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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, February 16, 2000

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 16, 2000

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

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

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today the people of Lithuania and Lithuanian Canadians are celebrating the occasion of the 82nd anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

Canada has always had a very positive relationship with Lithuania. This is partly due to our steadfast refusal to recognize the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states and also our rapid recognition of re-independence in 1990.

Canada's active Lithuania Canadian community has also greatly contributed to fostering exchanges and maintaining the friendship between our countries. The cultural and diplomatic ties between our countries have been fostered and strengthened over time through the twinning of cities, military co-operation through NATO's partnership for peace, as well as trade investment initiatives such as the Baltic express mission in 1998. The government is currently planning a follow-up Baltic express mission which will take place in September of this year.

I would like to offer my congratulations to President Adamkus, the Lithuanian parliament and to the people of Lithuania on this momentous occasion.

FARMERS

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, for months now I have had farmers from my riding of Athabasca coming to me to tell me how they are suffering. Alberta farmers are being crushed under a burden of debt and non-existent profits due to crop failures, high input costs and low commodity prices. Many of the municipalities in the province of Alberta have declared their regions disaster areas, and life is not getting any easier for our farmers since this government is unwilling to provide them with any substantive relief or assistance.

I have been trying my best to help our farmers, but now I realize that what I should have been telling them all these months was, instead of lobbying the agriculture minister for assistance, they should have sent in bogus applications to the Minister of Human Resources Development. No doubt they would have received more money than they could ever have hoped for.

When I go back to the farmers to give them an update I can tell them that the reason they have not received any real assistance is that this government was too busy losing over a billion dollars to worry about western farmers.

* * *

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as one of the 10 non-permanent member states currently elected to the United Nations Security Council for a two-year term, Canada has taken concrete steps to increase the transparency and openness of the council sessions and procedures by providing regular updates to non-members of the security council—170-plus states at any time—posting regular information about the security council and its activities on our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade website, and advocating the opening up of council meetings to non-member countries.

Through these initiatives we are working actively to ensure that the concerns of all countries are heard at the United Nations before one of its key parliamentary institutions.

S. O. 31

THE LATE J. ANGUS MACLEAN

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Prince Edward Island and Canada have lost one of their most distinguished citizens. J. Angus MacLean, a long-time member of the House and a former premier of P.E.I., died yesterday.

The man everyone knew as Angus served our province as opposition leader from 1976 to 1979. He was premier from 1979 to 1981. He retired from leadership but continued to serve his constituents as their MLA for another year.

Prior to his tour of provincial duty, Angus was one of the members of parliament for the dual riding of Queens in Prince Edward Island, which became the riding of Malpeque in 1966. He served in the House in a most distinguished fashion for 25 years. During that period Angus was Minister of Fisheries from 1957 to 1963.

Born on a small farm in 1914, Angus never lost his affinity for the rural way of life. He left the island to serve his country in World War II in 1939. His aircraft was shot down, he spent 10 weeks behind enemy lines and finally made his escape to safety. Decorated for his heroics with the RCAF during the war, Angus returned home to his beloved province and a life of public service.

A man of principle, Angus drew respect from people of every political stripe. His common sense approach and sense of fair play endeared him to all. His droll sense of humour also served him well.

* * *

BIOSPHERE RESERVES

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada now has eight biosphere reserves. Six are located in Quebec, Alberta, Ontario and Manitoba. There are two new reserves, which are Clayoquot Sound in British Columbia and Redberry Lake in Saskatchewan. They are now designated as international biosphere reserves under the UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program.

• (1405)

This is a great victory for the communities involved, the Western Canada Wilderness Committee and the Friends of Clayoquot Sound, as well as the Nuu-chah-nulth Central Region First Nation. They all deserve special recognition for their dedication and work which led to the nomination of the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of the Environment also should be recognized for their support for this fine initiative.

* * *

FARMERS

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I spoke to Nick Parsons on his cellphone. Nick, a

farmer in my riding, is into the second week of his combine odyssey from Farmington to Ottawa aboard "Prairie Belle", his big red combine.

Nick hopes to open the eyes of the Prime Minister to the plight of Canada's farmers. According to Nick, "If the Prime Minister won't stand up for farmers, he should step aside for someone who will".

When I spoke to Nick he was having coffee with farmers at a Massey dealership in Watrous before heading for Yorkton, Saskatchewan. He described his trip as tears and fears, a very emotional journey.

On Monday a priest stopped Nick's combine to talk about his fears regarding farmers in his parish on the verge of committing suicide. At the end of their conversation the priest reached into his wallet and donated \$20 to Nick's survival of the family farm trust fund.

I commend Nick on his monumental journey and encourage Canadians to give him a supportive call at area code 250, 784-4677.

Keep her between the ditches, Nick.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be Canadian. I believe that Canada is the best country in the world in which to live and I am determined to see it remain united.

My love for my country is why I am also very proud to support Bill C-20, the clarity act. On an issue as important as national unity we cannot let our judgment be clouded. The question must be clear and the majority must also be clear. Anything less would be unfair to all Canadians, past, present and future.

Yesterday was flag day. I was proud to see people in Guelph—Wellington and across Canada show their patriotism and commitment to making this country work. As the saying goes, something worth having is worth fighting for, and our country is definitely worth fighting for.

* * *

[Translation]

LABELLING OF TRANSGENIC FOODS

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on January 29, a protocol on biosafety was adopted in Montreal.

Despite the efforts of Canada and its buddies in the Miami group to limit the scope of this protocol, it now allows a country to ban importation of a genetically modified product if it feels there is not sufficient scientific proof of its safety. It also sets rules for shipping, requiring cargoes containing GMOs to be identified. The protocol left the issue of labelling of transgenic foods unresolved, however.

The Canadian government cannot continue to do nothing on this issue until the protocol is ratified and implemented. It must respect the rights and wishes of consumers to know what they are eating and to choose accordingly, by moving quickly to require the labelling of all foods containing genetically modified organisms.

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[*English*]

AUTOMATION TOOLING SYSTEMS

Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Automation Tooling Systems, a world-class high tech company in my riding of Cambridge, yesterday announced a multimillion dollar expansion and the creation of 300 to 400 new jobs.

ATS operates an automation systems plant, a metal components plant and recently made a breakthrough in the health care industry. This successful company employs close to 3,000 people worldwide. Half of its employees work in Cambridge and Kitchener.

I would like to congratulate the management and employees of ATS for their ongoing success in the new economy.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yes, Virginia, there is a brain drain and overtaxation is to blame. Hurrah, the industry minister has finally acknowledged the role that high corporate taxes play in driving our best and brightest out of Canada. But what is he going to do about it?

Witness after witness appearing before the industry committee's productivity study have called for lower corporate and personal income tax rates. Leading economists, such as Pierre Fortin, have said that the answer to Canada's declining standard of living is to cut taxes and pay down debt. It is very simple: cut taxes and pay down debt.

Clearly it is time for the minister to stand for Canada. It is time for him to put his money where his mouth is and deliver real tax cuts on budget day.

* * *

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are very much attached to their public and universal health system.

It is the responsibility of the Canadian government to ensure that the five principles for health care set out in the Canada Health Act are respected. These are: accessibility, portability, universality, public administration and public funding.

S. O. 31

In the 1999 budget, the Government of Canada earmarked \$11.5 billion over five years for strengthening and modernizing our health system.

In that context, the Liberal government calls for the collaborative efforts of all of the Canadian provinces in order to provide the best possible services throughout the country.

With a united effort we are going to improve health services, in the interests of enhancing the quality of life in all of the regions of Canada.

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[*English*]

ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is Academy Award nomination time again. There are some Oscar nominees who have been overlooked by the academy, so we offer them to you today.

Best actor: The Prime Minister. There is no doubt about it. For seven years he has been cutting health care and acting like he is not.

Best makeup: The Canadian alliance or the Reform Party, or whatever they are calling it. Every Canadian knows it is the same old Reform underneath, no matter how many times they change their name.

Best foreign language film: This would be the Reform Party too. Canadians consistently say their priority is health care, but Reform thinks it is tax cuts for the rich, which is foreign to anyone who is staying in a hospital.

Best performance in a musical: The health minister for his question period renditions of the same old tune "I'm saving medicare".

Best supporting actor: The finance minister for his portrayal of Scrooge in the Liberal government's budget series.

Finally, best lead in a horror feature: Ralph Klein for "Destroying Medicare III—The Privatization Bill".

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[*Translation*]

BILL C-20

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, eight years ago, on February 8, the foreign affairs ministers of the 12 members of the EU signed a new monetary, economic and political partnership agreement. This was the Maastricht agreement, the new Europe.

Then the acceptance or rejection of this agreement was put to a vote in referendums in these countries. In all instances, the rule of absolute majority applied.

What a contrast to Bill C-20, which, in addition to failing to recognize the rule of absolute majority, denies Quebecers the right

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to ask their government to negotiate a new economic and political partnership agreement with Canada.

While Europe is built on openness, equality of peoples and respect for the rules of democracy, the federal government is trying to restrict democracy and to deny the equality of peoples in order to preserve the status quo.

Hats off to Europe of the people and democracy and shame on the federal government of Canada.

* * *

CANADIAN ECONOMY

Mr. Claude Drouin (Beauce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on scrutiny, the Liberal government's economic performance is impressive.

Thanks to the concerted efforts of Canadians, our economy is the best it has been in over ten years. The economic indicators bear witness to its good health.

In 1999, there were 427,000 new jobs in the country. That represents a 3% increase over 1998. The Liberals have created some 1.9 million jobs since they took office in 1993.

The unemployment rate was 11.4% in 1993. It is now at 6.8%, something not seen since April 1976, nearly a quarter of a century ago. The unemployment rate is therefore 4.6% lower than it was when we took office.

The figures, not to mention the elimination of the \$42 billion deficit, amply prove the statement that the Liberal government works for Canadians.

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[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, PC): Mr. Speaker, no action has yet been taken by the department of HRDC to help the growing crisis in Atlantic Canada among seasonal workers called gappers.

Since the last cuts to the EI program seasonal workers have been unable to make it from season to season without running out of benefits for weeks or even months.

Unfair economic zoning has also contributed to this growing crisis.

What is the government's plan of action to help these seasonal workers make it through these very difficult times?

The pain and suffering can no longer be ignored by the government. How can the government deny money to seasonal workers in need, and give millions of dollars to Wal-Mart and Vidéotron? Until the government fixes the problem it has created it must recognize the hardship these people are facing.

• (1415)

Again I ask what is the minister's plan of action, or does she simply not have one? The workers living in seasonal communities are waiting for answers and a solution to the problem they sadly face year after year.

* * *

MEMBER FOR BRANT

Mr. Paul Bonwick (Simcoe—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to one of parliament's most hard working and conscientious members. I am referring to the member from Brant, Ontario, who is the Minister of Human Resources Development. Since her constituents first elected her in 1993 she has been a role model, a leader and a respected parliamentarian of whom all Canadians can be proud.

For the past two years I had the pleasure of chairing a regional caucus of which the minister was an active member. Her passion and caring for all Canadians are unparalleled. She truly is a parliamentarian who cares about her country. She has never wavered from her dedication and concerned interest in serving Canada to the best of her abilities.

On behalf of the constituents of Simcoe—Grey, and indeed all Canadians who support her, I commend the minister for her excellent work and tell her to keep up the good work.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Her office does write a good Standing Order 31. Mr. Speaker, listen to this familiar story. A letter was sent to urge approval of a government grant even before anyone applied. We have seen that pattern before. This one came from the Prime Minister's Office and he lobbied Canada economic development for a fountain in his own riding.

Finally a month later the application form actually showed up. The Prime Minister broke the rules and now just last week we saw the announcement, with a big fanfare and a big press release, about \$200,000 going to Heritage Shawinigan.

Why is the letterhead of the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Office a legal application form for grants now?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the city of Shawinigan and the city of Shawinigan-Sud have been working on this file for years. It is nothing new.

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When there is a project in my riding I do like Reform Party members do. I support projects in my riding that help to create jobs and make the area very attractive.

When my caucus visited Shawinigan a year ago with a lot of our friends from the press they found that Shawinigan is much more attractive than it was before.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): I dare say, Mr. Speaker, I am sure it is a lovely fountain. There we are with government slush funds draining into government slush funds, which is something else, and finally getting sucked into the Jane drain at the bottom.

There were Liberal demands attached to this. First, the minister responsible must be invited to the announcement and, second, the Government of Canada must get the last word at the press conference.

This is not about jobs. It is not about fountains. Why is it that the Prime Minister's Office and his letterhead are now the official application form for grants? Why would that be?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, long before the letter there was an application started by the city of Shawinigan and after that the city of Shawinigan-Sud and so on. This project involves the people of Shawinigan, the Historical Society of Shawinigan and I have helped them of course.

Yes, it is very important in every riding of Canada that the people of the ridings know, when there is a subvention coming from the taxpayers of Canada, that the money is coming from the taxpayers of Canada, particularly in areas where some people want to quit Canada because sometimes they do not know the good that this government is doing for its citizens.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, surely it is absolute blackmail to try to pay the people of Quebec to keep them in Canada.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

• (1420)

The Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the hon. member not to use the word blackmail.

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, insults do not impress people. The Prime Minister's Office demanded funds for a fountain. The fountain may be lovely but they had not even applied for any money. No one had even applied for that.

Now, in the middle of this huge boondoggle where we have seen all kinds of arrogance, wastage of money and misspending, a quarter of a million bucks was just announced last week for this fountain. When the Prime Minister brings up taxpayers' money, why is it he keeps thumbing his nose at these taxpayers?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I was re-elected as a member of parliament and came back with this government in 1993 we had 11.5% unemployment in Canada. It is down now to 6.8%.

The result is that the program is helping: 1.9 million new jobs have been created in bit more than six years and unemployment is down from 11% to 6%. I understand when I see the Leader of the Opposition travelling the land telling everybody that the Reform Party has no future.

Mr. Eric Lowther (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister can try to claim innocence all he wants, but the fact remains that he has been caught playing fast and loose with the rules again. We know the Prime Minister twisted the arms of bureaucrats to get crooked loans for hoteliers—

The Speaker: I ask the hon. member to withdraw the word crooked.

Mr. Eric Lowther: I withdraw.

The Speaker: I ask the hon. member to go to his question.

Mr. Eric Lowther: Mr. Speaker, he knew from his experience that these bureaucrats would not say no. Why does the Prime Minister consistently break the rules and funnel other taxpayers' dollars into his riding?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the riding of Saint-Maurice is made up of citizens of Canada who are entitled to exactly the same programs as anybody else. All the rules are respected. The grants are analyzed by all the bureaucrats.

I am happy that one of the things they are doing, which is very good for me personally, is that they are attacking me because I do my job. I want the unemployment level in my area someday to be as low as that of any city in Alberta.

Mr. Eric Lowther (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the situation here is that the Prime Minister does not follow the rules. The Prime Minister argues that he demands high standards for his ministers, but he makes a point of personally interfering with their portfolios.

His ministers do not mind, though. It means they do not have to bother with those annoying little rules either. The human resources minister has bungled \$1 billion as a result.

Is the Prime Minister defending the human resources minister because he does not care about taxpayers' money or is he guilty of the very same thing himself?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very careful with the money of Canadian people, but we are not like the Reform Party. We think the government has a role for the people who very seriously want to find jobs.

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We know very well what the Reform Party will do. It will scrap all these programs that are helping those who need it in Canada to give a tax break to the rich guy they want to support.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the current HRDC fiasco takes us back to the Corbeil affair, in which a political adviser obtained from the Department of Human Resources Development a list of grant applications which, according to the minister in charge at the time, was not confidential.

