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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, September 28, 2000

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, September 28, 2000

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

• (1000)

[*English*]

The Speaker: Before we begin the daily routine of business I address myself directly to the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Yesterday there was a question of privilege introduced by the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst with regard to an alleged leaking of a document, specifically the bill. Is the minister prepared to address that at this point, or will she do it after question period?

• (1005)

Hon. Jane Stewart: Mr. Speaker, it was my intention to do it after question period, if that is acceptable to the House.

The Speaker: It would be acceptable to the House for you to do it then. We will expect your response.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-44, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act.

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

MARINE CONSERVATION AREAS ACT

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek consent of the House I think you would find, as a result of all party consultations, there is agreement to the following motion:

That all report stage motions standing in the name of the member for Dauphin—Swan River be changed to stand in the name of the member for Edmonton North.

The Deputy Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member for Athabasca could enlighten the Chair on which bill this motion concerns. That would be helpful.

Mr. David Chatters: Mr. Speaker, it is Bill C-8.

The Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the proposal of the hon. member for Athabasca. Is there unanimous consent for the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

GASOLINE ADDITIVES

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present a petition on behalf of citizens in the Grand Bend, Thedford and London area.

They urge the government to eliminate the gas additive MMT as it has a negative impact both on people's health and our ecosystem at large.

[*Translation*]

GASOLINE PRICING

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition bearing the signatures of a number of constituents in the riding of Charlevoix.

This is just one more in a series of petitions presented in this House relating to rapidly escalating gasoline prices.

The petitioners call upon the government to act to lower the excessive price of crude oil and to devote sufficient funding to alternative energy research.

Government Orders

[English]

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I present three petitions on behalf of my colleague, the member for Okanagan—Shuswap.

The first petition is signed by 47 constituents in that riding. These Canadians ask parliament to take all measures necessary to ensure that possession of child pornography remains a serious criminal offence.

MARRIAGE

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the second and third petitions are signed by a total of 103 residents.

They ask that parliament withdraw Bill C-23 and affirm the opposite sex definition of marriage in legislation and ensure marriage is recognized as a unique institution.

- (1010)

[Translation]

IMPORTATION OF PLUTONIUM

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition signed by 350 constituents in the riding of Jonquière.

The petitioners are calling upon parliament to take all of the steps necessary to ensure that the public and its representatives are consulted on the principle of importing MOX plutonium.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 92 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 92—**Mr. John Williams:**

Do any of the following agencies provide governor in council appointees with tax free allowances and if so (i) what is the amount of the individual allowances and (ii) the reason for the allowances, for example, second residences and/or transportation: (a) Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages; (b) National Film Board of Canada; (c) Canada Industrial Relations Board; (d) Canadian Dairy Commission; (e) Atomic Energy Control Board; (f) Canadian Space Agency; (g) Immigration and Refugee Board; and (h) Privy Council Office?

Mr. Joe Jordan (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister, Lib.): No “tax free” allowances are provided to governor in council appointees, however, some of these appointees do receive allowances which are specified as being “net after tax”. They are not tax free. These types of allowances normally cover travel and

living expenses incurred during temporary relocation and are generally in line with those available under the treasury board integrated relocation policy.

[English]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MARINE CONSERVATION AREAS ACT

The House resumed from September 27 consideration of Bill C-8, an act respecting marine conservation areas, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I apologize if the request I made was not properly put on paper, although the House was aware that pursuant to consultations yesterday the first order to be called today would be the motion for the appointment of the privacy commissioner, not Bill C-8.

I understood that debate would be rather brief but it was to be the first order called today.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry the Chair was not aware of the order that had been agreed but I will put the question to the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Have you taken for granted that the House had given its consent that this motion would be the first item discussed today?

The Deputy Speaker: It is not a matter of consent. The government is entitled to change the designated order for anything under government orders. I do not believe that it is a matter of the consent of the House because we did not begin with the item the clerk read at the table. I believe it is completely normal for the government to determine the order in which we will deal with items under government orders.

* * *

PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, in accordance with subsection 53(1) of the Act to extend the present laws of Canada that protect the privacy of individuals and that provide individuals with a right

of access to personal information about themselves, Chapter P-21 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985, this House approve the appointment of George Radwanski of Toronto, Ontario, as Privacy Commissioner for a term of seven years.

• (1015)

First, I want to thank Bruce Phillips whose mandate ended on August 30 and who carried out his duties with integrity and professionalism.

An eminent journalist, Mr. Phillips served as deputy privacy commissioner from February 1990 to April 1991. He then assumed the position of privacy commissioner from April 1991 to quite recently, namely August 30.

With the ongoing responsibilities and the extremely delicate nature of the position of privacy commissioner, it should be filled quickly.

Therefore, pursuant to subsection 53(4) of the Privacy Act, the governor in council may give any qualified individual the powers and functions of the incumbent of this position. George Radwanski has therefore been appointed acting commissioner.

I hope that all members of this House will support the appointment of Mr. Radwanski as the next privacy commissioner.

[English]

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Government Operations met to consider Mr. Radwanski's appointment last Thursday, September 21. The committee reviewed Mr. Radwanski's extensive experience which, as I am sure all hon. members will agree, makes him very well qualified to assume the role of privacy commissioner.

A former journalist, Mr. Radwanski is currently president of his own public policy and communications consulting firm. From 1965 until 1985 he held journalism positions of increasing responsibility for various newspapers, including associate editor of the *Montreal Gazette*, Ottawa editor and national affairs columnist with the *Financial Times* of Canada and editor in chief with the *Toronto Star*.

Indeed, he was honoured by his peers in the journalism profession on two occasions, namely in 1980 and 1981 with the national newspaper award for editorial writing.

Following his departure from the journalism field, Mr. Radwanski entered the public service when he was appointed by the then Ontario premier, David Peterson, to head major studies into matters of importance to the Canadian public, including a study into the service sector in Ontario.

In 1996 at the request of the Canadian government, Mr. Radwanski chaired the mandate review of the Canada Post Corporation, a very important task.

Government Orders

During his journalism career and indeed his professional activities following his departure from the journalism field, George Radwanski has demonstrated a commitment to Canadian values and to serving the Canadian public. His long and distinguished career will hold him in good stead in this future position.

With his background he will bring to the position both knowledge and experience with the delicate and difficult problems of balancing the public's right to know and the individual's right to privacy. He will also bring to the position of privacy commissioner the independence of mind of a journalist, which I am sure all hon. members will agree is an extremely important qualification for the job of privacy commissioner.

[Translation]

In conclusion, I encourage all members of this House to support the motion to have the House approve the appointment of George Radwanski as the privacy commissioner.

[English]

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the official opposition certainly supports the appointment of Mr. Radwanski as the privacy commissioner.

For years now the official opposition has asked that when appointing people like this to key positions, the individual should be interviewed by certain standing parliamentary committees, and that was done in part in this case.

• (1020)

Before I proceed any further, I would like to pay tribute to the previous privacy commissioner, Mr. Bruce Phillips. It was my privilege to meet with him on several occasions and I have a lot of respect for the gentleman. He did the office a great honour and carried out his responsibilities with respect and also with great confidentiality. I am sure that Mr. Radwanski will do the same.

I want to refer back to the particular interview process that took place at the parliamentary Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Government Operations. This particular committee met and the members of the committee were invited "to an informal meeting for the purpose of consulting with the interim privacy commissioner."

The hon. member opposite just indicated that the committee met to consider the the appointment of Mr. Radwanski. To the best of my recollection there was no motion made at this particular committee, neither was it ever indicated that there was a consideration here. It was for the purpose of consulting with, which is quite different from the implication left by the words that the hon. member used a moment ago.

Unfortunately, the committee interviewed someone who had already been appointed. In one sense it was really a ratification and,

Government Orders

indeed, the motion here before the House is in fact a ratification. It is my understanding that Mr. Radwanski has occupied the position since September 1, 2000.

I want to ask this question. What was the status of this committee meeting at that time? It was my understanding that the committee was to have been conducted in a manner similar to that of a regular meeting of the standing committee. While an interview took place, while there was translation services and while there was a broadcast on the usual radio channels, there was no official record of what transpired at the committee meeting.

I submit that there is little practical use of a meeting like this, when it is purely a motion. I want to reinforce the concept that we agree that these kinds of interviews should take place with people who will be occupying key positions. It is essential that we do this. There should be transparency, there should be respect and there should be dignity for the office and also for the people who are being chosen to occupy these positions. In order to have meaningful input it should not be simply a consultation and it should not be simply a matter of meeting with this person.

We met Mr. Radwanski. He was a good individual. He met with the group and expressed himself well and demonstrated that he was able to do the job.

I would suggest that in future the record of these meetings be recorded. It will help both the memory of the members who were there and will also help to make the process transparent and accountable and it will give the respect deserved to these kinds of appointments.

I would like to say something as well about the individual who is being considered today, Mr. George Radwanski. I do not think there is any doubt that he is a very capable individual and that he has extensive academic and experiential credentials to do the job. However, one wonders whether his connections and association, past and present, with the Liberal Party, both federally and provincially, may have influenced the selection of him as the privacy commissioner.

To be specific, I want to refer to some of these connections. First, he was the special adviser to the treasurer of Ontario, appointed by then Premier Peterson to undertake a study of the service sector. He published the study known as "Ontario Study of the Service Sector, 1986".

Then, in 1987 he was the special adviser for the minister of education in Ontario, again appointed by then Premier Peterson. He undertook a major study which resulted in a publication entitled "Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education, and the Issue of Dropouts, 1987".

He served as a senior strategy and policy adviser and principal speech writer for the Right Hon. John Turner in the 1988 election

campaign. Then very recently, Mr. Radwanski served as a senior policy, strategy and communications adviser to the Right Hon. Prime Minister of Canada in the House today.

During the discussion and consultation in no way did Mr. Radwanski ever try to cover this up or in any way suggest that he did not have these associations. In fact, he had had these associations and was quite open about that. I commend him for that.

• (1025)

He indicated that he wanted to make some recommendations with regard to the Privacy Act so that the act could be brought more up to date and more commensurate with the conditions in the world of government and business today.

He wrote "The Future of Canada Post Corporation", which was a review of the Canada Post mandate to which the hon. member opposite just referred. The publication was given to the hon. minister then responsible for Canada Post Corporation in 1996. Unfortunately, those recommendations did not go anywhere. I hope the recommendations he will make on the Privacy Act will go a little further than that.

The Canada Post mandate reflected in my opinion both depth of understanding of sound management principles and what a strong organizational structure should look like. His comments, even in this early tenure in the position of privacy commissioner, showed the same kind of understanding and sensitivity that he revealed in that earlier review. I certainly wish him well.

In my mind there is no doubt about the competency of this individual. However, I have the sneaking suspicion that his appointment was not totally void of patronage considerations by those making the recommendation to appoint him the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will make just a few comments on what the House has before it today, this motion to appoint Mr. George Radwanski as the new privacy commissioner.

At the outset, I want to say that everything I have to say today should not be taken as a reflection in any way upon the integrity of Mr. Radwanski or his competence as an individual, an administrator or, for that matter, potentially as a privacy commissioner. However, there are a number of concerns that should be registered at this time.

If we have a recorded vote on this, it may well be that we might choose to vote against the motion, not so much as an expression of opposition to Mr. Radwanski, but more as our expression of opposition to the process which has been followed and the fact that the government has missed an opportunity to really do the right thing and break new ground with respect to the appointments being made to these kinds of positions.

Government Orders

One can understand, to a certain degree, what we normally call patronage when the government appoints people to carry out its policies. It is understandable even though this can be done to excess and improperly with people without merit sometimes getting appointed. Nevertheless, governments have a right to appoint people to carry out policy whom they trust share their world view and can carry out their policy thrusts in any particular area.

However, there are a number of other positions that are not positions in which people are entrusted with the carrying out of government policy. What they are entrusted with is the scrutiny of government policy. Their job is to criticize, if necessary, government policy. For instance, there is no possibility that part of the job of an ambassador is to criticize government policy. He is an extension of government policy. However, a privacy commissioner, an information commissioner, an official languages commissioner and a number of other of those kinds of appointments that may exist either as officers of the House or out in the broader realm of the public service are quite different in that respect. Certainly the Office of the privacy commissioner falls within that realm.

• (1030)

I go back, at the risk of sounding repetitive, as I know I do to some people in the House, to the McGrath report. We suggested in that report that real power be given to committees of the House when it comes to these kinds of appointments and, for that matter, when it comes to a variety of other critical appointments, like the appointment of the head of the CRTC, at that time called the CTC, and those to a number of other government boards and commissions. This was not just to have informal consultations but to give committees real power to hear from potential candidates, not just candidates that the government had already selected, or if it was fixed on only one candidate, to hear from that candidate and make a recommendation. For that matter, we even suggested that the committee have some measure of veto power over whether or not an appointment was to be made.

That long standing recommendation goes back some 15 years. The government had an opportunity here to implement that recommendation in one way or another through having a much more meaningful process than it did, instead of asking us what we thought of a candidate and then appointing him as an interim privacy commissioner.

This is putting the rest of us on the spot now. The government tells us that a candidate is going to come before the committee and at committee we then find out that it is a hybrid event. It is not really a committee meeting but an informal discussion. There may or may not be a record of the conversation. I raised this matter with the chairman at the time and I understood from what he said that there would be a record, but now I understand that there is not. The record is not available. As far as I am concerned, I was misled at the time with respect to the nature of the meeting.

There is a lot to be unhappy about. There is the failure of the government to implement a long standing recommendation when it had an opportunity to do so with respect to these kinds of appointments. We are unhappy with the inadequacy of the government's process, by its own standards.

Mr. Radwanski is capable of impartiality. Even though he was an active Liberal, he has a history of being critical of the Liberal government and the Liberal Party from time to time. That is beside the point. The point is that when it comes to this kind of position the government should have chosen someone who was beyond reproach at the level of perception. I am sure that there are many capable Canadians who have no particular political party association and who would make great privacy commissioners. They would not necessarily come from the public service because, as we know, sometimes bureaucrats have a tendency to secrecy. I do not mean secrecy in the privacy sense, but secrecy in the secrecy sense. They might not fit the bill either.

I am sure that there are Canadians who would have been great nominees. Parliament could have had some role in short listing them and suggesting to the government that it select from half a dozen people. This would have been a much more meaningful process and would have helped, in the public's mind, to reduce the cynicism about parliament being a rubber stamp for things that are decided elsewhere. Let us not kid ourselves. This was clearly decided elsewhere.

We could, for the sake of Mr. Radwanski and for the sake of public perception, have a nice touchy feely debate in the House and pretend that parliament is doing something. That is not what is happening. Parliament has been presented with a fait accompli and an inadequate process. This is another missed opportunity. As far as I am concerned, this is another demonstration of the fact that the government and the Liberal Party are a hopeless case when it comes to democratic reform or doing anything that would really enhance the perception and the power of parliament.

• (1035)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, before discussing this appointment, I would like, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, to acknowledge the work of Bruce Phillips who, in spite of often extremely difficult circumstances, did a professional job. Mr. Phillips can only be praised for the impartiality and common sense that he displayed.

At this point, I think that the Parliament of Canada and all Canadians and Quebecers want the privacy commissioner to be someone with good judgment and with the ability to objectively evaluate the facts before him.

Government Orders

We congratulate Bruce Phillips and we wish him a new career that will allow him to use his skills for the benefit of society.

As for the appointment of Mr. Radwanski, anyone taking the time to read his resumé can only agree that this man has a very extensive knowledge of Canadian politics. He is most certainly a brilliant and very intelligent person.

We all know, however, that these qualities are important but do not necessarily provide all the rigour required to hold an office that must be totally exempt from any partisan behaviour. The Bloc Québécois will not approve this appointment for the simple reason that parliament must be allowed to ask questions to a candidate to the position of privacy commissioner.

This is another appointment made by the executive branch of government and it could be perceived as a political appointment. I believe the government—the one that is still in office—would definitely not want to give that impression. I humbly suggest that the government order that this candidate be called by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to answer the questions of members of parliament. In my view, this is the least we can ask in a parliament that claims to be the most democratic and the best one in the world.

[English]

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member from the Bloc for her statement.

The other day we were informed that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation in Winnipeg has been given another board director through order in council without any consultation from the fisheries committee, without any consultation from anyone. This name just appeared, and bang. Through government order in council this person is now in a very important position within the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation in Winnipeg.

I would like to have the hon. member's comments both on the systemic attitude that the government has shown in ignoring past recommendations and on making these appointments much more open and much more transparent to all Canadians.

[Translation]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the issue of transparency in parliaments is taking on increasing importance. With the emergence of all the information technologies, the average person is becoming increasingly aware that things are not as they should be.

The appointment to which the hon. member referred is just one more example of what I would call the almost disturbing power wielded by a majority government which has the right to decide on a number of appointments with ramifications for the public.

• (1040)

[English]

Mr. Dennis Gruending (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as our House leader said earlier, our opposition to this process is not based on any personal judgment about Mr. Radwanski, who is a journalist of some renown although he does have historic and close ties with the Liberal Party. It is the process we do not like.

Can my hon. friend from the Bloc enlighten us briefly about what sort of process would be better in a case like this, rather than having the government simply dip into its bag of Liberal contacts and friends to make an appointment that really flies in the face of any parliamentary debate or participation? What process would be better?

[Translation]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, I will give an example of what I think would be a clear way of doing things.

We will be having an election soon, in three weeks or three months. We do not know when but there will be one. When elected parliamentarians return to the House how will they choose their Speaker?

It is the role of the Speaker of the House of Commons to be impartial, to use judgment and common sense. These are three attributes required of the privacy commissioner. I think that everyone would agree with me.

Why, therefore, would parliament not elect one of several candidates? Naturally this takes longer and is more complicated than just appointing someone, but when it is a question of privacy, something that affects us all, is it not worth taking a little of the House's time? This is something that is very basic and I am certain that Canadians as well as Quebecers would see it as a plus for democracy.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate. I think it is about a very important matter.

I will begin my remarks by commending and thanking Mr. Phillips for his work. He has worked very hard for the country.

Government Orders

[English]

I think it is fair to say that he brought great competence and great class to the office he filled and to the work he did on behalf of Canadians in his capacity as privacy commissioner.

I would very much like to attach myself to the remarks of prior speakers on the opposition side of the House, particularly those of the House leader of the New Democratic Party, who has a great deal of experience and a remarkable degree of understanding of the inner workings of parliament.

Much of the theme he touched on in his remarks is that which is most important, which we are discussing here, and that is, it is not the personal aspects of this appointment but the process that was followed that is offensive to those previous speakers on the opposition side.

I also must take issue with the way in which we were given some semblance of an opportunity to have interaction and discussions with Mr. Radwanski. I want to preface everything by saying this is not to in any way question the integrity, competence or ability of this individual. Yet when the name was first brought forward in February of this year by the government House leader, there was some initial resistance, some initial question, that was expressed on the part of other government House leaders. I note that my colleague from the Bloc is indicating likewise.

The issue just seemed to disappear. It just seemed to go away. Then, while parliament was not in session this summer, we were suddenly notified after the fact that this person would be given this appointment. It was a very after the fact, stealth like consultation.

• (1045)

The government House leader is being a little economical with the truth when he says this has been an open and inclusive process. It is a shame, a crying shame, because in my opinion this puts a pall over an individual who very well could serve the country in the same professional, proficient fashion we have seen of Mr. Phillips. That remains to be seen. We will see how this turns out.

It is very important to note, as my colleague from the reform alliance has put on record, the very close personal contacts this individual has with the Liberal government. Something else important to point out is that the resumé we received at the pseudo-committee meeting we had did not include the same connections that were on the initial resumé given back in February. Those references have already been pointed out.

That is not to say a person who was senior policy strategy and communications adviser to the Prime Minister would necessarily be partisan. However, one would assume that working in that capacity he would be called upon on occasion to dispense partisan advice. One would also assume that working in that capacity very

closely with the Prime Minister he would achieve some level of personal attachment and friendship. Similarly one would suspect that in working as a senior strategy and policy adviser and principal speech writer for the Right Hon. John Turner a personal relationship and connection would develop.

We know times change. We know things evolve. Yet the same government House leader who, while a prominent member of the rat pack, used to stand on his desk and rail like a banshee at the prior Conservative government, using words such as patronage orgy and nepotism while in opposition, now has very much embraced this supposedly offensive practice. He has wrapped his arms around it.

I have a compiled list of over 500 appointments in the past seven years that indicate a very strong golden thread of connection to the Liberal Party which leads to very lucrative and rewarding patronage type appointments. The shoe is on the other foot and is now kicking the opposition in the teeth.

I know I cannot use the word hypocrisy in this place. I am not allowed to use that word, but it is a shame because it seems to me it smacks of just that. Famous words were uttered in debate when Mr. Turner was left with that anvil of patronage appointments hanging around his neck. It was pointed out by former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney that he had a choice. He had to wear that albatross. Yet it appears the government House leader did not have a choice. He had to take his marching orders from Mr. Goldenberg and the Prime Minister's Office. He had to follow along the same path. He obviously was in the same boat as Mr. Turner.

We know other very important supposedly non-partisan roles have been filled on the advice of Mr. Goldenberg and others in the Prime Minister's Office. As the House leader for the New Democratic Party alluded to, it diminishes and sullies the process when this attachment exists.

We know as well the significance of the office cannot be lost. The significance should never be undermined or in any way attacked or somehow devalued during the course of the debate, because the ethics commissioner's office is very important, if it is exercised in the way it is supposed to be.

Similarly, regarding the privacy commissioner, the information commissioner and all of the roles that are filled by individuals, I say with great sincerity that one hopes the persons in those positions will exercise their duties in a non-partisan fashion. When the perception exists that the only reason the appointment has occurred is a close connection to an individual in government, in this case the Prime Minister, or an individual with strong Liberal connections, in my opinion this leads to questions and further cynicism, almost bordering on apathy at times on the part of the public when this practice continues.

Government Orders

• (1050)

As was mentioned as well, the qualifications of the particular person whose name has been brought forward are very impressive. He is an author of great renown and an individual with connections in the journalistic community. I am yet to be convinced and I am yet to even hear proper explanation as to why it is that a person necessarily with a journalistic background or an academic background is the person who should fill the role of privacy commissioner. I do not quite follow that thinking.

Again, this is not to attack the personalities here, but what special qualifications do journalists have that make them good privacy commissioners? We know the natural role of a journalist is to disseminate and distribute information, as opposed to protecting the public information. It seems to me a completely contrary role is filled by a journalist or author.

In this context, in this parliament we have seen an occasion when private information of Canadian citizens was being distributed and was being handled in a very sloppy fashion, shall we say, by the HRDC, and the privacy commissioner in his capacity played a very important role in making that public. Would this person, with his close Liberal connections, have done the same thing?

Again we must ask that question because it is also the public perception of impartiality that is important here, not just the real impartiality, but the perception of same. We see that phrase used quite often in the courtroom: it is not only that justice be done, but that justice is seen to be done. That is exactly what is at issue in this debate and the questions surrounding this appointment.

The government, I would suggest, has failed to discharge its duty of giving that public assurance and giving that impression. Therefore we have some difficulties with this: difficulty with the process, difficulty with that same old Liberal arrogance that is being displayed more and more with each passing day.

The neutrality of this position has to be paramount, as well as certainly a working knowledge of the Privacy Act. Again, I did have the opportunity to participate in the sham of a committee. As was alluded to, it was a hybrid. It was not really a committee, but it was an opportunity after the fact to examine the qualifications of this individual. To his credit, he certainly owned up very quickly to his connections to the Liberal government and expounded on his abilities in other areas.

One concern I have is a full appreciation and working knowledge of technology. I suspect that in the capacity of privacy commissioner there has to be a real in-depth grasp and knowledge of the information technology explosion and an ability to understand how important it is to protect information that is now available in computer banks and computer information that is held by the government. Again we are not completely clear on the connection and the ability of the particular individual in that capacity, but time

will tell. Certainly we will have the benefit of hindsight, one would argue, at some time to come.

The government should be the focus of this debate. The Liberal government has created this situation. It could have been avoided with a more open and inclusive process, if there had even been the invitation early on to simply sit down and talk with this person, to have an opportunity to meet him even, on an informal basis, instead of this stealthy, behind the scenes appointment process that occurred in this instance. Perhaps we should have had an opportunity early on to do that, and it would have avoided some of the unpleasantness and some of the bad taste left in the mouth of the opposition with this appointment.

• (1055)

I want to conclude my remarks by reminding the House of something I was reminded of quite recently. The individual is an officer of parliament whose duty, first and foremost, is to the people of Canada and to the Parliament of Canada, to discharge his or her duties honourably, with professionalism, and in an impartial way, devoid of any sort of partisan political considerations.

We are unfortunately left, to some degree, with damaged goods. That is most unfortunate for the privacy commissioner. This could have been avoided if the government had chosen to go about this in a different fashion and if the nominee had been given an opportunity earlier to meet with opposition members to satisfy concerns they might have about the way in which this process took place.

Again I would suggest that our retiring privacy commissioner, Mr. Phillips, certainly performed very ably on behalf of the country. We wish him well in his future endeavours.

We hope this debate, to some small degree, will be a reminder to the government that those on the opposition side of the House have every right to question. There is in fact a public expectation that the opposition will question the way in which these appointments are made. They should not have the ring or the stench of patronage. They should not reflect nepotism.

If competence is to be the true criterion, let us ensure that takes place through a fair, open and inclusive process of examination of those appointments.

[Translation]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with interest to the remarks made by the hon. member from the Progressive Conservative Party as well as by all our colleagues from the other political parties, except those from the party in power.

We are now speaking about an officer of parliament. The privacy commissioner is indeed an officer of parliament.

Government Orders

Would my colleague from the Progressive Conservative Party be in agreement with what my colleague from Laval Centre proposed, that is that it should be up to parliament, therefore to all the members in this House, to appoint officers of parliament? These officers should have no connection of any kind since they are supposed to represent the whole population.

Would he agree that all the members of parliament should elect the privacy commissioner?

Mr. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

[*English*]

I would certainly agree that parliament should have greater say and greater participation in the selection of the officers of this place.

To rule out individuals who have had active participation in the political process is somewhat naive. I am not saying this personally to the member. We do want to encourage people to participate in the political process to whatever degree, through support of the party, through support of an individual, or through participation in politics generally. We do not want to say that would somehow negate a person's ability to fill an office.

However, if there is to be confidence and the perception that the person will perform the role impartially, then parliament should have the final say. I believe that having an open vote is appropriate in some cases, not necessarily in all appointment cases, but for roles in which the underlying objective and need to be fulfilled is the duty to respond to parliament. Yes, at the end of the day, parliament should have the final say in electing those individuals.

• (1100)

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough for his comments. I only wish his good friend the premier of Nova Scotia, Dr. John Hamm, would hear his comments. As we all know, a former major Conservative member received a very plum position in Nova Scotia as deputy minister of education and received a raise on top of what the person previously in that position received. I hope his comments translate to the provincial Conservative premier. But that is just a little punch to a provincial issue.

The member is absolutely correct in that parliament needs to be more relevant, more transparent and more open. What role can the hon. member see the general public playing in this? Would it be just through elected officials in the committee? Would the general public have an actual say in this as well or does he feel that it would

get too bogged down in some sort of bureaucratic malaise? Can the hon. member see the general public having an actual say on who is appointed to these very prestigious positions?

Mr. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I will respond in two parts. First, about trying to make some sort of a tie to what happened in Nova Scotia, that individual was not an officer of parliament obviously. With respect to the NDP, I think there is still some residual smarting for the spanking that party received in the provincial election in Nova Scotia. I will not delve into that partisan boxing match.

My colleague from the eastern shore of Nova Scotia would know that it is sometimes difficult to involve the general public entirely in the appointment processes. I would suggest that is what elected individuals are supposed to do. They are entrusted, one would hope, with the public confidence and with the faith that they will fulfil their roles in critiquing the government or when in government that they will fulfil their roles in an impartial way to as large a degree as possible.

I know my friend from Nova Scotia, my fellow Bluenoser, is a person who appreciates that these processes have to take place sometimes in a speedy fashion. If we go to complete populism where there are referendums on everything and complete public input on every appointment, I would suggest that government and the bureaucratic malaise he refers to would kick in. There would be a grinding, screeching halt to all government operations if we tried to approach it in that fashion.

I take his point. Certainly openness and greater participation from all sides of the House and certainly increased public confidence and increased public participation are things we should all strive for in this place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to what my colleagues from the opposition parties had to say. I can only agree with them that this kind of appointment should for the most part be made by parliament and not by the government, its decision then being ratified by the majority in the House.

This is the difference between an appointment made with the consent of all the parties represented in the House and an appointment submitted, brought forward and even, as is the case today, imposed by the government.

To the credit of Bruce Phillips, the privacy commissioner who is stepping down today, I must say that he had a very delicate role to play in the last few months. The commissioner must absolutely deal at arm's length with the government. We saw this not too long ago, when he played a key role when the government tried to link the data from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency with those

Government Orders

of the Department of Human Resources Development. Had he been close to the government, he might not have got involved. The retiring commissioner also played a major role in bringing to light the existence of the longitudinal file of the Department of Human Resources Development. Had he been close to the government he might not have got involved.

• (1105)

We should really make sure that the individual appointed to this position is impartial, non-partisan and independent, especially from the government, and all the more so because the new legislation dealing with the protection of personal information in the private sector still seems to us to be very vague, especially as regards the development of e-commerce.

It is important that the appointee be under no suspicion at all for collusion or dubious contacts with the government.

Does the Conservative House leader not find it strange that the appointment process for officials of the House provided in various laws is not exactly the same?

Here is an example. Subsection 49(1) of the Official Languages Act reads:

49.(1) There shall be a Commissioner of Official Languages for Canada who shall be appointed by commission under the Great Seal after approval of the appointment by resolution of the Senate and House of Commons.

As for the Privacy Act, it states under subsection 53(1):

53. (1) The Governor in Council shall, by commission under the Great Seal, appoint a privacy commissioner after approval of the appointment by resolution of the Senate and House of Commons.

A simple approval is all that is required.

Is it not strange that the appointment process is not exactly the same for the various House officials and that, in this case, the commissioner is appointed by the governor in council?

Mr. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I think my colleague is absolutely right. I believe it is necessary to apply the same standards so that there is a balance.

[English]

The hon. member is right to point out that for these positions there should be a higher standard. If we are going to expect the office to hold the respect of the public, if we are going to expect there to be confidence in the proficiency and in the process, we should have this equal standard that requires the approval and examination and the penetrating view of both houses.

Surely anything to suggest otherwise diminishes the importance of the role itself. The privacy commissioner, language commis-

sioner, ethics commissioner and information commissioner are all extremely important offices that serve or should serve Canadians with the highest degree of professionalism and non-partisanship. To ensure that happens in the first instance, maybe we should be looking at a similar standard apply that will give Canadians the confidence and that will give parliament itself the confidence and dignity and raise the standard which is applied to these appointments and the process.

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleagues know, I have been a member of this House for many years. September 4 marked my 16th anniversary of continuous service in this place. You know that I always follow with great interest and take part in every debate in this House.

I have heard the speeches of the four opposition parties, particularly that of the chief whip of my party on the appointment process for the offices of commissioner of official languages and privacy commissioner. There is a double standard. I think that you, Mr. Speaker, would find unanimous consent to withdraw the motion and to appoint privacy commissioners in the future using the same appointment process as for the commissioner of official languages.

Accordingly, I ask for unanimous consent to withdraw the motion so that in the future appointments to that position will be made the same way as appointments to that of commissioner of official languages.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

• (1110)

[English]

Mr. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am wondering if I could request the unanimous consent of the House to table the curriculum vitae of Mr. Radwanski. This is an important part of the debate and it would reflect some of the comments that have been made during the course of this debate.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to permit the tabling of the document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Document tabled)

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

Business of the House

The Deputy Speaker: Just before I put the question, the Chair would like to clarify something that happened earlier today.

At the beginning of debate this morning when government orders were called, the clerk at the table rose and announced that the item of business to be called was Bill C-8 at report stage. The announcement was complete. The government House leader indicated that had not been his wish. He wished to proceed with the motion that is now before the House and which I am about to put to the House.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes raised a point of order, asking the Chair to continue with Bill C-8, which had been called by the clerk at the table. At that time I decided that the government was always entitled to change the order of government orders. That is what was done through the intervention of the government House leader.

[English]

I regret that it appears the Chair made an error in making such a ruling. In fact, the Chair should have proceeded with Bill C-8 at that time. The hon. member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes was quite correct in that, and I cite for the House on this point, Erskine May's book *Parliamentary Practice*, page 319:

When an order of the day has been read, it must thereupon be proceeded with, appointed for a future day, or discharged. It cannot be postponed until after another order except as the result of a motion moved by a Minister of the Crown at the commencement of public business.

