. Each year the council prepares a report for NAFO. It makes recommendations on specific fish stocks as to what the total allowable catch should be or what the health of a certain fish stock is. That scientific council then makes a recommendation of a total allowable catch, but because of this, in my view, very obscene objection procedure, all a country has to do if it disagrees with the advice of the scientific council is register an objection. Then it sets its own total allowable catch and flagrantly overfishes that fish stock. One of the biggest problems with NAFO over the years has been this objection procedure.

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Imagine a scientific council, which also involves scientific information from Canada, that makes a recommendation on a particular fish stock. A country completely ignores that recommendation and then catches, in some cases, five, six or ten times the total allowable catch of a particular fish stock. That is one of the biggest problems we have with NAFO.

Meeting after meeting, year after year, countries such as Canada go to NAFO with a delegation. We have a delegation head and commissioners who go to those meetings and review the activities of the NAFO partners. Year after year for the last 25 years there have been significant weaknesses that have been identified and corrective actions have been recommended, but certain countries just continue to violate.

Therefore, in its wisdom, in my view, the committee this year held hearings on this very important issue, the nose and tail and the Flemish Cap of the Grand Banks. In my view the committee produced a tremendous report. The recommendations are very direct and frank and very precise. As one member of the committee, I feel that it is a very useful tool for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Government of Canada to use to try to address this very major problem.

• (1550)

Last year when the Canadian delegation came back from NAFO, its members made some very alarming statements about what was really happening on the nose and tail and the Flemish Cap of the Grand Banks. They talked about Canada being isolated. They talked about countries ignoring the scientific advice of the NAFO scientific council. They talked about the weakness in the observer reports, which my colleague opposite has alluded to. In some cases the observers are actually members of the crew. We can imagine how objective an observer report is when the observer is actually working for the captain. Of course the livelihood of that particular observer as a crew member is dependent on the amount of fish that the vessel catches. We can imagine the impact that would have on an observer reports.

These are the kinds of things that have been happening over the years and these are the kinds of things that the same countries have continually ignored and continually violated. They have refused to address those very important issues. This year past, the Canadian delegation came back in a state of great alarm. As a matter of fact, in front of the standing committee, our head of delegation, Mr. Chamut, who is an assistant deputy minister in the department of fisheries, described the situation and alluded to those alarming facts.

Of course all of that was taken into consideration when the committee did its report and finally decided on the recommendations of the report. Those very important observations from our Canadian delegation were certainly a very critical consideration and a very critical point of the report.

Of course as well we went to Newfoundland and Labrador and heard some very compelling evidence from people who have been long associated with the fishing industry: people who have been top executives with companies, people who are community leaders, and mayors, union people and processors. On and on the lists went. The evidence was very compelling. It certainly had a huge impact on members of the committee, particularly those members of the

committee who come from central and western Canada, because of course they were not as conversant with the issues as we were, coming from Atlantic Canada.

Having said that, I want to thank all the members of the committee for their support and for the report. It is very important that everyone in the House realize that this is an all party committee report. It is a unanimous report. There is no minority report. It is unanimous, strong, direct and frank, and in my view it should still serve as a very useful tool for the Government of Canada as it proceeds to address this very important issue.

The committee is recommending establishing custodial management. I think that has been talked about by every speaker to date. If we continue to leave the management and the regulation of these fisheries to the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, it is the strong view of the committee that nothing will change. We have given NAFO so many opportunities in the past to clean up its act, but it has not happened.

We believe that it is time for the Government of Canada to finally take the lead on the issue, to strike a management regime over the nose and tail and Flemish Cap of the Grand Banks and as well, of course, over the fisheries resource that falls within the 200 mile limit. In a lot of cases, as has been alluded to by other members, those fish stocks are the same because they are known as straddling stocks. They swim. Sometimes they are outside the 200 mile limit and at other times they are inside the 200 mile limit. We have to realize that in a large measure we are talking about the same fish.

However, there is something really alarming about all of this. When we shut down the cod fishery and imposed a moratorium, our own fishermen in Newfoundland and Labrador and Atlantic Canada stopped fishing, but foreigners continued to fish outside the 200 mile limit and foreigners continued to take the same fish that we stopped fishing in the name of conservation.

To reiterate the point, just a few weeks ago, one of the largest fish companies in Canada, Fishery Products International, was engaged in a yellowtail flounder fishery, which it does each year. In that yellowtail flounder fishery this year, the bycatch of American plaice was unusually high. Of course it is common practice that when a bycatch level exceeds a certain percentage the fishery shuts down. This year, Fishery Products International, in the name of conservation, stopped harvesting yellowtail flounder prematurely because the bycatch of American plaice was too high. What did that do?

• (1555)

That meant that FPI had to shut down its groundfish operation in the town of Marystown, which employed approximately 600 people. This also had an impact on its groundfish operations in the towns of Fortune and Harbour Breton, which again impacts another 800 to 900 people. A responsible Canadian company shut down its fishery and called in its boats because the bycatch of American plaice was too high, but what is happening outside the 200 mile limit is what is alarming.

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American plaice, by the way, is under moratorium by NAFO. What is happening? Our company shuts down and will not fish yellowtail flounder because of the bycatch of American plaice. What is happening outside the 200 mile limit? Certain NAFO countries have a directed fishery for American plaice. That is what is happening. Then there are those people who say we should continue with NAFO and who ask what are we going to have if we do not have NAFO?

In my view, to continue with NAFO will just be a continuous failure. To continue with NAFO will mean more of the same. It will mean that our stocks will never rejuvenate and will never replenish. There has to be a change in the management regime. In my view, the committee in its wisdom has made the proper recommendation: that Canada establish a custodial management regime.

My friend from the Alliance Party, and I apologize for not recognizing his riding, made a very interesting observation in his comments and questions when he talked about it not being the desire of the committee that we push the other countries out. It is the view of the committee that we should look at historic attachment, historic fishing patterns and historic practices and consequently divvy up the fish based on that. That was the member's point. In my view, and I do not mean to speak for all the members of the committee, that is what the members of the committee desire. That is what the members of the committee want done.

We know we cannot go in, flex our muscles and tell other countries that they are out of the zone, that they will not get any of this fish. We have been selling them fish for 400 years. Spain and Portugal have been fishing off our shores for 400 years. We just cannot do that even though they are probably the most flagrant violators and have consistently been so. They do have an historical attachment to the fish and the resource. All we are saying is, let Canada manage the resource, let Canada enforce the zone.

Yes, there are those who will say we cannot afford to do that. I remember a comparable debate a few years ago in the house of assembly in the legislature of Newfoundland. The premier of Newfoundland and Labrador of the day and I used to debate this issue fairly regularly. His common line always was that Newfoundland and Labrador could not afford to have more control and say over its very important fisheries resources off our shores. I consistently said to him, and I thought perhaps I would make some gain with him with a sobering thought, "Mr. Premier, Newfoundland and Labrador cannot afford not to take more control of its fisheries resources off its shores". I am sorry to say that I have been proven right. Because in regard to what that resource and then the downturn and the decimation of its fish stocks have meant to the economy and the way of life of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, I am sure there will be many books written in years to come.

When I travel the south coast of Newfoundland in the riding I represent, I see what has happened to the communities. I see that many people are no longer there. I look at the ages of the people who are left there. I look at the vacant homes. I look at the businesses that are shut down. If ever there was a compelling story to show that we need more control over our fish resources, to see it all one has to do is travel rural Newfoundland, especially if one is familiar with how it was there.

● (1600)

In the riding I represent we worked 12 months a year at the fishery. We never knew what it was like to have a vacation. We were lucky if the plant shut down on Christmas Eve for three or four days. The boats would sail again on Boxing Day or certainly before New Year's Day to go to the fishing grounds. We did not know what vacations were.

What has happened to the fish stocks has impacted on the people. If one is as familiar with it as I am, it is very disappointing and alarming to go to communities that were so viable. I grew up in one but now there is very little life left in it. It is very disconcerting. The people do not have a lot of faith in anyone or anything any more.

That is the ongoing debate. I say to members that the report is a good one. It was not done lightly. It was done after listening to witnesses, hearing testimony, looking at the historical background. Of course there was the input of many members of the committee who have experienced what I just talked about because of where they grew up and the way life was in the communities they lived in and the way it is today.

I commend all those who participated in the debate. It has been a mature and informed debate. Quite often in the House of Commons members talk about issues for the sake of talking about them, or someone encourages them to make a speech on an issue in which they are really not interested. I have detected here today that everyone who has spoken on the issue have been well informed.

Sometimes parliamentarians and committees of the House are criticized for travelling. Quite often we hear the question, why are they travelling again and spending all that money on air transportation, hotels and other things? If ever there was a solid reason that committees of the House should travel, it is this very issue, the report we are debating today. I am sure members opposite would be only too willing to confess that before they went to Newfoundland and Labrador and heard the testimony of the witnesses at the hearings and familiarized themselves with the issue, they did not fully understand and appreciate the gravity of the situation.

The same thing happens when on occasion as a member of the committee I go to the west coast of Canada. I learn about the problems with the salmon fishery, the hake fishery, and on it goes.

There is a strong justification for members of parliament and committees to travel all over this great country. In that way we become more familiar with other people's problems and we do not always so readily slough them off as complaining about one thing and another. I want to go on the record as saying that because of the travel of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, of the five years I have been on it, it has done some good work and has produced excellent reports. I commend all members for their input into the report.

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This is a very serious issue in the province in which I live. It has seriously impacted on the livelihoods of individuals. It has almost broken the economic back of many communities. It is incumbent upon the Government of Canada to take the issue very seriously and to seriously consider the committee's recommendations in the report. The government should show the report to NAFO and say that Canada is serious about dealing with the issue. In my view there is only one way to deal with it and that is to move forward with custodial management.

• (1605)

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Burin—St. George's for his remarks. I agree that the committee members work well together.

The town of Burgeo is in the member's riding. As the member said, there is nothing like being out there on the ground with the people who are affected by these issues. I am fortunate enough to have with me the presentation by Allister Hann, the mayor of Burgeo, who stated:

The reason I have chosen to come here today is because of the importance I attach to extension of jurisdiction. Also, your committee...will be able to put a face on a particular town, the town of Burgeo. There are many other Burgeos.... Our towns have made and continue to make the ultimate sacrifice, that is, of dying. This is due in no small part to Canada's mismanagement of our fishery inside 200 miles and total inaction and disregard for the nose, tail and Flemish Cap of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland.

Those are his words, not mine. That is the view of an individual on the ground. It is his point of view that the country is not taking enough action to back them up in terms of this issue.

I will not read all three pages of his presentation into the record. It is available in the minutes and proceedings of the committee. I encourage members to read it so they can feel from the heart how he felt. He concluded by saying "Rural Newfoundland is dying while Canada pussyfoots around. The question is not should Canada, act but when. The answer is now".

Perhaps the member for Burin—St. George's could talk about the other Burgeos in his constituency and the impact the loss of the fishery is having on those communities. Perhaps he could comment on why it is so very important for the Government of Canada to stand up and take action against the violators of the conservation measures that NAFO itself established. They are member countries and they are violating the conservation measures established by the scientific council of NAFO.

• (1610)

Mr. Bill Matthews: Mr. Speaker, the town of Burgeo highlights the very seriousness of the situation. Mayor Allister Hann summarized it very well.

Burgeo is still a very proud town and a very well managed town. It has faced dire consequences for the last 10 years. People in that town worked for 12 months. A number of deep sea trawlers were attached to the town. A very vibrant workforce that had been working 12 months a year basically has been shut down for the last 10 years because of the moratorium on ground fishing and cod stocks.

The member has asked me about other communities. I look across the coast of Newfoundland and see the towns of Isle aux Morts, Rose Blanche, Ramea which is just off the coast from Burgeo, Gaultois,

and the Burin peninsula communities of Fortune and Marystown. Burin had a primary processing plant at one time. Thank god right now we are into secondary processing. Trepassey in St. John's West literally has been shut down and boarded up, a town where people worked 12 months a year. Thousands and thousands of people were fully employed. That is the impact the situation has had on the economies of those towns. It is not a very pretty sight.

