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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, November 2, 1999

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 2, 1999

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

• (1005)

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

NATIONAL DEFENCE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Okanagan—Coquihalla on October 21, 1999 concerning delays in the release of information under the Access to Information Act caused by staff of the Minister of National Defence.

Before beginning, I would like to thank the hon. member for raising the matter. I also want to acknowledge the contribution of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford, as well as the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government to this matter.

The hon. member for Okanagan—Coquihalla has argued that his privileges, as well as those of other members, were breached by the actions of two employees of the Minister of National Defence, namely Mr. Aldege Bellefeuille and Mr. David Robinson, who delayed the release of information thereby obstructing him in the performance of his parliamentary work.

The member went on to assert that the delays in question constitute a contempt of the House.

[*Translation*]

Contempt as described by Joseph Maingot in his book *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* is “an offence against the authority or dignity of the House”.

[*English*]

The 22nd edition of Erskine May states that:

any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any Member or officer

of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence.

The member for Okanagan—Coquihalla did not state clearly in his presentation on this question of privilege nor in the supplemental material submitted to the Chair that he personally had been obstructed. The facts, as I have them, indicate that the member for Okanagan—Coquihalla had placed requests with the Department of National Defence to obtain information under the Access to Information Act and received the answers to his questions after what he stated was an intentional and deliberate delay initiated by Messieurs Bellefeuille and Robinson. Following this series of events, the member then proceeded to inform the Information Commissioner of his criticisms of the process. The Information Commissioner in his report found the instructions issued by these individuals to constitute improper interference with the lawful processing of access requests. As a result of the members complaint and the commissioner's report, the Department of National Defence was informed of the misconduct and acted to remedy the situation.

While the actions of Messieurs Bellefeuille and Robinson may have been deemed improper under the terms of the Access to Information Act, this is not a matter that the Speaker can judge. As Speaker Fraser eloquently stated in his ruling on January 28, 1988:

I would remind the House that it is not the duty of the Speaker to judge the actions of public officials in the fulfilment of their duties. It is my duty only to determine whether or not sufficient evidence has been presented to judge if there has been a prima facie breach of privilege or contempt of the House.

The fact that these public servants were not properly fulfilling their duties is not de facto in itself grounds for a charge of contempt.

[*Translation*]

Technically, obstructing members in the discharge of their responsibilities to the House or in their participation in its proceedings is considered to be a contempt of the House. However, as Joseph Maingot writes, in his book *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, on page 82:

—the member must be exercising his functions as a member in a committee or in the House in the transaction of parliamentary business. Whatever he says or does in

Routine Proceedings

those circumstances is said or done during a "proceeding in Parliament"; in other words, while the member is functioning as a member, not in his constituency, but while actually participating in parliamentary business and saying or doing something necessarily incidental to parliamentary business.

● (1010)

Thus, in order for a member to claim that his privileges have been breached or that a contempt has occurred, he or she must have been actually participating in a proceeding of parliament.

[English]

Joseph Maingot reiterates this point on page 86 of his book:

A Member is doing something inherently connected with a "proceeding in Parliament" when putting down a question on the Order Paper, a notice of motion, a notice of motion for the production of papers, or a report stage amendment; when obtaining assistance to do any of these; or when obtaining assistance to draft a bill.

In order to fulfil their parliamentary duties, members should of course have access to the information they require. The Chair is mindful of the multiple responsibilities, duties and activities of all members and of the importance they play in the work of every member of parliament. However, the gathering of information by an elected representative through means other than those available exclusively to members does not, in and by itself, necessarily constitute "a proceeding of parliament".

As stated in the 22nd edition of Erskine May on page 121:

Correspondence with constituents or official bodies, for example, and the provision of information, sought by Members on matters of public concern will very often, depending on the circumstances of the case, fall outside the scope of 'proceedings in Parliament' against which a claim of privilege will be measured.

Let me stress to all members of the House that any matter concerning the privileges of members, particularly any matter which may constitute a contempt of the House, is always taken seriously. At this time, however, based on the facts presented on this matter, the Chair cannot determine that the member has been obstructed in the performance of his parliamentary duties. I am therefore bound by practice to conclude that there are not sufficient grounds to find a prima facie case nor to proceed further at this time.

I thank the hon. member for Okanagan—Coquihalla for bringing this matter to the attention of the House.

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 Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in

both official languages, the government's response to four petitions.

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-293, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (political activities by charities receiving public funds).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this private member's bill once enacted would disqualify from charitable status corporations, trusts and organizations that have received discretionary funding from the public money of Canada or a province if they give direct or indirect support or endorsement to parties or candidates for election at the federal level.

There is a gaping wide loophole at the moment in the act which allows charities to engage in political activities with no real accountability.

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

* * *

● (1015)

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-294, an act to amend the Employment Equity Act (elimination of designated groups and numerical goals) and the Canadian Human Rights Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, once this bill is adopted it will get rid of the ridiculous provisions of the Employment Equity Act, which I have mentioned in the House, which result in the sort of perverse discrimination that one of my constituents has experienced, and it would completely derail the government's agenda in that regard.

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

* * *

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-295, an act to establish principles of responsible fiscal management and to require regular publication of information by the Minister of Finance to demonstrate the government's adherence to those principles.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill, once adopted, would cause there to be responsible fiscal management by the Minister of Finance. Not only would the minister have to make a forecast of the fiscal state of the nation for the year on what the policies are for the government, but he would be required to report regularly to parliament to show that those things are being achieved.

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

BEVERAGE CONTAINERS ACT

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-296, an act respecting beverage containers.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill would ensure that all beverages sold in Canada are sold in bottles upon which a deposit would be chargeable. It may be that the amount of the deposit would differ from some of the existing programs, such as those found in the breweries of Canada, but the principle is very important to ensure that we help the environment by having all of these bottles and containers returned for deposit.

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

* * *

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-297, an act to amend the Young Offenders Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to reintroduce the bill formerly known as Bill C-260, an act to amend the Young Offenders Act, to make the offence set out in section 7.2 of the Young Offenders Act a hybrid offence.

I appreciate that the Minister of Justice has recognized the value of this legislation as it is incorporated in its entirety in government Bill C-3.

• (1020)

I am forced to keep my bill alive as it has received the support of the majority of members of the House. As well, it is my bill that keeps the clock ticking to force the government to deal with this issue. There is no guarantee that Bill C-3 will even pass successfully from this place or that it will pass in its entirety with the issue raised by my legislation.

The bill was a votable item in the previous session. On May 25, 1999 it was referred from this place to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. The bill is in the same form as it was in the first session of this parliament. Pursuant to our present rules, I am requesting that it be returned to the position it held prior to prorogation.

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The Chair is satisfied that the bill is in the same form as Bill C-260 was at the time of prorogation of the first session of the 36th Parliament. Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 86(1), the bill is deemed to have been read the second time and referred to a committee.

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

*Government Orders***PETITIONS**

JUSTICE

Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present the latest instalment of this petition on behalf of Diane Sowden of Coquitlam, British Columbia. The petition contains the names of some 7,100 citizens. It brings the total to some 11,500 Canadians who are calling on parliament to enact legislation raising the age of consent from 14 years to 16 years for sexual activity between a young person and an adult.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CIVIL INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed from October 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, an act to implement the agreement among the Government of Canada, Governments of Member States of the European Space Agency, the Government of Japan, the Government of the Russian Federation, and the Government of the United States of America concerning co-operation on the civil international space station and to make related amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Jim Jones (Markham, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely delighted to finally be able to speak to Bill C-4, the civil international space station agreement implementation act. This bill will allow Canada to fulfil its obligations under the agreement concerning co-operation on the civil space station. Bill C-4 legally formalizes Canada's partnership in the space station.

Members of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada will work co-operatively with the government to ensure speedy passage of the bill. Why would we not? It is the culmination of a process that was started by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and President

Government Orders

Ronald Reagan at their infamous shamrock summit. I am sure I do not have to remind the House that it was that conference which saw Canada-U.S. relations begin to thaw after the acrimonious Yankee baiting Trudeau years.

It was due to this new co-operative relationship that the Progressive Conservative government was able to successfully negotiate the free trade agreement, an agreement that has provided the present finance minister with balanced budgets and a fast track to the leadership of his own party. I am sure he joins me in congratulating the foresight of the previous government, just as my party congratulates his government for continuing this positive relationship with Bill C-4.

There are many issues I want to touch on regarding the initiative to have a permanently inhabited space station, but for just a moment I would like to pay tribute to the powers of the dreamers. One man had a dream, a dream that many different friends and allies could design, construct and permanently inhabit a space station, a station whose sole purpose would be for peace and scientific study. What is even more remarkable is that this vision arose in the midst of a cold war, a time when new space initiatives were routinely judged by their strategic benefits, not necessarily by their humanitarian and scientific attributes.

• (1025)

This bill honours the dream of former President Ronald Reagan, as well as the vision of the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney and other world leaders who quickly coalesced behind the initiative.

I do not wish to have my words misconstrued by detractors in our ranks. Certainly my party is not advocating carte blanche spending on any and all flights of fancy. Quite the opposite, since my party created the Canadian Space Agency in 1989, frugal spending with an eye to the return on investment has been the hallmark of this institution.

In this case it is the return on investment that I want to deal with. Over a 20 year period the government is telling us that Canada's total investment will be \$1.4 billion, with 90% of that investment going to Canadian industry. Projected returns on investment are three to four times that amount, or at least \$5 billion. Thus, from a business perspective, this investment makes good sense.

Why is Canada involved? Is it because we are good friends and neighbours with the Americans? Of course not. If that were not the case we could certainly expect to be excluded. The point here is that Canada has been invited to take part because of our own scientific merits. Our contribution to the space station includes the design, construction and operation of the mobile servicing system, plus responsibilities for the operation and use of the space station.

This high tech repair system will feature an agile robotic arm with a sleeve bearing the Canada wordmark. This remote manipu-

lator will be monitored on the ground by the Canadian Space Agency headquartered in St-Hubert, Quebec. Clearly, Canada has made a name for itself in arming spacecrafts for peaceful purposes.

The Canadarm has become a cliched reference to our contribution to space study. I have no desire to belittle that important innovation which put us at the table with other world class space studying nations, but the reality is that we have moved exponentially beyond those days in both our research and capabilities.

Our capabilities in space robotics are renowned around the globe. In fact, it would not be arrogant bluster to state that this project simply could not go ahead without Canada's involvement. Our investment provides us with one laboratory shelf per year for science and technological experiments. This will allow us to further our research in the microgravity field which has already produced medical benefits for us in several areas, including the treatment of osteoporosis.

Since 1987 the Canadian Space Agency has allocated over 150 contracts to Canadian firms and universities for automation and robotics technology developed projects, resulting in the development of several new technologies which have already been alluded to by my colleagues in the House. In many ways this is remarkable considering the shrinking budget that the CSA has had to endure over the last several years.

Since the Liberal government was elected in 1993 it has cut the budget to the CSA by 7% thus far. In the 1999 budget the Liberals bragged that they were giving new money to the Canadian Space Agency, but in reality the government was cutting the budget by 21% from when it was first elected. We all realize that hard decisions have to be made so that we live within our means. However, when a sector of the economy provides so much spinoff and keeps racking up success after success, I really think we should re-evaluate our goals.

This project goes beyond technological and scientific advancement. As we are all aware, it was due to the hard work and lobbying efforts of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney that Canada gained entry, along with Italy, into what was the G-5. Membership in the G-7 guaranteed that no longer would Canada be relegated to afterthought status when it came to important international initiatives. At that point we graduated to the big leagues. Bill C-4 continues that status for us.

Along with the United States, the space station's other partners include Russia, Japan, Brazil and 11 other European countries. It is interesting to note that whenever this agreement is referred to in terms of its partners, it almost always lumps the 11 European countries together as one, while leaving Canada as a stand-alone. Even the NASA website does this. The message from the rest of the world is clear. We have assumed the natural leadership mantle that the 20th century promised us.

• (1030)

My party's support for this bill is both resolute and strong. However, I would be remiss if I failed to mention our disappointment with the way the Liberals have dragged their heels in getting this bill before the House.

The partners in the international space station signed the original agreement in January 1998. This agreement provides a legal framework for the operation of the space station, including provisions for each inhabitant of the station to be subject to the laws of their own nation, a very important sovereignty issue for all the participants. The question though is why the delay? The bill seems simple enough yet it had not been called for second reading before the House prorogued.

It is now the beginning of November. This agreement has sat around for 21 months. What is the Prime Minister afraid of? In all fairness, I do not see any reason to be suspicious, but it is easy to see how waiting until the last minute when this bill must receive royal assent by mid-December can raise questions. These questions are entirely unnecessary when a government respects the role that parliament and the parliamentary committees have to play.

Having said that, I will not delay the bill any further. Let us move this bill along and give Canada's best scientific minds one more reason to stay and work in Canada.

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-4, the civil international space station agreement implementation act. I should say at the outset that the NDP supports this legislation. Let me give a little background on the legislation.

In January 1998 Canada, Japan, Russia, the U.S. and 11 European countries signed the civil international space station agreement. Bill C-4 provides the legislation needed for Canada to meet its commitments for ratification by all signatories before January 2000.

The lifespan of the station we are told is 10 years, from 2005 to 2014, and it will house seven astronauts. The purpose of the station is to do research in the areas of biotechnology, engineering, Earth observation and telecommunications.

Canada's contribution to the international space station is the next generation of the Canadarm, the space station robotic manipulator system. This system plays a crucial role in assembling and maintaining the international space station while in orbit. It will be used to move equipment in space, help astronauts during space walks and it will manipulate the various instruments and experiments docked on the ISS. We are all very proud of this Canadian invention and the role it has played thus far in the whole area of space development.

Government Orders

What rewards are there for Canada? The cost of Canada's participation over a 20 year period is approximately \$1.4 billion. Ninety percent of that investment is being spent in Canadian industry and universities. Indeed we know the importance of our universities to our society and to our young people.

Since 1987 the Canadian Space Agency has allocated 150 contracts for robotics development technology to firms and universities from British Columbia right through to Newfoundland. Already the technology is being used in such diverse areas as prosthetics, the deployment of airbags in vehicles, and in a digital imaging system for medical radiology.

Firms have landed international contracts based on the expertise they have acquired through their work with the Canadian Space Agency or by supplying equipment and expertise to some of the other signatory countries to the agreement.

From our participation in the international space station we received one rack, or what is known as a laboratory shelf, per year for science and technological experiments. These shelves will allow Canada to expand its research in the microgravity field which will aid research carried out here in areas such as osteoporosis. It is very important to have this kind of research in our society. Certainly the benefits of this technology will be great for our nation.

I also noticed that the bill talks about establishing an international space station for peaceful purposes. I want to take a moment to comment on that. I certainly support the concept of a space station, but I find it somewhat disturbing that we can spend lots of money and move forward with great urgency and a certain sense of determination on things that are outside of this Earth, the space element.

• (1035)

It would be good if we could put as much energy into finding peace here on Earth and working toward establishing peace within the many troubled countries throughout the world. If countries across the world would put the same effort that is being put into the development of the space agency into establishing peaceful negotiations and peaceful relationships between countries, the world would certainly be a much better place. If ultimately we have an elaborate space station in outer space but we are killing each other off here on Earth, what good does it do us in the long run?

The space station will house seven astronauts. The term house draws to my attention that here on Earth on the streets within our communities many people are homeless, yet we are providing very elaborate and costly facilities to advance the cause of science and business industries. I am not saying it should not be done; I am saying that we should devote as much attention to looking after the kinds of concerns that we see as we walk out of our doors and down our streets.

Government Orders

I am sure many people living in constituencies right across the country have more concern about putting bread on their tables and about providing the homeless with shelter than they do with proceeding with space development. That is not to say it should not be done and I emphasize that. People will probably want to say I am putting down that effort. I am not putting down that effort. What I am saying is let us bring other efforts up to that same level of advancement.

Finally, this project emphasizes industrial development and economic development. It is very important that we as a nation move forward in those areas. But again I would say that we must also move forward in the area of social development and meet the social concerns that face many of us. It would certainly be good to see the kind of money that is being put into space development being put into many of the problems that confront our young people and the citizens of this nation.

With those remarks and that footnote about balancing the kinds of priorities we deal with, I would say that I am pleased to support this legislation.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the NDP member's speech with some interest. He touched on a very important subject and that is to what extent we support investing in these high tech projects that take a lot of money from the taxpayers.

It must be recognized that when we engage in these projects, none of the money really goes up there. It involves supporting our people and businesses that develop the space stations and that do the work there. The money actually stays on planet Earth. Most of it that is spent in Canada stays in Canada. It is spent here by the people who have earned it, thereby providing jobs for a lot of people. If these people did not have that employment in the high tech area, then obviously they would leave Canada to go to the United States or elsewhere.

I picked up from the member's speech that he generally supports the government's involvement in the international space agency projects. I would like him to respond to the issue of its funding. By providing jobs and greater economic activity in Canada as a result of it, in fact that does almost directly but certainly indirectly help our economy. It helps all of the people in this country, many of whom are struggling economically. It would increase the proportion of jobs that are available to them as they demand services and products that are put together by Canadians. I would like the member to respond to that.

• (1040)

Mr. Gordon Earle: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member has indicated, projects of this nature keep money within our communities and they do generate economic activity. I believe I did cover

that point in my comments by mentioning that for this very reason we support the project.

We also have to look at priorities in terms of our communities. We have to use the same kind of energy and enthusiasm to tackle some of the problems which are very evident in our society such as the homeless, the lack of opportunities for some of our young people and the concerns they have around education and so forth.

I am not disagreeing with the member's comments. They are well taken. We did touch upon that and we do agree with that.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is always very interesting to read, learn and discover how people in our country are participating in the leading edge technology in this way. Without technology I suppose we might argue that perhaps we would not even be in caves and tents because even that is some technological advancement. However, at a time when we are looking at the enormous burden of taxation on our people, the costs and the prioritizing of the moneys that are raised is extremely important.

I would like to ask the hon. member about another aspect of this. He mentioned the peaceful programs. Humankind has had difficulties in reserving the technological advances for strictly peaceful purposes. We have seen space surrounding Earth explored for more than peaceful purposes. I would like to have the member's comments on the peaceful purposes of the project. Is there any danger of it going beyond that?

Mr. Gordon Earle: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

I too would have concerns about the possibility that a space station could lead to another space station and that some rivalry could take place in space. Many of us have watched *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*. We would certainly hope that this kind of development does not reach the point where we are not only carrying on wars here on Earth but we are carrying on wars in space or using the technology that has been learned through these programs to further devastate ourselves on Earth. We have to be vigilant about that.

It is for that reason I commented that it would be nice if we could put energy into finding peaceful solutions here on Earth. If we find peaceful solutions among the countries here on Earth, then whatever we develop beyond should be guided by the same principles. If we have wars going on here among countries and we cannot come to some solution on those issues, then the member is quite right in being concerned that perhaps the development of more technology might lead to further disaster.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak to Bill C-4, the civil international space station agreement implementation act.

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We talked with the people responsible for the development of the Canadian aspects and the participation internationally on the space station. I was impressed by the technological advances which Canada is making and the contribution we are making toward this space station.

I have a number of questions more than concerns. We certainly support the bill. I have questions in the areas of the brain drain and our young people going south, and where the technology is headed and where it is coming from. I have questions on the aspects of training our young people to participate in such a project, the distribution of the manpower and technology throughout the country. When talking to people at the space agency a lot of the focus and the development and participation is in Quebec and some other parts of eastern and central Canada.

• (1045)

Having resided in the west for many years, I once again ask out of the billion and so dollars that are being spent on this matter what is in it for the west and for the young people who reside in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina and all those other places. How do they fit into the plans for this sort of thing?

If we are spending billions, basically, over the next 20 years, do we not have an obligation as a central government to have young people participate in this project from across the land and not just focus in on one part of the country? It seems to me that time and time again we stand in the House and ask why the west is being ignored while other parts of the country are indeed benefiting from major programs funded by the central government.

I find it ironic that I stand in the House today on a bill with which we basically agree. I also want to talk about what went on in the House yesterday with time allocation. We were expected to talk about the Nisga'a agreement which involves as much money or maybe even more money than the space station itself. We have a diametrically opposite point of view from that of the government and have made clear that there are significant flaws in that legislation. We have said time and time again that constitutionality was involved in it. There was taxation without representation and all those sorts of things. Why was time allocation used on the official opposition after four hours and 12 minutes?

Then the government brings in a bill for a little over a billion dollars that we essentially all agree on. We are all happy again. The government is expecting us to roll through the bill really fast because it agrees with it and thinks we agree with it.

I raise the question on whether or not my colleagues and I should be sitting in the House allowing these bills to go through. On a large bill like the Nisga'a bill the government does everything to interfere in the process of proper debate. It brought in time

allocation on the Nisga'a agreement. We did not even have the opportunity for the committee to travel to British Columbia because it did not want to travel there. The bill was delayed by a day. We forced its deferral because we wanted to force the government to travel to British Columbia.

Once again I am having a difficult time, as are my colleagues, understanding why Bill C-4 on the space agency can come to the House and be zipped through when the government called time allocation rather than debate something like the Nisga'a legislation. The government is happy when we stand in the House to debate the space agency, with which I agree. It is willing to sit around all day and listen to how much I agree with this legislation, but when I stand to disagree with the Nisga'a bill it calls time allocation because it does not want to hear it.

I therefore have a bit of news for the government. I am sick and tired of time allocation and closure on bills. I formally tell the government today that if there is one more time allocation or even a mention of closure—

Mr. Nick Discepola: Are you going to resign?

Mr. Randy White: No, I am not going to resign. I am glad the member said that because it makes me a bit more angry. If I hear even a whisper of it again on the Nisga'a bill, the House will come to a screeching halt. If the government thinks I am kidding, it should just try me.

• (1050)

It is the height of arrogance to table this space agency bill after the Nisga'a bill and expect us to stand here and pretend we will all be happy. We will listen to how nice the bill is and what a sweetheart deal we have when in fact we have been slapped in the face and told the government does not want to hear about our opposition to Nisga'a. I think it has another thought coming.

I could hold on to this bill, which I just might yet, and debate it for a couple of days. We will talk about Nisga'a while I am doing it and a bit about a few other things. Yes, I may be called me on relevance once in a while. Yes, I may call quorum more than once and play all those silly games. As of yesterday and the Nisga'a debate in the House, 23 of my colleagues were sitting here who did not have the opportunity to speak to the Nisga'a bill, many of whom are from British Columbia. That is unacceptable.

Today we stand in the House to talk about the space agency bill, something we all agree with, and we have two Liberals in the House talking to each other over there and not even listening. As long as we occupy the time of the House of Commons the government is okay with that, as long as we agree, but when we do not agree as with the Nisga'a legislation it is unforgivable. We have to rush it through the House, do we not?

Government Orders

Given that there is only a couple of them over there and they are not listening, we should wake them up a little. I could call quorum but I do not think I will because there are committees in place. We will have to discuss this bill for a while and see where it goes. At the same time we will make reference and comparison throughout to the disgusting process which took place on the Nisga'a legislation.

We have taxation without representation in the Nisga'a legislation. We have constitutional concerns and all kinds of issues yet to discuss on that bill, but we cannot get our hands on it because it was rushed through the House on time allocation.

Yet I see on the space agency bill that a little over \$1 billion will be spent. That is fine. We will just sit here, talk about that, smile and all be happy. That is just plain unacceptable to me. As House leader I will be talking to my colleagues tomorrow in our caucus. I will make the points that we are sick and tired of time allocation closure on bills, that we will not put up with it any longer, and that we might just talk about all these bills a little longer.

I have one comment about the space agency bill which the government has not really considered. I well understand that another head office like that of Air Canada and all the other head offices will end up in Quebec. When will the government see fit to put one in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Edmonton or Calgary one of these days? We do have a little technology out there, believe it or not.

If we look at some of the good companies in Vancouver, I am sure they could match the technology. Why is it that we get a \$1.6 billion space agency program, which is an excellent program, and it happens to sit in Quebec? Why is that? Time after time that happens.

• (1055)

If we look at the value of the space agency to the country, I do not think there is any question about the technology and the possibility that our young people will get jobs and that sort of thing. However, once in a while the government should give us the opportunity to have just a wee bit in the west.

I will get back to the comparison. If the space agency project is to be a good project, it is not just international and our participation in space and technology. It is more than that to me. It is young people who should be training now for 10 years from now, those who will be working on this project.

Are the universities fitting in? Has the government seen fit to bother to try to help with programs at post-secondary institutions for students to get jobs in this regard, or will we be importing jobs applicants from other countries? Should we expand the operation? Should we put satellite companies in other parts of the country? Should we ask our technicians, our young people, for participation

and for ideas on the agency? How do we promote the space agency even more than it is being promoted today?

I do not think the government has thought a lot about these things. It just looks at it and says that it has another project in Quebec and it will make it work. I think there is a future for our young people to be involved and it should be looked at.

If the space agency bill is to pass the House, with which we all agree, I repeat once again that it is time the government understood that it cannot keep bringing bills like this one into the House expecting our agreement when bills with which we adamantly disagree are rammed through the House on time allocation. I have no intention whatsoever any longer of living with the government's agenda, its timeframe. If we disagree with or even if we agree with legislation it is highly likely that we will talk about it for a while, as in the case of this bill.

When we get into issues like that of the space agency, I hope the House understands that all those involved should be prepared for questions and for longer debates. If members on the other side do not have the courtesy to do that with an important bill which involves billions of dollars and affects the Nisga'a constitution, I think we will have to insist that they do it on all bills.

I will sum up. We may yet move an amendment through one of our members to extend the debate, putting emphasis on the Nisga'a agreement which my colleagues have not yet had the opportunity to fully discuss. We may have discussions about relevance in the House. I am prepared for that and I am prepared for a long debate in that regard, but it is time we gave notice to the House that we will discuss what the official opposition wants to discuss. I do not give two rats about the government's agenda.

We will agree with Bill C-4. We will discuss further Bill C-4. I will bet that between now and Christmas we will be discussing the Nisga'a agreement for many more hours rather than the four hours and twelve minutes we were given up to yesterday.

• (1100)

Mr. Derrek Konrad (Prince Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed the hon. member's speech and his notations about the freedom to speak on something that we can all read from the government press releases and not to concern ourselves with the real issues that matter in the country.

I will read a few notes from the office of the leader of the official opposition of British Columbia regarding the democratic process that the member alluded to. He says "I am writing to note my extreme dismay over your government's motion to invoke closure on the Nisga'a treaty debate today." What is important is what he says next. He says "This motion is an unacceptable slight to British Columbia and to all Canadians who deserve a full and open debate on this landmark treaty". This is in contrast with the free and open debate on Bill C-4 which everyone is in agreement with.

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He goes on to say “On a matter of this critical importance to our province, our country and our constitution, every member of parliament deserves an opportunity to speak”.

I would like the member to comment on what the B.C. premier had to say as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Just before the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford takes the floor to respond to the question as presented by the member for Prince Albert, if we are going to stretch the rules of the House as far as relevance is concerned, it is going to take ingenuity on the part of the members doing so.

The Chair is not going to control the debate. In absence of protests opposite, it is not the Chair’s intention to try and stifle debate. However, if the opposition is going to use the rules of the House, then it must be done in the spirit of the rules of the House. It is going to demand ingenuity so that members who wish to bring other issues to the table do so in a way that will not command the Chair to intervene.

Mr. Randy White: Mr. Speaker, ingenuity we have and ingenuity we will use.

It is interesting that my colleague comments on the letter the premier has received in British Columbia. The leader of the official opposition in British Columbia, Gordon Campbell, has somehow expressed the frustration we feel in the House. We come here and talk about Bill C-4 and a space station. It is fine to talk about the bill in the House. We basically all agree with it.

The Liberals would sit here for four days and talk about this and occupy what is not even much of an agenda. The moment there is something contentious that comes to the House, after four and a half hours on something like the Nisga’a agreement, they call time allocation. Go figure. What is wrong with these people?

Mr. John Cannis: Don’t look at me.

Mr. Randy White: Do not look at him, he says. Well you put up your hand when you voted. Talk about stupid, some of these people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Please address each other, particularly when the occasion is a little heated, through the Chair. We will refer to each other as hon. members or as persons representing a particular constituency and we do so through the Chair.

• (1105)

Mr. Randy White: Mr. Speaker, I did not call any one particular person stupid here. The difficulty the opposition parties should

have, the NDP included and the other fellows, we should all have the same problem in the House.

If a bill comes in that we basically agree on, like Bill C-4, it is okay. The Liberals will have us discussing the thing for three or four days. They would be happy with only two or three people in the House of Commons reading the newspaper.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): In reference to other members presence or absence in the House, that will also require ingenuity.

Mr. Randy White: Mr. Speaker, instead of me arguing with you, I did not say there were two or three people in the House of Commons. I said that they would be happy with only two or three people in the House of Commons.

It is okay to come in here and talk about Bill C-4, the space station, for three or four days. However, what opposition parties should be concerned about is that the moment we disagree with one of their bills, the Liberals call time allocation. They call closure after four hours of debate. While we are the only party fighting Nisga’a in the House, the next time it may be one other party or two other parties that disagree and they will do it again. That is plainly unacceptable. We will take this any longer. Myself, as House leader, and our whip, my colleague from Fraser Valley, have made up our mind that is enough.

Hon. Jim Peterson: That’s two.

Mr. Randy White: Yes, that is two, but those are the two the hon. member should worry about. The Liberals may want to travel. Maybe we will not like that.

Mr. John Cannis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I know the leader of the Reform Party was pleased and very enthusiastic with respect to the space bill. We appreciate his support and the support of the Reform House leader. I know what the hon. member is driving at and everybody appreciates it, but if at the same time he could just zero in a little bit on the space bill and bring some relevance into it that would really add to it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I would ask all hon. members to be relevant and to keep in mind that we are discussing Bill C-4.

Mr. Randy White: Mr. Speaker, if this is not relevant then we are in the wrong place. This is more than relevant. The hon. member does not seem to understand that I have said time and time again in this particular speech that we agree with Bill C-4.

What we do not agree with is just exactly what is going on with the so-called democracy in this place. It is okay if I stand here and

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agree with Bill C-4. It is okay if I agree with the space station. It is okay as long as we agree with the Liberal Party. If any member on this side disagrees with the Liberal Party, we get time allocation and closure. That is what is wrong and that is what is relevant with this bill.

It is about time bills like this, that we agree on, that we talk a long time on and everything else that comes into the House. If the member thinks that is not relevant, he should just try us. It is more than relevant.

The government has a really bad habit as a majority government. We can count, as I already have, the number of bills it has called closure on after a number of hours. It is coming up, in almost half the time, to surpassing Mr. Mulroney in the number of times he called closure or time allocation. However, that is okay with the Liberals.

• (1110)

Here is a sweet space station everybody agrees with, so the guys can talk here for a week if they want. However, when we disagree or if my colleague's party, the NDP, disagree with a bill, just watch how long it takes the Liberals to call time allocation or closure. It is okay if a member wants to stand up for the space station because everyone agrees with it.

Mr. John Solomon: No, we oppose it now. If there is no money for farmers, there is no money for space.

Mr. Randy White: That is not a bad position. If there is no money for farmers then there is no money for space. How long have we been asking for money in the House for farmers? We have been saying that the Nisga'a agreement is costing an enormous amount of money. The Liberals do not want to talk about that because they called time allocation on that. This is only \$1.6 billion or \$1.3 billion on a space station. The Liberals lose count after the billions.

The Liberals have my message. It is very clear. We will be talking about these bills as long as we darn well feel like it. We will be talking about travel from now on. We are not under any circumstances going to entertain these time allocation-closure bills henceforth.

[Translation]

Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I too am wondering about the relevance of the remarks made by the member for Langley—Abbotsford. I find him incapable of ingenuity.

The Speaker suggested that he would have to be ingenious to be relevant. His remarks had to do with the Nisga'a agreement, the implementing legislation being debated today. I should say "his

many remarks" because he spoke almost exclusively about this native treaty and not about the Civil International Space Station Agreement Implementation Act.

Yet, ingenuity was possible. For instance, it could have been suggested that the Nisga'a treaty should have been debated in the House before it was signed, or before it was ratified by the Government of Canada or the Government of British Columbia.

There is a parallel to be drawn here between domestic treaties, those having to do with aboriginal matters, those described by the Supreme Court of Canada as *sui generis*, and international treaties, because the process for each is, in many regards, similar.

Treaties are debated, discussed, negotiated by governments. However, to apply in domestic law, they also require implementing legislation, and sometimes legislation from both a provincial legislative assembly and the federal parliament.

I imagine that this is not something a person can do unless he is really ingenious: when he does not want to really address a bill such as this one, when he wants to waste the precious time of the House on a debate that ought to be kept for the appropriate time.

I want to speak of this implementing legislation, indicating what lessons can be learned from it and the path it followed in order to get before this House, after the negotiations that led to the Civil International Space Station Agreement.

The signature and implementation of treaties is an important issue. It is one that involves us all, because treaties are playing an increasingly important role in international life. Their numbers are multiplying. Hundreds of treaties are entered into yearly, and ratified by Canada and other countries.

• (1115)

This often requires parliaments to pass legislation to implement these treaties and to give them effect in Canadian internal law.