The motion had in fact been called and should have been proceeded with.

[Translation]

That said, I must also indicate that your Chair has, like all other members, read the new work on this subject, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, by our distinguished colleagues Messrs. Marleau and Montpetit.

Its wording is less precise. It states:

When Government Orders is called, any item listed may be brought before the House for consideration. Any item that has been called, and on which debate has begun, must be dealt with until adjourned, interrupted or disposed of.

The wording in the new book is not as precise as in Erskine May, but I must state that our practice—and obviously I have been well advised on this—has always been what is given in Erskine May, and not in the new book.

I read something and believed it. Hence my decision, but it was obviously in error, and the hon. member for Verchères—Les-Pa-

triotés was absolutely right. Certainly the next time there will not be such a disaster.

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, if you are saying that you made a mistake when you authorized the tabling of the motion and the debate, the motion must be withdrawn. This debate should not have taken place and we must revert to the former version of Bill C-8 and ignore the part dealing with this motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The problem is that the Chair made a mistake. The decision had been taken and it was over and done with. We have now completed the debate and the House is ready to vote on the matter. I must therefore put the question to the House.

I am sorry, and this time I am sure that I am not mistaken.

• (1115)

[English]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: At the request of the deputy government whip, the vote on the motion is deferred until Monday at the conclusion of government orders.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two motions to present.

Government Orders

First, pursuant to discussions between all the parties and the hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys concerning the taking of the division on M-259 scheduled at the conclusion of private members' business today, I think you would find consent for the following motion. I move:

That at the conclusion today's debate on M-259, all questions necessary to dispose of the said motion be deemed put, a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, October 3, 2000, at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the deputy government whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope there will be unanimous consent as well for the following motion. I move:

That private members' business item, C-469 in the name of Mr. Jordan, now stand instead on the order paper in the name of Mrs. Jennings;

That private members' business item, C-438 in the name of Ms. Redman, now stand instead on the order paper in the name of Ms. Torsney;

That private members' business item, C-230 in the name of Ms. Bulte, now stand instead in the name of Ms. Carroll;

That private members' business M-418 in the name of Mr. Szabo, now stand instead in the name of Mr. Calder;

And that Private Members' Business C-457, in the name of Ms. Leung, be withdrawn and the order for consideration thereof discharged.

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to adopt this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

MARINE CONSERVATION AREAS ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-8, an act respecting marine conservation areas, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to introduce the amendments to Bill C-8 standing in the name of the hon. member for Portneuf, since the hon. member cannot be with us today.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to allow the hon. member for Jonquière to introduce the motions standing in the name of the hon. member for Portneuf?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: I will now put the motions in Group No. 2 to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-8 be amended by deleting Clause 2.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-8, in Clause 2, be amended by replacing lines 3 and 4 on page 3 with the following:

““Minister” means the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.”

Hon. Elinor Caplan (for the Minister of Canadian Heritage) moved:

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-8, in Clause 2, be amended by replacing line 15 on page 3 with the following:

“under the Parks Canada Agency Act”

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-8 be amended by deleting Clause 4.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-8, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing lines 5 to 11 on page 4 with the following:

“(3) Marine conservation areas and reserves shall be managed and used in a manner that meets the needs of present and future generations.”

Government Orders

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-8 be amended by deleting Clause 5.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-8, in Clause 5, be amended by replacing lines 25 to 27 on page 4 with the following:

“Canada, an amendment to Schedule 1 may be made adding the name and a description of the area or altering the”

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-8 be amended by deleting Clause 8.

Hon. Elinor Caplan (for the Minister of Canadian Heritage) moved:

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-8, in Clause 8, be amended by replacing line 36 on page 6 with the following:

“cal knowledge, including traditional aboriginal ecologi-”

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-8 be amended by deleting Clause 10.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 22

That Bill C-8, in Clause 10, be amended by replacing line 43 on page 7 with the following:

“claims agreements, aviation associations and provincial aviation councils, and with any other per-”

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-8, in Clause 10, be amended by replacing line 4 on page 8 with the following:

“considers appropriate in a manner consistent with article 1.3.2 of the National Marine Conservation Areas Policy.”

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 24

That Bill C-8 be amended by deleting Clause 11.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 25

That Bill C-8, in Clause 11, be amended by replacing line 13 on page 8 with the following:

“advisory committee of stakeholders to advise the Minister on”

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 30

That Bill C-8 be amended by deleting Clause 16.

• (1125)

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 31

That Bill C-8, in Clause 16, be amended by replacing line 24 on page 9 with the following:

“regulations, after consulting with the public as provided for in article 3.2.3 of the National Marine Conservation Areas Policy, consistent with international law,”

Motion No. 33

That Bill C-8, in Clause 16, be amended by replacing lines 36 and 37 on page 10 with the following:

“recommendation of the Minister, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Natural Resources and shall be consistent with article 3.3.5 of the National Marine Conservation Areas Policy.”

Motion No. 35

That Bill C-8, in Clause 16, be amended by replacing line 9 on page 11 with the following:

“and the Minister of Transport, following consultations with affected aviation associations and provincial aviation councils.”

Motion No. 36

That Bill C-8, in Clause 16, be amended by deleting lines 26 to 32 on page 11.

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 38

That Bill C-8 be amended by deleting Clause 18.

Hon. Elinor Caplan (for the Minister of Canadian Heritage) moved:

Motion No. 39

That Bill C-8, in Clause 18, be amended by replacing lines 5 and 6 on page 12 with the following:

“appointed under the Parks Canada Agency Act whose duties include the enforce-”

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 51

That Bill C-8 be amended by deleting Clause 29.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 52

That Bill C-8, in Clause 29, be amended by replacing line 21 on page 17 with the following:

“measures to mitigate such degrada-”

Motion No. 54

That Bill C-8, in Clause 30.1, be amended by adding after line 2 on page 18 the following:

Government Orders

“30.1 Any area named and described in Schedule 1 ceases to be a marine conservation area five years after the amendment is made to that Schedule adding the description of the area unless, before the expiration of the five years, another amendment to that Schedule is made altering the description of the area or continuing its existence as a marine conservation area.”

Hon. Elinor Caplan (for the Minister of Canadian Heritage)
moved:

Motion No. 57

That Bill C-8, in Clause 34, be amended

(a) by replacing lines 29 to 36 on page 18 and lines 1 to 3 on page 19 with the following:

“34. (1) Paragraph (a) of the definition “other protected heritage areas” in subsection 2(1) of the Parks Canada Agency Act is replaced by the”

(b) by replacing line 8 on page 19 with the following:

“(2) Subsection 2(1) of the Act is amended”

(c) by replacing line 14 on page 19 with the following:

“35. Subsection 5(1) of the Act is replaced”

(d) by replacing line 25 on page 19 with the following:

“36. (1) Subsection 6(1) of the Act is replaced”

(e) by replacing line 33 on page 19 with the following:

“(2) Subsection 6(3) of the Act is replaced”

(f) by replacing line 41 on page 19 with the following:

“37. Section 7 of the Act is replaced by the”

(g) by replacing line 8 on page 20 with the following:

“38. (1) Paragraphs 21(3)(b) to (d) of the Act”

(h) by replacing line 31 on page 20 with the following:

“(2) Subsection 21(4) of the Act is re-”

(i) by replacing line 40 on page 20 with the following:

“39. Section 31 of the Act is replaced by the

(j) by replacing line 10 on page 21 with the following:

“40. Subsection 32(1) of the Act is replaced”

(k) by replacing line 29 on page 21 with the following:

“41. Part 1 of the schedule to the Act is”

(l) by deleting lines 34 to 46 on page 21 and lines 1 to 13 on page 22.

Motion No. 58

That Bill C-8, in Clause 35, be amended

(a) by replacing lines 14 to 22 on page 22 with the following:

“42. On the later of the coming into force of section 122 of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 and the coming into force of this Act,”

(b) by replacing lines 30 to 32 on page 22 with the following:

“tion de ce terme à l'article 122 de la Loi canadienne sur la protection de l'environnement (1999), la mention dans cette définition de”

(c) by replacing lines 39 and 40 on page 22 with the following:

“matter listed in Schedule 5 to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999.”

(d) by replacing line 1 on page 23 with the following:

“tion Act, 1999, as if references in that sec-”

(e) by replacing line 12 on page 23 with the following:

“Protection Act, 1999 applies, as authorized by”

(f) by replacing line 18 on page 23 with the following:

“Protection Act, 1999 for disposal in the waters”

(g) by replacing line 29 on page 23 with the following:

“Protection Act, 1999 does not apply; and”

(h) by replacing line 37 on page 23 with the following:

“dian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, to”

The Deputy Speaker: I must inform the House that motions Nos. 32 and 34, standing in the name of the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, could not be proposed since the member was not present in the House.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise with pleasure to speak in this debate at the request of my devoted colleague from Jonquière, our critic on this subject. She does remarkable work on behalf of the environment within our party and always comes up with arguments in the defence of Quebec's interests when the federal government is likely to overstep the bounds of our jurisdiction.

I would first like to put the debate in context. The Bloc will vote against this bill. We would not object to having stricter or more up to date environmental measures voted on in the House, but we have clearly defined in two paragraphs our position which should, it seems to me, rally all members, or at least those from Quebec, of all parties claiming to speak for the interests of Quebec.

● (1130)

“The Bloc Québécois supports”, said the Bloc through its devoted critic, the member for Jonquière, “environmental protection measures”. More specifically, the Bloc Québécois reminds the government that we supported it when it introduced legislation to establish the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park.

Furthermore, the Bloc Québécois knows that the Government of Quebec has its own initiatives to protect the environment and specifically the seabed. The Government of Quebec is also open to working in this regard with the federal government, as phase III of the St. Lawrence action plan indicates.

However, and this is where the problem lies, the Bloc Québécois is opposed to the bill for the following reasons: instead of focusing on co-operation, as in the case of the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park, the federal government can fill marine conservation

areas without regard to Quebec's jurisdiction over its own territory and the environment and, because Canadian Heritage is proposing to establish a new structure, the marine conservation areas will duplicate DFO's marine protection zones and Environment Canada's marine protected areas.

This position is clear and simple and all members representing Quebec should readily support it. The Bloc Québécois arrived at this position after extensive consultations with the Quebec government, with opposition parties at the national assembly, with Quebec's environmental groups and with all the interested people in our province. Our party came to the conclusion, along with these stakeholders, that this was the best position to adopt in Quebec's best interest.

If the federal government wants to get involved, it should harmonize its measures with what already exists. If Quebec already has effective legislation in this area, why should the federal government interfere? It is as simple as that. Everyone should agree to avoid duplication and to respect provincial jurisdictions, which means to respect the constitution.

All members from Quebec, are here to represent the interests of Quebec, regardless of which party they belong to. In the case of this bill, the interests of Quebec would be better served if the amendments suggested by the hon. member for Jonquière were included in it.

This is not a debate on sovereignty, on a philosophical issue or on an issue involving millions of dollars. It is not a debate that would put members at odds with their constituents because of election speeches made during the last campaign about their party's platform. It is a matter of practicality. It is a matter of pride and of willingness to serve Quebec's interests. Members from Quebec sitting across the way are also here to protect Quebec's interests but are not doing so by supporting this legislation.

It is very simple, basic and something which unites all Quebecers. Will the Liberal members from Quebec refuse to come on board when everyone in Quebec is favourable to the amendments we are proposing, the vision we have presented in our speeches and through press releases and letters written by our critic, the member for Jonquière? Everyone in Quebec agrees on this except the federal Liberal members. But what are they doing here? Do they represent the interests of Quebec?

The member for Shefford was here as a Progressive Conservative member. She criticized the Liberal Party, voted against Bill C-20, against everything. Suddenly she decides to cross the floor of the House. She announces "I am going to move across to the Liberal Party and see that provincial jurisdictions are respected. I am going to see that the constitution is respected and, with it, Quebec's rights". Having gone over to the other side, she has fallen silent. I see her there. Why does she say nothing?

Government Orders

• (1135)

She now prefers to serve the Liberal Party and its leader, who has always worked to crush Quebec. She prefers that to defending Quebec's interests. What is the member doing?

I appeal to the people of Granby who are listening at home. Their representative has stopped speaking. The person they elected as a Progressive Conservative back then, thinking that she would defend their interests, defended those interests for a while and then suddenly went over to the other side.

I would like to send greetings to the mayor, the municipal council and all the community, social and economic organizations we had the opportunity to meet. The Bloc Québécois caucus meeting was held in the magnificent city of Granby and we had an opportunity to visit the entire riding. We saw what proud people they are.

I would like the people of Granby to know that the Bloc Québécois members will now be proud to defend them and proud to speak for them here in the House of Commons. The people of Granby will never hear the voice of their representative again. They will never hear a word out of her, no more speeches.

When a person moves over to the Liberal Party, he or she joins a voiceless party, what I called the "muffler party" the other day.

Their representative will no longer speak for them, so I would like the people of Granby to know that they can count on the Bloc Québécois and on us. If they have questions, letters, phone calls or need someone to defend their rights, let them call a valiant Bloc Québécois MP. We will be there to defend the people of Granby.

Hon. Ronald J. Duhamel: You will not have that opportunity.

Mr. Louis Plamondon: I have just heard some words from a Quebec Liberal MP. That is the surprise of the day. He said "You will not have that opportunity".

Hon. Ronald J. Duhamel: From a Franco-Manitoban. Don't you know the difference?

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Pardon me, a Manitoba MP. I would have been surprised if it had been one from Quebec.

Hon. Ronald J. Duhamel: He is confused. There is a difference between Manitoba and Quebec.

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I ask the member from Manitoba, who will be speaking soon, to tell us just how much he serves the interests of Manitoba's francophones. I sit on the

Government Orders

committee for the defence of the interests of francophones outside Quebec and the official languages committee and I have never seen him at this committee, I note in passing.

The people of Granby live in a beautiful region, but their spokesperson will be silent from now on.

I know that this lady gave the next general election considerable thought before crossing over. I know, however, that the voters of Granby are now thinking about who they will vote for in the next election.

The situation is the same for the member for Compton—Stansstead. He was here. Why did he criticize everything the Liberal government proposed for three years? For three years he criticized all the bills, including Bill C-20. He rose to say “No, that makes no sense”.

Then after three years, he is prepared to join this party, which has always worked contrary to the interests of Quebec. He is prepared to do so as a member from Quebec. Is that acceptable? Is he serving the interests of Quebec by doing so or is he looking out for his own interests?

I am looking forward to seeing the reaction of the people of this riding, whom I salute in passing, and to whom we offer our full co-operation through our candidate, Mr. Leroux, who was selected and who will make an excellent member.

It saddens me to think of this riding. I remember the two previous members who represented that riding, Mr. Bernier and François Gérin. These were men of their word. They were elected, they worked hard for their riding and they also respected Quebec's interests. Never would they have put their personal interests before those of Quebec.

People in that riding must also be disappointed by the attitude of a member of parliament who claimed to be a spokesperson for Quebec. Now that he has crossed the floor, he never opens his mouth.

I mentioned those two members of parliament but what about the member for Lac-Saint-Louis who is here with us and who is a former Quebec minister of the environment? Would he have accepted such a bill by the federal government? In fact, in 1987 when he was a Liberal minister in Quebec, he introduced an environmental bill that clearly defined jurisdictions.

• (1140)

Would he have let the federal government get involved in a provincial jurisdiction? No. He would have risen in the national assembly and told the federal government “You have no reason to come up with such a bill”. He would have fought as a Quebecer but now that he is a federal Liberal member of parliament he remains

silent. Worse still, he supports this interference in Quebec's jurisdiction.

How is that? What is it that they slip the members from Quebec when they join the Liberal Party? Why do they fall silent? Why do they agree to serve Quebec's interests so badly, to serve the Liberal Party, to let its leader—

An hon. member: Serve his own interests.

Mr. Louis Plamondon:—and to let the leader of the party serve his own interests, to serve the friends of the party and to go along with this sham? How is that?

Earlier I saw the member for Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies who was appointed by the provincial government of Mr. Bourassa to chair environmental commissions. This member should be the leading spokesperson for Quebec because he is very familiar with the issues. What is more, when he was commissioner he always said that jurisdictions should be respected and that when it came to the environment the best approach was not confrontation but harmony. That was what he always said.

In conclusion, I again appeal to all members from Quebec, whatever their political stripe, that Quebec's best interests are at stake. We must join forces to vote against this bill or at least to amend it so that it serves Quebec's interests.

[English]

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak to Bill C-8, an act respecting marine conservation areas. As the title alone would indicate, why would anyone be against marine conservation areas? When we say it like that it sounds great. We are going to protect conservation areas in the marine aquatic areas.

Unfortunately, it is just the title. Like most other things the Liberal government does, this is another piece of legislation that came out of the south end of a northbound cow. It is simply not strong enough. It is not going to do what it is supposed to do.

There is a bill that is also before the House, Bill C-33, the endangered species act. It is very clear when we speak to people within the environment committee and to people who appeared before the committee that the bill does not protect the habitat of the endangered species. That is what this bill does. It does not do anything to protect conservation areas.

I will digress for just a moment. One of the reasons why the cod stocks on the east coast of Atlantic Canada are down is the massive overfishing through the technology that we use today in dragging and trawling the ocean floor. They completely drag the bottom of the ocean floor and everything comes up with it. Then they throw over what they do not need, dead, to the tune of millions of pounds of fish. Every year in this country and around the world fish are

Government Orders

being dumped overboard. As we speak, there is dumping going on in the Georges Bank and in the NAFO areas of the Flemish Cap because they throw overboard the fish species they do not want.

The bill will permit trawling and dragging in these conservation areas. It is absolute madness. If we are going to protect a particular area it means we must have the most sustainable environmental methods of harvesting our dwindling aquatic resources. The bill does not even address that problem. In the entire country, the government did absolutely no consultation on the bill with any fishing communities. I find it absolutely deplorable that people who rely on ocean species for their livelihood are not even consulted on this very important bill.

As well, I cannot help but notice that the Minister of Veterans Affairs is reported in the newspapers today as saying that he wants an expansion of the 200 mile zone to a 350 mile zone.

• (1145)

That sounds great, but what is its main purpose? Is it to protect fishing jobs and coastal communities on the east coast and on the west coast, or is there another reason for it? Are his comments or ideas included in Bill C-8, an act respecting marine conservation areas? Are they even included? I would doubt very much.

We have a burgeoning oil and gas industry off the east coast. We have a beautiful place called Sable Island about 100 miles off the coast of Halifax.

We were told in 1997 that for oil and gas seismic work Sable Island would be a no-touch zone. That means no seismic work would be done on Sable Island because they did not need to do it. It is a no-touch zone.

What happened last year? Seismic cables were drawn clearly across that island, a very fragile ecosystem. They changed the rules. They changed the code of practice in order to get that work done.

I find it absolutely astonishing that one year they say something and two years later they do something completely different. If we are truly interested in protecting marine conservation areas, we should stand by our words and truly protect the aquatic species in Atlantic Canada.

For example, it has cost taxpayers across the country \$4.2 billion to readjust the fishing industry on east coast since 1988. Yet the cod stocks are not rebounding. Salmon stocks are in trouble. We heard the other day that turbot stocks may be in trouble. Crab stocks off Newfoundland are in trouble. The bill could have provided some protection for breeding grounds and spawning grounds for many of those species, but unfortunately it falls terribly short.

We on this side of the House know that the government cannot handle certain areas on its own. The federal government does not

have the wherewithal or the knowledge to be able to do it on its own. Why would it not include the province, the communities and those people closest to the resource in the decision making process?

I understand why Bloc Quebecois members are so angry. It goes completely against what we voted on in the House earlier in Bill C-7, the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park model. That was an excellent example of co-operation at all three levels of government to protect a very sensitive area for beluga whales. Now Bill C-8 goes completely the other way. It is absolute madness.

Again we have that top down, bureaucratic, central based government saying to the extremities of the country “We know what is best for you in Ottawa, so be quiet, forget about it and we will move forward”. It is disguised under a nice, touchy-feely thing called conservation of marine areas and protection of the environment, but unfortunately it simply does not work.

Another big problem the government failed to address is that Victoria, British Columbia, and Halifax, Nova Scotia, still pump raw sewage into our oceanways. They are dumping millions of pounds of sewage every year into the waterways and our oceanways. The federal government has refused to act. It refuses to assist the city of Victoria and the city of Halifax in stopping deleterious substances from going into our oceanways and affecting our marine aquatic species. The bill does not even address that issue.

What are the Liberals really up to? They are all right. They are pretty decent people. In fact some of them in the House today are my friends. However, I doubt very much they have even read the bill. I doubt very much they have even informed their constituents about it.

The bill is very misleading. We simply cannot have that any more, especially on the east coast with a burgeoning oil and gas industry. Many people are very concerned about seismic work off the east and west coasts of Cape Breton Island. There has been no consultation with user groups. The province and federal government, through the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board, grant the leases and tell the companies to do an environmental assessment after they get the leases. It is sort of putting the cart before the horse.

The environmental assessment should be done on these areas long prior to any seismic work being done. The government has shifted responsibility from the public sector into the private sector, which could have devastating effects on fishing communities throughout Atlantic Canada. We do not know exactly what is going on in the oceanways. We have cut back in that department in science so much that this does not go a very long way.

• (1150)

The Liberals continuously refuse to discuss these issues in an open manner. They like to rush things through. Input from the

Government Orders

opposition or other members of society is simply not acceptable in the Liberal way of things. It is incredible.

The fact is that there are many good things we can do to protect our environment by working co-operatively with all three levels of government, with all five official parties, and with our friends in society who are seriously concerned about having true marine conservation areas on our coastlines to protect aquatic species and to protect the planet for many generations to come.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to talk about the Marine Conservation Act, Bill C-8, which I think is what is on the table. I appreciate the member's remarks and some of the insight from the Atlantic coast.

On the political rant from the separatists, it is easy to go on a rant and the closer we get to an election it seems all the more simple. It seems to me that right now we should be discussing the Marine Conservation Act.

The member across the way from British Columbia will be well aware of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, with which I met earlier this morning. It talks about marine protected areas. We are talking about marine conservation areas. I suspect they are pretty much the same, but when we look at semantics we start to try to decide what it is we are actually dealing with.

We as members of the opposition certainly believe in sustainable development and the management of the environment. Anyone in the country would be foolish not to realize the importance of that in this day and age. We simply must do that. We have to be able to preserve biodiversity and conserve the environment for the enjoyment of Canadians, present and future. There are always generations coming along and it gets more and more important for people to be able to enjoy that whether it is in the oceans, in the Great Lakes or on land.

I question the fact that this bill falls under the heritage department. I am not saying that we do not need to look at marine conservation areas. This may well be important, but I question why it is in the heritage portfolio. Bill C-8 appears to fulfil preservationist and environmental objectives instead of the usual objectives for national parks, historical or heritage sites which generally allow relatively free public access. We need to ask just how much free public access will there be to these conservation areas.

Motion No. 5 would therefore rightfully change the minister looking after the bill from the Canadian heritage minister to the fisheries and oceans minister. Some may ask: "What difference would that make? Is it not just a title?" If we look at national parks or marine parks, as the minister wants to change them, we have to look at the bureaucracy attached to that.

Granted, national parks and their agencies certainly do a pretty good job of looking after and administering national parks. It

seems to me that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans already looks after some small areas. Granted, they are not as large as the MCAs the minister is wanting to include, but certainly under the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans there are already marine protected areas. If the whole structure is in place it seems to me it would be wise to make use of it and perhaps put it under the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

I could get skeptical or cynical and say that the same minister of heritage was the environment minister before and maybe is trying to encroach on her old area. It could be just some nostalgia to say that it would be important to look at the whole area of the good old days back in environment. I understand the Minister of the Environment would look after, very specifically, seabirds. To enlarge that area it may not be wise to put it under the Minister of the Environment. Certainly I believe the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans would be a great overseer of one of these marine parks.

We also have concern about some clauses in the bill which would allow the government or the minister to circumvent the usual parliamentary process. When we look at the Henry VIII clauses in the bill, the minister would be allowed to designate new areas under the act without having to steer an amending act through parliament. Whether we agree or disagree with it, parliament is the place where these things should be discussed and at least passed so that even if it is a rubber stamp, at least it got stamped. With the Henry VIII clauses where the minister could bring in sweeping new changes and designate new areas, it would not even have to come back to pass the House.

• (1155)

The key Henry VIII clause, clause 7, delegates the authority to object to the creation or expansion of a new marine conservation area or reserve to a standing committee. The whole House must confirm the committee's objection.

Somewhere in this precinct on Parliament Hill today we see that the government has asked if it could strike a couple of committees early, ahead of the scheduled time next week or the week after, to come up with committee chairs. That is all it wants to do today. It just wants to come up with a couple of chairmen for these committees.

Opposition members went in good faith to the couple of committees this morning, finance and immigration, and agreed to allow it to go ahead so a chair could be established, but there would be no business done, the government told us.

We got in there and all of a sudden it was said "We are just going to look at these couple of bills today". We can understand why people are nervous. They are told one thing, and when they walk in there in good faith all of a sudden there are surprises. I love surprises but sometimes after I have made a commitment to

Government Orders

something I like it to be what I signed on for. Those kind of surprises are never much fun.

Today before noon we have had the very thing happen we are concerned about. We were told one thing and then something absolutely different happened. That causes us great concern.

Schedules 1 and 2 are to describe the lands to be set aside in marine conservation areas and reserves. In other words, with schedules 1 and 2, the government will make sure it designates the lands. It will tell us about it and have a really good conversation so we know everything right upfront, but no lands are described in schedules 1 and 2.

The government is asking us to sign the cheque and it will let us know what they are later. It reminds me of the Charlottetown accord in 1992 where the government was trying to push a document through. Fortunately it put it to a national referendum, and I give the Tories credit for that. I think it changed the way politics will be done in the country because the people had the power.

To be able to say "we will let you know" and designate it, as in the Charlottetown accord when it said "Just give us the go-ahead on this and we will tell you some of the constitutional changes we want to make later", I would be considered foolish if I went to my truck dealer, gave him my signed cheque and told him to fill in the amount later. You would never do that in your business, Mr. Speaker. Nor should the Canadian public with this. Canadians certainly have concerns about the whole area of these schedules.

Also it gives the minister too much discretionary power and a lack of adequate public consultation. I have had a briefing from Parks Canada and appreciate the fact that a consultative process goes on. I know they have just been through that up in the Lake Superior area, that there have been consultations.

I say that is great. It is a terrific start. However the area that would cause me the very most concern is the whole idea of federal-provincial negotiations. It looks as though the federal government obviously takes precedence over the provincial government. It has just happened too many times and there are too many awkward situations where the federal government has come in and just stamped out the rights or concerns of the provinces.

With discretionary power the minister would be able to just waltz right into the provinces and say "Thanks very much for that 12 minutes of consultation but, sorry, we are going to go ahead and do it our way". That works for Frank Sinatra but I do not think so for government policy on marine conservation acts.

I want to speak about the whole idea of prohibitions in the bill. We have concerns with the whole aviation area, that the minister has the right not just to scale back on but to prohibit flights over some of these sensitive areas.

There are a number of float planes on the west coast that fly around out there. Could the minister, as it says in the bill, and the answer would obviously have to be yes, absolutely prohibit some of these small aircraft that may be coming into the area carrying tourists? Aside from any new air traffic that might be coming in, would the minister have the power to absolutely prohibit them? There are piles of scheduled flights every day. There are seaplanes buzzing around all over the west coast.

• (1200)

Obviously that makes me nervous too because we look at some of the things we have already seen. For instance, we saw this minister overlook safety concerns in national parks before when they wanted to close the Banff and Jasper airstrips. They said that was they wanted to do and they were going to shut them down. I do not think we can do that.

Motion No. 22 would put aviation associations and provincial aviation councils on the list of bodies to be consulted by the minister. It seems very reasonable to me.

Finally, regarding resource exploitation or exploring, I know some of my colleagues will deal with this with far more expertise than I will in the hours to come. However, for marine conservation areas which would have their boundaries established, knowing that there would be resource mineral extraction, the government would say "Okay, we will put them over here then". That works for today but how in the world would it work in future years if we found that we have the technology available to extract some of those resources? Who would have thought we would have ever seen a Hibernia project 15 or 20 years ago? It seemed impossible to be able to make that extraction through a Hibernia project.

Those kinds of things are the areas that we have severe concerns about. I know the member opposite will address those and I am looking forward to her comments and concerns. We want to make sure we do this as well as possible, but when we see red lights and alarms we want to make sure we pay attention to them. I know the government is very pleased to make corrections to address our concerns.

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity today to participate in this debate at report stage on Bill C-8, an act respecting marine conservation areas.

First, I want to express the regret of the hon. member for West Nova who is the Progressive Conservative heritage critic. He is unable to be here today to present his views on this second group of amendments introduced at report stage. I know he is truly disappointed that he cannot be here and that he is missing this opportunity to condemn the federal government for going forward with this flawed piece of legislation, despite the very serious ramifications it

Government Orders

could have on our coastal communities, particularly communities in and around the Atlantic area.

The federal government's decision to go forward with the bill at this particular time is totally reprehensible. It shows its clear lack of understanding for the potentially explosive situation that presently exists in Atlantic Canada. Violent feelings are running very high in and around the Burnt Church and New Edinburgh areas because of illegal native fishing.

Now in the midst of this very dangerous situation, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has suddenly decided she wants to pass a piece of legislation in the House of Commons which could negatively affect fishermen. It clearly shows the contempt that the Liberal government has for the people of Atlantic Canada.

My colleague, the hon. member for West Nova, was told in committee that extensive consultations had been conducted all over the country prior to introducing the bill. These so-called consultations were more or less confined to sending letters out to fishing organizations advising them of the government's intention to introduce a marine conservation act. The government has interpreted the lack of response as a total acceptance of its plan.

Most fishermen in West Nova and in the Atlantic provinces have never heard of these plans. Frankly, they have much larger problems to deal with and worry about at this particular point in time. It is inconceivable that lobster fishermen in the Atlantic provinces would participate in discussions about a new marine conservation act when their livelihoods are being threatened by the illegal native lobster fishery.

• (1205)

Atlantic Canadians are witnessing the Liberal government's failure to fully enforce the laws of the country by not putting an end to the illegal lobster fishing in Burnt Church and New Edinburgh. This is despite the fact that the federal government received clarification from the supreme court in the Marshall decision and was the recipient of a successful federal court decision in Halifax.

What assurances do fishermen have that designated marine conservation areas will not have a negative impact on their fishery? Why should they expect the Department of Canadian Heritage to protect these areas when the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has shown that it is completely unable to uphold the laws of the country?

If the Minister of Canadian Heritage thinks she can protect these designated areas then perhaps she should take over the responsibilities of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It is all well and good that the Minister of Canadian Heritage wants to create a marine conservation act. The Progressive Conservative Party has continually shown support for protecting our natural habitat. Our recent

support of Bill C-27 is but one of the many examples of our commitment to protecting the environment.

The government should be ashamed of itself for going ahead with this bill without having held extensive public consultations. Of greater concern is the fact that the government is going ahead with this when it knows that fishermen in the Atlantic provinces are preoccupied with the crisis in the fishery. This is but one more example of the Liberal government's insensitivity toward the Atlantic provinces and toward Atlantic Canadians in general.

I was somewhat surprised by the proposed amendment to replace lines 3 and 4, on page 3 to read "Minister means Minister of Fisheries and Oceans". I respect the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River, however, does my hon. colleague, or for that matter the Canadian Alliance Party, really believe that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and his departmental officials are capable of protecting newly created marine conservation areas? No, I do not believe they are. I suspect most Canadians would not think so either.

I do not know what the member for Dauphin—Swan River was thinking when he introduced this amendment, but I can certainly tell him that we would not support that kind of amendment. Our party believes that our national parks system must remain under the jurisdiction of the Department of Canadian Heritage. Whether these parks are on land or in water, we believe that they would be better served if they remained under the jurisdiction of Canada's new parks agency.

I have examined the other amendments grouped together at report stage of this bill. Some would appear to be purely a question of semantics while others were introduced to raise questions about provincial jurisdiction. Our party has not introduced amendments because we feel that the whole process for creating this particular piece of legislation was fundamentally flawed right from the outset. Therefore, we urge the federal government to withdraw this bill immediately until proper consultations can take place with the various stakeholders who are interested in this.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with the introduction of Bill C-8, the Canadian government is following up on the work done in parliament in relation to Bill C-48 on the creation of marine conservation areas, which was introduced last session. Thus we are picking up where we left off, that is at the report stage.