My colleague opposite talked about the resource being a world resource. It is a tremendous protein resource for the world that we are talking about here. Someone has to take responsibility for conservation of that very important protein resource on the nose and tail and Flemish Cap, which is known as a nursery area where fish spawn and grow quite readily because of the nutrients and the water temperature.

We have been debating species at risk. We have been debating conservation. We have been talking about environmental issues. However no country in the world, including our own, has risen to deal with this crisis.

It is about time that someone rose to the cause for this very important nursery area, a great protein resource for the world, or it could be if we managed it properly. With proper enforcement and a proper management regime in place, it could be again that which it once was, a great food resource not just for Atlantic Canada or Newfoundland and Labrador, but for the entire world. It is time that someone rose to the occasion.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the committee report is minus a minority report by the opposition and the reason is quite clear.

The committee looked at this issue openly and honestly and examined the issue for what it was. We all agreed that what was unfolding in front of us was a tragedy. We all agreed that we would have to act together to make it very clear not only to the government but to the people of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the people of Canada and the people of the NAFO nations that we were serious about this issue and we felt that something had to be done to deal with this critical problem.

How critical is it? It is bad. Ten years ago when the fishery was shut down, when the cod moratorium was put in place, things were bad and they tell us that things are worse now. We are not in a time of recovery. Is this the only issue? Right from the get-go, no it is not. There are other reasons for it.

One which the committee will be looking at in the fall is the growth in the seal herd. That issue will prove to be quite relevant. People with experience in the fishery on the east coast know that is a severe problem. It is a problem that we are experiencing on the west coast as well. We understand the impact the growing seal populations can have on the fishery.

That certainly is one issue but the other critical issue is the overfishing and lack of concern of NAFO nations that are there ostensibly fishing for species to which they are legally entitled. Just what are they pulling up? We are told that they can be seen catching redfish the size of one's thumb and turbot the size of a Coke bottle. They harvest cod and American plaice, species which are under a moratorium.

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That is pretty serious business. It does not bode well for the future of the fishery if we somehow do not get this matter under control. It is unfortunate and I hope the quote that was given was an incorrect one, but the minister said that he is not sure that foreign fishing is primarily to blame for the failure of the east coast cod stocks to bounce back. He suggests that the stocks are having a hard time recovering in part because they were so eroded. We all agree that the fish stocks were eroded but we also are convinced that foreign overfishing is the reason the stocks are not recovering.

The question is how bad is it? The St. John's *Telegram* under access to information wanted that kind of information. It wanted the department to provide the information it had in its records for the interceptions it had made of foreign vessels that were fishing on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. It wanted that information so it could get some idea of just how serious the problem was. That request for critical information that we could use to substantiate our charges was denied. Why? That request was denied because some NAFO nations might find it offensive if that information were released to the public.

In a letter to the chair of the committee, the minister said that the Government of Canada's position is that unilateral action would raise international legal concerns and would not be accepted by the international community. What he is saying though in this instance with regard to releasing the details of the catch is that cannot be done because it might upset the very people who are raping the resource and driving the fisheries into extinction if action is not taken.

● (1615)

This is serious business. It is not a political concern in the sense that the committee members were arguing among themselves on political lines. It is anything but that. In our hearings in Newfoundland and Labrador committee members were drawn together by the strength of the scientific evidence that was presented to us that showed in fact that the resource was dwindling.

There are a number of issues that are worth reading into the record. None are as compelling as some of the information that has been released, showing the disregard that some NAFO nations have for the law within the country.

For example, there was an article that appeared in the *National Post* on Tuesday, June 4. A small twin-engine fisheries patrol aircraft was out patrolling the 200 mile limit and spotted a Russian vessel in Canadian waters. The article stated:

The ship's rear doors are open and its nets are splayed out on deck—a violation of a federal law...

The article goes on to state that Clayton Simms, the fisheries officer, hailed the trawler on the marine radio and said:

"Good morning Captain, this is the Fisheries Officer on-board the Canadian patrol flight."

A thick Russian voice returns the greeting.

"Your doors must be closed and your trawl must be stowed", orders Mr. Simms. "Do you understand?"

"Ah, right now I am repairing my fishing gear", the Russian says.

"But your doors must be closed." There's a pause. "Thank you for the information" says the Russian.

The Russian trawler continues on its way completely ignoring the fact that he has been given a legitimate order by a federal fisheries officer within Canada's 200 mile limit.

In a recent CBC news report on *The National* on May 23 the reporter reminds us:

At any one time, there are 50 to 75 ships fishing outside Canada's territorial waters. And there are just two Canadian Fishery officers to make sure these ships obey the international rules set by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, or NAFO.

We have the additional problem right now that our ability to cover the waters outside our 200 mile limit is limited. We do not have the manpower or the vessels to do it.

In talking about that and raising this issue the reporter points out:

Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans says since 1995, the number of charges laid against foreign fishing vessels has increased by almost 500 percent. But the charges may only tell part of the story. CBC News has obtained some of the patrol logs for the Canadian ships that monitor foreign fishing. Those logs cover the years from 1999 to 2001, and they indicate that many more ships may be getting away with illegal fishing than are ever charged. Here are two samples from the logs of ships that weren't charged.

From April, 2000, "We feel very strongly that the vessel is under reporting regulated species, and species under moratorium. There is no way to verify this at sea, but we are certain he is lying." And from May, 1999, "All European Union vessels cheat to some degree, but the level of misreporting on board this vessel demonstrates that he has no fear of reprisals when he off-loads his catch".

That is the real issue here: no fear of reprisals.

● (1620)

It goes on to say:

One of the reasons there are few reprisals, if the violation happens outside Canadian waters, there is little Canada can do. It is up to the discretion of the ship's home country to decide what, if anything, it will do about it. Fisheries patrol officers say they see too many ships that have been charged and are still fishing.

That is the nub of the problem. When we talk about the nose and tail of the Flemish Cap we are talking about a vast expanse of ocean approaching 80,000 square miles outside our Canadian limit. It is a huge area. Foreign vessels are operating without any regard for the law set down by NAFO, and without fear of reprisal. It is a wild west show out there. It is pillage at will because the sheriff is not coming to town. That is the way it is. Nobody is in charge. That is why the committee in its collective wisdom decided that Canada must exert custodial management over the fisheries beyond our 200 mile limit.

In March we heard of a well documented case involving a Russian vessel that was brought in to St. John's harbour. Found on that vessel was approximately 40,000 pounds of small cod, a species which is presently under moratorium. At any one time there could be 50 to 75 vessels fishing in those waters. We are almost certain that most of those fishing vessels are fishing with a complete disregard for species under moratorium.

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If we want to extrapolate from one vessel with 40,000 pounds of illegal product aboard to 50 to 75 vessels, we are probably talking in the neighbourhood of two million pounds of fish perhaps at any one time that may be caught by that fleet and may be in the holds of that fleet. This could be done 10 times a year. We are talking about 20,000 tonnes of illegally caught fish from the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. That is a lot of cod. I am extrapolating because the department is denying us access to information for fear of embarrassing these NAFO countries. That is not an unreasonable number to catch.

When I talk about those 20,000 tonnes I must also mention the seal issue. I know all the good people in environmental organizations say they do not take much, but I have experience with seals and I know the damage they can do. I have seen the growth in the number of seals and sea lions in the Fraser River in British Columbia where I have fished for over 25 years.

About 25 years ago it was rare for a salmon to have a seal mark on it when it went up river. Now the coast is littered with seals and sea lions, especially in the Straits of Georgia. About 20% of the fish have seal marks on them. The seals do not eat the whole fish but take a bite out of the salmon's belly where the liver is and the rich tasty morsels of the stomach contents, and then let the fish go. I have caught salmon coming into the Fraser River with a bite out of its belly that starts to skin over. Those fish are still trying to make their way up the river.

I have no reason to doubt that seals are seals and that the same thing will happen on the Grand Banks. They will not eat the whole fish, but take a bit out of the belly of a mature cod or other species that may be under moratorium and then let the rest of it go.

• (1625)

There is no question that we have a serious problem on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. The moment is now upon us and parliament to stand up and say that we are interested in protecting the fisheries resource on Canada's east coast. That is what it is all about. If we were to allow the stocks to continue to erode there would be no recovery. It is that simple. We either take action now, after 10 years, or there will be nothing to take action for. The stocks have decreased over the last 10 years.

How do we go about it? How do we start to take action now? We have some legislation on the books in the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act. The committee recommended that we use that and name the NAFO countries. That gives the authority to Canadian enforcement agencies to enforce the law outside our 200 mile limit. We must name those countries and go out and do the job that has to be done.

If we do the job that needs to be done who will object? Will the NAFO nations object? Some might. For example, the European Union has decided that it has to reduce the size of its fishing fleet. It has told Spain that it will have to reduce the size of its fleet. Spain has told the European Union to go and stuff it. It does not intend to do that. The European Union and Canada will have to deal with that if they get their backs up.

Who will object to Canada taking a strong stand on behalf of the fishery? I do not think anybody will. There is a strong feeling in

Europe that we must protect this fisheries resource. I am sure that if we do the proper educating of the public in the European community and let them know why Canada is taking the action that it should be taking to protect this fisheries resource we will have the support of the people of the European Union and we will gain the support of other NAFO nations.

We must take this first step. We must say that we intend to stand up for the fisheries resource. Once we have done that I am convinced that receiving that support will not be difficult to achieve. If we do not stand up for the fishery, pretty soon there will be no fishery to stand up for. That is the bottom line.

It is time for Canada to say that it is not doing this just for itself. It is doing this for all of those countries, including Spain and Portugal, who have an historical attachment to the fishery on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. It is in their best interests as well. The issue we must bring to the Spanish public is that we would be taking custodial management in the best interests of those fishermen in Spain and Portugal who want to obey the law and see the fishery continue to ensure that their sons and daughters have the right to fish on the Grand Banks off Canada's east coast. That is why we must do that.

The members of the fisheries committee stand together on this issue. The committee is now calling on members of parliament to stand together to give the minister the mandate and the backing of the House of Commons. When he goes to the NAFO meetings in the fall he must have the support of the parties to put a strong platform forward for custodial management by Canada over this most important fisheries resource on our east coast.

• (1630)

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his statement, certainly when it comes to the east coast.

I have stood many times in the House of Commons calling for a national shipbuilding policy. One of the reasons for that is not just defence but to make sure we build our ships and have the supply and surveillance ships that we need to go out to the 200 mile limit. We do not have them today. That is why these foreign ships can come in and take over 20,000 pounds of fish.

When those foreign ships come in and start dragging the bottom of the ocean they take the eggs and the baby fish. It is unbelievable what has been happening. This has had such a negative impact on our fishery in Canada.

I had the distinct pleasure of attending a UN meeting in New York with the former minister, Mr. Tobin. However, Mr. Tobin was afraid I would bring up the seal situation at the UN. However his researchers had also looked into it as I had. It is unbelievable what happens to seals when it comes to fishery. Seals can eat hundreds of thousands of tonnes of fish.

I ask my colleague to think about the positive impact a shipbuilding policy would have on all those communities. If we were to put the shipbuilders back to work we could then do the surveillance required and save the fishery as well. It is a two part deal.

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I want to know what my colleague thinks about this. At the present time we do not have the surveillance that should be there and we do not have the ships we need to look after the 200 mile limit.

One only has to look at what is happening in P.E.I. and in New Brunswick. My own city is not what one would call a fishery city but I just cooked a shad for my husband before I left to come here. The shads we catch today are a lot smaller than they used to be. There is an urgent need from one end of the country to the other for us to deal with the fishery.

What does my colleague think about this need for us to build our ships here in Canada to look after that 200 mile limit?