• (1425)

Can the minister tell us today how it is that a political organizer from the Liberal Party came to be in possession of lists of grant applications when it is so hard for members to obtain documents concerning projects that were approved?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the particular case the hon. member makes reference to was handled appropriately at the time. It was referred to the RCMP and it has been dealt with by them.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I know what happened. I do not wish to know whether he pleaded guilty or whether the RCMP did its job. I wish to know whether the minister herself did her job and whether she can reply to us today.

How is it that it was so easy for a Liberal organizer to obtain such lists, when for the life of them members cannot obtain all the documents relevant to the projects that were approved?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have answered on a particular circumstance, but the hon. member asked if this minister is doing her job. I am doing my job.

I took the information provided by this audit seriously. I have worked with my department and those outside to create a plan that would fix this problem. That is what Canadians want and that is what will be done.

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is becoming very difficult to have a clear picture, when the information in the possession of Human Resources Development Canada is being given to us piecemeal, and members of parliament are reduced to getting their information through the Access to Information Act.

Can the minister explain to us how she can reconcile the orders she gave to her staff to make departmental information public with

the fact that MPs are reduced to relying on the Access to Information Act to get hold of more credible information?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said at committee and as I have said in the House, we are working with the department to see if indeed we can pull the information together in an effective way so it can be used by members of parliament.

I want to remind the House that the programs we have are not necessarily kept by riding. They are focused on their intent: helping young people, helping Canadians with disabilities, helping those who want to find work.

As I have said, we are working to try to see if we can provide new and useful information to members of parliament, and as it is available we will do so.

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have an important question to ask of the minister: can she confirm to this House that Liberal MPs have the same information as opposition MPs, and that they have no more than we have?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said to the House and as I have said to the committee, they asked for information. There have been motions passed by the committee for information. We are working to be able to satisfy those interests and to the best of our ability we will do that.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Yesterday the Prime Minister took the time to wrap himself in the Canadian flag. I wonder if the Prime Minister will take the time today to concern himself with the plight of farm families on the prairies.

When there was flooding in the Saguenay, Canadians pulled together. When there were ice storms in Quebec and Ontario, Canadians pulled together. I wonder whether in that same spirit and before the budget the Prime Minister will finally go to the prairies to see for himself the desperation on family farms on the prairies.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we did the same thing in Manitoba when there was a big flood. In fact we gave a billion dollars over two years a few weeks ago in order to help that situation.

• (1430)

I said that if there is a very specific problem that is important to any provincial government and if they want to contribute to a

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special program, we will contribute to the special program. But they have the responsibility to say to the federal government to take it over. We have done it to the tune of \$1 billion and the money will be available to the farmers for their planting through the program. The program—

The Speaker: The hon. leader of the New Democratic Party.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, all of the political parties in Saskatchewan, including the Liberal Party, agree that the federal government must take the lead. The federal government must take the next step.

If the Prime Minister thinks that the federal government's response to the prairie farm crisis has been adequate, then he clearly does not understand the depth of the crisis. That is why the Prime Minister needs to go to the prairies and see for himself before the budget. Why—

The Speaker: The hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are aware that there is a serious problem. We have acted.

The federal government is providing 60% of the money that is available at this moment to resolve this difficulty. It is a very difficult problem. We have made a decision that will permit the farmers to have access to money early so they can have the money for the seeding season. The program is in place. If the provincial governments think they need something else or they want a different program, I already said that if they want to put money—

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

* * *

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, two companies, RMH Teleservices and Duchess Foods, moved to the HRDC minister's riding and between them received \$2 million of taxpayers' money. Duchess Foods was lured into the minister's riding from the riding of her colleague from Hamilton Mountain at a cost of \$370,000.

How can the minister justify this flagrant misuse of public money?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to stand in my place as the member of parliament for Brant to say that the transitional jobs fund and the Canada jobs fund have made a difference in providing opportunities for employment for the people of my riding. In both of these cases men and women who have not had the opportunity

to work for years are now employed. That is what these programs were intended to do.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know why she would be proud to take jobs from her colleague's riding.

The minister has quoted unemployment statistics for her riding in 1995. Surely similar information should be available to all MPs, not just Liberal MPs. When several of our MPs called their local HRDC offices, they found that this information is only available by economic region. In 1995 the unemployment rate in the minister's riding was 8%. How then did she qualify for TJF funding? Why did the minister get preferential treatment?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indeed the statistics as compiled by Statistics Canada were available for my riding and that is the information that was used.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it does seem that we have seen this movie before. The Prime Minister and his office sent a letter to the bureaucrats asking for money but of course there is no application actually on file. What happens? The bureaucrats write back a hurried memo saying that while it is outside the rules, the Prime Minister asked for it so they had better get moving.

The last time he wanted money was for a hotel in his riding. We remember that deal. He got the grant even though no application was ever found. This time it is a \$200,000 fountain in Shawinigan.

Why is there one set of rules for the Prime Minister and his cabinet and another set of rules for the rest of Canadians?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a project. Reform members should do their homework. It is not with the department of human resources but with regional development agency for Quebec.

This project is financed like the infrastructure project was, partly by the federal government, partly by the provincial government and partly by the municipal government. It is a joint venture. The three levels of government made an agreement. That is why the project exists. It is not a unilateral decision by the government. It is a joint venture by the three levels of government which are working together to make sure the people of that region can enjoy jobs like anywhere else in the country.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister makes my point. It does not matter which department. This problem goes right to the Prime Minister's office and throughout the government. It is no wonder the HRDC minister

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has such a problem in her department. When she sets up illegal trust funds there is no reaction over there—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. Stay away from the word illegal, please.

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Mr. Speaker, she uses public money to lure jobs from other people's ridings and ignores audits not only in her own department but in the last department she ran. Why does she do that? Because she does not get any problem from the Prime Minister. He says that this kind of stuff is okay. In fact he bends the rules in his own riding. Why is there one set of rules for the Prime Minister and the front bench while the rest of Canadians have to play by the rules every single time?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the rules apply to everybody on both sides of the House.

They are always asking questions. I know why their leader is struggling and trying to get rid of what is known as the Reform Party and starting a new one.

In every riding we can make applications and receive grants when we qualify, ministers and members on both sides of the aisle. In fact, with some of these funds, very often more money goes to the ridings of the opposition than to the ridings of the government side.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the minister said in this House that the unemployment rate used for the transitional jobs fund was the 1995 rate and that the rate for the Canada jobs fund was the 1997 rate.

How does the minister explain that the monthly rate is used for the unemployed and a rate outdated by several years is used for grants to business?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the program criteria have to be based on something and in this case it was 1995—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Resources Development.

Hon. Jane Stewart: Mr. Speaker, as I said, the program criteria for the transitional jobs fund were based on employment statistics for 1995. The program criteria for the Canada jobs fund were based on statistics for 1997. It is the same for ridings on this side of the House as it is for ridings on that side.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how does the minister explain the questionable efficiency of her department in the frantic rush to hunt down the unemployed, when shamelessly little attention is given to the administrative follow-up of grants to business?

• (1440)

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the programs are working. They are working in our ridings. They are working in the ridings of the Bloc members. It is thanks to programs like the transitional jobs fund, like the Canada jobs—

Mr. Yvan Loubier: Why not define?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Human Resources Development.

Hon. Jane Stewart: Mr. Speaker, the criteria applied are the same in ridings whether they be opposition ridings or government ridings.

The transitional jobs fund came into vogue in 1995 with the changes to the Employment Insurance Act. It transitioned itself into the Canada jobs fund in 1997 and the rules are there.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we could pursue that for sure but I would really like to know about the transitional jobs fund and why the minister is making it into the transfer of jobs funds. She used it to lure Duchess Foods from Hamilton into her own riding, a whole distance of 30 kilometres by the way, not to create jobs but to bolster the minister's image.

The only reason the company moved was because the minister dangled \$370,000 in front of it. How could this possibly benefit Canadians who are footing the bill?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I say again that I am very proud of the investment that went to this company and ensured that 156 citizens of my community who were not working before now have employment.

The real issue here is that day after day the Reform Party stands up and undermines the effect of the transitional jobs fund and the Canada jobs fund, but day after day I received phone calls from the offices of individual members and letters from the offices of individual members. The Reform Party cannot suck and blow at the same time.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: What did she say? We did not get the translation.

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Sometimes some words are more difficult to translate than others, so we should stay away from it.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister should not be surprised that the opposition is calling her office to find out why she is mismanaging Canadians' money. And speaking of—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: The hon. member may begin her question.

• (1445)

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy: Speaking of sucking and blowing, Mr. Speaker, this minister is very good at—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: We are really not getting anywhere on both sides. I would ask members to please listen to the questions and then to the answers. I ask the hon. member to please go directly to her question.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy: Mr. Speaker, this minister seems awfully good at sucking jobs from other ridings into her own with public money. She lured Duchess Foods and she lured an international call centre from Sarnia into her riding.

My question is very simple. Why should other Canadians be taxed to feed this minister's political ego?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the programs are working in my riding and I am very glad, as are the members and constituents of the riding of Brant.

The hon. member suggests that members of the Reform Party are phoning to ask about the internal audit, which they are not. They appreciate, as does the hon. member, that we have a plan that is going to work.

What they are calling about are programs like the one on my desk right now from the riding of Skeena. The hon. member for Skeena wrote last fall saying "As member of parliament for Skeena, I wish to extend my support for Prince Rupert Custom Processors Limited". The member went on to say that the creation of a minimum of 70 full time new jobs—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Quebec.

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister took us by surprise with her statement that a computer problem could have left the impression that a number of projects were approved several months after receiving grants.

I would like the minister to explain how her department and its computer system can be so adept at going after unemployed

workers and so ham-handed when a grant approval process involving billions of dollars is involved?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this particular issue that has been raised in the House with regard to the internal audit, we are taking it seriously. We have a plan of action that is now being implemented. The auditor general says it is going to work. As the minister, I will ensure that the problem gets fixed.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when the minister was telling us how her department had been in the dark ages as far as management was concerned, was she referring to computer problems, administrative methods, directives from the then deputy minister, Mel Cappe, directives from the then minister, who is now the Minister for International Trade, or all of the above?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the work and investments made by the Department of Human Resources Development Canada are extraordinarily important across the country, whether they be grants and contributions, support for children and young people, skills development, employment insurance or old age security. Those are incredibly important and valuable investments that Canadians make on our behalf.

My job is to ensure that the foundation of our administration is strong. With the six point plan and our focused attack on this issue, we will ensure that is done.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Human Resources Development was busy with Indian Affairs and Northern Development, she knew about problems with millions of dollars that were funnelled from HRDC to the Metis Provincial Council of B.C. In fact she received over 50 complaints from the Metis regarding, guess what, missing funds, sloppy bookkeeping, political interference and possible conflicts of interests.

What did the minister do? She did nothing. What has she done about this since she became minister of HRDC? She has done nothing.

Why does the minister do nothing about complaints, warnings and audits until they receive media exposure?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again the hon. member is wrong. In reference to this issue, a third party audit was done by Consulting and Audit Canada. We are working with the Metis nation to improve the relationship we have with them and to deal with the issues that have been brought forward on that account.

Oral Questions

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the minister mentioned the audit because the audit of the Metis program stated “internal policies, procedures and monitoring were either not in place or not being followed”, referring to things such as nepotism, missing documents, missing applications. Does that sound familiar? Two audits, two programs, same minister. Does the House see a pattern here?

With her disastrous track record, why does the minister not just admit that she is way out of her league and resign?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I categorically reject everything the hon. member has said here.

On this side of the House, we believe that the Government of Canada can work with individuals and organizations to make a difference in the lives of Canadians. We will continue to stand up for that, and I, as minister of Human Resources Development Canada, will ensure that in the area of grants and contributions we have an administrative practice and process in place that will support these very important programs.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has received a letter from Dr. Pierre Gauthier, the president of the Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec, calling on the government to abandon its plan to increase funding for home care. Dr. Gauthier reminded him that health is a provincial jurisdiction and that, under the Constitution, it is up to the provinces to define their health policies.

Is the Prime Minister going to ignore this warning from medical specialists, just as he is continuing to ignore what the provinces think?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the present state of health services is unacceptable. The status quo is unacceptable.

We have put certain ideas on the table with a view to improving the situation and I think that these ideas are valid both in Quebec and elsewhere.

• (1455)

I have invited my counterparts to a meeting in a few weeks' time and I hope that Mrs. Marois will be there.

* * *

[English]

CHECHNYA

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past few months many of my constituents, in

particular organizations like the Polish Canadian Women's Federation, the Polish Combatants Association and the Polish Canadian Congress, have been expressing great concern about the human suffering in the Russian Republic of Chechnya.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell the House what Canada is doing to end this human suffering?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last November the Prime Minister directly raised this question with the Russian leadership during the OSCE meetings. Following that, the minister for CIDA announced major humanitarian programs that would be allowed.

Two weeks ago I had the opportunity to raise directly with the Russian foreign minister following on the Prime Minister's position that it is important to care about the civilians in that area, and in doing so, provide an opening for humanitarian intervention.

I think it is also incumbent upon the Russians to provide proper investigation of alleged atrocities in that area so that they can really live up to their commitments under international law.

* * *

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, two weeks before the last election when the riding of Vancouver East was still in Liberal hands, it received a \$500,000 job grant.

However, when the voters of Vancouver East tossed out their Liberal member of parliament, they were informed that they did not qualify for any job grant.

Could the minister tell us why this constituency qualified for job grants when it was a Liberal riding, but was told it did not qualify for job grants when it was an opposition riding?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to confirm that the project in the riding did create 18 jobs and did make a difference in that very poor riding that needs assistance.

To date there have been no requests from that riding for Canada jobs funds.

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, since the minister's own audit said that 15% of the grants given out did not even have application forms, why should Vancouver East be the only one that requires an application form?

The 1996 census shows that only 13.2% of the families in the minister's riding of Brant were considered low income, yet her riding gets millions of dollars in job funding. By contrast, in Vancouver East, 34.9% of families are considered low income, yet this minister gives them not one single penny.

Oral Questions

Why do the people in the minister's riding get millions of dollars but the people in Vancouver East get nothing?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the hon. member is so interested, I am glad to confirm that the people of Vancouver East did get millions of dollars.

* * *

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, gasoline and diesel prices are at record levels and home heating oil has doubled. Consumers are being shafted by the OPEC cartel and the big oil companies and the Liberals do nothing about it.

Today the U.S. energy secretary ordered extra home heating oil into New England and offered emergency aid of over \$250 million to help low income families pay their heating bills.

The industry minister found \$20 million for millionaire hockey players, but will he do anything to help consumers being gouged by the big oil cartel, or will he allow Canadians to freeze in the dark?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to hear from a member of the New Democratic Party from Saskatchewan, knowing the responsibility that the provinces have, if they wish to do so, to impose regulations on retail pricing.

The province of Prince Edward Island has chosen to do it, but in Saskatchewan the NDP do not seem to have the will to do it. Perhaps the hon. member might like to address the question to his own government.

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the Liberal government believes this issue is serious, it would call in all the provinces and all the oil companies and hammer out a solution or lay down the law. Instead, the minister passes the buck.

The Bank of Canada is warning that rising energy costs can push our inflation rate over 3%, threatening everyone from families to businesses and local school boards. Energy is the underpinning of our economy.

• (1500)

What is the Liberal action plan to defend our economy from OPEC and to defend Canadians from the impact of record energy prices?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was a lot of rhetoric. If the hon. member had looked at the newspapers he might have noticed that a year and a half ago crude

prices were about \$10 a barrel and today they are quoted at \$30 a barrel.