• (1210)

The purpose of federal Bill C-8, which is entitled an act respecting marine conservation areas and was introduced by Heritage Canada, is to provide a legal framework for the creation of 28 marine conservation areas representative of each of Canada's ecosystems. The 29th marine conservation area is the Sague-

nay—St. Lawrence marine park, but it is not covered by this legislation because it has its own.

We will be voting against this bill, not as a political rant, as my colleague from the Canadian Alliance put it, but because we have major reasons, reasons relating to the jurisdictions of Quebec and others, the multiplication of organisms in one area.

The Bloc Québécois is certainly in favour of measures to protect the environment, and I believe that no one can teach us anything in that regard as we are focusing particular efforts on working to protect the environment, particularly in marine conservation areas.

Hon. members will recall that our party supported the bill proposing legislation to create the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park, as well as being involved in initiatives to protect the environment, the seabed in particular. The Government of Quebec is also open to efforts to that same end and has, moreover, shown itself capable of partnership with the federal government as evidenced by phase III of the St. Lawrence action plan.

So why are we opposed to this bill? The answer is very simple. First, instead of focusing on working together, as it did in the case of the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park, the federal government wants to introduce marine conservation areas with no regard for Quebec's jurisdiction over its territory and environment.

In addition, Heritage Canada is planning to introduce a new structure, marine conservation areas, which will duplicate the marine protection zones of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the protected marine areas of Environment Canada.

Bill C-8 ignores the integrity of Quebec's territory, because one of the preconditions for a marine conservation area is that the federal government own the territory where it is to be established.

Subsection 92(5) of the Constitution Act, 1867, makes it very clear that the management and sale of public lands is an exclusively provincial jurisdiction. When is the government going to abide by the constitution it has signed?

In Quebec, the *Loi québécoise sur les terres du domaine public* applies to all public lands belonging to Quebec, including beds of waterways and lakes and those parts of the bed of the St. Lawrence River and the Gulf of St. Lawrence which belong to Quebec by sovereign right.

This legislation also provides that Quebec cannot create or transfer its lands to the federal government. The only thing it can do is to authorize, by order, the federal government to use them only in connection with matters under federal jurisdiction. Usually, the federal government reads the constitution more than we do, but I think it is reading it too quickly and misinterpreting it.

Government Orders

Co-operative mechanisms already exist to protect ecosystems in the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park and in the St. Lawrence River under the St. Lawrence action plan, phase III, which was signed by all federal and Quebec departments concerned, and which provides for major investments in connection with the St. Lawrence River.

We are interested in protecting the environment. We are interested in a partnership but we will not give up what is ours.

Why then have the so far productive partnership ventures I just mentioned been ignored by Heritage Canada? Why is it now claiming exclusive ownership of the seabed? Will the federal government respect the territorial claims of Quebec or ignore them as usual?

There are precedents. I have mentioned two of them briefly and I will go back to them again in more detail.

• (1215)

The Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park is a fine example of consultation and organization with the community respecting who we are and protecting all our rights.

In 1997 the federal and Quebec governments passed legislation to establish the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park. This legislation led to the creation of Canada's first marine conservation area. One of the main features of this legislation is the fact that the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park is the first marine park to be created by two levels of government without any land changing hands. Both governments will continue to fulfil their respective responsibilities. The park is made up entirely of marine areas and covers 1,138 square kilometres.

In order to promote local involvement, the acts passed by Quebec and by Canada confirm the creation of a co-ordinating committee whose membership is to be determined by the federal and provincial ministers. The committee's mandate is to recommend to the ministers responsible measures to achieve the master plan's objectives. The plan is to be reviewed with the people of the community who are aware of the activities taking place in the marine park. This gives great pleasure to the people of the north shore and the south shore alike. My colleague is from the north shore. I am from the south shore and everyone is happy.

This was a first, a fine example of success, and I do not understand why the 28 other marine parks did not use the same model. Is it because this is a Quebec model? Are people so sceptical? Are they so unreasonable that they will not transpose a success from one place to another part of Canada?

Another interesting example is phase III of the St. Lawrence action plan, which was announced in June 1998 and which also

Government Orders

allows for extensive work to be done in the St. Lawrence River. That initiative is also an unquestionable success.

Those are two successful initiatives that should be used as models. Unfortunately the government is proposing an act that creates overlap within the federal administration because we will have Heritage Canada's marine conservation areas, Fisheries and Oceans' marine protected areas and Environment Canada's marine and wildlife reserves. This will generate confusion. It will not ensure a single management structure but rather a lot of discussions, opinions and ambiguity, thus adversely affecting the effectiveness of the decision making process.

I will refrain from talking about the phony and failed consultation process—the participation rate was 5%—about the concerns and the agitation in fisheries, or about the interference in sectors such as transportation in marine conservation areas, public safety and research.

In conclusion, the future is rooted in the past. We have a success story, the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park, and we have a failure in that Heritage Canada is incapable of protecting ecosystems in existing national parks, according to the 1996 report of the auditor general.

In light of this, we wonder if Parks Canada will be able to protect the ecological integrity of our national parks and we wonder why we should not follow the example of the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park.

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add a small point here leaving most of the time to my colleague, the parliamentary secretary to the minister, who will address the substance of the committee report to the House.

Before doing so, however, I would just like to perhaps spend a couple of seconds on the comments by the hon. member for Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, who devotes his time not to speaking to Bill C-8 but to casting invective at several members of this House, myself included. He has become a specialist in invective. I will not stoop to such an approach, of slinging mud when one has nothing important to say.

The only thing that I will say is that I work very often in committee with the hon. members for Jonquière, Repentigny, Laurentides and Portneuf, and they all know my true character.

• (1220)

I have spoken about the environment here in the House on a number of occasions, sometimes even against my party, the government, when my conscience dictated. People will judge for themselves whether or not what he said is true.

With all due respect for all members of the House, I would like to clarify a very important issue. It was said that Bill C-8 interferes in provincial jurisdiction. But this is not the case, and there was a debate on this in committee.

I chaired the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage when Bill C-8 was being considered and this issue was debated. So that there would be absolutely no doubt about this important issue of provincial and federal jurisdiction, the government agreed to introduce an amendment, which is part of the report tabled in the House, to say that if provincial jurisdiction over the seabed were challenged, a federal-provincial agreement would then be required before there could be any action on Bill C-8.

This therefore means that each province has a veto, and if it does not agree that a jurisdiction is completely federal, there will then be no federal-provincial agreement. There is therefore no possibility under Bill C-8 that any provincial jurisdiction will be affected.

I believe that this is a fundamental point that needs to be cleared up, because all that I heard from Bloc Québécois members was that the federal government was interfering in provincial jurisdiction. This amendment will clearly completely prevent that. I believe that Bill C-8, as it stands, is a reasonable bill, and I hope that it will become law as soon as possible.

That having been said, I am very happy to turn the floor over to my colleague, who will speak to the House about the substance of the report.

[English]

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, who was the chair of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, for explaining the government's position with respect to creating marine conservation areas.

This bill is about partnership. It is about consultation. It is about people wanting the legislation to occur. The important thing is, when our colleagues from the Bloc Québécois spoke out that this was a violation of the rights of Quebecers, I would submit that they have not read the legislation at all.

As chair of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage said, the standing committee discussed the concern about what would happen if the province owned part of the seabed. If it does, or if any part of it is contested, the province must enter into an agreement with the federal government to actually transfer ownership of that area of land to the federal government before we can ever proceed with this.

There has been a lot of talk over the Saguenay—St. Lawrence Marine Park model. That is only one model. In that case it was an undisputed fact that the seabed was under provincial control.

Government Orders

Where that was the case we passed two pieces of legislation. They were mirror legislation. It is just another way of doing it.

What Bill C-8 tries to do is actually create the framework which would allow us to begin consultations, to work with community groups and coastal communities to ensure that it is in their best interests that these areas are created.

The critic from the official opposition also noted that that party had some concerns about low flying aircraft and the Minister of Canadian Heritage imposing regulations over aircraft. The legislation does not allow the Minister of Canadian Heritage to do just anything she wants. Again if we look at the bill, this is a true bill about consultation and partnership. Before any regulation can be passed, it has to be done in conjunction with the Minister of Transport.

There were other concerns about whether this should be an act that is administered by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans or whether it should be something the Minister of the Environment should administer. All those ministries are complementary to what this bill is trying to do. We are trying to balance conservation with sustainability. The Oceans Act already provides for conservation, as the critic from the NDP has said. The Minister of the Environment is responsible for habitat but the Department of Canadian Heritage is responsible for preserving Canada's heritage.

• (1225)

I would also like to take this opportunity to address the amendments the government has proposed. These amendments are essentially technical in nature. They deal with the fact that the Parks Canada Agency Act has been passed. Our amendments reflect the passage of that bill. As well another motion reflects the passage of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act because at the time the bill was tabled, it had not yet been passed.

There is another minor technical amendment which deals with the recommendation brought forward by the standing committee. I am specifically referring to Motion No. 15 which talks about including traditional aboriginal ecological knowledge in clause 8 of the bill.

For members who are here listening, we are proposing essentially all technical amendments today. I have no further comments on the motions in Group No. 2.

Mr. Dennis Gruending (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to report stage of Bill C-8.

The New Democratic Party wants to restate its support for the principle involved in the bill. However as we have stated previously, we cannot support the bill in its present form. I am going to make a few general comments before getting into the specifics of the motions moved.

Our repeated efforts in committee to improve Bill C-8 were defeated at every turn. We think the amendments would have clarified protection, conservation and jurisdictional issues which were raised by many witnesses, communities and opposition parties throughout the legislative review. However, as in many other times and places in the House the committee process has been frustrated by the government.

We intend to fully outline our concerns at third reading. They are concerns the NDP has repeatedly raised on other parks and environmental bills in the 36th Parliament. These are concerns which all too often the Liberal and Alliance parties continue to ignore.

If I may use an analogy, the Liberal promises and talk on the environment are a little like the constitution of Myanmar, the country formerly known as Burma. That country has a wonderful constitution but the government's distasteful actions are contrary to the fine language in that constitution. If I may extend the analogy, the Liberal government makes all kinds of sanctimonious comments and promises about the environment, but its actions, or perhaps more accurately its lack of action, give it away.

The Canadian environmental protection bill introduced in the last parliament was derailed by an election, and there may be a parallel here as well. It died on the order paper. In this current parliament a much weaker bill has been introduced. Similarly the species at risk act which was around in a somewhat different form in the last parliament died on the order paper when an election was called and was reintroduced into the House during this parliament as Bill C-33. It is weaker legislation than we would have had with the previous bill.

This is a disturbing trend with the government. It has little or nothing to show on its environmental record, something which I think must give it a bit of pause, or perhaps it will not as we enter the next few weeks.

Finally, the commissioner for the environment reported last spring that the federal and provincial governments had an accord on smog abatement signed about a dozen years ago. He said that nothing really has happened. He also said that 5,000 people a year in Canada are dying as a result of bad air.

This is the general context in which I would like to address the specifics of the bill. I could do well by quoting from the newest member of the Liberal caucus who was once a heritage critic for our party when he spoke to the bill previously. He said:

The Liberal government's repeated statement to Canadians that the high standards of environmental protection are being met is not true. There is continued devolution and abdication of environmental responsibilities. This government can sign a piece of paper and have a photo opportunity for the news. Then the government has a program review and always cuts the budget and at the same time says that things are going great.

Government Orders

• (1230)

This is a quote from the newest member of the Liberal caucus completely panning the record of the party which he now embraces.

I will now speak to the motions in Group No. 2. The NDP supports Motion No. 6, an effort we believe for clarification and continuity between relevant acts. This is another example of legislation that requires improvement at this final stage of the legislative process.

The NDP will support Motion No. 15, an effort to clarify the important contribution that aboriginal ecological knowledge plays in the environment and ecosystem management. The NDP has consistently fought for similar amendments throughout this entire parliament in an effort to recognize the important role that traditional knowledge can play to foster a greater understanding between cultures and the importance of respect for the land and nature's processes and unique relationships.

The NDP notes that the Canadian Alliance Motion No. 35 provides direction for increased public participation with affected aviation associations and provincial aviation councils. We also support this motion.

I want to quickly mention that the government's lack of consultation in air transportation matters is legendary, as was most obviously seen in its granting to Air Canada an effective monopoly over Canadian consumers without any concomitant regulation. This was an abrogation of moral responsibility to passengers. The government has also downloaded safety and operation costs on to small communities by privatizing airports. I might also mention the MOX shipments which have arrived in Canada without emergency clean-up plans when other countries such as the United States deem these shipments as unsafe practices. We point to these as other examples of where the government has not consulted on transportation matters, and that is true in this bill as well.

The NDP cannot support the Alliance's motions that will open marine areas for various facets of development. We believe this defeats the purpose of protecting marine areas for the enjoyment and use of future generations. We believe, unfortunately, that the Alliance does not understand the basic tenet for our national parks, which is long term management and not off and on protection that suits the whims of oil or mining companies.

We would like to draw the House's attention to Alliance Motion No. 52 which proposes to delete the need to take measures to prevent environmental damage. We cannot support this motion. In fact, a precautionary approach to environmental mitigation is really becoming a basic international tenet. We hope that someday the Alliance Party will be able to demonstrate foresight and support prevention measures as well. Prevention makes a lot more econom-

ic and environmental sense than cleaning up after the fact or trying to recapture the horses once they have left the stall, as we used to say on the farm. This is common sense and really a basic credo.

Alliance Motion No. 54 provides clarity on reserve scheduling. We think it could help to ensure the federal government continues to settle aboriginal land claims in a fair, just and consistent manner. The NDP will support this motion. We are pleased, in this case, that the Alliance recognizes the need for a timely and prompt settlement of aboriginal reserves, as will be outlined in schedule 1.

As I mentioned, we will be making further comments on the bill at third reading stage. However, to sum up, we think the bill in principle is fine. As in many pieces of environmental and other legislation, for that matter, the bill falls far short of what the Liberals say they intend to do about the environment. They talk the talk but do not walk the walk.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to this bill on behalf of my party. I would like to take this opportunity to commend our heritage critic, the member for Portneuf, and our environment critic, the member for Jonquière, for their excellent work.

From the outset, I must say that even though the Bloc Québécois will oppose this bill, that decision must not be taken as evidence that our party is against environmental protection measures, on the contrary.

On behalf of all my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois who are here in the House, I want to state that we certainly can appreciate the work done in our regions by the hundreds of volunteers involved in environmental protection. My riding is home to the Cap-Tourmente wildlife refuge. Other areas also need to be protected, including the shores of Île d'Orléans, the bay near Beauport and the shore in the Beaupré area.

I want to take this opportunity to salute the many volunteers who work for an organization called Ducks Unlimited, which is dedicated to protecting the environment in general and waterfowl in particular. Ducks Unlimited raises funds privately without government grants, makes these funds grow and creates marshes for conservation purposes. Some members of Ducks Unlimited are hunters who are in favour of a reasonable, structured and controlled hunting program, to ensure that the resources will still be there in the future.

I want to stress the fact that even though the Bloc Québécois is opposed to the bill, it supports environmental protection measures.

There are three reasons why I oppose this bill. The Bloc Québécois members who spoke before me accurately explained

them. Let me first elaborate on one reason in particular, namely the fact that, with Bill C-8, Heritage Canada is proposing the establishment of a new structure, namely marine conservation areas, that will duplicate Fisheries and Oceans' marine protected areas and Environment Canada's marine reserves.

If this bill is passed in its present form, we will be faced with an incredible administrative maze with three departments overlapping and all the costs that such a situation involves. Indeed, these new structures do not appear by magic. They require additional human and financial resources. Now Heritage Canada wants to get involved in this area, even though Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada are already present. This will create an administrative maze.

We also know, given the personality of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, that this is undoubtedly motivated by reasons of visibility. Let us not forget that this same minister launched a flag campaign that cost Canadian taxpayers tens of millions of dollars.

In the end, if we in the Bloc Québécois are speaking out against this administrative maze, it is not because we are against the public servants who are part of these structures. This is not the point. Whenever a new structure is set up, who is the common denominator when it comes to paying for it? It is always the same one who pays, the taxpayer, who is sick and tired of paying taxes and believes he is not getting value for his money. The fact that the Minister of Finance is bragging about a surplus that will likely reach \$157 billion over the next five years is proof enough that the government is taking in way too much in taxes.

• (1240)

This should not be cause for joy. It is proof that, first, the government is no good at forecasting and cannot count, and second, that it collects too much tax. It should cut taxes as we, in the Bloc Québécois, have been saying for years.

Another reason the Bloc Québécois is opposed to the bill is that instead of favouring negotiation, as was the case for the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park, the federal government may now establish marine conservation areas regardless of Quebec's jurisdiction over its territory and the environment.

Again I salute the work of my colleague the member for Jonquière, who recognized that the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park was a good thing for her area, the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, because it was to be developed in partnership with the Government of Quebec.

The member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord was happy too. But in the days when he used to sit at the left of the Bloc Québécois members, on the Progressive Conservative Party benches, he used to say to us regularly "We Quebecers should stick together. We should not let the Liberal government get away with what it is doing. It does not

Government Orders

make sense to be governed by such nincompoops for another four years". We are far too young to have Alzheimer's disease; we remember well what the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord used to say.

Now he sits by the curtains in the last row. Exactly six and a half weeks have passed between his resignation from the Progressive Conservative Party and his first visit to this House. I have made note of this. We have a fine motto in Quebec "I remember". The hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, who is now sitting by the curtains, stayed away from the House for six and a half weeks. Surely he was working hard to represent his constituents. But the people of Chicoutimi sent him to this parliament to defend their interests.

Why am I talking of the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park—which brings me to the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord? Because apparently the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord—this was in the news at noon—is tempted to join the Liberal Party. A token investment in an aluminium processing research centre should be announced this weekend, followed by the announcement that the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord has sold his allegiance for a mess of potage.

I want to tell the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord and the people of Chicoutimi who are now listening, the people of Ville-de-La-Baie, Chicoutimi, Saint-Honoré, l'Anse-Saint-Jean and Bas-Saguenay, that I hope they will remember that this turncoat who had their confidence to defend an allegiance let himself be bought to join a government he had criticized and condemned. The rules do not allow me to repeat here what the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord said about the prime minister. The British tradition and our rules keep me from repeating his words, but we will bring them up in due course.

If the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord really intends to do this, whether it is as an independent, a Conservative or a Liberal, the people of Chicoutimi will be waiting for him just around the corner and will have a chance to correct the error they made on June 2, 1997, when they elected the hon. member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

In closing let me say that the third reason we from the Bloc Québécois, are opposed to this bill is because Heritage Canada wants to establish marine conservation areas while it is unable to protect the ecosystems in the existing national parks.

I repeat that the Bloc Québécois is in favour of measures to protect the environment. That is why we supported the establishment of the marine park.

Moreover, the Bloc Québécois is fully aware that the Government of Quebec is taking steps to protect the environment and, in particular, the seabed.

Government Orders

• (1245)

The Government of Quebec is also willing to work toward this goal with the federal government, as evidenced by phase III of the St. Lawrence action plan, and the shoreline municipalities in my riding of Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans can also appreciate this.

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, what I am about to say exactly matches the last remarks of the previous speaker, my colleague the hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans.

Before becoming a member of parliament I worked in parks and recreation at the municipal level. I was a recreationist. I had studied in this field. Over the course of many years I visited a number of national parks in Canada.

For example, this summer I visited Fundy National Park. One can say that there are really incredible and beautiful natural attractions there. I do not wish, like my colleague, to say that the employees of Parks Canada are not doing their work properly and that they are not taking the time to do it right, but the fact is they do not have the resources they need.

I would like to quote from the 1996 report of the auditor general. In chapter 31, on the management of national parks by Parks Canada, the auditor general makes the following statement after studying a sample:

In the six national parks we reviewed, Parks Canada's biophysical information was out-of-date or incomplete except for La Mauricie.

It seems that everything is fine in La Mauricie Park. Curiously it is in the Prime Minister's riding. It seems that there was considerable effort and investment in this riding by the federal government, sometimes the investments are made in businesses, sometimes, invoices are missing, but I will not go into that.

It is a beautiful park. It appears that, with the exception of this park, there are problems. According to the report:

Monitoring the ecological condition of the ecosystems in national parks is a high priority, according to Parks Canada policies and guidelines. However, in many national parks, the ecological conditions are not monitored on a regular, continuing basis.

It also states that management plans for 18 national parks were an average of 12 years old, even though they ought to be reviewed every five years.

The report goes on:

The park management plans provide strategic direction for the protection of park ecosystems.

The auditor general added:

Delays in preparing management plans and ecosystem conservation plans reduce Parks Canada's ability to preserve the ecological integrity of national parks.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage wants to create a new structure because Parks Canada proposes a new structure, the marine conservation areas, which will duplicate the Fisheries and Oceans Canada marine protection areas and the Environment Canada protected marine areas.

I can claim some knowledge in this area, even a considerable amount of knowledge about parks. I studied that field at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. Parks were part of the curriculum and we had access to data. I have retained my interest in this area and have continued to meet with experts in the field.

People may wonder what the differences are between "marine conservation areas", "Fisheries and Oceans marine protection areas", and "protected marine areas".

Judging by what we heard from public servants, the Fisheries and Oceans people were getting their terminology all mixed up.

• (1250)

Now that there finally was some kind of consensus with regard to fisheries management plans, these people are not too happy about this new structure that could create duplication within the federal government. We in the Bloc Québécois have often said that the federal government should be careful not to duplicate structures that already exist in Quebec, that it should work in partnership with us instead, as in the case of the Saguenay park. In that case, it was done through special legislation that dealt specifically with that park. It is a good example that should be followed more often. It is a good example of governments working together.

Instead of that, there is infighting in federal government. The right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. Three departments are involved. I do not know if this bodes ill or well for the future of fish in Canada.

I thought the Department of Canadian Heritage was mainly responsible for culture and history. I understand there is such a thing as a natural heritage, but structures, like those at Fisheries and Oceans Canada, already exist within the federal government to deal with the protection of wildlife. It goes without saying that protecting the fisheries and all marine species means protecting the sea floor. We must protect the shores and the flora of the St. Lawrence River as well as those of Canada's oceans.

However, when committee members and public servants themselves voice concern, we too should be concerned. These days, with the 300% increase in the surplus announced by the Minister of Finance, some bills just reappear, like Bill C-8, formerly known as

Government Orders

Bill C-48. We have heard about it for many years and now, here it is again. It suddenly becomes important to invest money or to promise to invest money before the election. In the end, they are unable to clean things up within the federal government and between the various departments. What a waste. What a bad example the federal government is giving the provinces.

When the government cannot respect jurisdictions and creates duplication, confusion or dissatisfaction, it is going against the principles of good business management. What would big business do? Some businesses merge and amalgamate to prevent duplication and unnecessary spending. Some experts even say they go too fast in some cases. The federal government is establishing three structures that will in essence deal with the same thing, plant and animal life. Now it is trying to add a heritage dimension on top of all that. I hope that it does not want to turn the fish into objects to be put in a bowl once they are dead. I hope this is not what they want to do.

I know the people well, but I do not want to make jokes about a serious matter. Environmental and wildlife protection is a very serious matter. My colleague from Jonquière keeps bringing up this issue in caucus meetings. Each time she rises to speak—we sometimes find it annoying, but we must give her credit for her strong commitment—she tries to drive the point across that this issue must be given priority. I agree with her. Members will understand that, as a former director of parks and recreation, I am very much interested in that issue.

• (1255)

Since my time is almost up, I will conclude by saying that before investing in new structures, setting up new programs, doing new things and spending new moneys, the federal government should streamline and clean up its own act. It should develop better conservation plans.

It should do what the auditor general said it should do in 1996. Four years have passed already, and it has not acted on it yet. People in the environment community, public servants, volunteer organizations, such as Ducks Unlimited Canada, and every environmental group in Canada, all those people are concerned.

We are more concerned about Quebec, but we think the government should work in closer co-operation with provincial governments, particularly that of Quebec. That government too has jurisdiction over that area, as well as programs and structures.

I hope the Liberal government will pay attention to what we are saying.

[*English*]

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As a result of all party

consultations, I would ask that you seek unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That the motions on the notice paper to amend Bill C-8, standing in the name of the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, be deemed moved and seconded, and before this House for debate in Group No. 2.

I am speaking to Motions Nos. 32 and 34.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to adopt the motion by the hon. member for Athabasca?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 32

That Bill C-8, in Clause 16, be amended by replacing lines 14 to 16 on page 10 with the following:

“(j) for the control of aircraft to prevent danger or disturbances to wildlife and wildlife habitat, respecting the”

Motion No. 34

That Bill C-8, in Clause 16, be amended by deleting lines 6 to 9 on page 11.

The Deputy Speaker: Those two motions are now before the House as are all the other motions that we are debating in Group No. 2.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in this House to speak to Bill C-8. At the start of my remarks I would like to pay tribute to the hard work done by the member for Jonquière to protect the environment.

Bill C-8 concerns the creation of a network of national marine conservation areas, the marine equivalent of national parks. This network would be representative of 29 marine regions in Canada, covering the waters of the Great Lakes, inland waters including swamps, the territorial sea and the 200 mile exclusive economic zone.

With this bill, the government will set the boundaries of the marine conservation areas in all the regions in Canada, in consultation with the people of the area. This phrase is very important.

Bill C-8 gives the governor in council, on the recommendation of the Ministers of Fisheries and Oceans and Canadian Heritage, the right to limit or prohibit activities in commercial zones in order to protect marine resources.

It also gives the governor in council, on the recommendation of the Ministers of Transport and Canadian Heritage, the right to limit or prohibit transportation in marine conservation areas.

Government Orders

It is important to note that 1998 was set aside as the year of the oceans by the UN.

The most important activities held to draw attention to this event include the world's fair in Lisbon, Portugal, and the adoption of the ocean charter by UNESCO in September 1997 in St. John's, Newfoundland.

The government claims it is important to preserve the natural marine ecosystems and their balance to maintain biologic diversity. It says there is a need to establish a representative network of marine conservation areas, whose scope and features will ensure the maintenance of healthy marine ecosystems.

The Bloc Québécois supports environmental protection measures. We have always given our support. It gave its support when the government introduced legislation to establish the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park.

In addition, in my riding of Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, the Argenteuil Parti Québécois and the PQ subcommittee on the environment for the Laurentian region submitted briefs to the BAPE. People wanted to show their support for the protection of the environment, particularly ecosystems in the groundwater, marine conservation areas, forests and other areas.

• (1300)

In 1986, the federal government launched the marine conservation area program. In 1988, the National Parks Act was amended to take into account the establishment of temporary protected marine areas. Since then, the following areas were created: Fathom Five National Marine Park in the Georgian Bay, the Gwaii Haanas marine conservation reserve in British Columbia, and, of course, the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park.

The park is over 1,100 square kilometres and has a unique tourist component, the importance of which we are just beginning to grasp. This marine park was 14 years in the making. Its management is shared by the provincial governments and, yes, the federal government.

The project began in 1985. It took quite a long time to create the park because of the public consultations, environmental studies and negotiations that were required. That precedent should have served as a model for the federal government in establishing other marine conservation areas.

It should be pointed out that co-operative mechanisms already exist to protect ecosystems in the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park, and in the St. Lawrence River, under the agreement entitled "St. Lawrence action plan, phase III", which was signed by all federal and provincial departments concerned and which provides for an investment of \$250 million over five years in various activities relating to the St. Lawrence River.

Therefore, the Bloc Québécois is opposed to this bill, first because it is not clear whether Quebec's territorial integrity will be respected. Second, the Bloc Québécois is opposed to this bill because Heritage Canada is proposing the establishment of a new structure, that is the marine conservation areas, which will simply duplicate Fisheries and Oceans' marine protected areas and Environment Canada's marine wildlife reserves. There are many people doing the same thing.

Quebec's jurisdiction is recognized under the British North America Act of 1867. So, there is overlap within the federal government. With the bill, the government wants to establish marine conservation areas under the responsibility of Heritage Canada, marine protection areas under the responsibility of Fisheries and Oceans and marine wildlife areas under the responsibility of Environment Canada. As I said before, three cooks might spoil the broth.

The same site could have more than one designation. It could be designated as a marine conservation area by Heritage Canada and as a marine protection area by Fisheries and Oceans. In both cases, it is said that the local population will have a major role to play in the establishment of marine protection areas. The Bloc is concerned about problems related to the bureaucracy.

The same area, according to Fisheries and Oceans, could fall under different categories and be subject to different regulations. We know that when more than one department is involved in a project, there are difficulties and additional costs to the taxpayers.

I think the government would have been better to make sure that ecosystems are managed by one department only. The departments involved should sign a framework agreement to delegate all of their responsibilities over ecosystems to the same department while respecting constitutional jurisdictions.

I also want to mention the fact that the preliminary consultations were a failure. Furthermore, during hearings by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, almost all groups from coastal areas heard condemned the bill on the grounds that the system proposed by Heritage Canada would duplicate part of the work done by Fisheries and Oceans and create confusion.

• (1305)

On February 11, 1999, Patrick McGuinness, vice-president of the Fisheries Council of Canada, told the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage that it was simply inefficient, cumbersome public administration. I remember because I was there. In his view, bringing forward this marine conservation area initiative in its own act under the responsibility of a separate minister and a separate department was unacceptable. His conclusion was that the bill should be withdrawn.

Government Orders

Jean-Claude Grégoire, a member of the board of directors of the Alliance des pêcheurs professionnels du Québec, which represents almost 80% of all professional fishers in Quebec, also told the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage that there were numerous problems. In his testimony, he mentioned that because such an area is scientifically inaccessible, you tend to work a lot more with unconfirmed data or assumptions of what exists than with actual scientific knowledge of what you are dealing with.

Lastly, I want to point out that the Bloc Québécois believes that the consultation conducted by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in Quebec with respect to the introduction of marine conservation areas was also a failure.

Furthermore, the Bloc Québécois knows that the Government of Quebec is also engaged in initiatives to protect the environment and submerged lands and water in particular. Bill C-8 does not respect Quebec's territorial integrity.

In conclusion, the Bloc Québécois is in favour of measures to protect the environment, but opposed to Bill C-8 for all the reasons I have mentioned.

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-8 at report stage.

I am sorry that this government has introduced such a bill. In my opinion, it is a bill that should never have seen the light of day. Why? Because the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec had finally managed to innovate with the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park. This park is located in my riding. It is a very beautiful park. I urge all Canadians to come and visit it. It was through the framework agreement on the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park that the two levels of government set a precedent. Where did this precedent come from? From the community.

For years, people in my riding worked together to really make something of this enchanting site. Everyone got together and said that they must do something. They called on the provincial and federal governments.

As a result of the community's efforts, the two levels of government sat down and said "Why not do something really special?"

This was the model that the federal government should have used, if it wanted to create 28 new marine conservation areas. It could have said "We have a model, so we are going ahead". But no. What did it do? It decided to reinvent the wheel and introduce a new bill, even though we already had a good one.

I think that one of my colleagues was right when he said that, in this government, the right hand does not know what the left one is doing. I think that this government is deaf and blind, but not silent.

It is always reinventing the wheel. It never learns. I do not know why.

It seems to me that there are some very serious problems in Canada today requiring a major investment of funds. There is poverty, and all the issues to do with young people. But the government wants to put millions into creating parks. That is not what is needed right now.

• (1310)

I think this government is out of touch with reality. I think it is suffering from self-importance.

In my part of the country, when we say someone is self-important, it means that person no longer believes that he or she can trust other people and listen to them.

I think that, with this bill, the federal government is showing that it is self-important. Right now, the federal government has some cleaning up to do in its own backyard. This bill will allow the heritage minister to interfere in other departments, including Fisheries and Oceans Canada. I know that Environment Canada's staff as well as its budget have been cut for a number of years.

Why not take the money the government is willing to spend with this bill and use it to meet crucial environmental needs? We hear constantly that the environment has always been a low priority for this government. However we know that during the next election campaign the Liberals will claim that the environment will be their second priority, after health, as the prime minister has already told us.

Canadians will not buy that because by bringing forward such bills the government is showing us that it could not care less about the environment.

Let us just take Bill C-33 as an example. I examined the documents that were given to me by the Bloc Québécois heritage critic. Bill C-33 is aimed at protecting species at risk. Fisheries and Oceans Canada already has legislative authority to act in order to protect species at risk.

With Bill C-33, the government is trying to interfere in other federal departments and in the provinces' ministries.