• (1635)

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that she has struck on a very critical point, that is, our ability to patrol our coastal waters. We simply lost that over the years. We do not have the vessels and the capability to adequately patrol our coastal waters.

I know my friend has long supported the notion that Canada should build those replacement vessels in Canada. I do not think there would be too much argument about that in this place. We need to have a shipbuilding program in this country because we simply need vessels, not just coast guard vessels and fisheries vessels to do these patrols, but naval vessels to maintain our sovereignty off our coast.

The issue today is about the fishery on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. In that regard we need to commit the resources to policing the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. That means the acquisition of new and additional vessels to allow the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to do the kind of surveillance that it needs to do.

My friend also mentioned the issue of the seals. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to deal with that issue. I know seals are pretty to the folks from the cities. They see the little white pups on the ice and think they are cute. I grant that they are cute and that they have pretty brown eyes but the fact is that they do grow up and eat a lot of fish. They are also wasteful eaters. They do not lick their plate clean. They take a bite and move on to the next one. That is a serious problem. There needs to be a balance in nature. We harvest the fish and rightly so but we should be harvesting the seals.

The issue of the illegal fishing by NAFO nations and the ignoring of the moratorium has to be dealt with. There is no question that it is incumbent on the government to deal with that issue in a timely fashion if we are going to save the fish stocks.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, sometimes when decisions are made in Ottawa that impact on the everyday life of people, whether it be through HRDC programs or, in this case, the fishery, the people back in my riding of Cape Breton often ask whether the people of Ottawa reach out to the regions of the country and try to understand what is actually happening on the ground.

I want to reiterate what my colleague from Delta—South Richmond stated concerning the study the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans embarked on. Committee members travelled to the east coast and listened to a broad collection of opinions. People were passionate in expressing their opinions. The fishermen, the

processors, the buyers and the community leaders all shared those same opinions. When we returned we put the report together and came forward with the recommendations. It was unanimous. There were no dissenting reports offered. We thought it was a great piece of work.

I have a tremendous amount of respect for my colleague. He is a gentleman who has earned a living in the fishery. He has a great understanding of the industry. I have a question for the member. With a revision of the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act, will that give us the stick that we need? Will that enable us to move forward toward custodial management? Will it give us some teeth in order to win back control of the resource off the nose and tail of the Grand Banks?

• (1640)

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the efforts my friend from Cape Breton made when the committee travelled to the west coast to understand the problems that we are facing there.

With respect to the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act, my understanding of the act is that a country must be named in the regulations before Canada can take action to arrest a vessel from that country for violations under the Fisheries Act. I believe quite strongly that this is the first step in gaining control over the fishery. Once we have the ability to name those countries, then we have the ability to bring them to heel if they continue to ignore the moratorium and fish undersized species. It is critical that the action be taken. It is not unprecedented. We did it in this country of course in the mid-nineties. It is something that Iceland did a couple of decades ago when it declared its 200 mile limit.

However it is important to remember that we are not doing this strictly in our own self-interest. It is in the interests of all countries that fish the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. Custodial management means preserving the fishery for all countries that have an historical attachment to the fishery off Canada's east coast, on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ) Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on the motion by my colleague concerning the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans entitled "Foreign Overfishing: Its Impacts and Solutions, Conservation on the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap" off Newfoundland.

As most of my colleagues who have spoken have said, this is a unanimous report tabled by all of the committee's members. I would like to thank all my colleagues who were on the committee with me for their excellent work, as well as its chair, who is with us at this time.

The objective of the members of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans was a very simple one: to protect the resource off Newfoundland, that is the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap. We were made aware of the real tragedy that ensued as a result of the loss of this resource, both in Newfoundland and in Quebec, the Gaspé in particular.

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I have just been rereading some of the witnesses' statements and would like to quote Richard Cashin, who headed the task force on incomes and adjustment in the Atlantic fishery in 1993.

It is now 2002, and we are still in the same boat. In fact, the situation is worse. In 1993, Mr. Cashin said:

We are dealing... with a famine of biblical scale—a great destruction. The Social and economic consequences of this... destruction are a challenge to be met and a burden [on] the [entire] nation, not just... its victims.

It was a real tragedy because fisheries management, prior to 1992 and the moratorium, was extremely lax. Things were let slide until they realized that the resource was at risk of disappearing. The day this was realized, the decision was made to establish a moratorium, and this totally demolished the economy of Newfoundland and the region I come from, the Gaspé.

My colleagues, particularly those from Newfoundland, have already referred to this. It is a veritable human tragedy, a profound and unfathomable one, that these people have had to live through. The tragedy continues to this day. In Gaspé as in Newfoundland, fishing was people's livelihood and an honourable one. It brought them in a decent income. Since the 1992 moratorium, they are faced with a totally catastrophic economic situation.

We know that since 1992, the federal government has had to create programs to assist these people. These assistance programs only kept the people of Newfoundland and the Gaspé in a state of poverty that continues to worsen today.

When there is a strong economy, based on resources that belong to the people, it is impossible, by way of assistance and support programs, to completely replace the economy of a province or a region like the Gaspé overnight when the resource disappears. Small projects, that last a few weeks, with paltry wages, cannot jump start the economy of a province or a region such as ours.

Basically, what the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans is asking for is quite simple. We made five recommendations, which I believe should have been made back in 1992, and thought of well before the moratorium and well before we reached the catastrophic situation that we experienced in 1992.

It is incomprehensible that today, despite the 1992 moratorium, the federal government is still hesitating to implement real measures to ensure that the resource is protected. Right now, we cannot claim that the resource is being protected.

•(1645)

On the contrary, reports continually point out that the resource is at risk, that it continues to decline and that the fish stocks are not rebuilding themselves. This is what we are being told right now.

Members of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans are asking for something quite simple: that custodial management be implemented for the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap.

Why implement this type of management? It is quite simple. It is so that the resource can some day rebuild itself, so that some day, the people who traditionally lived off the resource, and who are still waiting to do so, can have some hope of living off the resource again.

Unfortunately, there are people who are still denied the resource and they have very low incomes. In my region, fishers make approximately \$20,000 or \$22,000 per year. These are people who could be making \$100,000, and even more. These people are living on what I would describe as modest incomes, are being kept in poverty.

In the meantime, the federal government is hesitating to take the necessary measures, some proposed by the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. Yet, these measures are very simple.

Along with all its other partners, the federal government has set up what is called the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization.

All the stakeholders and witnesses who appeared before our committee said—and we were able to see this for ourselves—that the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization is not working and will never work.

The reason is very simple: member countries set quotas, decide whether or not to implement regulations, and decide, at some point, to give themselves additional quotas, in spite of the fact that the resource is in jeopardy and that scientists, who are paid by NAFO, come and tell them that the resource is in jeopardy and that quotas must be reduced.

These people form a majority within NAFO and vote additional quotas for themselves, in order to support their economy. However, they are supporting their economy while wearing blinkers, because soon the resource will be all gone. Soon, these people will find themselves in the situation that we experienced, that Newfoundland experienced and that the Gaspé experienced.

What is even more serious is that this resource is our resource. As the hon. member mentioned earlier, it is obvious that even though there is a 200 mile zone, groundfish does not stay outside that 200 mile limit. It crosses that limit and, therefore, it becomes our resource. This is what we call straddling stocks. Under the United Nations Fisheries Agreement, we have the right to protect our jurisdiction over the resource within the 200 mile zone, our resource called straddling stocks.

To show how disappointed people are about NAFO, I will quote some of the comments made to us when we were in Newfoundland and in the Atlantic regions, including remarks by the hon. Gerry Reid, the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture for Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Reid said:

If you want to look at what happened at the last NAFO meeting back in January, it becomes obvious that NAFO is not working for the benefit of Canada, and Newfoundland and Labrador in particular.

We are well aware that NAFO is only working for the benefit of the European Union countries, which represent the majority within this organization, including Spain and Portugal, which are probably the worst offenders when it comes to respecting the resource.

Here is what was said by Jim Morgan, a spokesperson for the Newfoundland and Labrador Rural Rights and Boat Owners Association.

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NAFO was an organization that failed desperately in controlling and managing the stocks on the edge of our continental shelf.

It is obvious that NAFO failed “desperately”, as Mr. Morgan, the witness we heard from, said. This is not surprising, because they basically have no interest in enforcing the rules. They have no interest in depriving themselves of a resource that we are leaving for them, giving to them.

• (1650)

We are applying the rules stringently for Newfoundland fishers, and we have police to monitor Gaspé fishers. But we are letting fishers from these countries, NAFO members, deprive us of our resource and, as my father would have said, take the bread right out of our mouth. This is what the present federal government is letting happen and what it is hesitating to change.

I have here in front of me the five recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. These are very simple recommendations which would enable us to protect and safeguard the resources. They would perhaps give us some hope of being able to restore a fishery in Newfoundland, as well as in the Gaspé. These recommendations must be approved by the federal government. This parliament must give the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans the mandate to implement these recommendations.

These recommendations are not difficult to implement. They are simple recommendations. First, custodial management on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and on the Flemish Cap must be implemented no later than one year following the September 2002 NAFO meeting.

We are not asking the government to do it overnight, because we are well aware that this would be impossible. On the other hand, one year after the September 2002 meeting, that is September 2003, is a possibility. It is not impossible, if government decides this is important and necessary.

Another recommendation is that, as I have said, basically all witnesses felt that NAFO is totally ineffective. The countries themselves are the ones allocated resources, when we know very well they really have no intention of protecting the resource, which is not theirs anyway.

Considering that NAFO is totally inefficient and ineffective, and considering that we bear 40% of the costs—if memory serves, the Canadian government pays very close to \$500,000 to NAFO to have its resource stolen from it—let us cease to be a member. Let us withdraw from NAFO, useless and totally ineffective organization that it is.

When an organization is ineffective, when one is a member of an organization that does not function, and when one pays 40% of its costs moreover, I believe it is our duty to withdraw from it and to announce that we are going to take control and decide on our own what to do, that is to say protect the resource and ensure that our fishers, whether from the Gaspé or from Newfoundland, can benefit from this resource which belongs to the community.

The fishers of Newfoundland and the people of Gaspé are not the only ones affected by this groundfish catastrophe which has affected all maritime fishers since 1992, or even earlier. They are not alone.

Everyone in Quebec, in the maritimes, and in the rest of Canada is affected.

The resource is not the property of only one province or of certain European countries; it belongs to us all collectively.

I call upon parliament to support the motion submitted to us, so that the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans may be implemented, so that Canada may withdraw from NAFO, and so that custodial management is implemented on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap.

• (1655)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester, Fisheries; the hon. member for St. John's West, Voisey's Bay; and the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Ferry Services.

Mr. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Matapédia—Matane for his important contribution to the work done by the committee.

Personally, I very much appreciated the member's efforts when our committee, the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, presented a report on the issue of the gulf region, which affects me a great deal. Obviously, this is a very important region for the inshore fishery in my area, and the member for Matapédia—Matane provided us with tremendous support. I am grateful to him.

My colleague also heard from witnesses in Newfoundland. I think that his speech did a good job of summarizing the appalling situation that certain communities along the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador are experiencing. He also mentioned the provincial minister of fisheries from Newfoundland, and I think he agreed that he was right. We also heard from the mayor of Burgeo. We were given a fairly revealing picture of the situation caused by foreign overfishing, which harmed important stocks, such as the groundfish stocks.

I would like the member for Matapédia—Matane to describe a bit for us the situation that the moratorium has created in his region, in Quebec. I am not really aware of his riding or his region of Quebec being dependent on groundfish for example. I would be interested to hear his comments on foreign fishing and past excesses, including by some Canadian fishers and former Canadian governments.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that what happened in Newfoundland is very similar to what people experienced in the Gaspé, particularly east of Matane, which is in my riding, and also from Chaleurs Bay all the way around the Gaspé Peninsula.