For the benefit of this House and those who are listening to us, I would like to say a few words about the process, particularly since I just recently introduced Bill C-214. This bill is aimed at getting parliament more involved in the process of concluding treaties, at democratizing in a way the process whereby treaties are accepted by the state and subsequently lead to the passage of legislation in order to implement the international obligations negotiated by the government.

I will therefore give hon. members a short course in international law. I am pleased that my colleague from Vancouver Quadra, who is also a professor of international law, is with us and will no doubt be able to add to my modest contribution. He will, no doubt, wish to share with us his thoughts on these proposals for increasing parliament's involvement in the treaty process.

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I would also like to remind hon. members that an international treaty is something that has first been negotiated. As a general rule, negotiations are conducted by governments represented by officials—in this case, officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs—or by diplomats, the ambassadors. When very important treaties are involved, ministers of the government are also involved, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in particular, since, under the Department of Foreign Affairs Act, it is he who is generally responsible for concluding international treaties.

Treaties are negotiated with other countries usually. Negotiations may take place with international organizations. Often, these organizations provide the forum for such negotiations. There is the negotiation, for example, of treaties in the context of the United Nations, which often acts as a forum for conferences, where debates are held on the treaties and lead to their passage.

It is not enough, however, to negotiate a treaty, because treaties, depending on the constitutional law of the country, sometimes require action by parliament to permit their acceptance by the country, so that the country can agree to be bound by the treaty.

This is where practices differ significantly from one country to the next. For some countries, like Canada and most countries with a British style parliamentary system, treaties are concluded, and the countries agree to be bound by the provisions in them, such as in the one creating the international space station, without parliament's involvement.

Here in Canada, a government can conclude a treaty and sign it after it has been adopted. It can even ratify it without parliament's prior approval or agreement that the country will be bound under the international treaty.

There are countries, however, that involve their parliament and can neither sign nor ratify—in most cases it is ratification—without the prior approval of parliament and the holding of a debate to give parliamentarians an opportunity to consider the text of the treaty and its provisions before the government commits internationally.

● (1120)

In France, for example, parliament must adopt an act approving any treaty before the French authorities can ratify it.

The practices are different, but they tend increasingly to involve parliament in the process leading to the conclusion of treaties and give it a say in the process, since the content of an increasing number of laws passed by parliaments depends on the treaties that were first negotiated by the government.

I believe that in parliamentary systems such as ours but also that of other countries, there is a real lack of democracy in that

parliamentarians are asked, as we are today in the case of Bill C-4, to adopt laws whose content is largely determined by the content of treaties negotiated by the governments, even though their parliaments were not involved in the discussions on that content.

This is why I have introduced Bill C-214 which, I hope, will be the subject not only of a debate but also of a vote. This bill proposes that the House of Commons be involved in the conclusion of treaties by first approving a treaty and thus authorizing the government to ratify that treaty once the House has been informed of its content.

Some fear, however, that such a procedure might prevent the government from negotiating and accepting obligations pursuant to debates held between states. The example of the United States is often referred to; two-thirds of the U.S. Senate has to support any treaty the government—in this case, the President—wishes to ratify on behalf of the United States.

The formula I am proposing is one where approval by the House would not necessarily be binding on the government, which would, ultimately decide whether or not to ratify a treaty. This is not a procedure or formula that would paralyze a government, at least not in a system like ours where the government very often, almost always in fact, has a majority in the House and can get a resolution passed in favour of approval because of that majority.

My discussions, and some debates with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, have led me to conclude that the minister has considerable misgivings about such a procedure. He should not have any. This is a procedure aimed at making the process of ratifying treaties more democratic and involving MPs in the procedure for signing a type of document that is becoming more important in our societies and, I feel, will continue to do so.

For example, there are the debates and negotiations soon to begin at the World Trade Organization, leading to a number of treaties around the turn of the new millennium. These treaties arising out of the WTO millennium round will—or at least should—be debated in this House before the government makes commitments that will be binding on this House when the time comes to enact legislation implementing them.

● (1125)

We might also mention treaties pertaining to cultural diversity we want to negotiate with UNESCO and many other treaties that concern trade and cultural issues, individual rights and freedoms and information technology issues, since treaties concern all matters of interest to governments and to parliaments as well.

I believe also that transparency would require—and this is the focus of other provisions in Bill C-214, which I tabled in this House—the government to agree to table treaties in the House so parliamentarians might be aware of their content.

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It would thus agree to members of this House knowing our international obligations and to the enshrinement of a practice that was carried on for a number of years in this House. It was abandoned for a number of years but, only a few months ago, it was revived after I lobbied increasingly in this forum and in other forums to have treaties tabled to properly inform this House of Canada's international commitments.

In addition, I wanted—and would like to convince my colleagues in the House of this—the government to do a better job than it is currently doing of making the content of treaties known, not only by tabling them in the House, but by publishing them in various forms, electronically for example, on an electronic site such as that of the Department of Foreign Affairs. This is one of the rare sites of the departments of foreign affairs of developed countries where the country's treaties may be accessed, with a few rare exceptions.

We must also make sure they are published in the Canada Gazette, as are the laws, and that they are published in the Canada treaty series, as they currently are but at more reasonable intervals, since sometimes it takes months if not years for a treaty to appear in the series.

These are changes in practice that, in my view, deserve to be adopted by this parliament. They would, in certain respects, modify the royal prerogative underlying the government's authority in this area.

This House, however, is empowered to abrogate part of this prerogative and adopt a much more transparent and more democratic procedure involving all elected representatives—not just those of the government party that sit in Cabinet—in important decisions having to do with treaties and the government's response to them.

As I make this proposal, I am aware, and wish to inform the House, that, in other Commonwealth countries, and I am thinking of Australia and New Zealand, and even in the United Kingdom, the mother of all parliaments and some say of this parliament, recent practices for concluding treaties have been modified to introduce greater transparency. Treaties are tabled in the Houses, accompanied by an explanatory memorandum, and distributed much more widely, with much greater parliamentary participation than we are seeing here, in the House of Commons.

There is no excuse for the resistance to these changes, certainly not the lack of willingness and transparency of a government that should realize, on the eve of the year 2000 and a new millennium, that changes are in order. These practices must be adapted to the new importance of treaties in the international as well as domestic order.

• (1130)

Bill C-4, the Civil Space Station Agreement Implementation Act, was introduced in this House without our ever having been

able to examine its contents, without any examination before the treaty was signed.

According to my information, it was signed on January 29, 1998, and adopted on that same date. Signing already commits signatory states to a certain extent because article 18 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties stipulates that a state is obliged to refrain from acts which would defeat the object and purpose of a treaty before it consents to be bound by it and ratifies it.

Thus, by signing the treaty on January 29, 1998, Canada assumed a number of commitments, without this parliament having been consulted. It is therefore necessary for a signatory state to agree to involve its parliament. Parliament must be involved in examining the treaty itself, not just its implementation, because implementation legislation depends on the treaty contents. This bill ought to have been introduced only after the House of Commons had examined the treaty.

In closing, I wish to state that I feel it is important, and hope to have the opposition parties' support in this, even the government party as well, to ensure that Bill C-4 will be the last such bill, and that in future all treaties requiring implementing legislation will have initially been approved by the House of Commons.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry has advocated major constitutional reform.

Constitutional changes require patience, obviously. They take a lot of time and require a lot of work.

Will he agree for the time being, according to the umbrella agreement between the Government of Quebec and the federal government—signed I believe by Paul Martin senior—to there being rules that can fill the gap he now finds in the constitutional system? That means that the federal government appoints a representative from one or all the provinces to a constitutional delegation when negotiating a treaty concerning provincial jurisdictions.

Second, it is clear that most of the treaties today are not self-executing. Federal legislation is required to establish them in Canadian municipal law.

Third, there is a distinction between Australia and Canada in jurisdiction over foreign affairs. Australian law, as interpreted by the supreme court, requires the precedence of any law incorporating an international treaty. The converse is true in Canada, according to a decision by the privy council in the matter of the 1937 conventions on labour law.

Mr. Daniel Turp: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vancouver Quadra for his three questions.

First, on concluding treaties and provincial participation in the conclusion of treaties, I did not raise that in my remarks this morning, because I wanted to limit them to the role of parliament in the conclusion of federal treaties.

• (1135)

Since the treaty we are being called upon to implement comes primarily if not exclusively under federal jurisdiction, only the federal parliament may intervene for purposes of legislative implementation.

But, if you want an answer to your question, there would be ways of involving the provinces in the conclusion of treaties, even in a federation like Canada. What is more, Quebec, with its Gérin-Lajoie doctrine, believes not only that it must be involved in the conclusion of treaties and approve treaties concluded by Canada in areas over which the Constitution gives it jurisdiction, but it believes and affirms, as all successive governments of Quebec have done, that, under the present Constitution, it even has authority to act autonomously in concluding treaties in areas that come under its jurisdiction.

It is because of the continual foot-dragging of the federal government—which has often sought to introduce umbrella agreements to limit Quebec's autonomy—that many Quebecers want sovereignty. There is no excuse for this foot-dragging, even within a federal framework, and it will only stop when Quebec becomes a sovereign state with the authority to conclude its own treaties free of intervention by the federal government.

With respect to the second question, when treaties are not self-executing, they have to be implemented by legislation. Here we have an example of a treaty that is not self-executing as far as all of its clauses are concerned, since the Civil International Space Station agreement requires the Parliament of Canada, and the House of Commons in particular, to pass amendments to the Criminal Code in order to implement section 22 of the treaty, which the implementation bill does in clause 11. The treaty not being one hundred percent self-executing, it was therefore important for this House to adopt implementing legislation.

What I wanted to emphasize in my speech, however, was that this legislation implements an international treaty which did not have the prior approval by this House that it ought to have had. It is necessary for the House of Commons to approve a treaty in order for it to have greater legitimacy. Then parliament can move to pass implementing legislation.

Finally in response to the third question from my colleague, the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, concerning Australia, I realize that there is a great difference. I would not like to see us with an arrangement similar to Australia's, one which is in my opinion contrary to the federal principle. It is precisely because at one point we had a Privy Council judiciary committee that respected provin-

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cial jurisdictions that today we still have shared legislative jurisdiction over implementation.

That is not enough to convince us to stay within Canada, however.

[*English*]

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech of the member. As I have done before, I would like to give special thanks to the people who do the interpretation. I am one of those unfortunate people who speaks only English. My knowledge of French is vastly limited. I am totally dependent on their good work in those booths. I heard the speech secondhand, but I thank them for their excellent work in providing us with an instant interpretation.

I would like to make a comment about the speech and I also have a quick question. He made one comment that was resonant. I hate saying it because I am one who loves the country, who believes in democracy, and who believes that a democratically elected parliament is the way to go. It is superior, but quite clearly parliament is but an annoyance to the government and to the Prime Minister.

The member mentioned the fact that the particular agreement was signed a year and a half ago, and here we are bringing in legislation to implement what has already been done.

• (1140)

An hon. member: Like the Nisga'a treaty.

Mr. Ken Epp: Yes, like the Nisga'a treaty. Parliament has been made irrelevant by the same Prime Minister who keeps going around at election time saying that he will make parliament more meaningful and give MPs a greater role. It is a sham. The red book is a sham.

How often have we passed bills to implement budgets? I am on the finance committee and just before prorogation we passed a bill to implement some of the Income Tax Act that had already been in place and was being enforced. In some cases guys were going to jail because they did not comply, and the bill was before the House to approve that legislation.

As much as I sometimes hesitate to do this, I agree wholeheartedly with the member from the Bloc on this point. This place is irrelevant. What are we doing here?

I have a question for the hon. member. I am committed and dedicated to keeping the country together. No matter what the topic, they always talk about wanting to be their own country and breaking free. In this case clause four of the bill says the act is binding on Her Majesty in the right of Canada or a province. I am amazed they are supporting the bill because they are really saying that the act is binding on Quebec. It must be a violation of their desire to break free from the country, which I wish would not happen.

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[Translation]

Mr. Daniel Turp: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the interpreters. I also want to thank the translators. I often call on the translators of the House to translate my remarks from French to English or from English to French.

I want to pay particular tribute to Elizabeth Cowan, a translator with the House, who does an exceptional job.

To respond to my colleague's question, I will say that the scope of section 4, which appears in a number of implementing acts is not very clear, especially since it is an implementing act that concerns federal jurisdictions.

This is something I would very much like to clarify and I will no doubt do so as professor of international law when I have more time to exercise this profession, which I have left temporarily to become a member of this House.

I would add, in closing, since I know my time is limited, that federalism could work very well with expanded powers for the provinces to conclude treaties. This could be the case for Quebec, Alberta or British Columbia. The formulae that apply in Belgium might even be used as an example.

Under Belgian federalism, communities and regions are empowered to conclude treaties. But this government is ignoring parliament and, I agree with the hon. member, it is ignoring the provinces as well by setting up and exercising a monopoly on foreign policy and on the conclusion of treaties.

This is one reason why my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois and many Quebecers want sovereignty, which will give them jurisdiction to approve and conclude treaties and to involve their parliament—the National Assembly—in their implementation. Having the National Assembly approve treaties before they are implemented—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): I am sorry, but the member's time is up.

[English]

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak to the international space agency bill today.

I say to the member of the Bloc who just spoke that during the course of my comments I will be addressing a couple of private members' bills the member has brought forward on the ratification of international treaties. I know it is of interest to him, as it is to

me. I look forward to supporting his bill, if it ever comes to the House for a vote.

• (1145)

It is another one of those strange coincidences on how a populist party will agree on some of the broad issues about the necessity of consulting parliament on issues of national and international concern. The member of the Bloc and I may have disagreements about many things, but the priority of making the House relevant has to do with allowing us to deal with meaty issues, big important issues not after they are a *fait accompli* but during the ratification process.

I encourage the member to continue with his private member's initiative. I look forward to one day debating and hopefully approving that private member's bill.

The bill we are talking about today deals with the civil international space station, the funding required and the co-operative efforts of the Government of Japan, the Government of the Russian Federation, the Government of the United States, the European Space Agency and ourselves to put together the space station in the years to come.

This leads me to talk about the station and about five truths that we can get from this bill. There are five principles that I think are true in the bill and are true in many of the bills we discuss.

First is the truth of fiscal matters. This bill involves the expenditure of well over a billion dollars. It is a long range commitment of Canada to the international space agency. It is not a one time budgetary expenditure. If we are to be a serious player in the international space agency, we have to commit to it in the long term.

When talking about numbers this large, over a billion dollars over the course of the next few years, it is important that we also say that government spending is about priorities. It is about picking and choosing the things we can and should be involved in as a country and as parliament. By doing that we also say there are some things we are not going to spend money on. In other words, we cannot be all things to all people. We have to pick the issues that we think governments can address. Once we make those choices, some things are approved and some things are rejected. It is up to us to pick and choose between them.

Personally, I think this is going to be money well spent. I hope that 10 years from now we will look back and, as what the Canadarm did for us in the aerospace industry, our participation in the space station will have brought awareness to Canadian talents and expertise in engineering and so on. I hope it will be the next big boost to the Canadian aeronautical industry. This money will be seen as money well spent. I hope that years from now people will

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thank this parliament for having approved this expenditure and for having made this international commitment.

It is true that a billion dollars is a lot of money. It reminds me that many people in British Columbia are saying that we also made choices last night when we committed to the Nisga'a agreement. We said there was a billion dollars. We made a priority choice that the money spent not just by this parliament but by the B.C. legislature was a priority and it would be well spent. This parliament and the government have said that we will look back years from now and be grateful that we spent it. How can that be true?

In the case of the Nisga'a agreement, how can we say that we are going to perpetuate a system of treaties and separateness for one group of people over another group and treat them differently on things like property rights, the rights of women and the rights of people to vote for the government that taxes them? How can we say that a billion dollars spent to perpetuate the current reserve system in Canada is money well spent?

• (1150)

Most Canadians will say that we should move forward on the space station. It binds all the provinces. It is a good project for the federal government. It deals with international relations. We are going to get some other side benefits from it. It affects all of us. All of us are in favour of it, so let us move it forward. I think we are going to find that that is basically going to be the case.

For many people however, and in British Columbia at least where they understand the Nisga'a agreement, that is not the case. Once they know about the Nisga'a agreement, the majority of British Columbians say that they do not approve of the current expenditures on Nisga'a. More important, they do not agree with the principle behind it.

The principle is that a system that has been proven to be a failure over the past 130 years has been enshrined in our constitution at the next level in the Nisga'a agreement. Some money has been thrown at it in the hope that a giant collectivity called the Nisga'a government will somehow be all things to all people in that environment and it will somehow make life better for them for all time.

That is not a good expenditure of money. More important, it is not a sound principle to treat one group of people separately, to give them a different set of laws, a different set of privileges, a different set of rights, one from another and think it is a good thing for Canada. It is almost the same amount of dollars we are talking about for the space agency but it takes us down a path I think most Canadians will not support.

It is interesting how we can all rally around the flag on the space station idea. We see the benefits for all Canadians, Nisga'a and non-Nisga'a, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, immigrants and non-

immigrants. Everyone will benefit from it. But the same amount of dollars being spent on the Nisga'a agreement is driving a wedge between people rather than bringing people together.

That is the first truth. The truth about fiscal matters is that each decision we make means not only that the taxpayer is footing the bill but that there is something else we cannot afford to do because we spent that billion dollars. A billion here and a billion there and pretty soon we are talking real money.

The second truth is the truth about democracy that I get from the debate we are having today. It is interesting. The reason we are talking about the international space agency bill today is that last night the government rammed through the second reading stage of Nisga'a. After four hours of debate it brought in time allocation which means that it is all over but the crying and the soft music by the end of the day. That is what happened last night. We had four hours of debate. The B.C. legislature had four weeks of debate, the longest debate in the history of B.C., on the Nisga'a agreement. But here we did not have a long debate. We did not even have one week of debate. We did not even approach a record of any kind except for a record number of times for the application of time allocation.

We can learn a lesson about democracy. The truth is that we are only on this bill today because yesterday we saw what the B.C. Liberal leader called a reprehensible demonstration of undemocratic government. It was a reprehensible example from over there. The leader of the B.C. Liberal Party was appalled at what he saw going on here in the House.

We are on this bill today, rather than talking about having a big principled debate about the future role for aboriginal people within Canada, because democracy fell on its sword yesterday. That is an absolute truth. People who review what went on yesterday in the House will know that to be true. For a record number of times the government has said: "If there is dissent, opposition or a problem, we will bring in closure and shut down the debate". The Liberals have done it more times now than Brian Mulroney did in his heyday.

The Liberals brought it in on Bill C-78, the public servants pension fund. They scooped the excess out of that fund. We opposed the bill. We debated it for one hour and they brought in closure and shut down the debate.

• (1155)

Today's debate is on a kind of motherhood and apple pie issue. We all want the space station. We all think it is a good idea which should move forward. But it is bittersweet. Instead of relishing the debate and being able to focus only on the space station, we are left with a bad taste in our mouths. Yesterday was a travesty of justice and democracy and that is why we are on this bill today.

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That is the truth about democracy in this place. It does not happen like Canadians think it happens. The government pushes through, rams through and shoves through anything it wants that is the least bit contentious. That is where we are at today.

The Bloc member who has a private member's bill on the approval of international treaties will be pleased that at least this bill is before the House for ratification. This is rare in international agreements. It does not happen very often. Whether it is behind closed doors negotiations on the multilateral agreement on investment, the next phase of the WTO, the Kyoto agreement or other UN forums, time and again, it is just brought back to us here by fiat.

A minister will say "While I was away last weekend sunning myself wherever, I signed an agreement and it binds Canada for the rest of our lives". We will read about the details in the paper but we are not allowed to debate them, discuss them, amend them, propose alternatives, inform Canadians, travel the country or do any of the democratic things that Canadians assume are happening.

It is like the Nisga'a agreement again. We were delivered a document that said it is the enabling legislation. It is just a few short pages, but there are also two thick books and we are not allowed to change, amend or alter in any way a dot, jot or a tittle in the entire Nisga'a agreement. It came here as a done deal.

People think we come here to debate the issues. They wonder whether the environmental part of that agreement is too strong or not strong enough. What about the conflicting jurisdictions between the province, the feds and the Nisga'a governments? Could there be some better language? No, it is brought forward as perfection. The government says that a few people negotiated it behind closed doors and the 301 members of parliament are just window dressing.

The government brings it here because it technically has to, but the truth is that the Liberals do not respect this place at all. They disrespect the opinions of members of parliament. They disrespect the entire contingent of people in the official opposition who have concerns about it and who would like to see a different process that we would hope would clarify some of the 50 unsettled sidebar agreements that have to go into the Nisga'a agreement. We would like to see those clarified before we stick up our hands and vote yes.

The Liberals ignored all of that. Any concerns we have are written off as sour grapes, bad attitude or whatever they want to chalk it up to, instead of saying that this place should be supreme and should have some pre-eminence in the political life of the country. Instead, the Liberals defer to the backroom negotiations. They defer to the behind the scenes stuff. They defer to the courts. They defer to the tribunals. They defer to anything, except to the seat of democracy which is this place. It is discouraging.

If a young person who wanted to influence the future of the country were to ask me if he or she should follow in my footsteps in Fraser Valley, I would say, "Well, I suppose you could, but if I were you I would get a seat on the supreme court. That is where it is happening". I might even tell that young person to get on as a delegate at the United Nations or at one of the NGOs because they negotiate and settle things that we as parliamentarians are not even allowed to debate. We are not even allowed to know what they are discussing. It just comes back to us, pressed down and rolled over. We are expected to shrug our shoulders and say "Look what they negotiated for us today".

• (1200)

At least in the space agency agreement we can see what was negotiated. We may not have had a hand in the negotiations, but at least we can see what we are committed to in terms of money and what the structure of the management team will be. We can talk about a lot of that stuff, and to me it looks pretty good. At least we get to vote on it.

If young people asked me today if this was the place where big changes will be made and big decisions will be made, I would have to say, under the current government, sadly, no. They will have to wait for a change in government, because the attitude on that side of the House is "It is our way or the highway". The government's highway involves time allocation, closure, lack of consultation and bypassing parliamentarians in favour of special interest groups which government members say know more than the people who were elected to this place.

That is the truth about democracy. That is why we are debating this bill today. All of those other things I mentioned are absolutely true. People can look at what happened yesterday. Yesterday democracy took the fall for the expediency of this government.

Another thing I would like to talk about briefly is the truth about intellectual property rights, because a lot of what will be developed on this space station will become valuable. There will be an exchange of information and there will be scientific data developed, which is key to the success of the project. The reason all of these countries are getting together is to develop intellectual property which will be beneficial to those living on Earth. It could be anything from the development of future medicines to things which are happening on Earth which can be observed from space. All of that will become incredibly valuable.

What about intellectual property rights? More important, what about property rights in general? What about the property rights that the government has never recognized? I think most Canadians watching would say "Yes, but I own my house. That is my property. It is mine". I am sorry to break the news to those people, but this government does not recognize property rights.

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During the Charlottetown accord debate one of the big problems in my area, and I cannot speak for the whole country, was that we wanted to include the right to own property and to develop intellectual property rights because the ability to have property rights is the cornerstone to the development of assets, wealth and prosperity for any people. The fact that the government does not seem to be concerned about intellectual property rights and about property rights in general is a very alarming leftover from its socialist roots. It just believes that property is communally owned. We do not have to worry about property rights because we are all together. What we have to do is hug one another. If we hug one another and love one another things will be fine.

Where are the property rights, for example, for aboriginal women on Nisga'a reserves? When there is a divorce, the property that people enjoyed during the years they were married has to be separated. We have a long set of rules governing most of Canada which set out how the property will be divided, what the paternal and maternal rights will be, and rules governing the visitation of children.

If a person does not own anything personally, if it is all owned by the Nisga'a government, guess what? The aboriginal women will get short shrift down the road because they do not own the houses they live in. They are sitting on communal property which is owned by the Nisga'a. The whole territory is owned communally. Rather than having individual property rights and being able to enhance the value of the property, to make sales, to use that land to develop wealth and opportunities, the Nisga'a agreement will unfortunately not allow that.

● (1205)

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions)): Madam Speaker, while I disagree with much of what the whip for the Reform Party said today, which is to be understood in a parliamentary democracy where we have different parties representing different points of view, I commend him warmly for his eloquent and strong voice on the issue of the necessity for members of parliament to make choices.

He said very clearly that if we use money in one particular way, be it paying down the debt, cutting taxes or creating new programs, we will not have it for other priorities. He said that we cannot be all things to all people. We must make choices. We must have our priorities.

I believe this type of constructive approach to the debate that will follow the budget, as to what we do with our surplus, should be commended to all members of parliament and to all Canadians as together we constructively put forth our priorities for the future. I thank him for that very useful contribution to the debate.

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his kind words. If I was eloquent it was mostly by accident, but I thank him for his kind words.

People who run a household know about setting priorities. In Canada, the fact that the government takes more in taxes than people spend on food, clothing and shelter combined, means that a lot of their choices are taken away from them.

We want our government to do some things for us. We find it a good way to pool our resources to look after those who are truly in need. However, the debate is about choices. When an average citizen, such as a millwright, makes around \$4000 or \$5000 a month, works overtime and does the job, and then finds out that fully half of his paycheque has gone to CPP, EI and all the global tax deductions, he says "I made \$4000, but \$2000 went to the government. Now I have \$2000. My mortgage is \$1000. Now I am down to \$1000 to feed and clothe my family, to provide for their education and to provide for my retirement".

I agree with the hon. member that government spending is about choosing priorities, but we should not have to choose a medicine that is so harsh and severe that it kills the patient. We should have a better choice. One of those better choices, which I hope we will hear when the finance minister speaks today, is a specific commitment to tax relief that is as specific as the many commitments that have been made to new spending.

The commitments to new spending seem to be ironclad. They seem to be saying "We will spend money on the following". Government departments came up with a wish list of \$47 billion, which seems to be solid. It seems to be a sure thing.

I hope the minister says this afternoon that there is another sure thing, that taxes will be cut by 25% over the next three years, that EI premiums will be lowered to where the auditor general says they should be, not a tentative little nibble from \$2.55 to \$2.40, but a big chunk of tax relief down to \$2.05 where the premiums need to be. I hope the government will not just nibble a bit and hope that Canadians will benefit from one bit of tax blessing or another which it chooses to mete out. I hope the minister will say that there will be broad based tax relief.

The government should plagiarise a proposal of the Reform Party and say "We are going to give you 25% tax relief over three years. Here is how it will be done. It is a firm commitment, as firm as our spending commitments. Canadians can take it to the bank, spend it on their mortgages, look after their kids and plan for the future. It will be done. The commitment is there because that is the choice the government has made".

I hope that is what we are going to hear this afternoon, but there is not a collective holding of breath out in the hinterlands waiting for the finance minister to be that specific.

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[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-4, which we are debating this morning, involves 12 European nations. In addition, it involves Japan, the United States, Russia and, of course, Canada.

• (1210)

This civil international space station will cost the people of Canada over \$1 billion, at the very least. What bothers me is the government's lack of respect for the House of Commons and for democratically elected members.

It was around 1984 that talk of creating this civil space station first began. The first negotiations took place between the United States and Spain and, over the years, many other countries joined in.

What hurts a parliamentarian, however, is that Canada signed this agreement on January 29, 1998, almost 22 months before the government House leader deigned to introduce the bill for ratification.

The chief whip of the Reform Party raised this major time lag, which is probably the reason for the poor attendance today, particularly by government members who, for some reason, perhaps to snub their own government, are taking very little part in a debate that could, in fact, be very constructive.

I would like to hear what the Reform Party whip has to say about this lack of respect for Canada's elected representatives.

[English]

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Madam Speaker, what it shows Canadians and what it shows this place is that the Liberal government treats parliament as an afterthought rather than as a key player in the development of important policies.

We have seen many examples. We have asked the Speaker to rule when a minister makes an announcement in the House about what is going to happen down the road as far as an expenditure of money, a millennium fund for students and various other things. The government never comes to the House of Commons to ask for the money to be spent. A minister just says "There are a couple of billion dollars involved in this and I held a press conference to make the announcement because I thought I would look good".

Are expenditures of money not supposed to be passed in this place? Are we not supposed to kick them around and debate them? Time and again that has not been the case. However, Canadians assume that is the case.

It is a travesty, whether it is announcements like the millennium fund or different things that the government has declared to be true, whether they have actually been passed or not.

Then we have a case like the space agency where, well after the fact, a couple of years down the road, the government is finally getting around to approving it. The government often comes to us and says that it has known about something for two years, but it has to be completed by the end of the day because it is time sensitive. In other words, when it is convenient for the government it is an emergency and it has to be done right now.

The truth is that the government uses parliament as a rubber stamp. Whether it is this bill or important things like the position we took at the Kyoto summit and the approval of the Nisga'a agreement in principle, the government comes to the House and says "This is a done deal". It is finished. It is unwilling to accept a single amendment of any kind, small or large, about money, about principles, about details, about the purpose of the thing, the goal of the bill, none of it. It will not accept a single amendment. It is going to bring in the Nisga'a agreement and it will be agreed to. If it is not, the government will push it through at the end of the day.

That tells me that with a bill such as the space agency bill, international agreements like Kyoto and the Nisga'a agreement, the government cares little for this place and instead cares only for what it and the people in the back rooms have decided will be done for all Canadians.

• (1215)

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak to Bill C-4. It provides a unique opportunity for Canada to get involved or continue its involvement in space. I am told that the space station is the largest science and technology project in the history of humanity. We should well be proud of our involvement in that project.

From a personal point of view, the fact that Canada is continuing its involvement in space is somewhat gratifying in the sense that my uncle is considered one of Canada's space pioneers. He conducted one of the first experiments in outer space that a Canadian scientist conducted. He was one of the designers of the first satellite, Alouette I, and subsequent satellites which Canada sent up.

From a family point of view we are quite proud of my uncle, Dr. Andrew R. Molozzi, and his accomplishments are rather interesting. My uncle was my mother's brother. My grandmother was born in Poland. She was lucky to get two or three years of schooling and that was all. At the age of 15 she came to Canada, got married and raised a pack of kids, including my uncle who was the youngest. He was fortunate that in his family my grandparents encouraged him to

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continue at school and achieve the kind of excellence in science that he eventually did achieve.

This is a model for a lot of people to look at. In many immigrant families in the country education has perhaps not been a priority to this point. The kids leave school, not because of lack of ability but because for some reason their parents are not encouraging them to continue and fulfil their potential.

In talking about Bill C-4 I would like to address it from the point of view of a Liberal. I want to make a speech on this legislation which I think the Liberals should be making, given the fact that they pulled debate of the Nisga'a treaty from the agenda of the House yesterday. As pointed out earlier by my colleague, this was a travesty. It was pulled after only four hours of debate. I would have liked to have spoken to that bill yesterday, but I was unable to because time allocation was used.

Then we got this bill with which all of us agree. I do not think there is a parliamentarian in the House who is not encouraged by Canada's involvement in outer space and very supportive of it, because we see it as a wonderful opportunity for our children. There is probably very little interest in this debate out there in TV land, let alone in the House. It is one of those motherhood and apple pie debates.

I will address this issue as a Liberal should in light of their commitment to the Nisga'a treaty and will discuss the issue of native involvement in the Canadian space station. That may not be as much of a stretch as one might think. It is certainly not much of a stretch in light of the recent Marshall decision of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Let me just review that decision for a moment to show the House why the point I will make about guaranteed aboriginal involvement in the space project is reasonable from the supreme court's point of view, and certainly from the point of view of the Liberals, the NDP and the Conservatives.

• (1220)

The Marshall decision was an interpretation of a 1760 treaty signed between the British crown, the Mi'kmaq people and the Malecite people of the maritime provinces of Canada. In essence it was a peace treaty. The British had been doing battle with the French and the French had been expelled from the area. The Mi'kmaq had supported the French and the British thought it would be best to ensure that they would stay on side with them and would come to rely on them for some of the trade goods they had received through their dealings with the French, and so they signed a treaty.

Part of that treaty was the establishment of some truck houses. These truck houses were special trading posts that were to be constructed and manned to deal with Mi'kmaq people. A list of goods that were to be traded was created. It included the goods that

the British would provide those truck houses. It also showed the price that they would pay for the goods. Among the trade items the Mi'kmaq had to offer the only things that were dealt with were furs, that they would trade furs for truck house items. Fish were not mentioned as a trade item.

As well, the Mi'kmaq people were required to place hostages at certain places to ensure that they lived up to the terms of the treaty. Lunenburg was one place where there were supposed to be two hostages to guarantee this. Fortunately that treaty was not long lived. It operated probably for a couple of years. Certainly within 20 years things returned to normal. That meant the Mi'kmaq people were to be treated as everyone else in the country. They were to enjoy the same trade rights as everyone else.

That was in effect until the supreme court decided to look at the issue of the 1760 treaty. What brought the court into action was that Donald Marshall had gone fishing eels and said that he had an aboriginal right. His first defence was based on a 1752 treaty. When it was clearly demonstrated that had no relevance, he switched horses and decided to base his comments on the 1760 treaty.

What the court said then was that the treaty somehow gave this blanket right to fish. That right was one that was to be enjoyed as a preferential right. It was a right to be satisfied in advance of those of everyone else. Currently we might say that we are negotiating whether non-aboriginal fishermen will have any right.