The lack of harmony orchestrated by this government is obvious. When faced with such lack of harmony, one has to stop and say "Let us sit back and see where to invest the money that is needed".

This is a joke. The environment is an ever increasing concern in the heart, mind and daily life of people.

As parliamentarians, for the sake our future, our children's and grandchildren's, we do not have the right to let the environment be put on the back burner.

Government Orders

This must be a concern to us. The concern right now is to find money to invest to deal with our listeners' main concern.

It makes no sense to blow up balloons and say "Look how nice my balloon is". At home we call this cellophane. I do not know if it is how you call it. Cellophane wrinkles easily and then it is ruined; however when you stretch it, it becomes smooth, and then there is nothing left.

I believe we must act in a responsible manner. Being responsible is part of what is expected of us as parliamentarians.

The government is not acting responsibly with Bill C-8. The parliamentary committee spent many hours studying a bill that should never have been introduced to begin with. We have the striking and magical example of the agreement on the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park. Again, we have to start with things we already have instead of reinventing the wheel.

This bill deals with environment and the protection of marine areas. We must give Canadians and Quebecers areas of which they will be proud. They will then be able to say "We wanted to have those areas and the governments have met our expectations".

I do not believe that the consultations on this bill have allowed people to voice their concerns properly.

• (1315)

It is important for this government to consult Ducks Unlimited and several other environmental groups and say to them "We will listen to you: what do you expect us to do for your environment?"

If they do not understand, they should come to my part of the country. We will show them what we have accomplished and what it is important to do in order to develop areas that future generations will be proud to have.

The Bloc Québécois will vote against this bill. The environment must be a concern for us, but we should not spend money where it is not necessary.

[English]

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to this bill before when it was called Bill C-48, in 1998-99. I have attended some of the committee meetings where the bill was discussed. I have ensured that we had some witnesses from the west coast because essentially their voices were not being heard and had not been heard in the so-called consultation process.

I thought that somehow I could help to have their voices heard in the committee process, but I still have a thing or two to learn about the process. Even though I had witnesses from the west coast at committee, they certainly were not treated with the deference that I thought witnesses should be treated with. Their input basically was rejected as being inadequate for the process the government had set

up, which is a ridiculous posture and a ridiculous point of view to take.

That point of view was promoted by the chair of the committee. I took issue with the chair of the committee with regard to how the witnesses were being treated. Rather than achieving what I thought was neutrality from the chair, I ended up being lectured as well. I have not had happy experiences with the bill.

The last time I talked about the bill I complained about the fact that 29 regions in the country were going to get these trophy marine conservation areas under the Minister of Heritage, previously the environment minister. This is an environmental bill, not a heritage bill. We did not know where these 29 areas were.

How can we respond to the government? How can industry groups and other groups respond to a piece of legislation without knowing the specifics?

When I challenged the government to do that, the parliamentary secretary suggested that I was somehow being very controversial and asked if I could name a single area where I would object to a marine conservation area. My response at that time was that if the parliamentary secretary could tell me which industry would be targeted by the Americans as a result of the government's then split run legislation which was so ill considered, I would be able to return in kind and that would be a good barter. Of course neither myself or the parliamentary secretary were prepared to take that any further.

At this point we have received a lot of information from the coastal perspective. A marine conservation bill obviously has to consider the coastal stakeholders. We have heard from some stakeholders from Nunavut, from the Atlantic provinces and from the Pacific coast. Overwhelmingly they talk about the negative consequences of this proposed legislation.

• (1320)

I can talk about mining, for example. We cannot create areas that restrict activity except by special permit when we have not even done an inventory to see what is there. As one of the proponents for undersea harvesting said, if we had had this kind of legislation a long time ago Columbus would have never sailed to America, because it is so exclusionary in terms of what activities are allowed and what activities are not.

When we look at the potential mineral resources and other resources on the seabed, it is not right to restrict activity. One of the proposals has taken some shape since the last debate in the House of Commons. We are talking about 9,000 square kilometres of lake bed in this case, I think, in the Great Lakes. Without an inventory we do not even know what we are locking up. Locking it up pre-empts an inventory in a sense, because why would anyone bother? This has been pointed out.

I want to very quickly make reference to some of the witnesses we heard from in committee. Mr. Ainsworth from the west coast is the one I was referring to in my Columbus point. He said:

Columbus would never have left port if constrained by this principle. We would never embark on an airplane to soar en route to Ottawa with ozone-eating exhaust gases, injected right into the base of the stratosphere, if we really believed in the precautionary principle.

The precautionary principle is behind the way the legislation has been brought forward.

We heard from the mayor of Prince Rupert at the time, who said that west coast residents were not aware of any areas that required conservation on the north coast. He said that there was only consideration of an extension of South Moresby Park on the Queen Charlotte Islands, and that without adequate consultation the federal government has made north coast residents very suspicious. The park the mayor mentioned was created without the need for proposed legislation.

We heard from Pat Green, who is with the regional district in that area. Despite very good intelligence in terms of what the government was thinking of proposing in the way of marine conservation areas there, despite the fact that Mr. Green tried to give some shape to that in the discussions, despite the fact that the very bureaucrats responsible for administering this were available to the committee, there was a complete denial that there was any shape or form or contemplation of a marine conservation area for that part of the world.

That marine conservation area, if it proceeds in the way this legislation conceives of it, would pre-empt what has been a traditional fishery, the gillnetters and some of the other fishing activities in that area, without special permit. It would pre-empt what is looking to be more and more like a project that British Columbians will decide is a viable and worthwhile project, that is, north coast oil and gas.

This is very large area of concern. The concerns that have been expressed by industry, by local politicians and by the stakeholders really have not been brought into this whole discussion. They need to be. Here is a statement from the testimony at committee, which illustrates what I am talking about. This is from somebody with the International Council on Metals and the Environment:

To my knowledge, in western Canada in the industry, I'm the only person I've found who knows Bill C-48 [the predecessor to Bill C-8] in any way, shape or form. It's interesting to note as well that I don't see anybody from the Maritimes here on the witness stand. I don't know if that reflects the selection of witnesses at all, but I know there is concern in the Maritimes for the use of mineral potential in the offshore environment.

• (1325)

There has been undue haste, on the one hand, to make sure that this piece of legislation goes through this place without criticism.

Government Orders

On the other hand, the government has been very slow to push it ahead because it knows there is a lot of opposition to it.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motions in Group No. 2. The question is on Motion No. 4. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on Motion No. 4 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 8. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on Motion No. 8 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 10. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Government Orders

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on Motion No. 10 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 14. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on Motion No. 14 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 21. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on Motion No. 21 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 24. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on Motion No. 24 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 30. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

• (1330)

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on Motion No. 30 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 38. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on Motion No. 38 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 51. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

Government Orders

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on Motion No. 51 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 54. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 76(8), the recorded division on Motion No. 54 stands deferred.

That is it for Group No. 2. All the other votes apply. The votes have been called and all the others will be dealt with later. We have dealt with all the ones that have to be done now. When we get to the deferred divisions there will be a few more.

We will now put the motions in Group No. 3.

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-8 be amended by deleting Clause 9.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-8, in Clause 9, be amended by replacing line 3 on page 7 with the following:

“9. (1) The Minister shall, within three years”

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-8, in Clause 9, be amended by replacing line 13 on page 7 with the following:

“sion for ecosystem protection, academic research, recreational use, geological surveys, natural resources exploration, visitor use and any other human use and”

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-8, in Clause 9, be amended by replacing lines 21 to 26 on page 7 with the following:

“(3) Management plans shall balance the principles of ecosystem management and the precautionary principle with considerations of the fisheries, academic research, recreational use, geological surveys and natural resources exploration.”

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-8, in Clause 9, be amended by replacing lines 29 to 31 on page 7 with the following:

“agement, marine navigation, marine safety, academic research, recreational use, geological surveys and natural resources exploration are subject to agreements between the Minister, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Natural Resources.”

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 49

That Bill C-8 be amended by deleting Clause 28.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 50

That Bill C-8, in Clause 28, be amended by replacing line 10 on page 17 with the following:

“in evidence only with proof of the signature or”

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to get up and carry on with the debate on the motions in Group No. 3.

As I said earlier about Group No. 2, and I think some of these clauses refer to that as well, Canadian Heritage does seem a bit puzzling. I listened carefully to the committee chair's speech earlier about the fact that this is about preservation and making sure, for present and future generations, that this should fall under Canadian Parks. Of course we want to make sure future generations get to enjoy these marine conservation areas, but again, I do not think the government has come to grips with the very basics of it.

As I mentioned earlier when I finished up my remarks, if we are going to look at mineral resource extraction from these areas, the government says now, i.e. in the future, it would make sure it put the boundaries of these marine conservation areas in place so that it did not disrupt any mineral or resource extraction. Yet if we talk about future generations, what is going to happen if in seven months, ten years or fifty-three years we come up with some amazing technological device that is able to find, harvest and extract some of these resources or minerals? What do we do then? I believe the bill says it would be in perpetuity, that they would say “Sorry, we have a marine conservation area here and we cannot do a thing about it. It is there forever”.

● (1335)

I am pleased to see the member is looking through her notes. I hope she will be able to straighten that out and let us know that if in future years another Hibernia, for instance, were to come along there would be room in the bill for it. We are all very familiar with that. I think that would be a major thrill for everybody.

Let me refer specifically under Group No. 3 to Motion No. 18, which specifies that a marine conservation area management plan would have to take into account not only ecosystem protection but also academic research, recreational use, geological surveys, natural resources exploitation and visitor use. Each one of those would

Government Orders

include a huge area of concern, consultation and advisory committees.

It is one thing to talk about advisory committees, but it does seem strange sometimes that a government may be only keen to take one side of advice. I mentioned earlier a couple of committees that were struck today, right in this place. The government gave its word that it would just be electing chairs, nothing more. Then all of a sudden, once the Liberals got to the committees they sat down, and I am sure were having coffee and a pleasant visit, and the next we knew they wanted to deal with a couple of bills.

It does seem strange. When someone gives their word and their commitment, I would like to be able to take it as such. Surely it is not a good thing when people go back on their word. We would want to make sure when the government says advisory committees would be put in place and consultations would take place that we would get both sides of the equation.

My friend from northern Vancouver Island just made comments about some folks who came down from British Columbia as witnesses. Dear knows, that is a large part of the country. If we are talking about marine conservation, there is plenty of water out in B.C. They should be given the opportunity to give their advice, to participate in those consultations. But what happens?

It does not fit with the government's little agenda. It thanks them for coming in one of those big jets that gives lots of pollution. It is talking about the environment now. It thanks for them coming anyway and says that they can be shipped home.

Another thing the bill fails to do is strike a balance between environmental protection and other interests. Of course we need to weigh the pros and cons. If this is basically falling under national parks, surely we can look at the national parks. My home province of Alberta I think has about 60% of the land mass of the national parks in the country. Somewhere, somehow, we need to strike a balance between environmental preservation and human enjoyment of this.

I know the Minister of Canadian Heritage, under whose purview the bill falls, has made a trip to Banff, has made a trip to Jasper, and certainly has looked at the balance between environment and other interests. I know she has certainly some concerns about it, as everyone does. Although she will talk about scheduling delays or defaults or something or other, our minister for tourism, the Hon. Jon Havelock, has been waiting and wanting to meet with the hon. minister for some time now.

I am not sure if I can use the word stonewalling, but I think that certainly would be the sentiment he has in his desire to meet with the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Even though we are landlocked in Alberta, if this whole marine conservation area goes ahead certainly Alberta would express some of those very same concerns.

When talking about consultation, surely from the provincial level to the federal level, we should have consultations between ministers. It seems to me fairly simple. I mentioned earlier the struggle between federal and provincial negotiations and whose power supersedes whose. The member across tried to make us feel better or allay the fears or concerns by saying everything would be up to negotiation and everyone would just sit down and have coffee and a happy time and come up with an agreement.

I see members from B.C. across the way. I am dying to know if the member over there has felt very comfortable in the fact that her provincial government has worked with the federal government and everything is going along just tickety-boo. I will bet 10 bucks she would not, as a matter of fact. When these negotiations are being talked about, surely my minister, the Hon. Jon Havelock, is not the only one being shunned when we are talking about federal-provincial consultations and negotiations.

• (1340)

It is great to throw around that we are to consult and have advisory committees, but it is a very dangerous thing just to say "I will consult with the people who agree with me, and I do not really like listening to those other guys on the other side". Surely we need to make sure that does not go on.

Talking about the very tenuous balance between environment and sustainable development, there are people who go to Jasper and just love to spend a night or two in Jasper Park Lodge. I gave up tenting many years ago, having grown up on the west coast and having spent far too much time in a wet tent when I was young. I am sure there are others besides me who love to go to Jasper and do some skiing or whatever, and who want to stay in a hotel. That may be terribly capitalistic, but at the same time they want to make sure they have a chance to wander around Jasper Park Lodge or some of the fine hotels in that area, or Lake Louise or Banff.

I would also bet 10 bucks that a lot of members of the government have had a wonderful visit to one of the national parks, Banff or Jasper. I would also bet they stayed in one of those capitalistic, entrepreneurial places such as a hotel and ate in restaurants. I will bet they did not set up their Coleman stoves and just rough it, although it is a wonderful thing to do; it is great.

Many people need to realize there is a balance between environmental concerns and making sure that when they want to make use of those places or buy souvenirs for their children some of those places are in those parks, with a balance, of course.

When we talk about present and future generations we want to make sure we balance these environmental concerns. That is absolutely essential. However, they must be balanced with the interests of those individuals affected by the creation of particular

Government Orders

marine conservation areas. People live in the area. People fly their float planes over this area, as we talked about earlier.

I asked the people who were giving me briefings what would happen with jet boats, for instance. They said “We are not going to prohibit boats, but if in future times we decide jet boats are too noisy, or heaven forbid, Sea-Doos, we may be able to have the minister with the power to do so”. Sure, she could work in conjunction with the Minister of Transport, the Minister of the Environment, and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It all comes out of the same cat. If on the government side they decide they do not like Sea-Doos and they do not like big, noisy jet boats, they can just put a prohibition on them.

People are used to that lifestyle, and many of those who live in these proposed marine conservation areas are very responsible. I do not think people want to live there or holiday there just to take advantage of those areas. Many of those people are as environmentally concerned as any government member. We need to make sure the individuals who are affected by it would be able to have an amazing amount of input.

This is where I closed my remarks the last time I was speaking. There is a lack of adequate consultation with resources groups, aviation groups and other stakeholders. We should be able to tell them we will listen to their concerns. What about those who make their living by flying float planes up and down the B.C. coast, for instance, or the Atlantic coast?

The minister may all of a sudden say to them “We are going to consult with you. In other words, we will sort of listen for five minutes, but we already have the order in council or the regulations drawn up, and you too will be out of business”. Surely that is not a good balance in making sure we can live harmoniously in some of these areas.

I look forward to the members’ concerns about this and certainly possible solutions to the very real concerns. These are not just my concerns. As I say, I live in landlocked Alberta, and I am not sure we are looking at too many marine conservation areas. However, people from the west coast, the east coast and the Great Lakes will need these very real concerns addressed, and unfortunately I have yet to hear any of them being addressed.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak once again this afternoon to Bill C-8, an act respecting marine conservation areas, at report stage.

In the motions in Group No. 3, the Bloc is proposing that clause 9 dealing with management plans be deleted. Through this clause, the government will draw up a management plan five years after the establishment of the marine conservation area.

• (1345)

This does not make any sense. There will be no management plan beforehand, only afterwards. The government should go back to the agreement it signed with the Government of Quebec and all the stakeholders to establish the Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park.

The Saguenay—St. Lawrence marine park was established jointly by the Quebec and federal governments in 1997, when they passed mirror legislation. I wonder if members opposite know what that is. Mirror legislation is passed with the support of everyone concerned, following extensive consultation of all the various stakeholders. These people said “This is what we want”. They wanted a plan and the governments told them that they would pass mirror legislation. Under this legislation, the Quebec and federal governments agreed there would not be no transfer of land. The two governments will continue to exercise their respective jurisdictions. I hope our colleagues opposite now understand what it means.

Second, the park is located entirely in a marine setting. We should not forget that. It covers 1,138 square kilometres. We can just imagine how huge that is. Its boundaries may be changed by mutual consent and following public consultation by both levels of government.

As members can see, public consultation is always carried out because there is a management plan. To facilitate community involvement, Quebec and Ottawa agreed to create a co-ordinating committee, whose membership is determined by the federal minister and the provincial minister. That is what a management plan is all about.

The committee’s mandate is to make recommendations to the minister responsible with regard to measures which should be taken to meet the objectives set out in the management plan. The plan will be reviewed jointly by both governments at least every seven years.

We can see that before the marine park was established through mirror legislation, there was a management plan. Under clause 9 of Bill C-8, a management plan would be prepared five years after the establishment of a marine conservation area. I think this is absolutely ridiculous.

As I was saying earlier, this bill should have never been introduced. We in the Bloc Québécois also think that clause 28, which deals with proceedings by way of summary conviction, should be deleted.

There should have been a management plan with specific benchmarks right from the start to avoid doing everything all over again. I do not know what language we have to use to talk to the government and tell it that enough is enough, that we already have

Tributes

mirror legislation containing a management plan. We have legislation on marine areas that was drafted in co-operation with all federal and provincial stakeholders. We already have that. So why is the government setting up another structure which will only create further confusion? It will be like the tower of Babel.

Perhaps hon. members do not know about the tower of Babel. People started to talk different languages and could no longer understand each other. One minute they were all talking the same language and the next they were all talking at the same time in different languages and no longer understood each other. A self-styled responsible government should not be setting up such a monstrous structure.

I believe the environment is an important issue and so are the marine conservation areas. Before the government puts the bill to a vote, let it come to my riding. We will explain how to go about this. If it does not remember how we went about establishing a conservation area in 1997, which is not exactly the distant past, we will sit down with the government and we will explain it all.

This bill is a waste of members' time and a waste of money. Members have more important issues to discuss. We will support the Bloc Québécois amendments in Group No. 5 and we will ask that this bill be withdrawn.

• (1350)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to add to the dialogue on Bill C-8. I will quote the hon. member for Churchill River who said:

Adequate resources must be defined and committed to pollution monitoring. The Liberal government's repeated statement to Canadians that the high standards of environmental protection are being met is not true. There is continued devolution and abdication of environmental responsibilities. This government can sign a piece of paper and have a photo opportunity for the news. Then the government has a program review and always cuts the budget and at the same time says that things are going great. This cannot continue with Bill C-8.

Those were the words of the member for Churchill River.

The Speaker: We will have a small change today in our regular schedule. I announced to the House that last Sunday a former Speaker of the House, Mr. Marcel Lambert, elected in 1957, who was a member of the Progressive Conservative Party, who became Speaker of the House of Commons and then subsequently returned to the benches to serve with the Progressive Conservative Party, passed away. His son Chris is here with us today. I invited him for this, for what will be a fitting tribute to Mr. Lambert.

THE LATE HON. MARCEL LAMBERT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, I had the great privilege of serving in this Chamber with the late Marcel Lambert and am honoured to rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party to pay tribute to a man who served this country and the House so well.

• (1355)

Marcel Lambert may not be well known in the House now. He was a soldier. He was an economist, a lawyer and a Rhodes scholar. He was a man whose talent and discipline would have led him to excel in any field he chose. He chose public life because he had a sense of commitment to the community around him.

Marcel Lambert was born and educated in Edmonton and later was educated in London as a Rhodes scholar. He was an effective member of the House of Commons for some 27 years, a Speaker of the House and a minister of the crown.

Mr. Lambert served in the second world war as a lieutenant in the tank division of the King's Own Calgary Regiment. He was part of the Dieppe raid and was feared lost and reported dead in that historic event. In fact he had been captured. He was held as a prisoner of war for three long years.

[*Translation*]

Marcel was elected the member for Edmonton West in 1957. He served Canada in the House for 27 years and is seen as one of the MPs who worked the hardest on behalf of their constituents. People lined up outside his riding office to speak to him. Appointed Speaker of the House in 1962, he acquired a reputation as a tough arbiter when debate was heated.

In his memoirs, Lester B. Pearson spoke of the fine job Marcel Lambert did as Speaker of the House. His detention as a prisoner of war and his experience in combat were instrumental in his appointment as Minister of Veterans Affairs in 1963.

[*English*]

During my years in the House as leader of the official opposition, Mr. Lambert undertook the thankless job of leading my party's scrutiny of the spending estimates each year. He held the government accountable for spending. I have to say he did that job with relish. Scrutiny of the estimates was much more intense in those days. Marcel Lambert also served the House as chair of the committee on miscellaneous spending.

If any of us sought a model as to the attributes that should come to the Chamber and the spirit in which Canada should be served here, we could do no better than to look to the example and experience of the late Marcel Lambert.

Tributes

[*Translation*]

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were saddened to learn this past Sunday of the death of a former Speaker of this House, the Hon. Marcel Lambert, a proud Franco-Albertan and a distinguished scholar, soldier, lawyer and parliamentarian.

As a member of the Canadian forces in World War II, he served at Dieppe and even spent close to three years as a prisoner of war. After the war, he continued his studies toward a degree in commerce from the University of Alberta. He was awarded a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford University, where he earned three degrees in law. He then practised law in Edmonton.

He was elected to the House of Commons in 1957 to represent Edmonton West, now in part represented by the hon. Minister of Justice.

He went on to serve in 10 Canadian parliaments. He was a parliamentary secretary. In 1962 he was elected, unanimously—as if I need to point that out—Speaker of the House of Commons. He also served as Minister of Veterans Affairs. Marcel Lambert was the opposition critic for parliamentary procedures and finance and was known as one of the hardest working and best prepared members of the House of Commons. He later went on to sit on the Canadian Transport Commission.

Although my time as an MP started after the hon. Mr. Lambert had left this parliament, I have clear memories of him from our time together on the International Assembly of French-Speaking Parliamentarians. I am proud to be able to say that I had the opportunity to work with him.

• (1400)

On behalf of the Government of Canada and on behalf of my party, I extend my deepest sympathy to the family, to his sons, his grandchildren and his great-grandchildren, who have every reason to be proud of the contribution the Hon. Marcel Lambert made to his country in war and in peace.

[*English*]

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is nearly impossible to acknowledge in the short time that we have the accomplishments of Marcel Lambert. The passing of this veteran of Dieppe, prisoner of war, Rhodes scholar, member of parliament, cabinet minister and Speaker of the House, saddens us all.

At the time I first arrived in the Chamber in 1972, Marcel Lambert had been in the House for 15 years, to which he added another 12 years before leaving in 1984. This record of 27 years speaks highly of this gentleman's sense of public duty.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, Marcel occupied your chair for a brief but impressive period from 1962 to 1963. He earned a reputation as a tough arbiter in a rowdy Commons in those heady times. Following that, he was appointed minister of veterans affairs and served that portfolio with distinction and honour.

Marcel left the Chamber and the country with many things. In the vicissitudes of political life, Marcel had one thing constant: respect and service to his constituents.

To his son Chris in the gallery and to his family, “you can be very proud of your father. He was a great Canadian”.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the Bloc Québécois in tribute to Marcel Lambert who passed away Sunday at the age of 81.

Mr. Lambert, who sat in this House and was its Speaker, was born in Edmonton in 1919. He was a student at the outbreak of the second world war. He joined the King's Own Calgary Regiment. He was taken prisoner of war in 1942 during the Dieppe raid. At the end of the war, he returned to the University of Alberta and went on to study law at Oxford. He returned to Edmonton and opened a law firm there.

In 1957 he was elected for the first time to the House of Commons under the banner of the Progressive Conservative Party in the riding of Edmonton, which he represented until 1984. He served as parliamentary secretary to the minister of defence in 1957-58. Re-elected in 1958, he served as the parliamentary secretary to the minister of national revenue until 1962. Following the 1962 election, he was appointed Speaker of the House and remained so until February 1963.

The general election brought the defeat of the Conservative government but not of Marcel Lambert who was re-elected. In opposition, he served as defence and finance critic.

When the Conservatives returned to office in 1979, he chaired a committee and was re-elected in 1980. In 1985, when he retired from active political life, he was appointed the chair of the Canadian Transport Commission.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois and myself, I would like to offer my sincerest condolences to his family and friends.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, like the right hon. member for Kings—Hants and the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, I too had the honour of serving in the House with the honourable Marcel Lambert in the

S. O. 31

latter five years of his parliamentary career. I consider myself fortunate to have been in that position.

I want to join with others who have already spoken and who have portrayed very well the details of Mr. Lambert's career as a parliamentarian, his service as a soldier, his sensitivity to his constituents and his care for others as reflected in the way in which his constituents repeatedly re-elected him.

I think particularly of his service as a soldier and his capture at Dieppe. If his family might permit me, we see him as a symbol of a generation of young men who were in military service at the beginning of the war and who therefore suffered in ways that not everyone did by being in places like Hong Kong and, in this particular case, Dieppe, and who therefore had the misfortune and the tragedy of becoming prisoners of war.

• (1405)

Time is taking its toll on their generation and so, through my salute to Marcel Lambert, I also want to salute that entire generation of Canadians.

I also want to salute his work as a Speaker and the fact that in the House of Commons one of the special ways in which a member of parliament can be honoured is to be selected as Speaker, or in those days, appointed as Speaker, but clearly governments appointed people whom they thought would have the respect of the House of Commons and the confidence of both sides of the House. Mr. Lambert fell into that category.

For all these things we give thanks. We honour his life and work. We honour his memory and we express our condolences to his family.

The Speaker: I reserve a few words for myself, and I address myself to you, Chris, who are representing the members of your family here in the House today.

I knew Marcel Lambert of course, like some of the other members, because we served together in the House. You will recall when you came to see your father that he sat in these seats over here. Forever the vigilant parliamentarian, yes, and forever the critic because that was his role at the time.

I spoke with him immediately after I became Speaker in 1995. He was in Ottawa and he did me the honour of coming to my chambers where we shared lunch together. I asked him at that time that if he had advice to give to a novice speaker what would it be. He told me that these were the important things of being a Speaker. He said "You must respect the parliamentarians. They have work to do here and you must give them as much leeway as you can. You must respect the rules of parliament under which you operate so that you can make decisions in a fair-handed manner. But most of all", he said, "you must love this place. You must love parliament, this House of Commons".

I think it is good advice that he gave to me that all Speakers who sit in this chair would do well to remember whenever they do take this awesome task of trying to bring the House to a decision of some kind.

Your father, sir, was an intellectual, a Rhodes scholar. He was a soldier and, in my view, a hero. That has been mentioned. He was a parliamentarian who served in our midst for more than a quarter of a century. We who knew him held him in very great respect. Canada has lost one of her sons. In that way the nation is diminished by his departure.

Please accept my own personal sincere condolences and the condolences of all members of parliament. Some of us had the great honour to serve with your dad. Thanks for coming.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

THE LATE GEORGE K. DRYNAN

Mr. Ivan Grose (Oshawa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am sad to say I have to announce the passing of a good friend, an outstanding citizen of Oshawa and a great citizen of Canada, Mr. George K. Drynan, Q.C.

George was an officer in the Canadian army and was wounded in Italy. Being a lawyer he was involved in the war crimes trial of Kurt Meyer, a German Panzer officer who ordered the execution of Canadian prisoners of war in Normandy.

My fondest memory of George was to see him walking in downtown Oshawa, cane in hand. Incidentally, the cane was more an exclamation point than an assistance to walking.

George was always definite about everything. We knew where he stood and damn the torpedoes. He called me regularly with advice I was to convey to the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Minister of Justice. I passed on to these ministers a great deal of what George said and, amazingly, some of it bore fruit.

• (1410)

"Goodbye good friend. I am sure you will, wherever you go, find some Tories or Socialists to argue with. See ya round".

* * *

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Transparency International, a global anti-corruption organization with chapters in over 75 countries, will host its first ever integrity awards ceremony in Ottawa on September 29 and 30. It

S. O. 31

will present integrity awards to those who have shown courage and dedication in their efforts to fight corruption.

Among those receiving recognition include Alfredo Maria Pochat, an auditor in Argentina who was murdered shortly before he was to release a report on fraud in a government department, and Mustapha Adib from Morocco, presently in jail for having blown the whistle on his air force superiors. Among us today, also receiving an award, include representatives for the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government from the Philippines, and Lasantha Wickremetunge, a newspaper editor from Sri Lanka.

I commend Transparency International's ongoing efforts in curbing corruption at all levels. I recognize and I am sure the House will recognize those who have both committed and paid the supreme sacrifice for their beliefs.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST MOX

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, 161 organizations from all over the world are celebrating the third international day against MOX, to oppose the marketing of that fuel anywhere in the world.

The United States and Russia recently announced that a large proportion of the plutonium from their old ballistic missiles will be used in nuclear reactors to produce energy. Canada, through its Minister of Natural Resources, is jumping head first in this adventure. However, many top scientists feel that the global marketing of MOX could result in an increase in the number of accidents and terrorist acts and adversely affect nuclear disarmament.

Immobilizing plutonium in Russia and in the United States is the only way to achieve disarmament. If Canada is serious about that objective, it is with this in mind that it should provide assistance to Russia, and it should immediately stop importing MOX.

* * *

[English]

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the month of October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

More than 500,000 women will die this decade alone from breast cancer. That is about one every ten minutes. These very high numbers should be ringing alarm bells across this country. I am sure all of us in the House agree that something must be done immediately.

As it stands right now, we do not know what causes breast cancer nor can we prevent it, but if detected in time it can be cured.

Probably every individual in the House of Commons has been or will be affected by this very serious illness, whether it be directly or indirectly. Breast cancer affects us all. Early detection is key.

Let us commit today to reinvest in our health care system in order to ensure that these preventative measures are in place and, in doing so, more lives will be saved.

* * *

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the House that as we approach October that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It is a month dedicated to raising the awareness of this devastating disease.

On October 1 we will see approximately 85,000 Canadians in 29 cities participate in the Run for the Cure campaign to raise funds to support the necessary research, education, diagnosis and treatment programs.

Almost 20,000 Canadian women will develop breast cancer this year and over 5,000 will die from it. Breast cancer is the leading cause of death among women ages 35 to 55. Twenty-two per cent of all breast cancers occur in women below the age of 50.

I know all my colleagues in the House will join me in wishing the Breast Cancer Awareness campaign every success.

* * *

[Translation]

BOMBARDIER

Ms. Diane St-Jacques (Shefford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bombardier is a household name. That company is very successful and is also a major economic tool in Quebec.

Last Friday, we learned that Bombardier was awarded a \$379 million contract to design and build an elevated monorail in Las Vegas.

Under that contract, part of the engineering work will be done at the head office, located in Saint-Bruno. This is a direct economic spinoff for Quebec.

Bombardier, which owns, among others, two plants in my riding, one in Valcourt and one in Granby, continues to be a showpiece of the Quebec and Canadian economy.

● (1415)

Our government's contribution consists in ensuring a very favourable climate for businesses in Canada and in Quebec.

Oral Questions

This stimulating context helps attract investments, which have a positive impact on job creation and on our quality of life.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

THE MINI-BUDGET

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the Prime Minister could confirm for us today whether the government will be bringing down a mini-budget before October 16 or 17?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will all have to wait and see what happens.

[*English*]

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, their future may be short. The concern that we have with October 16, as we have heard that date, is that the 17th is a very exciting day. It is the day that the auditor general intends to release the report on the scandal plagued HRDC. We would like some assurance that there would not be a mini-budget and then an election call before we had the great opportunity to view that particular report.

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be pleased to take the hon. member's question as a representation.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I understood that in English. I will get the French translation.

What we are concerned about is the representation of the people of Canada. Can the Deputy Prime Minister give us the assurance one way or another, either by advancing the release of the auditor general's report from the 17th, or moving a prospective mini-budget from the 16th to the 17th, that an election would not be called before the public had the great honour and pleasure of viewing the auditor general's report on the scandal plagued HRDC? Can we get that confirmation?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition is now backtracking from his demand for an immediate election.

* * *

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Oh no, Mr. Speaker, we are ready whenever it is, but the Prime

Minister seems to have a new game in the lead-up to the election call. It is called hide and highlight.

He will hide that upcoming HRD audit. I am sure he does not want to see that, but he will highlight vote buying down in Atlantic Canada. He will hide that pesky APEC report, I am sure of it. He will highlight the new health accord but he will hide the fact that it was he who slashed all that funding in the first place.

When will the government admit that yes, it can run, but it sure cannot hide?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the deputy leader is making a very bad attempt at trying to hide the fact that if her party ever got power, which is unlikely, it would kill medicare. That is the fact and she cannot run away from that.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we would highlight the fact that under the Prime Minister's watch we have seen higher taxes, longer hospital line-ups, and the Liberals can hardly blame us for that, a hepatitis C nightmare that the government has overseen, the GST flip-flop of course, and prison parties.