It is obvious that this was a true catastrophe; a whole economy was totally destroyed, just like in Newfoundland. The impact of this is still being felt to this day. Ten years have gone by since the 1992 moratorium. Whole villages practically shut down. To this day, the Gaspé is losing its people, just like the whole province of Newfoundland.

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I did not mention this earlier, but according to the latest census figures, Newfoundland is experiencing the same situation as the Gaspé. It must be realized that Newfoundland's population is constantly diminishing and that whole villages have shut down following the moratorium. It is the same thing in my region and in the Gaspé.

The economy, which had been based on fishing for 300 years, was doing very well, but was totally destroyed. Everything closed down overnight. This is what a moratorium means. It means the complete destruction of an economy.

Let us try to imagine what this means to people who experience such a situation. It is almost like living through a war. People find themselves depending on governments when they are used to fending for themselves, to being gainfully employed. They become dependent on governments, on small ad hoc programs that provide them with what I would call a measly income. These people are kept in poverty, because the government was not aware of what was going on. It did not act with caution. It let the situation deteriorate.

In conclusion, if the government does not implement the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, things will not change. If it does not implement the committee's recommendations, if it does not act with caution, and display excellence, then it is not governing properly.

● (1700)

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Matapédia—Matane. He is a good friend of Newfoundland's fishers. He visited Newfoundland with the committee. He knows the problem. He also familiarized himself with our culture and our resource.

[*English*]

I thank my hon. friend who is a very good friend to the fishermen of Newfoundland. I also thank other members who have participated in the debate. It has given us a chance to educate not only the House but the country as to how important the issue is.

My hon. colleague from Matapédia—Matane came to Newfoundland with the committee to listen to the people directly affected by the issue. He listened to people from industry, people from the boats, fish plant workers, people who had been involved in the industry before, politicians of all stripes, union workers, union representatives, government people and others, and especially the mayors of towns that have been decimated by what has happened.

Did my hon. colleague have any idea at all of the magnitude of the problem? How does he perceive it now compared to before he came to visit our great province?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I may not be a good example because I had a very good idea of what was going on over there. My region was experiencing the same problem, and I knew that Newfoundland was affected in the same way. As I said, I am not a good example because I was very well informed. I was familiar with the issue and I followed the situation closely.

However, I would like to go back to the fact that the magnitude of the problem is clear from a statistical point of view. We know that communities are affected. I could see that happening in the Gaspé, where I lived. But as long as one does not meet those affected, as long as one does not see what human tragedy really is, as long as one is satisfied with looking at statistics, one can say "Yes, Newfoundland's population is on the decline. Yes, villages have disappeared. Yes, the economy has been totally destroyed".

However, we have met people who have lived through the tragedy, people whose village has closed down, people who had been honourably earning a living in a given area for generations, people who had been earning a living in an industry and, suddenly, found they had no future. They were forced to move away and, today, their 18 to 20 year old children must also move away, because there is no work. Basically, these people have been left alone to cope in a more or less active environment, the social fabric of which is gradually deteriorating. At that point, things are quite different, because you are really living with them—temporarily, for the time that you are there—going through what they go through daily and what they have been going through for years.

The government has said "We will create assistance programs to support you", but these are essentially useless programs. All it is doing is keeping these people in poverty, when it should have been exercised caution and protected the resource, which we did not do.

The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans is asking today that we protect the resource. This is what we are asking. It is quite simple: let us protect the resource, at least what is left of it, to ensure that it can renew and rebuild itself and that, one day, we can rebuild the economies of these regions.

Of course, they will no longer be based only on fishing, because this will not be possible. However, let us at least give the resource a chance, to ensure that we can rebuild the economies of these regions and that some of these people can go back to earning a decent living.

This is simple. This is what we are asking this parliament to do.

● (1705)

[*English*]

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will take this time to acknowledge the work of the fisheries committee. At this point and in the past it has done an excellent job of doing what committees of the House need to do when dealing with issues and reviewing problems: go to Canadians, listen to them at the source and see the problems they are dealing with.

The fisheries committee has done this on a regular basis. I thank its members for that. I am grateful, especially as someone who has been sitting on a transport committee that has not so much as moved its butt outside Ottawa to listen to Canadians for a number of years. Sitting on that committee has been a rather bad experience.

The fisheries committee has shown what committees ought to be doing. The recommendations before us have come from all members of the committee representing all parties. They went out and listened to Canadians, saw what they were dealing with and recognized the anguish they were going through.

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I was in Newfoundland in 1992 when the moratorium came into place. It was my first time in Newfoundland. The friends I was visiting wanted me to partake of that famous Newfoundland tradition: being screeched in. I do not think they are too happy about it now. The toughest job that day was to find a cod so I could be officially screeched in. We had to find alternative routing because no cod were available. The alternative was a puffin's behind. That was the rough spot of the day.

I am not making light of the issue. Since then there has been recognition of the anguish felt by the fishermen and concern about their livelihood. There was willingness among the fishermen to recognize that to sustain a long term fisheries industry they would need to make sacrifices. They did that and have continued to do it for a number of years. Yet the stocks have not improved.

The province's fishermen see foreign fishermen come in pretty much every day and sit outside the fence of where the fish are, so to speak. So members from the prairies can understand, it is like someone sitting outside a fence waiting for animals to cross over, or in this case fish, so they can be caught. The fish stocks are not given the opportunity to fully come back. It has been disheartening for these people, yet the fisheries committee has made recommendations that were totally disregarded by the government.

It is crucial that with respect to the five recommendations regarding this fragile area of Newfoundland and Labrador's economy the government not just do a lot of talking. Committee members need to do more than talk their faces off for the sake of talking. The government needs to respond to their recommendations. For once it should stand up for Canadian fishermen and all the industry people involved in the issue. It should stand up against the foreign countries taking the stocks. It should do so not because Canada wants the stocks for itself. We want them to improve. That is what it is about. It is about fishermen caring for their industry and for the resource. It is about conservation.

I encourage the government not to let it all be for show. Let it not be a bunch of talk. Let us not totally ignore the recommendations again. We are running out of time. The government at some point will need to stand up strongly for Canadians. It must not go to the table for Canadians merely to negotiate on its knees or not at all.

• (1710)

My hon. colleague Nelson Riis who was here previously got on his knees one day in the House and said it was Canada's way of negotiating with the U.S. It was somewhat of a joke then. However as time has gone by I have seen many issues come into the House. Quite frankly, that is the way the government negotiates with the U. S. and numerous foreign countries on issues that relate to the well-being of the Canadian public.

It is time the government remembered it is the government of the people of Canada and should be standing up for them.

Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member for Churchill for her comments. I congratulate and thank all members of the fisheries committee for the important work they have done not only with respect to the crucial issues on the east coast but in my home province of British Columbia.

As members will know, many British Columbians are deeply concerned about the possibility of a significant expansion of the aquaculture industry. Given the serious concerns that have been raised about problems in the industry such as the Atlantic salmon issue, I and my colleagues in the New Democratic Party have called for a rapid move toward closed containment in the aquaculture industry.

On the grounds that foreign nations are overfishing the stocks on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap, the motion focuses on the importance of gaining control of the fish stocks that lie on Canada's continental shelf. The recommendation of the committee is clear: The stocks rightfully belong to Canada. They could keep many fish plants open year round while still maintaining appropriate conservation standards.

I will never forget my trips to Newfoundland and Labrador in the mid-1990s. On more than one occasion I met with fishers who talked, in some cases with great emotion, about the fact that the future for their children in the industry was bleak indeed. They pleaded with us as members of parliament to put far more emphasis on conservation. Frankly, it is unbelievable that Canada is not in a position to take stronger action with respect to the nose and tail.

I want to pay particular tribute to my hon. colleague who is not able to be with us today, our member of the fisheries committee, the hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore. I am sure other members of the committee would agree that he has worked long, hard and diligently to bring these matters to the attention of parliament. He would be here today to speak strongly in support of the motion were he able to. Unfortunately, due to a family emergency he cannot be here but I want his position recorded.

• (1715)

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, I certainly acknowledge the comments made by my hon. colleague from Burnaby.

The fisheries committee travelled to an inland fishery in Manitoba some years back and made recommendations that would have improved the inland fisheries of Canada. It met with people from the northern end of my riding to the southern end. It made good, strong recommendations because it recognized the problems. Its members, a very knowledge based group of individuals, made great recommendations that were totally ignored.

The fisheries committee has done a great job. It is now in the government's hands to do something about it and follow through on the committee's recommendations.

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with what the member for Burnaby—Douglas said about the member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore. The committee does work well together and he is a great addition to the committee. However the member for Burnaby—Douglas, in quoting one section of the report, might have wrongly left the impression that we want to take all those fish beyond the 200 mile limit for ourselves. That is not what we are saying. We want them managed properly. We may undertake custodial management to do that. I will quote directly from the report so that it is on the record. It states:

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We believe that there is a third option: custodial management. Under a custodial management regime, Canada would assume sole responsibility for the management and conservation of the areas of our continental shelf beyond the 200-mile limit: the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap. However, foreign fishing interests would not be removed; instead, historic allocation and access would be respected.

We do not feel NAFO is working the way that it is supposed to work. Member states of NAFO are violating their own scientific recommendations. They are overfishing, using smaller gear, using targeted fishing in terms of bycatches and so on. We believe it must be managed properly. We would not take over complete control but we would manage the resource according to historical allocation so that Canadians and foreigners could benefit from that fishery for the future and for future generations.

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, I would acknowledge that because in my comments as well I indicated that it was not a matter of Canada wanting everything. It is a matter of wanting to ensure that the resource is maintained and that there is a sustainability to it.

Canada can do a good job managing it. The point is we have to take the initial position. We have to take that step, stand firm and tell those countries that they will do this and that we will ensure they do it because it is best for all of us. We have to either get them outside or, as the recommendations say, tell them to take a ride.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am interested in the comments from the member, particularly about the inland fishery in Manitoba. I am not particularly familiar with it but I know that the member for Dauphin—Swan River has been pretty fervent about the problems in that inland fishery in Manitoba. I know he is concerned about the future and the viability of it in the long term if the fishery continues to run as it does currently, almost unchecked.

Could the member comment specifically on what she sees as a solution and what she sees as the current problem so that people are aware of that inland fishery, which is significant? Could she also perhaps comment on the position of the member for Dauphin—Swan River, who feels that the fishery is in real danger if something is not done to curb what he considers is an excess of overfishing?

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, issues have been raised that in some areas there has been overfishing. The perspective of the fisheries committee when it travelled to Manitoba was that what it had seen was rather unfair allocations in certain areas; the fresh fish marketing war; putting in place rules that favoured one area of the province over the other, as far as taking in fish stocks; and different rules for different groups of fishermen throughout the province. That was a major issue at that time. Good, solid recommendations were made.

The biggest improvement we can make in a good many industries is to involve the people in those industries, get suggestions from them and follow through on the recommendations. That is what was done previously but the government ignored the recommendations. I would suggest that is a very important factor. It is what the fishermen in Newfoundland want to see in order to maintain their fishery.

• (1720)

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, when I listened to the member for Dauphin—Swan River, he specifically mentioned that the aboriginal fishery was out of control, that there was not a sharing

of the resource, that people were taking more fish out of the freshwater fishery than could be sustained and that something had to be done.

Does the member have some recommendations, or does she agree with that observation or does she think there is some other problem that could be addressed?

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, specifically on the area the member is talking about, investigations are taking place as to the whole course of activities in that area. I have no knowledge of what those investigations have found. As is often the case with issues related to first nations and non-first nations, we hear differing opinions. Until the investigation is thoroughly done we really do not know the answers.

I willingly admit that my understanding is that there are investigations taking place but I do not know the results of those investigations.

Mr. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to have a chance to speak to the House on this important report prepared by the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. We have heard many of my colleagues give credit to the committee for the outstanding work that it did. If we looked at the transcripts of the hearings and if we heard the speeches this afternoon and on previous occasions, the committee really did do outstanding work.