The reason I raise this issue is that the court interpreted the 1760 treaty with a view to protecting the honour of the crown. Also it suggested that the treaty was not stagnant, that it did not just affect times long ago but that it had to be viewed in light of today.

If we are to view that treaty in light of today, why are we restricting the benefits of the treaty to goods and items that might have been traded 200 and some odd years ago? Why is it that we have not taken the terms of that treaty, if it is being interpreted in today's terms and viewed in that regard? If it is supposed to protect the honour and integrity of the crown, why are we not then interpreting it in terms of today's economy?

In other words, if we can give a priority right to fish, or in other treaties such as the Nisga'a guarantee access of 25% to Nass River fish, if we can guarantee that in that treaty, why are we not guaranteeing a place for aboriginal people in the space station?

• (1225)

Does it not follow? The logic is there. The court very clearly said that it could not interpret the terms of the treaty as things were back in 1760. Somehow it had to give it a modern twist. It had to interpret it in terms of today and had to consider the honour of the crown.

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Today's economy does not really revolve around fish. It certainly does in the maritime provinces in many of the communities affected by it. I do not mean to downplay their interest, but what I intend to do and the point I really want to make is that if we want to talk about a treaty which reflected society in 1760, if we want to talk about a treaty that we are signing today, if we want to talk about a space station today, or if we want to talk about interpreting that treaty in today's terms, maybe we should be looking at the global economy that is operating today, the whole of the economy. That means in my view an aboriginal component to the space station. Like, why not?

That question deserves an answer. Why is it that when parliamentarians and the misfits at the Supreme Court of Canada interpret who is entitled to a job and who is not, the only people they go after is the people in the resource sector? Why is it that they only tell fishermen to stand aside and allow somebody else to have their job? Why is that?

Why not say that if there is to be a place for aboriginal people in the country it should be across the broad spectrum of jobs we all enjoy and have access to today? Why are we saying that aboriginal people can only participate in the fishery and that they have a priority right to it?

Certainly the minister of northern affairs says that they have a priority right to forests and to mineral wealth. Why not the technology of today as well? Why not commerce today? Why are they not guaranteed seats on the board of directors of the Royal Bank of Canada, for example? Why not seats on Canadian Airlines and Air Canada? Why are we not guaranteeing them a place in today's world economy?

Let us put it in the context of the way I started my speech when I talked about my uncle and the fact that my grandmother came to Canada with very little education of probably no more than two or three years. She had a great desire to see my mother, my aunts and my uncles be successful in a new society, in the new country she had come to. She encouraged my uncle to seek an education, to continue his education and to develop to his full potential.

When we look at the aboriginal community we should be placing in front of it the same kinds of challenges. They can be anything they want to be. Whether it be an astronaut, a banker, a television performer or whatever, the opportunity is there. Somehow it should not be inherent in their genes that the only jobs suitable to them would be jobs in the resource extraction centre.

If there is one flaw in the government's argument today on the bill before us, I would say the flaw would be that it has completely ignored the rights of aboriginal people. The government cut that discussion off last night so that we could not present a positive alternative or a critical but positive analysis of the Nisga'a treaty. It is allowing this debate to continue today without any real reference

to the welfare of the Nisga'a people or any other native in the country.

• (1230)

One other issue of Bill C-4, the space station bill, that I will talk about is the cost. I am told that this will cost Canadian taxpayers something in the order of \$1 billion. That to me is a lot of money and I think it is to most people.

In the area I grew up in as a kid those making \$10,000 were doing pretty well. I did not know too many millionaires. I still do not know too many, Mr. Speaker, other than yourself of course, but that just shows you the circle I travel in, the ordinary folk and not the wealthy.

When I look at a billion dollars I consider that a lot of money. I find it hard to visualize a billion dollars let alone a million dollars, but a billion dollars is right out of my league. I also think it is out of the government's league. I would like to know just how hard and fast the numbers are here. It is not that I object to spending money on this particular project. It is a good and worthwhile project that will provide opportunities for all Canadians who desire to get involved in the space agency.

When I look at the government's track record for spending money, I am a little bit concerned. I would like to draw members' attention back to the Nisga'a treaty. When the treaty was first made public there was a huge fanfare. The federal Liberals had joined with probably the most disreputable government in the history of Canada, the NDP government in British Columbia, a government that has stolen money from cripples, kids and single mothers to advance its causes. Overnight, it quickly found an agreement on the Nisga'a treaty and said that it would only cost the Canadian taxpayers something like \$250 million. It also said that the fast ferries were going to be \$200 million and they are well over \$400 million. I could go on with the track record of the provincial NDP members and their inability to estimate costs, but I guess the same probably applies to their brothers across the way, the federal Liberals. They also have very little value for dollars.

When the cost was made public, there were a number of people who pointed out various matters that had not been costed and very quickly both the federal Liberal government and its brothers in Victoria, the provincial NDP government, agreed that perhaps the cost of the treaty would be more in the neighbourhood of \$485 million. That is the value that has now been put on the treaty.

There were a number of us in British Columbia who looked at that and thought the figure was not quite right either. Early on, the B.C. Fisheries Survival Coalition conducted an independent study of the treaty. We thought it was time to do that again. A little over a year ago, I contracted with an economist to take a look at the Nisga'a treaty and give us a costing of it. I told him that when he got a range of values I wanted him to take the lower value, not the

mid-value. I told him to always lowball the numbers. I told him I wanted an estimate of what he thought the treaty was going to cost British Columbia.

Mr. Julian Reed: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have great respect for my colleague across the way and his knowledge on various pieces of legislation. However, I also understand that there should be some relevance to the specific legislation that is on the floor of the House today. His remarks should be addressing that legislation.

Many times they talk about wanting to debate, so let us debate the legislation that is on the floor of the House today. We have given him sufficient time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The member for St. Catharines is quite right. I am also interested in hearing how the member for Delta—South Richmond will bring his comments back into the debate at hand, which is Bill C-4.

• (1235)

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Speaker, I certainly will bring it into hand. The point I am trying to make through example is that the dollar value the government puts on this treaty is questionable. If I do not reference it to something else then I am simply expressing an opinion. I am trying to solidify and give some substance to the agreement by describing another area where the government made an estimation of the value or the cost but did not live up to it. I believe that is perfectly valid point, and I am sure you agree, Mr. Speaker.

The point I made when I asked for a cost evaluation of the Nisga'a treaty was that the government lowballs the cost or this economist lowballs the cost because I did want not him to come out with an estimate that somebody could criticize and say that he estimated this while it was really down here. A lowball estimate of the cost of the Nisga'a treaty is \$1.5 billion not \$485 million. That leads me to wonder what the final cost is going to be on Bill C-4.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Once again I will admonish all members that if they are going to stretch the credibility of their argument on Bill C-4 by referring to other issues, which is certainly their privilege, it would be best to use some imagination and to be sure to continue to come to a touchstone and not to challenge the Chair by forcing the Chair to make a ruling. Those are the rules.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your fairness and willingness to explain the rules to us and to enforce the rules fairly.

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I am particularly interested in the member's comments about the space station bill. It is my understanding that the space station will have some beneficial aspects for agriculture, for example, in being able to survey large tracts of agricultural land. Will that surveillance also apply to other areas of the space station's abilities? I am thinking, for example, about how government allows the uneven enforcement of laws. Would the space station be able to pick up things like that?

Since being elected, I have heard a number of stories in my constituency relating to wildlife resources. I am thinking of a rider looking after his cattle who comes across 16 slain deer. Out of those deer, four hind quarters are removed. I wonder if a space station could see things like that.

I am aware that this year in my part of the country, central British Columbia, for the first time there are limited entry moose hunting permits because the moose population is so depleted. I have been told that the reason the moose population is so depleted is that there are actually reefers, refrigerated trucks that are parked, and people are loading these trucks with moose carcasses and hauling them out of the country.

One aboriginal guide came to me and showed me the map of his territory, his guide licence, his hunting licence and the list of customers he had. He said "There are so many moose being hauled out of the country that there is nothing left for my customers to admire and perhaps even to shoot and take home".

I am aware that although the fish have been scarce this year on the Fraser River, in past years there have been truckloads of salmon hauled out and taken to Alberta while some have been taken down into the United States. I have actually contacted the authorities about these things and have been told that there was nothing they could do about it. They said that they were under orders from the government to not enforce those laws.

• (1240)

I am concerned about the uneven enforcement of the laws. I am not criticizing aboriginal people. They are just doing what they are able to do. It is the government that is allowing this to happen. I wonder if the space station technology could see this and convince the authorities to enforce the laws evenly and fairly?

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to acknowledge the Speaker for his very liberal viewpoints on many issues and also for his very conservative implementation of the rules of this place. He does not allow much leeway and I recognize that. That is why I try to stick as closely as I can to the rules as the Speaker sees them.

The issues that were raised by my colleague are interesting. He talked about the scientific benefits of the space station for Canada

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and our ability to monitor the Earth and study our environment, including monitoring agricultural crop and the Arctic ice pack, aiding in navigation for shipping and those sorts of things.

The member raises a good point. Certainly, the space station may very well be an aid to agriculture and to farmers, that is if there are any farmers left after the government is done with them. That is the real question. The technology will benefit farmers, but whether there will be any farmers left to benefit from it, God only knows and the Liberal government only knows because I certainly do not.

The space station can play a role in monitoring. Science and satellite technology can play a role in monitoring ships at sea off our coasts and so on. That is certainly a possibility.

An hon. member: Illegal immigrants.

Mr. John Cummins: Yes, illegal immigrants as well. There is no doubt about that.

The potential for the scientific community and the benefit to mankind are limitless through the technology and opportunity being created by this particular space station. I look forward to enjoying the benefits and watching it as it progresses over the next decades.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we do believe in equality of all people in Canada so that they will be able to participate in programs like the space program in the various educational institutions. It seems to me that all government legislation in this place should make people equal, not set them aside with special status. As an example, that is what the Nisga'a agreement does not do.

On another issue from the last question, in areas like Kashmir, Iraq, Iran or wherever, it seems to me that it would be very important, from an intelligence and peace standpoint, to use a facility like the space station for those observations. Does he see a lot of implications of this development for that purpose as well?

Mr. John Cummins: Mr. Speaker, the first comment the member made is an interesting one. It has to do with the whole notion of equality of all Canadians. The government appears to think it is important in this bill because it does not try to separate Canadians. The implication is that there is equal opportunity for everyone. Why it does not apply that to bills that reference the extraction and harvesting of natural resources is beyond me. Why it has only been the fishing industry on both coasts which have been required to bear the burden of treaties entered into long ago is beyond me. It is beyond reason.

• (1245)

As I said in my remarks, if the government truly believes, as the supreme court seems to, that the supreme court was interpreting this treaty in its modern context, then it should have expanded that

to include aboriginal access to the space station and to other government facilities, business and so on. Do not just identify one group, one industry and tell it to pay the bill for the rest of us. If that fairness as the government sees it, that inequality as I see it, applies to the fishing industry, then that equality should be right across the board and we should be guaranteeing that kind of access.

There is unlimited potential for the technology, the monitoring capabilities that will result from the space station, and which we currently have from satellites. As time goes by scientists will develop even more effective cameras and other systems that we can only dream about now. It is a wonderful opportunity for this country to be involved in the station.

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak about Bill C-4, which is an act to implement the agreement among the Government of Canada, the governments of member states of the European Space Agency, the Government of Japan, the Government of the Russian federation and the Government of the United States of America concerning co-operation on the civil international space station.

The first thing that strikes me about this bill is that it concerns an agreement between many nations. The order paper says that on the bill before us today there will be speeches of 20 minutes which are subject to a period for questions and comments of 10 minutes for the first five hours of debate. I am wondering if we will actually get five hours of debate. Most bills in this House do not, as everyone is probably aware. Usually closure is brought to bear long before we ever get to that period.

I think back to the last bill that was discussed in this House, the Nisga'a land claim, that was supposed to be the final deal with the Nisga'a. That is a very erroneous title. It certainly will not be the final deal. I do see some similarities between what we are discussing today and the whole idea of the Nisga'a.

The similarity is that there was a government to government discussion with the Nisga'a. There is a government to government discussion with the international space agency. In the case of the international space agency, I believe it is quite appropriate. In the other instance, I think it was totally inappropriate.

The Nisga'a land settlement claim that is supposed to be the final claim was never discussed at the grassroots level. Thank heaven for the pressure applied by the Reform Party because the committee will now travel to some parts of British Columbia during the week of November 14 to have hearings and perhaps get a little local and grassroots input on the bill.

I see some similarities between these two pieces of legislation. Both of them, as I have already touched on, were part of multiparty negotiations. I am not too sure about the space agency negotiations, but I am pretty sure that most of the Nisga'a negotiations took

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place behind closed doors. Perhaps some of the negotiations for the space station took place behind closed doors as well.

I would also draw a similarity in the projected cost of these agreements. It is suggested that \$1.5 billion or thereabouts, over \$1 billion at least, will be needed to support the international space station. We are also going to have to come up with another \$1 billion to support the Nisga'a treaty. In the people's republic of British Columbia it was suggested that it is not going to cost the taxpayers of British Columbia much money, that federal taxpayer money would be used to seal the deal.

• (1250)

We all know there is only one taxpayer. It is impossible to line people up and say, "You people pay strictly provincial taxes and you people over here pay strictly federal taxes". You know this, Mr. Speaker, because you pay a lot of taxes. It is one of the hazards of people in your income category. There is no differentiation between whether you pay provincial or federal taxes. You pay taxes. There is only one taxpayer and that taxpayer is hit with all different levels of taxation.

The international space station, as some of my colleagues have pointed out, has great potential. One thing we look forward to is getting some information on climate change; whether civilization is having a tremendous impact on the climate, or whether the climate is having an impact on civilization. I for one would be very interested in observations made by that international body as to which is the case. A great controversy is raging as to which is the case.

Some people say that we have depleted our ozone layer through our activities here on Earth to the point where it is no longer safe to go out in the sunshine. I wonder if we have come to the point where we can measure the thickness or the intensity of the ozone layer, and now having the method in which to measure those layers, if we are not just observing a natural phenomenon and leaping to the conclusion that civilization is to blame for what is happening.

I am under the impression that this is a done deal, that the Government of Canada is now saying, "Oh, by the way, we need \$1.5 billion". That is entirely consistent with the way the Liberals do things. It was the same with the Nisga'a deal. The deal was cut. It was passed through the provincial house in British Columbia and it was done so with closure.

There must be something about that bill which carries the desire to invoke closure on it because it certainly has had that effect on the House. After four hours of debate, we have something that is going to create another level of government in the country and it is going to be entrenched in the constitution.

Changing the constitution in this country is a very onerous task, as it should be. It takes a great amount of consultation and agreement. There is the 7-50 rule, seven provinces with better than

50% of the population voting in favour of changes to the constitution. That was never done.

The Nisga'a deal has made changes to the constitution. That treaty has been entrenched in the constitution of Canada without ever having asked the citizens of Canada whether they wanted to have those changes made.

I know the position that we as a party are taking on this certainly is not the mainstream sentiment. The position this party took on the Charlottetown accord was not the accepted position. The establishment across Canada felt that the Charlottetown accord was the best invention since penicillin. The Reform Party and some other groups took the position that it was not. It was fraught with flaws. When the Charlottetown accord went to a referendum, we were vindicated in that 70% of Canadians who voted in that referendum voted against it. It was a resounding defeat.

• (1255)

The architects said that they would not be worried about that at all. They said they had other ways of amending the constitution and that they would set about doing it through the back door. Apparently the back door is wide open. Now we have a treaty that is entrenched in the constitution of Canada. The laws of the people that this treaty covers now supersede those of the province and of the dominion, and if Canadians do not like it, too bad. The Liberals know best. It is no longer father knows best; it is the Liberals know best.

We hear time and time again from the members of the government that it is just a matter that they have to educate Canadians, that it is being done in Canadians' best interests. We will see about that. I am quite confident that history will bear us out that we have taken the proper position.

My information on the civil international space station agreement is that it more or less has been a done deal since January 29, 1998. We are closing in on a year since the deal was signed. Of course the government comes to us now and says, "Oh, by the way, we forgot one minor detail. We need \$1 billion or maybe \$1.5 billion to finance this project". It is not that I begrudge the financing of the international space station, but it is the way it was done, and \$1 billion or \$1.5 billion is a pile of money.

I am invited to talk to school children from time to time. They ask me questions about the difference between the deficit and the debt. I try my best to put \$1 billion into perspective. We bandy that word around like it was nothing, a billion here, a billion there. Mr. Speaker, pretty soon it runs into real money. It could even deplete your bank account in time.

I try to explain it to the students. I think everybody can put \$100 in perspective. Even primary school children can put \$100 in perspective. Ten \$10 bills make \$100. One hundred \$100 bills make \$1,000. They are all with me so far, even the primary

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students. Then if we have a thousand \$1,000 bills, we have \$1 million. If we have one thousand million, we have \$1 billion. Of course, as I do this I just keep adding zeros to the \$10 bill. That puts \$1 billion in perspective.

If that does not register with them, I try this story. If we had \$1 million and it was on the table and we decided to spend that at \$1,000 a day, in about three years or a little less, it would be gone. Let us assume that it does not attract any interest rate. It is just laying there on the table in thousand dollar bills. If I spent one a day, in about three years it would all be gone. If there were \$1 billion dollars on the table, I would have to live about 3,000 years to spend it at \$1,000 a day. I think that puts \$1 billion in perspective. It is a lot of money.

• (1300)

At the present time we have a debt of about \$580 billion. We are paying out between \$40 billion and \$50 billion a year in interest. That money has to come out of the pockets of families across the nation. We have a duty to spend that money wisely and frugally. Just because government has the ability to reach into people's pockets and extract their hard earned wages does not give it that right. There is a huge difference between the ability and the right. The government has given itself the ability to reach into the pockets of Canadians and take out any given amount.

When we look at the history of the country we realize that taxes have consistently risen. They have never decreased and I think it is about time they did. We were told in 1991 that the GST would replace the manufacturers sales tax, a 12% tax that applied to some items. The items the manufacturers sales tax applied to were to be less expensive because the tax that would be applied to them would be a very reasonable 7% tax rather than the rather onerous 12% manufacturers sales tax. That has not happened. As a result about \$15 billion a year comes into the federal coffers through the GST, and still the country was running \$42 billion deficits as late as 1993.

On the subject at hand, we want to ensure that intellectual property rights are protected. If a company or an individual working on some aspect of the space station were to come up with some leading edge technology, some kind of ground breaking work discovery, how would that intellectual property be protected? Are we talking about a communal effort, the same aspect as the Hutterite colony where nobody owns anything and everything is owned collectively? Is that the way this process works, or will individual intellectual rights be protected? I am not at all sure of that.

While we are talking about collective rights versus individual rights, I am again reminded of the bill we were discussing, the Nisga'a so-called final agreement. Collective rights in the Nisga'a

agreement supersede individual rights. I do not think that is the Canadian way of doing things. Individual rights in the country are of paramount importance and should always take precedence over collective rights.

One year my wife and I took a holiday to enjoy the beaches of Cuba. One thing which was extremely apparent there was that individuals had no rights. They might have a form of security but they had no rights. A policeman can stand on the street corner. When people are driving by in their dilapidated old cars, he simply blows his whistle and points to whomever he wants to stop, and they bloody well stop right away. They know that if they do not they could have their old car all shot to pieces, and themselves besides.

• (1305)

That is an ultimate example of where collective rights supersede individual rights. I talked to the people in Cuba and discovered there were two kinds of people: those involved in the regime and great supporters of it, and those who were governed by the regime and did not support it at all.

Mr. Richard M. Harris: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know we have been advised this morning that the Indian affairs committee refused to allow anybody but witnesses friendly to the Liberal government at the Nisga'a hearings in B.C. I know we have heard that and I know it is difficult for my colleague—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): In fairness to the hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley, explain to the Chair how this could possibly be a point of order relevant to the debate that is taking place right now.

Mr. Richard M. Harris: Mr. Speaker, I was about to do that. I was explaining that because Liberal members of the Indian affairs committee have refused to let hostile—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): As the hon. member knows, what goes on in committee goes on in committee. Committees are their own masters. That does not have a direct relevance to the House. It is not a point of order.

Mr. Dale Johnston: Mr. Speaker, I see quite a few parallels in the bill in the way it came to us as a fait accompli. Our caucus is very anxious to speak to the bill.

It would not surprise me in the slightest to see that it too becomes the subject of closure yet again. If we look at the government's agenda we wonder what is the urgency. What does it have on the agenda that is so urgent that it has to shut down debate after four hours? Those who look at the agenda just scratch their heads because there is nothing there but thin soup.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise with some trepidation on Bill C-4. It is not particularly controversial; in fact it

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is anything but. The reason I am concerned is that the Liberal government is making this place completely irrelevant.

I call them the green foreheads over there. We look at the chairs over there and we see that they are green. I am speaking to many green foreheads over there, the green party over there which maybe we should call the brown party because there is as much brown over there too.

Of course Bill C-4 is important. It shows the priorities of the government both in spending money and in using the time of the House for debate. I guess it is good because it is an indicator. It is like a red light on the dash. I wish every Canadian would wake up right now, look at the red light on the dash and realize that the red light or the red book is giving them big problems.

When we ask for an opportunity to debate an issue of terrible importance to the people of British Columbia, of immense importance to all Canadians across the country at the present time and of increasing importance for generations to come, when we ask that we in the House and throughout the country have ample time to debate such an issue, the Liberals invoke closure and say no. They will not talk about that. They want to talk about Bill C-4, an agreement on an international space agency.

• (1310)

That tells us something. I do not want to be disrespectful. I think the technological advancements we are participating in as Canadians are wonderful, but this shows that the government is totally spaced out.

It is right out of it when it comes to evaluating what is important to Canadians. It is right out of it when it comes to trying to figure out how to spend money. It is right out of it when it sets the agenda for what is debated in the House and what is debated among Canadians.

Canadians from coast to coast would like to engage in a debate on the future of the country. Right now we have a government with its dictatorial powers and its majority that it uses so blatantly. Where does the government stand on the issues that are important to Canadians? It is pulling the strings of its members and getting them to vote the way they are told on all sorts of issues.

It is Bill C-4 today. It is a very small bill. The Liberal government has chosen to debate this bill today instead of the Nisga'a one. It is an agreement between Canada and a number of other countries. It is an agreement to co-operate on building an international space station and operating it. A number of elements are involved. A number of elements require co-operation among different countries. It is probably a job that is too large for one country to bear. The two elements of greatest importance to us are our contribution of personnel and our contribution of dollars.

Bill C-4 is an act to implement the agreement among the Government of Canada, governments of member states of the European Space Agency, the Government of Japan, the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the United States of America concerning co-operation on the civil international space station and to make related amendments to other acts.

If we look at the more detailed list a number of countries in the European Union are involved. When I saw the bill I was absolutely amazed. The government hammered out an agreement behind closed doors and signed it on January 29, 1998. This is almost the end of 1999. We are approaching two years since Canada signed the agreement. To show its total disdain for parliament, having signed the agreement almost two years ago, it now has the gall to say that it would like parliament to ratify the agreement. It would like parliament to give its consent to an agreement that it has already signed.

A couple of things come to my mind when I hear that. One is how Canadians through their parliament and perhaps directly in debate were not involved previously. Why were they not informed that the agreement was being considered? It is a tremendous expenditure of money.

It is a strange coincidence that the cost of this program, \$1.4 billion, is pretty well the cost of the immediate implementation of the Nisga'a agreement, although that agreement has the potential with its spin-offs across the country to cost the country in excess of \$200 billion or more than the annual budget of the Government of Canada right now.

The government is willing to cut off debate on the Nisga'a agreement and deal with Bill C-4, which shows that it does not want to deal in any real or substantial way with anything of any relevance to Canadians. Government members want to sweep the big problems under the rug and try to get them jammed through before anyone wakes up and realizes what they are doing. I guess they learned from the Charlottetown accord that they could not trust Canadians to be totally ignorant. They want to keep them ignorant by ramming through those things really fast so that no one has the time to become informed and react. They want to do it quickly and let the consequences of the future be as they may.

• (1315)

I have a firm belief that in a true democracy, which we do not have in Canada, once we have debated an issue and have come to an agreement it would have been because of the fact that we were promoting a sensible idea. When people consent to it, of course, they would support it and our country would remain strong and unified. That is not so with this government. It will not debate an issue which has the potential of costing \$200 billion, but it will talk about this, which will cost about \$1.5 billion.

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I taught mathematics for a number of years. I have with me a trusty calculator which I always have with me as my auxiliary brain. I will give a perspective on what \$1.5 billion means.

We have approximately 15 million taxpayers in the country. That \$1.5 billion means that every taxpayer will be contributing \$100 to this project. That is an immense amount of money.

I should not have admitted that I had to use my calculator for that division, but I was not thinking that these numbers were the same. I am now a little red faced and embarrassed. However, it is a lot of money. Taxpayers are being pushed.

Meanwhile, do we have \$1 billion to support Canadian farmers? No. Instead what we get from the government is the hauling out of a bunch of statistics which show that the government has no interest at all in western Canadian farmers. It has let them go down the tube.

One of the advantages of the space station is that we should be able to send more people up there. When we look at our planet from space, I think it would give us a perspective on what is important down here. We as Canadians, and the Liberal people as parliamentarians, should value Canadian society and Canadian farmers. That might come to our minds if we looked at it from a different perspective.

With this agreement the government has made some unilateral decisions and is now coming to parliament for approval.

In a lot of bills there is a great deal more power being attributed to the minister. That is also true of this bill. This is amazing. Clause 7 gives a lot of power to the minister. It reads:

The Minister may send a notice to any person that the Minister believes, on reasonable grounds, has information or documents relevant to the administration or enforcement of this Act, requesting the person to provide, within any reasonable period that the Minister specifies, that information or those documents to the Minister or any person that the Minister designates.

That is pretty scary stuff, which is actually standard in a lot of the bills the government brings in. Basically the minister has the power to do anything he wants. If he believe it is the right thing to do, the bill will give the minister the ability to do it. If the person objects to providing or fails to provide the information, then the minister can take the person to court.

Has anyone had a fight with a schoolyard bully? I have not because I was always so cuddly. I did not pick fights a lot. I was the brunt of a lot of teasing and every once in a while people would attack me, but I would not call those fights. However, when we take an individual and put the weight of the government behind a lawsuit, I do not think that individual has a chance of winning. All of the resources of the government would go behind the lawsuit

and the funds of the poor individual, who is usually limited to whatever he can borrow against his house, if the government permits that, would be eaten up very quickly.

• (1320)

We have an agreement. I like the concept of agreement. It says in the schedule of this bill that this is an agreement among the government and all of these different countries. It adds the Kingdom of Belgium, the Kingdom of Denmark, the French Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Italian Republic, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Kingdom of Norway, the Kingdom of Spain, the Kingdom of Sweden, the Swiss Confederation, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Add to that the list of all of the parties I read before.

This is a multilateral agreement. Is it not interesting that the government is willing to go through the work of arranging an agreement that these different parties can agree to? When it comes to an element as important as Nisga'a, does it make sure the parties come together? No. It totally fails to do that. It has not recognized that when it comes to an agreement like the Nisga'a agreement there are two parties to it. Sure it has the Nisga'a people, but it also has all of the non-native people who are a party to that agreement. The only difference is that this Liberal government does not even want to discuss it with the other members of the agreement. It wants to unilaterally impose it on them and hopefully keep them in the dark and ignorant about the terms and issues in the agreement.

Today we are debating the space station when we should be debating the importance and the relevance of probably the most important piece of legislation to hit this country in the last 30 years. Instead the Liberal government is saying "That is the end of that debate. We cannot let members talk for more than four on that, but go ahead and talk all day on the international space agreement".

Here we have an example of an agreement which was reached among all the parties, but the government is imposing on Canadians an agreement with the Nisga'a in which one party to the agreement is not allowed to be involved. The terms and conditions are being dictated to them. They are not allowed to have any input. If anything, the government would like for them to have no understanding of it. That is atrocious. As far as I am concerned that is a serious aberration of what we call democracy. With this kind of contempt for the House of Commons and the people of Canada, I do not believe the Liberal government has the moral authority to stand in governance over us. It has failed us. It continues to fail us because of the fact that it does not want to engage in democratic debate, democratic give and take, on an agreement which will so vitally affect both parties.

While we are in principle in favour of Bill C-4, because it ratifies an agreement, we think it should have been done in advance of the agreement's being signed. It is arrogant of the government to go

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ahead and sign the agreement and say that it can get it through parliament. All sorts of things could prevent this from happening. For example, the government may simply not be re-elected. It could well be that the next government would have something else on its agenda besides this agreement and that it would not necessarily pass. I am not predicting this because I do not think that is my role. I am not able to see the future that way, but I think it is going to happen. For the sake of Canadians, the sooner it happens the better.

We need to make sure that Canadians are represented and that the wishes and will of Canadians are represented in this parliament. Without that we are not going to be successful as a democratic society.

• (1325)

I have one more item to talk about which relates to Bill C-4.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure you are very pleased at how relevant I am remaining. By the way, I should add in passing that it has become a practice in this House that wide ranging debate be permitted. As the Speaker ruled a couple of days ago, when we have wide ranging consensus and practice over a period of time, then that sort of becomes the operating method of the House, and I appreciate that freedom.

At page 16 of the bill we have article 12. It has to do with transportation. It says that every country which is a party to this agreement shall have right of access to the space station. That is sort of cool. It means that I can go, maybe with some of my friends, up to the space station if I happen to be selected and trained. It indicates once again some of the countries. Then it states that there is an obligation on the part of the participating countries to provide launch and return transportation services for the space station and, in addition, other space transportation systems.

I could not help but remember something that happened in my riding a couple of years ago. Because of a very weak showing by the Liberal Party in Alberta, it decided to make some changes. Without a great deal of thought from a military point of view, it decided to move the air base from Namao to never-never land and to bring in the army to that base instead. The result is that the longest and strongest runways in North America, which were at the Namao air base, have been changed into streets leading up to warehouses for the army. There was not even the foresight to keep the buildings far enough away so that in an emergency that airstrip could still be used. It has often been said that this was one of the collateral runways that was available to spacecraft returning.

We have an obligation to provide and to do our share in providing transportation to and from the space station, which in an emergency would necessitate the use of those long runways, but we have disabled them. Again it shows a total lack of foresight on the

part of this government. I am absolutely disgusted that those decisions are so often clouded with political ramifications instead of being made on a rational basis.

I look forward to questions from the green foreheads.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I do not qualify for the category my hon. colleague mentioned, but seeing none of the green foreheads standing I thought I would ask a question of my colleague from Elk Island.

Being the critic for industry, I want to say that the Reform Party is very supportive of Bill C-4 and the Canadian Space Agency. I know that my colleague had many good comments about the work that space station will do to help in the future.

My colleague is a keen follower of new technologies and the ability of the space station to monitor Earth. The good that it will do for crop monitoring for farmers and the monitoring of the ice pack to aid in the navigation of shipping in our Arctic are all things that I think my colleague from Elk Island would agree are important factors.

Some of the things that we take for granted in Canadian society, such as individual property rights, are not available under the constitution and yet we have fee simple use of our land. We have fee simple title to our land, whether it be a lot, a house or a farm.

Intellectual property rights and patent rights are being protected for Canadian companies and the Canadian government when doing research on the international space station. The fact that there are going to be eight different countries involved makes it important to protect intellectual property and patent rights. Yet we see in the Nisga'a agreement things that we take for granted in our Canadian law through intellectual property rights.

• (1330)

In the Nisga'a agreement property rights are not protected for Canadian Nisga'a women in terms of a marriage breakup. They are not protected in terms of fee simple land for the Nisga'a. Individuals will not be able to own a piece of property. They are going down that road of communal property which is a failed policy. Even the east bloc countries in eastern Europe finally had to admit that it does not work.

I would like my colleague's comments. What does he think of the comparison between the need for intellectual property rights on the space station and doing it here at home?

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased with this question. We do not expect any questions from the green foreheads because they have difficulty standing.

I want to answer the question with respect to property rights. One of the best kept secrets in the world is that I have a little company called Epp Software. What I used to do, and still do

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except it has become rather rusty now, is write computer programs. I used to have a small business and I sold some custom programs.

I was the owner of that intellectual property. When I purchased a blank disk it had a value of \$1 or \$1.50. After I added my program to it, I was able to sell it for \$25 or \$30. I added some value to it and it was my right to do that. I was hoping that I would have a copyright that would prevent other people from copying my disks and giving them to other people without penalty. That is what copyright acts are all about. They are to preserve the property of the person who actually made the invention.

It has become a tough situation. The Liberal government has completely failed on this issue. We now have the tax on blank cassettes. In other words, it assumes that people are going to break copyright laws, so they pay a penalty whether or not they break the law. It is the same as giving people speeding tickets in advance.

I am appalled that there are agreements in Bill C-4 that will protect the intellectual rights of the participants in that program, but the Nisga'a people do not even have the simplest of rights. That the government has failed to address that is even a greater travesty.

[Translation]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat amazed at what is going on in the House at the present time.

I see only Reform Party members speaking. One of them, a member of the Standing Committee on Industry, has just said that they were in agreement with the bill.