If the Prime Minister has done such a fabulous job in these seven years, why the rush to backtrack and fast track?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is totally mistaken. We have not been raising taxes, we have been lowering taxes. We have been lowering taxes by billions of dollars. In the last budget we put down a tax package where we would lower taxes over the next four years by close to \$50 billion.

Why does the hon. member not get up and speak accurately and praise us for these real achievements for Canadians?

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister admitted in the House that the EI cuts were used to pay down the \$42 billion deficit.

Now that there is no longer a deficit and surpluses are the order of the day, should the government's priority not be to help unemployed workers, who have been required to pay more than their share in the fight to reduce the deficit?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our priority is not just to help the unemployed by creating millions of jobs, but to help the entire Canadian economy. So far, we have been very successful.

• (1420)

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should mention this to all these

Oral Questions

unemployed workers, the more than 65% who pay premiums and are not entitled to benefits when they are out of work. The word that would appropriately describe what this is is unparliamentary, but I know what it is.

Could the government not use 90% of what it is going to relieve unemployed workers of this year, a surplus of \$5.6 billion, to help young people, women, seasonal workers, all the people who are discriminated against in the existing Employment Insurance Act?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have reduced EI premiums by millions and millions of dollars. Why is the hon. member not congratulating us on how successful we have been at reducing EI premiums for all employees in this fine land of ours?

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the rejects of the employment insurance system have been the main contributors to paying off the government's deficit, as the Prime Minister himself confirmed yesterday.

Now that it has the full financial manoeuvrability it requires, is the government going to finally do away with the incredible discrimination toward young workers, who need to have worked 910 hours to qualify for employment insurance when everyone else needs 400 to 700 hours?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government continues to act on behalf of Canadians who find themselves unemployed.

We celebrate the fact that two million more Canadians are working today than were working when we took office in 1993. We celebrate the fact that when we look at youth unemployment, it has been reduced by 3.8% since that time. We celebrate the fact that women are working more today than they ever have and at the lowest unemployment level in 25 years for that very important part of our workforce.

We support Canadian workers not only with employment insurance benefits and making changes as we need to, but also by direct programs that deal with their immediate concerns.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister is trying to use improved working conditions to justify her discrimination of young workers. This is disgusting.

How can the government continue to penalize young people by treating them differently, when they have already contributed their share to paying down the government's deficit?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us review some of the investments we make on behalf of Canadian youth. There is \$155 million every year through the Canada youth employment strategy. There is the \$2.5 billion that has been put into the millennium scholarship fund to help young people interested in post-secondary education. There is the introduction of the very popular Canada education savings plan and the continued commitment through the Canada university grant system.

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HEALTH

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

One of the justifications that Liberals are giving for the possibility of an early election is that they have a surplus and they do not know what to do with it. They need a mandate. They want to have a national debate.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister, why do they need to have this debate when they have committed to and already have a mandate to bring in a national pharmacare program? This mandate was recommitted to by the Minister of Health this spring when he promised a pharmacare program. Why not bring in the pharmacare program that they have a mandate for, spend some of the surplus on that and do that before any election call?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we already indicated the way we want to help Canadians in the health care area with our \$21 billion health accord with the provinces signed by the way by the NDP premier of the member's province. We have put billions into the national child care program.

We are doing things along the lines the member is asking for. I do not know if he is asking for an election or not, but we will see what happens.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, surely the Deputy Prime Minister does not believe that the accord was the last word on health care, unless he is prepared to repudiate all the other things the Liberals are committed to.

Incidentally, today is the day that bill 11 is proclaimed in Alberta yet we hear nothing from the other side. One would think that the political flags would be flying at half-mast over this new era in the destruction of medicare. However, that is not the case because it is this government that collaborated with the government that the Leader of the Opposition was part of to make sure that this kind of privatization could happen, both in terms of the 12 points and the obvious deal that was cut between the Prime Minister and the premier of Alberta in order to get Mr. Klein to sign on to the accord in the first place.

Oral Questions

• (1425)

What was the deal? Could you tell us what the deal was?

The Speaker: My colleagues, please address your questions always to the Chair.

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the premise of the hon. member's question is totally wrong. There is no such deal. We have said clearly that we do not agree with bill 11. We said clearly that we will monitor what is done or not done with respect to the actual use of the bill.

We put \$4 million into more funds for the health department to monitor how the Canada Health Act is respected in Alberta and across the country. If the Canada Health Act is not respected in Alberta or any other province, we will assume our responsibilities and the hon. member should know that.

* * *

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is becoming clear that one of the reasons the government would call an election would be to hide the auditor general's report.

It is well known that the draft reports from the auditor general would now be in the hands of ministers for their comments.

May I ask the minister of HRDC if she is prepared to table today in the House of Commons the copy of the audit by the auditor general which otherwise would be hidden from the people of Canada?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member with his years in the House should know that it would be a breach of the privileges of the House to pre-empt the role of the auditor general, an officer of the House, in tabling his report and making it public through tabling in parliament.

I am surprised that the hon. member has forgotten this, although I realize he took two years off when he could have been updating himself on the rules of the House.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, conscious as we all are of the proprieties of the House, will the Deputy Prime Minister right now commit his party to an all party agreement in the House to permit ministers to lay upon the table in parliament today the copies of the audits they have of the Downsview scandal and the HRDC scandal, so that the people of Canada will know what the ministers know, so that the Government of Canada will be prevented from hiding these facts from the people? Will he agree to that all party agreement in the House?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. member has an overactive imagination. I

certainly have not seen any drafts of the auditor general's report. I am not able to say that he is right in saying that ministers have drafts.

I repeat that the obligation of the auditor general is to report to the House with his formal report. I am surprised that the hon. leader of the Conservative Party with his years of experience here is not willing to respect the role of the auditor general as stipulated in legislation passed by the House and as set out in the rules of the House.

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EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, if the Deputy Prime Minister has such respect for the role of the auditor general, it is surprising that the Liberals are making all haste to call an election before the auditor general can report to the Canadian public.

In addition to that, after ignoring concerns about EI for years, the Prime Minister suddenly decided to make changes right before an election call. To make sure he can use it to gain election support, he plans to rush it through all stages in just one day.

Is this whole thing not just a cynical vote buying exercise by the Liberals over there?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of cynicism, why did the member ask the question she just did, contradicting her leader who called for an immediate election just the other day? Is this cynicism or what?

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition called for lower gas taxes for Canadians too. I did not see the Liberals rushing out to do that. They are very selective on what advice they take from the opposition.

Here we have changes to the EI system. The Liberals knew they needed to be made years ago. Now they are rushing them through just before an election so that they can have bragging rights in Atlantic Canada and try to gain some seats they deservedly lost in the last election.

Why should Canadians be manipulated like that by the government?

• (1430)

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, why should the hon. member want us to ignore the concerns of the seasonal workers and the construction workers all across the country? What does she have against the seasonal workers and the construction workers? What is wrong with their concerns being taken into account? Why does she oppose working people?

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, women are the big losers in the cuts this government has made to employment insurance.

How can the Minister of Human Resources Development explain that pregnant women need 600 hours to qualify for benefits, while many workers can collect benefits with only 420 hours?

What does this government have against expectant mothers?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, the government has shown its understanding of the workplace family dynamics facing Canadian women.

I point to the doubling of parental benefits that will be in place by the end of this year. I point to the reduction in hours required to collect special benefits. I point to the proposals that are before the House today that will ensure that women are not part of the clawback if they are home caring for their children and out of the workforce.

I point to the other proposal that says we recognize that women may leave the workforce for a longer period of time. These proposals will make it easier for them, should they need to collect regular benefits on their return to the workforce. Canadian women are at the heart of these proposals.

[Translation]

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister has had a solution proposed to her by the Government of Quebec, which has a parental leave program that is far more fair, accessible and generous.

What is the minister waiting for before giving a favourable answer to the 17 organizations which called on September 26 for the return to Quebec of the funds allotted to family benefits under the employment insurance program? What is she waiting for before she gives the green light on this?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if I am not mistaken, those organizations recognize that the government is prepared to and will, by the end of this year, have a plan in place that will double parental benefits for all Canadian women, including those living in Quebec. If I am not mistaken, what was said was that the Government of Quebec could nicely complement the undertakings of the Government of Canada.

I remind the hon. member that our undertakings will be done in the context of the employment insurance program. They will be

done without raising premiums but, as we proposed today, by continuing to lower employment insurance premiums.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, ministers attending a FACT fundraiser is not an issue of culture or ethnicity. It is about terrorism. It is about the government's priorities and mismanagement of security intelligence information.

On the one hand, Canada signed a United Nations declaration calling for a global ban on terrorist fundraising. On the other hand, ministers are attending a fundraiser for a front for terrorists. Does the solicitor general have confidence in his department's reporting service or not?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the premise of the hon. member's question is wrong, wrong, wrong. The minister did not attend a fundraiser for this group. He attended a cultural event involving the celebration of the Tamil new year.

I do not know why the member of the Alliance Party, on behalf of his party, is attempting to wrongly stereotype and stigmatize hundreds of thousands of people because of their Tamil origin.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister did not answer my question. The question is why was the security intelligence information ignored. The government is failing to fulfil its responsibility for the safety and security of all Canadians.

Therefore I ask the question again. Does the solicitor general have any confidence in his department's reporting service or not? Yes or no.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remind my hon. colleague that CSIS does not recommend who should or should not go to any gathering.

The government strongly condemns terrorists and any group that uses violence to forward their goals and will continue to do so.

* * *

● (1435)

*[Translation]***EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it seems increasingly certain that the Minister of Finance will respond favourably to the repeated request of the Bloc Québécois and table a mini budget before the next election in order to give some of the billions of dollars of hidden surplus back to the taxpayers.

Oral Questions

Can the Deputy Prime Minister guarantee that his government will add in the mini budget all the money needed to employment insurance to end to discrimination against women, young people and seasonal workers?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the confidence he is expressing in this government. We will consider his comments as representing interesting advice.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are calling for a mini budget because we want to make the commitments official, since, otherwise, they evaporate like a puff of smoke for lack of expression.

Are we to understand from the answers of the Deputy Prime Minister that, in the face of the bill tabled by his colleague, the government is giving up and will not put one cent more in the employment insurance system than the few hundred million dollars announced this morning?

Are we to understand from the response by the Deputy Prime Minister that the government is abandoning many of the unemployed and will continue to dip into the employment insurance fund surplus?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in case the hon. member missed it, the proposals before the House speak directly to the issues facing seasonal workers and women. I am confused as to what more he is asking.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is fairly obvious from the documents that have been brought into the House that the solicitor general has a complete lack of confidence in the reports to him from CSIS or from any of the other organizations, when the government permits ministers to go to events such as have been described in the House.

He does not understand that when terrorists slip into Canada, it is the people from their former countries who are the most put upon. Why is the minister not taking their well-being seriously?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that the government and I take their well-being very seriously. As I previously indicated, CSIS does not recommend to government who should or should not go to dinners, official dinners, fundraising dinners, heritage dinners or whatever.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, these terrorists raise funds through welfare scams, drugs, credit cards, passport frauds and human smuggling. These are all international security issues which put all Canadians at risk.

We are asking legitimate questions in the House. We are answered by blusters from the frontbench and caterwauling from the backbench. It does not change the issue. This issue is not about culture or ethnicity; it is about public safety. Why does the minister not understand that?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have explained to the House, Canada has taken a very active role in developing an international convention against fundraising for terrorism. We chaired the committee that put the convention together. We have tabled the convention at the United Nations and we were one of the signatories.

The next step is to develop legislation in consultation with the provinces, because it is a criminal matter, to set up a process of due law so that people who are considered to be under suspicion can have a full protection of the law and we can also use the instruments of the law.

There is no point in trying people in the court of public opinion, by allegation or by guilt by association, which is what the Alliance Party—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Berthier—Montcalm.

* * *

[Translation]

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in a 1990 supreme court ruling, chief justice Dickson recognized the notion of diversity in the application of the criminal law for the provinces.

He even said the following regarding young offenders, and I quote: "It is legitimate for Parliament to allow for province-based distinctions as a reflection of distinct and rationally based political values and sensitivities".

My question is for the Minister of Justice. If the minister will not agree that we are right regarding young offenders, will she at least comply with the supreme court opinion? What Quebec is asking about Bill C-3 is legitimate and legal under a ruling made by the Supreme Court of Canada.

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member should know, that is exactly what Bill C-3 does.

• (1440)

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Following a review of the subject matter of my private member's Bill C-224, the recognition of crimes against humanity act, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage recommended that Heritage Canada consider entrusting one or more academic centres with the task of researching all genocides and crimes against humanity in the 20th century.

Will the minister explain to the House what efforts are being made to ensure that this important issue is addressed by the Government of Canada very soon?

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the stories of the victims of crimes against humanity are among the most powerful stories of the 20th century. Canadians need to hear those stories.

The Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage report on Bill C-224 looked at a number of ways that the Government of Canada could recognize the victims of genocide and the victims of crime against humanity through education, research and remembrance.

The department is grateful to the committee for its thorough, sensitive examination of this very profound and complex issue. It made a number of recommendations which the department is currently and carefully considering.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Umberto Marvuglia of Surrey knows that accessibility to quality health care in Canada is dubious at best.

Last year he was diagnosed as having an aneurysm and was warned that any strenuous exercise would kill him. Despite this life threatening condition, it took seven months before Umberto was operated on.

Is this the type of accessibility to quality health care the Canada Health Act is trying to protect?

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remind the opposition member that the delivery and structuring of services come under the responsibility of the provinces and of the hospitals that are accountable to them.

However, the federal government, through Health Canada, just showed its willingness to help strengthen the health system in each

Oral Questions

and every province by providing them with an additional \$21 billion in the coming years and by targeting certain investments under a very concrete action plan.

I believe these investments will provide an answer to such issues.

[English]

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it did not help the Canada health services to have the federal government cut as much money as it did a number of years ago.

Umberto's family members in his native Italy were so concerned about the delay in his surgery that they approached Italian doctors who said that they would have operated within seven days, not seven months. Umberto's Italian relatives are horrified that a country like Canada would have a health care system that forces someone to wait so long for life saving treatment.

I think Canadians would like to know as well if this is the type of accessibility to quality health care that the minister is trying to defend.

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we knew official opposition party members in this theatre were very eager to walk on wet land. We have invited them to work now on dry land. Now they are walking on very slippery land.

The Leader of the Opposition has a written a letter to all provincial premiers asking them to weaken the role of the federal government in health. What is the logic of this question now?

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Dennis Gruending (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for three years the government has known about plans to dump Toronto garbage into the Adams mine. Environment Canada played a role in this process from day one and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans gave it a green light in 1997.

The Liberals knew about this problem for three years, but they waited until a week before the decision had to be made to pretend to do something. The minister just figured out that 80 billion litres of toxic byproducts from Toronto garbage just might be a problem. Why did the minister do nothing for three years?

• (1445)

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the contradictions in the hon. member's question show how faulty the question itself is.

He has pointed out that we were there at the beginning providing information to the Ontario government, which has the primary

Oral Questions

responsibility for a landfill site of this type. He has pointed out that we were right there providing that information.

Later in the process, when concerns were raised about trans-boundary pollution getting into the province of Quebec and the province of Ontario and getting into an Indian reserve from lands outside the Indian reserve, in accordance with I believe sections 46 and 48 of the act we followed the normal procedure set down by the legislation. That process is continuing.

Mr. Dennis Gruending (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us review what the government has not done. It has sat on its duff for years and only now on the eve of an election has it begun even to think of doing something.

People in the Adams mine area do not want this project and that includes the Timiskaming first nation. Mike Harris is free to pollute Ontario and Quebec, and this minister sits and watches the clock tick down, abandoning clean water to Mike Harris.

Why does the minister not protect the drinking water of Ontario and Quebec? Why did he gut our laws to the point that he cannot act?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member's question follows the same faulty assumptions that preceded his questions with respect to Walkerton.

The fact is the primary responsibility in this situation for the issue of a municipal dumpsite is provincial and municipal as well. That is the Canadian constitution. There are certain federal aspects. We provided technical information to the province in its assessment. There are aspects which we are now considering appropriately under sections 46 and 48 of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

* * *

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Does the minister's department have a copy of the audit prepared by the auditor general, the audit of her department scheduled to be presented to the House of Commons on October 17? Does her department have a copy? Yes or no.

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, there have been some consultations among House leaders and parties on this side of the House, and all parties on this side of the House would be prepared to agree to special permission to allow that document to be tabled now in the House of Commons.

Would the Deputy Prime Minister agree to tell the truth to the Canadian people, to stop hiding the facts, and agree to an all party agreement to let the minister table the document right now in the House?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the House leaders meeting took place as early as two days ago. No such discussion took place.

* * *

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to ask the government for and receive valuable information in the House. My question is for the Minister of the Environment.

This morning the World Conservation Union released its red list of threatened species. The list shows that 62 of the globally threatened species are found in Canada. Could the minister indicate to the House what Canada is doing to ensure that those species will be protected?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for pointing out what is a critical issue for Canada. We have in his province a large number of species at risk, including the beluga whale, wolverine, woodland caribou and many others.

The approach is threefold. We are trying to work with the provinces on the accord on species at risk to make sure we have maximum co-operation and no holes in the system, and with organizations and communities so that we can encourage, on the ground, attitudes among people who live and work out there where these species are to protect them. We have our own species at risk act which is moving through the House process.

* * *

● (1450)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, Christian churches have a long and honourable history in the country in spite of the actions of some employees involved in the residential schools.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Only one out of eight lawsuits has named the church as a co-defendant. Now the government has initiated countersuits naming the churches in the remaining seven out of eight, forcing many churches to face the peril of bankruptcy. Why is the government doing this?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is appropriate to discuss details of litigation before the courts in the House.

I want to confirm to the House that I have been asked on behalf of the government to undertake a new dialogue with the churches

Oral Questions

involved in the issue of residential schools. I hope to have the first meeting in this dialogue later today.

* * *

[Translation]

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT CANADA

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Human Resources Development Canada is a source of endless surprises, and, daily, members of this House discover new scandals there.

Since the members of this House are unanimous in their desire to discover the outcome of the inquiry at Human Resources Development Canada, will the government agree to table this report today so that we do not go into an election without knowing the truth in this whole scandalous affair?

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not the government's report. It is the auditor general's report. The hon. member may well have forgotten that a law was passed not too long ago to enable the auditor general to make reports four times a year.

He can pick a date of his choice, if he wants to respond in his role as an officer of the House, to table his report on a date other than the one the hon. members have been talking about. It is open to him to do so. I think we should respect the role of the auditor general. He is an officer of the House.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 65% of the people paying employment insurance contributions do not qualify for benefits.

We know that there are people in a black hole, seasonal workers across the country, especially in the Atlantic region.

My question to the Minister of Human Resources Development is clear. What is there in her bill to resolve these two problems—the black hole and entitlement? She should stop bragging; Atlantic Canada cannot be bought with her paltry 5%.

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on December 15, 1999, the hon. member said:

I am prepared to give credit to the Liberals. They understood the situation before taking office in 1993. They knew that employment insurance was an important program that was part and parcel of the social fabric of our country.

I thank him for that support. Again on December 15 the hon. member said:

We have to get rid of the intensity rule.

Today we have proposed to do just that, so I assume we still have the support of the hon. member.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday at the fisheries committee departmental officials referred to phase two in implementing the Marshall decision.

Non-native fishermen were completely left out of the negotiations in the so-called phase one. Is it the minister's intention to involve non-native fishermen in the negotiations in the so-called phase two?

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is wrong. Throughout the Marshall decision and our response to the Marshall decision we have worked with the commercial fishermen.

I have met with the executive itself. In fact, Mr. Thériault was assigned the job of working with the commercial fishermen to get their feedback to make sure that they played an important role and that their views were taken into consideration in the Marshall response.

• (1455)

Further to Marshall and in terms of the long term view, we are still working on these issues. Of course their input will be very important in the final resolution.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Lou Sekora (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. I am told today that the House Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration has received a paper outlining the minister's proposal for regulations that will accompany the immigration bill.

My colleagues, my constituents and I would like to know what the minister is doing to reduce the waiting period across the system.

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I promised, I tabled a discussion paper which will lead to the development of regulations. The purpose of these are to see that Canadians and permanent residents are reunited with their families in a faster and easier way.

We will be allowing spouses and children who are legally in Canada to apply for landing from within Canada. We will also be allowing refugee families to be processed for landing as a family unit.

Oral Questions

We believe that families are the backbones of our community. That is why we would like to see families reunited more quickly, and that is our plan.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the people in these churches are very worried and very concerned about the government's action against them. I am glad that finally the Deputy Prime Minister will meet with them.

In the meantime, has the government ceased to name these churches as co-defendants in these suits?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is probably aware, these claims reflect very complex and difficult issues. I think it is not appropriate for any of us in the House to attempt to score cheap political points out of the pain and suffering of victims of physical and sexual abuse.

* * *

[Translation]

BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, to date, 75 countries have signed the Biosafety Protocol, but Canada is dragging its heels and refusing to acknowledge the global trend to providing rules on GMOs.

Is it the intention of the Minister of the Environment to sign the Biosafety Protocol in order to put people's health and the environment ahead of commercial concerns?

[English]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the final phases of the Cartagena protocol were negotiated in Montreal in January, and I took part. Canada played a very important role. I thank my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, for the great work he did in this regard.

I point out that the standard practice of the Canadian government, when faced with the issue of signature and adhering to the protocol, is to consult with groups in Canada that may be affected and may have concerns. We have virtually completed those consultations. I fully expect a decision of the government will follow very shortly.

* * *

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government House leader said that at the House leaders meeting on Tuesday the issue of the October 17 reports did not

come up, and that is true. What is also true, of course, is that on Tuesday an election did not seem as imminent or probable as it does today.

I wonder whether it would be in the interest of the government itself and of its own reputation to dispel any perception that it might be contemplating an election because it does not want these reports to become public.

I ask the government why would it not agree, as all parties on this side of the House have suggested, to a procedure by which these reports could be made public. Transparency could be preserved, accountability, freedom of information—

The Speaker: The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, House leaders seldom negotiate things like this during question period. We have—

Mr. Bill Blaikie: You are the one that mentioned the House leaders meeting on the floor, not me.

Hon. Don Boudria: No, I did not, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry, it was someone across the way who expressed that House leaders had made such an agreement when such was not the case.

If House leaders want to bring a suggestion to the next House leaders meeting, they are quite welcome to do so. We usually have very constructive work in which we participate all together.

I congratulate other House leaders for their usually constructive work. I look forward to working with them again at the next House leaders meeting and at all subsequent House leaders meetings as well.

* * *

CHILD POVERTY

Ms. Angela Vautour (Beauséjour—Petitcodiac, PC): Mr. Speaker, today a report was leaked on the health of children in Canada and we have another confirmation that we have 40% more children living in poverty in this rich country.

● (1500)

I hear Liberals laughing at me right now while I am talking about poor children. I think that is a disgrace.

Will the Minister of Human Resources Development admit today that her government's cuts to the EI program in 1996 is a major factor in the increase of child poverty?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member is not aware of it, but I would encourage her to read the Employment Insurance Act wherein, as a result of the 1996 amendments, we made very

effective and targeted changes. The family supplement is there for low income families earning less than \$26,000. They do not receive the regular benefit of 55%. As of this year, it is 80%.

The recommendations from that party would be to raise the percentages not even close to that 80%. What would that do to poor families?

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in one of my answers I may have referred to a national child care program. I should have either spoken of an early child development program or the already existing and very well funded national child benefit program.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to ask the government House leader this very important question on the business of the House for the remainder of this week and for next week.

Also, in light of the questioning during question period with regard to the auditor general's report, which we now know the minister of human resources has, would it be part of the government's agenda to release that prior to the imminent election call?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me take those points in reverse order. First, no one said there was an imminent election call. That decision certainly has not been announced.

Second, the last point that was raised was the allegation that there is an auditor general's report to be tabled. In fact that is not what the minister said. The minister said that she, as with any government department, has been issued documentation from the auditor general on which to respond. That is not an auditor general's report.

To get back to the initial question that was asked, which was the weekly business statement, it is as follows. This afternoon we will continue to debate the report stage of Bill C-8, the marine parks bill. This will be followed by the second reading of Bill C-39 respecting Petro-Canada and Bill C-36 respecting the criminal code.

On Friday we will deal with second reading of Bill S-17 respecting marine liability and, time permitting, we will then commence Bill C-43 which amends the Income Tax Act.

Privilege

On Monday we will debate the second reading of a new bill to amend the Employment Insurance Act. If the House is so disposed, we would be prepared, as the Prime Minister said yesterday, to go through all stages of that bill in one day in order to give the benefit to Canadians as soon as possible. We will see whether that is the wish of the House.

We will then follow on Monday, or later if we do not get to it on Monday, with Bill C-15 regarding the export of water.

● (1505)

It is my present intention that on Tuesday and Wednesday we would return to unfinished business from this week, more particularly or including Bill C-3, the youth justice legislation. I will be consulting further before clarifying this issue.

Next Thursday shall be an allotted day.

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POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, in his preambular remarks, the House leader of the government inadvertently misrepresented the facts in question period. The question was about the receipt by the minister of the audit by the auditor general. Just so the record is clear, she answered in the affirmative, "yes".

The Speaker: I do not want to get into a debate on what was said. The blues exist. If you want to check with what was said, I invite all hon. members to check on it. That will be made available to you very quickly.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

DISCLOSURE OF DOCUMENTS

The Speaker: I will now deal with a point of privilege that was raised by the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst yesterday. At that time I asked the hon. member directly if he was alleging that the Minister of Human Resources Development leaked a bill or a paper. I was referring to a bill. He answered in the affirmative, "yes".

The minister is here. The allegation has been made. I ask the hon. minister to address herself to that particular fact.

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have read the *Hansard* for the member for Acadie—Bathurst's point of privilege yesterday. Let me first say that I take strong exception to his accusation that I have shown contempt for the House and its rules. I respect the House and its practices immensely.

Let me be very clear that I never authorized or instructed anyone to provide a copy of the bill to the media or to any other individual.

Points of Order

After making inquiries with my department, I have confirmed that no copies were distributed to journalists or to anyone else. I can only conclude that no copies of the bill have been leaked and, therefore, any reporting in the media would be speculative.

I know that the member has been working very hard on this issue of employment insurance on behalf of many of his constituents and I know how seriously he takes this issue. He is aware of the adjustments we introduced today and that they have been a topic of varied speculation and wide discussion in recent months, both in the media and elsewhere.

I regret that he has drawn the conclusions that he has over media reports on this issue, but I can reassure him and this House that I would never condone any practice of leaking copies of bills prior to their introduction in this place.

The Speaker: We have an allegation that was made by the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst. We have a denial by the minister that she was involved and, evidently from an inquiry that she made, that no one on her staff was involved in this.

This matter of leaking documents is one that continues to take our time in the House and, in some ways, to baffle us as to what we are going to do about it. Because there were direct allegations with regard to the information that was released and that which is in the bill, I will take a couple of days to look at everything. If it is necessary, I will come back to the House. What we have now is an allegation and a denial. Until I have a look at it, the matter will stay there.

* * *

• (1510)

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I seek your advice on this question I have for the government on something that I know you have addressed in the House before during question period, and that is a tactic by the government in that when the opposition parties, which have a limited time to keep the government accountable, do ask questions, often a technique is for government members to actually ask questions of the opposition. I think if you check the record today, that happened on at least eight different occasions. I am wondering what can be done in order to remedy this.

The Speaker: I wish I had advice for hon. members. I have found myself in the same situation in years gone by.

You as a House have agreed that you will have about 35 seconds for a question and about 35 seconds for a response. We have had a pretty good run at it in the last three years. We started with getting

in 24 questions in a question period. We have been averaging in excess of 35 for the last three years.

I can deal with the quantity, that is to say the timing, but my dear colleague, you will forgive me for saying that I cannot deal with the quality of either the questions or the answers.

My role here is to see to it that a question is asked and that an answer, whatever we want to say about it, is given. I do not make any judgment about the quality of the questions and I do not think you should ask me to make any judgment about the quality of the answers.

BILL C-44

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order arising somewhat out of the circumstances surrounding Bill C-44, which we now have in hand. It concerns the practice of supplying the opposition with copies of the bill in a timely fashion.

This morning the bill itself was tabled. It was introduced at 10.04 a.m. or 10.05 a.m. Within five minutes the minister promptly left the House and went on television to discuss the bill. Some members of the opposition who have the critic's responsibility for this department were not provided with copies of the bill until 10.40 a.m., 30 minutes later.

I know this may sound petty, Mr. Speaker, but it is petty on the part of the government not to ensure that the entire opposition, those critics, are given copies of the bill.

The bill itself was available on the media Internet site, which is where our critic, the member for Madawaska—Restigouche, went to get a copy when he was unable to obtain a copy from the government. Other members, and I will not single anybody out, received hand delivered copies from the government House leader.

There has to be parity. There has to be an attempt to see to it that all members receive the same information at the same time so that they can discharge their duties.

I ask the Chair to consider this in conjunction with the earlier complaints yesterday with respect to the government's seeming unwillingness to be forthcoming with this type of information. This place is not to be considered an afterthought. This House of Parliament has to be treated equitably on both sides. This is not to say that the government can give the information prior to the minister being prepared to do so, but we cannot be treated here like mongrel dogs, as an after supper thought. This has to be done fairly and in a straightforward fashion so that all members can respond.

The Speaker: I want to deal with this directly. I do not agree with all of the words the member used, but I agree and I order that these copies be given to all members of parliament so that we have access to them.

I do not know what happened such that some of the members on this side did not have this information but I will make inquiries, unless someone here can give an explanation.

Where these copies are distributed at a certain time for everyone, I believe that the copies should go to our members of parliament at the same time. If they are distributed on this side at 11.15 or whatever it is, then they should be distributed, out of courtesy, to one another. I will see to it that the minister is apprised that this was not done and if it is necessary she will come back to the House.

I agree with you that you should have the information to work with.

• (1515)

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we respect your decision. I would like to refresh the memory of the House. Last year, when I used to be the deputy House leader, I raised the same issue that the House leader—

The Speaker: The point of order is closed for now. I will make inquiries about it and find out what happened in this regard because it is a matter of courtesy among the members of parliament and it should be respected.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MARINE CONSERVATION AREAS ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-8, an act respecting marine conservation areas, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 3.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The question is on Motion No. 16. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The recorded division on Motion No. 16 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 49. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The recorded division on Motion No. 49 stands deferred.

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of the bill. Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): At the request of the deputy government whip the vote stands deferred until the end of government orders on Monday.

* * *

• (1520)

ELDORADO NUCLEAR LIMITED REORGANIZATION AND DIVESTITURE ACT

Hon. Denis Coderre (for the Minister of Natural Resources) moved that Bill C-39, an act to amend the Eldorado Nuclear Limited Reorganization and Divestiture Act and the Petro-Canada Public Participation Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Benoît Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House on second reading of Bill C-39, an act to amend the Eldorado Nuclear Limited Reorganization and Divestiture Act and the Petro-Canada Public Participation Act.

Government Orders

I am pleased to be bringing this piece of legislation before the House at this time. Canada's economy is booming, due in no small part to the strong performance of Canada's resource industries. Today the energy, mining, forestry, geomatics and related industries account for 11% of Canada's gross domestic product. They directly employ 780,000 Canadians and account for 22% of new capital investment in the country. The sector had \$97 billion in exports in 1998 and is the economic lifeblood of more than 600 communities across the country.

Canadian resource companies are showing that not only can they succeed in the knowledge based economy, but they are a dynamic and vital element of the new economy. Canadian resource companies are investing \$35 billion per year in new capital, and average productivity growth is three times higher in the resources sector than in the rest of the economy. The policies implemented by the government are helping to ensure that Canada's resource industries remain competitive and continue to underpin our economic prosperity.

I am proud of the government's record on natural resources, but I am also convinced that we can never take a prosperous resource sector for granted. We must strive for continuous improvement. As we enter the new millennium, I believe Canada must become and remain the world's smartest natural resources steward, developer, user and exporter—the most high tech, the most environmentally friendly, the most socially responsible, the most productive and competitive—leading the world as a living model of sustainable development.

Consistent with this vision, it is important that Canadian resource companies have the ability to make strategic decisions and better position themselves in the domestic and global marketplace. With that in mind, I am proposing legislative amendments that will allow two of our major performers in the natural resources sector, Cameco Corporation and Petro-Canada, to continue their record of economic growth and environmental stewardship.