We had a chance to listen to Canadians. We had a chance to visit Newfoundland and Labrador. I will never forget the couple of days that we spent as a committee in St. John's listening to people firsthand tell us of the devastation that the groundfish moratorium had on small coastal communities. Many of the members of the committee are like me and represent rural areas which are very dependent on resources and on the fishery in particular.

To hear people like the mayor of Burgeo, members of the house of assembly in Newfoundland and Labrador and the minister of fisheries for that province describe in detail the difficulty and the pain that many small communities have gone through since this devastating moratorium left a very important mark on the committee. We can see that clearly in the report.

What is also important is what some of my colleagues from the committee have alluded to as the outstanding work done by the chairman of the committee, the member for Malpeque. Many of us remember him in his previous life as a very effective leader of the National Farmers Union. The same passion and dedication that he brought to the farm movement he brought to the work of the committee.

The member for Malpeque has a perfect ability. I say that only having had the chance to serve on a couple of committees of the House. I have watched the skill that the member for Malpeque has in chairing the meetings. It is very much to his credit that we arrived at a unanimous report. It is important to pay tribute to the chair of the committee and thank him for the work he has done on this important issue.

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We had the chance to hear from other colleagues who joined the committee and were present at the hearings. As I mentioned a minute ago, what struck me was the important spirit of unanimity that existed throughout the discussions. My colleague from Burin—St. George's, our new colleague from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception and the member for Labrador have consistently spoken out on this issue and on the impact this issue has had in their communities. They have been very effective advocates for the federal government taking a strong position and approach on this very difficult problem.

The committee has functioned in a non-partisan way. My colleague, the member for Delta—South Richmond, has been a consistent supporter of the committee's work on this important issue. He is an articulate spokesperson for fisheries issues on the west coast. I have learned a lot from listening to him talk about fisheries problems on the west coast. It is a testimony to his commitment, to the people of small coastal communities and to the protection of the resource that he too has been a very articulate and tough defender of the committee's work on this issue.

My colleague, the member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, also has seen the effect of this moratorium and has worked effectively with all members of the committee.

● (1725)

When we were in Newfoundland and Labrador I had the chance to spend some time with the member for St. John's West. He has consistently spoken to the committee and publicly about the devastation that the closure of this industry has had in his community and throughout his province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

From the perspective of a rookie member of parliament, to have had the chance to work with a committee like this under the leadership of our chair, the member for Malpeque, has been an interesting experience and the report that we have before us is a testimony to the good work of members on all sides.

The issue of foreign overfishing, as we saw in the committee's work, is certainly not an easy one. Many countries are involved, many historical patterns of the fishery are involved and there is probably enough blame to go around for everyone. Previous governments perhaps did not do the job that ideally they should have done. International bodies, we have heard a lot about NAFO, have in many cases let down the people of these small coastal communities by simply not being as effective as we would have liked to be.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans himself understands the fishery very well. The minister comes from the great riding of West Nova, a constituency very much dependent on the fishery and on these resources.

I had the chance to visit the riding of West Nova with the minister. His knowledge of the fishery and of resource allocation issues is extremely impressive. He graduated from the University of Moncton, avec un diplôme de gestion des pêches.

The minister's knowledge of the fishery is both academic and practical, because he has lived in small communities along the coast of southwest Nova Scotia. He understands the issue of foreign overfishing and the devastating effect it has had on many communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. We heard the member

for Matapédia—Matane tell us about the devastation in his province of Quebec. The parliamentary secretary to the minister of fisheries also has talked to us about the difficult circumstances of these communities. I think we can see that the committee wanted to take a tough position because we feel very strongly that foreign overfishing has been a major factor in the collapse of these important stocks.

As I said, the minister himself understands very well the principles of conservation. In my discussions with him, the minister has consistently spoken of the importance of conservation and how his decisions on allocating stocks over which he has jurisdiction must be based upon the principles of conservation.

Some weeks ago I was in New Brunswick with the minister. We met with the Maritime Fishermen's Union. The president, Ron Cormier, is a constituent and a friend of mine. He does outstanding work for the inshore fishermen of my community. We had a discussion about the difficulty with this spring's herring fishery. I mention this because of the difficulty of having a regime that ensures conservation while it at the same time respects the needs of the economic security and future of small communities. It is never easy. The minister, in his discussions with me and with members of the Maritime Fishermen's Union, showed great sensitivity to the important balance between measures that ensure conservation and protection of the stocks but also understand the need and dependence of the economy of many coastal communities on the fishery.

The loss of the groundfish fishery, as we have heard this afternoon and in committee, has been an economic and social tragedy for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and for the people of other maritime provinces. We have heard horror stories about devastated coastal communities that previously enjoyed a sustained level of economic growth and activity. Now in many cases they are ghost towns. We heard stories of U-Hauls going in one direction as people have to leave communities they have grown up in and where their families reside to try to seek employment in other areas.

The issue of how to control and regulate foreign overfishing certainly is not an easy one. I remember that in 1977 my father was the minister of fisheries and oceans at the time when we proclaimed the 200 mile limit. I remember my father talking about how complicated it was for him at that time to lead the Canadian government's efforts to proclaim, on January 1, 1977, the 200 mile fishing limit. He spent many weeks visiting countries like Russia, Cuba and Poland to try to get those countries to accept the need for Canada to take jurisdiction over 200 miles of our coastline.

Small countries like Cuba played a key role. The Cuban government was a consistent partner of Canada in that effort. The deputy minister of fisheries, Mr. Enrique Oltuski, became a friend of my father's. He has been deputy minister of fisheries for some 30 years. As we can see, the changes in bureaucracy in Cuba are perhaps less quick than changes in the Canadian bureaucracy.

● (1730)

As I have said, the problem of foreign overfishing and the need to protect straddling stocks and those stocks that are beyond Canada's 200 mile limit is not an easy one. One of the great parliamentarians and a great Newfoundlander, the former member for St. John's West, the Hon. John Crosbie, when he was minister of justice in 1985, said:

Unfortunately, the nose of the bank is not within the Canadian 200-mile economic zone. So, we have no legal powers to act on the nose of the bank.

Some seven years later, Mr. Crosbie, when he was then minister of fisheries and oceans, said before a committee of the House:

NAFO is established by an international convention and all of the members, of course, have to consent. If they don't consent to change you certainly can't bind them.

The former member for St. John's West understood how complicated it is for a country to try to manage these fish stocks. I say that recognizing that the urgency has become greater. I say that recognizing that the situation now, 10 years after Mr. Crosbie made those comments, has deteriorated.

I recognize that NAFO certainly has not been a perfect organization. I have a lot of confidence in the ability of this Minister of Fisheries and Ocean to convince his NAFO colleagues of the importance of taking dramatic measures. We need some international structure in which to conduct these efforts.

I was struck, as were many members of the committee, by the comments of the assistant deputy minister of fisheries and oceans, a very distinguished public servant, Mr. Pat Chamut. When Mr. Chamut appeared before the committee to report to us on his efforts at NAFO, we could see the benefits of his long experience at managing fisheries, but we could also see the frustration he had, which he shared quite openly with the committee, about our inability at that time to persuade our NAFO partners.

Mr. Chamut's long and distinguished record of public service is a credit to the department and to the people who earn a livelihood from the fishery. I have felt for a long time that the public service and the Government of Canada are lucky to have a career public servant of Mr. Chamut's skill and dedication. I found his frustration very revealing, and alarming, to say the least, because he certainly painted a picture for us that left the committee with some considerable concern.

The issue of information and educating the public certainly struck me as very important as our committee did its work. Of the many foreign nations that abuse these resources that straddle Canada's 200-mile limit, I am convinced that if their own domestic populations understood the devastating effects that many of their actions are having, it would be the beginning, I think, of putting some political pressure on many of these countries to stop what clearly has been an abusive practice.

That is why recommendation 4 in the committee's list of recommendations would be a very important step. It states:

That the Government of Canada conduct a targeted public information campaign to increase awareness of violations of NAFO conservation measures by vessels under the flag of member states—

It would be an important step because that is one effective way for the populations of these countries, which do not want to see limited resources abused, to understand that the actions of their fishing fleets have absolutely devastating consequences on small coastal communities on the east coast of Canada.

The committee's recommendations merit close attention. I think the minister himself will certainly take a close look at what very effective steps the government can take. For example, when the minister closed the ports to vessels from the Faroe Islands and

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Estonia, it was an important step. I think it sent a clear message and I believe it had some effect. It is that kind of bold initiative that the minister will continue to take which will make this issue the priority that we believe it is.

• (1735)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): It being 5.40 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should consider amending the Criminal Code to make it an offence to drive a motor vehicle while talking on a cell phone, except in circumstances where an emergency situation can be demonstrated.

He said: Mr. Speaker, my thanks to my seconder, the hon. member for Churchill.

Every day millions of Canadians get in their cars and drive to work, drive home, drive the kids from one activity to another, drive to do errands, drive to visit relatives and drive all over the country. Every time those individuals get into their cars there are certain expectations of them: that they are of age; that they will have taken a driver's test; that the car is insured and roadworthy; that they will drive safely; and that they are not intoxicated.

These are all expectations that we have of people when they get behind the wheel of a car and they are all expectations that have been codified in various federal, provincial and territorial regulations. These requirements are all necessary to ensure that our roads are safe and that those individuals who are driving will do so in a way that ensures the safety of others. The overwhelming majority of drivers have no problems with these restrictions and recognize that they are necessary to ensure everyone's safety.

[*Translation*]

An area which is not regulated and should be is the use of cell phones while driving. In the last few years, there has been an increase in the number of accidents caused by drivers who were using their cell phone while driving.

Cellphones are certainly extremely useful, and I personally use one, but we should recognize that their ever more frequent use causes a number of problems. In the last two years, for example, the proceedings of the House and the committees have been more disturbed and interrupted than ever because of cellphones.

It would seem that people do not know when it is appropriate or not to use these phones. At least, when a conversation is interrupted, our security is not at stake. But when drivers use their cellular phones while driving, risks are greater for their passengers, for other vehicles and for pedestrians, and even for the users of the cellphones themselves.

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• (1740)

[English]

The reports of accidents in which cellphones were involved are becoming more and more frequent. Just a few months ago two couples from Quebec were killed near Washington, D.C. when the car they were driving in was hit by an SUV whose driver was using a cellphone at the time. The driver was also killed in that accident. This is something that is becoming more common every day and I believe it is something that governments ought to address. It is a growing problem, but there is also a growing awareness that this is a problem that should be dealt with.

According to a poll conducted by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation three months ago, the majority of drivers, around two-thirds, feel that cellphone use while driving is a serious problem that should be addressed. Half of all the respondents felt that there should be an outright ban on the use of cellphones while driving.

There clearly exists the recognition that this is a serious problem. I suggest this is true even among those who are in the habit of using their cellphones while driving. I have had a number of people tell me that even though they use their cellphones while driving they would gladly welcome a law to prohibit it so that they might be freed from the temptation of using their phone while driving.

These opinion polls have been bolstered by a number of studies that have been done over the past few years in which the effects of cellphone use on driving were also examined. These studies found that not only was cellphone use unsafe, it was one of the most unsafe practices that a driver could engage in while driving.

A study done in Toronto in 1997 found that drivers using a cellphone were four times more likely to be involved in an accident than those who did not. According to another report, issued by the transport research laboratory in Britain three months ago, talking on a cellular phone while driving can slow reaction and stopping times more than the effects of alcohol. Hands free kits for cellular phones were only slightly less dangerous. That is an interesting finding by this particular study because many people argue that all that is required is for the hand held cellphones to be banned and everyone can use the hands free set as much as they like. The study found that reaction times were approximately 30% slower when using a cellphone than when just over the legal blood alcohol limit and 50% slower than when driving normally. Further, drivers had more difficulty maintaining a constant speed and a safe distance from a car in front.