I know that the NDP believes governments are omnipotent and can control world prices. I do not think that we can do that.

That is not to say that this is not a problem which consumers across Canada are concerned about. It is one which we have in fact worked on with the provinces. Provincial and federal governments have discussed this issue together.

I think it would be helpful if the hon. member did a little homework on this before rising in hysteria.

* * *

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC): Mr. Speaker, the minister of HRDC keeps referring to her riding as having pockets of unemployment which qualify for the TJF.

I called the HRDC offices in New Brunswick and when I said "pockets" they asked "What are you talking about?" They do not seem to exist in all provinces—

The Speaker: I ask that members address all of their remarks through the Chair, please.

Mr. Jean Dubé: Mr. Speaker, why was her riding given special consideration? Why the favouritism?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member would be interested in knowing that another pocket of high unemployment was found in the riding of the hon. member for Saint John. She too got transitional jobs funds as a result of outlying high unemployment areas in that community in which opportunities were provided.

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC): Mr. Speaker, on Monday the minister responsible for HRDC used selective data for Brant to justify HRDC grants.

Let me tell the House the rest of the story for five months: August, 11.8%; September, 11.8%; October, 10.8%; and December, 11.4% With these numbers she does not qualify.

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me confirm that indeed the riding of Brant did qualify according to the rules.

I again stand in my place and say that I am proud, as a member of parliament, to have had these programs that have made a difference in the lives of many of my constituents. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that back home they know the value of transitional jobs funds and Canada jobs funds.

*Points of Order***PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of four very distinguished visitors, my brother speakers from the different provinces of Canada:

The Honourable Murray Scott, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia;

The Honourable George Hickes, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba;

The Honourable Ron Osika, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan; and,

The Honourable Anthony Whitford, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

• (1505)

POINTS OF ORDER

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wish to inform the House that I am designating tomorrow, February 17, as an allotted day.

QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thought I would rise on a brief point of order related to what has been happening in question period the last few days. I rise partly out of concern for the whole House, but partly to make a specific case for the smaller parties. It is a case I have made before.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, if you have to take a lot of time standing, waiting for order, that uses up time which would otherwise go toward questions and answers. If we do not get to the so-called third round, that is to say, the third opportunity for the smaller parties, the smaller parties then lose a much larger percentage of the time for questions that is available to them than the Reform Party and the Bloc.

I submit empirically, and not in any partisan way, that it is just the nature of the place, that most of the banter, the noise and the shouting—although we contribute from time to time, the same as the Conservatives—takes place between the government and the two major opposition parties. In effect, we as a smaller party are punished for behaviour to which we are only minor contributors, if you like.

I think this accumulates day over day into a form of unfairness which I am asking you, Mr. Speaker, to address. I am asking you to be tougher with the House in this respect, in terms of order. I am pleading with my fellow House leaders and fellow colleagues. We do not need the level of racket in this place that has come to characterize it. We cannot hear each other. There is too much cheap hollering going on when people are trying to listen. I do not like a lot of the answers that are given, or for that matter a lot of the questions, but I would like to hear them. If we cannot do that, then what is the point of being here?

I implore you, Mr. Speaker, to be tougher with members. If you ask members not to say something and they say it, move on. Do not stand there and plead with them for minutes and use up minutes that belong to the smaller parties. If you ask people to move to their question and they do not move to their question, if the next sentence that comes out of their mouth is not in an interrogatory form, move on. They will get the message. They will stop doing it. I think we need less exhortation and more punishment. That is what has to happen in the House.

I would urge you, Mr. Speaker, to consider what I have said.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but echo the same sentiments of the House leader of the New Democratic Party. There is a disproportionate price that is paid by the smaller parties as a result of the system and the process that has evolved. When question period is cut short due to the racket, it is the two last questioners in the House who inevitably lose their questions.

• (1510)

As has already been pointed out—and I think the government House leader would support this position—there should be an intervention on the part of the Chair because the acquiescence, in essence, hurts parties that are not causing the problem and we are paying a disproportionate price. To lose one question out of a possible five or six is a huge portion of the amount of floor time that we have in the House of Commons.

I would echo that sentiment and ask that the Chair be more diligent in interventions if questions are not posed properly. If time is being wasted we should move to the next party or the next questioner.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there is something being lost, which is the fact that if members on the government side make a lot of noise and I, as was the case today, am penalized because of their noise, I cannot get my question out and I cannot make the points that I carefully considered before even asking the question. If I am then cut off and directed to move right to the question because of the misdemeanour of Liberals, that is not fair. I carefully consider what I want to put to the minister. I have a complete package and if I am cut off because of their misdemeanour that is not equitable.

Points of Order

I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that when you consider this point of order you also consider the fact that my rights are being interfered with inappropriately when I am cut off because of noise from the government benches.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make three comments on the matter we are addressing at this time.

First of all, I must say that I feel a great deal of sympathy with the views expressed by the NDP and Progressive Conservative House leaders. I do feel that time wasted in this House results in missed opportunities for questions, not just for the two smallest opposition parties, but also for the other two opposition parties. This is indeed most regrettable.

I would, however, like you to also take into consideration the point of view expressed by our Reform Party colleague, who has just said something I am in complete agreement with. As members of the opposition, when we ask a question, we must not be taken hostage by the lack of discipline of the Liberals, which might result in question period being speeded up. We have to be careful about that.

The third point I would like to raise is that, while I have every sympathy for the point of view of the NDP House Leader, I strongly deplore the tone in which she addressed you, Mr. Speaker; it was cavalier to say the least.

[*English*]

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North—St. Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me add my thoughts to the debate on this point of order. I agree that decorum is a bulwark of democracy. Civilized behaviour during question period enhances our image in parliament.

Mr. Speaker, when you make a ruling and advise any member, whether the member occupies a position of title or not, that ruling truly must be upheld immediately. With that kind of decision, Mr. Speaker, the Speaker's chair will earn the greater respect of parliament and Canadians.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I too empathize with the House leaders from both the NDP and Tory party who have described what happens when time is wasted in abundance.

Today during the intervention by the member from Nose Hill it took nine minutes for the government side to quiet down long enough for the member to get out a truncated question because of the delaying tactics. It took nine minutes. We could sit here as quiet as mice during that time, but if the uproar continues over there, not only do the smaller parties, but all of us, including Canadians, get short shrift because other good questions get lost in the hubbub.

It is very true that sometimes when asked to go directly to a question when a member has done nothing wrong, Mr. Speaker, you can make the judgment call on who is creating the fuss. However, often when someone has been interrupted two or three times, not by any noise made on this side of the House but by standing ovations and carrying on over there, if the ruling is delivered "You are finished, go directly to your question", that is not the fault of the member asking the question, it is the fault of the government, in this case, which chose to take up nine minutes with general hubbub and carrying on. That is not right.

• (1515)

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an important point has been raised here. I do think it is not just the responsibility of the Speaker, but it is the responsibility of all of us in the House. I think we were all encouraged when a time limit was put on questions and answers. It allowed more participation in question period and it certainly helped pick up the pace of question period. On both sides of the House there is some fault and some correction to be taken. Inflammatory language in questions simply stirs a response. Perhaps that response should be more contained than it is, but I do encourage you, Mr. Speaker, to do whatever you can.

I want to speak on behalf of Liberal members who do not usually get their first question on until at least 2.45 p.m. We are the ones who are most penalized if question period drags on longer.

I support some of the comments that have been made but I also encourage all members in the House to support you, Mr. Speaker, in trying to do your job.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a brief comment about this point of order.

I commend you for extending question period today by a few minutes. I know it is difficult for you to make that judgment call, but perhaps that is one avenue you could choose in the future. If the majority of the disturbances in question period are coming from the government side, then obviously as many have made the point, it is the opposition that primarily is penalized. If you were to extend question period by another five or ten minutes or whatever time they want to take up, I do not think it would take very many days before the government side would learn the lesson that questions will still get asked.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, certainly, when decorum is absent from our deliberations during Oral Question Period, fewer questions are asked.

It must be kept in mind, however, that the objective of question period is not just to ask questions, but to get answers. The public's expectation of Oral Question Period is that it will gain a better understanding of how government and parliament operates.

Points of Order

I do deplore the lack of decorum, which results in not all questions getting asked. Unfortunately, answers are rarely forthcoming, and I realize this is beyond your control, Mr. Speaker, and not affected by decorum. Please excuse me for saying what I think.

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): I rise on the same point of order, Mr. Speaker.

I think representations to you suggesting in any way that your demeanour has not led to expeditious handling of these matters in the House would be totally unfounded. I think you have demonstrated exemplary behaviour in the way you have tried to bring order at times. I think the solution to the problem lies with members themselves on all sides of the House.

The Speaker: I will hear three more interventions and then I will go from there.

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree that we have confidence in the Speaker. I want to pick up on the minister's comments as well.

It is incumbent upon us as members of parliament when we are putting the question that most of us in the Chamber are mature enough to know what words are unparliamentary. When we choose that type of language we should be shut off completely from getting up and going over the question once again because it is time delay. I think both sides of the House would agree on that.

We are under time restraints as individual members. There is a 35 second limit on our questions. Mr. Speaker, I think you have been very, very good in enforcing that. Whether it is our party or some other party, including the government, but when the members use spontaneous applause and standing ovations for their members, the stopwatch should begin. If they are on their feet for 30 seconds, question period should be extended by 30 seconds.

I think a set of rules that will work are known to all of us, but we have to set the rules and live by those rules. I think we would all be supportive of that.

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would say I think the House would benefit from your penalizing those who abuse your generosity by causing a ruckus.

If an opposition party causes a disturbance, you should intervene by taking a question away from it. If you discover that the commotion comes from the government side, they too should be penalized by having Oral Question Period extended by the amount of time they spent reacting to one of our questions.

I make this suggestion to resolve the problem in all humility.

[*English*]

Mr. Ovid L. Jackson (Bruce—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the human being is the only animal that when one word is used inappropriately gets into all kinds of problems. That is why we have Beauchesne's, *Robert's Rules of Order* and what have you.

It is important in this House when one member is speaking that other members are listening. For the most part I sit here very quietly and listen to a lot of rhetoric from all sides. It is very important for us and the Canadian people that when somebody is speaking, other people have the courtesy to be quiet.

The Speaker: All of us would agree that in the last two days our question periods have not been the best that we have had in the last short while. It seems like we are all getting in a circle and we are pointing fingers. The fact of the matter is that we should just turn our fingers around and point them at ourselves.

As the Speaker I could stand up and yell for order until I am blue in the face but I am not going to do that. I am not going to try to shout this House of Commons. I will not do it.

We have heard interventions from every party in here. We all agree that if we are going to get more questions in and hopefully more answers in, we are going to have to co-operate. I would remind you that in the last parliament when it came to question period I was forever asking you to please shorten the questions and the answers so we could get more questions in.

[*Translation*]

The House decided collectively to do something for itself. The party leaders came to me saying "We need certain questions; they mentioned a number". I said "That is easy. We have 45 minutes and there are 60 seconds in each minute. If you multiply the two and divide by the number of questions you want to ask, you end up with 35 seconds for the question and 35 seconds for the answer".

[*English*]

Everything went well. Why? Because it came from the House. It came from us collectively that we could make this House function.

When there is a question posed, what possible good can it do to heckle so we cannot even hear the question? If a person asks a question, it is surely because that person wants to hear an answer. I cannot control the quality of the question nor the answer but I can now control, thanks to you because you agree, the length of the questions.

Instead of pointing our fingers at one another, let us look at ourselves. I am not here to lecture you. God knows, I have sat on those benches and I know what it is like in question period. I know

Routine Proceedings

what you are trying to do. It is not as if I arrived here a couple of weeks ago. [English]

Having said that, surely we can come to some kind of an agreement that we will be able to conduct ourselves the way we want to conduct ourselves so that the people who are asking the questions will get the answers and those who are giving answers will be heard on the other side.

• (1525)

You want me perhaps to take punitive measures. There are suggestions. I do not take offence when a member parliament stands and says that maybe I should try this or maybe I should try that. That is okay. It is advice. I will listen to advice. If you get a little bit frustrated, I sit in this chair day after day and hear our own members not give each other the chance to speak or be heard on the other side.

If I have been a little too lenient, perhaps I should tighten it up to the point where at least we can function a little bit better. But as your Speaker, I do not want to be some kind of dictator or martinet. I do not want to do that. I want all of us, the 301 of us, to be able to do our work in such a fashion that we will be proud of what we do in here.

I ask all of you to review what has been said by your peers. This is not somebody from outside; this is you who have spoken in here today. Look at *Hansard* and look at your own conduct, and me too. Let us see if tomorrow we can do a little bit better.

I have heard the points you brought up and I am going to take them to heart. But unless and until this House collectively wants to discipline itself, I suggest that your Speaker can stand here and shout all through question period and it will not make one iota of difference until we want to make this House the place that it should be. As the hon. member from Winnipeg said, we owe each other that respect.

Once again, I ask you to respect each other as parliamentarians. Tomorrow shall we see if we can have a better day for ourselves.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 26 petitions.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present in both official languages the first report of the Standing Committee on Health.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Monday, November 29, 1999, your committee has considered Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian institutes of health research, to repeal the Medical Research Council Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts. Your committee has agreed to report it with amendments.

• (1530)

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Health pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and with regard to the study of Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian institutes of health research, to repeal the Medical Research Council Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts. Your committee has agreed to make the two recommendations listed in the attached report.

* * *

SALES TAX AND EXCISE TAX AMENDMENTS ACT, 1999

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (for the Minister of Finance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-24, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act, a related act, the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, the Budget Implementation Act, 1997, the Budget Implementation Act, 1998, the Budget Implementation Act, 1999, the Canada Pension Plan, the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, the Customs Act, the Customs Tariff, the Employment Insurance Act, the Excise Act, the Income Tax Act, the Tax Court of Canada Act and the Unemployment Insurance Act.

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

* * *

INCOME TAX AMENDMENTS ACT, 1999

Hon. Jim Peterson (for the Minister of Finance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-25, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Excise Tax Act and the Budget Implementation Act, 1999.

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

*Routine Proceedings***INCOME TAX ACT**

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-429, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (deduction of mechanics' tool expenses).

He said: Madam Speaker, once again I am honoured to table a private member's bill which would allow mechanics to deduct the cost of purchasing tools under \$200 or the capital cost allowance on tools valued at over \$200 when it is a job requirement to purchase these tools. It is long past time when this should be implemented into law.

I am proud to introduce the bill and encourage the whole House to support it when it comes up for debate.

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

* * *

CANADA HEALTH ACT

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-430, an act to amend the Canada Health Act (conditions for contributions).

He said: Madam Speaker, my bill is actually a notification protocol for emergency response workers whose duties may expose them to an infectious disease without their knowledge.

Due to a concern for patient confidentiality there is currently no official procedure to notify these workers if it is discovered they were exposed. My bill is designed to provide the notification protocol urgently requested by the Canadian Association of Firefighters while still protecting that confidentiality.

• (1535)

The need for this protocol is urgent. Emergency response workers put their lives on the line to protect us when they are attending accidents. We in turn owe it to them, their families and their communities to take the appropriate steps to protect them by swift passage of this non-partisan bill.

I have contacted the House leaders for each of the parties requesting their support. I therefore request at this time to seek the unanimous consent of the House that the bill be adopted at second reading and sent to the Standing Committee on Health for its timely consideration. If the House agrees, the bill will be a non-partisan gift from all of us to those who put their lives at risk for our safety and protection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is there agreement to proceed in such a way?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

* * *

INDIAN ACT

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-431, an act to amend the Indian Act (election of chiefs and councils).