Hon. members are familiar with these companies. Canada is the world's largest producer and exporter of uranium, and Cameco is the dominant Canadian company, accounting for about 25% of both global uranium production and the western world's uranium conversion services capacity.

At one time both companies were crown corporations, fully owned by taxpayers. As hon. members are aware, this is no longer the case. The Government of Canada sold all its shares in Cameco by 1995. Although the government currently holds 18% of Petro-Canada's shares, it does not influence the management of the company.

• (1525)

At the time of privatization certain ownership restrictions were placed on both companies, but the energy sector is a dynamic sector and the market has evolved significantly over the past decade. While these restrictions were implemented for good

reason, some have outlived their usefulness and are now preventing these companies from taking advantage of new business opportunities.

Officials of Cameco and Petro-Canada have repeatedly asked for changes in these ownership restrictions, which they view as unfair, since they do not apply to other companies in their respective industries. After careful review our government has determined that these arguments have merit.

Through Bill C-39 we are taking action to give Petro-Canada and Cameco greater freedom to grow and compete in the global market on a more level playing field with their competitors, while ensuring decisions will still be made in Canada.

The goal of Bill C-39 is to remove unnecessary restrictions that are limiting the ability of these companies to attract new investment capital and forge new strategic alliances, good alliances. Specifically the legislation proposes to modify existing restrictions on the ownership of shares and the disposal of assets in the Petro-Canada Public Participation Act. We are also proposing to amend the share ownership provisions of the Eldorado Nuclear Limited Reorganization and Divestiture Act, which governs Cameco.

In the case of Petro-Canada, Bill C-39 will increase the limit on the individual ownership of shares from 10% to 20%. We are proposing to eliminate the 25% limit on the quantity of shares that can be collectively owned by non-residents of Canada. In other words, there will be no foreign ownership restrictions for Petro-Canada.

In the case of Cameco, Bill C-39 will ease but not completely eliminate the current foreign ownership restrictions. The limit on individual non-resident share ownership will be increased by 10%, to a maximum of 15%. The ownership limit for an individual Canadian shareholder will remain at 25%. Under Bill C-39, the cap on total non-resident ownership of Cameco will move to 25% of the company's shares from the current 20%.

I assure hon. members that these proposed changes are intended strictly to give Cameco and Petro-Canada increased agility and better global positioning. Bill C-39 will not affect Canadian control of these companies.

[Translation]

As I have said, the restrictions on foreign ownership of Cameco will be loosened, although not totally done away with. The legislation will continue to require Cameco's head office to be located in Saskatchewan and for the majority of its directors to be Canadian residents. This will ensure that Cameco remains under Canadian control.

It is true that Bill C-39 will result in the elimination of restrictions on foreign participation in the case of Petro-Canada. A

Government Orders

number of factors, however, will ensure that this major national will remain Canadian.

First of all, the 20% limit on individual ownership of voting shares in Petro-Canada will prevent a takeover by a major multinational. Then, as in the case of Cameco, the legislation will require the headquarters of Petro-Canada to be located in Canada—in Calgary, in this case—and the majority of its directors to be Canadian residents.

Finally Petro-Canada has more or less reoriented its activities to concentrate on off-shore resources in the Atlantic region and on the oil sands, both of which are essentially Canadian resources.

• (1530)

Bill C-39 will amend the provisions of the Petro-Canada Public Participation Act that govern the disposal of Petro-Canada assets. Specifically, the provision preventing Petro-Canada from disposing, particularly by sale or transfer, of all or substantially all of its commercial or production assets will be replaced by a similar one which makes no distinction between the two types of assets. Petro-Canada will thus benefit from more latitude in administering its portfolio of assets, while not being allowed to wind up its activities through a pure and simple liquidation of its assets.

The proposed amendments are not an indication of a major change in the government energy policy. In fact, they confirm that we want to let the market forces play within reasonable and responsible limits. This is merely housekeeping legislation bringing minor changes to property rules for Cameco Corporation and Petro-Canada.

I can assure my colleagues that the proposed amendments will have no impact on the prices of refined petroleum products. The recent hikes in gasoline and diesel prices in Canada are a direct result of the price of crude oil worldwide, which has increased three times since 1998. The price of crude oil is established according to supply and demand on the global market and has nothing to do with property rules established in the Canadian energy industry.

I also want to inform the hon. members that Bill C-39 will not change anything to the commitment Canada made toward non-proliferation of nuclear weapons or nuclear security. Also, it will permit Cameco to consolidate its position as a world leader in the mining and conversion of uranium.

Both companies support Bill C-39. Canadian as well as foreign investors will applaud this initiative, which should improve the long term outlook for shareholders as well as protect the Canadian status of Petro-Canada and Cameco.

This is clearly legislation which encourages good management of public affairs, and that is why I would ask all members to join me in voting to have it referred to a committee.

[English]

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C-39. We in the Canadian Alliance support the objective of the bill and will be supporting it when it comes time to vote on second reading.

I am certainly not about to let the government off the hook on the issues in the bill simply because the issue that the bill addresses should have been addressed a long time ago. In some respects the government still does not go as far as it should in allowing the flexibility of the two companies to compete in a global economic environment. Only a Liberal in a Liberal government could stand in the House and say he or she is proud of the Liberal record when it comes to energy management.

The two acts originally placed restrictions on individual and foreign ownership when Petro-Canada and Cameco were first privatized. In my view the restrictions placed on these two companies were too restrictive, more restrictive than necessary. The government some time ago should have made the move that is being made today.

The intent of the bill is to increase the companies' access to domestic and foreign capital and enable greater flexibility in using share exchanges and asset pooling to make acquisitions and strategic alliances. Of course, if the government would do something about our pathetic Canadian dollar, we would not need this legislation even to the degree that still remains to protect these Canadian companies from international takeover. However that is another issue and a topic for debate on another day.

• (1535)

Having said that, I cannot help but wonder if the bill is to finally pave the way for the government to sell off its remaining 18% ownership, or 49.4 million shares of Petro-Canada. Certainly that is what appears to be going on here. Far be it from me to be suspect of the government's motives, but I suspect that is the intent of the bill.

The bill does a number of things to make room for the sale of Petro-Canada. It raises the limit on individual ownership of shares from 10% to 20%. The 25% limit on shares that can be owned collectively by non-residents is removed. It also provides the company with greater flexibility to manage its assets portfolio while maintaining a check against the company winding up its activities through an outright sale of all of its assets. What does all that mean?

Petro-Canada was created in 1975 as one of the mechanisms of the national energy program. The feelings of western Canada and those of us who represent ridings in that region are well documented when it comes to the national energy program. We never did buy the Liberal line that the national energy program was a vehicle for nationalist dreams and a ticket to energy self-sufficiency.

Government Orders

At the time Canadians were told that we had less than 20 years worth of recoverable oil reserves and that a high gasoline tax burden was justifiable to guarantee our future energy needs. When we look at where the oil industry in Canada currently stands, obviously our skepticism was appropriate. Twenty-five years later we know that those empty threats were little more than Liberal hogwash and a simple money grab and a flagrant breach of the principles of confederation by the federal government, a Liberal federal government.

We now have proven oil reserves that will supply Canada's energy needs well into the future. In fact, there is almost 400 years of recoverable reserves at current usage levels in the tar sands of northern Alberta alone. The Liberal government might have thought that it had fooled Canadians but we knew it was the federal government poking its rather large and unwelcome nose into the oil and gas industry, an intrusion that was totally unasked for, unappreciated and unnecessary.

Although the national energy program was eventually dismantled, Petro-Canada lived on, fed by taxpayer dollars without taxpayer approval. I might say that even today in this Liberal government so many years later, the concept of a made in Canada energy policy still exists. We heard reference to it just the other day on the debate on the reduction of gasoline taxes in Canada.

At one time perhaps it was of primary interest only in western Canada. I would urge Canadians on the Atlantic coast and in Canada's Arctic today to be just as wary of that kind of discussion.

The Liberals' presentation of the principle of a made in Canada energy policy perhaps had some validity when we look at the total context of Canada and its energy needs, but the folly and downfall of the program was that it was based simply on the resources of one or two provinces and took some \$60 billion out of the economy of those provinces and gave nothing back in return.

In my opinion that is not the way to run a country. If we are going to depend on one part of the country for our resources and if we are going to take those resources in the interests of the whole country, then it behooves us to give back to the particular province or region something in return to equalize the contributions of the province or region. Certainly that did not happen.

Anger was a result of that program. The injustice of the program has resulted now in a commitment in the North American Free Trade Agreement which does not allow Canada in any sense to set its own energy policy independent of the North American market. I think it could have been handled much better and in the interest of the entire country, not just a small part of it.

• (1540)

It was not until after a federal election and the Liberals were defeated and the Tory government came to power that the national

energy program was abandoned. Of course by that time it did not matter anymore because oil prices had collapsed and the idea of western Canada selling its oil resources below international prices was not an issue. It did not matter. Finally the concept of a made in Canada energy policy was abandoned.

Petro-Canada lived on after the national energy program and continues to live on today. It continues to remind us of just how foolish and inept the government was in setting up the program. Petro-Canada ended up as an oil company much like any other oil company in Canada, except that the taxpayers still own 18% of the company and are the single largest holder of stock in the company. No one but the government could own more than 10% of the company.

In 1994 I questioned why the government would not sell off its national oil company while the industry was strong and recoup some of the billions of taxpayer dollars that were used to create Petro-Canada in the first place. Even in 1994 I asked the government why it would not do something significant and use the revenue from the sale of Petro-Canada to reduce Canada's debt burden. That debt burden was in part because of the creation of Petro-Canada and the money that the government took from taxpayers to buy Petrofina and create Petro-Canada.

In 1995 the Liberal budget promised to totally privatize Petro-Canada, and we can see today how reliable Liberal budget promises are. Certainly this is no different than in many other areas. Indeed it is something we should consider over the coming weeks.

The fact remains that Petro-Canada cost Canadians over \$5 billion to create. Petro-Canada has never provided any benefit to Canadians that could not have been provided by the private sector. When it was finally privatized, Petro-Canada started making a profit and competed effectively. Until the company was privatized, it continued to be a drain on the taxpayers' purse and never did make a profit until it was privatized, even with the restrictions that have continued to be placed on the company.

Governments, since Petro-Canada was established, have never had the courage to admit to Canadians that they will only be able to recover less than \$2 billion of the original cost of \$5 billion for the creation of Petro-Canada. If this bill is indeed the first step in the process of the government to sell off its remaining shares of Petro-Canada, my first response would be it is about time.

I am curious though about the timing of the bill. On Bay Street investors have driven up Petro-Canada's share prices in anticipation of a move by Ottawa to sell its shares. Today Petro-Canada shares are selling at \$32.75 each. That is over a 46% gain just this year and there is potential for the price to go even higher. Bill C-39 will remove foreign ownership restrictions, allowing for an expanded market and certainly the potential of increased share prices.

Should the government sell its shares? It could optimistically find itself receiving \$1.6 billion. That is \$3.4 billion less than what Canadians originally paid for Petro-Canada, a business transaction anyone could identify as being a disaster, let alone standing and saying they were proud of their record. How could anyone be proud of a record like that?

• (1545)

However, the government could find itself in possession of \$1.6 billion. What I would like to know is what it is going to do with the money? Since it was originally taxpayers' dollars that paid for Petro-Canada, I believe that the funds should be returned to the taxpayers in a direct fashion, rather than being dumped into the general revenue fund that the Liberal cronies can dip into whenever they feel inclined, whether it is for vote buying schemes in some parts of the country or for huge new national social programs that it commits to then later backs away from and leaves the provinces stuck with them. No, I would like to see the money going to debt reduction, again to reduce the debt that the creation of Petro-Canada had a role in making in the first place.

Perhaps it could be put into transportation improvements or maybe we could really be revolutionary and put the money toward lowering gas taxes. Lowering gas taxes, what an original idea. However, we must remember that these Liberals just two days ago voted against such a notion so I do not suppose they would be interested in returning taxpayer dollars directly to the taxpayers. No, in fact, that is far to clear-cut, simple, direct and responsible for this government to recognize.

Bill C-39 does a number of things that we support. Referring to Petro-Canada, it moves toward opening up ownership of the company to both national and international interests, while still ensuring that the majority of the company is still Canadian. The legislation clearly states that resident Canadians must still make up the majority of the board of directors. It also stipulates that the head office of the company must remain in Calgary. That is a curious feature of a number of bills which privatized crown corporations. I have always wonder why that was necessary.

It would only make sense for the head office of Petro-Canada to remain in Calgary because that is the centre of their operation. As the House may recall, when CN was privatized the head office had to remain in a certain particular city. When Air Canada was privatized the head office also had to stay in a particular city. I have trouble understanding what the motivation for that is, except it has to be politically motivated. I tend to be a bit cynical after awhile.

The Canadian Alliance supports the removal of restrictions upon Canadian businesses to allow for both domestic and foreign investing. We expect to see that Petro-Canada, once it is no longer manipulated by government, will continue to show profits and growth.

Government Orders

Of course, Bill C-39 does not only address issues surrounding Petro-Canada, although that is where my primary interest is, as members might have noticed. It also addresses relating to the sale of shares in Cameco, Canada's biggest uranium producer. Canada's Kyoto commitments have increased the need for Canada to find green energy and certainly nuclear energy is one of the options that is being considered. Our Prime Minister speaks of it often.

I do not wish to get into the debate at this point on the merits or lack thereof of nuclear energy, but the fact remains that uranium is a resource that should nuclear energy be a factor in the world's efforts to reduce CO2 levels will become a very important resource.

The bill raises foreign and individual ownership limits for Cameco. Individual non-resident ownership will increase from 5% to 15% and the limit on the total amount of non-resident ownership of shares will increase from 20% to 25%. I am pleased to see that the legislation still is mindful of the possible consequences of high levels of foreign ownership of uranium resources. In fact, the lower limits on Cameco shares reflect across the board government restrictions on foreign activity in uranium mining. While the Canadian Alliance is all for Canadian businesses having all the opportunities to succeed, we must also be conscious of the need to keep such potentially volatile resources within Canadian control.

In effect, the bill allows for greater flexibility in the selling of shares in Canadian companies and I can certainly support that effort. It allows those companies the freedom to raise capital and to prosper and grow to the maximum that their ability and their resource will allow.

As I have already stated, if this legislation leads to the government finally selling off its remaining shares of Petro-Canada, it would be legislation that is long overdue.

• (1550)

I guess we will just have to wait and see if the sale of Petro-Canada becomes another pre-election goodie, and if so, exactly how much the Liberals think Canadians have forgotten regarding the original purpose of Petro-Canada and the amount of taxpayers' dollars that went into establishing the company which were never and will never be recovered from the sale.

As I said, essentially we will be supporting the bill. It is a step in the right direction. It is the right thing to do. It is better late than never. We will be voting in favour of the bill as it moves through the House of Commons.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with rather mixed emotions, I rise to speak to Bill C-39, an act to amend the

Government Orders

Eldorado Nuclear Limited Reorganization and Divestiture Act and the Petro-Canada Public Participation Act.

These days, we hear the words “snap election” or “early election” on everybody’s lips. In the meantime, the job of the MPs is to speak to certain bills, which in some cases are contrary to the interests of Quebec, such as the young offenders bill or bills I consider of relative importance, such as the one before us today.

In short, this enactment relates to the mandatory provisions in the articles of Eldorado Nuclear Limited—now Cameco Corporation—and Petro-Canada.

It provides that the articles of Cameco Corporation will have to contain a 15% individual non-resident share ownership limit for voting shares as well as a cap on aggregate non-resident share ownership voting rights of 25%.

It provides that the articles of Petro-Canada will have to be amended to allow for a 20% individual share ownership limit instead of 10%, while the aggregate non-resident share ownership limit of 25% will be eliminated.

In addition, the prohibition on the sale, transfer or disposal of all or substantially all of Petro-Canada’s upstream and downstream assets will be replaced with a similar prohibition on the sale, transfer or disposal of all or substantially all of its assets, without distinguishing between the upstream and downstream sectors of activity.

However, before examining the reason for the bill, let me give you a brief overview of these two corporations, which I had to do to get to know them better.

First Cameco. Cameco was born in 1988 out of an amalgamation of two crown corporations, namely, Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation and Eldorado Nuclear Limited.

Eldorado Nuclear Limited had been in existence for 61 years. It was the oldest uranium producer in the world. It was a world class business and a reliable supplier with many customers, both in Canada and abroad. The Eldorado company was Canada’s only integrated producer, which means that it could transform uranium into products used not only in Canadian reactors in order to satisfy Canadian energy needs, but also exported in order to satisfy the energy needs of other countries. Modern and efficient plants were operated by Eldorado, and it owned in whole or in part the uranium mines where the ore was extracted at competitive costs.

The other partner, the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation, was one of the biggest uranium suppliers in the world. Already, in 1986, it accounted for 7% of the total production in the Western world. As the company had been intensifying its explora-

tion activities for a number of years, it owned some of the world’s most important commercial reserves.

Since 1988, Cameco has made several buyouts and has extended its activities in several other countries. The company deals in uranium, gold and oil. It is worth mentioning that, in 1999, the company signed an agreement for the purchase of natural uranium extracted from highly enriched uranium coming from Russia’s dismantled nuclear armament. I will come back to this later.

● (1555)

Cameco Corporation, headquartered in Saskatoon, is thus the world’s biggest uranium producer. Its customers are hydro-electric companies in 13 countries around the world. The uranium products they buy supply nuclear energy plants.

The Canadian nuclear industry sales figure is \$4.5 billion and it maintains 30,000 highly skilled jobs in 150 Canadian companies. The Canadian government brings in annually more than \$700 million in taxes and sale taxes.

The new Cameco company has one thousand employees and its total assets are worth over \$1.6 billion. The public holds 90% of its shares, and Saskatchewan government holds 10%. The company’s 57 million shares are traded on the Toronto and New York stock exchanges. Unfortunately, I cannot at this time say what the percentage of non-resident shareholders is. This is the kind of information the minister will be able to give us when he appears before the standing committee.

Let us now turn to Petro-Canada. Petro-Canada was established in 1975 by the federal government as a result of the high oil prices and the uncertain supply we faced at the time. The company’s initial mandate was a response to public policy needs in the energy sector. Canada had to establish a presence in the industry, stimulate exploration in frontier areas and find new oil resources in Canada.

The world changed a lot over the next decade. Ten years later, the oil crisis was over, and it was claimed that successful exploration and conservation measures had had a tremendous impact both on supply and demand.

In 1984, Canada elected a Conservative government with a totally different view of government’s involvement in the business world. This new philosophy, which meant the official end of Petro-Canada’s public policy mandate, was the first of many steps toward privatization.

This new approach put an end to government funding of Petro-Canada. However, as a crown corporation, Petro-Canada could not go to the market to finance its operations. In the mid 1980s, net receipts dropped even further as oil prices came down.

During this time, Petro-Canada had to turn itself into a profitable venture; it was very difficult. Petro-Canada had a huge debt because of its original public policy mandate and, in the absence of new capital, it had to borrow more to fund its growth. Access to the stock market became essential.

Finally, in 1990, the government announced its intention to privatize Petro-Canada and the first shares were sold on the open market in July 1991, at \$13 each. The markets were quick to pass judgment on Petro-Canada's financial health. During the first year, the value of the shares gradually dropped to \$8. In 1991, Petro-Canada suffered a huge loss of \$603 million, primarily because of the devaluation of some assets. Petro-Canada needed more than a change, it needed a miracle. It had to fundamentally review its business and the way it was managed.

It significantly reduced the number of properties in which it had a direct interest. It reduced its annual operating costs by \$300 million. It went from a staff of close to 11,000 to only about 5,000 employees.

September 1995 was a turning point in Petro-Canada's history. Indeed, this is when the government disposed of most of the 70% of outstanding shares that it still held, keeping only a 20% interest. At the time, this was the largest issue of shares in Canada's history.

On December 31, 1999, out of the 222.4 million public shares of Petro-Canada, 181.6 million common shares were held by Canadian residents, while 40.8 million multiple voting shares were held by non-residents.

This completes my historical overview. Let us now briefly go back to Cameco.

• (1600)

In his press release announcing the proposed legislative amendments, the minister put it this way, no doubt to reassure the public.

The proposed amendments are consistent with the Government of Canada's policy on foreign ownership in the uranium mining sector and do not diminish Canada's ability to meet its commitments with respect to nuclear non-proliferation.

Given the attitude we saw with respect to the transportation of MOX, the warm and fuzzy words of the member for Wascana are hardly reassuring. I wonder about the appropriateness of such an action. Is it really necessary to go after more foreign capital to mine uranium?

It should also be pointed out that the Ontario communities of Clarington, Hope Township and Port Hope will have to manage more than one million cubic metres of low level waste produced by former crown corporation Eldorado Nuclear Ltd. at the Port Hope refinery from the 1930s on.

Government Orders

This waste was first dumped in various sites in the city of Port Hope, then moved to the Welcome storage site in Hope Township, and finally to the Port Granby site in the Municipality of Clarington. The Welcome and Port Granby storage facilities are authorized by the Atomic Energy Control Board and belong to Cameco, which runs them itself.

Even though the waste is managed safely in its present location, the current situation will not be acceptable in the longer term according to the Atomic Energy Control Board, the Government of Canada and the local communities. Why, while we want to attract more foreign capital, are we limiting foreign control? Is it to protect ourselves or to protect them against potential liability with respect to the environment?

I hope the minister will give appropriate answers to our questions in committee. However, I would be remiss if I failed to mention that the head office of Cameco is located in the minister's province, Saskatchewan.

Now, let us go back to Petro-Canada. Petro-Canada, whose head office is located in Alberta, was previously a crown corporation. Today, the federal government owns about one-fifth of the corporation's shares. As sovereignist Quebecers, we consider that this corporation is already owned, to a certain extent, by foreigners. The fact that the maximum percentage of shares that an individual is allowed to own is raised from 10% to 20% does not necessarily change the problem of competition on the fuel market.

What is surprising is that this bill is being introduced at the very moment when the Conference Board is studying that market. Would it not have been more appropriate to wait for the completion of the Conference Board study before introducing such changes to the share structure of Petro-Canada?

Also surprising is the fact that Petro-Canada contributed a little over \$5,000 to the election fund of the Liberal Party of Canada in 1999. I suppose that when the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Petro-Canada asks for changes to the Petro-Canada Public Participation Act, close attention is paid to what he has to say. All roads lead to the campaign fund of our friends across the way.

As for the report of the Conference Board, I want to remind the House that the parliamentary committee examined Petro-Canada and the fuel industry in 1998. In one of its recommendations, the committee warned us against a possible merger of Petro-Canada and another oil company.

This is another fine example of the Prime Minister ignoring the work of his own members. Despite all the work that was done, he is trying to hide the fuel issue in this report from the Conference Board.

Government Orders

The federal government not only collects fuel taxes, it grabs part of the huge profits being registered by the oil companies this year. Petro-Canada's profits increased by \$195 million during the second quarter of the year 2000. That is a 304.7% increase. To increase its tax revenues, the government will stop at nothing. During the next campaign, the Liberal Party election cry could very well be "We want nothing but your good, and your goods."

Increasing the foreign ownership limit from 10% to 20% will not allow an individual to take control of Petro-Canada. However, 20% of the shares of a company can give someone a lot of power. We, in the Bloc, think that competition is one of the major problems of this industry.

Also, the 25% cap on aggregate non-resident share ownership voting rights would also be abolished under this bill.

• (1605)

Petro-Canada could very well end up under foreign control. The minister should explain why this should be.

The federal government identified a dangerous level of concentration in the industry, but it decided against doing anything until the problem reached crisis proportions since the winter of 2000.

The Bloc Quebecois has been demanding for some time that the federal government make sure there is more competition in the Canadian oil industry. For example, three refiners-marketers control 75% of the wholesale trade in Canada, which is reason enough to wonder if there is any real competition in this industry. The Competition Act should be amended to guarantee competitive prices for consumers. The House committee that has been poring over this legislation for a year has clearly indicated that the Competition Bureau had a very hard time enforcing the law.

Two things should be done in that regard. First, there should be changes made to the onus of proof with respect to anticompetitive behaviour, and, second, the Competition Bureau should be given the authority to initiate investigations.

Another problem with the federal government in the gas issue is that only 17% of federal taxes on fuel are invested in the transportation infrastructure. The federal government then feels it has to set up infrastructure programs in order to gain more visibility. Compare this with the Quebec government, which is investing 71.7% of fuel taxes revenues in infrastructure.

To sum up, I fail to see how this bill is relevant. We are not against it nor do we support it, but the minister will have to answer some questions. The problem I see here is why introduce this bill now? Is it because a foreign investor anxious to invest in Petro-

Canada needs an increase in the foreign ownership limit to take over the company?

I suppose the Minister of Natural Resources will be able to explain to us in committee why this bill is being introduced now and why the government is not dealing with the issue of competition in the gasoline market.

In conclusion, I will quote an excerpt from the 1999 annual report of the National Energy Board:

Petroleum export revenues increased to an estimated \$14.9 billion in 1999, somewhat below the peak of \$17.9 billion in 1997. Spending on petroleum imports was about \$9 billion, leaving Canada with a trade surplus in petroleum of \$5.8 billion, up from \$4.4 billion in 1998.

It is strange that a country that has a trade surplus in petroleum cannot exert any pressure on the gasoline market. It is also strange that it would consider allowing foreign control.

There are some fundamental questions which must be put to the minister. Therefore, I am looking forward to seeing him at a future meeting of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Government Operations.

[English]

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party to say how disappointed we are with the government again selling off or giving away and basically denouncing something that we were a big part of back in 1972-74 when there was a minority government.

Some people say that probably the best government of that time was when we were assisting the Liberals and pushing them into the Petro-Canada act itself. Because of the energy crisis facing our consumers, our industries, our businesses and the economy at that time, we felt that it was necessary for Canada to try to look internally, at its own concerns, when it came to energy pricing and energy supply. Unfortunately now the government has turned its back on yet another Canadian corporation, one that all of us in Canada were very proud of and in many ways are still very proud of.

It is very interesting to hear the reform members talk about how much it costs. They use inflated figures and say, "This applied to the debt—". To say that because we had Petro-Canada the finances of the country are in terrible, dire straits is simple nonsense.

The fact is, they never mention the profits that Petro-Canada made over those years or the number of jobs it created in Canada. They never mention the taxes that were paid by the employees of Petro-Canada, which assisted in social programs and other programs in Canada.

Government Orders

• (1610)

They never mention the positive aspects of what Petro-Canada did for this country. They never do. They are in such a rush with their American friends to sell off anything that has the Canadian flag on it, almost. In fact I will rue the day when I come into this House of Commons and see the stars and stripes standing right next to you, Mr. Speaker. The way we are going, we are rushing off at a very dizzying rate and selling more of our assets in Canada to American and foreign control.

My wife is from Montreal. Really, she sometimes can understand and feel what the Bloc Québécois is saying in the House of Commons and in the province of Quebec when they talk about their culture, their unity and being Québécois. Many times I sit back and say that sometimes they might be right in defending against the interests of the Americans, but separatism will not work. Their link to the American currency, which they would love, kind of blows that little touchy-feely warm feeling I have for them.

It is a long string of deregulation, of getting rid of what we pride ourselves on in Canada. When this country was young, when it became a country with the CBC radio and television, we spoke to each other from coast to coast through the CBC. What has happened over the years? The government has again taken away funding from CBC. It has made it a shell of itself, to the point where I think 5% of westerners actually watch CBC. In fact, the CBC's greatest strength now is in Atlantic Canada and even that is diminishing, to the point where eventually we will have the argument of whether money should go into the CBC or into health care. Then people will say that health care is diminishing because we have the CBC, so get rid of it.

I suspect it will not be too long before we one day sit in the House of Commons and the government across the way gets rid of the CBC, something that we cherish and value. The string just goes on and on.

We had Air Canada, a proud airline at one time. The government got rid of it. It became privatized in the dog-eat-dog competitive world out there. They linked with Canadian, a company I worked with for 18 years, and what happened? There are major complaints about the service. While competing against one another these two airlines were doing a great job, but what has the government had to do now? It has had to get an NHL referee to separate all the concerns that were going on with regard to the complaints in the industry.

It goes on and on. We sold MacMillan Bloedel. We are getting rid of Petro-Canada. Pretty soon we will be getting rid of the CBC. Eventually we will be selling out everything. This is what shocks me. This shows how the Liberals are really no different from the Canadian Alliance or the Progressive Conservatives in their thinking. They both support more privatization of our crown corporations, of what makes us Canadian. It is true. They support it.

Petro-Canada will eventually be controlled, if it is not already in the majority sense, by foreign ownership. We will no longer have the ability or the access to control our own petroleum industry, for example.

A classic example of this is that we are a net exporter of petroleum products in this country. That is a fact. Yet we do not have a national energy pricing commission or an energy review commission to protect consumers, the industry and the economy from inflated prices for gas or natural gas. We cannot do anything about it because we do not have those controls.

We continually allow government intervention or governmental ability to protect, such as seniors, for example. Seniors in my riding this year are going to have a very difficult time heating their homes. They are on fixed incomes. They are already making the choice between bread and their prescriptions. What are they going to do this winter if we have a very cold winter in Atlantic Canada? What is going to happen to these people? The government is going to do absolutely nothing.

The government may talk about a little GST credit and everything else, but it does not go after the root of the problem, which is, first, the taxation on the fuel prices and, second, the fact that these foreign companies can raise their oil prices without any regulatory aspects to it and can just get away with it constantly. For example, when the price of oil went down the other day were there any concessions or knocking down of prices at the pumps? Absolutely not. But when they go up, all of a sudden, bang, they go up.

A classic example of that is from the member for Labrador who so rightfully complained to his own government. In September and early October most of the fuel for Labrador goes up there by barge. That fuel was bought at a specific price. What happens when the price goes up? The gas starts going up in Labrador if there is no new supply into there. It is a major rip-off to the economy and to the people who live in Labrador. What does the government do? Absolutely nothing. That is the way the pickle squirts.

• (1615)

The government claims it cannot do anything about it. It knows it has a responsibility to care for the people of this country, but is not doing anything because American and foreign ownership of our companies is much more important than the protection and interests of our economy and those people who live within our borders. It is a sin and a real shame.

A publication from Natural Resources Canada says that Canadian control of these two enterprises will not be affected by the amendments. That is simple nonsense. Nobody in their right mind believes that. In most cases, nobody believes what the natural resources minister says anyway. Just because a corporation keeps its head office in Canada does not mean that its management is completely in Canadian hands. Just because a corporation has an office in Calgary does not mean we have Canadian control of it. It is simple nonsense. This is what this bill will do.

Government Orders

From 1972 to 1974, Petro-Canada was pushed by the NDP so our interests from coast to coast to coast would be protected. We were very proud of that initiative. It allowed us to say that we had our own company controlling energy prices, energy flow and everything else. Yet, now we are in the year 2000 and the government is saying get rid of it. Let us get rid of anything that has a Canadian flag or a Canadian symbol on it. Pretty soon we are going to see the stars and stripes up here. I proudly walk into this building everyday because when I look up at the Peace Tower I see our Canadian flag. Yet, every single day we start losing one more piece and one more brick of what is called Canadian.

I was not born in this country. I came to Canada in 1956 because my mother, father and the six children decided to leave Holland for economic opportunities and for the opportunity to live in peace and freedom. That is what Canada has given us. We are very proud to be called Canadians. I am very proud to stand up and say I am a Canadian and I am very proud to raise my children in this country. It is disappointing to see our Canadian identity slowly slipping away to foreign hands and foreign control.

When policies in the government are no longer acceptable for the people of Canada, we have to wait to see what the World Trade Organization says or we cannot do something because we have to see what GATT is going to do. We cannot help our farmers because of certain international regulations. Yet, France and the Americans do not hesitate for a second to help their farmers. We sit and talk but do absolutely nothing about it. This is a real sin.

As I have said before, the particular bill we have before us looks like a piece of legislation that came out of the south end of a north bound cow. I urge the government to reconsider this legislation.

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has repeated the disappointment of Canadians as gasoline and oil prices rise. Would he not accept, what most of the world has come to accept, that is that these prices are driven by the international markets, not by what happens on Wellington Street? No country in the world has the ability to control the prices.

Canadian oil companies are not bumping up the price. They are simply responding to price increases. If the price happens to go down, I am sure the member and Canadians would not be so concerned. I accept the fact that the increase in oil prices is very much an issue for Canadians. The ripple effect in the marketplace for oil and gasoline is an also issue in terms of affordability. The government is attempting to address that at this time as are most governments around the world.