I can understand that this gives my hon. colleague another chance to speak about his former company and the cassettes it sold, but it seems to me that the House's time is valuable. The Bloc Québécois is in agreement with this bill. Having visited the space agency in Saint-Hubert, there is much I could say and, being a member of the industry committee, I am somewhat aware of the various facets of this subject.

Unless there is an objective of negotiation, if there is agreement, why stretch out the discussion, especially if everyone is already in agreement? I would like my colleague to explain this to me, then perhaps I will understand.

[English]

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Speaker, I know that the member believes in democracy. I suppose he believes in parliament because he is here as a member of parliament. I know he believes in MP pensions because I understand he is taking it.

Parliament is here to debate the issues of the day. As he and others have observed, our right to debate in depth the full implica-

tions of the Nisga'a agreement was cut off by the Liberal government yesterday. Therefore, we are going to use the time today to debate not only this bill, but the bills that we think we should be able to debate in this place. That is my reason and it stands on its own.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Of course, on the right to do so, it is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that the debate is on the question that is on the floor. Relevance has to be maintained.

• (1335)

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, certainly it is my privilege to speak to Bill C-4 on the space station and what it means to Canadians.

I want to start off by talking about the provincial co-operation that needs to go on whenever we put any kind of legislation forward. Certainly Bill C-4 would be an example of that. I would like to know from government members just how much consultation went on in talking to the premiers about the implications for Canadians of a space station.

Because we have not heard answers from the Liberals, all I can do is try to project how much consultation they might have done. What I would have to do is look at the most recent bill we discussed in this House. Yesterday we talked about Nisga'a. Let us examine that and compare it to Bill C-4 and how much provincial consultation went on.

Also the premiers of Saskatchewan and Manitoba came to try to consult on the agricultural issue. What kind of consultation happened and what were the results?

Let us examine that first in the context of Bill C-4. Let us ask government members, did they consult with the provinces? That is the question. Let us look at the examples of their consultation process.

Let us start off by looking at the Nisga'a agreement. In the Nisga'a agreement which involves the people of British Columbia, the consultation was extremely limited. Closure was used on that bill in the parliament in British Columbia. Yesterday's press release by the leader of the opposition in British Columbia puts it into perspective:

The motion this morning by the federal government to invoke closure on the Nisga'a treaty debate is a reprehensible abuse of the democratic process, said Liberal Leader Gordon Campbell.

"This is an egregious abuse of the democratic process, and shows flagrant contempt for all British Columbians," said Campbell. "It's an unacceptable slap in the face to our province, and to all Canadians who deserve a full and open debate on the landmark treaty".

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“On a matter of this critical importance to our country, to our province and to our constitution, every member of parliament deserves the right to speak. Every Canadian should demand the right of their MP to speak. To put this in context, we would not for a moment dream of shutting off debate on a change to the constitution affecting Quebec, but that’s exactly what the government’s doing to B.C.”

The federal government’s closure motion, introduced at 11.30 a.m. EST, will shut down all debate on the treaty this afternoon at 6.30 p.m. EST. At the time the motion was introduced, there had been less than 10 hours of debate on the treaty, of which only four hours [and 12 minutes] had been allocated to the official opposition. In that time, the official opposition was able to field just 16 speakers out of a caucus of 58 members. There are 24 Reform opposition MPs in B.C. alone.

This is the example of the co-operation the B.C. politicians feel this federal government gives them. I wonder what the B.C. government would say about the consultation on the space station and its involvement for the 21st century.

Let us move on to Alberta. There is a longstanding tradition that most Alberta politicians feel toward the federal government and its lack of consulting them on most issues. There are so many examples we would not have time to deal with all of them.

• (1340)

I wonder what the Alberta politicians would say about the consultation on Bill C-4, the space station and the implications for the people of Alberta.

Let us go to Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Representatives from Saskatchewan and Manitoba came here last week to consult with the federal government. They wanted to talk about the most important issue they had before them which is the agricultural issue. The farmers are hurting. They are losing their farms. Young farmers are leaving simply because there is no future for them in agriculture. That is our food supply. I wonder how much consultation the premiers of Saskatchewan and Manitoba would say the federal government has had with them.

We could talk about the space station and the implications to agriculture which one member spoke about earlier. It could be a boon to the agricultural community regarding production. I wonder if they have been consulted, if they know what is involved and if they want taxpayers’ money to go toward that.

I wonder as well if Ontario and Quebec have been consulted. Mr. Bouchard makes many, many speeches on the topic of consultation with the federal government and the lack of it. It does not matter which party it is in Quebec, we hear the same thing. Mr. Harris in Ontario does not feel he has been consulted on the many issues that affect the great province of Ontario.

If we ask Atlantic Canadians if they have been consulted about the space station, they would say, “No, agreements come out and we get no support at all from the federal government. We have all

kinds of fishing agreements. We have the supreme court setting the laws for us and that has opened a time bomb for Canadians”.

A race based policy has been set up in this country. This race based policy is going to cause a great many problems in the future for my children and grandchildren. They are going to have problems because we have set aside special rights for different people. I would hope that the consultation necessary between provinces would go on and would involve everything from space stations to Nisga’a to any other agreements the federal government might enter into.

One of the first items to identify in this severe problem is the co-operation between the provinces and the federal government. It just is not there. It should be there whether it is on the space station or Nisga’a. It should be there. It must be there. We should be here to fight for that right.

Let us talk about the effects on Canadians of legislation that happens here. Let us talk about the space station and what it will do for Canadians.

Obviously, there will be a pride among Canadians when they hear that Canada is playing a role in developing a space station. We are playing a scientific role. We are co-operating with the United States, Japan and countries of the European Union. There will be pride that we are part of this project.

There will be influence created by our involvement in the space station. We will have influence in terms of our marketing and sales and what we do around the world. Our trade will be helped because of the space station.

Let us talk about co-operation and what we will learn by co-operating with these other countries. The prestige and position of Canada in the world will be improved by the space station.

Let us look at the effects on Canadians. Let us compare the space station and all of the good things we have gone through to Nisga’a and the message that sends to the world. Let us compare the two. We have pride and co-operation, prestige and influence in the world because of a space station, but the Nisga’a agreement sends the message that we are persecuting a group of people, that we have a race based policy.

• (1345)

I hope all Canadians believe in the equality of all people, but we have a government that is putting forward a race based policy in the House. The government is afraid to debate the policy because it knows it is onerous to the people of the country. It allows four hours and twelve minutes to debate an issue like that and expects us all to be happy and say “Isn’t democracy a wonderful thing”. We are sick and tired of that kind of presentation to the world. The world is looking at us.

Government Orders

The UN has condemned us for our treatment of our native people. The UN has said that it is time we talked about the grassroots people of the country. We do not need to be spending time in here talking about a sophisticated space station. We need to be talking about the grassroots people who really count.

What is happening to those people? They are living in poverty. They have problems with crime and alcoholism. What has caused that? The race based policy of governments in the country over the years have caused the problems. They have created a situation where they think they can solve the problems by throwing money at them and by signing these agreements which no one is happy with.

Many of the people on the reserves are contacting some of our members. The member for Wild Rose and a number of other members have done extensive work with the natives. The member for Prince Albert has also done extensive work with them. They have done a lot of talking to the grassroots people. That is the message we are sending to the world as well.

On the one side, we have the great Bill C-4, the space station bill, that gives us pride in our country. On the other side, we have another piece of legislation that makes us absolutely sick to our stomach and we cannot let the people of Canada know about it because the government is afraid to let it be debated in the House.

The Liberals have no courage at all. They do not stand by their convictions. They should be embarrassed to go out in public. I think that is why so many of them moved to Ottawa and live here. They are afraid to go back to their own constituencies. They should be afraid because of the image they are sending to the people of Canada. One day it will come to haunt the hundreds of people sitting across the way who are listening so attentively. It shows how much interest there is in this kind of issue.

Let me talk further about the constitutional changes and the loss of rights. We are here to talk about the space station. We have said what that does for us and the pride it gives to us. However, what we should be talking about is the loss of rights and the loss of democracy in the country? That should be part of what is happening here as well.

What rights have we lost? I feel I have lost rights by the use of closure in the House. When closure is used we do not have the right to debate the issues and let Canadians know about them. It used to be that closure could be used once in a session and the government would worry about whether it would be defeated. It now uses closure on every single bill. I expect it will use closure on the space bill. Why would it not on something as great as that? That will send a great message to the world as well: We had to use closure on the space station that every party agreed with. It is a great idea. We are proud of it and we want to be involved but the government has to use closure on it because that is how its democracy works and that is how democracy exists in Canada.

We have lost our rights. We lose our rights every day in the House. Whether it is on closure, Bill C-68, the committee approach to things, satellite TV or whatever it is, the government operates like a dictatorship. It is time the government changed its attitude and started to think about the people who really count.

The government throws out fancy bills like Bill C-4 and says that everyone will agree with it because they are a bunch of patsies who are just going to go along with it. It knows we will put up one more speaker and it will then ram the bill through because it is a good bill. This is an opportunity for us as opposition members to at least let the government and the Canadian people know how the government is operating.

● (1350)

This is not about Bill C-4 and the space station. We are for that. We think it is great and we are proud of it. This is about democracy and the total abuse of democracy in this place. That is why all of us need to stand on our feet and be counted with regard to the issue.

The Nisga'a people would want us to stand and talk as well, even if they are opposed to what we are saying. In a democracy, one has the opportunity to speak and that is what it is all about. We go around the world peddling democracy. We say that we are the example of a democratic state. How can we say that when closure is used at the drop of a hat? It does not matter what bill it is, closure is used on it.

Here we are setting up a group of people who are going to run a socialist state, where the chief and council will have the rights to land and the rights to everything. The individual person will have no property rights. We cannot have a race based policy like that. We cannot have a top-down government like that. My God, if that worked then the east bloc countries would be leading the world. They would be the only super powers around.

I have been in all the east bloc countries. They are collapsing. They are being destroyed because of their type of government. This government is doing exactly the same thing to Canada, to this great country, a country that should be on top of the world. It is destroying it by destroying democracy and destroying the sorts of things that all of us grew up to believe Canada was all about.

It is time to examine that and to stand up and be counted. It is shameful that the other parties are not standing up to hold the government accountable. I am proud to be part of a group that is standing up, that is getting that message out and is saying what it is really all about.

As we travel internationally and involve the international community, and as foreign affairs critic I have been able to do that in lots of places, I want to be proud of the country that I come from. I want to be proud of the country that has a democratic process where every member of parliament has an opportunity to stand up and speak. I do not want to be part of a country that uses closure at

the drop of a hat and allows four hours and twelve minutes of debate on something that will affect the rest of our lives, the lives of our children and our grandchildren. It is a shameful example of what we have seen in the House in the past day or so and, for that matter, over the last six years.

We are proud of the space station but we are not proud of the other things the government has done. We cannot stand in pride and also have shame in our eyes because of what the government has done. In the last 24 hours, it has just committed probably one of the most shameful things that we have seen since we have been in the House and something that will affect us for so many generations.

I am embarrassed for the government members of the House. They should hang their heads in shame, as 10 or 20 of them are doing over there right now. In fact their heads are so low I cannot even see them because they are under their seats with embarrassment, which is exactly where they should be.

The space station, yes; the Nisga'a agreement, no. Let the government take notice of just how many more speeches we have to give and how many more comments we will have about the lack of democracy that has been displayed in the House.

The Speaker: I understand we have had quite a morning. We will now have questions and comments. I will take one question and then a response and whatever time is left over we will go to questions and comments after the question period.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I particularly appreciate what the member said in regard to his concerns for the working poor who have to pay taxes, the poor people of the country, over top of the space station.

This was signed on January 29, 1998 by Canada and a number of other countries with no consultation in the House. It was not brought before the people. Now we can look at the consultation that is supposed to be going on in British Columbia with regard to the Nisga'a agreement.

• (1355)

With regard to consultation by the Liberal government, which it likes to say that it has out there, is the hon. member aware that there will be four meetings in British Columbia, none in the Okanagan and only witnesses that the government approves with its okay stamp to appear with regard to the agreement?

The Speaker: Order, please. I understand that we are going to try to tie this into the space agency, are we not? I will let the hon. member take it from there.

Mr. Bob Mills: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately you were not here for most of my speech, but I did talk about the connection between the

negotiations with the provinces and the federal government with regard to agreements. I used, as an example, the space station, which was an agreement that I hoped the federal government had consulted with the provincial governments. I had to use examples of where the federal government had not consulted with the provinces, like the Nisga'a agreement and many of the other agreements that have come forward like the student loan program.

It is a tradition for the federal government to not consult with the provinces about these issues. It is just how it does business. It just rams legislation through, which is the unfortunate, but I am very aware of that.

What I am most concerned about is that not only is that an abuse of democracy, but when the government starts to say "We'll take this witness, but not that witness. We'll pick them", that goes absolutely to the ultimate end in lack of democracy, which was the point I was trying to make.

The Speaker: I do not want to cut this off because I thought that was quite interesting.

Mr. Randy White: It is very interesting.

The Speaker: Yes. Any time the opposition House leader stands I know it is going to be interesting. However, it is almost two o'clock and I want to save as much time as I can for the hon. member. The hon. member will have about seven and a half minutes left for questions and comments after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was recently a participant in a public consultation at Swanton, in Vermont, and Venise, in Quebec, on an issue that is vital to my riding of Brome-Missisquoi: the quality of water in Lake Champlain.

In the past three years, I have been in increasing contact with the political authorities on the American side to save Lake Champlain. An important step could be taken with the planned construction of the Swanton-Alburg bridge, but we are far from having settled the main problem, which is an earthwork that has been in place for 60 years now and is blocking the flow of water between Canada and the United States. It needs to be removed if our lake is to be saved.

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Our neighbours to the south appear to have a lot of reasons for not doing so. They have even brought up the presence of soft-shelled turtles.

I will continue to make use of all possible forums to ensure that this natural treasure, our Lake Champlain, remains an important asset for future generations.

* * *

[*English*]**IMMIGRATION**

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last November, immigration enforcement officer Dale Lewis took a man's four year old son from him at gun point. This followed a one hour of investigation into allegations made by one source; the man's estranged wife.

Adnan Khan had legal custody of his son but Dale Lewis refused to even look at the evidence. The child has not been seen since and the father has no idea where his child is.

At a subsequent hearing, Lewis admitted under oath that if he had done his job properly he would never have taken the child in the first place. To avoid further embarrassment, Lewis disobeyed a summons to appear at a hearing on October 21. Furious, the adjudicator then ordered summonses for all the top managers involved in this case who have since indicated that they will not appear.

The department is clearly determined to see that justice is not done in this case.

• (1400)

I challenge the minister to attend tomorrow's hearings so that she can see how unfairly Mr. Khan is being treated by her department.

* * *

WOMEN VETERANS

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, prior to World War II there were no women serving in Canada's armed forces. The Canadian women who enlisted then in the army, navy and air force became a significant part of Canada's military history. They proudly served both at home and overseas. Women were numbered among the casualties.

Canada's women veterans of World War II have been recognized locally with memorials such as the tri-service statue in Winnipeg and bronze statues in Brantford, but there are few others.

National recognition of World War II women veterans is long overdue. It is high time our government recognized the women who served through a tri-service statue in Ottawa. I urge the government to see to it that women veterans of World War II are

properly recognized and honoured while some are still with us. Would not this be a fitting Year 2000 project?

* * *

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ms. Aileen Carroll (Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in a few days we will celebrate the final Remembrance Day of this century. Throughout veterans week we will reflect with pride on the sacrifices made by our citizens over the past 100 years. The Canada we have inherited was paid for with the blood and sacrifice of its young Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The world wars had an impact on the lives of thousands of Canadians. Those who returned home were changed forever by these wars.

[*English*]

Those who returned home battle weary, often scarred in body and spirit, had a country to build. They picked up the lost years of their lives and got on with the job. They worked in the fields and the factories. They set up new businesses. They raised their families. They helped build a nation that has known only peace and prosperity throughout the last half of the century.

Today we thank those who served the nation for a job so nobly done.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, equality begins with the truth. The truth is that the decision handed down in the Marshall case and supported by the Liberal government will cost non-Indian fishermen their jobs and their way of life.

The government's response tells the untold truth. A race based fishery will deprive fishermen across Canada of equal access to a resource they have shared with Indians for generations. The government talks of native rights but says nothing about the rights of non-Indian fishermen who must feed their families and make a living.

The Liberals hope that by throwing money at the problem it will go away. While the government and its fisheries minister continue to dilly-dally over what to do, Indian leaders are already exploiting the Marshall decision and expanding their Indian only policy into mining, forestry and crab fishing off the coast of Newfoundland.

The truth is that the Liberal government and the supreme court are responsible for pitting Indians against non-Indians and status against non-status Indians. As a consequence the equality rights of all Canadians have been crushed.

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[Translation]

AUTHOR ABLA FARHOUD

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, Montrealer Abla Farhoud was awarded the France-Quebec literary award.

I know I speak for all my colleagues when I offer my most sincere congratulations to this author, known primarily for her theatre work.

She has written a dozen plays, including *Les filles du 5.10.15* created at the Festival de Limoges in the early 1990s before being put on in Paris and at the Théâtre international de langue française.

An initial selection for this award was made by a jury of authors, academics and literary critics from France and Quebec. Twenty-eight regional associations took part in the vote.

We congratulate Abla Farhoud and wish her all the best in the pursuit of her work.

* * *

[English]

SPORTS

Mr. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place today to say to all my colleagues that Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, indeed Corner Brook and Deer Lake, western Newfoundland, is becoming one of the premier capitals for sporting and high performance athletics not just in Canada but internationally as well. I want to pay tribute and salute all the people who have provided this platform, this foundation.

It goes without saying that while we are building the infrastructure and building the reputation as one of the premier sporting capitals, not only nationally but internationally, part of the reason we are doing so is that we have high performance young athletes like Eric Daggett.

Eric Daggett is performing very well not only nationally but internationally on the mountain biking scene. He has proven himself to be a very capable young athlete. I want to pay tribute to him and his great successes. He has competed in Kamloops, B.C. He has represented Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte very well. Hats off to Eric; keep up the good work.

* * *

● (1405)

[Translation]

KARINE VANASSE

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a young actress in my riding, Karine Vanasse, has just received the *Bayard*

d'Or as the best actress in the Festival international du film francophone in Namur, Belgium, for her performance in Léa Pool's film *Emporte-moi*.

Karine is now working on another feature film, *L'instant fatal* by Céline Baril, and playing in the new TV series *Les deux frères*, while continuing to act in the program *Les Débrouillards*.

This young woman, who is also the official spokesperson for the magazine *Filles d'aujourd'hui*, is now seeing doors open for her in the United States and new upcoming projects.

Karine Vanasse's career is now taking off in keeping with her talent, and we cannot but wish her every success.

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[English]

EGYPTAIR FLIGHT 990

Mr. Murray Calder (Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last night more Canadian families were pained with the news that their loved ones were lost on the fatal flight of EgyptAir 990.

Our deepest sympathies go out to the 22 families across Canada who are coping with this tragic event. On behalf of all members I would like to express my sincere condolences to the families and to let them know that our prayers are with them at this time of sorrow.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the people of Okanagan—Coquihalla to bring to the attention of the House a briefing note from the B.C. ministry of agriculture. This document states that Nisga'a used as a template for future land claims will cause significant disruptions to individual ranchers, orchardists and farmers in the Okanagan.

Over 1,000 farms in the Okanagan have crown tenures on land that will become the subject of Indian land claims. Not only does this threaten the commercial interests of those ranchers, orchardists and farmers, but it threatens the whole B.C. agricultural land reserve.

The NDP briefing note states that the majority of the crown agricultural land reserve would likely be consumed by land claims for a total of approximately 2.5 million hectares. Using Nisga'a as a template will not create economic certainty in B.C. The Liberals, NDP and Tories know this but insist that their extreme measures are best for all British Columbians.

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[Translation]

JEAN COUTU

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to pay tribute to the actor Jean Coutu, who passed away last night at the age of 74.

Born in Montreal, Jean Coutu began his career in 1943. In September, 1952, he played a role in one of the first French broadcasts in Canada, a presentation of *Oedipe Roi* by Jean Cocteau.

Jean Coutu is quite rightly viewed as one of the pioneers of French language television. He played the title role in the television series based on Germaine Guèvremont's novel, *Le Survenant*, or *The Outlander*, one of our literary masterpieces.

As a member of the *Compagnons de Saint-Laurent*, the company directed by Father Paul-Émile Legault, he also helped to launch French language theatre in Montreal.

Later, in the 1950s, he played the role of Ti-Mé in the popular series *Les Plouffe*, by Roger Lemelin.

The artistic and cultural community pays him a resounding tribute, in honour of his talent as an actor, his untiring energy, and his role as a builder of French language culture in Canada.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CIVILIZATION

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last night I was honoured to join labour leaders and trade union activists from across the country to cut the ribbon on a new exhibit at the National Museum of Civilization.

The exhibit is a full size accurate reproduction of room 10 of the old Winnipeg Labour Temple at the time of the 1919 Winnipeg general strike. This was the actual room where strike leaders like J. S. Woodsworth and R. B. Russell encouraged working people of Winnipeg to rise up and demand their rights, even at great personal risk.

Before the strike was over many were injured. Some were killed and the labour leaders were thrown in jail for sedition, but prison bars cannot contain ideas. Because of their spirit and courage they achieved things like the right to organize, the right to free collective bargaining, the right to a living wage and the eight hour day.

I encourage all members and all Canadians to visit this wonderful exhibit and to learn for themselves the contribution the labour movement has made to our quality of life.

[Translation]

JEAN COUTU

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon, we heard the sad news of Jean Coutu's death.

An entire generation of Quebecers who grew up during the early days of television and who watched the popular Radio-Canada series, *Le Survenant*, which ran from 1954 to 1960, will forever remember this talented and generous actor who left his mark on an era and on Quebec's cultural world.

• (1410)

Anyone remembering that time, when the new medium of television began to change the lifestyle of Quebecers, cannot forget the great popularity of *Le Survenant* and the role played with intelligence and sensitivity by Jean Coutu, who, for three more decades, pursued a career that took him from the theatre to the cinema and made him a familiar face on television for several generations of viewers.

The Bloc Québécois offers its condolences to Jean Coutu's family and friends. His deep voice will resonate in our ears for a long while to come.

* * *

[English]

NORTEL

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Nortel Networks is solidifying Canada's reputation as a global leader in high technology.

Today the company announced a \$587 million global injection in its booming optical networking business, creating a total of 5,000 jobs and tripling overall production capacity by next year.

This strategic investment will expand and accelerate the development and deployment of the company's market leading optical Internet networks.

Montreal and Ottawa will come together, to borrow some words from a Nortel advertisement, as the greatest beneficiaries of this major capital infusion. New high tech facilities will be constructed in both cities, with approximately 2,300 new jobs shared between the two.

In total Nortel expects to invest \$210 million in Ottawa and an additional \$120 million in Montreal. This is a huge vote of confidence in Canada's high technology future and the future of the Ottawa area as Silicon Valley North.

This is a clear sign that globally renowned companies on the cutting edge of the new information technologies recognize that Canada—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saint John.

DIABETES

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, on November 14 the world will recognize the birthday of a Canadian hero, Sir Frederick Banting. Dr. Banting's co-discovery of insulin in 1921 has saved countless lives. It is in his honour that November 14 is marked as World Diabetes Day, in the heart of Diabetes Awareness Month.

A million and a half Canadians have been diagnosed with diabetes, but horribly it is feared that some 750,000 more suffer from the condition but are themselves unaware.

I am honoured to serve as the campaign chairperson for the annual fundraising campaign of the Canadian Diabetes Association Saint John Branch. The CDA has played a key role in maintaining and expanding diabetes research and has this year alone provided over \$5.3 million to various projects nationwide.

I encourage all Canadians to think of those who suffer from this condition on November 14 and to give generously to this valiant cause.

* * *

FOOD LABELLING

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government's decision in favour of voluntary labelling of foods derived from biotechnology is a good initial step in the right direction. That option is already available to food companies. So far, however, most companies are not labelling their genetically modified foods.

Last week 200 Health Canada scientists declared that they do not have the capacity to assess the safety of genetically modified products. At present labelling is mandatory only when Health Canada has identified a health concern.

I therefore urge the responsible minister to make labelling of all genetically altered foods mandatory because Canadians want to know what is and what is not genetically modified.

* * *

LEONARD PELTIER

Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday former Liberal member of parliament and president of Canada's leading international human rights organization, Warren Allmand, joined with the Leonard Peltier Defence Committee in condemning the government and a recent report released by the justice minister justifying the extradition of Leonard Peltier.

Mr. Allmand conducted an internal review of the extradition under the previous justice minister and found the extradition was

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seriously flawed. He has compared Mr. Peltier's case to those of wrongfully convicted Canadians.

We urge the government to listen to the many human rights organizations, unions and concerned citizens from around the world and support their call for an independent inquiry into the extradition of Leonard Peltier.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I received a copy of the following letter only yesterday from the Liberal leader in B.C. It reads:

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to note my extreme dismay over your government's motion to invoke closure on the Nisga'a treaty debate today.

This motion is an unacceptable slight to British Columbia, and to all Canadians who deserve a full and open debate on this landmark treaty. On a matter of this critical importance to our province, to our country and our constitution, every member of parliament deserves an opportunity to speak.

It was wrong for the NDP government of British Columbia to close debate on this treaty, and to deny British Columbians' elected representatives the chance to even ask questions on 11 of its 22 chapters. I would submit that it is equally wrong for your government to engage in this same indefensible conduct, conduct that will only serve to further erode public trust and confidence in the treaty process.

Sincerely,

Gordon Campbell, MLA
Leader of the Official Opposition

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

● (1415)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has a spending problem. Someone has to help him work through it before taxpayers have to turn all of their income over to the government.

He is planning a \$47 billion shopping spree based on a projected surplus that could, might, may reach \$90 billion. Someone should remind him though that, unlike his shopping list, the surplus is projected and expected, not confirmed, meaning that tax relief is doomed again.

Why are the Prime Minister's shopping sprees always set in concrete while his tax relief is merely set in quicksand?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we predicted at the time of the last election that there would be a surplus for the first time in 50 years. We said that the surplus

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would be divided 50:50, 50% for the debt and tax reduction and 50% for social and economic programs. That is exactly what we are doing at this time.

I am very pleased to know that the Reform Party is beginning to realize that we have provided Canadian people with very good government, because we have a big surplus now compared to the \$42 billion—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Southeast.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is absolutely right. We do recognize that he has provided us with big government and that he is keeping his promise. Yesterday the finance minister denied the \$47 billion in new spending and the Prime Minister just took credit for it.

If everybody was as fabulously wealthy as the Prime Minister perhaps they would not care so much about tax relief. But for middle income families that are losing up to half of their income to government, it does matter a lot and it matters that the government is planning a nearly \$50 billion spending spree.

A surplus is a surplus, and the answer to a surplus is to collect less, not spend more. Why will the Prime Minister not abandon his \$47 billion spending—

The Speaker: The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these are the people who yesterday asked for more money to spend on agriculture. We are doing that. We are spending \$900 million more on agriculture this year than last year. The Reform Party has asked us to put in more.

What we have said is that the rational thing to do is to divide it 50:50. Even Premier Harris used the red book at the meeting of the first ministers in Quebec City in August and said it was the right policy for Canada.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Premier Harris has demonstrated how to grow an economy by letting people keep more of what they earn through real tax relief. He has done that by being responsible in terms of spending.

Premier Harris has not blown \$47 billion of Ontario taxpayers' money out the window like the Prime Minister plans to do. Why does he not listen to the growing demands among working Canadian families for tax relief, instead of planning a back to the seventies spending binge? Why does he not stop his retro-seventies fiscal policy and give people tax relief for the 21st century?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have already started to reduce taxes. Most of these people

voted for the Tories in the past. The Tories gave us a 3% surtax, which we took away.

Yesterday I gave the example of a family of four, with two people working, making \$60,000. They will have a 10% reduction in their income tax and a 20% reduction—

The Speaker: My colleagues, we want to hear the question and the answer. The hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, we have reduced taxes and we will keep reducing taxes because we offer the Canadian people a good government which has, for the first time in 50 years, put us in the position of having three surpluses in a row.

* * *

• (1420)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Richard M. Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister has said that a \$2.40 EI premium is his comfort zone, but the chief actuary of Canada said that his comfort zone is a \$2.05 premium, the same comfort zone as the Reform Party and millions of Canadian workers and businesses.

Why do the Prime Minister and his finance minister not just enter into the comfort zone of working Canadians and lower the EI premiums to \$2.05? Why do they not do that?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is coming from a party that said we should reduce the premiums only to companies, not to individuals.

When we started it was \$3.07. We have reduced it every year by 15 cents. That is why it is now lower. It will be reduced again this year, but we will do it in a way that will make sure that the money will be available when it is needed.

Mr. Richard M. Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, \$21 billion, that is how much this government has overcharged Canadian workers and Canadian businesses. There has been a \$21 billion overcharge on EI premiums.

The chief actuary said that the government can lower those premiums to \$2.05. Why does the Prime Minister not listen to the chief government actuary and lower EI premiums to \$2.05 for Canadian workers? Why does he not just do that?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, really I enjoy these moments, because I never thought, after six years in government, that I would be confronted with the difficult problem of what to do with the surplus that we have as a government.

I think of my predecessors for 50 years who were never confronted with this awful problem.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

BUDGET SURPLUSES

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is all-round champion when it comes to missing the mark with predictions.

In 1995, the gap between his forecast figures and reality was \$4 billion; in 1996, \$15.4 billion; in 1997, \$20.5; in 1998, \$7 billion.

What credibility can we give to a Minister of Finance who has a 107% average error in his predictions over four years?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, prudence is the greatest of all virtues.

When we were in the opposition, I recall the Conservative finance ministers constantly telling us, with the support of the Reform Party members of the day, that the deficit was going to be something like \$25 billion, and it ended up at \$35 billion.

I prefer a prudent Minister of Finance; it is far better for the economic health of the country.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, prudence may be the greatest of all virtues, but camouflage is not necessarily a good thing in politics.

This is a jerry-built strategy. All of the Minister of Finance's scenarios since 1995 have had but one objective: giving him a better image. The Prime Minister knows a bit about that.

Is the essential quality of a Minister of Finance not rigour and transparency in handling the public purse?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is precisely why the Minister of Finance was prudent, so as not to get people's hopes up, something the Bloc Québécois is so good at.

We prefer to be prudent, keeping within the confines of reality, rather than painting castles in the sky. At present, of course, the economy is going a lot better than planned, because there is a good government. Two million more Canadians are working, paying taxes, spending money, and as a result the treasury is in very good shape.

We need to keep on being prudent if we want to continue to be able to address the real problems of the nation effectively and efficiently.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Finance said that his government had increased the social transfers to the provinces by \$11.5 billion over five years and had lowered income tax for all Canadian taxpayers.

● (1425)

How, with any decency, can the minister speak of increased transfer payments to the provinces, when these transfers amounted to nearly \$19 billion in 1993 and have decreased this year to \$15 billion?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is neglecting to mention that the transfers involve not only cash but also tax points, which give the governments enormous amounts.

When we calculate transfer payments, we calculate tax points and cash transfers. These are the real payments to the provincial governments, because the tax points are adjusted according to the individual provincial government's ability to tax.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is more erroneous information.

How can the minister talk with any decency of tax reductions, when, since 1994, tax revenues from individuals have grown faster than the economy, and a middle class family today pays \$700 more in income tax than in 1993? Where are the Minister of Finance's tax reductions?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that someone who was unemployed and is now working pays more tax than before.

Two million more Canadians are working today than when we formed the government. This is why we collect more income tax, and when the figure reaches three million, we will be collecting even more. I would rather have that than have to pay employment insurance to people not working.

* * *

[English]

POVERTY

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday a devastating report by the National Council of Welfare noted that the political landscape is littered with rhetoric about children, broken promises and token efforts that provide very little real help to families.

It has now been 10 years since parliament voted to end child poverty by the year 2000, but in fact half a million more kids live in poverty.

Will the Prime Minister commit to use the budget surplus on real measures to reduce poverty, such as the national child care program?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have increased transfer payments to families by billions of dollars since we formed the government.

Oral Questions

We had a program on day care that was proposed. It was part of our program in 1993, but it was rejected by the provincial governments which did not want to put more money into it, so we decided to give the money to the families rather than lose it. That is why the child tax credit has given a lot more money to families.

Some of the provinces are using that occasion to reduce their own transfers and to apply it elsewhere in the same field. That is their judgment. They have the right to do that, but—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the provinces are not rejecting any child care programs. In fact, recently B.C. wrote to the federal government asking for leadership for a national strategy. Time is running out and more and more Canadians are facing grinding poverty, one of the root causes of which is the lack of affordable housing.

My question is for the homelessness minister. When will the government stop talking about its concern about homelessness and housing and start building a national housing strategy and building housing for Canadians who need it? When will that happen?

Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that across Canada it is a serious problem. Members on this side of the House are as concerned as the hon. member. However, it must be realized that we are putting \$1.9 billion into social housing. We have put \$50 million more into RRAP funding and many, many projects are growing through the RRAP program. We are seeing them being built across the country. We are doing something at this time.