He said: Madam Speaker, I am honoured again to table this private member's bill which would be an amendment to the Indian Act to put in place monitoring by Elections Canada of all elections of chiefs and councils.

In speaking with aboriginal peoples in my constituency and across the country one thing I have heard is that they want accountability and certainly accountability in elections will come if Elections Canada monitors all elections. We can be pretty much assured that we will have fair elections. That is what the bill is about. I cannot imagine anyone not supporting it.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

RAOUL WALLENBERG DAY ACT

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-432 entitled an act respecting Raoul Wallenberg Day.

He said: Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a bill to celebrate the life of Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish citizen who could have taken advantage of the fact that his country was a neutral country during the war and led a very quiet life. Instead, he almost lost it.

He risked his life to save more than 100,000 Hungarian Jews.

[*English*]

Indeed he saved more Jews during the war from the Holocaust than many countries of the world. The intent of my bill is to proclaim January 17 as Raoul Wallenberg Day.

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

* * *

**INCOME TAX CONVENTIONS IMPLEMENTATION ACT,
1999**

Hon. Jim Peterson (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill S-3, an act to implement an agreement, conventions and protocols between Canada and Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Algeria, Bulgaria, Portugal, Uzbekistan, Jordan, Japan and Luxembourg for

Routine Proceedings

the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income, be read the first time.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Henri, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with leave of the House, I move that the first report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament, tabled in the House on December 16, 1999, be concurred in.

This report establishes the mandate of the committee, its quorum and its entitlement to sit during sittings of the Senate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to move his motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*English*]

SCRUTINY OF REGULATIONS

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I move that the first report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Scrutiny of Regulations be concurred in.

This is the organizational report of the committee and its content is the same as it has been at the beginning of every session in this and the previous parliament, so the motion may be deemed adopted.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay: Madam Speaker, we are opposed to this motion. There is a quorum restricting groups, etc., and we oppose this proposal.

We would like the Chair to ask if there is unanimous consent on this motion, so we can voice our opposition to it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The hon. member for Surrey Central moved a motion. We are now on debate, questions and comments.

However, if no one rises to debate the motion, I can put it to the House. Does anyone want to carry on the debate?

Some hon. members: No.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Call in the members.

• (1625)

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

(*Division No. 686*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Adams	Anderson
Assad	Augustine
Axworthy	Bailey
Baker	Bélair
Bélanger	Bellemare
Bennett	Benoit
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Bertrand
Blondin-Andrew	Bonwick
Borotsik	Boudria
Bradshaw	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brisson	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Caccia	Cadman
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Carroll
Casson	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Charbonneau
Chatters	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Clouthier	Collenette
Copps	Cullen
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Discepola	Doyle

Routine Proceedings

Dromisky	Duhamel
Eggleton	Elley
Finlay	Folco
Fontana	Forseth
Fry	Gagliano
Galloway	Godfrey
Goldring	Goodale
Gouk	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Grose
Hanger	Harb
Harris	Herron
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hubbard	Iftody
Jackson	Jennings
Johnston	Jones
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Keyes	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Konrad	Kraft Sloan
Lastewka	Lavigne
Lee	Leung
Limoges	Lincoln
Longfield	Lowther
MacAulay	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Mark	Marleau
Mathews	Mayfield
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough East)
McLellan (Edmonton West)	McNally
McTeague	McWhinney
Meredith	Mills (Red Deer)
Minna	Mitchell
Muise	Murray
Nault	Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Obhrai	Pagtakhan
Pankiw	Paradis
Parrish	Penson
Peterson	Pettigrew
Price	Proud
Proulx	Reed
Richardson	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Sgro	Shepherd
Speller	St. Denis
St-Julien	Stewart (Brant)
Stinson	Strahl
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Vellacott
Volpe	Wappel
Wayne	Whelan
White (North Vancouver)	Wilfert
Williams	Wood—162

NAYS

Members

Alarie	Asselin
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bigras
Canuel	Cardin
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Crête
de Savoye	Debien
Dockrill	Dumas
Earle	Fournier
Gagnon	Girard-Bujold
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Godin (Châteauguay)
Gruending	Guay
Guimond	Hardy
Lalonde	Laurin
Loubier	Mancini
Marceau	Marchand
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Ménard
Mercier	Nystrom
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Proctor
Sauvageau	Solomon
St-Hilaire	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)	Venne—42

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

Mr. Werner Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I noticed that the member for Trinity—Spadina and I came into the House at about the same time. He was allowed to vote and I was not. If I had been here at the same time, I would have voted with my party.

The Speaker: Did the hon. member for Trinity—Spadina enter the House after I had read the motion?

Mr. Tony Ianno: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The member's name will be withdrawn from the voting list.

I declare the motion carried.

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 Parkdale—High Park, Health; the hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Gasoline Prices; the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst, Employment Insurance.

* * *

● (1630)

PETITIONS

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have had several petitions to present for some time, but because of the unusual proceedings in the House I have not been able to introduce them.

The first petition deals with rural route mail carriers. The petitioners seek the support of the House in ensuring basic rights to help Canada Post improve wages and working conditions for rural mail carriers, which are unfair and discriminate against rural workers. Therefore the petitioners call upon parliament to repeal section 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act.

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have another petition from constituents who are calling on parliament to fund the national highway system in the 2000 budget to reduce fatalities and injuries on roadways.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, in the third petition the petitioners call on parliament to enforce labelling on all foods containing genetically modified organisms.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay—Boundary—Okanagan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the final petition deals with child pornography, particularly in British Columbia. The petitioners request that parliament, at the earliest opportunity, invoke section 33 of the charter of rights and freedoms to override the B.C. court of appeal decision and reinstate subsection 163.1(4) of the criminal code, making possession of child pornography illegal.

Routine Proceedings

GASOLINE

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition signed by residents of Newmarket, Mississauga, Kitchener, Burlington and Whitby which urges the government to support the auto industry in its clean fuel program and to implement new fuel standards for gasoline with zero MMT.

CHILD POVERTY

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have another petition signed by residents of Petrolia, Brigden and Corunna who urge the government to help in eliminating child poverty by using the federal budget to introduce a multi-year plan to improve the well-being of Canada's children.

NEW IDENTITIES PROGRAM

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by over 600 people from Newfoundland, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Alberta, B.C., Ontario, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The petitioners call on parliament to pass into law Bill C-494, which would formally fund and administer the new identities program under the witness protection program, providing necessary protection of last resort for those trying to protect their lives and the lives of their children from abusive spouses.

GENETIC ENGINEERING

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

Genetic engineering of food, plants and animals is still relatively new, but it is expanding at an extraordinary rate. It now involves the manipulation of the most basic building blocks of life and requires such a high level of science and technology that it places new forms of basic foods in the hands of large corporations.

Genetic engineering of plants in one field can affect those in another through the spread of pollen.

• (1635)

Plants have been developed to produce a terminator gene which prevents farmers from growing seed for future plantings.

The petitions call upon parliament to direct the Government of Canada to ban all terminator gene development in Canada and to work with the United Nations to ban such development worldwide.

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions which I would like to present today.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

The first petition is on behalf of 77 petitioners from my riding who draw to the attention of the House that rural route mail carriers are not covered under a collective agreement. They call upon parliament to repeal section 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act to protect these workers.

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to present to the House a petition signed by 5,325 people from Vancouver Island.

The petitioners draw the attention of the government to the problem of genetically modified organisms. They call upon parliament to enforce labelling of all foods that contain genetically modified organisms and to make sure that adequate testing is done on these foods to ensure the safety of our food supply.

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC): Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today to present a petition signed by people from across Nova Scotia, who urge the government to fulfill the 1989 House of Commons pledge to end child poverty by the year 2000.

Obviously we are now in the year 2000, which makes it even more important that we address the very important issue of child poverty post-haste in the House.

CHILDREN

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my pleasure to present four petitions on behalf of my constituents of Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

The first petition calls upon parliament to use federal budget 2000 to introduce a multi-year plan to improve the well-being of Canada's children.

ABOLITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the second petition requests that parliament support the immediate initiation and conclusion by the end of 2000 of an international convention which will set out a binding timetable for the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the third petition calls upon parliament to support Bill C-479, the recognition of crimes against humanity act.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the fourth petition requests parliament to enact animal

Routine Proceedings

protection legislation that will enforce sanctions upon persons convicted of cruelty to animals.

EQUALITY

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I take great pride in presenting a petition put forth by over 2,000 concerned Canadians, mostly from the province of Quebec.

The petitioners ask our government to affirm that all Canadians are equal under all circumstances and without exception in the province of Quebec and throughout Canada.

They wish to remind our government only to enact legislation that affirms the equality of each and every individual under the laws of Canada.

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by a number of Canadians, including those from my own riding of Mississauga South, on the subject of child poverty.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that one in five children in Canada lives in poverty, according to the Statistics Canada low income cut-off, and that on November 24, 1989 the House unanimously passed a resolution to seek to achieve the elimination of child poverty by the year 2000.

The petitioners therefore call upon parliament in this federal budget, and indeed through other initiatives, to seek to achieve the elimination of child poverty as soon as possible.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of Vladimir Cicha, Mavis Johnson, Fran Lewis and 240 others from North Vancouver.

The petitioners bring to the attention of the House the fact that the recent arrival of a ship bearing 123 illegal Chinese migrants to Vancouver Island has underscored how illegal immigration is one of the most serious issues facing Canada.

• (1640)

The petitioners call upon parliament to enact immediate changes to Canada's immigration laws governing refugees to deal with the situation.

I might add, Madam Speaker, that the government's response to these petitions so far has been less than satisfactory.

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my pleasure to table the following petition from concerned Canadians in my riding of Lethbridge.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to fulfill the promise made in 1989 by the House of Commons to end child poverty by the year 2000.

TAXATION

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the second petition is also from concerned Canadians in my riding of Lethbridge.

The petitioners call attention to the fact that Paul Martin has raised federal taxes in six budgets and that in Paul Martin's six budgets the tax burden—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I remind the hon. member that we do not refer to members by their names in the House of Commons.

Mr. Rick Casson: In the six budgets of the Minister of Finance revenues from the GST, which the Liberals promised to kill, scrap and abolish, have grown by 30%.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon parliament to give Canadian taxpayers a break by instituting tax relief of at least 25% in the next three years, starting immediately.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the first petition I would like to present concerns taxation. The petitioners, mostly from the Cold Lake area, call for the government to lower taxes because it has increased taxes 30% since it became the government, it has not honoured the promise to scrap the GST and high taxes are job killers.

The petitioners call on the government to reduce taxes by at least 25% over the next three years.

I fully support this petition.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the second petition has to do with child pornography and the problem which we still have in the country with the possession of child pornography being legal in British Columbia.

The petitioners call on the government to rectify the situation immediately.

I fully support this petition as well.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Madam Speaker, today I rise to present two petitions signed by the people from the constituency of Red Deer.

The first petition, which is signed by 28 individuals, requests that parliament immediately enact changes to Canada's immigration laws governing refugees.

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the second petition is signed by 325 constituents, who urge parliament to fulfill the 1989 promise of the House of Commons to end child poverty by the year 2000.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 6, 48, 51, 60, 62 and 65.

[Text]

Question No. 6—**Mr. John Herron:**

With regard to RESPs, does the Minister of Finance have a plan to ensure financial planners are permitted to apply for administrative relief and, if so, what is the plan?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.): Registered education savings plans, RESPs have existed and have been registered with the Department of National Revenue, now the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, for several years. To date there has not been a need to establish a policy regarding administrative relief.

However, with the introduction of the new Canada education savings grant program in 1998, there has been a significant increase in RESP activity which has given rise to a few requests for administrative relief.

The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency is monitoring the situation and will consult with the Department of Finance and the Department of Human Resources Development if the problem becomes significant and a policy needs to be developed.

Question No. 48—**Mr. Charles Caccia:**

What has been the tonnage of SO₂ cross-border coming from the United States into Canada for the last five years?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): This information does not currently exist. It would require complex models, which have not been attempted to date. What is known, based on 14 years of data, 1980-1994, is that while Canada has been emitting only 15% of the sulphur, it has been receiving 41% of the sulphur wet deposition. This implies a strong influx from south of the border.

Question No. 51—**Mr. Charles Caccia:**

What has been the tonnage of SO₂ deposited in Eastern Canada for the last five years?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): The estimated annual deposition of sulphate in Eastern Canada for the years 1990-1995, the most recent year for which we have data, is:

1990—4.44 million tonnes
1991—3.81 million tonnes
1992—3.90 million tonnes
1993—3.54 million tonnes
1994—3.43 million tonnes
1995—2.73 million tonnes

Question No. 60—**Mr. Bill Casey:**

With regard to the exchange of surplus land at Mirabel Airport for two property lots belonging to the town of Mirabel, for which the federal government's approval was announced by the Minister of Transport on November 22, 1999, what are the current market values of these three pieces of land?

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Lot 15-1815 of the Cadastre of Mirabel, registration division of Deux-Montagnes which was transferred by the federal government to the province of Quebec in 1995, was appraised at \$489,000 by an independent appraiser, Barbeau, Lavoie, Gauvreau, Vaillancourt et associés inc., hired by Transport Canada. It was valued at \$304,937 by the province for the exchange with the town of Mirabel.

The two lots owned by the town of Mirabel to be exchanged for lot 15-1815 were appraised at \$67,110 and \$156,509 by the town of Mirabel.

Question No. 62—**Mr. Yvan Loubier:**

With regard to the salary scale for directors of Human Resources Development Canada centres: (a) can the salary scale include performance pay; and (b) if so, what is the average amount of such performance pay (i) for Quebec as a whole, (ii) for the Montérégie region, and (iii) for central Quebec?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): (a) A performance bonus is a lump sum payment that is not part of the salary scale. The pay scale for Human Resources Centres of Canada, HRCC, directors is \$74,300 to \$87,400.

(b) (i) Human Resources Centres of Canada directors in Quebec as a whole received an average of 1.05% of their salary as a performance bonus, taxable, which was in the range of \$780 to \$917 gross.

(ii) (iii) Since there are so few HRCC directors in Montérégie and central Quebec, departmental privacy policy does not allow for the release of this information.

Question No. 65—**Mr. John Williams:**

Regarding page 10.14 of the Public Accounts of Canada 1998-1999. Volume II (ii), under the rubric Ex Gratia Payments—Department of Health, Compensation for damages to multiple infrastructure projects in the amount of \$55,000 can the government provide a breakdown of: (a) what was damaged; (b) the costs or repairing the damage per item; (c) who was responsible for the damage; (d) were those held

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responsible reprimanded and/or terminated; (e) was the incident reported to the authorities or to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): The payment of \$55,000 was erroneously coded to ex gratia. The transaction was related to the construction of a Health Canada health center.

[English]

Mr. Derek Lee: Madam Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if Questions Nos. 19 and 35 could be made orders for return, the returns would be tabled immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 19—**Mr. Eric Lowther:**

With respect to the import of what is or was known as “grey market” direct-to-home or digital satellite systems and digital broadcasting equipment, devices or components which are deemed to be in violation of sections 9 and/or 10 of the Radiocommunication Act: (a) what federal taxes and/or duties have been collected from those importing this equipment into Canada; (b) what is the estimated amount of federal taxes collected on the import of this equipment for each year since 1993; (c) what is the estimated amount of customs duties collected on the import of this equipment for each year since 1993; and (d) what is the estimated value of this type of equipment which has been imported into Canada?

Return tabled.