The second thing the member referred to was the repeated mantra of foreign ownership in Canada. Would he not acknowledge that Canadians directly themselves and through their pension plans

are investing billions and billions of dollars in ownership of Canadian oil companies, other Canadian enterprises and in other enterprises around the world? We are no longer afraid of being owned by non-Canadians. In fact, Canadians are investing their capital and buying here and abroad as well. Would he acknowledge that that is going on at the same time as he is trying to frighten, as has been done for 100 years, that Canada is being bought out by those nasty foreigners?

• (1620)

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Mr. Speaker, if he wants to refer to foreigners as nasty, I would not call them that and never did. I would call them very enterprising. Why would one not pick up a Canadian company for a song? With our low dollar, why not? It is an easy deal. I would do the same thing if I had the opportunity.

However, if he firmly believes that we cannot do anything about oil and gas prices and if he is going to blame the oil companies for the rapid rises, then why does he not reduce the prices on taxation of the fuel right now? Why does he not regulate the industry within the country in the way that P.E.I. does? P.E.I. has a regulatory framework on its fuel prices and its gas is almost a dime cheaper than in Nova Scotia. Why does he not do that?

Second, he talked about the corporate control. I know that the parliamentary secretary is an honourable man and one of the most intelligent people on the government side. However, how much has foreign ownership gone up since 1993 when the government took office? I think he would be astounded by the statistic of exactly how much foreign ownership has increased since the Liberals took power.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, before I get to the heart of the matter, I would be remiss not to make a few comments on the speech by my colleague in the NDP. For a change, I have to say that I agree with some of what he said.

As it pertains to the cost of oil, gas and fuel at the present time and the effect it is having on a lot of people in our country, the hon. parliamentary secretary mentioned that we could not control the price of oil. What the government can control is the effect it is having on the poor of the country and on the people who are living on fixed incomes and suffering drastically because of escalating prices.

If the government cannot control or lower the price of oil, it can certainly lower the taxes. As the price of fuel goes up, the amount of money that governments make, both provincially and federally, increases dramatically. If they were satisfied with a certain fixed income, then the balance of the amount of taxation which is now being charged could revert to the user and that would be substantial. There are all kinds of other ways that the government can help the poor people of the country.

Government Orders

One of the other items that the hon. member mentioned, which is an extremely important to people of Labrador, is the effect this is has on the people who depend on fuel in Labrador. The fuel is brought in during the summer months. Earlier this year, of course, fuel was at a relatively low price. Prices escalated and are those people paying the earlier price at which the owners of the shipping companies bought the fuel? No, they are paying the higher price which is now being charged. That is extremely unfair to the users.

However, that is probably where my agreement with my colleague in the NDP ends. My feeling on the divestiture of Petro-Canada as such is entirely different from what the hon. member feels. Even though we appreciate, perhaps more in Newfoundland than anywhere else in the country, what Petro-Canada has done for oil and gas development in our province, we also must realize that to grow companies need investment. We cannot restrict that investment or we are putting companies at a disadvantage.

• (1625)

Any legislation respecting ownership of Petro-Canada is bound to draw considerable attention in my home province of Newfoundland. Petro-Canada, as a crown corporation and a private company, was and remains a key player in the Atlantic oil and gas industry. Petro-Canada was a partner in the Hibernia oil discovery off Newfoundland in 1979, as well as in gas discoveries off Nova Scotia. It now shares in substantial revenues from the very successful development of the Hibernia field.

When the Tory government bought shares in Hibernia and invested heavily in Hibernia development, many naysayers condemned it for throwing money into such a development. The Canadian Alliance talked about throwing money into a sinkhole. Today, the Government of Canada benefits greatly from the development of Hibernia and will continue to profit for years to come from the developments off the shores of Newfoundland and Labrador.

A year later, in 1980, Petro-Canada was the operator of an oil and gas exploration off Labrador. While it may be some time before the oil and gas from the Labrador fields hits the market, there is no doubt that the Petro-Canada shareholders will reap substantial benefits from their investment in that first class property.

In 1984 Canada Petro-Canada made its first large offshore oil discovery as an operator at the Terra Nova oil field and is now just a few months away from getting first oil from that property. Petro-Canada is also a significant partner in the White Rose oil field which will likely follow Terra Nova as the third producing oil property in offshore Newfoundland.

Along the way the company became a key investor and owner in building an oil transshipment terminal port at Whiffen Head which

will be the storage and distribution centre for all the Newfoundland offshore oil. I doubt very much that there would be an offshore oil industry today in Newfoundland without the initiative, the drive, the risk, the faith and the determination of Petro-Canada and its only shareholder for most of that time, the Government of Canada.

Today, oil exploration, development and production in offshore Newfoundland is one of Petro-Canada's four core businesses. The others are the oil sands production and development in Alberta and other developments in northern Alberta, natural gas exploration and production in western Canada generally and refining and marketing of petroleum products including lubricants.

Petro-Canada's mandate is obvious in its core businesses. It was formed by the Government of Canada in 1975 to do what private investors were unwilling to do. That perhaps is the greatest legacy that Petro-Canada leaves the country. The public investment in Petro-Canada was the catalyst for drawing other private sector investors at that time who, perhaps because of exorbitant costs of development of oil fields in rough and rugged areas or unchartered areas in the country and perhaps because of the uncertainty of such developments, could not take the risk on its own. It was the Government of Canada, through Petro-Canada, that was the catalyst to start some of the major developments in the country which have proven to be extremely successful and rewarding to the country.

Private companies were reluctant to take the risks or to invest in new technologies that would be needed to explore and develop these frontiers. Petro-Canada gave Canada a presence and a voice in the corporate culture where attitudes were formed and decisions were made about potential for private sector investments in these areas.

• (1630)

It provided the government with a corporate investment that it could use to form partnerships with the private sector, companies to undertake projects such as Hibernia, which would never have been undertaken without the incentive that the government provided through Petro-Canada.

I am not normally a fan of public sector competition in the private sector but Petro-Canada is different. It is a case where the public sector attracted private sector investment in projects that might not have been developed.

Petro-Canada is a success story. It demonstrates how the public sector can open the door to new areas of investment. Thanks in large measure to Petro-Canada and the former PC government, the Newfoundland offshore is highly profitable, although still a difficult area for private investment solely.

Everything changes. Petro-Canada is now a private company, although the federal government retains 18% ownership. It has to look to private investors for the capital it needs to operate and to

Government Orders

expand its core business. It must find the capital in the global financial markets that are increasingly attracted to the size of the profits that we see happening.

I can understand that the present level of ownership restrictions on Petro-Canada may have a negative impact on its ability to raise new capital. We had an example of that with a former public company in Newfoundland, Fishery Products Limited, which was privatized under great restrictions. The company now readily admits that the limit on these restrictions have to be changed because in order to draw the investment that will make the company grow, prosper and be competitive it must be able to encourage investment.

Now that the private sector has experienced firsthand that the energy frontier in Canada is a good place to invest, it may not be necessary to insist that Petro-Canada be majority owned by Canadians.

It is important to avoid a reign takeover of Petro-Canada and the 20% restriction on individual ownership might help do that. If Canadian investors continue to put their money into Petro-Canada so that we continue to have a primarily Canadian owned company playing in the major leagues of global energy exploration, development and production, it is worthwhile to keep the requirement that a majority of directors be Canadian citizens, but it may be more window dressing than substantial.

We have an old saying that says, “he who pays the piper calls the tune”. Undoubtedly, the investors or shareholders in any new company will be the ones who will direct the board of directors. By having that clause in the bill, which says that everything will be okay because the directors will be mainly Canadian, it will probably be just window dressing.

We are not against the bill. It is something that had to come. Petro-Canada has played an extremely important role in the oil and gas development, particularly in my own area of Newfoundland and Labrador. However, times change and new outside interested investment is required to make companies grow, prosper and be competitive in this global market.

We will be supporting the bill. However, just because we are opening up the country to investment, I hope it does not mean that we ourselves will be bought or owned by anybody else. The remarks of my hon. NDP friend that one day we will see the American flag flying over the country, surely we as representatives in this great Chamber and as Canadians generally, know we will never let such a thing happen. We are Canadians and we stand for Canada first. Any decisions we make in this Chamber will be for the betterment of the country and not to weaken it or give it away.

• (1635)

The Speaker: 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 Beausejour—Petitcodiac, Employment Insurance.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Speaker: The question is on the motion for second reading of Bill C-39.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Speaker: Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Government Operations.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

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CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. David Anderson (for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.) moved that Bill C-36, an act to amend the Criminal Code (criminal harassment, home invasions, applications for ministerial review—miscarriages of justice, and criminal procedure) and to amend other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to rise to introduce the debate on the motion to give second reading to Bill C-36, an act to amend the criminal code, dealing with criminal harassment, home invasions, applications for ministerial review, dealing with miscarriages of justice and criminal procedure, and to amend other acts.

As I am sure hon. members opposite will agree, there are a number of outstanding criminal law policy matters that require a legislative response. Bill C-36 is designed to address some of these matters.

The amendments proposed to the bill respond to issues of public concern. The proposals are as follows: first, the bill before you proposes to amend the criminal code that would increase the maximum penalty for criminal harassment from five years to ten years; second, make home invasions an aggravating circumstance for sentencing purposes; third, codify and clarify the review process for applications to the Minister of Justice with respect to allegations of miscarriage of justice or wrongful convictions; and

Government Orders

fourth, reform and modernize aspects of the law of criminal procedure.

This enactment would also amend the National Capital Act by increasing the maximum fine available and the National Defence Act by providing for fingerprinting.

I would like to outline the rationale for the proposals. I would like to spend some time this afternoon setting out the rationale for these proposals in very clear terms. Let me turn first to the proposal concerning criminal harassment.

Criminal harassment, or stalking, as it is sometimes referred to, is a serious offence that can have a devastating effect upon the emotional and physical well-being of the victim. Although the offence of criminal harassment is still relatively new, the conduct itself is not. There are many Canadians who associate this type of conduct with some of the few well-known cases of stalking of a celebrity. However, the reality is that in Canada the primary motivation for stalking another partner more typically relates to a desire to control a former partner.

We know from Statistics Canada data for 1997 that eight out of ten victims of police report incidents of criminal harassment were women. We know that nine out of ten accused were men. We know as well that two-thirds of the victims were criminally harassed by a current or former intimate partner or close male friend. This data characterizes criminal harassment for many as an issue of violence against women and as an issue of family violence.

The government is committed to taking strong measures to ensure that the criminal justice system treats criminal harassment as the serious offence that we know it to be.

Some time ago the federal, provincial and territorial ministers of justice directed senior criminal justice officials to review the problem of criminal harassment. After receiving the advice of senior officials and after carefully considering the matter, the governments adopted a twofold response: first, strengthening the existing legislation; and second, releasing comprehensive guidelines for criminal justice personnel on criminal harassment to enhance implementation of the law.

This twofold response, supported by our federal, provincial and territorial counterparts, with whom the minister shares a mutual concern that more must be done to ensure that not only the law itself but also the enforcement of the law, is adequately reflected in the serious nature of criminal harassment and its impact.

● (1640)

Bill C-36 responds to our first commitment by proposing to increase the maximum penalty for criminal harassment from five to ten years. By increasing the current maximum penalty for criminal harassment from five to ten years, we are sending a strong

message to would be stalkers that criminal harassment is a serious offence and its sentence will now better reflect the serious nature. It also provides criminal justice personnel with a stronger sentencing tool to more appropriately respond to this type of conduct.

With respect to our second commitment relating to enhancing the enforcement of the criminal harassment provisions, I am pleased to note that, together with our federal, provincial and territorial counterparts, a handbook for police and crown prosecutors on criminal harassment was developed.

The handbook provides a practical set of guidelines for criminal justice personnel on all aspects of a criminal harassment case, including victim safety. The Department of Justice released the handbook in December of 1999. I am pleased to note that well over 3,500 copies of the handbook have since been distributed across the country and are being used to assist with investigations, prosecution, sentencing and victim support in criminal harassment cases, as well as for training of criminal justice personnel.

I would also like to note that Bill C-36's proposal to increase the maximum penalty for criminal harassment is built upon the 1997 criminal harassment reforms introduced by the government. These reforms strengthen the criminal harassment provisions by making murder committed in the course of stalking first degree murder, irrespective of whether the murder was planned and deliberate, where the offender intended to cause the victim to fear for her safety. We also made the commission of a criminal harassment in breach of an existing protective court order an aggravating factor for sentencing purposes.

I will turn now to the problem of home invasions. Hon. members may be aware that this phenomenon has achieved a growing prominence in the news media and in the minds of the public. The term home invasion is generally described as a robbery or break and enter of a private residence when a perpetrator forces an entry while the occupants are home and threatens to use or uses violence against the occupants. The criminal code offences most commonly used to address home invasions are robbery and break and enter of a dwelling, both of which carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

While the statistical occurrence of home invasions is still low, these incidents have had a significant impact upon victims and result in residents feeling unsafe within their own homes. The proposed amendments to the criminal code would indicate that where the offender's conduct was in the nature of a home invasion, the court must consider this to be an aggravating factor when determining the sentence to be imposed.

Such an amendment would provide clear direction to the courts and would express parliament's view that home invasions are a grave form of criminal conduct which must be dealt with appropriately during the sentencing process. This amendment also ac-

Government Orders

knowledges that home invasions have a devastating impact on the victims of this type of crime and that the safety and security of Canadians within their own homes must be protected.

I would now like to outline changes that are being proposed to deal more effectively with alleged wrongful convictions. The efficiency of any criminal justice system depends upon its ability to protect the innocent while bringing those who are guilty of crimes to justice. Despite all the precautions that our justice system takes to avoid the conviction of an innocent person, no system is infallible. Wrongful convictions can and regrettably do occur. I need only mention the names of Donald Marshall, David Milgaard and Guy Paul Morin to make my point.

In such cases, our entire justice system finds itself in disrepute. That is why the minister has included in Bill C-36 some very important improvements to section 690, conviction process.

For many years now there have been calls for the reform of how cases involving alleged miscarriages of justice in Canada are handled. Advocacy groups, such as the Association for the Defence of the Wrongfully Convicted, have repeatedly called for the repeal of section 690 and its replacement with an independent agency, like the criminal cases review commission in Great Britain.

In April of 1998 the commission on proceedings involving Guy Paul Morin recommended that we should study the advisability of creating a criminal case review board to replace or supplement the current system. Even before the Hon. Mr. Justice Kaufman's report was completed on the Morin matter, the Minister of Justice instructed her department to review the section 690 process and to make recommendations on how to improve this very important component of our justice system.

In October of 1998 a public consultation paper was released seeking submissions on how the conviction review process could be improved. The minister was searching for a fair and an efficient solution that balanced the principles of fairness, timeliness, openness and accountability. As part of the consultation process, the minister met with members of the British commission.

• (1645)

The British experience was completely different from ours and convinced the minister that a completely arm's length commission is unnecessary and not the best solution for Canada. It is expensive, it is cumbersome, and although it was designed to handle many more applications than the number we receive in Canada, it has not yet solved the longstanding problem of delays and backlogs.

After extensive consultations and review of all the submissions received from interested parties, the minister concluded that the ultimate decision making authority in criminal conviction review should remain with the federal Minister of Justice, who is accountable to parliament and to the people of Canada. The executive role

of the Minister of Justice is ideally suited to the task of effective gatekeeping, that is, to recognize and maintain the traditional jurisdiction of the courts while providing a fair and just remedy in those exceptional cases that have somehow fallen through the cracks of the conventional justice system.

Having said that, I must add that the consultation process also convinced the minister that maintaining the status quo was certainly not an acceptable option. Therefore, the proposed amendments to section 690 will provide new investigative powers to those investigating cases on the minister's behalf. This will allow investigators to compel witnesses to testify and documents to be produced.

In order to make the conviction review process more open and accountable, ministers of justice will now be required to provide an annual report to parliament, and a website will be created to give applicants information on the process.

In the past, section 690 reviews have been reserved for those who have been convicted of a serious indictable offence. In recognition of the fact that any wrongful conviction is a miscarriage of justice which threatens public confidence in the justice system, conviction reviews will be expanded to allow for the review of any federal conviction.

To create a greater degree of independence, a senior adviser from outside the department will be appointed to provide advice exclusively on cases of alleged wrongful conviction and oversee the review of applications. That person will be in charge of a new multidisciplinary review unit which will include investigators as well as counsel.

The government believes that these amendments are the most efficient and effective way to improve the conviction review process in Canada.

Let me turn to the area of criminal procedure reform. The Department of Justice has been working closely with the provinces and territories on criminal procedure reform for some time. This work is now in its third phase. The two previous phases were introduced as legislation, Bill C-42 in 1994 and Bill C-17 in 1996, and are now in effect.

The first two phases have been successful in assisting jurisdictions to manage resources more effectively in the criminal justice system. Jurisdictions are now pressing to have the third phase translated into legislation. It is the proposals of this third phase that are before the House now in Bill C-36.

The objectives of phase three are to simplify trial procedure; modernize the criminal justice system and enhance efficiency through the increased use of technology; protect victims and witnesses in criminal trials; and provide speedy trials in accordance

Government Orders

with the charter requirements. We are trying to bring criminal procedure into the 21st century. This phase is an essential instalment in our efforts to modernize our procedure without in any way reducing the measure of justice provided by the system.

The criminal procedure reform amendments proposed in Bill C-36 would retain the unconditional right to a preliminary inquiry for indictable offences on request, while modifying some procedural aspects of the inquiry. For example, the proposal would create a new pre-preliminary hearing for the judge and the parties to attempt to determine the scope of the inquiry on a consensual basis, and would amend the criminal code to require the justice to prevent inappropriate questioning of witnesses at the preliminary inquiry.

It would also change the rules of evidence applicable at the preliminary inquiry to allow the admission of evidence the justice considers credible or trustworthy. It would create a limited defence disclosure obligation with regard to expert reports.

It would also facilitate the establishment of rules of court in relation to case management and preliminary inquiries. It would also facilitate the application of new technology such as the use of electronic documents to render the administration of justice more efficient and effective.

It would expand the potential for remote appearances. It would codify a plea comprehension inquiry scheme. It would make it easier for the attorneys general to carry out the duty of supervising private prosecutions. It would place restrictions on the use of agents in criminal matters and allow for the selection of two jury alternates who would be on hand until the start of a trial.

As I said at the outset, this package of reforms was developed in partnership with the provinces and territories. They support these reforms. As they are responsible for the administration of justice, I believe that we should do our best to give them the tools that they need to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the criminal justice system.

Finally, Bill C-36 includes amendments to the National Capital Act and the National Defence Act.

• (1650)

In order to make the National Capital Act consistent with other federal legislation and regulations, it is proposed that the maximum fine available for offences in regulations under the act be increased from \$500 to \$2,000. This is the maximum fine currently provided in the criminal code for summary conviction matters. The type of offences that this proposed change would target are relatively serious regulatory offences such as poaching of large game and illegal dumping of waste.

The proposed amendments to the National Defence Act would allow for the taking of fingerprints and other information from persons charged with or convicted by court martial of designated service offences. Designated service offences would be offences that are identical or substantially similar to offences for which civilians are currently subject to fingerprinting under the Identification of Criminals Act. This legislative authority is proposed to enable police forces to have access to the full criminal record of persons dealt with under the code of service discipline.

I would appreciate the support of all hon. members in the House in bringing forward these very worthwhile reforms.

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, finally Bill C-36 is up for second reading.

It was first introduced in this place back in the spring. At that time the present whip of the Canadian Alliance, the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, was the justice critic for the official opposition. He accused the government of pre-election posturing with this series of proposed amendments to the criminal code, a sort of omnibus bill so to speak. At that time he stated that the bill could be passed in a couple of days if the government really wanted it.

As members know, I have been actively involved with my critic responsibilities on Bill C-3, the youth criminal justice act. Youth justice has never appeared to be much of a priority to the government until this past week. It is only when an election looms that the government feels the necessity to act and do something. The government is not too interested in governing for the people. It is much more interested in being re-elected and staying in power.

In Bill C-3 the government absolutely bypassed any reasoned contribution from the justice committee and almost overnight forced the legislation back to the House for report stage debate. The government House leader has been quoted widely about the potential costs of overtime of the House dealing with Bill C-3. However, he has been conspicuously silent about the costs incurred by his compelling our legal staff and clerks to work almost around the clock this past weekend in getting 3,133 amendments to Bill C-3 ready for debate this past Monday. Somehow it was a priority for the government to deal with Bill C-3 on Monday morning, meaning that the amendments had to be filed with journals branch by early Friday afternoon.

We started debate on Monday, but the priority seems to have disappeared as we will not be debating Bill C-3 again for the rest of this week. Talk about a waste of money. I will not even begin to get into the waste of money expended by the justice committee to review the bill and prepare amendments, only to have the government refuse to permit the committee to debate those amendments and present an improved version of the legislation to the House.

Government Orders

The member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast sure called it when he suggested that Bill C-36 was little more than an election ploy. It is an attempt to convince Canadians that the government is really interested in justice issues. We have seen this action with the youth justice bill. It is only back on centre stage because an election is looming. I suggest that Bill C-36 is only getting time now for the same reason.

The Liberals are decidedly weak on their justice platform. They merely need to prop up their image by claiming that youth justice laws would have been enacted except for the tactics of the opposition, specifically the Bloc. I suppose they will claim that Bill C-36 would also have been enacted but they ran out of time on their mandate because of other pressing issues, whatever they may be. As I have already stated, that does not hold water as Bill C-36 could have been passed in a couple of days last spring. It could surely have been passed this fall.

I expect that Bill C-36 will not be passed before the Prime Minister wakes some morning and, as he has said himself, hears his wife tell him to call an election. He will then be able to retire in the spring and have all of next summer to get his golf game back in shape. We did not hear much about his golfing exploits this past summer. Unfortunately, we did not see him do much for Canadians either, other than overtax them and tell jokes.

While there is not much to get too excited about with Bill C-36, I will briefly make some comments and raise some concerns. As my time is rather limited, I am sure there will be other opportunities to discuss the pros and cons of this particular legislation.

A number of the proposed changes to the law concern issues whereby the government made earlier changes to the law but either forgot or failed to properly consider all the aspects of those previous changes. In effect, the government is correcting some previous screw-ups.

• (1655)

For instance, there are a number of changes to the criminal code to include the Nunavut courts. There was a bill in the first session of this parliament, Bill C-57, to deal with the Nunavut courts of justice but the government seems to have forgotten to include these aspects of the criminal code. It certainly makes us wonder how much preparation and thought goes into bills before they reach the floor of the House of Commons.

The Liberal government has also dealt with making stalking an offence in Bill C-27 in the last parliament. At that time it claimed that it was getting tough with stalkers of primarily women, but it is only now that it is open to increasing the maximum sentence for this offence.

One troubling aspect of the bill concerns changes to preliminary inquiries. There are to be additional onuses placed upon the

defence to provide disclosure of its case in respect of expert evidence. The defence will be compelled to provide the names of its witnesses. That is something entirely new. I expect the defence bar will have much to say about this provision. Charter applications will also be an issue. It will be interesting to see whether the government will be forced to withdraw from its stand in this regard.

We have seen how the government pays little consideration to the testimony obtained by the justice committee on Bill C-3. I do expect that the government will be more apt to listen to the lawyers. It is not so apt to listen to ordinary everyday Canadians who comprise the bulk of persons interested in Bill C-3.

As my colleague from Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough pointed out in his comments on Bill C-3 the other day, in Bill C-36 the government appears to be trying to limit the use of preliminary inquiries while at the same time through Bill C-3, it appears to be introducing the whole concept into the youth justice system. Talk about sucking and blowing at the same time; the government cannot have it both ways.

The bill will also attract some attention over its amendments to section 690 applications under the criminal code. There has been much discussion about setting up an independent review agency.

The Minister of Justice has retained a right of final decision on applications of wrongful conviction and I support her in this regard. The minister must be held responsible and accountable for these cases. She should not and must not relegate this duty to an independent agency. It will be very interesting to see how lobby groups, et cetera attempt to sway her from this position. Again, it will also be interesting to see whether the government listens to the lawyers and persons of influence when it was not too interested in listening to laypersons pursuant to Bill C-3 on youth justice reform.

Two components of the bill that will attract some public attention are those proposals dealing with home invasions and stalking. The proposal to make a home invasion offence an aggravating factor certainly causes me to smile. A year and a half ago, I moved a motion at justice committee after the premier and the attorney general of British Columbia had written to the minister requesting action on this issue. In that motion I proposed the very course of action that the minister is now proposing, but the government was not interested. In fact, one Liberal member of the committee referred to my initiative as silly and nothing more than political posturing. Now it appears the government is claiming credit for the idea. Somehow I do not believe it will see this as political posturing now.

Although the law currently allows for more severe sanctions, this change will ensure that all of our courts clearly know that parliament wishes home invasions to be considered as serious attacks on the security and the lives of our citizens. This should go

without saying, but it appears that some of our courts require an occasional tune-up.

The problem in this area is primarily systemic. Our whole justice system must be readjusted so that our courts use the full extent of punishments available for violent crimes. We have significant maximum punishments available for most offences but these maximums are seldom, if ever, utilized and imposed. This is one of the primary reasons Canadians have become so disenchanted with the criminal justice process. It also says something about the Prime Minister having sole authority to appoint judges to our superior courts.

I note that in the spring the Minister of Justice was quite quick to lay claim to the fact that she is doubling the maximum potential punishment for stalkers. This is the criminal offence of criminal harassment. Stalkers are primarily male so this type of issue is readily recognized and supported by female voters in the country.

I fully agree that stalking is an abominable crime and that we must protect all victims regardless of gender. With all due respect, the government is not being entirely forthright on this issue. The government is still maintaining the dual procedure nature of this offence. The vast majority of offences are proceeded with by summary conviction where the maximum sentence is only six months in jail, a far cry from the 10 years maximum if proceeded with by indictment. If the government really wanted to protect victims, it would change the law to make the offence a strictly indictable procedure. It would indicate to the courts that parliament considers criminal harassment a serious offence.

• (1700)

Instead, the government seems to be sending the message that the offence may be serious, but it may not be so serious. It may be indictable in some circumstances, but in most cases it is merely a summary offence. This type of attitude does little to protect our women, who are the vast majority of victims of this form of crime.

Some time ago a Vancouver family came to see me in my constituency office. The estranged husband and father had harassed them for years. The children are now grown. There had been restraining order after restraining order, which he was careful not to violate. The latest order was about to expire, and they came to me for some help.

Let me give an example of how manipulative this man is. The family lives in the central area of the city of Vancouver. Successive restraining orders forbade him to be within a 25 block zone around their home. The supermarket where they do their shopping is outside that zone. The House can probably guess where I am going with this. He would regularly show up in that store when the family members were there to shop. He said nothing to them. He did nothing to them. He was just there. He would also show up at

Government Orders

school or social functions. Again, he would say and do nothing. He was just there. Can one imagine trying to function from day to day with this going on?

All the restraining orders had fixed terms of two or three years. Whenever one expired, like clockwork, within 24 hours, he would show up at their door. The family members would be forced to apply for a new order, which required them to justify time and time again why such an order was required.

Unfortunately I could not offer them much help, other than to encourage them to keep the restraining orders in place and support their requests to the police and crown to examine the possibility of criminal charges.

They contacted my office a few weeks ago because the latest order, the current order, was about to expire. They wanted to let me know that the crown was going to try to bring criminal harassment charges, stalking charges, against this man. I do not know the current status, but unfortunately the legislation before us will be too late to be of any profit to them. Had the government not chosen to introduce this harassment legislation in the form of an omnibus bill, thereby clouding it with other issues, we could have had something for these folks already.

My time is limited and, as I said earlier, there will be other opportunities for discussion and debate. I am not interested in holding up the legislation. I have witnessed the dilatory actions of the government, and it needs no lessons from me when it comes to stalling on justice issues.

I look forward to dealing with the bill at the justice committee, but if the rumours of a potential announcement of an election are accurate, it appears once again the government is more interested in politics than in providing security and protection to our citizens. It will be months, if ever, before the legislation actually comes to fruition.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to this bill because it concerns justice and I find very interesting what the Department of Justice is involved with these days.

I always find it a bit comical, however, when I see this type of omnibus bill, which seems to be a catch-all affair. It deals with a number of subjects—I would not dare to say in a not entirely serious manner—and mixes together a number of things. I believe that, overall, this bill is perhaps a bit short on seriousness.

I listened earlier to the parliamentary secretary telling us about Bill C-36, which we are examining. There is one section on which he said nothing at all. I will remedy that quickly at the end of my speech, since it is a subject close to my heart.

Government Orders

For our audience, I should explain that when I refer to an omnibus bill that touches upon a lot of different subjects, as we will see, the bill seeks to codify and clarify the review process for applications to the Minister of Justice with respect to allegations of miscarriage of justice.

The same bill also seeks to increase the maximum penalty for criminal harassment. Then, in the same bill, there is reference to making home invasions an aggravating circumstance for sentencing purposes. And it goes on to address the procedural aspects of preliminary inquiries, the disclosure of expert evidence, rules of court in relation to preliminary inquiries. It will even address electronic documents and remote appearances, private prosecutions and the selection of jurors.

This is, I think, a bill that is going to solve certain problems here and there, but lumping them together is not necessarily going to solve the problem.

• (1705)

It is certainly not accelerating the settlement process. On this, I may be echoing the member for the Canadian Alliance. Some parts of the bill could probably have been dealt with outside the omnibus bill, and those matters requiring a more in-depth consideration could have been dealt with much more quickly. We would certainly have achieved much quicker results.

In all I have mentioned, there is one aspect missing in the summary. This might explain why the government member did not say a word about this. It has to do with Bill C-3, the young offenders bill. While it has yet to be passed by the House, this bill is already amending it.

I will come back to this because I find it quite exceptional. I do not know what kind of country this is, but where I come from, we would say that they are putting the cart before the horse. It may be necessary to dot the *i*'s and cross the *t*'s, and I will do so in my speech.

I will first talk about the judicial errors. When reading the bill, we can actually notice an improvement in the review procedures. It is obvious. Greater openness is sought. I think an effort is made to speed the process. Perhaps the government is trying to make it more accessible. But is it trying to make it more transparent? I might say that I really doubt it.

In any case, there is evidence of openness and of the desire to modernize the criminal code. Nowadays, with the new DNA tools available, when we want to present evidence that could not have been gathered previously, we realize that the justice system is not perfect. Throughout the years, there were some dreadful miscarriages of justice. People found guilty of criminal offences spent 20 or 25 years in prison before their lawyers were able, thanks to modern day techniques, to prove their innocence.

The process used to be rather cumbersome. With Bill C-36, the government wants to improve the process and make it more accessible, which is a good thing and deserves to be examined.

In fact, I want to congratulate my hon. colleague from Repentigny, who introduced a private member's bill to speed up the compensation process for these people. I do not know if his bill is what prompted the government to act, but it could not have come at a better time and both pieces of legislation go in the same direction.

The government would be well advised to go a little further, as the member for Repentigny proposes to do, to compensate these people as soon as possible.

Even if, at first glance, no one can be against the bill introduced by the minister, the fact remains that the minister wears two hats, one as Minister of Justice and the other as Attorney General of Canada.

I do not know if the government understands the system as I do, but at first glance, there appears to be a potential for a conflict of interest involving the two hats on the same head.

The Minister of Justice has a lot of power and many jurisdictions, but she is the protector of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, among other things. The attorney general has a responsibility to examine irregularities in proceedings. It is sort of as if one works to condemn and the other to check that everything is fine.

On the very face of this we can see a potential conflict of interest. If I were going to amend the criminal code, I would have done it all and set up a real independent commission, which would be accountable to parliament. Accordingly, the minister would still be wearing these two hats, but at least, we would ask her to try to correct an injustice caused by one of her hats, to put it clearly.

• (1710)

I do not understand the government member who said he examined this whole possibility, that the department existed in Great Britain. He mentioned Great Britain as an example.

This may do nothing to speed things up, but at least we have the impression that justice has been served. It is very important in a matter in which an individual did not obtain justice to have some procedure to follow when a request is made to have the file re-examined, when there is an error in law and justice is served the second time.

Law and politics are pretty much the same thing: public perception is very important. It bothers me that the same person who sentences someone can also grant a pardon, or that the person who sentences can assess the case to determine whether there was a miscarriage of justice. For this alone, it would be important to send this bill to the justice committee. The situation would be examined, questions would be asked, and we would try to improve

Government Orders

this bill and the amendments introduced by the minister in Bill C-36.