A number of arguments have been made against these findings but I believe they are all easily refuted. For example, there is the suggestion that using a hands free kit would mean that a telephone conversation would be just as dangerous as having a conversation with someone in a car. However a passenger would have the capacity to notice dangerous situations and put the conversation on hold until the danger passed, not something that someone on the other end of a cellphone link can do. Someone connected by cell would have no way of knowing what the driving conditions facing the driver are.

The idea of banning cellphone use while driving is not a new idea, although I believe this is the first time it has been debated in this Chamber. I am happy to have been a catalyst in that regard.

Currently there are more than 30 countries where using a cellphone while driving is illegal. Further, there are numerous countries where similar actions are being considered. I will be interested to see what the government has to say when the parliamentary secretary gets up to respond.

There are definite benefits to enacting this kind of ban. A Japanese study published in 2001 found that in the two years since 1999 when a ban was imposed the number of phone related accidents was halved.

There have also been numerous initiatives in Canada related to this kind of ban. Currently, in the Ontario legislature, a private member's bill is being considered that would ban cellphone use while driving. It was introduced in response to a particularly serious accident in Mississauga two years ago.

Further, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador recently announced that it will ban the use of cellphones while driving, something that has also been done in numerous jurisdictions in the United States.

• (1745)

[Translation]

The Minister of Justice could tackle this issue in a number of ways. The motion would make it illegal to use a cellphone while driving. I already asked the Minister of Justice to propose this to his provincial and territorial counterparts.

[English]

While the government of Newfoundland and Labrador is in the process of enacting a ban and other provincial governments are considering this issue, one government that has adamantly refused to consider this request is the Conservative government in Alberta. Members of that government voted against a private members' bill introduced by a Conservative member to introduce a ban. Although initially Premier Klein suggested that the provincial transportation department would do a review of this issue, within two weeks the Alberta government decided that it would not regulate a common sense issue. The rationale was that drivers would have the common sense not to use a cellphone while driving.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you have done any driving lately but a lot of people are not responding to this kind of common sense.

While I hope that most drivers would have the common sense to not use their cellphone while driving, many clearly do not. This is the same way that most people who drive have the common sense not to drive while intoxicated. There are a small minority who clearly have not learned that lesson.

Private Members' Business

The fact is that this small minority who still drive while intoxicated have become a minority. The common sense that we now associate with not driving while intoxicated is a common sense that was instilled over a number of years through changes in the law and through changes in the culture. It did not happen all by itself. It happened in part because the law changed, and of course the law changed because attitudes changed. This process here today is as much about changing attitudes or initiating the debate as it is about changing the law because this is after all a non-votable motion.

In any event, in the case of drinking and driving, we did choose to regulate this behaviour both through the criminal code and through the various highway traffic acts in all of the provinces. I would like to see a situation in which a similar mechanism exists for the use of cellphones, that the bulk of the regulation be under the rubric of provincial traffic acts with the possibility of a criminal code statute making it illegal to drive while using a cellphone.

I say the possibility because in the interim, between the time I first tabled this motion and to the time that I am debating it now, there has been a bit of a debate in the country. I have come to the point of view that is why it is non-votable. I chose to make it non-votable. I did not seek to have this motion votable because I did not see any point in having the House divide on this at this particular time.

For me the key thing was to help push along the debate on this without having it resolved one way or the other. In the final analysis I am not really all that uptight about whether or not it happens provincially or federally, just that it happens.

We should hold the federal power to amend the criminal code in reserve if in a reasonable amount of time provinces appear unwilling to deal with this in the context of their highway traffic law jurisdictions.

I say to the government that I would like it very much if it would put on the record its intention or its willingness to use the criminal code power should provincial governments over time not respond to this. I think we are at that point in the debate, particularly with Newfoundland beginning to do this.

Had there not been this initiative in Newfoundland I may well have decided to have made this votable and tried to force members to vote on this. However I do not think that would have been the best use of the House's time at this point in time in this debate about the use of cellphones while driving.

Whether it happens federally or provincially, I do not have a constitutional fixation about how this happens but I do think it needs to happen. More and more people are driving and someone whips through the intersection while yakking away on the telephone. This first happened to me when I was in the parking lot in front of my constituency office just after the election in 2000. Someone almost ran right over me in the parking lot. Sure enough, when I looked up, the person in the car was talking on a cellphone and did not even see me because he was so engrossed in the conversation. I said to myself that there ought to be a law. Then I said "Wait a minute, Bill, you're a lawmaker, why don't you put in a private members' bill or a motion to that effect." That is why this motion is here, because there ought to be a law. Maybe it should be a federal law, maybe it should be a

provincial law but there ought to be a law, which is the point I am trying to make here today.

• (1750)

Mr. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to respond to Motion No. 116 introduced by the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona. The motion calls for the government to consider criminalizing the use of cellphones while driving.

Clearly it does identify a serious issue for Canadian society. However let me state at the outset that I cannot support Motion No. 116 for a number of reasons, but let me explain.

Many activities when combined with driving can decrease attention to the task of driving. One aspect of this broad area of driver distraction is driving while talking on a cellular telephone. I understand that the Minister of Transport and his road safety officials are closely monitoring the safety research in the area of driver distraction.

With regard to the criminal law aspect of driving while using a cellular telephone, there is currently no specific criminal offence for simply driving while using a cellular telephone. However it is very important to note that section 249 of the criminal code does criminalize the driver who carries on an activity to the point that it causes such deterioration in the driving that the driving actually becomes dangerous. In some circumstances using a cellphone could contribute to creating a situation of dangerous driving within the meaning of the criminal law, and this is so, regardless of whether the cellular telephone is hand held or hands free.

In 1985 parliament strengthened section 249 of the code by adding two new crimes: causing death by dangerous driving and causing bodily harm by dangerous driving. In the year 2000 parliament added to the criminal code two other amendments related to the failing to stop for police provision, namely flight from police that is aggravated by dangerous driving that causes death or flight from police that is aggravated dangerous driving that causes bodily harm.

Members of the House will recall that the dangerous driving amendment of 2000 came about through a private member's bill tabled by the hon. member for Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge. It is my understanding that those countries and states that do have some legislative ban on cellphones typically prohibit only the use of hand held cellphones while driving. Drivers are able to legally use hands free cellphones. Prohibition is accomplished under the traffic safety legislation and not under criminal legislation.

I remind the House that in Canada it is the provinces that have the constitutional legislative responsibility for property and civil rights matters within the province. This encompasses many matters that are related to traffic safety. Also, provinces are responsible for driver licensing. So far only the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, as has been pointed out, is contemplating provincial legislation that would prohibit the use of cellular telephones while driving. On the other hand, Alberta has reportedly decided that it will not prohibit the use of cellphones while driving.

Private Members' Business

It is my view that we have a balance in Canada that is very appropriate. If a province wishes to ban the use of cellular telephones as a matter of road safety and collision risk, it is free to do so. It is also free to choose what exceptions, if any, there should be to such prohibition.

I do not believe there is any need for parliament to create a specific crime for simply driving while talking on a cellphone. To do so could in effect overturn the decision of a province, such as Alberta, to leave drivers who use the cellphone alone.

I am comfortable with this Canadian approach because I know that if driving while using a cellphone amounts to dangerous driving under the criminal code, then the police can lay a criminal charge under section 249 regardless of whether the provincial legislation permits cellphone use while driving or not. Any provincial permission to use a cellphone while driving cannot be used as an excuse to committing the criminal offence of dangerous driving.

Many Canadians who are very prudent in their driving habits will never talk on any cellphone while driving. This no doubt is the safest course. Other drivers will talk only on a hands free telephone and only when parked. Still others will talk on the hand held units if their province does not ban it without driving in a manner that is dangerous.

• (1755)

The criminal law is society's strongest sanction against behaviour that is typically morally blameworthy or dangerous. When looking at a particular kind of conduct we must ask ourselves whether the criminal law is the most appropriate instrument to address the conduct or whether other measures might better serve the purpose.

In the case of driving while using a cellphone without any hint of dangerous driving, provinces can choose to prohibit this activity. A driver could receive a fine, or a ticket and possibly a driving licence suspension were a province to create such legislation. However if parliament were to criminalize the act of driving while talking on a cellphone, the cohort of individuals who now use cellphones while driving and who could be criminalized would be enormous.

The hallmark of an offence placed in the criminal code is that incarceration is part of the range of potential penalties. A conviction carries a criminal record that could disentitle the offender from entering a foreign country. Given recent world events there may be countries that would make the decision to exclude any visitor from Canada who has a criminal conviction without considering whether the same behaviour is permitted in the home state or country.

Before turning to the criminal law as a solution there must be other instruments that could be chosen if it is desirable to end the behaviour of driving while using a cellphone. Driver education, provincial driving licence measures and provincial fine measures immediately spring to mind. These may well be more appropriate in addressing many forms of driving distraction and not just driving while using a cellphone.

If a cellphone presents a driving distraction problem that requires the weight of criminal law, then what other driver distractions might also require the weight of criminal law? Would it be necessary to criminalize other distractions even when they do not result in actual dangerous driving?

I appreciate that Motion No. 116 brings forward a serious matter for Canadians. We are all concerned about road safety. However I cannot support Motion No. 116. Our criminal law already does criminalize cellphone use while driving that results in dangerous driving. If provinces wish they could act through provincial legislation to prohibit cellphone use even if it does not result in dangerous driving.

The government does not happen to agree that driving while using a cellphone requires parliament to employ the criminal law against this behaviour.

• (1800)

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to Motion No. 116 brought forward by the member for Winnipeg—Transcona.

When I first looked at the motion I felt I needed to speak to this issue and express my point of view. During the last year I have experienced three occasions where an individual driving ahead of me was driving dangerously. In each instance this could have resulted in an accident as the individual was breaking the traffic law. On all three occasions the individual was deep in conversation on a cellphone and not paying attention to the issue of driving, which the individual was required to do.

These occasions brought a stark reality to bear—we must do something. While the motion is not votable the member from Winnipeg brought it forward because he thought it was necessary to have it debated. I would hope that the motion would become a private member's bill and, based on our new procedure, be brought back to the House so everyone can debate and vote on it.

I was interested to hear my colleague from the government side give his rationale on the motion. This is the second time I have listened to the parliamentary secretary on issues that have come forward during private members' business, including my issue dealing with break and enter.

I am left with the impression that the parliamentary secretary is not speaking on behalf of his constituents. That is what he is supposed to do as an elected member of parliament. It seems that he is speaking for the bureaucrats of the Department of Justice because his speeches and arguments are all based on a way that bureaucrats would present an argument. They are not based on what he has witnessed or what his constituents are telling him is out there.

We all know bureaucrats live in their offices and are not privy most of the time to what is happening out there. Democracy has been set up that allows our constituents to write and tell us about issues so that we can bring them to parliament and debate them. I find it strange that the government does not want to debate the issue and has brushed it aside very quickly, much like it did with my private member's bill.

The parliamentary secretary is blaming the provinces, saying that it was a provincial responsibility. Do members think Canadians care whether it is a provincial or federal responsibility? They want safe roads. That is the issue. As far as Canadians are concerned they could care less, constitutionally, who has the authority to do this. Let us not pass the buck.

We are elected members of parliament. People write to us and tell us about their concerns. We bring those concerns here and it is our job to take them forward, not make excuses. I hope that in the future when issues do come forward my colleague on the other side will not try to hide and say it is a provincial responsibility and has nothing to do with him. That is not what Canadians expect.

I am sure he will take time to ensure that his bureaucrats do not write his speeches and that he would listen to and represent his constituents.

● (1805)

In some jurisdictions people have stated that a hand-held cellphone should not be in use when driving. We are reaching the stage where the use of cellphones is increasing. Maybe at this given time it has not hit hard. However, we must do something.

I remember embarking on campaigns against drunk driving because the carnage on our roads was increasing. Through a concentrated effort a lot of bills were passed in the House amending the criminal code to address that social issue.