Question No. 35—**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:**

For the financial year 1999-2000, how much money has the government (a) spent before September 1, 1999, and (b) allocated for the reduction of smoking, in each of the following activity areas: (i) anti-smoking programs aimed at youth and young Canadians, (ii) research into tobacco use and its consequences, (iii) enforcement of federal laws on tobacco use, (iv) enforcement of laws against cigarette smuggling, (v) measurement of the tobacco use by Canadians, (vi) development of regulations under the new Tobacco Act, (vii) costs associated with the tobacco industry challenge of the Tobacco Act, (viii) cessation programs or other support for Canadians addicted to cigarettes, and (ix) grants and/or contributions to health and community organizations?

Return tabled.

* * *

[English]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker,

Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-8, in the name of the hon. member for Calgary Centre, is acceptable to the government and the documents are tabled immediately.

Motion No. P-8

That an Order of the House do issue for copies of all studies and/or reports since September 1993 of the operational and regulatory costs of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to Canadian industry and/or consumers.

Mr. Derek Lee: Madam Speaker, I ask that all remaining Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

ECONOMY OF CAPE BRETON

Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to seek leave under Standing Order 52(2) to move, seconded by the hon. member for Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, that this House do now adjourn for an emergency debate to address the deepening economic and social crisis facing the Island of Cape Breton.

I will not speak just about the Devco situation because I know that would not be sufficient under the rules. However, during the month of January it was indicated by the provincial government that it would either sell or close down the Sydney Steel Corporation. It has not sold it. It has listed the assets for sale. This means 700 people will lose their jobs in that industry.

• (1645)

Because of cuts at the CBC, the *Pit Pony* series has been cancelled resulting in the loss of 200 jobs. If we combine that with the 1,500 jobs that will be lost when the government passes the Devco legislation, this comes to about 2,400 jobs in an area that already has an unemployment rate two to three times the national average.

This is a national crisis. It is an emergency. It has happened over the last month. It has been precipitated by the actions of the provincial government and the federal government. Every one of those jobs has two or three spinoffs.

I would ask for leave for an emergency debate. I will leave this in the Speaker's hands.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): At this point I must tell the member for Sydney—Victoria that I really do not feel such a request meets the criteria for an emergency debate.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION DIVESTITURE AUTHORIZATION AND DISSOLUTION ACT

The House resumed from November 15, 1999 consideration of the motion that Bill C-11, an act to authorize the divestiture of the assets of, and to dissolve, the Cape Breton Development Corporation, to amend the Cape Breton Development Corporation Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to follow up on the comments I made on November 15, 1999 on Bill C-11, an act to authorize the divestiture of the assets of, and to dissolve, the Cape Breton Development Corporation. On that occasion I spoke about the Liberal government's lack of respect for the workers in Atlantic Canada and how Bill C-11 was just another insult to the workers who have given their lives to Devco.

Since November 15 much has happened in Cape Breton with regard to the Liberal government's treatment of the Devco question.

[Translation]

On January 4, Devco miners had to resort to a strike to get the Liberal government's attention. Did it listen? Of course not. It continued to stick its head in the sand. It was only when miners barricaded themselves underground and threatened to go on a hunger strike that the government began to take an interest.

Finally, after a year of asking for a meeting with the Minister of Natural Resources, union representatives were able to sit down with the minister and air their concerns.

Negotiations on the pension plan began on January 11 and were referred to a mediator last week.

Miners should have been granted the right to negotiate their pension plan from the outset of the dispute. However, we should never expect the Liberal government to consult those concerned. That would be far too much to ask.

[English]

While the miners were fighting for the right to negotiate, it was revealed that the finance minister's shipping company was part of the fleet bringing coal in from Columbia and the U.S. It was also reported that the finance minister's company had expressed interest in buying some of Devco's assets.

The Liberal government has no shame. It cuts thousands of jobs in Cape Breton while the finance minister directly profits from the sale of Devco. In my books that is what I call a conflict of interest.

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That is not the only problem with the Liberal government's quick sale of Devco. The moneys set aside for economic adjustment are inadequate even by the government's own estimates which placed the need at \$300 million. The proposed funding package is definitely inadequate in comparison to the Gardiner-Pinfold study which suggested the cost to offset fallout from the closure of Devco would be \$1.5 billion.

The government is once again writing its policy on the run. It refused to consult the affected communities, the unions that represent the workers affected and other community groups who live in Cape Breton and know what the impact will be if Devco is sold.

Too often my Liberal colleagues on the other side of the House forget that the policies which they support have a direct impact on the lives of Canadians.

• (1650)

Many of the policy decisions made by the government have hurt Canadians. The cuts to social transfers have crippled our health care system and increased tuition fees for universities to such a level that many Canadians no longer consider post-secondary education. Because of changes to the employment insurance, 800,000 unemployed workers cannot receive EI benefits, even if they contributed to the fund.

Do the hon. members opposite realize the hardship that will descend on the people of Cape Breton if Devco is closed? It is sometimes hard to imagine the effect on a community when it is not ours.

Unfortunately, I have seen the devastation caused by unemployment. I have seen families thrown into poverty, children going to school with no food in their bellies and workers going to the employment insurance office day after day hoping to find jobs but leaving empty-handed. This kind of desperation takes a toll on the family and on the community.

The government is content with turning its back on Cape Bretoners when it could have proceeded in a humane and proactive manner. It could have sat down with community leaders, unions, elected representatives to figure out what needed to be done to fulfil the government's obligation under sections 17 and 18 of the original Devco act.

Instead of its drive-by announcement, the minister could have actually talked to Devco workers, answered a few of their questions and, heaven forbid, actually have acted on their recommendations.

Why does the government always run away when the Canadian people want to talk to them? The former Minister of Human Resources Development categorically refused to meet with unemployed workers even though his department administered the Employment Insurance Act which condemned thousands of Canadian families to poverty.

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Now the Minister of Natural Resources comes in, announces the Devco closure and takes off. Why do Canadians have to take to the streets to get the Liberal government to listen to them?

The members for Bras d'Or—Cape Breton and Sydney—Victoria have stood in the House repeatedly to identify the fundamental problems with this bill. They outlined the lack of public consultations, but did the Liberal government listen? Of course not.

Sadly, it is par for the course for this government. Let me talk about other areas where the Liberals have let Canadians down: the lack of leadership in the aboriginal fisheries crisis; the inaction of the government on homelessness; the government turning its back on hepatitis C victims; the Liberal government cuts in social transfers which have plunged our health care into crisis; the sky-rocketing cost of getting a post-secondary education; the cuts to employment insurance; the bungling of HRDC grants.

The government has made a habit of letting down Canadians and this Devco sell-off is just another item on the list.

However, it is not too late. The government can still set things right. I hope the Minister of Natural Resources and his colleagues listen carefully to the debate that is going on now and act in the best interest of the people of Cape Breton. It is pretty clear they have not so far.

The government should have more respect for those people who have spent 30 years working underground in the coal mines. I bet not many members in the House of Commons have ever worked underground. I know what it is like to work underground because I worked for 15 years underground. However, I did not work for the coal industry.

The government must show respect for the people of Cape Breton. It must take a lead hand and take care of those people who have spent 30 years of their lives underground in Cape Breton. The government has a responsibility. It cannot just sell off Cape Breton to the Minister of Finance who wants to be the next Prime Minister.

• (1655)

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the hon. member's speech, I know there must be another side to the story of Cape Breton. I know that I speak for millions of Canadians when I say that we understand just how difficult the closing of the mines of Cape Breton is for the miners and their families.

There are members of the House who should be ashamed of themselves for trying to make Canadians believe that Cape Breton miners cannot be retrained. They would have us believe that the economy of industrial Cape Breton is nothing more than coal mines and steel mills, which we just heard today, and that its future can never move beyond the old economy. There are members of the House who would sustain political careers by keeping Cape

Bretoners chained to industries that are no longer viable as presently operated.

It is no secret to the people of industrial Cape Breton that the economy has been on life-support for over 30 years. Is this fair to the miners? Is it fair to their wives? Is it fair to their children? Is it fair to these families to put more money into industries going nowhere when money can be spent on industries that have a future?

Cape Bretoners can and will make changes to their own future. They have done it in the past with people like J.P. McLaughlin, Moses Coady and Father Thompkins. The federal government is not turning its back on Cape Breton.

I will review what the federal government is doing in a later comment.

There are very few miners who in fact are going to be dislocated. Jobs are available at the Prince mine. They have a chance of employment there. There are over 500 jobs being created.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I really welcome the comments by my Liberal colleague across the way, but not his question. It shows how disconnected he is to the problems in Cape Breton. He did not see the families who came here to meet with parliamentarians. He did not see the wives crying and tears rolling down their cheeks because of what the government has done to the people of Cape Breton. He seems to have forgotten what the Liberals have done to those families of Cape Breton. He should take another look at what has been done.

One cannot train people at 50 years of age and think that they will go back into the mines. That is what we are talking about. We are talking about people over 45 years old, those who are 50 and 54 years old. Do you want them to be trained and go back to college? You should quit thinking that because it is not right.

What we are talking about is giving a fair agreement to those people so they can put bread on their table and feed their families.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): We will go to the hon. member for Dewdney—Alouette, but before we do that may I ask hon. members to address each other through the chair.

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is incredible what we have just witnessed in this place. We have a colleague from the New Democratic Party who has lived the life of a Cape Bretoner with the experiences he was talking about and the hon. member for Durham, a Liberal, has the gall to stand up in this place and lecture that member and other members of the opposition about what they should do and what they should think.

It is the Liberals' policies and their arrogance, which he has just demonstrated, that has led to this kind of situation in Cape Breton. This is the kind of arrogance that is a pattern across these benches that speaks every day to the reason why we need a change in the

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governing party and to throw them out of office so that people will have a different approach and a different way of governing in this country.

I would just ask my colleague if he might comment on that.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, there again I would like to thank the hon. member for his comments and not his question.

That is what the government failed to do for all the years it was in power in Cape Breton. When Cape Breton was in its hands why did it not begin training people? Why did it wait until it had closed the mines and put people on welfare before beginning to train them? Why did it give them the hardships they have today?

For years and years the government was served on a silver platter by Atlantic Canadians. Do the Liberals know why they were kicked out? Do they know why Doug Young was kicked out. It was because of their attitude, as the hon. member just showed. That is why Atlantic Canada has kicked the Liberals out of office. I hope that the rest of the country, along with Ontario, smartens up and kicks them out too, because they do not deserve to have a place in the House.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hec Clouthier (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when my good friend the member for Acadie—Bathurst gets upset, I worry he will have a heart attack.

[*English*]

I empathize with my colleague. No one likes to see people lose their jobs, but I have to disagree with him on two statements that he made. He said that the Liberal government had cut health care to the bone. Yes, we did make some cuts to health care in 1993, but now the funding has been returned to health care in the year 2000 to what it was in 1993.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Hec Clouthier: They keep yelling.

[*Translation*]

All the yelling across the way will not make more housing available after the next election. This is ridiculous.

[*English*]

This is the question I want to ask my friend. Devco has been supported for 30 years by the federal government. My colleague said that. How can we make a change at Devco? Do we keep on putting money into something that continually loses money?

Mrs. Michelle Dockrill: Give them a fair deal. That is what the government should do.

Mr. Hec Clouthier: The member is saying that it is a fair deal. In my region we lost many people from the lumber industry. I am sure it is the same in Acadie—Bathurst. Sometimes when the resource is no longer there or people cannot make any money, they have to make a change.

What would my colleague suggest the federal government do in order to keep the people working at Devco? I just cannot see how it can stay open if it loses money.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I am very fond of my colleague opposite. He goes to the same barber as I do, and we get our hair cut the same way.

If I have a heart attack here, in the House, fighting for the people in the Atlantic region, it will have been worth it.

[*English*]

I will repeat it in English. If I have to have a heart attack in this Chamber fighting for the people in my riding and the people of the Atlantic, it is worth it to have one.

Regarding health care, in 1969 the government was paying 50% of the cost of health care. Today we are down to 13%. I do not care what happened back in 1993. The Liberals have cut health care. That is why seniors do not have adequate health care any more. That is why people want to privatize health care. It is because the Liberals have cut health care.

Our grandparents and our children have to wait in the hallways of hospitals to get service. When our parents have cancer they have to go to the United States to get service. That is what the Liberals have done in our country.

To answer the hon. member's question about Devco, we need a fair deal for those people so that they can get up in the morning and be proud because they have served the country for 30 years. For 30 years they have gone underground and put their lives on the line for the country. They deserve better than what the Liberals have given them today.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Unfortunately, there is no more time for questions and comments. The hon. member for Jonquière.

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak today in the debate on second reading of Bill C-11, an act to authorize the divestiture of the assets of, and to dissolve, the Cape Breton Development Corporation, to amend the Cape Breton Development Corporation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

The reason we are having to debate this bill is that, on January 28, 1999, the federal Minister of Natural Resources announced the

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closure of the Phalen Mine and the privatization of the Price Mine, both of these being coal mines located in Cape Breton and operated by the Cape Breton Development Corporation.

Bill C-11 means the withdrawal of the federal government from coal mining in that region.

• (1705)

As a result of this decision, once the closure and privatization have taken place, some 1,000 people will be without work in a region where the unemployment rate is already close to 25%.

I believe we should take advantage of the debate on this bill to properly examine how this could happen. Our role as parliamentarians requires us to question the economic development choices made by the federal government in the past, so as not to keep on repeating the same planning errors.

Today we have an example of this in the coal mining sector. In recent years, the fishers have also had to pay a high price for the federal government's lack of planning and poor resource management.

We must also ask ourselves how the government needs to act in future to ensure regional development, and we must wonder, in light of its numerous failures, whether it ought not to leave this to the provincial governments, which are often in a better position to know what a population to which they are closer needs.

In closing, I shall focus on the importance of planning replacement industries when the decline of others is predictable, and particularly on the replacement of polluting energy sources such as coal by renewable and cleaner energy sources.

But I would like first to return to the situation of the workers, who, after years of work in the harsh conditions of the mining industry, find themselves without work and with few prospects for the future.

That moves me, because last year, with some of my colleagues, I met the representatives of these workers, who were very concerned about their fate. They had come to Ottawa to tell parliament and the government that they should do something to save their community. To my way of thinking, they are the victims of the lack of vision of the federal government, whose economic strategy for this region hinged solely on the mining industry.

Since 1967, the federal government has injected over \$1.5 billion in coal mining by the Cape Breton Development Corporation. However, by the end of the 1960s, a commission on the future of the industry on Cape Breton Island indicated that coal production should be phased out and the local economy diversified. Unfortunately, the Liberals of the day, like the Liberals of today, lacked political courage. Instead of planning a change in the economy in co-operation with the provincial government, the

federal government preferred to keep its little empire, which assured it maximum visibility.

And so the federal government continued over the years to encourage hundreds of young workers to go into the mines like their father. It said to them "Trust the federal government, you young men, you will have jobs for the rest of your days. Keep on mining". We can see what happened. Today, the government is putting the key in the door and proposing an early retirement program that, however, excludes some 230 miners with over 25 years' seniority. These events are serious, very serious.

In my opinion, the federal government has a moral responsibility to these workers and to the some 6,000 people living off coal mining, since it is in large measure responsible for this situation. I encourage my colleagues who will be examining this bill in committee to remember this responsibility when they address the issue of pensions and acquired rights.

This situation totally upsets me, since I have seen the federal government behave this same way in many other sectors of the economy, dropping them overnight, with no transition, with no alternative, when its visibility was threatened.

• (1710)

One only has to think about the program for older worker adjustment. That program was designed to help workers who were often the victims of the federal government's mismanagement and of plant closures. That program helped workers, in spite of being underfunded and in spite of criteria which were sometimes inflexible and which did not take specific circumstances into account. But at least there was a program.