There is also the whole issue of criminal harassment. The only solution the government has found is to increase the maximum penalty from five to ten years. At some point, the government will have to stop and look at the problem in Canada. What is the problem in Canada? It is not only by increasing penalties that the problem of crime will be solved. This is too easy.

It is too easy to say "We have a problem because of criminal harassment and we will solve it by increasing the penalty from five to ten years. The problem has been solved. Since the people sentenced for criminal harassment will spend more time in jail, we have solved the problem". Well, no. The problem has not been solved. It has only been put off.

I understand that the Minister of Justice does not want to listen to a nasty separatist. In her opinion, I must be a rare species coming from who knows where, because what we are saying is never good enough for the minister.

I understand that she is from western Canada, that there is an extremely strong right wing in western Canada, and that the minister, who probably wants to keep her seat in an upcoming election, has decided to listen to this right wing from western Canada to reinforce any legislation at the first opportunity. At some point, however, we will end up with a criminal code that will be no fun to apply and that may become a burden for the state, precisely because the emphasis has been put on incarceration, when it is not the solution.

I keep repeating it in this House, I keep explaining it in every possible way, even with drawings, but the minister just does not get it. She does not want to hear any of that. She only listens to western Canada.

If the minister does not want to listen to me, a Bloc Quebecois member, a Quebec MP, let me quote a supreme court decision, as I did during oral question period. I do hope that she pays a little more attention to what supreme court justices say.

In a fairly recent landmark decision, the supreme court dealt directly with what is going on in Canada regarding incarceration. Unfortunately, I do not have the specifics, but I can provide them later to those hon. members who are interested in this issue.

In a unanimous decision, the court said:

Canada is a world leader in many fields, particularly in the areas of progressive social policy and human rights.

That is the positive part.

• (1715)

The justices continue:

Unfortunately, our country is also distinguished as being a world leader in putting people in prison.

This is not so flattering. They go on:

Although the United States has by far the highest rate of incarceration among industrialized democracies, at over 600 inmates per 100,000 population, Canada's rate of approximately 130 places it second or third highest. Moreover, the rate at which Canadian courts have been imprisoning offenders has risen sharply in recent years, although there has been a slight decline of late. This record of incarceration rates obviously cannot instil a sense of pride.

These are the words, not of a separatist, but of the justices of the Supreme Court of Canada. I trust the minister listens attentively to these justices. She needs to listen to them, not just to the right in the Canadian west. The court continues:

Notwithstanding its idealistic origins, imprisonment quickly came to be condemned as harsh and ineffective, not only in relation to its purported rehabilitative goals, but also in relation to its broader public goals.

They go on:

The Criminal Code displays an apparent bias toward the use of incarceration—

I stop here for an aside which is that, with all the changes by the government, there is no longer any doubt. The belief is that there is a bias toward incarceration. Incarceration, increasingly, is the favoured approach of the government as well. I continue:

—since for most offences the penalty indicated is expressed in terms of a maximum term of imprisonment. A number of difficulties arise if imprisonment is perceived to be the preferred sanction for most offences. Perhaps most significant is that although we regularly impose this most onerous and expensive sanction, it accomplishes very little apart from separating offenders from society for a period of time.

The minister, who finds herself with a problem of criminal harassment, will not resolve it by increasing the sentence from five to ten years. That is very clear and I hope she has got the message. I see that time is running out and I will go immediately to my final point, which is a very important one for me.

When I saw Bill C-36, I pointed out immediately that I was not very fond of omnibus bills. I do not have much use for them. I think that the government is getting it off its plate quickly. However, I noticed that in clause 71 of the omnibus bill the government wanted to amend Bill C-3, a bill that has not yet been passed. It wants to amend a bill with 3,133 amendments when we have only begun to consider the first group of amendments. Worse still, a look at the background of Bill C-3 shows that it was introduced on October 14, 1999 and that it contains 198 clauses to criminalize young people in conflict with the law.

On June 8, 2000, the government introduced Bill C-36, which includes amendments to Bill C-3. On September 25, the same minister who introduced the bill on October 14, 1999 and who amended the bill on June 8, 2000 through amendments in an omnibus Bill, that is Bill C-36, tabled 170 amendments to a bill

Government Orders

containing 198 clauses. There is a problem and the problem is the person running the Department of Justice.

• (1720)

She does not know what she is doing; she is acting only for political motives, and I am sure that that will play a trick on the justice minister in a very near future. I am convinced she will pay a heavy political price for doing what she is doing with legislation as important as the youth justice bill.

The amendments to the bill proposed by the minister are not simple amendments. They are about the rights of young people, the right to explain to them what is a plea of guilty and a plea of not guilty, to inform them about their right to a trial by judge and jury, to inform them about adult sentences. Those are not minor changes.

Today, the minister wants us to pass Bill C-36 even before a decision is made on Bill C-3. She wants us to examine and pass Bill C-36, before the House has passed a single one of the 3,133 amendments that are before the House.

The parliamentary secretary, who has just spoken for the minister, strangely enough, did not speak about Bill C-3. He has probably not seen that in his bill. I say no. They are trying to hide things, hoping the opposition will not see them. But the opposition has seen them. They were caught red-handed.

An hon. member: We could say something else.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Indeed, some of my colleagues could say more about the minister. For my part, I will only say that she was caught red-handed.

What is the bill on young offenders really all about? Why is the minister so determined to change the legislation? Why does she want to deprive Quebec of the current act, which is working well? Of course things can always be improved but we were able to do some great things in the last few years with the current act. Successes must be taken into account too, not only failures.

When I see a 30 year old man totally integrated into society, an ordinary citizen who has children, pays taxes and contributes to his community, and know that he committed murder when he was young, I think that we have succeeded. If we did, it is because we applied the Young Offenders Act correctly.

What are the major differences between that act and Bill C-3? Basically, in Quebec the Young Offenders Act is applied with a focus on the needs of young offenders. We examine the specific needs of the young boy or girl who has a problem with crime, because we believe that by answering his or her needs with the help of experts, we can turn him or her into an ordinary citizen in a few

years. That girl or boy can be rehabilitated and that is good for society.

It is the Young Offenders Act, let us make no mistake, that focuses all the jargon, all the philosophy of the legislation on young people's special needs, while Bill C-3, which the minister is trying to ram down our throat—and fortunately the Bloc Québécois was there and used every parliamentary weapon available to block the bill in committee and now in this House so it may never see the light of day—what is its focus? It focuses on the severity of the offence. A young person will be treated this way or that according to the severity of the sentence.

There is also the whole issue of serious crime. Murder is serious, it is true. There are always too many, but in the case of serious crime, as the minister's bill provides at the moment, a youth of 14 could be sentenced as an adult. That means that a youth of 14 could go to prison for life. That makes no sense.

We know that life imprisonment is for about 25 years. It is 25 years even with parole but let us say 25. Now 25 plus 14 makes 39.

• (1725)

When this youth comes out of prison he could still be productive. I do not know what he will have learned at prison. Not the right things, I am sure.

The minister wants to incarcerate 14 year old youths, to put children in prison. However, on the subject of organized crime, the Hells Angels, the Rock Machines and all those gangs, the minister will not touch anything. These people have rights. The minister has chosen organized crime instead of protecting young people, and this is a bit of a scandal.

Let us talk about similarity of sentences. The minister said we could do whatever we want in Quebec. If this is true, let the minister put it in black and white in her Bill C-3 and we will pass it on the same day. Let the minister say that Quebec can continue to apply the Young Offenders Act as it has been doing successfully for years and her Bill C-3 will be passed on the same day.

The minister knows full well that what she is saying is not true. It is not reflected in her bill. The harmonization of sentencing, among other things, is an aberration. We will not be able to treat our young people like we want. Western Canada will tell us how to raise our children in Quebec. Thanks but no, we are not interested.

In the numerous amendments that she just tabled on September 25 and which she probably forgot to include on October 14 or June 8, the minister tells us about the regional harmonization of sentences. What does the minister mean by region? Is my region of Lanaudière part of her definition of "region" when it comes to the harmonization of sentences? Are the maritimes a region? Is the centre of Quebec a region? Is British Columbia a region? The

minister will leave that to the interpretation of the courts. It is as if the minister was short of ideas. We will give her ideas the next time. She should consult us first. Harmonizing sentences does not work.

Then there are the delays. If there is something that could be improved on in the Young Offenders Act it is this issue. I have always said that if we want to amend the Young Offenders Act—because I never said that this act was untouchable, that it was perfect—we should begin with the issue of delays. Delays must be shortened so that a young person who commits an offence is punished immediately, or brought into the system immediately. If there is a gang or family problem, it should be possible to take him away from his gang or family immediately.

What is the minister doing about this? She is increasing the number of steps: appearances, preliminary investigations, discovery, selection of judge and jury, trial, decision and sentence.

Someone who is a hardened criminal, who has just committed a rape, a serious crime, and who has opted for judge and jury, as any lawyer will suggest that he do, and is found guilty, will be sentenced after a year and a half or two years, in the best case scenario, so that there is zero cause and effect. The minister has done nothing about this either.

Let us look at the complexity of the bill. I can understand that the minister has amended the bill three times in less than 12 months. The bill is incomprehensible. It is complex. Even the experts who appeared before the committee have said so.

Clearly, I could say a lot more. The last time I spoke, I went on for 27 and a half hours. I think that if I were to seek unanimous consent to continue, it would not be granted.

I simply wish to say that, for all these reasons and many more as well, we will not be supporting the bill.

[English]

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1730)

[English]

CULTURAL INDUSTRY

The House resumed from June 9 consideration of the motion.

Private Members' Business

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Before recognizing the hon. member for Edmonton North, let me indicate that this is a votable item. The hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys has asked me to advise members of the House and those watching these proceedings on television that the vote will not take place at the end of the hour of debate tonight but has been deferred until the end of government business on Tuesday, which is normally around 5.30 in the afternoon, eastern time.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I know we have had a busy day talking about the Marine Conservation Areas Act, mines and all kinds of other things. In private members' business tonight I want to address the motion of the member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Motion No. 259, which reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should give consideration to exempting up to \$30,000 of income from income tax as a gesture of support for those artists, writers and performers who work in Canada's cultural industry.

I thank the member for bringing the motion forward. It certainly bears discussion. We need to celebrate our arts community in the country for sure.

Some members of my family are artists. As members know, I taught in the high school system in the department of English and love to see people who spend some time writing and in the performing arts. It is a wonderful heritage for us as Canadians.

The member's proposal that the motion would give fledgling artists, writers and performers a tax break to keep them in their chosen line of work is noble. The reasoning is that due to the economically unstable nature of their profession artists often live at or below the poverty line. The NDP cites the average income of Canadian artists as \$13,000 a year. I am not sure where the member gets his statistics, but I know he will enlighten me on that.

If we start singling out this sector or that sector for tax breaks, it makes it very difficult and puts us all at different levels as to who pays what marginal rate of tax or what their personal income tax will be. As hon. members know, we already have several rates as it is: 17%, 21%, 29%, and those in the higher income brackets pay as much as 50% in tax, which is a little difficult to stomach for anyone in any industry, frankly.

I am thrilled to say our Alliance policy would give tax breaks to everybody, not just the rich, whom we always get accused of supporting. I would challenge any government member to stand here when I am finished and say I support tax cuts only for the rich.

Let me use artists as an example. The NDP has cited that they make \$13,000 a year. It is scandalous that they would pay any federal income tax at all. The basic exemption now is around \$7,000, I believe. Under our program the basic exemption to any taxpayer would be \$10,000 and then the spousal equivalent would

Private Members' Business

be another \$10,000. As I understand it now, \$5,000 or \$6,000 is the basic income exemption for the spousal equivalent. Our program, solution 17, would up that to \$10,000 and then \$3,000 per child to be exempt from that.

Let us use the example of two kids and two adults in a family earning \$26,000. They would not pay a dime of federal income tax. That is a marvellous release for people in the artistic community or anywhere else. Hon. members can hardly say that is a tax break just for the rich. I really do not think anyone in the Chamber would have the nerve to say \$26,000 would be helping the rich. Surely not.

We see this as a marvellous tax relief for people, and we would see broad based tax relief certainly for artists in our communities. Moreover, for people they deal with—their family members, their extended family members, and those people who would buy their art, go see their performing art, or read their writings—the economic spinoff in that would be far more exciting than just the proposal in Motion No. 259.

We should think about people who purchase art. In fact I just had someone in my office who works with an arts stabilization program, who had great ideas of private-public funding to say we want stabilized programs, stabilized funding for the arts, but to make sure there is accountability, to make sure government money is not just being shovelled into whatever project it is with no accountability.

● (1735)

I met with the director of the Canada Council for the Arts, Shirley Thomson, this week in my office. She is very keen on making sure any grants that go out from the Canada council are subject to accountability and that a small percentage of government funding goes into this.

These artists certainly need to be celebrated for their works, but we cannot just say we will pay the whole shot. It is wise that we look at private-public partnerships for some of that funding. I am sure the member who put the motion forward would feel exactly the same way, that it would be only responsible.

Let me again mention that people who are in the business of art would be able to celebrate capital gains savings through our tax plan. Also, regarding business taxes such as employment insurance and Canada pension, if they are paying their own premiums or if they are working for someone else and someone is paying payroll taxes for them, their particular EI premiums would be much lower than they are now.

I was going to say I watch with amusement, but it is with almost pity and sadness that I see government members today trying to say they will put back all the money they stripped and slashed out of EI, for which they got their heads kicked in, in the election in 1997. The marvel of it is that they want it through the House of

Commons, and in one sitting day. Is it not something that this twinge of conscience would hit them days before a writ? It just has to be irony, and I find it very strange that the timing would be such, but what in the world.

Surely we have to look at that and say we would decrease the EI rates to \$2 from \$2.40. I know it was much higher than that. Yes, we do have to give government members a shred of credit and say they have brought it down some. It is pretty hard to sit on a \$12 billion egg of surplus and not be smitten by conscience for some of the things they did in the past. The Prime Minister or anyone else on the government side would say they have a burning desire to help people whom they cut and kicked earlier.

Witness the health care accord just signed a couple of weeks ago. If we look at the numbers, it is a very strange thing again. The government has pulled out, slashed, and burned about \$21 billion in health care transfer payments to the provinces since it came in in 1993. What do we think the health accord signed a couple of weeks ago said? They are to put about \$21 billion back into the health care system. That was just a pure accident as well.

Let us look at the artists and employment insurance. It is true that rates moving down to \$2 would be very helpful to them. That to me is exciting. A single rate of tax would eliminate the 5% surtax, which would again give a tax savings of \$762 million to all Canadians. That would help the artistic community a whole lot.

Let me also say that under the current income tax system there already are some tax breaks for artists. They may deduct the cost of creating a work of art in the year in which the costs are incurred instead of when the work is sold. Of course that is when the bulk of work goes into an artistic piece, when the artist is working on it. The artist may be able to defer those costs. Also, employed artists and musicians can deduct certain expenses against their employment income.

We could look at mechanics. My husband Lou is a carpenter. Anyone who came to our shop would see how unbelievably much equipment goes into that industry.

People are just begging for tax relief. If we come up with broad based tax relief right across the country, to every sector, not just cherry-picking this sector or that sector, all of us will be a lot better off.

There are already programs funded by the taxpaying public to help this sector, artists, although they too are not terribly accountable or transparent. I am trying to have some briefings and meetings with many of these groups. Certainly there needs to be some overhaul, but there are granting agencies in place. I mentioned earlier the Canada council, the cultural initiatives program and the National Film Board, just to name a few. I am sure I could go through the estimates and really go at it in terms of government funding that goes into it.

Private Members' Business

• (1740)

Although I certainly do support the artistic community and all the wonderful things artists do in supporting Canadian heritage, I think the best way to help them would be not just to have this particular proposal of a \$30,000 exemption, but when we form government to have broad based tax relief. That would help those people probably more than anyone else on a relative scale.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the motion brought before us by the member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys proposes that the first \$30,000 per year earned by artists, writers and performers be tax exempt. The government recognizes and applauds the intent behind the motion. The motion underscores the importance of Canadian culture.

Because of the way it shapes our lives, culture tells us who we were in the past and who we are in the present. Inevitably it also influences who we are likely to become in the future. Culture is a force that drives our unique development as individuals and as a nation. The government remains committed to providing continued support to individuals engaged in our cultural industries.

Since the 1950s the involvement of the federal government has gradually evolved to include a variety of roles in response to the expansion of cultural activity and its growing social and economic impact. Cultural development in Canada is a partnership among the private sector, individuals, corporations and all orders of government.

By looking back, one can see the emergence of distinctive Canadian approaches to supporting culture. In recent years it has been identified as the Canadian model of cultural affirmation. It emphasizes partnerships with other governments, organizations and the private sector. Most important it is an approach to government that uses a mix of the most effective measures available to it, recognizing that circumstances and situations are constantly shifting.

Ensuring a thriving economy in which individuals and businesses earn more income and keep more of the income they earn is perhaps the most important way to support our cultural industries. Not only does such an environment provide better economic circumstances for artists, writers and performers directly, it also gives individuals and businesses more opportunities to support these professions by increasing their ability to acquire their products. Just as important, it recognizes the partnership we share with other governments, organizations and the private sector in supporting those cultural industries.

The broad based tax relief provided in the 1998, 1999 and 2000 budgets will help support economic growth and ensure that all Canadians keep more of the income they earn. With the books

balanced in 1997-98, the 1998 and 1999 federal budgets introduced broad based tax relief.

This tax relief was proportionately larger for low and modest income Canadians. It included an increase of \$675 in the amount that can be earned tax free for all Canadians, elimination of the 3% general surtax and a \$2 billion increase in the Canada child tax benefit, for a total benefit of \$7 billion annually. The actions taken in the 1998 and 1999 federal budgets have removed 600,000 low income Canadians from the federal tax rolls.

As a result of these actions, taxpayers including artists, writers and performers will have their federal income taxes reduced on average by about 10%. Total personal income tax relief provided in the 1997, 1998 and 1999 budgets amounted to \$7.5 billion annually or 10% of the \$76.9 billion paid in personal income taxes in the years 1999-2000.

The government has continued to build on these important tax reduction efforts. In the fall of 1999 the government promised Canadians in the Speech from the Throne and the economic and fiscal update that it would set out a multi-year plan to further reduce taxes. The 2000 budget set out such a plan, including the most important structural changes to the federal tax system in more than a decade.

The plan will immediately restore full indexation of the personal income tax system to protect taxpayers against automatic tax increases caused by inflation. This will benefit every Canadian. It also reduces the middle income tax rate to 23% from 26%, starting with a two point reduction to 24% in July 2000. This will cut taxes for nine million Canadians.

Additional key personal income tax measures of the plan will increase the amount that Canadians can earn tax free to at least \$8,000, and the amount at which the middle and top tax rates apply to at least \$35,000 and \$70,000 respectively. It will also enrich the Canada child tax benefit by \$2.5 billion a year by 2004 to more than \$9 billion annually. Maximum benefits will reach \$2,400 for the first child and \$2,200 for the second child.

• (1745)

This plan will also eliminate as of July 1, 2000, the 5% deficit surtax on middle income Canadians with incomes up to about \$85,000 and completely eliminate it by the year 2004. It will also raise to 25% for the year 2000 and to 30% for the year 2001 the permissible foreign content of investment, registered retirement pension plans and registered retirement savings plans.

The plan will mean more money in the pockets of Canadians. Taxes will be reduced by a cumulative amount of at least \$58 billion over five years. Personal income taxes will be reduced by an average of 15% annually by 2004-05. Low and middle income Canadians will see their personal income taxes reduced by an average of 18%.

Private Members' Business

In addition to these broad based measures that assist our unique partnership approach to supporting cultural industries, the tax system also features several specific measures intended to target support to that cultural sector.

First, to enhance the exposure given to works by Canadian artists, Canadian art objects purchased by businesses for display purposes are eligible for a generous depreciation allowance notwithstanding that such art objects may retain their value over time or even appreciate.

Second, the designation of the national art service organization provides not for profit arts groups with a tax treatment equivalent to that of charities.

Third, to reduce liquidity and valuation difficulties, artists may deduct the cost of creating work in the year incurred even though the work may not be sold until a later date.

Fourth, to ensure that the artists are not deterred from donating their works to charities, museums and other public institutions, artists may value charitable gifts from their inventory at an amount up to their fair market value.

In addition, employed artists and musicians may deduct certain expenses against income from employment notwithstanding that most employment expenses are not deductible. Specifically, employed artists may deduct expenses related to artistic endeavours up to an annual—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I was waiting for an appropriate time to interrupt the hon. member, if I may. It has been brought to my attention that the Right Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau passed away today.

May I suggest that we have a moment of silence at this time before we resume debate.

[Editor's Note: The House stood in silence]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I am sure that all members of the House present today extend to the Trudeau family their heartfelt commiseration. The House will in due course recognize Mr. Trudeau in a manner fitting. We will carry on with debate, as I am sure Mr. Trudeau, a parliamentarian and a friend of the House, would want.

Mr. Nelson Riis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I appreciate your comments. I am sure all of us in the House feel the same. We are shocked and saddened at the news.

I wonder if it would not be appropriate to simply recess the debate and perhaps make an arrangement between the parties to complete it later next week. It seems to me to be inappropriate to

continue now. Perhaps I could have the agreement of the House to come up with some agreement to continue this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I thank the hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys in whose name the motion stands and which is a votable item. That was the reason we felt we needed to bring it forward.

If there is unanimous consent to accept the suggestion as presented by the hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, we will proceed in that fashion. Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys to move a motion?

• (1750)

Mr. Derek Lee: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hate to be picky at a time like this, but it would be possible for us simply not to conclude the debate on it. The hon. member's item would stay on the order of precedence and come up again for the final portion of debate at a future date in the normal order, or otherwise if the parties came to an agreement on it. That would be a reasonable disposition.

The only other disposition is to allow the debate to conclude and go to a vote, as had been previously ordered by the House. Perhaps the hon. member could give us his view. I am sure the rest of the House would accept the member's view on it.

Mr. Nelson Riis: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments. I know that there are others who wish to speak to this motion. Rather than deny them the opportunity to speak, I would certainly accept the suggestion that we adjourn the debate at this point and pick it up at an appropriate time some time in the future. I know that is probably not the correct parliamentary term.

[Translation]

Mr. René Laurin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to know exactly where we stand, because this motion is already deemed to have been put and the vote deferred until next Tuesday.

If it is already deemed to have been put, how can we now drop it and resume debate? It would be necessary to go back on an earlier decision. I seek clarification, so that we do not get caught.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The motion being deemed put would only come into effect at the conclusion of debate. Since it has been suggested by the hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys that we adjourn the debate, the deemed motion would not come into effect and we would be okay in that regard.

Private Members' Business

Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys to move a motion that the debate be adjourned?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP) moved:

That the debate be now adjourned.

(Motion agreed to)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It has been brought to my attention that we have a late show. Is there a motion to adjourn the House?

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Canadian Alliance) moved:

That the House do now adjourn.

(Motion agreed to)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It being 5.53 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 5.53 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, September 28, 2000

Mrs. Stewart (Brant)	8765	Mr. Plamondon	8775
		Division on motion deferred	8775
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Government Response to Petitions			
Mr. Lee	8765		
Employment Insurance Act			
Bill C-44. Introduction and first reading	8765		
Mrs. Stewart (Brant)	8765		
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	8765		
Marine Conservation Areas Act			
Mr. Chatters	8765		
Motion	8765		
Mr. Chatters	8765		
(Motion agreed to)	8765		
Petitions			
Gasoline Additives			
Mrs. Ur	8765		
Gasoline Pricing			
Mr. Asselin	8765		
Child Pornography			
Mr. Schmidt	8766		
Marriage			
Mr. Schmidt	8766		
Importation of Plutonium			
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8766		
Questions on the Order Paper			
Mr. Lee	8766		
GOVERNMENT ORDERS			
Marine Conservation Areas Act			
Bill C-8. Report stage	8766		
Mr. Boudria	8766		
Mr. Bergeron	8766		
Privacy Commissioner			
Mr. Boudria	8766		
Motion	8766		
Mr. Schmidt	8767		
Mr. Blaikie	8768		
Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral	8769		
Mr. Stoffer	8770		
Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral	8770		
Mr. Gruending	8770		
Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral	8770		
Mr. MacKay	8770		
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8772		
Mr. MacKay	8773		
Mr. Stoffer	8773		
Mr. MacKay	8773		
Mr. Bergeron	8773		
Mr. MacKay	8774		
Mr. Plamondon	8774		
Mr. MacKay	8774		
The Deputy Speaker	8775		
Business of the House			
Ms. Catterall	8775		
Motion	8775		
(Motion agreed to)	8776		
Ms. Catterall	8776		
Motion	8776		
Ms. Catterall	8776		
Mr. Bergeron	8776		
(Motion agreed to)	8776		
Marine Conservation Areas Act			
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8776		
Motions in amendment			
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8776		
Motion No. 4	8776		
Miss Grey	8776		
Motion No. 5	8776		
Ms. Caplan	8776		
Motion No. 6	8776		
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8776		
Motion No. 8	8776		
Miss Grey	8776		
Motion No. 9	8777		
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8777		
Motion No. 10	8777		
Miss Grey	8777		
Motion No. 11	8777		
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8777		
Motion No. 14	8777		
Ms. Caplan	8777		
Motion No. 15	8777		
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8777		
Motion No. 21	8777		
Miss Grey	8777		
Motions Nos. 22 and 23	8777		
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8777		
Motion No. 24	8777		
Miss Grey	8777		
Motion No. 25	8777		
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8777		
Motion No. 30	8777		
Miss Grey	8777		
Motions Nos. 31, 33, 35 and 36.	8777		
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8777		
Motion No. 38.	8777		
Ms. Caplan	8777		
Motions No. 39	8777		
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8777		
Motion No. 51.	8777		
Miss Grey	8777		
Motions Nos. 52 and 54.	8777		
Ms. Caplan	8778		
Motions Nos. 57 and 58.	8778		
Mr. Plamondon	8778		
Mr. Duhamel	8779		
Mr. Plamondon	8779		
Mr. Duhamel	8779		

Mr. Plamondon	8779
Mr. Duhamel	8779
Mr. Plamondon	8779
Mr. Plamondon	8780
Mr. Stoffer	8780
Miss Grey	8782
Mr. Doyle	8783
Ms. Alarie	8784
Mr. Lincoln	8786
Ms. Bulte	8786
Mr. Gruending	8787
Mr. Guimond	8788
Mr. Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)	8790
Mr. Chatters	8791
Motion	8791
(Motion agreed to)	8791
Mr. Morrison	8791
Motions Nos. 32 and 34	8791
Mr. Dumas	8791
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8793
Mr. Duncan	8794
Division on Motion No. 4 deferred	8795
Division on Motion No. 8 deferred	8795
Division on Motion No. 10 deferred	8796
Division on Motion No. 14 deferred	8796
Division on Motion No. 21 deferred	8796
Division on Motion No. 24 deferred	8796
Division on Motion No. 30 deferred	8796
Division on Motion No. 38 deferred	8796
Division on Motion No. 51 deferred	8797
Division on Motion No. 54 deferred	8797
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8797
Motion No. 16	8797
Miss Grey	8797
Motions Nos. 17 to 20	8797
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8797
Motion No. 49	8797
Miss Grey	8797
Motion No. 50	8797
Ms. Girard-Bujold	8799
Mr. Stoffer	8800

The Late Hon. Marcel Lambert

Mr. Clark	8800
Mr. Boudria	8801
Mr. Reynolds	8801
Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral	8801
Mr. Blaikie	8801
The Speaker	8802

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Late George K. Drynan

Mr. Grose	8802
-----------------	------

Transparency International

Mr. Williams	8802
--------------------	------

International Day Against MOX

Ms. Girard-Bujold	8803
-------------------------	------

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Mrs. Dockrill	8803
---------------------	------

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Mr. Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	8803
--	------

Bombardier

Ms. St-Jacques	8803
----------------------	------

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

The Mini-Budget

Mr. Day	8804
Mr. Gray	8804
Mr. Day	8804
Mr. Gray	8804
Mr. Day	8804
Mr. Gray	8804

Government Policies

Miss Grey	8804
Mr. Gray	8804
Miss Grey	8804
Mr. Gray	8804

Employment Insurance

Mr. Duceppe	8804
Mr. Gray	8804
Mr. Duceppe	8804
Mr. Gray	8805
Mr. Crête	8805
Mrs. Stewart (Brant)	8805
Mr. Crête	8805
Mrs. Stewart (Brant)	8805

Health Care

Mr. Blaikie	8805
Mr. Gray	8805
Mr. Blaikie	8805
Mr. Gray	8806

Auditor General's Report

Mr. Clark	8806
Mr. Gray	8806
Mr. Clark	8806
Mr. Gray	8806

Employment Insurance

Mrs. Ablonczy	8806
Mr. Gray	8806
Mrs. Ablonczy	8806
Mr. Gray	8806
Ms. Gagnon	8807
Mrs. Stewart (Brant)	8807
Ms. Gagnon	8807
Mrs. Stewart (Brant)	8807

Foreign Affairs

Mr. Grewal	8807
Mr. Gray	8807
Mr. Grewal	8807
Mr. MacAulay	8807

Employment Insurance

Mr. Loubier	8807
Mr. Gray	8808
Mr. Loubier	8808
Mrs. Stewart (Brant)	8808

Foreign Affairs

Mr. Abbott	8808
Mr. MacAulay	8808
Mr. Abbott	8808
Mr. Axworthy	8808

Young Offenders

Mr. Bellehumeur	8808
-----------------------	------

Ms. McLellan	8808	Mr. Boudria	8813
Crimes Against Humanity		Point of Order	
Mr. Assadourian	8809	Oral Question Period	
Ms. Bulte	8809	Mr. Clark	8813
Health		Privilege	
Ms. Meredith	8809	Disclosure of Documents	
Mr. Charbonneau	8809	Mrs. Stewart (Brant)	8813
Ms. Meredith	8809	The Speaker	8814
Mr. Charbonneau	8809	Points of Order	
The Environment		Oral Question Period	
Mr. Gruending	8809	Mr. McNally	8814
Mr. Anderson	8809	The Speaker	8814
Mr. Gruending	8810	Bill C-44	
Mr. Anderson	8810	Mr. MacKay	8814
Human Resources Development		The Speaker	8814
Mr. Clark	8810	Mr. Grewal	8815
Mrs. Stewart (Brant)	8810		
Mr. Clark	8810		
Mr. Boudria	8810		
Endangered Species			
Mr. Price	8810		
Mr. Anderson	8810		
Aboriginal Affairs			
Mr. Elley	8810		
Mr. Gray	8810		
Human Resources Development Canada			
Mr. Gauthier	8811		
Mr. Gray	8811		
Employment Insurance			
Mr. Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	8811		
Mrs. Stewart (Brant)	8811		
Fisheries			
Mr. Keddy	8811		
Mr. Dhaliwal	8811		
Immigration			
Mr. Sekora	8811		
Ms. Caplan	8811		
Aboriginal Affairs			
Mr. Elley	8812		
Ms. McLellan	8812		
Biosafety Protocol			
Ms. Alarie	8812		
Mr. Anderson	8812		
Presentation of Reports			
Mr. Blaikie	8812		
Mr. Boudria	8812		
Mr. Blaikie	8812		
Mr. Boudria	8812		
Child Poverty			
Ms. Vautour	8812		
Mrs. Stewart (Brant)	8812		
Point of Order			
Oral Question Period			
Mr. Gray	8813		
Business of the House			
Mr. McNally	8813		

GOVERNMENT ORDERS	
Marine Conservation Areas Act	
Bill C-8. Report stage	8815
Division on Motion No. 16 deferred	8815
Division on Motion No. 49 deferred	8815
Eldorado Nuclear Limited Reorganization and Divestiture Act	
Bill C-39. Second reading	8815
Mr. Coderre	8815
Mr. Serré	8815
Mr. Chatters	8817
Mr. Cardin	8819
Mr. Stoffer	8822
Mr. Lee	8824
Mr. Stoffer	8824
Mr. Hearn	8824
(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)	8826
Criminal Code	
Bill C-36. Second reading	8826
Mr. Anderson	8826
Mr. Maloney	8826
Mr. Cadman	8829
Mr. Bellehumeur	8831
Mr. Bellehumeur	8834
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS	
Cultural Industry	
Motion	8835
Miss Grey	8835
Mr. Szabo	8837
The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland)	8838
Mr. Riis	8838
Mr. Lee	8838
Mr. Riis	8838
Mr. Laurin	8838
Mr. Riis	8839
Motion	8839
(Motion agreed to)	8839
Miss Grey	8839
Motion	8839
(Motion agreed to)	8839

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