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AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, in a privileged and confidential Onex memo about project peacock, dated August 16, 1999, Onex laid out the rules. It said that prior to launch Onex would want confirmation of political support, including the removal of the 10% ownership limit from the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

We now know that the Minister of Transport has proposed to change that 10% rule, just as instructed by Onex. Why did the minister tell Onex of his plans to change the 10% rule a full 60 days before he told the rest of the country?

• (1430)

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I asked the standing committee to see whether or not in its wisdom parliament should consider raising the limit. That is what

we are asking parliamentarians and it is a matter we look forward to hearing from them about.

With respect to the general issue, we have answered this question many times before. No assurances were sought by Onex from the government and none were given.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, the quote is “prior to launch” it wants those confirmations.

In yet another peacock memo dated July 29, there is a statement that says, “Onex has already been assured that the Government of Canada will grant a special executive order under section 47 of the Canada Transportation Act to suspend merger review under the Competition Act”.

Again, as instructed, this time the Minister of Industry granted a section 47 suspension. Why did the Minister of Industry provide this information to Onex 14 days ahead of everybody else?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have covered these particular memos for the last week. The hon. member asked questions in the House before. I have given answers. The Deputy Prime Minister has given answers.

This afternoon I suggest that the hon. member question the president of Onex when he comes to the committee. These are Onex's memos, not the government's.

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ELECTIONS CANADA

Mr. Eric Lowther (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are using children for their own political purposes.

Elections Canada is asking children as young as six years old to vote for their favourite right. Parents and school boards concerned about the politicizing of children have rejected this intrusion. Now government documents ask where the government can get the most mileage out of this. Liberal senators are encouraging MPs to be in their ridings on the day of the vote, presumably for self-promotion.

Why is the government using our children and Elections Canada for its own crass, political purposes?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that kind of accusation is completely false and nonsensical.

Elections Canada is a non-partisan organization. Together with the United Nations, it is holding simulated elections with children in Canada as part of a public education program. Maybe members of the Reform Party do not want future young Canadians to know what they are up to today. Perhaps it is a result of its shame.

Oral Questions

Mr. Eric Lowther (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the results of this exercise are going to be presented to the Prime Minister's office and the government.

As one parent has put it, this rights vote is not about teaching democracy. It is about using students—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Mr. Eric Lowther: Mr. Speaker, as one parent puts it, this is not a rights vote. It is not about teaching democracy. It is about using students as pawns in a political process.

Government departments are spending half a million dollars on this intrusive exercise which politicizes kids and the Liberal caucus plans to use it for self-promotion.

Why is the federal government invading our schools, politicizing our children and using kids for shameless self-promotion?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, children and the United Nations are not exactly partisan organizations. Elections Canada is not a partisan organization either.

They are being asked in a simulated election to talk about what is important to them: culture, family, liberty of opinion, their name, non-discrimination. That is what they are being asked to vote on. The Reform Party seems to be against all of these principles.

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[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for several weeks now, in connection with the Onex-Air Canada takeover bid, we have been trying to find out from the Minister of Transport whether he can give those living in regional areas any assurances with respect to the competitiveness of airline services.

Apart from paving the way for Onex, can the minister tell us whether he intends to ensure quality, affordable services to regional areas or whether, in this same connection, he simply intends to go on lobbying for Onex?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are certain that both proposals will guarantee good services for small communities throughout the country.

• (1435)

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we can see from the

minister's answers that he is unable to present a clear policy on the airline industry.

For the benefit of parliamentarians now considering this in committee, can the minister tell us whether he had a comparative study done of both proposals with respect to regional services, and whether he intends to tell us about it?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once we have a conditional agreement from Air Canada or Onex, we will examine the proposals.

We have clearly set out our five criteria. One important criterion is the guarantee of services to small communities. This is when we will determine public interest in this issue.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs says he finds it tiresome when people criticize Canada's defence capabilities. We find it tiresome that Canada was forced out of a NATO operation with Poland because of faulty equipment. We find it tiresome that Canada's NATO commitment is second to last. We find it tiresome that our military equipment is rusting out and personnel are being put at risk by using it.

Why does the defence minister allow the foreign affairs minister to belittle our troops with his tiresome opinions?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the actual fact is that when it comes to the NATO countries, Canada ranks sixth in terms of expenditure on defence. It also happens that when it comes to the Balkans, to Kosovo and to Bosnia, we have been the 10th largest contributor in terms of troops. Indeed Lord Robertson, the secretary general of NATO, said that when called upon, Canada has always been there.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's military has a proud tradition of serving overseas but they have not been given the proper tools to do the job.

The foreign affairs minister finds it tiresome to talk about the equipment they so desperately need. He finds it tiresome to worry about whether or not our troops have the protection they need when they are putting their lives on the line.

Why does the defence minister defend the foreign affairs minister's insults and not defend our troops?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was said well in the throne speech. The

Oral Questions

comment in the throne speech is one which the foreign affairs minister, all members of the cabinet and all members of the government subscribe to and that is that we are going to ensure that the Canadian forces have the capabilities to do their jobs.

Lord Robertson, the secretary general of NATO, also said that Canada actually uses its defence budget better than most. We will continue to do that to make sure our troops have the training and the equipment they need to do the job.

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[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Finance is going to report on the budget situation. Today, however, also marks another far less glorious event: on November 2, 1999 the federal government has already collected enough employment insurance benefits to finance EI until March 31, 2000.

Does the Minister of Human Resources Development realize that, from this date of November 2, 1999 on, all employment insurance contributions will be diverted by the Minister of Finance to cover expenses other than employment insurance? Is that not scandalous?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, where finances and taxation matters are concerned, it must be noted that the Government of Quebec, in its latest budget, raised its expenditures by 4%. At the same time, it cut expenditures for education and health.

A budget is a matter of government priorities, and we can see where the PQ's priorities lie.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at a time when the Minister of Finance is making such a show with our surplus billions, how can the Minister of Human Resources Development still be refusing to defend the people paying into employment insurance who, between now and April 2000, will see all their contributions going to pay other government expenses?

• (1440)

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is interesting because if I recall rightly, yesterday the same member was asking the Minister of Finance for tax cuts. Today he is talking about the need for benefits. Is it possible that he supports our approach of 50% for tax cuts and debt reduction and 50% for investments?

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last November immigration official Dale Lewis ripped Adnan Khan's four year old child from him at gunpoint even though Adnan had legal custody of the child. Lewis did this after only one hour of investigation based on information from only one source, the estranged wife. He has since admitted under oath that he should not have done it and that he had not done a proper investigation.

Why is the minister allowing her department to continue with hearings months after her own official has said there is no case?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member and all members of this House know, I cannot comment on individual cases because of the individuals' right to privacy in the legislation which gives them that protection. If the member would like to give me the details of this case I would be happy to look into it.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows about this case. I am not talking about what is going on in the hearing. I am talking about the minister's department ignoring the IRB's request in this case. Her own official, Dale Lewis, broke the law. He deliberately ignored a summons to appear before the IRB and others have now indicated that they will not appear either. The minister's own department does not respect the process.

Will the minister instruct all individuals who have been ordered to appear to be at the IRB hearing tomorrow, or will she continue to allow her department to operate outside the law?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat once again that I cannot discuss individual cases in this House or publicly.

I will tell the member that the Immigration and Refugee Board is an independent quasi-judicial body. I respect its independence and I will not interfere inappropriately in cases. I will undertake to the member to look into his allegations if he will give me that information.

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[Translation]

SOCIAL HOUSING

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government has put no money into the construction of social housing for the past six years, no new money, despite what the Minister of Labour would have us believe.

Oral Questions

We know that there is a desperate need. Several thousands of families can wait ten years or more for proper housing.

My question is for the Minister of Labour, who is also responsible for the homeless. When does she intend to answer these thousands of men, women and children, who are living in desperate conditions because the federal government cut social housing construction?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada contributes annually nearly \$2 billion to social housing. We have invested \$300 million in the RRAP program, and I would remind the hon. member that Quebec in fact receives over 30% of the funds in this program.

We are continuing to work with the provinces to find solutions. I am working with my colleague, the Minister of Labour, who is working on and co-ordinating the whole issue of the homeless. We will continue as we did last year by investing \$50 million more in the programs, and we will continue to tend to these programs.

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[English]

INDIA

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Co-operation.

Millions of people have been affected by the latest super cyclone to hit India's coast in Orissa, causing the worst flooding in 100 years of history. The unofficial death toll is set at more than 3,000 and many more are without food and shelter.

Can the minister tell us what Canada is doing to help the victims of this terrible storm?

Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to the families and the people of India for their tragic loss.

As a result of the Red Cross appeal that was issued recently, I am announcing today a \$150,000 relief fund. As well, we are monitoring the situation hourly and daily to see what is needed in addition to that and we will be responding.

* * *

• (1445)

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the possession of child pornography is still legal in British Columbia. Judges across Canada are now delaying trials on the possession of child pornography until after the supreme court makes a decision. The minister at one time said that she would not let this case get to the Supreme Court of Canada.

How many years do our children have to wait to get protection? Will the minister do the right thing now and invoke the notwithstanding clause?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, this case will be heard by the Supreme Court of Canada in January. We will be there to intervene on behalf of the Attorney General of British Columbia in support of our child pornography law in relation to possession. We believe that law is constitutional and we will be in the Supreme Court of Canada in January to make that argument.

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we know also that children are being left unprotected. We also like this law as the minister does, but the courts do not so far. Sixty-three members of her own caucus have asked the government to invoke the notwithstanding clause. Her own parliamentary secretary has asked the Prime Minister in a letter to invoke the notwithstanding clause. Three hundred thousand Canadians have signed a petition.

When is the government going to not wait for the supreme court? Let it know right now that parliament rules the country and we do not stand for child pornography.

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no one in the country stands for child pornography. One of the things the hon. members on the other side of the House forget to tell people is that all our sexual assault laws as they relate to children remain in full force and effect. All our laws in relation to the production, publication, distribution, sale and importation of child pornography remain in full force and effect. Maybe these people should stop misleading the Canadian public.

The Speaker: I would urge all hon. members to stay away from the word "misleading", please.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Louise Hardy (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the throne speech noted the particular vulnerability of the environment in the north and that the proposed diamond mine in Northwest Territories would drain a lake at the headwaters of the Coppermine River. The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, along with aboriginal groups and environmental organizations, have asked that this be put to a thorough environmental assessment panel.

Will the minister act in the long term interests of the community and the environment and submit this to a panel for assessment?

Oral Questions

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that the minister has received comments from concerned individuals and has received the comprehensive study report. He is going to make a decision shortly and we will all be informed of that.

Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an unusually warm day here in Ottawa as our climate continues to change. It may be the gas emissions coming from the Reform Party.

Two years ago in Kyoto, Canada agreed to greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. This week, Canada is behind closed doors in Bonn promoting instead unlimited emissions trading, particularly exchanging Candu nuclear technology for credits with developing countries.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Why is the Canadian government—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has engaged the active assistance of provinces, environmental organizations and the private sector all across the country in developing a Kyoto implementation plan. That work is going forward with a great deal of vigour. We are working on areas like energy conservation, energy efficiency, diversity among our energy sources, CO₂ sequestrations, carbon sinks, new science and technology and international mechanisms like trading, the clean development mechanism and joint implementation projects.

Canada will be a responsible environmental citizen.

* * *

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, contrary to answers given earlier by the minister, internal documents confirm that assurances were sought to seal the Onex deal.

In an August 11 memo entitled “Project Peacock”, Onex states that it will proceed only if the government supports its initiatives and if the new airline will not be burdened with cumbersome regulatory requirements.

● (1450)

Given the process is obviously in full throttle and even Buzz Hargrove is now on side, it is clear that those assurances were given. Will the minister now tell the House when those assurances were given?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to repeat, and I will repeat it slowly, no assurances were sought and none were given.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, this is starting to sound like airbus with evidence. It smacks of political interference. Internal documents show that Onex “would require clear indications of support from the government prior to proceeding with the transaction”. Well, it is proceeding.

I ask the minister again, with the 10% rule suspended and the suspension of the Competition Act checked off Gerry’s wish list, when did Onex receive the assurances from political friends that the government would support no burdensome regulations? When did those assurances comes in?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has his facts all wrong. As we have said, we are prepared to consider raising the 10% limit if parliamentarians believe it is in the best interests of a viable, stable industry.

Last week I went to committee and outlined the way ahead. I said that any merger that comes forward as a result of this process will be subject to the Competition Bureau. I hope the hon. member will deal with those facts truthfully.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul’s, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

The minister of finance from Ontario has recently complained that in spite of a large influx of immigrants to the area there has been no help from the federal government. Could the minister of immigration please help clarify the situation for them?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful to the finance minister and even to the member for St. Paul’s for giving me the opportunity to clarify this.

In the last budget, the funding formula for transfers under the CHST was changed from the Mulroney formula to one of per capita which includes all new immigrants, all refugees and all refugee claimants.

As a result of the new funding formula, Ontario will receive \$4.4 billion for health care over the next five years and an additional \$962 million in unconditional, no strings attached funding that could be used for immigration, housing and other important purposes.

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CORRECTIONAL SERVICES CANADA

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, dangerous high risk inmates are being escorted out of many of our prisons by unarmed guards, guards who are armed with nothing but their bare hands. In fact, some are being escorted by civilians, such as Robert Paul Thompson who was escorted by a nun.

Oral Questions

Will the solicitor general stop these idiotic practices for the safety of our guards and Canadians as a whole?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Correctional Services Canada evaluates each situation when an offender is transferred from one institution to another. Sometimes they are transferred by one guard, sometimes by two and sometimes by armed guards. It is a decision that is made by Correctional Services Canada with public safety as the number one issue.

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[Translation]

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health claims that genetically modified foods are absolutely safe. But his department is content to endorse private sector studies, without conducting its own research, and does not have studies on the long term effects of GMOs on health.

How can the minister guarantee the independence and accuracy of his department's expertise when, under the cost recovery policy, the bulk of the funding for its services come from the private sector?

• (1455)

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are naturally very proud of food safety standards in Canada.

As I have already assured the hon. member, all genetically modified foods are submitted in advance to Health Canada so that we can examine all the elements and assess all the information provided about them.

I repeat that, here in Canada, food is safe.

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[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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

Later this month there will be a very important resolution voted on at the United Nations General Assembly sponsored by the New Agenda Coalition. The resolution calls on nuclear weapons states to move rapidly toward a total elimination of nuclear weapons as particularly important in light of the failure of the CTBT in the U.S. Senate and political instability in Pakistan.

I ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs whether Canada will show leadership at the UN and vote yes on this important resolution which is sponsored by the New Agenda Coalition?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member should know, the resolution is still under negotiation. This morning a new variation was received. There are a number of amendments being presented on this particular issue. It is very hard to answer a hypothetical question when we do not know what the final form of the resolution will be. As soon as it is known, I will make sure the hon. member gets a copy.

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[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC): Mr. Speaker, in the documents on the Onex strategy, we realize that Onex was to meet a number of people, including Mel Cappe, the Clerk of the Privy Council of the Government of Canada. The strategy was to convince Mr. Cappe to make the right choice of Deputy Minister of Transport.

Can the Minister of Transport tell this House whether the people from Onex actually met Mr. Cappe, the Clerk of the Privy Council? And, if so, when?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cappe did not meet with the representatives of Onex. There was no such meeting.

* * *

[English]

FEDNOR

Mr. Carmen Provenzano (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for Rural Development and Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario.

The secretary understands how important this economic initiative is for northern Ontario. What steps is the secretary taking to finalize a new expanded mandate for FedNor?

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Secretary of State (Rural Development)(Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last June the Minister of Industry announced a \$20 million increase to FedNor, doubling the budget, allowing us to create an environment within which individual businesses can be successful in creating wealth and creating jobs and giving us an opportunity to build strong communities in the north.

Since that time, we have undertaken extensive consultation as members of parliament and as a cabinet with individuals. I am pleased to say that next next Monday, November 8, in Sudbury we will be announcing new programming that reflects this increasing budget.

*Tributes***CORRECTIONAL SERVICES CANADA**

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the solicitor general just told us about the assessments that are done prior to convicts being granted temporary release.

Let me tell him about a person who was escorted by an unarmed guard. He has had 41 incidents since 1985. He murdered two inmates in 1994 and 1996. His most recent assault was on May 25th. He has had two incidents since then. He has the potential for violence during his ETA.

How is this assessment protecting Canadian citizens?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure who the individual is that my hon. colleague is talking about.

I can tell the member that Correctional Services Canada evaluates each case and decides how an individual will be transferred from one institution to another. Sometimes they use one guard, sometimes two. Sometimes they use armed guards. The decision is made by Correctional Services Canada.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CORPORAL DANIEL AUBUT

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to a recent report on TVA, the army considers Corporal Daniel Aubut a deserter, when in fact he was fleeing Meaford base in Ontario in an effort to escape his colleagues, who were harassing him because he was the only francophone on the base.

Does the minister intend to reveal the circumstances surrounding this matter, which would tend to indicate once more that discrimination against francophones remains, unfortunately, a fact of life in the army?

• (1500)

[*English*]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be pleased to look into the matter and further advise.

* * *

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of Dr. Janez Podobnik, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, and his delegation.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I also draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Abdus Samad Azad, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I want to raise a question of privilege with respect to comments that I heard uttered by another hon. member during question period.

When the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast was posing his question to the Minister of Justice he said that the possession of child pornography was still legal in British Columbia. At that time I heard the member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre say “When are you going to turn in your stuff, John?”, referring obviously to child pornography.

It appears that member was imputing that the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast was in possession of child pornography. He was imputing criminal activity. He was imputing ill motive, and by this act of slander was inhibiting the capacity of the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast to perform his duties in this place.

I would therefore ask that the member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre withdraw those remarks.

The Speaker: What we have is an hon. member accusing another hon. member of saying something in the House. The hon. member is here with us right now. If he would like to join in this point I will hear him.

• (1505)

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if that remark were attributed to me, and I believe I did say something very quietly to that effect, I withdraw it and apologize to the hon. member if he took it wrongly.

The Speaker: I consider the matter closed.

We will now have tributes to a former member of parliament, Mr. Roderick Webb who was a member of the Progressive Conservative Party. Because he was a member of the Progressive Conservative Party, we will hear from the hon. member for Markham for the opening statement.

* * *

THE LATE RODERICK WEBB

Mr. Jim Jones (Markham, PC): Mr. Speaker, Roderick Webb, a name synonymous with leadership and patriotism, a man who put his hometown of Norwood on the map, passed away on October 1, 1999. Mr. Webb, the former Conservative MP for the Hastings—Frontenac riding, was a man said to bring water to Norwood homes in 1949.

Tributes

Married on June 12, 1941, Mr. Webb poured out his life as an example in love, marriage and family, along with his wife Roxie and son Fred. He devoted his life to the people of Norwood who frequented his small town business, Rod Webb Electric, for 15 years. He gave to his friends in a most typical small town Canadian way through the making of stained glass lamps and through the repairs of their household appliances.

Mr. Webb poured out himself to his town and his country in the same way. He served 13 years on Norwood council, 11 as a councillor and the last 2 as a reeve. He was president of the East Peterborough Agriculture Society, the Travellers Association and numerous other community organizations that typified his desire to give back.

Rod did not know how to give anything less than his best effort. Too often in politics superlatives are used loosely and generously, but make no mistake. Rod Webb was legitimately "an inspiration" through his kind disposition and strong leadership. In many ways he typified what it meant to be a constituency MP.

The courage and patriotism he displayed by serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force in the second world war remained with him. These attributes were witnessed time and time again by my former colleagues in the Progressive Conservative Party.

During his time in the House of Commons he was fortunate enough to serve in both government and opposition. Mr. Webb was first elected to the House of Commons on October 5, 1959, where he served under Prime Minister Diefenbaker. He was re-elected in 1962. He then successfully held his seat in the subsequent Pearson victories in 1963 and 1965.

As we remember and salute Mr. Webb, we say thank you. Thank you for your commitment. Thank you for your patriotism. Thank you for pouring out your life to your hometown and the rest of Canada.

Also, as a man who held true to the ideals of Sir John A. Macdonald, those of us in my party thank you for contributing to the history and tradition of the Progressive Conservative Party. We are stronger because of you.

As we honour you today, Roderick Webb, the collective prayer of the House where you once served is a simple one. May the Lord's peace be with your family.

Mr. Larry McCormick (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today it is an honour for me to pay tribute to a former parliamentarian, the hon. member for Hastings—Frontenac, Roderick Arthur Ennis Webb, who at 89 years passed away on October 1.

I did not have the privilege of knowing Mr. Webb personally, but I know the high regard held for him by members of his community

of Norwood and throughout the riding. It is through the affectionate stories of many of his friends, colleagues and family that I have come to appreciate his life, one that was more complete than many.

Rod Webb was an athlete, a war veteran, a small businessman, an electrician, a community builder, a politician and a family man. In his youth Mr. Webb was a Trent Valley hockey league star defenceman. During World War II he served as a master mechanic with the 407 Demon Squadron in the RCAF and continued his relationship with the military long after. Out of great respect for his commitment and advocacy, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 300 gave him a rare life membership.

• (1510)

He started a small business in appliance repair and other electrical work. Plying his services, Webb's good will and generosity became well known by residents for miles around.

Webb was known as a natural leader whose love of his community and church was evidenced by his actions. He took every opportunity to promote his community. He was an encyclopedia of his town's history and knew people for miles around.

Webb's involvement in community organizations included the Masonic Lodge, the Trent Valley Shriners and the Travellers Association. He had a hand in numerous initiatives at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. A past-president of the Norwood Agriculture Society, he was also an enthusiastic key member on the Norwood Fair Board. He left his mark on infrastructure projects ranging from bringing water to town in 1949, to the GA Brethren Coliseum.

A man who loved to talk with people, Rod Webb's energy, sense of humour and generous nature attracted many friends. It also helped lay the groundwork for his career in politics. Rod Webb cherished political life. He served as councillor and as reeve of the village of Norwood for 13 years. In 1959 he ran successfully as a Progressive Conservative for a seat in Canada's parliament. Webb enjoyed three consecutive re-elections, faithfully serving his constituents as the member for Hastings—Frontenac until his retirement in 1968.

My heartfelt best wishes go out to his wife Roxie Webb, his son Fred, and his grandchildren. Rod will be missed.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the mark of a quality Canadian is the amount of service and time an individual puts in toward others, service above self one might say.

We are here to pay tribute to a former parliamentarian and a man of service, Mr. Rod Webb, and I am honoured to speak on behalf of my Reform colleagues.

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Throughout his life Mr. Webb set an example to everyone of what a community oriented, caring individual should be. His life was one of a quality small businessman, giving service to others. From his career in the RCAF during World War II from 1940 to 1945 to his long standing career on the Norwood council and as a parliamentarian in this place from 1959 to 1968, he was always a helpful individual who got involved in causes he believed in.

On behalf of the Reform Party caucus I would like to extend our condolences to Mr. Webb's family. I am sure he will be sorely missed but his loving memory will live on and on in the House of Commons.

[Translation]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to offer my condolences and those of my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois to the family and friends of Roderick Webb, who died last month at the age of 89. Our thoughts go especially to his wife Roxie and his son Fred.

Mr. Webb was elected on four occasions and sat as the member for the Ontario riding of Hastings—Frontenac and a member of the caucus of the Progressive Conservative Party between 1959 and 1968.

Before his election, Roderick Webb headed his own company, Rod Webb Electric, for 15 years in Norwood. Throughout his life, Mr. Webb was involved in his community of Norwood and contributed to its economic and social development. Among other things, he sat on the Norwood town council for 13 years. His friends have described him as a natural leader, whose political and community involvement inspired others.

With the approach of Remembrance Day, I would mention that, in the second world war, Mr. Webb served his country in the Canadian air force, as a master mechanic, from 1940 to 1945. I commend his memory to his comrades in arms, who served with him to defend the democratic values we all hold dear.

They, like Roderick Webb, keep our democracy alive. Mr. Webb was never one to seek honour and glory, preferring to be involved in a thousand different ways within his community, working for change and improving society.

He left the business world to devote himself to public life, serving his constituents of Hastings Frontenac to the best of his abilities. To my knowledge, he was never a minister, nor did he aspire to high places in government. Like most MPs of the past, the present and the future, his work was often done on the sidelines, out of the public eye.

• (1515)

He sat for long hours on parliamentary committees, hearing the input from members of the public as well as experts in order to draft policies that would be profitable to all. He took part in

parliamentary debates, some more interesting than others, but all equally necessary to ensure a diversity of opinions.

What he did most was to travel the length and breadth of his riding, meeting its people. He spoke to them on the phone, answered their mail, advocated for them before government in order to solve their problems and help in their projects.

A society is not reflected only in its VIPs, in its stars. It is also built daily by the actions of dedicated people of conviction like Roderick Webb, and that is why we are paying him tribute here today.

His accomplishments are known to us. May he rest in peace.

[English]

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic caucus I too am very pleased to stand and offer our condolences on the passing of Roderick Webb who was elected 40 years ago this fall in a byelection in Hastings—Frontenac to represent that constituency. Mr. Webb was re-elected in 1962, 1963 and 1965 and retired in 1968 undefeated, which is a feat in and of itself.

What a political decade Roderick Webb lived through. When historians write about the century that is just ending and about the political scene in Canada, they will probably single out the 1960s as one of the most, if not the most, turbulent decades. Mr. Diefenbaker's huge majority after 1958 was reduced to a minority in 1962. Mr. Pearson was unable to secure a majority in 1963 and again in 1965. It was an extremely fascinating time. Roderick Webb was here and was very much a part of that decade.

Other people have spoken very eloquently in the House about Mr. Webb and his background. I would simply like to conclude by noting what a friend of Mr. Webb said upon his passing: "He enjoyed politics and life, was a community leader and just a nice person". Would not all of us like to be remembered that way?

On behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus our sincere condolences to Mrs. Webb, Mr. Webb's son Fred and grandchildren.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CIVIL INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, an act to implement the agreement among the Government of Canada,

governments of member states of the European Space Agency, the Government of Japan, the Government of the Russian Federation, and the Government of the United States of America concerning co-operation on the civil international space station and to make related amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): When the House broke for question period the hon. member for Red Deer was answering questions.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Red Deer has considerable experience as a result of being on the foreign affairs standing committee for the last six years and as the foreign affairs critic for the Reform Party. He knows something about the way Canada handles international treaties and the signing of international treaties and agreements.

The space station agreement made with the United States, Japan, the European Union and Russia is one such agreement Canada signed two years ago. It is now before the House to be ratified. We have had considerable difficulty with the process of not having any input and essentially rubber stamping that issue.

I wonder how he would compare what is happening with the Nisga'a agreement, the signing of a treaty again and expecting the House to rubber stamp it with no amendments, and the approach the government is using on the international scheme of things which does not seem to adequately consult members of parliament.

• (1520)

Mr. Bob Mills: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question of the member for Peace River. He is very right. Numerous letters from Canadians constantly remind us that we had input into the treaty that was signed at a UN conference somewhere in the world. We could talk about Kyoto. We could talk about Cairo. We could talk about many international agreements that have been signed, including the MAI.

These agreements are done in secret. Canadians are never consulted about them until after the fact when they are asked to ratify them. We have some that do not really represent the Canadian interest. Yet they are signed, sealed and delivered on behalf of Canadians. I guess the big concern is about how much negotiation went on for the space station. We do not know anything about that. It was all done behind closed doors.

Then there was something, as the member mentioned, that put doubt in our minds, the Nisga'a agreement. That is just the tip of the iceberg of how the government treats its citizens when it thinks it can ram through with four hours and 12 minutes of debate something that will affect not only the people here but our children and our grandchildren and will result in a disruption in the country like we have never seen before.

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Why would we take a race based policy, one that is not based on equality of people, entrench it in the constitution and create a future for us that will be just what we are seeing in Atlantic Canada now, what we have seen in B.C. and the comments we are hearing in our constituencies? Why would we create something like that without clearly opening it up to the public? What is the government afraid of that it has to use closure and shut things down?

It is despicable. B.C. had four months of debate and then used closure. Here we had four hours. How can that be called democracy? How can the Liberals say it is even a semblance of democracy? Perception is everything.

They expect us to stand and rubber stamp an agreement. Whether we rubber stamp the space agency agreement or the Nisga'a agreement they will use closure. They use closure like they change their socks. It is just the way they run this place. It is a dictatorship and the perception out there is that there is a level of arrogance. They will not even open the House and let us debate, let people hear what are the issues, and let us look at them all.

This is just like the last parliament with the Tories running things: close shop, shut the door, use closure, do not listen to people, do not consult anyone and control the witnesses who come forward. That is exactly how the government is operating.

Now we hear that as the committees travel they will not be able to call the witnesses they want. It will be a select group, a closed door. They will just hear from witnesses that are friendly to government policy. What kind of democracy is that? I hope Canadians will demand the government to change the way it treats its citizens.

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I did not want to let the hon. member get away with suggesting that the Nisga'a treaty would be ratified by the House with only four hours of debate. We dealt with time allocation on second reading debate.

Would the member concede that we have completed second reading debate at this point and the matter is referred to committee? There are over 50 or 60 witnesses currently being considered for the committee hearings. That will involve undoubtedly many hours of consideration by members of parliament. It will come back to the House for report stage. I am sure there will be consideration of some amendments and there will be a third reading debate. It is very clear that we are not dealing with closure at this point.

• (1525)

If the member is suggesting that we will only debate the issue for four hours, I hope he will acknowledge to us that is incorrect and that we have many hours of debate still to go on the issue.

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Mr. Bob Mills: Madam Speaker, certainly it will come back to the House. The committee will be a controlled process with controlled witnesses. I would like the assurance of that member that closure will not be used at every stage from here on in, that we will not have closure, closure, closure; four hours, four hours, and that is it.

That is not the way to treat democracy. That is not the way to treat the people of Canada. They should be upset with the way the government is operating. It is a total abuse of democracy.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.): Madam Speaker, we are debating Bill C-4. It is fascinating to watch how we can move from Bill C-4 to another topic. I will do the same and I will explain to the Canadian public why I am doing it.

Bill C-4 is formalizing our commitment to the space station, something that every Canadian should be proud of. Every Canadian would expect the bill to be unanimously approved. Of course I approve of the bill.

The U.S., Japan, Europe, Russia and Canada are the countries involved in the space station. These are countries with vastly different political systems, vastly different cultures and different monetary systems. What did they end up doing? Did they end up dwelling on those differences, unable to co-operate, and fighting among one another? No. The scientists joined forces. The engineers got together and divided up the tasks. The astronauts trained for complementary roles. The politicians set aside their own agendas and they co-operated.

The result was the Canadarm, something which most Canadians have seen and are proud of; Julie Payette; and high tech wizardry in Canada. Good solid employment trickled down to our universities. Professors are proud of our involvement in the space station. Students had a goal to strive for. There was co-operation, give and take, sharing, interchange, dependence upon one another and looking after common goals. That is what the space station has done.

What are we in the House like when it comes to co-operation? Let me talk about a brand new historic agreement, a treaty for a native group in the Nass Valley in British Columbia, a treaty that is complex, thick and difficult to understand. What an occasion. All the world was to co-operate. We had to get the information out and explain to everybody in the country what it was all about.

What has happened? The co-operation has been so dreadful on this issue that I as a member of parliament from southern Alberta with the largest native reserve in Canada, the Blood reserve, was denied the ability to speak on the treaty in the House by a government so intent on stopping co-operation that after four hours and 12 minutes time allocation was brought in.

To those Canadians watching that means debate was stifled, choked, smothered, shut down. I have to take my time on Bill C-4 to tell my constituents and Canadians—

Mr. John Bryden: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think it would be appropriate if debate were returned to the bill and the topic at hand.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): It is my duty to ask the hon. member to try to keep his debate pertinent to the bill being debated.

Mr. Grant Hill: I will get as close as I can, Madam Speaker. I was talking about the co-operation on the space station and I am talking about the lack of co-operation here. I will talk about that for the rest of my time.

There were obstruction and broken promises. We were promised full debate on the issue. I listened to the Prime Minister promise that. Is this important? Oh, it is so important. Full and thorough debate.

• (1530)

What happened in B.C. after 11 of the 22 clauses were discussed and debated? There was closure. Why would the NDP government in B.C. shut down debate on this issue? Here is the reason. When the bill came before the B.C. public, support was pretty strong. Sixty per cent said they supported it. As they learned more and more about the bill, what has happened?

Householders were sent to 534,000 homes in B.C., most of them in ridings held by Liberal MPs. In one riding 81.5% said not to vote for the bill. In another, 94% said not to vote for the bill. Then the Liberals tried to stop travel. They tried to stop committees from going to B.C. to let the public know. At that point a huge fight broke out in the House. It was a childish fight in my view with Reform members doing childish things because they were driven to do those childish things by a government bent on preventing that travel.

I am embarrassed by some of the things that go on here. I have to explain to high school students at home why we would do a childish thing like debating over and over again, preventing the finance committee from travelling so that we could get the aboriginal committee to travel. I wish I could explain that other than to say that that crew does not want the true information about Nisga'a to come out.

The Liberals said no to debate. They said no to travel. They said no to public input.