Unfortunately, this is no longer the case since 1997. The then Minister of Human Resources Development stubbornly refused to maintain the program. And the new Minister of Human Resources Development did not have anything concrete to propose to these workers, even though a unanimous report from the human resources development subcommittee recommended that measures be taken for workers, including the 230 miners. But the government has nothing for these people. This is how caring this government is.

The government abandons these workers, but it has no qualms about using employment insurance surpluses, about using money that belongs to workers and to which they are entitled. These workers are even more frustrated when they see that the Department of Human Resources Development uses their money for political purposes and distributes it so freely that it is unable to know who got money and for what purpose.

In order to avoid other human dramas such as the closing of the Cape Breton Development Corporation, this government must absolutely have greater long term vision. If mines in Cape Breton

had to close, other coal mines elsewhere in Canada could suffer the same fate.

Alberta produces 50% of Canada's coal and British Columbia produces 35%. And even if western coal is of better quality than eastern coal, the fact remains that power plants, which are the main users of coal, are gradually replacing it with natural gas.

Moreover, the price of coal on the international markets has declined sharply over the past 20 years. Between 1981 and 1994, prices of the two leading types of coal dropped by 40% to 50%. And this trend is expected to continue because this is a source of energy that leaves a high level of very polluting residue in the air.

Even the report released last September by the federal government appointed task force said that coal use was coming to an end. It felt that Canada should rapidly cut back on its use of coal to produce electricity if it was to meet its commitments to reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions.

The report also concluded that, in order to produce more electricity while reducing pollution, coal would have to be replaced by energy sources that produce less atmospheric pollution, such as hydroelectricity and natural gas. An analysis suggests that Canada should reduce its production of coal-generated energy by 38% over the next decade.

I point out in passing that while Canada, by signing the Kyoto protocol, undertook to reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions by 6% annually to 1990 levels by the year 2012, Canadian emissions increased by 13% between 1990 and 1997 and that, without a radical change in government policies, greenhouse gases could increase by as much as 41% by 2020.

In light of the predictable decline in fossil fuels and given its international greenhouse gas reduction commitments, it is high time the federal government invested substantially in the development of alternative forms of energy. The government must have a long term plan to favour the use of energy that is less harmful to our health and our environment, such as hydroelectricity, wind energy and solar energy.

If the government had acted 25 years ago, we would not see what is happening now in Cape Breton. We would not be faced with the fact that 1,000 workers will lose their jobs and that an entire community is threatened because of decisions that were not taken 25 years ago.

• (1715)

I will take this opportunity to mention that the federal task force report I referred to earlier asked the federal government to harmonize its environmental assessment process with the provinces' processes, so that it will not hinder the development of new sources

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of energy, particularly hydroelectricity, which could help Canada meet the targets set out in the Kyoto protocol.

Therefore, I encourage the federal government to start planning now, in co-operation with provincial governments, the transitional measures that will be required to reorient the economy of areas that are in decline such as Cape Breton, particularly in the energy sector.

The federal government can no longer afford to close down entire industries or regions by walking away from its responsibilities to workers and communities.

[English]

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to make it clear to the House and to those who are listening to the debate on television that our friends in the opposition are confusing two very important elements with respect to Bill C-11.

Bill C-11 essentially authorizes the sale of the Devco assets so that the private sector can take those assets to create jobs and continue coal mining in Cape Breton.

I appreciate that the opposition would use this as a platform to talk about the human resources package, to talk about health care in Canada, to talk about any number of other issues some related and some not. But using this simple bill which will allow for the sale of Devco assets and the continuation of coal mining as a platform for other issues could create a delay, but hopefully would not, that may hurt that process. I do not think anyone wants to see that.

I simply want to make it clear that on the human resources side, which is very separate from this bill, the government has made a commitment of \$111 million of severance and early retirement measures for the workers and \$68 million for economic development. Add to that \$12 million from the province. This has been made available to the communities so that they may redevelop their local economies to respond to the realities at Devco.

The member for Jonquière raised a number of very good points. I go back to my comments and questions to the opposition last November. Do we not believe that the best ideas for economic renewal come from the communities, their leaders and their citizens as opposed to Ottawa or elsewhere in the country? Should we not empower them to find the best solutions for the challenges they face?

I caution opposition members to focus on the need to get on with the future of Cape Breton. Focus on the need to make sure that a strong private sector buyer is able to create the jobs that we hope can be maintained. Do not confuse the human resources package with the need to move on with the private sector partner.

Does the member for Jonquière not agree that the very best solution for local communities is to allow local leaders and

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citizens to implement their ideas so that their economy best reflects their needs and the capacity of their citizens in this millennium?

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for his question. I believe he has not looked at the history of what has been going on in Cape Breton for the past 25 years. He is not familiar with history, a history that was made by this government, by the Liberal government of the day. This government is responsible for the situation we are in today. Had it left the local communities and the province to do what they wanted, had it not played sugar-daddy in order to build up its empire and get back its visibility, things would not have ended up like this.

In the past 25 years, the government has invested \$1.5 billion, or \$1 million for every one job. Instead of handing it back to the people, it invested again in order to extend the life of something that was doomed to failure.

I have quoted federal government studies which have stated for years that our thoughts about coal have to be changed. It has continued telling people “Things are fine. Stay as you are, the future is no problem.”

This government had no social conscience. Today, once the harm has been done, the hon. member over there tells us “We are going to pull out. We are going to leave the local communities to become self-governing”. They turn everything topsy-turvy and then they withdraw. They cannot ignore the fact that they are the ones in the wrong, and they are the ones who have to right that wrong.

[*English*]

Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d’Or—Cape Breton, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comments with respect to what is happening in Cape Breton. I hear the members on the government side talk about the real issues, about what we are talking about and that this has nothing to do with the human resources package. As my colleague has mentioned, what we are talking about is that the government has funded this corporation and clearly and obviously has run this corporation into the ground and has now decided to walk away.

What we expect from the government is a fair settlement for the men, the families and the communities of Cape Breton Island. I hear the government members saying would it not be better to allow the communities to decide their fate. Cape Bretoners have been wanting that opportunity for 30 years, but they have never had that opportunity. It has always been left in the hands of the friends

of the government to decide for Cape Bretoners what is best for them. That is what has happened to this crown corporation.

Does my colleague agree with the New Democratic Party that this is not about the government making the decision to arbitrarily get out of the industry? It is the government and it can make that decision. This is about ensuring that Cape Breton miners, their families and communities are given a fair settlement before the government walks away and sets this corporation up to sell it probably to another Liberal friend.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold: Madam Speaker, I thank my NDP colleague for her question. I think she has clearly identified the cause and the effects.

A government that turns things upside down, that decides to withdraw from certain fields after making sure that these fields no longer meet the aspirations of the locals, is not entitled to do so. It must do so according to the conditions of the people who have been deprived of development in their region.

I have never been to Cape Breton, but I hope to go there one day. People have said to me that solutions were put to this government over the years.

Earlier, I spoke of the POWA. This program existed before. It did not suit everyone, but it was one small way this government could, with our money, with its ever diminishing open-mindedness, meet the needs of these people.

Well, no. It did not suit it any more, since it was good for the people. So it withdrew it.

• (1725)

This government has always acted unilaterally, pulling out once it has deprived communities of their independence.

It must meet the needs of the people of Cape Breton. It must give them a hand. It must help them. These are proud people. They love their community and want to stay there. They are very ingenious and have my full support. The government has got to have a social conscience.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that in the month of January the miners had to go underground on strike to try to get a negotiated settlement.

It is not as if there were no precedent. One example is medical benefits. When Via Rail was shut down, medical benefits were provided to those employees. When CN was shut down, medical benefits were continued for those employees. When Devco was being closed down, the government told the miners who have gone underground and suffered injuries and their families that there would be no extension of any medical benefits whatsoever.

That is the kind of settlement the miners are seeking, in other areas as well, in terms of relocation and in terms of education.

My colleague has done her homework for which I commend her. She has a sensitive understanding of the issue. Would she not agree that these people should be entitled to the same benefits as the government has given to other Canadians when it phased out industries?

[Translation]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold: Madam Speaker, in reply to the New Democratic Party member, I think it is obvious that they are entitled to the same benefits as other Canadians in similar situations.

This government will have to stop closing its eyes. It is throwing money out the window. Billions of dollars have gone missing. Communities have legitimate rights and the government is denying them those rights?

I think the government is on the decline. In life, things keep moving forward, until one day they take a turn in the opposite direction. I think that this government is completely cut off from the real concerns and needs of ordinary people.

The people of Cape Breton have needs that must be met. It is the government's fault they are in this mess.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): It being 5.28 p.m., very little time remains before we must proceed to Private Members' Business. Is there unanimous consent to see the time as 5.30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

AUDITOR GENERAL ACT

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ) moved that Bill C-203, an act to amend the Auditor General Act (Poverty Commissioner), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to talk about the creation of the position of poverty commissioner. On March 25, 1999, I introduced a bill to amend the Auditor General Act. Because the session was prorogued, I reintroduced this bill and we are finally discussing it.

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When I introduced this bill last year, I had no idea that today's debate would take place in the context of the scandal relating to job creation at the Department of Human Resources Development. The management of job creation programs reflects badly on the whole Liberal government. In this context, having a poverty commissioner would be a good thing.

Before talking about the purpose of creating the position of poverty commissioner, I want to briefly remind the House about poverty. The figures say it all.

• (1730)

We can quote four sources, including the Canadian Council on Social Development. Between 1989 and 1997, the number of children living in poverty increased by 37.5%. In 1989, the members of this House unanimously passed a resolution to eliminate child poverty. Ten years later, there is a 37.5% increase, according to the CCSD.

Campaign 2000 made the same finding: there was a 47% increase in the number of poor children in families with an income below \$20,000, a 44% increase in the number of children living in low income families, and a 51% increase in the number of children living in a family relying on social assistance.

Data from Statistics Canada indicate that between 1993 and 1996, 23% of single parent families had experienced poverty for a period of four years. Single individuals make up 19% of the poor, and single parents 23%, a very large proportion of whom are women. It is also reported that one quarter of the population has experienced poverty for at least one year.

In the 18 to 24 year old group, 33% have been poor for one year. According to the Canadian welfare council, the fourth source of reference, four out of ten heads of single parent families are living in poverty, as well as single individuals.

Clearly, four different sources that have analyzed the increase in poverty among children, adults, women and female single parents tell us that since 1989 there has been a real increase in poverty, and this is a source of concern. Certain categories of the population suffer more from poverty, for instance the elderly. Although their situation has improved markedly, we are very much aware that the older one gets the more chance there is to find oneself poor. This is the case for those over the age of 74. It is primarily older women who are poor, and it is said that the proportion is twice that for men.

The situation of young people aged 18 to 24 is also cause for concern. According to Statistics Canada, their poverty rate is the highest of all age groups, 26% in 1995. It is said that, after taxes, 32.5% of young people between 18 and 24 have faced poverty for a full year.

So, poverty is also expressed in terms of increased demand on the food banks. In all our ridings, there has been an increase in

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demand on the food banks, more suicides, student and family debt, many bankruptcies and reduced savings.

I have cited a lot of figures, but behind them lies a lot of human drama. There is a lot of economic vulnerability, even though the growth rate is strong. Part of the public is not entitled to the redistribution of wealth.

Too many people are kept from being full-fledged citizens. I see poverty as being on a continuum, where, at one end, people are extremely poor and, at the other, people are poor. Those who are extremely poor have a hard time obtaining the essentials, that is, food, clothing and housing. According to the UN, they represent about 6%. At the other end, there are the people who just manage to make ends meet at the end of the month. But where it hurts is the lack of manoeuvring room these people have in meeting their family's daily needs.

Here too work must be done to understand all the facets of poverty. In our society, poverty has many faces, even though they say we live in the best country in the world.

• (1735)

With the present government, we have just gone through six years of social deficits. Let me raise four points, or four government decisions that have really contributed a great deal to the unravelling of our social fabric.

Let us take the Canada social transfer. Provincial governments have lost \$33 billion in transfers. This is \$33 billion less in provincial coffers, but also \$33 billion less in the pockets of individual citizens. The Canada social transfer provides money for education, health, and welfare.

I am now travelling throughout Quebec to speak about what the federal government has done, and the drastic cuts it has made. The sick, women, and children are those who have been hurt. Those cuts will last until 2003. That is right, the cuts are not over just yet. Since the government came to power, the cuts have totalled \$21 billion.

What does this mean, cuts of \$21 billion, in practical terms. It means a loss of revenue for the provinces. In Quebec, it means we will be hiring 3,000 physicians less, 5,000 nurses less, and 5,800 teachers less. It also means that those most affected, welfare recipients, will get \$500 less.

It really hurts. Cuts in the Canada social transfer affect individual citizens the most.

Another issue is the EI surplus. Twenty six billion dollars were snatched back, and six unemployed workers in ten no longer qualify for employment insurance, the new name for unemployment insurance. The problem is that people who suddenly find themselves out of work can no longer count on benefits that would at least ensure them a decent standard of living until they found another job.

Another problem the government has not had the courage to tackle is the non-indexing of tax credits and tax thresholds. The result is an additional \$2 billion in the federal government's coffers. This means that, between 1993 and 2001, non-indexing will have enabled the federal government to rake in an additional \$17.59 billion.

A fourth issue is federal government funding for social housing. This has become a matter of serious concern. If the federal government had put more money into social housing, there would have been 30,000 additional units in Quebec so that families had decent housing.

The cycle I spoke of earlier in connection with poverty also exists for those who are homeless or do not have decent, safe accommodation, with a roof over their heads that does not leak.

During the holiday season, we saw troubling images of the quality of housing occupied by certain people. This is a disgrace in a country that claims to have the best standard of living in the world. A poverty commissioner could keep close tabs on this government.

I moved a motion in the House of Commons asking the government to develop a concrete plan of action for the next ten years, with full funding, not the piecemeal approach we are used to with this government. There should also be someone in charge of ensuring that any measure taken by this government is properly managed, and monitoring its impact.

We are concerned about the impact of the measures taken haphazardly by this government. It is a big machine. We are all aware of the scandal that was just uncovered at Human Resources Development Canada. We know how this scandal is hurting individuals who might have benefited from government grants awarded through HRDC.

• (1740)

What is happening right now at Human Resources Development Canada is nothing new. I have here an article published in 1987, where a \$1 billion black hole is mentioned. This article was written in 1987 by a reporter saying that the way public finances were managed had created a \$1 billion black hole.

The government had introduced a tax deduction, a tax loophole really, for businesses involved in research and development. It was later found out that some of them had taken advantage of this loophole but did not give anything in return, because they had not done any research and development. There was no control with regards to the way public finances were managed. This is very troubling.

It is said that such things date back to the time of Marc Lalonde, a Liberal Minister of Finance. Then came another Minister of Finance, Michael Wilson, who wanted to put on the brakes but realized it was too late, because the total was up to one-tenth of the

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national deficit, because of these very shortcomings, these programs and measures that are taken without any real thought.

I could list a number of such shortcomings between 1983 and 1987. I would, however, prefer to continue with the importance of having a poverty commissioner. There is a scandal going on at the present time. In three weeks we may no longer be talking about it, but we know that we taxpayers are the ones providing the funds, and we want to ensure it is better redistributed throughout all of society, to provide more help to those who need it.

It is therefore very difficult to assess the effectiveness of the federal government's actions, which is why a poverty commissioner could put some order in all of this. Not after five or ten years. The auditor general reports on the government's management of various departments, but I consider that the government distributes its largesse with excessive randomness and lack of rigour. There is an ongoing saga of financial shortcomings in all of this government's programs.