I hope we do not get to the stage where we will only stand up to take action when the carnage on our roads increases. There are warning flags being raised with this issue. The parliamentary secretary said that one of the provinces is talking about it and other countries are talking about it. Why are they talking about it? Is it because they see a potential problem arising?

People expect us to take action. My friend brought forth a motion which I wholeheartedly support. This is not a votable motion but it is a warning to the government. The parliamentary secretary should go back to his bureaucrats and solve this problem. We should go and have discussions with the provinces and see how we can do it so that it does not become a serious issue. That is my appeal to the government here today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the Bloc Québécois' deputy critic for justice, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 116.

The motion reads:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should consider amending the Criminal Code to make it an offence to drive a motor vehicle while talking on a cell phone, except in circumstances where an emergency situation can be demonstrated.

From the outset, we would like to say that we are opposed to the motion mainly because it is a blatant infringement on one of Quebec's areas of jurisdiction, namely, road safety regulations. We are opposed to the motion because it is vague and unfounded.

Of course, it is aimed at ensuring motorists' safety and, as such, it is worthwhile. However, the method it suggests is clearly unreasonable.

Private Members' Business

Cellphones have entered our life so quickly that they are now commonplace and usual. Cellphones have become part of our daily life.

People understand that the benefits of this device are huge. Once again, this new technology is here to stay.

Some see it as a threat. The same thing was said of TV sets. Some even thought they were harmful to our health and intellect. We now understand it is how we use TV that is the problem.

Indeed, there are risks linked to the use of a cellphone while driving a car. According to the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec, anything that distracts drivers' attention from the task at hand, which is to focus their attention on the road, increases the risk of accident. Indeed, chatting with a passenger, smoking, eating and fiddling with the radio can be harmful because it is distracting, but none of these activities has been banned.

The motion mentions an exception where an emergency situation can be demonstrated. This is extremely vague. A physician driving to the scene of an accident could use his cellphone without restriction as it would be an emergency.

A parent stuck in traffic and who is going to be late to pick up a child at the day care centre may also be in an emergency situation. All this is way too relative to allow for proper assessment of the scope of this part of the motion. As a matter of fact, any individual will probably be able to justify using a cellphone and the emergency situation that made it necessary.

Furthermore, the motion makes no provision for using a hands-free cellphone. These are seen as much safer, but there is no provision for such a situation in the motion before us. Using a cell phone can of course be another driving risk, but there is no excuse for making it a criminal offence.

This is another reason why the Bloc Québécois is opposed to Motion No. 116. Any restriction, if one is needed, should be accomplished through regulations and not through an amendment to the criminal code.

It is up to Quebec, and the provinces and territories to assess the need for regulations which would limit the use of a cellphone while driving a motor vehicle.

There are three states in U.S. which limit the use of cellphones while driving—California, Florida and Massachusetts—but no state prohibits their use.

The Bloc Québécois feels that it is up to the governments of Quebec and the provinces and territories to consider measures to limit rather than prohibit their use.

Nonetheless, it would be preferable to begin with a public awareness campaign to alert drivers to the dangers of using a cellphone in the car. It would also be appropriate to consider a campaign to educate people about safe methods of use.

Private Members' Business

●(1810)

The Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec could insist on safety precautions such as pulling over to the side of the road if a conversation might be lengthy; using a hands-free cell phone; not taking notes while driving; programming in the most frequently dialed telephone numbers in advance; not dialing while the car is in motion; letting the voice mail take calls; and being thoroughly familiar with the operation of the unit before using it.

If these public awareness and education campaigns do not work, consideration could be given to tougher measures, but for now, we are a long way from that.

This is what needs to be done first and, more importantly, by whom. Amending the criminal code is an extreme step that must be avoided at all costs. The criminal code is not the answer to everything that is not working in our society.

We must trust the public to use its judgment, rather than try to implement rigid rules of behaviour.

In conclusion, the Bloc Québécois is opposed to this motion, because it represents interference in the highway regulations, which come under the jurisdiction of Quebec, and of the provinces and territories, and because its wording is too restrictive.

[*English*]

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have listened attentively to the debate on Motion No. 116 moved by the member for Winnipeg—Transcona. The closing comments by my colleague from the Bloc were apropos to the debate. He said that amending the criminal code would be a very drastic measure to take for this type of infraction. We should expect Canadians to rely on sound common sense and good judgment before we go about trying to amend the criminal code.

Since this is private members' business and it is a non-votable motion—and even if it was a votable motion—members may speak their own mind. In my mind this is not the type of motion that should be enacted into legislation at this stage of the evolution of cellphone use in Canada.

There are two sides to the argument. I do not have a difficulty with having the debate. There is an argument that says cellphone use should be regulated to the point that it does not cause unsafe or dangerous driving.

If we wanted we could look at the lighter side of the argument, but I am not saying in any way, shape or form that accidents that have been caused by cellphone use are somehow humorous. Quite frankly a number of things, including cellphone use, are illegal now if they cause an accident or if they cause a criminal infraction. If it is looked at by a police officer as dangerous driving, it is illegal now. We do not have to put it in the criminal code to make it illegal.

By the way, a number of other things that people do while driving are illegal too. We see people shaving; putting on makeup, especially lipstick at stop signs; drinking coffee; reading the paper; or looking for change if the person lives in Cumberland—Colchester and has to take the toll highway that the federal government helped to build. All those actions are dangerous and all of them are regulated now by the criminal code.

We do not have to have a police state that would regulate what should be common sense and should be looked after through an education process. That does not take away the importance of the debate. It does not take away the fact that it is probably time that we had this debate and that we looked at some way to change driver behaviour.

I would argue very strenuously that changing the Criminal Code of Canada may or may not change that behaviour, but that is not the first step I would take. That step is a long way down the road, and please excuse the analogy.

The ability is in the code now to sentence people if they drive dangerously or if their driving causes death or injury. We do not have to adjust the code to put in that ability.

I would rather put a challenge out to the cellphone companies. I have a cellphone and I recognize the importance of the tool. Most of us have used our cellphones to report car accidents, to report dangerous objects lying on the road and sometimes even to report drivers who we suspect are under the influence. Certainly cellphones are useful.

We all know that we cannot dial a cellphone and drive at the same time. That is dangerous. Common sense will tell us that. A driver who is looking at his or her cellphone obviously is not looking at the road any more than when the driver is looking at the radio or CD player or is trying to find something under the dashboard. A little common sense needs to be applied.

Rather than changing the criminal code, I suggest that we seriously look at the way we use cellphones in cars.

●(1815)

The first thing we need to look at is voice activated, hands free cellphones. That type of technology is available now and will be even better and more refined in the future.

There is no reason that we as parliamentarians cannot put that challenge out to the cellphone producers and suppliers on the planet. I say to the Motorolas and Nokias of the world to simply find a better way to make cellphones and to find a safer way to use cellphones in the car.

A person should be able to set the cellphone on a stand in the vehicle and automatically it should become a hands free, voice activated phone. If the driver wanted to call the office he or she would simply say "Call the office". The key word would dial the office number. There could be a mike on the sun visor and the driver could speak on the cellphone and drive at the same time.

We should not think for a moment that we will be able to tell people in Canada that they cannot use cellphones in their cars. Newfoundland and Labrador may be discussing it but it has not been implemented to my knowledge. Alberta has said it does not want to do it.

Adjournment Debate

I agree with the member from the Bloc. It is a provincial jurisdiction, unless we decide that somehow this has broader application across the country and that we should change the criminal code. Two years down the road if nothing is done, maybe that is a discussion worth having. I do not think it is a discussion worth having at this time.

I would ask everyone to look at the least drastic measures a public education program, a better way of limiting cellphone use in cars. Certainly I think the best way to do that is to challenge the suppliers of cellphones to produce an easy to use, voice activated, hands-free cellphone because we will not convince drivers not to use cellphones, especially on the highways.

We all spend too much time in our automobiles not to use the cellphones. Sometimes people pull off the road and sometimes they do not. That is a fact of life. Should people be using them in stop and go traffic? Should people be using them at stop signs and pedestrian crosswalks? Of course not.

There are provisions in the criminal code that can be enforced to prevent that if it causes dangerous driving. This is a worthwhile debate, but I personally would not support a piece of legislation at this time. However like all legislation, certainly there is a place for it in the House of Commons. I was particularly interested in the debate.

• (1820)

[*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.

Is there unanimous consent to see the clock as 6.30 p.m. and proceed to the adjournment proceedings?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

FISHERIES

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, on May 9 I asked if the Prime Minister approached the president of Spain about extending the overfishing limits to try to control overfishing on the Grand Banks. I asked if the Prime Minister specifically sought support for the Canadian proposal that would take quotas away from countries that overfished and impose lifetime bans on the captains.

Today that debate was expanded. We debated a motion about exactly the same thing, overfishing on the Grand Banks, lifetime bans, et cetera.

The fisheries committee brought out a very comprehensive, well thought out and well produced report recommending custodial management on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks as well as the

Flemish Cap. The committee report was unanimous. It received all party support. It also received a lot of support outside parliament from the fisheries ministers in Atlantic Canada.

In Atlantic Canada we have seen communities devastated because of overfishing especially in Newfoundland but in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick as well. Fishing beyond the 200 mile limit has gone unchecked. It is uncontrolled because NAFO simply does not work. We have seen plants close, fishermen put out of work and boats tied up while foreign boats offshore outside the 200 mile limit are capturing fish by scooping them up with electronic technology we could not even imagine 10 years ago.

Will the government take the steps to extend custodial management over the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap?

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Georges Farrah (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this issue has been abundantly debated in the last several weeks, especially last night and again this afternoon, with nearly two hours of debate.

Obviously, the government, and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in particular, is deeply concerned about the situation beyond the 200 mile zone, east of Newfoundland.

The minister has repeatedly acknowledged that it is unacceptable to have foreign vessels overfishing just outside the 200 mile zone. This has a catastrophic impact on the economy of Newfoundland. We all agree on this.

The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans has had extensive discussions on the custodial management it would like to extend beyond the 200 mile zone. As you know, the committee tabled a report on this just last week, and this report was debated this afternoon.

There is a very fundamental problem here. As a country, can we can impose a way of doing things, a management practice in the international zone? This is quite an issue. My colleague, the member for Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, made this point earlier. The former member for St. John's West, the hon. John Crosbie, who was Minister of Fisheries and Oceans at the time, said that it was very hard, almost unthinkable and practically impossible for a government to impose rules in a zone that, unfortunately, does not belong to us.

That being said, I agree with the fact that this does not solve the problem. As I said before, there is overfishing within the 200 mile limit.

However, our government did take some measures to make our NAFO partners understand that they should follow the rules established by member nations, including Canada.

As you know, we arrested some vessels, we closed ports to foreign vessels that had not respected the fishing area, the minister went abroad, and even went to Russia a while ago—the member for St. John's West was there—in order to inform our international colleagues of the fact that their own fishers are not abiding by the rules.

Adjournment Debate

The minister will be leaving this coming Sunday on missions to Spain, Portugal and Denmark, for the specific purpose of raising their awareness of the fact that regulations must be respected.

We need to go further perhaps, and that is what we are asking ourselves at this time. It must be admitted, however, that even if NAFO rules are not perfect, there has been progress in the situation since 1995, nevertheless. Not rapid progress, I admit. Not fast enough for the people of Newfoundland who are suffering—which must be understood, and we do indeed understand it—because of overfishing in international waters. As a result, the Newfoundland community is experiencing huge economic problems.

We believe that we must continue, and in a highly effective and efficient way, to pressure our partners so that our regulations are respected, precisely so that Canadian maritime communities such as Newfoundland may earn an adequate living from its fish resource. This is a very vital resource to the maritime provinces.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, I am certainly pleased to hear that the parliamentary secretary is acknowledging the problem, the devastation and the fact that what we have done before has not worked.

I believe it is time we all realized that we need to do something new. We must be innovative. We must take a risk. We must stand up and be counted now. All the actions of trying to influence other countries to stop the devastation and havoc all over eastern Canada have not worked. Canada must do something now.