I would like to discuss this issue from a narrow perspective, from the intergovernmental affairs perspective. That is my portfolio in the House. Just from the narrow intergovernmental affairs

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perspective, what does the Nisga'a treaty do? What does this big document that had four hours and twelve minutes of debate do?

It sets up a new order of government that was unheard of when our constitution was put in place. It is a third order of government. It is so specific in the agreement that it gives the Nisga'a supremacy over federal and provincial laws in 14 new areas.

It is very interesting that in health, the Nisga'a will have supremacy on the issue of the delivery of health services. That is a totally provincial responsibility in our constitution. That responsibility is being given to the Nisga'a. It is being given by the use of a phrase that is very legal. I am going to quote it. I believe these debates will go down in history as important. I am going to quote the phrase that gives the Nisga'a that supremacy: "In the event of an inconsistency or conflict between a Nisga'a law under this paragraph"—relating to 14 different areas, health in particular—"and a federal or provincial law, the Nisga'a law prevails to the extent of the inconsistency or conflict".

That sets up a new form of sovereignty. That sets up a new form of partnership. That sets up in my view a sovereignty association. This treaty can be used as an excellent debating position by those who would want to split up our country for a sovereignty association. On sovereignty this treaty is a mistake.

Another area in which the treaty makes a mistake is on race. On the issue of race, the non-Nisga'a, those living on the reserve that are not natives, will be disenfranchised or unable to vote. Their right to vote in elections or to hold office will be taken from them.

I have listened to my colleagues say that that is no big deal, that they can still be consulted. They can be consulted all right, on things like the health board. But when the Nisga'a government taxes them, and the provision is in the agreement to allow it to tax those non-Nisga'a citizens, they will be taxed without the right to vote for those who are taxing them. That is against every rule of democracy that I understand. This is a new order, a non-constitutional order, a third order. On the issue of race, this treaty is a mistake.

• (1535)

The third and most basic area in which this treaty is a mistake is on the issue of the charter of rights and freedoms. This is a truly debatable point. It says right in the treaty that the charter will apply, clearly, plainly and specifically. But the charter itself says that it should not be interpreted so "as to abrogate or derogate from any aboriginal treaty or other rights" of native peoples; abrogate or derogate, take away from, any of those native rights.

Here we have a treaty which says that the charter applies and we have in the charter a section that says that it does not apply. That is debatable and I am not sure where that would come down in a court

of law being no lawyer myself. This treaty is a mistake as it relates to the charter.

Politicians are great at coming to conclusions and arguing those conclusions until they are blue in the face. We can hear that in the House. We have complete disagreement on this issue of the charter.

I will quote someone who I think is fairly balanced in perspective. This is a journalist I personally have faith in. I find this individual able to come to conclusions that are defensible. He says that the treaty would accord the Nisga'a status and rights far surpassing those of other native bands, nor is that the end of it. He also said that the premier of B.C. may no longer boast that the treaty would serve as a template for settling the province's sixty-odd outstanding land claims, but it is hard to believe that native negotiators in any future treaty would settle for less. If this treaty, as he says and as I agree with him, sets out a brand new order of government unheard of before with far greater rights for our native brothers, it will be used as a template and to break these agreements that were put in place years and years ago.

All that was a diatribe on the co-operation we have had in the House. What would improve the process in the future for natives? Surely they do not deserve the treaty system we have given them. Surely they do not deserve the reservations we have given them. Surely they do not deserve the health problems, the drug and alcohol problems and the employment problems that I saw in my practice as a medical doctor. I treated people from the reserves in my own riding who came to the hospital.

What could we have done better? We could have looked at the position of how we could gain equality under the law for every single Canadian. Some of the things in this treaty move in baby steps toward that.

On the issue of taxation we will end up with natives who will pay income tax but they do not have the economic levers they need to become individually self-sufficient. They do not have the ability to own their own property in fee simple. They do not have the ability to use that to guarantee them a mortgage. They do not have the ability to do the things other Canadians can do.

If this treaty becomes a template for the future of our native brothers, it will be a grave error. It is an error on those big principles I have mentioned.

I have been talking about the problems with this treaty. I will slip back to Bill C-4 and what I think could have happened with this treaty. There is co-operation among the countries on the space station. They have put aside their differences and have really looked for common solutions. That could have and should have happened on this agreement.

• (1540)

It has been an embarrassment to have to use this time on Bill C-4 to talk about the Nisga'a treaty. I say to every Canadian that I

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would have stood in my place and I would have talked even if it was for half as much time on the Nisga'a treaty if I had been allowed to. I was blocked from the ability to do that.

I apologize to those who wanted to hear about Bill C-4. I know I did not talk about it in a way that was appropriate to the space station, but the Nisga'a treaty will go down in history as a mistake. I want to say that so plainly and so clearly to every single Canadian who is listening.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I was very enlightened by the remarks of the member for Macleod on the bill with respect to the Canadian space station. He drew a very effective analogy between that bill and the Nisga'a bill which we dispatched from this place yesterday.

Does the member think that if the Liberal Party of Canada were in opposition its members would have supported the invocation of time limitation on a bill of that importance? Does he think the Liberals would have supported the Mulroney government for instance in its frequent invocation of closure and time allocation? Could the member comment on whether he believes that the government is doing what it said it would do when in opposition with respect to allowing full and free debate and allowing opposition parties to express dissenting opinions on matters of important legislation such as that before us today?

Mr. Grant Hill: Madam Speaker, that is an issue I would enjoy greatly commenting on.

I did have an opportunity to review *Hansard* on that very subject. I found quotations from my Liberal colleagues when they sat in these very benches. The quotations were vicious and ferocious on the issue of time allocation and closure. They called it the most egregious and worst thing that could happen. In fact, from a medical man's perspective, I thought that high blood pressure might have caused mortal harm to some of them they were so upset.

An interesting and fascinating process seems to happen when a party crosses the floor from opposition to the government benches. It is a fascinating process. Some would call it the brain drain. I would not be so unkind as to say that none of my colleagues opposite have lost their marbles.

There are times when opposition parties obstruct the process. I recognize that is why time allocation is used.

On a bill that important, the attempt to obstruct travel, which failed and the attempt to obstruct debate, which will fail, that bill will be known to the Canadian public by the time we are through with it, I guarantee that. It is too important to allow a government bound and determined to shut down debate to be successful. I thank my colleague for that opportunity.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce discussion on the bill before the House, that is to say the intergovernmental agreement which is listed on the order paper.

It is a tribute to endeavours made during the cold war and which to some extent if adopted at the time might have put us another quarter century in advance of where we are now. It is often forgotten that when President Nixon and Secretary Brezhnev met in Moscow in 1972, they did initial an agreement on co-operation in space research, space exploration and space science. It was originally devoted to the development of co-operation in international telecommunications satellites and their utilization in broadcasting. The initial proposal was for co-operation between the western organization, which is essentially managed by an American consortium. INTELSAT was the western organization and Intersputnik was the Russian organization.

• (1545)

With President Nixon's departure and changes in the Soviet Union, to some extent those plans for co-operation and formation of a single international space agency were put on ice. What remained, however, was a tradition of co-operation. We saw that reach fruition as the cold war ebbed and détente expanded in co-operative U.S. and Soviet, or in the broader sense, western and Soviet explorations or participation in common space missions.

The spinoff from all this is of course that Canada was one of the pioneers in space research in scientific principles and in administration. I was director of a space law institute in Montreal and one could see the beginnings of what may now be the newest developments in Canadian scientific industrial partnerships to take us into the 21st century.

I could note that it is an important source of research, job creation and the development of export markets for industries in British Columbia and in other parts of Canada. I take pride in noting that in British Columbia we are at the leading edge of applied space engineering. Everybody knows about the space arm, which was developed and used in space rescue operations. But in other areas of pure science and its application in the finest forms of communication, British Columbia industry has made a major contribution.

The significance of this bill is that it heralds and institutionalizes co-operation across what used to be the old political ideological boundaries in co-operation with the countries that are most advanced in space research, space science and space engineering. We have them in the preamble to this bill and we notice the United States, Japan, Russia and Canada as key parts of that.

Our work in this area has involved allocations of 150 contracts to Canadian firms and universities since 1987 for automation and robotics technology development projects. There has been approxi-

mately \$2 million invested in Canadian firms for this particular year, 1999-2000.

I would note that a B.C. firm developed the first automated robotic refuelling station in partnership with Shell. Newfoundland has done interesting work here on a sensitive skin developed for space robotic manipulators and it is being applied in the technology on prosthetics and bumpers of cars to control the deployment of air bags. We can see the spinoff from the most refined and esoteric form of engineering to common, everyday application in our society.

A Sainte-Foy, Quebec company has developed space robotic expertise to produce a digital imaging system for medical radiology. It provides real time x-ray images and eliminates the need for photographic film.

Further, Canada's participation in this venture entitles us to what is called a "one rack" or one laboratory shelf per year for science and technological experiments and this in a station that has an estimated 10 year lifespan. It will let us expand the work we are already doing in the microgravity field and it is an area for which the potential application includes direct connections to the medical relief of osteoporosis. Protein crystallisation in space provides tangible solutions for problems here on Earth. The spinoff is in the direct application to contemporary local medicine, the spinoff in terms of companies. EMS Technologies of Ottawa recently won a \$9.5 million contract from Mitsubishi of Japan to supply the electronics to Japan's contribution to the international space station. It expects \$24 million in additional orders.

• (1550)

This is the promise to invest in science, technology and pure research. It is not ivory tower work. In the end there is a concrete application in industry leading-edge technology and the spinoff is direct. There was the investment we made six years ago in TRIUMF funding at the University of British Columbia, pure research with the spinoff we noted there. In industry there has been the creation of advanced technological jobs for skilled Canadians. It is all there.

In voting on this bill we signal our co-operation and we signal that it is something in which we have as much to gain as we contribute. We can be very proud of Canada's role in contributing to the science and technology of the 21st century.

Some references have been made, in part by my good friend, the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry, who raised what is a favourite constitutional project of his for reform in, as he sees it, the foreign affairs power. I think that deserves discussion at another time and in another place. I would simply note, however, that in this particular area and in this particular treaty I believe there has

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been exhaustive consultation with all the Canadian scientific community from Quebec, Ontario and all the other provinces. As to the umbrella agreement, which I am not sure was used in this case, the input from scientists in all Canadian universities and research centres was there. This is a non-self-executing treaty. By its nature it requires federal legislation and the opportunity there is to present contributions on the specific subject of the treaty.

Today, however, I have not heard any criticism of the substantive content of the treaty or what it proposes, which is I think a tribute to the prior extensive consultation with the scientific community. Be not afraid, I would say to members of the Bloc.

The member for Beauharnois—Salaberry conceded this in his response to my question this morning. The Australian analogy simply does not apply. Under the Australian treaty power, as interpreted, the mere fact of making a treaty gives the federal government power to implement that treaty notwithstanding provincial or state power. To the contrary, in Canada, as a result of the privy council's decision in the Labour Conventions case of 1937, which the member opposite rightly saluted, we cannot by making a federal treaty impinge on provincial law-making power under the constitution. We need to co-operate and speak to the provincial governments.

I see no conflict here. I heard none suggested by my friend the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry. If it were to arise, then the courts would properly recognize, if it was challenged, the area of provincial power. However, it would necessitate what is going on anyway because the imperative of co-operation is there in the common interest, close continuing consultation between federal and provincial governments in implementing this treaty and in making sure that everybody in Canada shares from its benefits.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know I am stretching the envelope a bit on this question, however, the hon. member does mention how all Canadians are very proud of the aerospace industry and what we do in terms of working with other countries. The Canadarm is a great example of that. As he knows, we sold the Canadarm through the Spar agency.

What assurance can the hon. member or his government give that we as a country will cease to sell our industries which are making great advancements in the world of technology?

• (1555)

Mr. Ted McWhinney: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for that extremely interesting question. I do not believe that research has any frontiers. The hon. member is, I believe, a former British Columbian. I would invite him to return and if I am in town I will take him out to the TRIUMF facility. On my first visit there

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six years ago I saw Russians, Israelis, Austrians, Indians and Pakistanis all working together. They share the knowledge.

Knowledge cannot be given frontiers. In my view, what is wrong with selling products that we produce or selling knowledge? We benefit from it. We get into new research. The funding we obtain from the sale enables us to take the research further.

We are ahead of most countries in space research. It is one of the astonishing achievements, the acquired achievement of Canadian science in recent years. It is not trumpeted abroad, but in British Columbia, where perhaps there has been too excessive reliance in the past on primary resource industries, it is a way into the new century. We are ahead and we have nothing to fear from other people buying our research riches. We will continue to do further work and go beyond.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Madam Speaker, first I would like to give the hon. member opposite a little lesson on electronic feedback. He should not put his earphone close to his microphone because it blasts a hole into our ears. That is lesson number one.

The question I want to ask is very simple. Bill C-4 obviously draws attention to the fact that negotiations have proceeded successfully with a whole bunch of different countries. He, of course, is an expert in international law, in agreements, in constitutional things and in all of those various things that a professor of his stature is an expert on. Does he believe that the Nisga'a deal in British Columbia has been very one-sided in its negotiations and has totally avoided the other half of the equation; that is, all the people who will be affected by this agreement, namely the non-natives, who have been ignored? Does he feel that in comparison with what happened in the negotiations on Bill C-4 that was an adequate procedure?

Mr. Ted McWhinney: Madam Speaker, I am satisfied with the process of consultation. I was not one of those who voyaged to the signing ceremony in the Nisga'a territory 15 or 16 months ago because I wanted to study the treaty in depth. I wanted to get the actual text, the 400 pages, and I did not get it until two days before the signing ceremony. I also wanted to consult.

I have spent those 15 or 16 months talking to people and consulting with people. I think there has been an astonishing amount of input into this, including potential adversary positions.

The interesting thing about Nisga'a that may not be true in subsequent treaties was the absence of countervailing interests in concrete cases proven to those investigating the matter. I get an enormous amount of mail on just about everything. On this particular issue, strangely enough, we have very little concrete opposition. In later treaties that I can see coming, I see the strong

possibility of conflicts in a substantive sense between different types of rights and I may have to give a different response then.

Frankly, as the consultations developed, I felt that the treaty could have been ratified, that is to say legislated by this parliament, even 12 months ago. The government has included though, as a result of representations made by British Columbian members and senators, the special provision in the federal enacting legislation which replicates what is in the treaty itself. However, what people do not notice in 400 pages is that it is subject to the constitution and to the charter, which will allow a judicial review and, if necessary, legal challenge if further points of conflict should arise that were not for any reason foreseen in the actual treaty negotiation itself.

• (1600)

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the member has spoken quite eloquently about the economic and side benefits that are going to Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia.

I happen to represent a riding in the province of Manitoba. I am sure the member can prepare an answer for me as to what the economic benefits are that will accrue to Manitoba, if any, in a direct sense as opposed to an indirect sense in that we are all Canadians and we know that we will receive an indirect benefit.

We have six members from the Liberal government in Manitoba. I have not heard them asking what benefit Manitoba will get from this. Possibly the member for Vancouver Quadra could tell the House and Canadians just where Manitobans fit in to the space agency program.

Mr. Ted McWhinney: Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question. It directs attention to the regional character of the federal system and the fact that some regions are strong in certain areas and not in others. There is a certain balance.

On the TRIUMF project I was trying to negotiate a \$167.5 million grant at a period when the inherited budget deficit we had was \$42.8 billion. One canvassed all the provinces and although Manitoba was not a governing member of the TRIUMF complex, there were four universities in British Columbia and Alberta, there was a spin-off to Manitoba because the University of Manitoba had expertise in the area and was able to offer co-operation and direct benefits flowed.

On the space issue my understanding at the present time is that the concentration of work is in British Columbia and Quebec but we noted Newfoundland which has its work.

All Canadians benefit by keeping advanced skills scientists here. We find their work, for example, in osteoporosis which will be a spin-off activity, has a strong Manitoba component because the University of Manitoba is very strong in medical research.

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If we do find that Manitoba is not one of the leading players here, it will be in other areas. Since I got Manitoba support for TRIUMF, I will pledge Manitoba my support in equivalent scientific projects there.

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as we approach the end of the millennium and the beginning of the next, there is one novel aspect of this legislation I would like the hon. member to comment on, especially since he is very well known in Canada as an expert in many aspects of the law, constitutional law among them. It is the fact that possibly for the first time we are making the provision for applying the criminal code and other statutes out of this world.

Mr. Ted McWhinney: Madam Speaker, I simply add as a matter of personal pride that I did a good deal of work on the substance of space research, not simply the law, and particularly on international telecommunications satellites. I was involved in the negotiations which were ultimately unsuccessful between Intersputnik and Intelsat.

On this particular issue, law follows the flag, and a spaceship has a nationality, in this case multinationality. There is no problem in principle in applying national law to it in the same way that one applies national law to an aircraft crossing the Atlantic. The ship's flag, the country of nationality of the aircraft applies its criminal law, and also those who have passengers of their own nationality can attach it too. Plurality of jurisdiction is not a problem. It is not novel.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-4 on the international space station.

• (1605)

Like my colleagues, I too will certainly make reference to the bill that was closed down very deliberately by the Liberal government. Debate was stifled on the Nisga'a agreement. I do not know what the reason was, apart from the fact that the Liberal government did not want a sound debate on that bill. The Liberals did not want Canadians to hear the true contents of that bill and its ramifications throughout the province of B.C. in particular, and for all Canadians.

The Nisga'a agreement bill impacts not only the province of British Columbia, but right across the country. Its potential in land claim settlements is quite phenomenal.

Back to the space station. I had the privilege of walking through the model of the space station outside of Houston, Texas. It was housed in a very large building as one can imagine. It is several hundred feet long and several hundred feet wide. I had the opportunity for a hands-on examination of the station. It was very, very impressive.

When we think about the beginnings of the space program in the United States of America, the roots were very much associated with Canada. I recall the scrapping of the Avro Arrow project in Canada. Some phenomenal engineering and technological achievements ended up south of the border. Unfortunately right now we do not possess the same qualities of research and support on a government level as we did back then. When we look at the history of NASA, the space race and the space industry, it very much has its roots here in Canada.

There are still many Canadian hands-on personnel down there. It just so happened that when I was down there, a number of Canadian scientists and engineers were working on different processes in reference to the robotic arm, the technology which was developed here in Canada. I saw how that arm is going to work on the space station. It is quite amazing. That arm can move like a giant spider from one end of the space station and attach itself to the other end. It can perform significant maintenance and construction feats.

A member of my family works on the medical team in NASA, Dr. Douglas Hamilton. He is known as Hammy down there. Dr. Hamilton has two degrees in engineering and a medical degree. Unfortunately he is part of the brain drain out of Canada. He was educated and received his degrees in Calgary. After he earned his medical degree he was looking around for a job and lo and behold, NASA snapped him up.

There is another one of Hammy's credentials which should be mentioned. He was in line to be an astronaut and was picked as one of the Canadian astronauts for the future. He was one of the five that was slated to go. Unfortunately it never happened. The race slowed down and a number of Canadians did not have the opportunity but he knows many of this country's present astronauts.

• (1610)

I was looking at a diagram of the space station. As I was walking through the station I had a good opportunity to look inside each capsule that will be made by various countries. There is no question about the importance of this space station and Canada's involvement in it.

There will be Canadians not so much in the station when it is up there but there certainly will be a lot of them on the ground. Canada's role in the station is going to be vital and ultra important. It will provide spin-off jobs in Canada as Canada contributes more and more toward that endeavour.

I walked through all of the modules. There is a co-operative effort on the part of these countries. Some of them were at odds with one another. Russia was at odds with the United States and the free world. Japan at one time was at odds with Europe and certainly North America. The United Kingdom and Europe are contributing to this effort with a substantial amount of co-operation.

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I was impressed that it is a Russian escape module, if there are problems in the station itself, that will allow those inside the capsules to exit safely hopefully back to Earth should some major problem occur. Co-operation was the key to this whole affair.

Ties are being built through efforts like the space station. Bonds are being built among the scientific community and among those in the diplomatic areas of governments. Some barriers are falling down which is so vital to world peace.

I look to our own country and I see other things happening which reflect the opposite. I am coming back now to another comparison, when we talk about co-operation and what can actually be accomplished when matters come before the House that are divisive to our country and its people.

I speak of the Nisga'a agreement. Many people in the country would like to know the truth of the matter when it comes to that agreement. They are not being allowed to do that. They are being denied a debate here in parliament on that very issue.

The government chose to invoke time allocation after four hours and 12 minutes of debate. In so doing—

Mr. John Bryden: I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. The member had an excellent speech that was right on topic and all on this side were listening raptly. But I must protest if he does steer the speech away to a subject that is not relevant to the matter at hand. Would he please return to the excellent speech that he was conducting previously.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I am sure that the hon. member is just about to come back to the subject being discussed today.

Mr. Art Hanger: Madam Speaker, as to the hon. member's point, I am and will be speaking on the whole issue of co-operation. It is important to recognize what co-operation can do when there is a common cause and a common purpose. A space station can be developed in four or five different countries and be assembled in space after being transported up there. Co-operation is the key point.

It is no different for the people of this country. They need to know where we stand on issues that are important to them. They need to know that the parliamentary process will allow that adequate debate, will allow input from the opposition, will allow their opinions to be heard, not shut down.

• (1615)

What would happen if that happened in the space program or at the international space station? I would not want to go into space and put myself in that mechanical device. I would not know if I was

going to live or die because there was no co-operation on the part of the engineers, the politicians and the medical teams involved.

I will flip back over to the Nisga'a agreement where it is very clear that co-operation is at the centre of the whole affair. At no time did we state that aboriginal people should not have self-government of some form. We are not denying self-government. Co-operation is the key: all levels of government working together, just like in the space station; and all levels of those planning divisions working together to accomplish one goal.

In the particular case of the Nisga'a agreement, we have a form of government that is apart from all other governments. Who is accountable to whom? What government is going to act independently? We are talking about co-operation in a space station. We are talking about co-operation by different levels of government. The Nisga'a government is one such level.

I cannot understand why the government is actually afraid to debate the Nisga'a agreement to its nth degree? It should be proud of being able to do that. I would suggest that is the democratic process. I do not know why the government is so nervous about discussing the particulars of the treaty?

What I find rather unsettling is this tendency to label its opponents, or those with an opposing point of view to this treaty, in the cowardly manner in which it does. It all showed up when closure was invoked, which, in my humble opinion, was undemocratic, cowardly and a desperate act to attempt to smother a good and sound free speech debate in the House.

When it comes to the government, its action is no different than the B.C. government that rammed through the Nisga'a treaty in the provincial legislature against huge opposition.

Mr. John Bryden: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is an historic piece of legislation before us. It is legislation that has never been seen in the House before. It is legislation of the millennium. Would the member please address the legislation at hand and leave politics behind.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I must agree with the member that the current speaker should stay on the bill being discussed before the House.

Mr. Art Hanger: Historic legislation is important. The Canadian space station is an historic occurrence. There is no question that the development, the co-operation and the resulting influence from the research that will be done up there will be historic. It is going to be a preparation for greater things to come in space, including a trip to Mars. Speaking with those in the area of research focused on that particular station, I know that is a very close agenda. Maybe with some exceptions, probably most of us here will be alive to see that happen.

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• (1620)

However, there is another historic piece of legislation that was never debated in the House and that was the Nisga'a agreement. The government shut it down before we could get to the nitty-gritty, the nub of the matter. There are tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of people who are unhappy with that agreement.

We have an agreement here that everyone agrees with but we are still debating it. We can laud all the possibilities that the space station will bring to the country, if not to the world, but let us talk about the country because we are the ones who are contributing to it.

We are also contributing to the Nisga'a agreement as to what may come of it in the end. As members of the opposition party, we have a responsibility to deal with that very complicated issue and complicated bill. I do not know if most people realize this, but there are two books that deal only with the Nisga'a agreement. It is very significant in scope.

I do not remember who the speaker was, but he or she identified the Nisga'a treaty as the balkanization of Canada.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member speaking right now keeps debating off a very good bill, Bill C-4, which I believe reaches a lot of consensus among all political parties here. It is a worldwide agreement and something that is very important.

I am surprised he is not talking about taxation, or sports or anything of that nature. I wish that you, Madam Speaker, would instruct the hon. member to stick to the subject at hand.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I am sure the hon. member realizes that it is the duty of the Chair to try to keep the debate on the subject at hand. I would again remind the hon. member of that.

Mr. Art Hanger: Madam Speaker, certainly I intend to do that as I do come back to the issue during my debate. I think it is important to compare and compare I will do. I know, Madam Speaker, that you will not disagree with that particular point so I will try to keep my comparisons very relevant.

I understand that the treaty struck for the space station among these different countries was certainly an historic treaty. However, I do not recall just how much debate there was in the House over that particular issue or how much consultation there was here. The only thing I recall over this particular treaty, and it is a treaty, is that the space station agreement was brought here for rubber-stamping. It is all over, finished and done. All the government

wants is the House's approval. That is no different than the Nisga'a agreement.

The Nisga'a agreement was done by the government in the same way. It was compiled with little consultation with those who really mattered. That is an important issue when we talk about an agreement that has such an impact on the lives of people in British Columbia and, for that matter, across the country. It is the taxpayer who is footing the bill. It is no different than on the space station issue where the taxpayer will also be footing the bill, although with the space station there is certainly going to be a different spinoff in the country than there will be with the Nisga'a agreement. It will be the balkanization of Canada.

• (1625)

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really do regret that the member for Calgary Northeast spoiled what could have been an excellent speech, which began as an excellent speech, on a historic piece of legislation by toeing his party line and obeying his whip to divert the debate to a discussion of time allocation on the Nisga'a treaty. The member for Calgary Northeast is well known for his interest in the law and legal matters.

We have before us a piece of legislation that truly is very historic in ways that go far beyond just the recitation of technology or the recitation of advancements in science. We have legislation before us that is an advancement in human organization, the advancement in democracy and the advancement in law. We have legislation that for the first time ever applies the laws of Canada not just outside of Canada but out of this world. For the first time ever, the law applies not just on the space capsule and among the spacemen, but the law applies to any vehicle that separates from the space station.

The reason this is so significant is because it takes the human spirit that is represented in our political institutions, and more than that in our legal institutions, and for the first time ever it has taken the law out of this world. That may sound trivial to some members but it is an enormous step. Symbolically, it means that the human spirit has passed the boundaries of geography, has passed the boundaries of city states, of the political states of the world and has actually entered into interplanetary space.

In 1,000 years or 500 years from now, humanity will look back at this moment and this piece of legislation, where it moves the law and mankind outside of the world, as a turning point in the history of all humankind.

Mr. Art Hanger: Madam Speaker, I do not disagree with the member for Wentworth—Burlington with respect to what the technology and the space station program will create. I agree wholeheartedly. I certainly laud the program. It is marvellous. I would like to see greater opportunities in Canada to develop our

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young people in the whole area of space technology which we lack in many respects. We have made some strides over the last few years but with no credit necessary to the government.

However, that was not the point I was making with my comparison of this treaty to the treaty that was just drafted on the Nisga'a agreement. I was also not following the party line.

We are concerned about what happens in the House, like any opposition member should be. We have a responsibility to ensure that debate does take place and that there is no other hidden agenda on any bill that may come forward. If the member for Wentworth—Burlington would dig into the short path, he would clearly see that there have been hidden agendas in other bills that have come before the House.

It is not the space station bill that I have any quarrel with in that regard. I think it is a marvellous opportunity for our country. However, when the government of the day decides that it is acting as God and decides to shut down debate on a bill that will have a greater impact on people in our country in a negative way than the space station will have in a positive way, then I have a problem with that. I and I know my colleagues will take every opportunity to voice that particular opinion.

• (1630)

Mr. Derrek Konrad (Prince Albert, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the member for Wentworth—Burlington accused our member of toeing the party's line in speaking to Bill C-9 at this point in time after his government and he toed the party line by voting to shut down debate in the House. That is shameful and ought not to be done by a person who believes in democracy, as I am sure he did before he was elected to the Liberal Party.

Our whip said that we would begin to discuss Bill C-4 when we had finished discussing Bill C-9, and that has not happened yet. My colleague was entirely correct in his answer to the member on the other side. I would like to add my amen to what he said.

Mr. Art Hanger: Madam Speaker, I would certainly like to thank my colleague for his support. The time is opportune for the Liberal government and certain members, I might add, to make mention of issues that are democratic. It is convenient and should be brought to the attention of the world because somebody all of a sudden is taking a right or a privilege away, and not to say that it should not be.

However, that applies on this side too because there are rights and privileges being taken away from others as a result of the Nisga'a agreement. We as the opposition have every responsibility to bring that to the attention of others in the country.

Mr. John Bryden: Madam Speaker, I continue to be throwing pearls on barren ground. What we are taking about here is a historic moment, a historic debate, a historic piece of legislation. We are applying the law off this planet for the first time ever. It is going to go to the moon, to Mars, to planets all across the solar system as mankind advances.

Can the member not see for one moment the historical significance of what is before the House? It is not a matter of partisan politics. Surely the member can appreciate the moment.

Mr. Art Hanger: Madam Speaker, I have no quarrel with the whole issue of what may happen and is happening with the space program and the space station. I do not think a person on this side of the House has any quarrel with the member in that regard.

He cannot seem to get it through his thick skull that the space station is not in question here but rather the Nisga'a agreement. That is why I am using that as a comparison. On one side we have a treaty that we find co-operation and benefit from. On the other side they shut down individual rights, which has a negative impact on society. The member across the way cannot get that through his head.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I will ask a simple question. Does Bill C-4, the space agency bill, deal with the constitution of Canada? If not, could he tell us other bills that in fact deal with the constitution of Canada where the Liberal government is trying to railroad and wreck democracy in the country?

Mr. Art Hanger: Madam Speaker, that is a very good question from my colleague. No, the agreement or treaty that was struck in reference to the space station is not a constitutional matter.

My colleague across the way may say there is a Canadian law involved here. Maybe there is something in that reflection, but specifically on that treaty, no.

When it comes to the Nisga'a agreement we cannot impact more seriously on the constitution than what this agreement has done. It is worthy of much debate in the House.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): 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 Burnaby—Douglas, Natural Disasters; the hon. member for Palliser, Agriculture.

• (1635)

[English]

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I had no plan of speaking to this particular bill as I came to

the House this afternoon, but I have witnessed the way members opposite have taken what should have been a debate in celebration of one of the most significant pieces of legislation to come before the House in this century instead of celebrating that legislation by an informed debate. What they have done is that they have diverted the discussion to cheap and partisan political opportunism. They have changed a debate that should have been about the advancement of mankind. They have turned it into a debate about time allocation, about a piece of legislation that they disagree with that was debated on another occasion.

They have missed an incredible opportunity. Is it true therefore that the people on the opposite side have no sense of the historic context in which we live as human beings, much less as Canadians? Do they have no romantic souls to appreciate that, when we discuss legislation that is actually taking the most fundamental rules of organized society off the planet, that is the most mind enlarging concept I can imagine? It is the type of thing one would expect to read. In fact it is the type of thing that I did read in the fiction of my youth when pulp magazines and science fiction were very new on the newsstands and we could buy them for—

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member has repeatedly reminded the Chair that we are discussing the space station bill, yet his remarks are entirely directed to his opinion of interventions by other members. I would suggest that the member live by his own advice and actually address the bill in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I am sure the hon. member will be speaking to the bill very shortly.

Mr. John Bryden: I do not want to sully this debate any further by cheap reflection on the type of debate I have heard here already from the opposite party. No, Madam Speaker. I will confine my remarks entirely to the legislation at hand, because I think it is turning point legislation. I think it is probably some of the most significant, maybe not the most important, that we have seen before the House certainly since I have been a member.

I would suggest it really is a piece of legislation of the century because it talks about taking the law off this planet. It talks about that one giant step, not just for moving mankind physically into space but moving the best of humankind into outer space.

I liken it to ancient Greece where one of the things we remember about the time of Plato is the fact that the Greeks, in their city states, not only discovered and developed democracy as we have come to know it. The most important thing about the Greeks and why they have a special place in history is that the Greeks discovered the law. They were known for mathematics and for advancements in science, but the most important contribution of the Greeks was a respect for law.

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Before we could have democracy we had to have and understand the need for law. From the Greeks came the European society that we knew in the 19th century and the medieval years, which developed into the modern states as we know it. We still hearken back to our debt to the ancient Greeks for introducing mankind to the concepts of law for all people which has to go before democracy.

I would suggest that we could talk as long as we want about the space arm, the advancements in technology and the various technological spin-offs.

• (1640)

I do not think we can ever match in significance the fact that for the first time in this legislation we are actually talking about applying the laws of the land in a space vehicle that is moving around the planet, and indeed about all the subcomponents of that vehicle. If they want to send from the space station a moon lander, the laws of Canada, the criminal code and all other relevant laws will apply to the human beings on those vehicles. This is the beginning, as I see it, for the application of the laws and democracy as we know them to all of mankind's explorations in space.

I note another incredibly significant thing. When we talk about applying the law in this space station, this island of humanity in the voyage, we are talking about the law applying to human beings from different countries. It is not just Canadians. It is all of those people from Russia, Japan or whatever other country that might find themselves together on that space station.