I have contacted the auditor general. I would have liked to have seen him report to the House on child poverty in this country, in light of the resolution adopted in 1989. I asked him to assess the measures, decisions and the feedback mechanisms proposed by the government in 1989 having a direct impact on child poverty and to measure the effects on the targeted clientele.

The auditor general's response was that I was raising a very important issue, but that it was the government's responsibility to do such an assessment itself. However, when the government does its own assessments, we know whose desk they land on and how difficult it is to get answers from the minister.

So, the creation of a position of poverty commissioner would set the record straight. The Minister of Human Resources Development is acting as judge and jury in the scandal raging at HRDC. When a government is under attack, it defends itself, and often we do not get the whole picture or the whole truth.

An independent poverty commissioner could answer parliamentarians' questions instead of getting the run around as we are getting the run around at the moment. We in the Bloc Québécois want an independent auditor. This was supported by 100 of our colleagues in the House of Commons; ten members from all parties.

My fight is not over. I have brought it here to parliament, but I want to recruit support. I have had a lot of it, but what I am after is to have the government see to it that public funds are better managed. Too many people are suffering as a result.

[*English*]

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this private member's bill

presented by my colleague from the Bloc. It is a bill to amend the Auditor General Act to appoint a poverty commissioner.

• (1745)

The purpose of this bill is to create the appointment of a poverty commissioner for the purpose of reducing or eliminating poverty in Canada. The poverty commissioner would report to the auditor general and through him annually to the House of Commons. The bill gives the poverty commissioner powers to study the causes and effects of poverty, to recommend courses of action to the government, to hold public consultations and to evaluate the effectiveness of measures taken by the federal government.

I have worked with the member and I know she has a heart of compassion for people and a real desire to see people in distress have some measure of assistance and have their concerns addressed in a meaningful way. I commend my colleague for her caring and compassion. When we are in public office we need these perspectives in order to have practical measures to address the concerns of a wide range of Canadians, including those who live in poverty.

There are members in this House who have probably experienced a measure of poverty in their own lives. Some have been more fortunate but we all know that we are responsible to assist each other when we are in need and in distress. This is a proposal whereby we can be of practical assistance.

There is a point of debate here, and I welcome the opportunity to participate as my colleague has invited us to, as to what degree we are personally responsible to be involved in the lives of other people. The poverty commissioner to some degree may allow some of us as Canadians to feel that we do not have to become personally involved in empathizing and caring for the needs of each other because there is an official to do that. My colleague will possibly address this concern when she makes her summary remarks.

We would want to make sure that in taking official measures to address the needs and concerns of our fellow citizens that we do not forget our personal responsibility to reach out to others to care for them, to give them that kind of person to person assistance. That would be more meaningful than all of the debates, studies, interventions, lobbying and papers could ever be.

I wonder whether the member would consider adding an element to her bill. The poverty commissioner she is proposing would also propose, suggest and advocate ways in which we as citizens could personally reach out to each other in a meaningful way.

As she has pointed out, there are many causes of poverty. I would suggest that to some degree when Canadians are in circumstances of distress, someone reaching out to them in a personal and caring way can make a tremendous difference. The encouragement and the interaction during circumstances of distress can give a lift

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that more official measures will not do. Perhaps my colleague would consider that as an element of her proposed plan and of the work of the poverty commissioner.

We could get into a long debate about the definition of poverty. I am not sure that would be particularly fruitful at this time. At some point we would want to make some distinctions between levels of poverty. There have been a number suggested.

There is the low income cutoff in Canada below which everyone is considered to be of low income or in poverty. However, that level keeps riding as the standard of living rises and perhaps is not a measure of poverty in its truest sense.

• (1750)

The social union and the talks between the provinces and the federal government have suggested a market basket approach. Poverty would be measured by an individual's or a family's ability to afford the necessities of life such as food, clothing and shelter.

These things can be debated. I think my colleague would agree that is not the point she is making at this time. It is not about splitting hairs or becoming technical in the definition of poverty, but about a more meaningful approach in extending practical assistance to people who are in distressed financial circumstances. If she agrees with that, and I think she does, then possibly at this point we could leave aside that element of the debate.

In a country as rich as Canada, it is inconceivable that there are not the resources to ensure that all of our citizens have the necessities of life. My colleague has made that point very eloquently. This country has the resources to provide people with the necessities of life when they are unable to secure those necessities themselves. It also has the resources to provide them with access to education, health care, transportation, housing and learning information because we need knowledge in order to build skills to provide ourselves with the means to secure the necessities of life and more.

It is a point well taken. It is disturbing that in a country like Canada we would have to debate this in the House of Commons. We have seen on our television screens the horrific scenes from countries like Sudan. That is something that goes beyond poverty to tragedy. In a country like Canada we generally do not think in terms of that kind of need. We should not have to think in those terms. It is important that we realistically address the expectations we have for all of our citizens and not just for some.

I have a suggestion for my colleague who has made this proposal of a poverty commissioner. There needs to be measures whereby people can move from the category of poverty to, shall we say, more desirable circumstances.

Many of us were impoverished students at one time. We were barely able to afford one meal a day but we knew that was

temporary. We did not consider ourselves to be impoverished because we knew it was a temporary step before we gained the skills and employment we needed in order to have much better circumstances.

Similarly there are people who are new to our country and who are becoming established. They are in very straitened circumstances, to use an old fashioned word. Again they know it is temporary and they look forward to entering our country's economic life and succeeding.

There are individuals who technically but temporarily are in poverty. However I think the member is referring to people to whom poverty all too sadly is more or less a permanent way of life. We need to address this in a coherent fashion. We have piecemeal approaches, some of which, as the member pointed out, have just recently fallen under some cloud. We want to have a very comprehensive way of addressing serious issues like this one.

I commend the member for her efforts. I hope that these remarks will be of assistance to her.

Ms. Louise Hardy (Yukon, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on private members' Bill C-203 to amend the Auditor General Act to create a poverty commissioner.

• (1755)

I agree with other members who have said that it is very sad we even have to contemplate the creation of a poverty commissioner in a country as wealthy as ours.

I want to reflect on the first international trip I made as a member of parliament with the minister for CIDA. We went to Jordan and Israel and into refugee camps on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. I had never seen or experienced poverty like that. It was so crushing. The smell and the sight were really appalling and shocking. All I wanted to do was turn around and go back to my beloved country but I still had five more days to go through those refugee camps to experience and see what those people had to live through. There is no escape at that level of poverty. They are walled in with security and armed guards all around them. There is very little hope for those people.

Last spring I made a trip up the James Bay coast to various first nations communities. I saw the poverty they were forced to live in. It was incredibly degrading for them. They had to send their children to a residential school. That was an incredible symbolism of oppression and degradation for them. The school had no fire exit and only one door. None of the fire escapes on the four storey building functioned.

It is unbelievable that in this country people are forced to send their children to those schools. People live three and four genera-

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tions in one home because our country will not accommodate them in any way and help them live in dignity. The fact is that in the first place they had been forced to move to an area that could not sustain their traditional way of life. This meant they could not feed their children in the way their parents had managed to feed them. We forced them into poverty and then abandoned them to that poverty.

Think about what is happening around us right now with the rising cost of heating oil. For many people it could be completely unaffordable. I do not know if any other members of parliament have ever had to wake up in a house with no heat in the middle of winter and know that there would not be any heat for a long time. That is an experience of poverty which families suffer in this country. There will be even more because social assistance rates are very minimal. They are not adjusted when the cost of heating oil goes up. People who need to heat their house have to take that money out of the food money for their children.

Our first nations people suffer poverty in disproportion to everyone else in this country. The kinds of institutions that would help them or those living in our inner cities move out of poverty are not there. Shamefully, our inner cities are degenerating and there is no hope for the people to move out.

[Translation]

[Editor's Note: *The fire alarm bells having sounded:*]

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): We have to suspend the sitting.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 5.59 p.m.)

• (1815)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 6.18 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Order, please. There are 30 minutes left for the consideration of Private Members' Business and we will then go to adjournment proceedings. Thus, the business of the House will be extended.

Mr. Mauril Bélanger: Madam Speaker, we must have the unanimous consent to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): According to Standing Order 30(7), and I quote:

If the beginning of the Private Members' Hour is delayed for any reason, or if the Hour is interrupted for any reason, a period of time corresponding to the time of the delay or interruption shall be added to the end of the Hour—

• (1820)

[English]

Ms. Louise Hardy: Madam Speaker, I reiterate my support for the creation of a poverty commissioner. As well, I urge the government to take a serious look at the causes of poverty.

We know that more women live in poverty than men. The rate of children living in poverty has increased. Single parent families headed by women often live in poverty. Women's wages are lower than men's. If women want to escape poverty through education, tuition costs have risen astronomically, which makes it even more difficult for women to achieve higher education unless they have the goodwill and financial help of their families to carry them through.

The poverty commissioner would evaluate the effectiveness of measures taken by the federal government to reduce and eliminate poverty, and advise the federal government on measures it could take to reduce or eliminate poverty.

With the change from unemployment insurance to employment insurance we have a very successful method of redistributing wealth to those who are in need and have paid insurance to cover the losses when they are unemployed.

However, outside of that strip along the southern U.S. border, where most Canadians live, there are those of us who live in remote, rural areas who work in extreme climates where employment is seasonal. We were disproportionately affected by the changes to employment insurance. In Yukon alone it meant a reduction of \$7 million. That money was not coming into our area because people were no longer eligible for employment insurance benefits. There are similar stories across the country in every single riding.

I would like to comment on something the Reform member said about creating a poverty commissioner, how it would somehow take away from an individual's ability to reach out in a personal way to help those around them. With the cuts we have seen, people have been trying to look after each other in very practical ways, especially in the areas of education and health care. However, even at the height of the cutbacks there was no lack of people looking out for each other. It never took away an individual's initiative to help someone, to see someone in need and go the extra mile for them. Creating a poverty commissioner would not disempower a single Canadian from taking the initiative to help someone else, to mentor them so they can then become responsible members of our community.

I would like to end by quoting a very respected former member of this House, J. S. Woodsworth, who said "What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all". To this end, may we take our share of the world's work and the world's struggles.

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Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party to join the debate today on this bill which would establish a poverty commissioner.

In January of this year the PC Party released the report of our task force on poverty. Set up last March, the task force held 16 public meetings across Canada to listen and learn about the causes, the effects and possible solutions to the growing problem of poverty.

We proposed 41 recommendations, which will be considered at our policy convention in May. These recommendations focus on fixing the problems, not allocating blame.

Our task force was set up because the government refused to agree to a joint parliamentary committee to study the problem of poverty, as proposed by one of my colleagues last year during a day-long debate on the issue.

Poverty is a cause of despair among Canada's disadvantaged, while the growing threat of poverty is a source of insecurity for its middle class. It is clearly time to move forward on this issue.

The task force report of my party presents a menu of proposals to start addressing the problems of poverty. Poverty is not a choice for many Canadians; however, poverty comes with a high cost to all Canadians. It is a major social and economic problem which denies our great country access to millions of Canadians who, due to circumstances, cannot contribute to the growth of our great nation.

• (1825)

The direct economic costs totalled billions of dollars in income support and other programs. The indirect economic costs could be even higher since poverty compromises the realization of Canada's potential as an innovative, competitive and prosperous nation in our new global economy. The human costs are immeasurable.

Poverty is a fact of life for almost one in five Canadians. What is most alarming is the growing number of children living in poverty. These children are starting life at a disadvantage. Our task force was told that those who are born poor are at greater risk than children from higher income families of experiencing poverty right through their adulthood.

Today many children are going to school hungry. Children are also part of the growing number of homeless people in Canada. In some of our wealthiest cities the use of food banks is growing at an alarming rate.

The return on investment in preventing and reducing poverty in Canada would be tremendous. The economic and social well-being of all Canadians would be improved. Our task force was told that

each dollar invested today in programs to reduce and eliminate child poverty could result in future savings of up to \$7.

There are no easy solutions to poverty, but it is time to recognize and deal with this growing problem. The successful implementation of an anti-poverty strategy requires a mechanism by which results can be measured and governments held accountable.

Internationally, Canada has been measured and found wanting in dealing with the issue of poverty.

Our task force talked to Canadians about the need for a social audit. We proposed that a Canadian social audit be conducted by an arm's length agency similar to the auditor general, the privacy commissioner and the information commissioner, including representation from all Canadian governments and all sectors of Canadian society. We are proposing that the social audit agency be appointed by and report to parliament. The social audit should include a mechanism for public input and the results of the social audit should be made public. This would help Canadians determine how well their social programs are working and would give us a tool in developing workable solutions to the problem of poverty in Canada.

The bill we are debating today proposes a similar mechanism. The bill would establish a poverty commissioner under the auspices of the Auditor General Act. The poverty commissioner would analyze the causes and effects of poverty in Canada, evaluate the effectiveness of measures taken by the federal government to reduce or eliminate poverty and advise the federal government on measures it could take to reduce or eliminate poverty.

The poverty commissioner would be a senior officer reporting directly to the auditor general and would report annually to the House of Commons as the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development does now.

Canada currently participates in an international social audit led by the United Nations committee on economic, social and cultural rights, which is charged with monitoring and reporting on countries' compliance with the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights. Canada ratified the covenant in 1976 with the written agreement of every provincial and territorial government in Canada. By signing this agreement Canada explicitly recognized in particular the right of every Canadian, as outlined in Article 11, to "an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions".

The international covenant requires periodic reviews of Canada's compliance with the agreement. In 1986 a group of independent human rights experts formed the United Nations committee on economic, social and cultural rights, which was created to develop a meaningful system of supervision to monitor countries' compliance. The Canadian report is prepared by a federal-provincial-

territorial committee of officials responsible for human rights legislation in Canada. The UN committee reviews the reports, questions government officials and seeks input from Canadian NGOs. Then it publishes its own conclusions and recommendations.

The last report was critical of Canada and its lack of progress in implementing this covenant. Specifically, the United Nations committee report noted that:

—since 1994, in addressing the budget deficits by slashing social expenditure, the State Party has not paid sufficient attention to the adverse consequences for the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by the Canadian population as a whole, and by vulnerable groups in particular. . . . The absence of an official poverty line makes it difficult to hold the federal, provincial and territorial governments accountable with respect to their obligations under the Covenant.

• (1830)

Under international law we are obligated to take action to improve the standard of living of our poorest citizens. We do not need international experts telling us that it is time to deal with this problem. It makes more sense for Canadians to judge how well the social needs of Canadians are now being met.

It is clear that a domestic social audit for Canada would be an invaluable tool to determine the effectiveness of our social programs in meeting the needs of all Canadians. As our task force stated in its report, it is up to us to start working together to build a road from this poverty. An arm's length poverty commissioner or social auditor could give the government invaluable guidance in targeting Canada's social programs to make them as effective as possible.

I feel kind of sad that the bill is a non-votable bill because it is an extremely good one. I assure the Bloc member that we support the motion even though it is non-votable. If it were a votable item, my party and I would surely support this kind of bill.

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Québec has introduced an interesting bill aimed at putting into place under the auspices of the auditor general a poverty commissioner who would report directly to parliament annually.

The commissioner's task would be to analyze the causes and effects of poverty in Canada, to evaluate the effectiveness of federal measures to reduce poverty and to advise on measures that could be taken to reduce or eliminate poverty.

We should recognize that this function would not be at all in keeping with the mandate of the auditor general. For one thing, the task would confer an advocacy role on the office, which conflicts

with the requirement for the auditor general to remain completely objective.