The member for Bonaventure—Gaspé—Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok is a member of the fisheries committee. The committee had a unanimous report that recommended custodial management. Could the member confirm his support for the concept of custodial management over the Grand Banks?

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Georges Farrah: Mr. Speaker, as I told to my colleague from St. John's-West in committee yesterday, I have had a rather frank discussion about the strategy put forward by the committee.

The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans works in a very objective manner, not a partisan manner. Personally, I have always had a very serious concern about the possibility of imposing rules at the international level when our own waters are not affected. This is the problem confronting us. I have no difficulty telling my colleague that I have raised this issue that concerns me.

Despite all the goodwill in the world, I am not convinced that we can impose rules unilaterally at the international level. This is why we must continue to work hard to convince our partners, in order to preserve a very important resource, particularly for the development of the maritimes and Newfoundland.

FERRY SERVICES

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I asked the minister—and I got an answer from the parliamentary secretary—about the urgency of finding a solution to the ferry problem between Les Escoumins and Trois-Pistoles.

The cause of this problem is the inaction of the Department of Transport, which has not maintained the wharves properly. We are desperately looking for a temporary solution to salvage part of the tourist season and for a permanent solution to bring the federal government to invest, as a good owner should do, to renovate the wharves and to restore full ferry service.

Today, in answering my question, the parliamentary secretary said that safety was the number one priority for the department. Safety is obviously important, but the ferry service between Les Escoumins and Trois-Pistoles is also important to the tourist industry and to the transportation industry on both sides of the river.

Right now, the inaction of the federal government is resulting in considerable economic losses, particularly in light of the fact that the Compagnie de navigation des Basques received in May, a six-day notice to the effect that the tourist season was compromised, while photos have been showing for years that this wharf is being washed away. We are still waiting for an answer.

Thankfully, the parliamentary secretary said today “We hope to reach a compromise that will be beneficial for all users. I am very confident that we will find a satisfactory solution”.

I know that there was a meeting today at 11 a.m. in les Escoumins. The meeting was still not over at 5 p.m. Can the parliamentary secretary tell us if the work will be done, so that a part of the season will be saved?

This problem did not just crop up this morning. It was raised in September 2000 by 52 municipalities in my riding who, together, told the federal government that it needed to repair the wharves. Back in May 2000, the Minister of Transport informed the Compagnie de navigation des Basques that the repairs would not be done to the wharf. There was even a letter signed May 23 by a public servant that said he could not authorize the use of the wharf.

Thankfully, we spoke to this in the House on a number of occasions; a delegation from Les Basques came and met with the Minister of Transport on June 4; we also wrote letters, with the member for Charlevoix, to get the Minister of Justice, who is responsible for Quebec, to do his job and influence the Minister of Transport. I know that these interventions provoked a reaction in the eastern Quebec caucus of the Liberal Party.

Will we be able to announce to the public today that there will indeed be an agreement and that there will be ferry service? In my opinion, it is entirely up to the federal government. Therefore, the negotiations should not be this difficult.

We need to implement a temporary solution, but also come up with a final decision. Can the parliamentary secretary, on this lovely summer day, promise the people in the region that they will be able to use the ferry? I know that there are two other ferries, but they do not solve the negative economic impact of the fact that the ferry cannot operate. I hope that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport will give me an positive answer right now.

Adjournment Debate

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the hon. member for raising this extremely important issue. I am definitely not the one who will criticize colleagues for raising issues that are important to all our communities.

This is indeed a long-standing issue. Transport Canada authorities responsible for safety were informed of the situation back in April, but they could not evaluate the condition of the wharf when the ice had not yet broken up. Therefore, they had no choice but to decide, with the Compagnie de navigation des Basques, that the wharf was inaccessible in its current condition.

I fully understand why the hon. member did not allude to safety criteria in a sarcastic way. Safety is extremely important to us. Operations cannot resume if we are not sure that safety criteria can be met. If the Department of Transport authorized the reopening of the wharf and a major disaster occurred because we did not take our responsibilities or were afraid to assume them, we would be strongly criticized. This could even impact on the activities of the other ferries between Rivière-du-Loup and Saint-Siméon, and between Forestville and Rimouski, the other two locations where ferry services are provided between the two shores.

Meetings are currently taking place. I hope that a solution, albeit a temporary one, will be found, allowing us to maximize safety. Unfortunately, this is not the case right now. All I can say is that, in recent years, the sum of one million to two and half million dollars was invested, to maintain operations in the area and at least make the infrastructure safe.

Unfortunately, at this point, I cannot confirm to the hon. member that a decision has been made in co-operation with stakeholders, the Compagnie de navigation des Basques and the Department of Transport, which is responsible for safety in this matter.

I hope that negotiations will be successful and that, in the next few days, if not in the next few hours, we will be able to reach a compromise that will allow us to reopen the season.

It is extremely difficult for departmental officials. We have technical staff on site, engineers who are specialized in these types of operations. I understand the difficulty in authorizing operations to salvage the tourist season if safety cannot be absolutely guaranteed. However, the problem raised by our colleague is extremely important.

I must mention that, in this case, the great majority of users, 80%, are tourists who have other alternatives, at least in the short term. They can use the two other ferries. It is not a satisfactory answer for my colleague, but that is where we are at this point. People are working hard on this issue. They are aware that the tourist season is very short in the region, as in all our regions. People are working hard to try to find a compromise.

● (1835)

Mr. Paul Crête: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the parliamentary secretary that there are photos showing very clearly that the current deterioration is not the result of last winter. For years now, the federal Department of Transport has known that the wharf would drift away if major repairs were not done. I understand that people are hard at work right now trying to fix their mistakes.

Various solutions are possible, including a barge system. Has any one solution been decided on? Having admitted that there will be an economic impact on tourism if the Department of Transport does not achieve the necessary results to ensure that the ferry is operational for the summer season this year and in years to come, can the parliamentary secretary promise compensation? The restaurants operating on either side of the wharf are no longer making a cent, even though there are ferries at Rivière-du-Loup and Rimouski.

Can he assure me that the maximum effort will be made to implement one of the temporary solutions, so that there will in fact be a ferry service before the summer is over? My major fear is that if there is no service this summer, it will spell the death of the ferry. Can the parliamentary secretary give me an assurance?

Mr. André Harvey: Mr. Speaker, the assurance I can give my hon. colleague is that the Minister of Transport himself and Transport Canada officials are very concerned about this situation. People are trying to find a satisfactory, short term solution. It is not easy, if we are to truly assume our responsibilities and do everything possible to ensure that the safety criteria are respected.

So much the better if a short term solution can be found. I hope that in the coming hours or days, at least a short term solution to the problem can be found. As for the long term, the minister is obviously going to keep working with the community to find the best possible solution.

● (1840)

[English]

VOISEY'S BAY

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, the question I asked the Minister of Finance, for which I was not pleased with the answer, was in relation to the financial arrangements surrounding revenues from the Voisey's Bay project. The question could apply to any resource development project in our province or several other provinces.

Before I get into the debate and allow the parliamentary secretary to respond, I would suggest to him that when we raise such issues we often get the same blanket response. If it is with respect to health care funding we are told there is a formula based on per capita. If a province's population is dropping we are told it is its own tough luck. If it is with respect to equalization we are told there is a complicated formula that involves all provinces across the country and that making changes would be extremely complicated.

Adjournment Debate

I do not want to hear that. We have heard it over and over. When will the government become original? I urge the parliamentary secretary to throw away the answer that was prepared for him and come up with original ideas to help provinces get on their feet so they can contribute to the country.

The Voisey's Bay development has started to move. The government and the company have agreed to a non-binding statement of principles. I am not sure what a non-binding statement of principle means, how solid it is or what effect it will have. However as we speak a major debate is going on in the house of assembly of Newfoundland which will undoubtedly colour what happens.

We do know that 95% of any royalties coming from the project, we understand they will be about \$10 million a year which is not a lot of money for a big project, will be clawed back by the central government. This will leave Newfoundland and Labrador with 5% of the royalties or half a million dollars a year. That is one dollar a year for every man, woman and child in Newfoundland. That is what we will get in royalties from the Voisey's Bay development.

The government says that is the way it is. I know that is the way it is, but it is not the way it should be. The government needs to look at where the resource rich areas are in Canada. Most are in the have not provinces which are only now starting to develop their resources, as in the case of oil in Nova Scotia or oil and minerals in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The government should do what it did when Alberta started developing its resources. For the first five, six, eight or ten years it should let the provinces keep their royalties to invest in infrastructure. We would then no longer be have not provinces. We would be have provinces which could contribute to the country to help create the type of confederation we should have.

Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my hon. colleague, although if I heard him right initially I thought he had also determined the answer. I hope that in fact is not the case, because as one who has visited Newfoundland and Labrador on at least seven occasions I think I can speak with some understanding of this, particularly of the communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

First I certainly want to say that we are pleased that the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, INCO and aboriginal groups have in fact reached agreements that will make it possible for the Voisey's Bay project to proceed. The government certainly welcomes the jobs and prospects that major development offers the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In terms of the suggestion that equalization prevents provinces from benefiting from their resources, it does not reflect reality. The recent Voisey's Bay announcement is certainly evidence of that. The criticism of equalization is not merited when we consider the purpose of the program.

What is equalization? It is found in the constitution. It is to ensure that all provincial governments, all of them, have sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation. I think all Canadians support that. As the member knows, there will be a review of this

coming up in April 2004, I believe, when the federal government and the provinces will be discussing this.

In other words, equalization ensures that all provinces have access to a standard level of revenues.

With the development of Voisey's Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador revenues will grow due to royalties and increased personal and corporate taxes. The province will keep every penny of revenue it earns from the project. The federal government does not claw back any provincial revenues.

It is a fact, though, that as Newfoundland and Labrador get richer, lower equalization payments will be required to ensure that the province has access to the national standard level of revenues. That is the way the program is supposed to work. That is the way it was envisioned. The common standard ensures that all provinces are treated fairly.

We sometimes hear that equalization is a disincentive to development because it erodes benefits to provincial treasuries. This claim obviously, in the view of the government, does not stand up to scrutiny. First, it is the private sector that drives most economic activity. We have seen that in this situation. Equalization is not a factor in private sector decisions. Second, provincial governments, including the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, have strong incentives to encourage development. Economic growth creates jobs and higher incomes and lowers the cost of social programs. It allows provinces to replace federal transfers with own source revenues. Equalization receiving provinces themselves have consistently stated that equalization is not a disincentive to development.

Looking at creative solutions, when the federal and provincial governments come back every five years to review the situation, there will be an opportunity, and I have no instant answer for the member today, to put all of this on the table for what will be, I am sure, some very interesting and creative discussions.

• (1845)

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member. I got the answer I knew I was going to get. Equalization means that the poor will always be poor, as it is presently structured, and we just hope that the rich will remain rich because the minute that Alberta and Ontario see their economies changing and dropping then the rest of the country suffers also.

What we are talking about is a deal outside the equalization formula to give provinces an incentive to develop resources and give them that incentive to invest in resource development so that they can become contributing partners. It does not take rocket science to figure out that there is a way around it. The problem is the will.

Adjournment Debate

The resources in Newfoundland are developed for the people, and for the people of Canada, I would say, because Thompson, Manitoba, and Sudbury will benefit just as much or more than Newfoundland. Everybody else is getting a share except the provinces that own the resources. It is very unfair.

Mr. Bryon Wilfert: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate the member feels that was the answer that he had expected. The fact is, I think I clearly outlined the role of equalization. We are very pleased at what is happening in Voisey's Bay. We think it is going to be very important for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The fact is, it is an excellent opportunity for resource development.

If in fact the member has some suggestions that he feels should be incorporated, there will be an opportunity and there will be a time as we look at the whole issue of the equalization formula. I would invite and encourage the hon. member to participate in that discussion.

[*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 Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.49 p.m.)

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