I regret that I cannot name the film, but I can remember my very first moon movie. I am sure older members of the House might remember one of the very early films where they were landing on the moon. There was conflict among the space crew because they ran out of water, or something like that, and of course there was tension. I think we have to appreciate that wherever mankind does go in the millennium ahead of us conflict will follow. The one thing that identifies us as human beings and not animals in our conflicts is that we resolve our conflicts by the law.

I suggest that this is probably one of the most significant aspects of the bill. We are, shall we say, not only sending hardware into space. We are not only sending human beings into space. We are sending our very spirit into space, and that spirit is not just our respect for democracy but that spirit is mankind's respect for the law.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to one thing the member said several times, that Bill C-4 is the most important bill parliament will have passed—what did he say—this year, this century or this millennium. I do not know what he was saying but he gave it great importance.

Does the member really believe it is more important than rejigging the relationship that we have as Canadians one to another? Even though this space station is of great consequence,

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and undoubtedly it is a wonderful technological masterpiece, is it more important than legislation that is pitting Canadians against Canadians, that is dividing up rights based on personal characteristics and racial origin rather than treating everyone equally as Canadians?

Does he really believe that Bill C-4 is so much more important than Bill C-9 which we would have loved to have been able to debate today?

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, we really are throwing pearls on barren ground around here. If the member had listened carefully, I did not say it was the most important legislation. I said it was the most significant legislation.

There is no doubt that there are other bills and have been other bills including the constitution which are more important that have appeared before the House, but it is the significance.

This bill and what it contains expands the bounds of the imagination. It expands humanity and the spirit of humanity in a way in which no other bill before the House could ever have done because it goes beyond this country. It touches all of humankind and it takes us off this very planet.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to suggest to my colleague opposite that when he is no longer in politics he can certainly become the poet laureate of Canada. I would be surprised if too many human spirits in Canada have taken flight because of the space station going up, but if the member would like to enrich his personal life by believing that I guess he can.

• (1645)

I am more concerned about the human spirit in Canada, particularly the spirit of aboriginal women who are not able to have the protection in cases of spousal abuse and marriage breakdown that other women have. This is certainly very debilitating to the human spirit, in particular the spirit of women.

Most Canadian women, when these circumstances arise, can request an order to have the matrimonial home for themselves and their children, as well as a division of matrimonial property. However, aboriginal women have brought forward time and time again their concern that they do not have this kind of equality.

Perhaps my poetic colleague would like to comment for the benefit of aboriginal women and suggest how their spirit can be enriched by the kind of inequality his government is forcing upon them through the Nisga'a treaty.

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I have commented often and elaborately on that issue before committee. I would be happy to comment when the Nisga'a bill comes back to the House on the issues the member raises.

The member illustrates that when it comes to talking about the human spirit and trying to get this other party involved we are really dealing with a four-wheel drive vehicle going gangbusters with the brakes on.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly as proud as anyone about the international space station and I am very enthusiastic about the use of space and how it can affect our daily lives. One of the greatest uses of space to date has been the global positioning system. RADARSAT has been of great benefit to us with respect to ice conditions and agriculture.

My question to the member for Wentworth—Burlington concerns the fact that the boundaries for the Nisga'a people in the Nisga'a area have to be determined on a scientific basis. I want to know if this member can explain how space can help set those boundaries. I would like him to also explain how these boundaries can be set so as to avoid any conflict with neighbouring aboriginal people who are claiming the same land. Is there some kind of magical outer space area that will settle these problems here on Earth, for example through the use of the GPS? I think he understands the question.

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, in a sense it is a very good question because global positioning, which is what he means by GPS, and also the various remote sensing capabilities, not only of the space station but also of other rocketry we have in space, enable the finest imaginable calculation of boundaries. We can calculate boundaries from outer space down to the very last metre, if not millimetre.

The member is absolutely right. When it comes to settling disputes among us, when it comes to having those fences that separate us as neighbours, in the end it is not hardware or space stations that matter, but the law. That is why I see it as so significant that we have before us legislation that takes the law, one of the best products of the human spirit, one step further, one step forward for mankind, one step into space.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member explained the GPS system in terms of global positioning and what it has done for our navigators and seafarers worldwide. However, I would remind him that it is still controlled by the Americans. What assurance can he or his government give that the new treaty on the space station will not be absolutely controlled by one nation, for example the United States?

• (1650)

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, at last we have a question that we should be dealing with. That is precisely the core of this legislation. What it defines is the parameters of the laws that apply to all members who are on the space platform at any given time.

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The legislation we have before us is echoed in other countries, or by the other partners shall we say.

In the end there is one thing that goes beyond the law and that is the trust we share among us. What we are seeing in this historic piece of legislation is a moment in time at the end of this century when countries with competing interests will have to work together in order to save and preserve the very lives in the ultimate hostile environment. They are going to have to have faith in one another. I admit that is probably a step of the human spirit that actually transcends respect for the law.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It is my duty to inform the House that from this moment forward debate will be 10 minutes with no questions or comments.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, are you suggesting that I have been time limited on the debate on Bill C-4? That is quite ironic. It gives me an interesting angle to address.

I want to begin by saying how touched I was to hear my hon. and eloquent colleague from Wentworth—Burlington speak in such glowing terms about his romantic soul and the expanding human spirit. He really does seem to want to go where no man has gone before. I was expecting that at any moment during his speech he would be beamed up out of the Chamber. Perhaps I could suggest to that colleague that we could volunteer him to be one of the first Canadian trial astronauts in the new space station. I suspect his constituents would rather have him in space than here representing them.

I am pleased to rise to debate this important bill, an act to implement the agreement among the Government of Canada, Governments of Member States of the European Space Agency, the Government of Japan, the Government of the Russian Federation, and the Government of the United States of America concerning co-operation on the civil international space station and to make related amendments to other acts.

The bill's statutory summary states:

This enactment relates to the implementation of Canada's obligations under the agreement concerning co-operation on the Civil International Space Station. The parties to the agreement undertake to establish a framework for mutual international co-operation in the long term in relation to the detailed design, development, operation and utilization of a permanently inhabited civil international space station for peaceful purposes. The agreement provides for mechanisms and arrangements to ensure the fulfilment of these objectives.

This is indeed an important bill before us. It is so important that I am distressed to learn that because of the rules of this place and the government's distaste for expansive debate on important statutes I will be limited to 10 minutes. In my remarks—

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member knows that after five hours of debate any piece of legislation is dropped down to 10 minutes without questions and comments. There is no limit on this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): That was not a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Penson: Mr. Speaker, that being the case, I wonder if I could seek the unanimous consent of the House that my colleague, who had prepared for a 20 minute speech, be allowed the 20 minutes for his speech, to reflect exactly what that member said.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

• (1655)

Mr. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, there we have it. They always blame it on the rules, but when it comes to an option to expand debate and to listen to the diverse voices of a pluralistic society, government members say no, no, no every time.

That member, in his specious point of order, suggested that this was simply an automatic limitation of debate. He realizes that this parliament governs itself through the standing orders and if we had a majority of members of this place truly dedicated to fulsome democratic debate on items like Bill C-4, the one before us today, then we could amend those standing orders to allow members to express fully their remarks in 20 minutes, plus questions and comments on any matter. We could extend the sitting hours of this place. We would not have to invoke time allocation and closure.

It is remarkable that this should come up because just yesterday at this time I was sitting here in my seat on behalf of my constituents, having spent much of the day preparing remarks to address another bill that had come before us, Bill C-9, a bill with respect to the Nisga'a treaty. I was enthusiastically waiting, having read dozens of articles and background documents, to enter my comments on behalf of my 130,000 constituents on that piece of legislation. However, I was denied the opportunity because as I sat in this place my right to stand and speak on that treaty was stolen from me by that member and his colleagues in the government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Your right to participate in that debate was not stolen by that member.

Mr. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I would not deign to suggest that member is a thief. He voted with his colleagues to take from me the right to speak on that bill by limiting debate through time

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allocation. I do think that is pertinent because we are talking about an important treaty which I would like, obviously, to address.

The treaty for Canada's participation in the international civil space station ultimately is the legal culmination of a 15 year process which began in 1984.

The member for Wentworth—Burlington spoke of his enthusiasm for the human spirit. There was a great leader, probably the greatest leader of the free world in the post-war period, who in 1984 proposed this vision of an international space station. His name was President Ronald Reagan. He was the man who proposed the international space station as a way for humankind to work together across national boundaries, to co-operate by bringing together the strengths of technology to further the endeavours of human science and the expansion of man's reach into space.

I want to say how proud I am to have an opportunity to stand and speak to an initiative that was begun by that great leader and defender of freedom in this century. I would furthermore say that members of the Liberal Party mocked that great leader back in the mid-1980s when Ronald Reagan was proposing that the world reach farther into space to expand our frontiers of science, research and travel. They called it star wars when Ronald Reagan suggested that perhaps the western nations of the world should co-operate to find means of strategic defence through space, using technology like that being developed in the space station, to defend the western countries, the free countries of the world from the enormous strategic threat posed by the intercontinental ballistic missiles of the evil empire.

They mocked him, but now they stand and applaud that man's vision. I want to put that on the record, that whatever benefit comes to mankind from this kind of bold scientific venture, which we in the official opposition support, ultimately came from the vision of a man who was mocked and vilified by members opposite.

This treaty will give Canada certain opportunities. We are only funding about 2.5% of the cost of this space station. We will of course have the prominent use of the Canadarm which will be employing an entirely new generation of robotics technologies, one of the very few areas of high technology where Canada has an edge. I hope this funding will have a spin-off in terms of private sector investment and development in the high technology field.

• (1700)

I believe that if we in Canada really wanted to take full advantage of the private sector opportunities afforded by the development of this technology in the space station, we would create a fiscal and economic environment where those scientists and the people who want to invest in that kind of science would stay in this country. Instead what do we have? A job killing tax burden which is driving away the people who would invest, the entrepreneurs who would finance the kind of real private sector development of technology represented by the Canadarm.

Sure, we are prepared to provide seed funding for this sort of technology through government, but when it comes to allowing the private sector to take over, we end up sending those people south of the border through high taxes. It is exactly what the Prime Minister said yesterday. The millionaire Prime Minister was speaking to his group of impoverished Liberal friends who paid \$350 a plate at last night's dinner. He said that productive Canadians can just leave the country if they do not like staying here.

In any event I am pleased to see that the Canadarm will be used. Canada will be able to take advantage of the monitoring of the earth, the monitoring of crop conditions, the monitoring of the environment. We will be able to measure climate and the Arctic ice pack which will assist navigation for the transportation industry. We will be engaged in various sorts of experiments relating to longevity, et cetera.

Again, I want to emphasize that it is important that parliament ratifies treaties after debate. Yesterday we had before us a treaty which we did not have a chance to debate fully. The official opposition, the only party opposing that treaty, had only four hours to debate it in principle on second reading. Now it has been shunted off to committee and the government hopes that the public will not notice.

This is important because public debate on treaties such as those in Bills C-4 and C-9 is a very important part of parliamentary accountability. That is why I was quite surprised to see the remarks of a man I know and respect, Gordon Campbell, the leader of the British Columbia Liberal Party, speaking on another treaty that was before this place. He called the closure of debate yesterday "a reprehensible abuse of democracy that is an egregious abuse of democratic process and shows flagrant contempt for all British Columbians". He said that the limitation of debate on that treaty was "an unacceptable slap in the face of all Canadians".

While we support Bill C-4 and this treaty, we want real debate on all treaties. We did not have it yesterday and we will demand that in the future we have that kind of debate.

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it has been a rather interesting debate today. One theme that keeps repeating itself and which is clearly emerging is the undemocratic nature in which the Liberal government is bent on ruling in this parliament.

As has been pointed out, the debate on a bill which essentially has unanimous agreement among parliamentarians is allowed to go on without any opposition by the Liberals in having that debate continue. However, yesterday, in a very undemocratic, dictatorial fashion, the Liberal government shut down debate on a treaty that is being thrust upon the citizens of Canada in a very undemocratic and unjust way.

The constitutional ramifications of the Nisga'a treaty are extensive. However, despite the lasting repercussions that the agreement will have, both the B.C. and federal governments have refused to allow a referendum on the terms of the Nisga'a final agreement.

• (1705)

Why would that be? If it is a good agreement, why would we not engage in a full open public consultation followed by a referendum? Why not let the people decide the issue? It follows that the answer is for the same reason the Liberals shut down debate yesterday.

The Prime Minister is running this country like a dictator. The three main lawmaking institutions of our country are the House of Commons, the Senate and the supreme court. The Senate is unelected and unaccountable. The supreme court justices are appointed by the Prime Minister and are there to exercise his will. The parliamentarians on the Liberal side of the House are under his direct control.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): If the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt will forgive me, I wanted to reiterate the ground rules that I laid out for this debate when I was in the Chair. They are these. Considerable latitude has been allowed in this debate on Bill C-4 which has to do with the the international space station. There has been quite a bit of linkage between that and Bill C-9 but the linkage must be there. That is the challenge for those who would wish to use the rules of the House to bring other issues to the table.

I would ask that the Chair not be challenged to find the link. Make sure that the link exists so that relevance is maintained.

Mr. Jim Pankiw: Mr. Speaker, I was just getting to the link. I first wanted to establish the method in which the Prime Minister governs the country and that is as a dictator.

The link is that with the bill before us, because there is no opposition, the Prime Minister is quite content to let opposition members of parliament speak in favour of the bill and in essence commend the government. If we are speaking in favour of the bill we are not being critical of an initiative of the government. I was just pointing out that only exists in the instance where we are supportive of a bill.

However, in the case of the Nisga'a agreement there is widespread discontent and unhappiness not only with the agreement but with the manner in which the agreement is being thrust upon the citizens of British Columbia in particular but indeed upon all the citizens of our country. That is something that needs to be discussed. It is not acceptable. People need to be made aware of how this place is being governed. They need to be made aware that solutions exist.

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The Reform Party proposes referendums for such major legislation as the Nisga'a agreement. On legislation which is before the House today, we are proposing free votes in the House of Commons in which members are not under the hard iron fist of a dictator but rather are free to vote according to the wishes of their constituents. If a member can demonstrate that his or her constituents are in favour or opposed to any particular bill, such as the space station before us, the member should be free to exercise that right and actually represent the people who elected him or her. Free votes is an answer to improving the democracy of this institution.

I mentioned the Senate. We all know how badly we need Senate reform.

Finally, before I leave this point, there is member recall. The Reform Party has been very strong in advocating the right of constituents to recall their member of parliament if he or she does not represent their wishes.

The lack of an elected effective Senate, the lack of accountability of politicians to the people who elect them and the lack of free votes are all part and parcel of the undemocratic nature by which this government is ruling parliament. It explains why with Bill C-4 because there is no opposition, none of these are real issues. It is not an issue. But in the case of the Nisga'a agreement which was before the House yesterday, all of these democratic principles and concepts were quashed.

• (1710)

With regard to the Nisga'a final agreement, I would like to point out that the form of apartheid which has failed in the past has been used as a template for the Nisga'a and therefore future treaty negotiations. To prove that point I would like to quote from the *Oxford Dictionary* which defines apartheid as a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on the grounds of race.

The Nisga'a final agreement permanently entrenches the same essential elements as the reserve system in a modern treaty. It creates permanent inequality, disenfranchising non-Nisga'a people and providing for a system of taxation without representation.

Non-Nisga'a people who reside in the affected area will be able to vote for federal and provincial representatives, but they will not be able to vote for or run as council members. Band councils will hold most of the power in the Nisga'a territory and will be responsible for local tax issues. Non-Nisga'a people will have no say in how those tax policies affect them.

Mr. Mac Harb: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have a lot of respect for my colleague but he has been referring to the Nisga'a bill and I thought we were debating Bill C-4. I would suggest that perhaps the member is a bit out of whack in terms of his presentation. He may want to go back to the bill we are discussing at this point in time.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The admonition of the member for Ottawa Centre is accurate and correct.

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to remind you, Mr. Speaker, that a scant two sitting days ago the Speaker of the House made a ruling that the long term practice of the House becomes the rules and we have—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): And when that Speaker is in the Chair that is the ruling. This Speaker is in the Chair and this Speaker will tell members exactly what is going to happen.

Mr. Jim Pankiw: Mr. Speaker, it is necessary to discuss the Nisga'a treaty today because Bill C-4 which deals with the space station is also based on a treaty.

It is essential that we discuss in parliament how these treaties are coming into existence and the irrelevance that parliament has with respect to these treaties. It is insulting for these treaties to be signed and sealed as a done deal and then brought before parliament to receive a rubber stamp. This warrants looking at the details of the treaties, in particular the Nisga'a treaty.

The Nisga'a final agreement is going to build barriers and widen the gulf between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people in British Columbia. It strongly contradicts one of the key founding principles of the Reform Party which is that we believe in true equality of Canadian citizens with equal rights and responsibilities for all. That statement is a direct word for word extract from the blue book of the Reform Party.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-4. I want everybody to understand that we support the broad thrust of the bill. However, we have some concerns and I have some particular concerns with regard to the bill.

• (1715)

One is the prioritizing of spending. We are looking at approximately \$1 billion. Another concern is that we do not know what the actual cost will be to the Canadian taxpayer.

For that kind of money I think we should have at least had some consultation with regard to the spending of it with perhaps some of the poorer people, the working poor of Canada. Instead the government said that it would be done, what it would spend, and that it would be coming out of the pockets of taxpayers, for we all know the government does not have money of its own.

One of my concerns with respect to Bill C-4 is the lack of consultation. Speaking of consultation kind of brings up another sore point with me. The other day debate was closed on Bill C-9, an area in which we are looking at reshaping Canada to a large extent.

Where was the consultation on that? It was about the same as it was for Bill C-4. Actually we are getting more on Bill C-4, at least on debate. On Bill C-9, the Nisga'a agreement, we had only four hours and 12 minutes before closure was brought in on debate. At least on Bill C-4 we seem to be able to talk all day because we all seem to be in agreement on it. The dictatorial might and hand of the government has allowed us to carry on this debate.

Let us look at what it did on Bill C-9 in reference to Bill C-4 and consultation. The government signed the agreement in Bill C-4 on January 29, 1998. Yet at no time did it come before parliament until now. I have to wonder how much consultation was done there with regard to Bill C-4.

Certainly on Bill C-9, the Nisga'a claims, we have had far less. We are saying now that we actually forced the government from this side to grant committee hearings in the great province of British Columbia, the province that will be directly impacted by the Nisga'a agreement.

Although we got agreement from the government on consultation through committee hearings, it put a bit of a codicil at the bottom with regard to who would speak there and what their concerns would be. If they are not rubber stamped by the government they cannot come forward as witnesses with regard to Bill C-9 and the concerns in British Columbia over the Nisga'a agreement.

The government is saying to the Canadian public that it will send out a committee for some hearings. It will pick and choose which cities it will go to for the hearings and exactly who will be heard from. If this is consultation, I have real concerns about where we are going.

I raise this matter because one person who should have been looked at very closely with regard to the committee hearings and what is happening in the province of British Columbia, everybody in the House must agree, would have to be an ex-premier of that province, one who sat in government for years and was the premier of British Columbia. His name is Bill Vander Zalm. Yet the committee has absolutely stamped not a good witness upon Mr. Vander Zalm and he will not be able to go before committee. I think a great atrocity has been done there.

It is the same for Bill C-4. When we look at Bill C-4 and what property rights are protected in it, we have no answer. In the same way we do not have an answer in the Nisga'a agreement with regard to property rights. One of the big concerns in the Nisga'a agreement was for private property rights given to the individual Nisga'a people, particularly with regard to any spousal disagreement or break up of marriage. In most cases it is usually the woman who takes the hardest blow. In the Nisga'a agreement there is no protection there. I have to wonder why there were no property rights put into that agreement. It creates grave concern.

It is the same in Bill C-4. We looked at intellectual property rights. We do not see where they are protected in Bill C-4 either.

• (1720)

It started out that we would have five hours of open debate in the House, 20 minute speeches. Then all of a sudden we were cut down to 10 minute speeches with no questions and comments. The Nisga'a agreement was cut to even less than that, which is something that will have far greater impact upon the country than a space station.

I listened to some government members who said that these were the rules. When we were elected to the House of Commons we were originally sent here to help make and shape the rules so that they would apply equally to everyone. Unfortunately members on the other side of the House still do not have this through their heads yet. They have rules for some that differ greatly from rules for others.

For example, most people in Canada fall under property rights and that aspect of marriage. There are some rights for both spouses in case of marriage break up. In the Nisga'a agreement that is not the case. There is no protection. There is one right for one part of society and another right for another part of society. I do not understand why the government which says that it has a caring, sharing nature has not looked very closely at this matter, allowed the debate to continue, and at least had a broad discussion with the people of British Columbia.

Not only the people of British Columbia should have concerns about the Nisga'a agreement. It should be all Canadians. It will be all of them. It will be everyone. It will be the people of Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Quebec. They will pick up the tab for this. It will not just be the people of British Columbia.

The government likes to say that it will pick up the tab. The government has no money. It only has the money that it can rip off working people. That is the only money it has. The government knows that and I think the working people of Canada are starting to realize that is the case. All they have to do is look at their paycheques to see how much in taxes are being ripped off by this caring, sharing government in Ottawa. There is absolutely no doubt about that.

Let us have a look at the Nisga'a agreement. Let us just see how caring and sharing the government is. How concerned is it really? This agreement is being put in place basically in the northwest part of British Columbia, but where is the government to hold some of the hearings? It will hold some of them in Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia. I have news for Liberal members. That is a long way from Nisga'a country. It is a long way from a lot of the concern.

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We asked if the government would not hold some hearings in another part of British Columbia, in the Okanagan Valley where we will feel an impact from the agreement. The answer was no. The government absolutely refused to do that. I would like to see the committee at least spend more than four days in the great province of British Columbia. I do not know if the government thinks that it is only the size of Prince Edward Island or if it the size of a smaller area. I do not think it fully understands that the size of British Columbia, as the third largest province in Canada, is extensive.

For something that will forever impact the people of Canada for generations, the government will only allow three or four days. I have concerns about that. It goes to show us in the west that we have the right attitude. Once they get to Ottawa representatives from other parts of the country have absolutely no idea where British Columbia is. They have no idea of what are the problems in British Columbia. They have no idea about what the impact will be upon the people of British Columbia.

As a matter of fact I will pre-warn my staff that perhaps we should get a bunch of maps and draw British Columbia on them in a different colour so that government members will at least know where it is. I have news for them. It is just over on the other side of the Rocky Mountains. They should know it well. They have ripped the people off there for their money for years and years. They should at least get to know the province and get to know that it is a large area.

For those who say that they can accomplish what they are trying to accomplish in three or four days I think they should give, and we like to talk about space stations, the empty space between their ears a shake.

• (1725)

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the interesting debate we have been participating also provoked interest in me.

Mr. Mac Harb: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to make a few comments if that is possible.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I have already recognized the hon. member for Surrey Central. I will be very happy to recognize the member afterward.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal: Madam Speaker, I am very interested in participating in this very interesting debate that has been going on here on Bill C-4, a bill committing Canada to implement its obligations for an international space station.

All of us in the House are very proud of the contribution of the Canadian Space Agency. We are very proud of the research and of the Canadian robotic arm. All of us are very proud of the contribution of Julie Payette and other scientists. It is a very interesting bill from one angle. All of us in the official opposition

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support the broad thrust of the bill. However we do have some reservations and concerns.

We want to ensure that intellectual property rights are protected. If a company is working in space or on the space station, we are concerned about how that intellectual property will be protected. Those issues are not properly addressed in the bill.

All companies that are doing research and development need a long time to do their research. According to the World Trade Organization agreement that was signed by member countries, Canada being one of them, there is a limit of 25 years. I think that is a major concern.

There are some other issues such as whether the scientists and researchers will be getting a fair reward for the innovations they will be making. I am interested in publishing some of my research as well as some of the discoveries and inventions which I have made. I know how important intellectual properties are.

Another concern is whether all the benefits from the space station will be dispersed equally in Canada. We know that \$430 million per year will be spent for the Canadian Space Agency that is based in St. Hubert, Quebec. I do not know what contributions or benefits that space agency will create for people in British Columbia or Nova Scotia, whether we will be seeing any benefits or jobs created in other parts of the country, or whether those will be focused only on the main station.

Another area we are concerned about is transparency. When the bill was brought to the House there was absolutely no consultation with parliament and absolutely no input from parliament before the treaty was signed. When the treaty was signed it was brought here to be ratified. We are here to debate and ratify it without making any amendments. That is another major concern.

The other day we all debated the Nisga'a bill in the House. We were not allowed to participate in making any amendments or making any contributions from parliament. That is the kind of transparency we see from the government in the House.

One important point about the space contribution bill we are debating today is regarding the mission of the international space station. It is to enable long term exploration of space and to provide benefits to people on Earth. What we are doing is for the benefit of the people living on Earth. That means that the international space station is all about life on Earth.

Let us talk about life on Earth. Life on Earth is so important that all of us are talking about it. The other day when we debated the Nisga'a bill in the House we saw how the government invoked closure and did not let us raise a voice on it. That is the life we are talking about. That is the lack of understanding we are talking about.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with what we want to debate. We are saying that all Canadians are equal and that all Canadians should be treated equally. Is there anything wrong with that? Absolutely not.

• (1730)

We want to say that there should be a new start for aboriginal people in Canada. We want aboriginal people to be full and equal participants in Canadian society. There is nothing wrong in that. We want aboriginal women to be full and equal partners both on reserve and off reserve. There is nothing wrong in that. We want aboriginal families to be protected by the same law that governs non-aboriginal families. Is there anything wrong in that? There is nothing wrong in that. That is the life in Canada we are talking about.

We want aboriginal people to have the same rights and protections that every Canadian enjoys. We want to eliminate the discriminatory barriers that have widened the gulf between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people for a long long time. We want to ensure that the native governments are fully accountable to grass-roots natives. We want to ensure that a bright future is there for all Canadians regardless of the colour of their skin or their origin. Is there anything wrong in that? That is the life in Canada we are talking about. That is the life on this planet we are talking about.

The government members invoked closure on the bill. They did not let us raise our voice. If I look at the record of how debate was shut down in parliament by the Tory government, it took eight years for it to reach the level of 50 closures on debate. It took only five years for the Liberal government to reach the level of 50 closures on debate, up until March 1999.

I do not understand how the government can shut down debate on an important issue. The Nisga'a treaty is the most important treaty the government has signed in this century and it invoked closure on it. It did not let us debate it.

I will quote some important statements made by members on the other side concerning closure when they were the official opposition. When in opposition the current government House leader spoke differently about time allocation. He said: "I am shocked. Perhaps I should not be shocked. This government has used closure on dozens of occasions. This is just terrible. This time we are talking about a major piece of legislation". He was talking about a particular debate in the House on November 16, 1992. This is recorded in *Hansard* on page 13,451. He said: "Shame on those Tories across the way".

That is what the present government House leader said when he was in the official opposition. If I repeat his comments back to him, what would he say now? Is he not ashamed of himself when he invokes time allocation on the debate of these important issues?

Let us talk about another prominent member who is now the foreign affairs minister. He said this in reference to closure in a

Toronto *Star* article on April 1, 1993: "It displays the utter disdain with which the government treats the Canadian people".

When the present Deputy Speaker was in opposition he said: "The government is using time allocation once again on this bill. Just to remind the House and the Canadian public of the draconian approach this government takes to dealing with legislation in the House, closure has been used 15 times in parliament since—"

Mr. John Cannis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. With the greatest of respect for the Chair, I came in here with great interest to hear about the most revolutionary technically advanced project human beings have ever seen. I understand the member tries to draw certain parallels but for the last 10 minutes he has been drawing upon closure as opposed to telling us about this project or some of the concerns he might have.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I must remind the hon. member, and I believe the Speaker who was here earlier today used the word ingenuity, to link whatever the member wants to say to the bill now before the House.

• (1735)

Mr. Gurmant Grewal: Madam Speaker, I am debating the bill before the House, Bill C-4. It is an important bill because we are signing a treaty dealing with the international space station. We want to make sure that we put forward our commitments and meet them.

We had absolutely no input on the treaty. The people of Canada, through their elected representatives, were shut down by the government. That is why I have to talk about it. The Liberals shut down the debate on the Nisga'a treaty which was another important bill. We are dealing with the most important issues of the century and we are not allowed to talk about them. When the treaty was to be debated in the British Columbia legislature, the government did not let the members talk. The NDP rammed the treaty through. That is why we are debating this.

The hon. member who sits on the other side of the House, when his party was in opposition, knew about closure. Why is his party doing it again?

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not want to take the 10 minutes. I will only take two or three minutes.

As a member of parliament who studied and practised in the field of engineering, it is absolutely fantastic that Canada is participating in such a venture. It speaks volumes for the kind of leadership the Department of Industry and its minister have

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provided in the House, across Canada and on the international scene.

This is a historic moment for all Canadians to see the co-operation between two previous arch enemies, the United States and Russia, as well as Japan and other countries, in order to advance the best interests of mankind and womankind. We should be celebrating. We should be talking about all of the positive things that will come out of such a terrific co-operative approach.

After hearing my colleagues from the opposition speak one after the other, they are in support of the bill because none of them spoke against the bill *per se*. That is very positive.

My colleague has some concerns about consultation. My understanding is this bill, like every other bill, will go to a committee. At that time anybody can make positive or negative suggestions about the bill. In the same kind of spirit, when the government introduces a bill it receives those recommendations and comments at the committee level, where the proper consultation and discussion will take place.

Frankly, to trash a bill that is an implementation of an agreement between different partners who are going to outer space for the benefit of this planet is highly unfair. It is not serving the purpose of the House.

It is my hope that we will let this bill pass as quickly as possible so we can show our partners how serious we are about ensuring that the best interests of not only our planet, but of outer space are protected.

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

An hon. member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

• (1740)

CANADIAN TOURISM COMMISSION ACT

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.) moved that Bill C-5, an act to establish the Canadian Tourism Commission, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. John Cannis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to speak at second reading on Bill C-5, an act to establish the Canadian Tourism Commission.

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The bill before the House builds on success and will ensure the continued high performance of one of the government's most successful initiatives. Bill C-5, an act to make the Canadian Tourism Commission a crown corporation, is a natural and a necessary evolution of the tourism commission.

In 1995 when the commission was first established, the government had very high hopes for it. Those hopes have not only been met, they have been exceeded. On every measure the commission has performed exceptionally well. It is a superb example of the benefits that can result when there is a genuine partnership between government and the private sector.

The commission has developed and sustained effective co-operation among federal, provincial, territorial and business partners. It shows how well national and regional policy objectives can be harmonized with business goals to the benefit of all participants.

Bill C-5 confirms the government's willingness and desire to work in partnership with different sectors of Canadian society and the economy as well. Our government sees the creation of a harmonious co-operative relationship among these partners as an excellent way for us to work together as a nation to address social, cultural and economic issues.

Every member of the House can attest to the fact that every region of our country benefits from tourism. Let me say it has a pan-Canadian flavour and has immediate impact on most of the economies in terms of financial gain from coast to coast to coast, to the northern part of our country and among Canada's first nations people as well.

As well as producing direct local and regional economic benefits, tourism is important to the national economy as a whole. In 1998 it generated more than \$19 billion to Canada's GDP. It contributes significantly to employment in parts of the country where other jobs are often scarce. It has come to generate both employment and spin-off economic benefits for first nations people.

Since the industry consists mainly of small and medium size businesses, the legislation will further the government's commitment to encourage the small business sector, entrepreneurial development and of course, job creation. Tourism by and large is an environmentally friendly industry and operates in a manner that is consistent with the government's commitment to a clean and safe environment. An industry that provides so much on so many fronts deserves the attention and support of this parliament.

Today we are at another juncture in the evolution of the course that was set by the Prime Minister and the cabinet in 1995 when the tourism commission was first established. Its current status as a special operating agency of the Department of Industry imposes legal and administrative restrictions which now prevent it from achieving its maximum potential and effectiveness. Establishing

the commission as a special operating agency was a necessary first step.

As the country's tourism industry has matured, so has the commission. The time has come for parliament to create a corporation with the authority and the tools at its disposal to be fully responsive to the needs of this diverse growing and dynamic sector of our economy.

Over the past few years it has become apparent that the commission should function as a fully integrated business entity with the capacity to make its own decisions, set its own business priorities and move more quickly to implement them. Making the commission a crown corporation will give it the legal, financial, managerial, administrative and policy-making flexibility it needs to work with its partners more adequately and more efficiently.

Until the creation of the Canadian Tourism Commission, Canadian efforts to market Canada as a tourist destination were fragmented among many players: the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, and the tourism industry itself.

● (1745)

Federal activities were divided among the tourism branch of the Department of Industry, the three regional agencies of Western Economic Diversification, Canada Economic Development for the Regions of Quebec and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

At the request of the Prime Minister in 1994, the Hon. Judd Buchanan studied the industry and its administrative structure. Mr. Buchanan recommended the creation of the commission on which tourism industry leaders as well as senior officials from the federal, provincial and territorial governments would be represented.

Established by order in council, the CTC board was given broad authority to plan, direct, manage and implement programs to generate and promote tourism.

The commission's first business plan recognized the absolute necessity of bringing together the very wide range of the organizations, groups and individuals involved in tourism. The key to success, which has been achieved, was to facilitate partnering and co-ordination among the various stakeholders.