In fact, the Government of Canada has already in place what amounts to a de facto poverty commissioner. Some 30 years ago, in 1969, the federal government established the National Council of Welfare. Since then the council has published regular poverty profiles and further advises the Minister of Human Resources Development on matters of concern to low income Canadians. Unlike the proposed poverty commissioner, the National Council of Welfare enjoys and activates its advocacy role.

Let me assure the House, however, that the Government of Canada shares the hon. member's concerns for the poor. Much of the agenda of the government has been directed at creating the economic conditions and building a social safety net that protects all Canadians. The government has recognized from the beginning that an effective social safety net must be built on strong fiscal management and a sound economy. In the final analysis, the best way to reduce poverty is through a strong economy delivering opportunities to all Canadians.

In addition, the Government of Canada has been taking direct action to strengthen the social safety net and thus reduce poverty. The 1999 budget increased cash transfers for all provinces over the next five years, including \$11.5 billion for health care and \$5 billion in equalization payments. As well, \$850 million was invested in the national child benefit in 1997. A subsequent \$850 million in increases announced in 1998 by the federal government will provide substantial support to low income families with children. Moreover the government is committed to a third significant increase in July 2001.

Our employment programs help groups such as people with disabilities, youth, Canadians in areas of high unemployment and people who want to go back to school to get more skills. Aboriginal people have access to a number of programs, including help to increase their education. Centres are being created to reach out to street youth to provide support and counselling. The aboriginal human resource development strategy has a new urban component to focus on the unemployment of and training needs of aboriginal people in urban areas.

These initiatives and the issues they were designed to address serve to illustrate a point that is pertinent to the discussion of Bill C-203. We have to remember that poverty is a multi-jurisdictional issue. It is painted in many different colours across the country and varies over time.

Many initiatives of many governments impact on the issue of poverty. We must remember that the federal government does not hold all the levers of social policy. We share them with provincial and territorial governments. That is why a concerted co-operative

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effort of all the players is required to mount an effective campaign to reduce poverty across the nation.

• (1835)

The national child benefit is one example of a joint effort by the federal, provincial and territorial governments to support families and reduce child poverty. By July 2000 the federal government will have increased the Canada child tax benefit to \$1.7 billion and, for their part, our partners in the provinces and territories are investing in complementary programs and services.

Yet another example of effective co-operation is the strategy that has been developed concerning Canadians with disabilities, an issue that is also related to poverty. All governments came together to release a document called "In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues". It establishes a blueprint for full citizenship for people with disabilities. It will focus long term policy development on three interrelated building blocks: disability support, employment and income.

I cite these initiatives to illustrate the point that in a multi-jurisdictional society like Canada poverty is an issue that must be dealt with through a partnership such as the social union. Poverty is a concern to all levels of government, as well it should be, but no one government acting alone can be expected to succeed in eliminating it.

I believe that the introduction of the bill has served a useful purpose in focusing the attention of the House, and we hope the Canadian public, on the subject of poverty. Let us hope it will serve to hurry the development of transjurisdictional policies and strategies to achieve our common goal of eliminating poverty across the country.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Madam Speaker, first of all, I wish to thank members who took part in the debate. It is a shame that we did not have more than one hour to discuss a problem as serious as poverty.

I will reply to the first question by the Reform Party member, who said that a poverty commissioner is no substitute for the assistance that the public should provide to the less fortunate.

I could not agree more that a poverty commissioner is no substitute for what each one of us should be doing to help those in need. However, a poverty commissioner is one means by which parliamentarians could keep tabs on what this government is doing.

I find most unfortunate the remarks of the Liberal member, who has rhymed off a long list of programs that have an impact on poverty. This is precisely the problem: we are not able to measure the full impact of all these measures. The HRDC scandal has made that abundantly clear. There were programs to help certain areas in

various regions. We know how the money was spent and how effective the programs were.

I find the self-serving remarks by the Liberal Party member an even greater incentive to call for the creation of a position of poverty commissioner. The type of management under the Liberal government, the management of the Department of Human Resources Development, is not a recent development; it goes back some years. In 1987, a journalist wrote an article about this government's tax measures; in his view, those measures were catastrophic. So it is one failure after another. It is a massive machine, I agree. We should not be commenting on the track record over five years. This should be done every year for every measure. I think there has to be a better assessment of what should be done and what is being done.

I have heard from several national groups in Quebec and in Canada, who support the creation of a position of poverty commissioner. It was mentioned that such a resource does not exist. We talked about the Canadian Council on Social Development, which gives advice to the government, but the poverty commissioner would have much more authority and would have greater access to the government's management than any outside consultant.

• (1840)

While the figures provided by the CCSD are relevant, a poverty commissioner could ensure government effectiveness. He could give advice to the government and he could even hold public consultations to assess the situation.

I am very concerned. It may be that, ten years from now, I will no longer sit in the Canadian parliament. However, I am concerned about the fact that ten years ago we were deploring the way in which the government was managing public finances. This year, we have a scandal with Human Resources Development Canada, and we know that some communities are being excluded from these federal grants because things are done very much at random.

We could use the examples from Human Resources Development Canada and from the billion dollar gap created in 1983 by a few measures adopted by the then Liberal government.

This year, when we say we need more money and families can not make ends meet, it is precisely because there were not enough watchdogs to keep a eye on public finances. It is about time that parliamentarians decide to put their financial house in order and that the government's wealth is available to share around.

The problem is not that there is no money. What is important is how that money is spent and to what end. When policies are developed to prevent tax avoidance, when some companies which are friends of the ruling party have better access to government grants, it is time to worry.

Unfortunately, I have used up all the time available to me to talk about such an important issue as increased poverty.

Adjournment Debate

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Since the motion was not selected as a votable item, the item is dropped from the Order Paper.

fed through a syringe because his mouth and throat were completely covered with blisters, but this child's suffering did not end there. He lost all his fingernails and toenails.

• (1845)

It seemed as though every time Quinn was picked up by one of his parents, he received a new blister. From then on the only time his parents picked him up was to feed or change him.

Mrs. Foreman describes the hardest part of this ordeal was having to break the blisters and bandage him up as if he were a burn victim. This process took approximately two hours every day.

When I think of EB and EB sufferers, I think of the almost total lack of services and support offered to those who live with this disease every day. I think of the measures taken by parents seeking a miracle which often involves going to the United States or abroad, where governments have invested in research into this illness and have attempted to treat its symptoms with procedures such as apligraf.

The parents of these infants are provided with little information, if any at all, about the disease at birth. A diagnosis is rarely arrived at easily.

When I think of EB, I think of my constituent Kevin Campbell. Both Kevin and his sister inherited this disease. Kevin is a perfect example of the hidden potential and ability that people with EB possess. If it were not for Kevin's initiatives to raise awareness of EB for all Canadians who suffer from it, there may not be the Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa Research Association, more commonly known as Debra Canada. And I would not have joined this fight to raise awareness of EB in the House of Commons.

Living with EB means being engaged in a never ending battle to educate. My question is for the Minister of Health. What steps are being taken by his department to encourage and facilitate research and development into the cure and treatment of Canadians suffering from EB?

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the health minister, I would like to thank our hon. colleague from Parkdale High Park who raised the issue of epidermolysis bullosa with both sensitivity and competence.

As she pointed out, it is a rare genetic disease. It dramatically affects a number of our fellow Canadians. That is why the federal government is willing to help Canadians suffering from this disease and to improve the health of the whole Canadian population.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

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

HEALTH

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Madam Speaker, epidermolysis bullosa or EB is a group of rare and debilitating genetic skin diseases in which the skin and mucous membranes are so sensitive that the slightest touch may cause painful blistering. EB is a lifelong disease often present at birth, which causes severe physical, emotional and financial hardships for the affected persons and their families.

There are two types of EB, non-scarring and scarring. The non-scarring type varies in form from the severity of seasonal blistering in the hands and feet to widespread blistering during much of the year. In some cases blisters appear over 75% of the body inside and out.

Even the mildest form can transform simple tasks such as walking and typing into impossible ordeals. Open sores and blisters that heal slowly if at all characterize the most severe form of EB. This continuous blistering leads to scarring causing disfigurement and immobilization of fingers, toes, arms and/or legs. Blisters that form in the mouth, oesophagus, throat and stomach cause serious complications leading to secondary infection, anemia and malnutrition, general debilitation, cancer and premature death.

When I think of EB I think of the courage displayed by those who suffer from EB. I think of the pain and frustration, the shame, the guilt and the toll it takes on one's self-esteem and self-confidence. I think of the parents of children such as the Foreman family whose son Quinn was diagnosed when he was five weeks old. Approximately 70% of his body was covered in blisters.

Through Mrs. Foreman's letters I have come to understand how their lives were turned upside down. Due to the lack of awareness by both the public and the medical profession, the diagnosis for Quinn was very slow in coming. For nearly five months Quinn was

*Adjournment Debate**[English]*

Through the Medical Research Council of Canada, the federal government is funding biomedical and clinical research expertise on skin diseases across Canada. The foundation of knowledge that these men and women are building will give the researchers of tomorrow the building blocks necessary to find cures on such conditions as EB.

To further its commitment to health research, the federal government proposed the creation of the Canadian institutes of health research.

[Translation]

Over the next few months, a number of health research institutes will be created and each institute will put in common the expertise of Canadian health searchers all across Canada. Just imagine for a moment how great it would be to bring your child, for example, to a hospital which would be linked to a Canadian Institute of Health Research. Then you would know that the physicians examining your child would be able to benefit from the expertise of searchers located anywhere in Canada and working in every field of health research.

Physicians linked to such an institute would have direct access to the most recent and relevant data, whether it be the latest developments in the area of biomedical research on that disease or other related diseases. That would be more reassuring than the current situation and your child's health would be in good hands.

Therefore I encourage our colleague to continue—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I am sorry, but I have to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise tonight on behalf of Canadian consumers who, for months, have been paying high prices for gasoline, diesel fuel and heating oil.

Those who are at home having dinner or on the road, as well as truck drivers who are working, wonder why the price at the pump of a litre of gas is so high. The only reason it is so high is because people do not know what the price would be if it were not for the federal, provincial and other hidden taxes.

• (1850)

Last Friday, I watched a program with Paul Larocque on TVA in Quebec City. On this program, Denis Dauray, from Les Pétrole Maurice, called for a real inquiry into the oil market in Quebec and Canada.

He is asking for concrete measures from the federal government and the Government of Quebec. This is what I am asking for

tonight on behalf of consumers, of people who are at home tonight, of those who are in their truck working and of those who are driving to work.

I am demanding that the Government of Canada take concrete action in co-operation with provincial and territorial governments, towards the reduction of the federal excise tax, a uniform reduction of the road tax in Quebec and the restoring of a special monetary subsidy on the price of fuel oil for families that have used this product since December 1, 1999. It would be in force for four months.

It would be the same thing the President of the United States just gave several Eastern States. In Nova Scotia, steps have been taken in that direction.

My question for the industry minister is the following: Why can we not strike as soon as possible, in February or March, a real, public inquiry into petroleum markets? It must not be conducted behind closed doors, as all studies have.

What we are asking for, and the request comes from consumers, is a real public inquiry that will include—and we must not forget them this year—independent producers, in order to shed light on the production costs of a litre of gas, of a litre of diesel and of a litre of fuel oil.

We want concrete action because we want to know what is really going on in the Canadian petroleum industry, and we want to know as soon as possible. That is what consumers want.

[English]

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for bringing the issue of increases in gasoline, diesel and home heating prices to the attention of the House.

Just last week following a question from the same member, the Minister of Industry asked the petroleum industry to meet with him so as to explain the reasons for recent diesel fuel price increases in particular.

The fact is that all members of the government are concerned about this issue since we all represent consumers.

The federal Competition Bureau must ensure that prices are determined by market forces and that the provisions of the Competition Act are respected. I can assure the hon. member that if the Competition Bureau finds that companies or individuals have engaged in anti-competitive conduct, it will not hesitate to take immediate and appropriate action under the Competition Act.

The fact is that no federal agency has the authority to directly regulate retail prices except in emergency situations. Consumers who may be asking the hon. member to have gas prices regulated should take their message to the provincial governments. Presently

only Prince Edward Island and Quebec have elected to do so in some manner.

Finally, we must remember that there are also outside factors influencing the price of fuel. Such factors include cutbacks by OPEC in crude oil production, an increase in demand for heating fuels and low levels of stocks in industrialized countries.

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Madam Speaker, on October 26, 1999, I warned the House and the Minister of Human Resources Development about the disastrous situation of seasonal workers.

Alain Boudreau, a young seasonal worker, is getting \$50 a week in EI benefits because the method of calculation takes only his last 26 weeks of work into account. If the calculation were based on a year, Alain would receive \$272 in benefits. This makes a world of difference for a young person starting out.

• (1855)

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development answered this:

Mr. Speaker, we have to remember that EI is not an industry or a business. It is an income support program for those who qualify.

Mr. Beaudreau does qualify under the Employment Insurance Act, but he only gets \$50 a week. The parliamentary secretary added:

Those who are eligible apply for it and receive benefits based upon the earnings they have been taking home from the jobs they have had.

If the calculation were based on a year, Alain Boudreau would get \$272. For the government to believe that, when people qualify and get \$50 in employment insurance benefits, it is an industry or a business is maddening. I wonder what is an industry or a business when the Minister of Human Resources Development gave away \$300,000 of taxpayers money to relocate a company from Hamilton to Brant, in her own riding. That is an industry.

A company like Wal-Mart, which has millions and does not need money, was able to get \$500,000 from the government to build a warehouse in Canada. Now, we very well know that this building would have been built here anyway and that Wal-Mart did not need money from the government.

How can the government say in this House that workers who have lost their jobs consider employment insurance as a business? They do not control jobs. They are not responsible for losing their jobs. Their employer is. Workers have no control over that.

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Yet, the government rewards employers by giving them \$300,000 here and \$500,000 there. The Prime Minister sold one of his businesses in his riding to a friend who did not have the money to pay and who later got money from the government.

This employer bought the business from the Prime Minister, who later got his money. While such scandalous practices are going on in our country, the government refuses to help people like Alain Boudreau, who receives \$50 a week, and who has been accused of seeing employment insurance as an industry.

This is unacceptable. This is why I ask the government, the minister and the parliamentary secretary to examine their conscience and consider changes to employment insurance—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but his time is up.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me begin by denying the allegation. No company was transferred from Hamilton to Brantford because of any HRDC programming. I also want to say that the company known as Wal-Mart received no HRDC funding. If the member would like to talk to me about that afterward, I will be happy to go into the details.

We are helping young Canadians like Alain Boudreau every day. Unlike the member opposite, we do not want to increase his EI benefits. Rather we want to encourage him to have the opportunity to access a good education and then a good job. That is precisely what we are doing.

We invest \$155 million every year to help young people get on the job experience. As well we provide assistance and advice on how to enter the workforce. We offer various types of financial assistance so that young Canadians can have access to a good education and get a good job.

I remind the member that employment insurance is a temporary income support program for people who are between jobs. It has programs to help unemployed people return to work as quickly as possible.

It is not a needs based program. It is not like the social assistance programs run by the provinces. Rather, it is an insurance program. Those who are eligible apply for it and receive benefits based on the earnings they have been taking home from the jobs they have had.

EI is also about helping Canadians get back to work through a reinvestment of about \$800 million in re-employment benefits. In addition, the Canada jobs fund was introduced to help create lasting

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jobs in high unemployment regions. We introduced an hours based system that addresses the special nature of seasonal work which often involves large numbers—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time has expired.

[*Translation*]

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 7 p.m.)

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