The co-ordination of the various interests was brought about by ensuring that all stakeholders were represented on the board. The CTC then set up a structure of partnering committees. These committees are led by the private sector and are responsible for individual program areas.

There are committees for the Canadian market, the U.S. leisure and travel market, business travel, European, Asia-Pacific and Latin American markets. There is also a committee on products and on research.

The commission's marketing programs include the development and maintenance of data on markets of opportunity, advertising, public relations, promotional projects, media relations, travel trade development and co-operative buy-in initiatives.

In addition, the CTC has a number of industry competitiveness programs. These include industry assessment on the structure and performance of the tourism industry and its subsectors.

As well, the CTC offers program development services such as how-to manuals, seminars, consultations and advice, study and interpretation of developments in the domestic and international markets. Analysis of this information is provided to members of the industry who also receive information on industry activity, revenues, capacity and tourism consumption on specific products and services.

Canadians across the country and members in the House may be asking themselves the question as to why the CTC should be turned into a crown corporation.

I point out to the member, and rightly so because he asked the question, that the commission's work is so closely tied into the private sector that it is necessary for it to be able to operate in a more businesslike way, I emphasize, and that it have the administrative flexibility to function more effectively as a partner.

Its unique public-private collaboration has delivered valuable tourism marketing and information sharing initiatives that have helped rejuvenate the tourism sector and indeed Canada's appeal as a tourism destination.

To respond more adequately to the needs of its private sector partners, the commission now needs the independence of an organization that can operate at arm's length from the government.

Its new structure as a crown corporation will improve the Canadian Tourism Commission's ability to work with the provinces and the tourism ministry and allow it to attract professional staff from the industry.

While an arm's length relationship would be created, members of the House should understand that oversight and the ultimate accountability will rest with the government, as it does with any crown corporation.

Under the bill, the Minister of Industry would have the power of direction and would retain policy responsibility for tourism. Also, the minister would be able to exercise an appropriate degree of influence over the corporation through the annual appropriations process.

In this context, the bill attempts to balance two factors. On the one hand, the agency needs to be, and seen to be, at arm's length from the government. On the other hand, the government's right to

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insist on meaningful reporting and accountability for the current expenditure of more than \$65 million in federal appropriation.

Members should be aware that the proposed legislation ensures, and I emphasize ensures, that the mandate of the new corporation continues to be explicitly focused on research and marketing. The bill also makes it very clear that the corporation would have no power to engage in any tourism development activities.

• (1750)

The prohibition on getting involved in tourism development activities ensures that the corporation does not overstep the jurisdiction of its provincial and territorial government partners.

This prohibition also keeps in the public sector, where it properly belongs, the use of government authority for such things as investment incentives and the managing of infrastructure projects.

The commission's overall operations will continue to be funded through a mix of federal appropriations and spending by other partners. The commission will explore revenue generating opportunities and will receive increased funds year after year from its partners.

As I mentioned earlier, the government currently provides \$65 million in appropriations. Contributions from its partners in dollars and services were valued at \$85 million in 1998-99. This is another illustration of the success of the commission because the government's original goal over the medium term was to have the commission partners contribute \$50 million per year to sustain a joint marketing budget of approximately \$100 million.

I want the House to know that the bill is a result of extensive consultation with all the participants, and that includes the staff and unions. With the changeover to crown corporation status, the employees would come under the Canada Labour Code and the corporation would administer its own pension plan.

All of the appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the transfer the cumulative public service pension contributions by employees who will not be affected negatively in their transfer to the crown corporation.

I also want to assure hon. members that the corporation will be subject to the usual federal statutes such as the Official Languages Act, the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act.

I should point out that although we are proposing the creation of a new crown corporation, we are not creating a new and large bureaucracy. In fact, the current staff complement of approximately 140 would not change.

Let me take this opportunity to point out the professional and highly dedicated staff that have contributed so significantly to the success of the work of the commission over the last five years.

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Since the commission was established, Canada has steadily moved up in the global rankings as a tourism destination, and now ranks eight. The benefits of this increased number of visitors have affected every region of our country, each of which has experienced significant revenue growth over the last five years. In Canada, tourism is definitely considered big business nowadays. It injected more than \$47 billion into the economy last year. That is up 7% from 1997.

The industry is also a great job generator. From 1994 to 1998, direct employment in this industry has grown faster than the national average. Some 44,000 direct jobs have been created and the employment of more than 500,000 persons is linked to this specific sector. Forecasts for job growth in this sector are very impressive. Between 120,000 and 130,000 new jobs are expected as a result of tourism between now and the year 2005.

The Canadian Tourism Commission is a success story in every respect. Its current evolution to a crown corporation will strengthen it. If the international tourism industry continues to grow at current rates, Canada's goal to grow with it is very realistic.

Tourism is an industry on the move, both in Canada and around the world. More people than ever before are travelling both domestically and abroad, from affluent baby boomers in North America and Europe to the growing middle classes in developing regions like southeast Asia and Latin America, are spending more money on leisure activities.

In fact, tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries, accounting for \$444 billion U.S. internationally in annual revenues. This figure is expected to grow at an annual rate of 7% over the next five years.

If Canada achieves just a 1% increase in the share of international arrivals, it would mean: 6 million more visitors to Canada; \$5 billion more in revenues; and 158,000 new jobs.

• (1755)

Our experience with the commission provides proof that by striking the right public and private balance, government and industry can work together to improve the performance of a sector of our economy. The legislation will allow the commission to really take the reins and move forward with its leadership in Canada's tourism sector.

As members can see, we have a winner on our hands. The bill before us is designed to capitalize on this success and ensure an even greater degree of success of the Canadian Tourism Commission over the long term.

I therefore urge all members of the House to give their enthusiastic support to the legislation and help make Canada a destination of first choice for all travellers. Let us make Canada not only the place to be but the place to visit.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am happy today to debate Bill C-5, a bill that was first introduced in the last session. It is entitled an act to establish the Canadian Tourism Commission. If the bill passes it will take the existing Canadian Tourism Commission, which is part of Industry Canada at the moment, and give it crown corporation status.

The question that arises immediately, and I think the parliamentary secretary raised it as well, is whether a crown corporation is necessary for the Canadian Tourism Commission. I will attempt to make the case in my speech that it is not necessary and is more probably a case of empire building than real need.

The first question we have to ask is where is this real need coming from. Who is expressing it? The Canadian Tourism Commission was created in 1995 to promote Canadian tourism. It establishes partnerships with the private sector, the provinces and the federal tourism partners. It uses the money it receives from the various sectors to do research and to market Canada as a travel destination.

The CTC receives an appropriation of approximately \$65 million annually. Of that amount, \$12 million goes to salaries and overhead and approximately \$52 million goes to provide promotion and product development. The industry matches the amount, so that a total of \$140 million is spent annually. The CTC has 62 employees in Ottawa.

The CTC has a 26 member decision making board of directors which functions as a special operating agency in delivering the tourism mandate of the federal government. The board of directors is comprised mainly of private sector companies with direct interest in establishing Canada as a preferred tourism destination. My understanding is that the two big proponents of this are the airline industry and the Hotel Association of Canada.

When I received a briefing on the bill from the CTC, I was told the commission wants to become a crown corporation because it feels constrained and cannot operate effectively within the government. It says that it cannot move quickly enough. The parliamentary secretary referred to the fact that because it is operating in a private sector environment maybe it needs to become a crown corporation. I would suggest, if that is the case, that maybe it should just be in the private sector.

My experience with crown corporations since coming here in 1993 is that they can get away with a lot, but I did not realize, and still do not realize, that they can actually move more quickly. I do not think that is the case. I think they are more bureaucratic.

The Reform Party has a problem with crown corporations in general. We believe that the ownership and control of corporations should be placed in the sector that can perform the task most cost effectively, with the greatest accountability to the owners and the least likelihood of incurring public debt. We believe there is overwhelming evidence that this would be the private sector in the

vast majority of cases. Therefore, we believe that many of them should be either privatized or go back to the departments which spawned them originally. This particular one wants to spawn out of the Department of Industry and become a crown corporation.

We have seen the privatization of a number of crown corporations in the past, including CN Rail, Air Canada, Petro-Canada and many others. Quite frankly, I do not think that the public has noticed that there is any huge problem with those privatizations. CN Rail used to lose about \$2 billion or \$3 billion a year on average and was a drain on the public treasury. A crown corporation that contributed to the national debt of some \$575 billion that we still have is now doing very well in the private sector. We hear about the merging of two airlines, and they are also making money. Petro-Can, no longer constrained by being an agency of government, is also doing a lot of work and doing well at the oil field in Hibernia.

• (1800)

There is no good reason to have crown corporations. They should be converted to private sector institutions or left with the department they are currently in so we would have better accountability to parliament.

We will be opposing this bill. We feel there is no good reason to give the Canadian Tourism Commission crown corporation status.

Recently the Department of Industry issued a paper which supports the rapid divestiture of crown assets. This makes me wonder why the department is sponsoring this bill in the first place. It seems to be in direct contradiction to the way the Department of Industry is going.

I refer listeners to a paper entitled "Canada in the 21st Century—Institutions and Growth—Framework Policy as a Tool of Competitive Advantage for Canada" by Ronald Daniels of the University of Toronto. The author argues that a key component of competitive policy and institutional environment is the minimization of state ownership in a productive sector of the economy. Is that not a direct contradiction to what the government wants to do with this tourism agency by turning it into a crown corporation?

In comparison to other OECD countries, Canada has had historically high levels of state ownership. I know this goes back a few years, but I think it is still very relevant. In 1986 the Economic Council of Canada reported that government-owned and controlled companies accounted for 26% of the net fixed assets of all Canadian corporations in 1983. Yet, these firms accounted for less than 5% of the total employment of the country. That does not say very much for the employment creation capabilities of government-owned companies.

Crown corporations are often unaccountable. My experience since 1993, being the critic for our party for international trade and having to deal with the Export Development Corporation, for

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example, has not been good. I would suggest they have been basically bad experiences. I feel that accountability is simply not there.

Whenever we try to get information about how taxpayers' money is being spent we get the runaround. It is a vicious circle. If we ask the minister, he says that the entity is at arm's length from him. He is not responsible. If we try to go to the crown corporation, it will plead that the confidentiality of its private or commercial stakeholders will be compromised if specific monetary information is released. Getting information from crown corporations ends up being an exercise in futility. I suggest this would be no different. There is no reason to believe it would be different.

As a division within Industry Canada, the CTC is accountable directly to the minister and the minister is accountable to parliament. That is the way it should be. Either that or the commission should be privatized. It should not become a crown corporation.

I also suspect that the cost of running the CTC as a crown corporation is going to be higher than it is now. The briefing I received suggested that moving the operation to Toronto is a possibility. I can just picture it. Instead of taking up a floor in the C.D. Howe Building at Industry Canada, which is across the street, the commission will need some prominent downtown real estate in Toronto at top dollar.

Salaries will have to go up. To buy a house in Toronto costs twice as much as anywhere else, and then there is the matter of moving and relocating costs for 62 people. It is empire building and it certainly will not be cheap. I am sure the emotional cost to all families involved will also be a problem.

I suggest that empire building is what tends to happen within crown corporations. In my view and in the view of our party we should be getting rid of the few crown corporations that are left rather than adding more.

Tourism is a very important industry. Canada is a spectacular tourist destination and the Reform Party believes that we should promote Canada as a travel destination. Tourism is a big industry for Canada.

A trip through Jasper or Banff national parks in my home province of Alberta in the summertime, or anytime for that matter, is an experience in itself.

• (1805)

They are very busy areas. It is hard to get hotel rooms. People from all over the country want to come to visit the majesty that is ours.

In fact Canada is the 12th largest tourist destination. Last year tourism generated jobs at twice the pace of most Canadian busi-

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nesses. It also generated \$44 billion in revenue for the Canadian economy.

A press release issued by the CTC states that international travel numbers for the first three months of 1999 indicate that this year may well be another record-breaking year for the Canadian tourism industry. Compared with the same period in 1998, international tourists have made 11% more trips to Canada of more than one night's stay.

I suggest that the low Canadian dollar is probably responsible for a big part of that, but we need all the help we can get to balance the service sector because a lot of Canadians also travel outside Canada, especially in the winter months when the snowbirds head to Florida and Arizona. However, I am happy to report that there are a lot of tourists coming to Canada, for whatever reason.

It is clear that Canada needs tourism and that we should market our wonderful country abroad, but it is not clear that we need a crown corporation to carry out that activity. Therefore, my colleagues and I in the Reform Party will be voting against this bill. We will be voting for Canada as a tourist destination. We see no compelling need for a crown corporation.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wish to confirm that tomorrow will be the fifth appointed day for the debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

* * *

CANADIAN TOURISM COMMISSION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-5, an act to establish the Canadian Tourism Commission, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is now my turn to speak to Bill C-5. I do not think I will have time to finish before members are called in for the vote, but I would like to say that the Bloc Québécois, for different reasons from those of the Reform Party—and I think the Reform Party will probably vote against this bill unless things change during consideration in committee—will vote against this bill. I will try to explain our reasons for opposing it.

Before explaining our position, I would like to draw a comparison with other bills now before the House—the first one that comes to mind is the one on the airline industry.

Often the government decides to indicate a direction without even legislating. In other cases, as we saw this morning, the House is not consulted until many years later, sometimes after an international treaty had been signed.

So that people are very clear, in this case, the Canadian Tourism Commission—because there is one—was established in 1995, and the purpose of this bill is to consolidate, as it were, something that already exists, something that was established by ministerial order a few years back.

It is an odd way of going about things to ask us to pass legislation after a number of things have already been done with respect to tourism. The question that comes to mind is this: why on earth use a bill now to create this crown corporation in order to make official what already exists?

If we look at the bill and examine the difference between the mandate the government wants to give the future Canadian Tourism Commission and the mandate of the former Canadian Tourism Commission, it becomes clear that this is a visibility operation. It is an opportunity for the government to promote Canadian unity by talking about Canadian unity and the integrity of Canada.

● (1810)

The mission of the previous commission was clear. It was short, but it was clear. The mission statement read “Canada’s tourism industry will deliver world-class cultural and leisure experiences year-round, while preserving and sharing Canada’s clean, safe and natural environments. The industry will be guided by the values of respect, integrity and empathy”.

There was also mention of promoting the growth and profitability of the Canadian tourist industry. That makes sense, since we are talking about promoting tourism.

What is the mission of the new commission? The bill says it all. It reads:

Whereas the Canadian tourism industry is vital to the social and cultural identity and integrity of Canada;

Terrific. There is a huge difference. There is no more talk of promoting tourism or organizing activities. There is nothing of the sort. There is no talk of profitability either.

A little further along, it reads:

Whereas it is desirable to strengthen Canada’s commitment to Canadian tourism by establishing a Tourism Commission that would work with the governments of the provinces and the territories and the Canadian tourism industry to promote the interests of that industry and to market Canada as a desirable tourist destination—

We will recall the first paragraph, which provides:

Whereas the Canadian tourism industry is vital to the social and cultural identity and integrity of Canada;

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The government is going to use tourism for political ends, to make political propaganda. That is the intent of this bill. It is consistent with a certain view. We can see the reactions of the Liberal members opposite. They are beginning to get it.

My Reform colleague spoke a bit about this government's approach. It creates government agencies to control the information it intends to give us elected representatives. We have a mandate here in the House to question the Minister of Industry, who will be responsible for this commission.

We can guess in advance what the answer will be. The minister will say "This commission must report to me. Unfortunately, before we can answer your question, you must wait for the end of the fiscal year, in a few months, after the commission has tabled its annual report. I encourage you to contact the commission directly. Perhaps it will supply you with some answers".

We are familiar with this kind of commission. As soon as economic activity is involved, the answer is "Given the commercial aspect, it may be our duty not to disclose all the findings of marketing and feasibility studies and so on".

Quite naturally, this commission will hide behind the secrecy relating to commercial practices. We are familiar with that. It has been going on as long as we have had this government, and the Department of Industry specializes in it.

There are grounds for concern. We are not always in agreement with the Reformers, even if we share the same side of the House. We are in agreement with them on this, however. We are concerned about this, and rightly so.

There are other examples. The millennium scholarship foundation is not over with yet. When the government cannot do what it wants directly, when it wants to interfere in provincial jurisdictions, then it sets up an agency, a foundation, to try and give scholarships directly to students. For what purpose? To hand out nice cheques with a maple leaf on them, to mark the millennium. We must never forget that maple leaf. People need to know that the money came from the federal government. That is one of the goals: visibility, seeking a high profile.

The government also created the society for health research and innovation. Same thing again. Health is a provincial jurisdiction. Because it cannot interfere too directly, the federal government does so through a foundation.

• (1815)

The universities, which normally come under provincial jurisdiction, are invited to apply for subsidies. Once again, the government is doing indirectly what it cannot do directly. More and more,

it is interfering in provincial jurisdictions. Why? Because the government is looking for visibility.

The Minister of Finance has confirmed that he has even more money than he thought he would. Money is flowing in from everywhere and has to be distributed. If only this money could be returned to the provinces through transfer payments. This is how it could be done. No; the government continues to cut, or maintain cuts—it is all in the wording and is developing new programs. This bill is more of the same.

While the government is trying to replace the old commission with a new one, with a stronger mandate for purposes of visibility and political propaganda, what is it doing? It is taking back money earmarked—I am not inventing this, it is to be found in the budget—for a subsidiary tourism agreement with the Government of Quebec. The amount involved is \$700,000. This year, not a red cent is earmarked for that agreement; everything has been cut. Why? Because the Minister of Industry, through the minister responsible for economic development for the Quebec regions, told the House that the federal government had its own strategy.

Now we can understand better why it does not want to reach an agreement with the Government of Quebec on tourism. It wants to keep the money and spend it itself. Why? To improve its visibility. The same old story.

And are we sure that the money the new Canadian Tourism Commission might distribute will be consistent with the strategic plans approved by regional stakeholders in Quebec, for example by regional development councils, by local development councils, by regional tourism associations? No.

The member for Jonquière was talking about this very issue; it is the same in her riding. The member for Louis-Hébert has run into the same problem. The dreadful to-do over the aquarium at the Charlesbourg zoo is common knowledge. We are told that they cannot get involved in that. Yet this is a priority clearly expressed by the people in that region. So the question is "Is the aquarium in Quebec City really international?". Well, I have seen international projects, and I will give an example of one.

I have nothing against the people in Gatineau, who have a fine hot air balloon festival, but an argument for the federal government's giving more in the area of tourism is an opportunity to fly the federal balloon. And it is not far, just in Gatineau. They cross the Ottawa river and reach Ottawa. So it goes beyond Quebec's jurisdictions and therefore money can go to it because the Canadian maple leaf can be seen floating in the air, and suddenly the thing becomes an international event.

You think I am joking? This is very serious. In the activity report of the former Canadian tourism commission, in an effort to get more federal government money, there was a place where they

Government Orders

reported having stylized the fine federal maple leaf and that it had been flown as many times as possible and that, with a little more money, it could be flown even more.

Visibility is what this is about. The government is seeking visibility. But there are other aspects of this bill that concern us. It talks of 26 directors. That is quite a lot of people. When we look at the representation decided upon for the provinces, out of the seven board members, there is only one representing Quebec. For the private sector, the same distribution: seven people, just one for Quebec.

• (1820)

Finally, in the sector not associated with the government or designated by the minister, still only one person. Out of 26, three will be officially designated by Quebec stakeholders or by the Government of Quebec.

This is pretty far away from the concept of two founding peoples. Granted, in 1867, Quebec accounted for about 50% of the Canadian population, and now only about 24%. Normally, we ought to expect to have about a 25% representation still. And twenty-six divided by four is at least six, if we drop the decimals. But we are down to three, and even these three are not a certainty, because at least one of the three is to be appointed directly by the minister. It is highly unlikely that person would be a friend of the Quebec sovereignist regime.

We cannot be opposed to the idea of a Canadian Tourism Commission. What is tourism? I have looked in various dictionaries, and it boils down to an activity with an economic, a commercial, tinge. In the Constitution—which I look at far more often than the little catechism book my mother left to me—it is stated that all commercial activity is a provincial jurisdiction.

I can understand that sometimes a commercial activity can be interprovincial. I can understand outside promotion. But there are organizations that already do that very well. There is a commission that spends a great deal of money on that.

Once again—and I will conclude on this because time is passing and I know people want to vote, because Tuesday is voting day—the fundamental goal of this government in this bill is, yet again, to seek out visibility.

On the subject of identity, what government is in a better position to promote Quebec's cultural tourist events, such as the festivals in Montreal, the Festival de Jazz, the Festival de l'humour, the Festival d'été de Québec—

An hon. member: The Festival mondial de la culture.

Mr. Antoine Dubé: The Festival mondial de la culture and so forth. Which government is in a better position to support these activities?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Antoine Dubé: My colleagues are giving me a number of examples, clearly the festivals are expanding. In Quebec, we want to promote our cultural identity through tourism. Education and culture are important for Quebec. Why not let Quebec try its luck in this regard? Instead, as I said earlier, the federal government cuts funds to the Government of Quebec in subsidiary agreements, and creates a new agency.

The minister looks very relaxed. He is reading documents, perhaps his paper. He will wash his hands of it when a member from Quebec puts questions to him, saying "You know, it is the commission we created".

We will watch this closely, obviously, on the Standing Committee on Industry, which I sit on. We have many questions: How will it operate? Who will really make appointments? Will there be consultation with the provinces, and what form will it take, because this is a very important sector, representing \$44 billion in economic activity?

Ms. Hélène Alarie: We are not talking peanuts.

Mr. Antoine Dubé: We are not talking peanuts, as the member for Louis-Hébert has pointed out. She is right.

The Progressive Conservative member for Chicoutimi surely agrees with me that tourism is very important for Quebec, including in his region.

It is so important that we want to run it our way. But it is not too clear whether Quebec will really have a say, because its participation will be reduced to a minimum. Obviously, we are going to try to negotiate improvements.

• (1825)

That is all I had to say today. I will hold a longer speech for when we return after committee study, unless there is a miracle and the government occasionally dares to accept amendments moved by the opposition parties, whether the Bloc Québécois, the Progressive Conservative Party or the Reform Party, to improve this bill. But this government has a lot of trouble with this members need only remember the case of shipbuilding, when it did not let even one comma be changed. The minister said he could not do it.

It is very difficult to get the government to change its mind, even with 160,000 postcards asking it to do something to help the shipbuilding sector. This government is convinced that it must always be right about everything, on every occasion and in every setting, and especially in this parliament. Nevertheless, we will continue to remain optimistic and try to get the government to change its mind, at least on the issue of tourism, for the good of this important economic sector.

[English]

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, as tourism spokesperson for the the New Demo-

cratic Party I am very pleased to rise in the House this evening to speak to Bill C-5, an act to establish the Canadian Tourism Commission. I note that we may have only four or five minutes before I can resume my debate tomorrow.

I will start off by talking to members present and to the folks watching at home about how important tourism is to our country and how necessary it is for Canadians to understand that this is an industry which employees literally tens of thousands of individuals and families.

The Canadian Tourism Commission was actually founded in 1992 after an extensive consultation with the tourism industry. However, because it was desirable at the time to get it up and running quickly, both government and industry agreed that the Canadian Tourism Commission should be created as a special operational agency rather than a crown corporation. A special operational agency is bureaucratise for all the responsibility but none of the authority.

The Canadian Tourism Commission, the CTC, was responsible for running the programs, but the deputy minister of tourism was responsible for the administration. Basically marketing operations had to sit around for months and go through the federal bureaucratic sign-off process of 13 signatures, or thereabouts, by which time circumstances had almost always changed.

We could just see the potential for problems because government contract issuance processes are painfully slow for a fast moving industry like tourism, like waiting a year to improve an advertising contract for an Asian-Pacific campaign and meanwhile the Asian economies go into the tank. Then we have to look for new sources of visitors, but it takes another year to approve the marketing plan for that.

It is a very bureaucratic system. I not suggesting it was a failure, but it was a very slow process. When someone is in business as I have been in business, decisions have to be made on a moment's notice after looking at all the inputs that are very necessary.

I notice that it is almost 6.30 p.m. and almost time to call the vote. With your permission I will resume the debate at a later time.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The hon. member will have approximately 18 minutes when we resume debate.

* * *

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—AIR CANADA

The House resumed from October 28 consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): It being 6.30 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, October 28, 1999, the House

Supply

will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

• (1900)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 51)

YEAS

Members

Alarie	Asselin
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bergeron	Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—
Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Blaikie	Borotsik
Brien	Canuel
Cardin	Casey
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Crête
Dalphond-Guiral	Davies
de Savoye	Desjarlais
Desrochers	Doyle
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)	Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
Duceppe	Dumas
Earle	Fournier
Gagnon	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin (Châteauguay)
Guay	Guimond
Hardy	Harvey
Jones	Keddy (South Shore)
Lalonde	Laurin
Lebel	Lefebvre
Loubier	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mancini	Marchand
McDonough	Ménard
Mercier	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Power	Price
Proctor	Robinson
Rocheleau	Sauvageau
Solomon	St-Hilaire
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Turp	Vautour
Venne	Wasylycia-Leis
Wayne—66	

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Adams	Alcock
Anders	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Axworthy	Bailey
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Benoit	Bertrand
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Cadman
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Carroll
Casson	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Charbonneau
Chatters	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Clouthier	Coderre
Collenette	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion

Supply

Discepolo	Dromisky
Drouin	Duhamel
Easter	Eggleton
Epp	Finlay
Folco	Forseth
Fry	Gagliano
Goodale	Gouk
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Grewal	Grey (Edmonton North)
Grose	Hanger
Harb	Hart
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Jackson	Johnston
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerpan
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottetown)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Konrad	Lastewka
Lavigne	Lee
Longfield	Lowther
MacAulay	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Mark
Marleau	Matthews
McCormick	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McNally	McTeague
McWhinney	Meredith
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills (Red Deer)	Minna
Mitchell	Morrison
Murray	Myers
Nault	Normand
O'Brien (Labrador)	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Obhrai
Pagtakhan	Pankiw
Paradis	Parrish
Penson	Peric
Peterson	Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Pratt	Proud
Provenzano	Ramsay
Redman	Reed
Reynolds	Richardson
Robillard	Rock
Saada	Scott (Fredericton)
Scott (Skeena)	Sekora
Serré	Speller
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Stinson	Strahl
Telegdi	Thibeault
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Wappel
Whelan	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
White (North Vancouver)	Wilfert
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PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson	Bevilacqua
Bigras	Copps
Marceau	Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)

The Speaker: Order, please. May I gently remind members that our practices in the House of Commons are such that when the Speaker has begun to read whatever the motion is that day, if members are not past the curtains and in their seats, they should not be voting. Similarly, if a member has voted, it is always best to

remain in his or her seat until the vote is taken because it causes a little of confusion. I would appreciate it if we could do that.

I declare the amendment lost.

The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

• (1910)

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

(Division No. 52)

YEAS

Members

Alarie	Asselin
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bergeron	Bernier (Bonaventure—Gaspé—
Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Pabok)	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Blaikie	Borotsik
Brien	Canuel
Cardin	Casey
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Crête
Cummins	Dalphond-Guiral
Davies	de Savoie
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Doyle	Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duceppe
Dumas	Earle
Fournier	Gagnon
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godin (Châteauguay)	Guay
Guimond	Hardy
Harris	Harvey
Jennings	Jones
Keddy (South Shore)	Lalonde
Laurin	Lebel
Lefebvre	Lincoln
Loubier	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mancini	Marchand
McDonough	Ménard
Mercier	Morrison
Patry	Perron
Picard (Drummond)	Plamondon
Power	Price
Proctor	Robinson
Rocheleau	Sauvageau
Solomon	St-Hilaire
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Turp	Vautour
Venne	Wasylcia-Leis
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Adams
Anders
Assadourian
Axworthy
Baker
Barnes
Bélair
Bellemare
Benoit
Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Bryden
Byrne
Calder
Caplan
Casson
Cauchon
Chan
Chatters
Clouthier
Collenette
Dhaliwal
Dromisky
Duhamel
Eggleton
Finlay
Forseth
Gagliano
Gouk
Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Edmonton North)
Hanger
Hart
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hubbard
Iftody
Johnston
Karetak-Lindell
Kerpan
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Knutson
Lastewka
Lee
Lowther
Mahoney
Maloney
Mark
Matthews
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague
Meredith
Milliken
Minna
Murray
Nault
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Penson
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt
Provenzano
Redman
Reynolds
Robillard
Saada
Scott (Skeena)
Serré
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Augustine
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Beaumier
Bélangier
Bennett
Bertrand
Bonin
Boudria
Brown
Bulte
Cadman
Cannis
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Charbonneau
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Coderre
DeVillers
Dion
Drouin
Easter
Epp
Folco
Fry
Goodale
Graham
Grewal
Grose
Harb
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Ianno
Jackson
Jordan
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Konrad
Lavigne
Longfield
MacAulay
Malhi
Manley
Marleau
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
McNally
McWhinney
Mifflin
Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell
Myers
Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Obhrai
Pankiw
Parrish
Peric
Phinney
Pillitteri
Proud
Ramsay
Reed
Richardson
Rock
Scott (Fredericton)
Sekora
Speller
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Strahl
Thibeault
Torsney
Valeri
Wappel
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Wilfert

PAIRED MEMBERS

Anderson
Bigras
Marceau

Bevilacqua
Copp
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

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

NATURAL DISASTERS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Madam Speaker, on September 21 of this year a terrible earthquake struck the island of Taiwan. That earthquake left more than 10,000 people either killed or injured and over 100,000 people homeless.

Immediately following the earthquake many countries sent rescue teams to assist in the process of search and rescue. Those countries included Russia, Switzerland, Turkey, Japan, Singapore, Israel and many others. Sadly, Canada was not one of those countries that responded with a search and rescue team.

We actually have an outstanding search and rescue team in Canada. It is based in Vancouver, the Vancouver Urban Search and Rescue Team. The Government of Canada did not see fit to send that team to Taiwan to assist in the rescue process.

In addition, the Government of China interfered in an outrageous way with the provision of humanitarian aid to the people of Taiwan at this very difficult time. It interfered in a number of ways. It rejected the request of the Russian rescue team to enter Chinese airspace, which resulted in a lengthy delay of some eight to twelve hours. It insisted that all relief had to be channelled through the International Red Cross of China. Finally, in a very insulting way, the Government of China thanked the world community on behalf of Taiwan for the very generous response that many countries had made. This was an unacceptable insult to the people of Taiwan and indeed to the Government of Taiwan.

● (1915)

Not only the Taiwanese Canadian community but many others were outraged at the failure of our government to respond. The Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society, for example, sent a very strongly worded letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs stating on

Adjournment Debate

behalf of the society its great disappointment and anger at the failure of the Canadian government to put the value of human lives and dignity above relations with the Government of China, particularly trade relations.

I want to note as well that when I raised this question in the House of Commons on October 18 the Minister for International Co-operation stated that aid to Taiwan was not affected at all by China. That statement is totally false. In fact, as I have demonstrated already, China did blatantly interfere.

I am calling today on the Government of Canada to acknowledge that our search and rescue team should have been sent at that time to ensure this mistake is never repeated, to call on the Chinese government to stop its interference in circumstances such as this, and to review more generally our policy with respect to Taiwan's participation internationally.

Taiwan has applied to join the World Health Organization and yet I have received a letter from our Minister of Foreign Affairs stating that only if China agrees, only if Beijing agrees, would Canada be prepared to support Taiwan's involvement in the World Health Organization.

My colleague from Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre and my colleagues generally from the New Democratic caucus have called on the Government of Canada to facilitate Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization. We support full participation, but at the very least Taiwan should be permitted to participate as observers initially in that organization.

I urge the government to show leadership to recognize Taiwan within the World Health Organization, to ensure that the search and rescue team of Canada is dispatched in the future and finally to show far more leadership in recognizing—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Co-operation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada has a long tradition of responding to humanitarian emergencies resulting from natural disasters throughout the world.

[*English*]

This is done, depending on the nature of the disaster, through a variety of channels. These include financial assistance, emergency food aid, relief supplies and the deployment of disaster response teams from the Department of National Defence. For example, CIDA today approved \$150,000 for shelter materials, emergency medical supplies and basic supplies for the victims of the cyclone in Orissa, India.

Now that the capacity for search and rescue is being developed within Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency is interested in exploring the notion that Canada further develop its international search and rescue capability as another way we can respond to humanitarian disasters.

On October 1, CIDA officials discussed the feasibility of future international deployments of the Vancouver search and rescue team with members of the team, the city of Vancouver and the Government of British Columbia.

[*Translation*]

The city of Vancouver indicated its intention to put together a proposal. The Government of British Columbia undertook to prepare a memorandum of understanding. We hope to receive these documents shortly.

In addition, as part of these efforts, the Government of British Columbia indicated that it would prepare, in co-operation with CIDA, Emergency Preparedness Canada, and the United Nations, a plan for the purpose of holding a simulation exercise to assess the Vancouver team.

• (1920)

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am taking part in the debate this evening because of the conflicting signals that are being dispatched across the way by government officials, ministers, and the Prime Minister surrounding the agricultural income disaster assistance plan.

One movie I enjoyed was called *Cool Hand Luke*. There is a great line in that movie when the warden says to Paul Newman: "What we have here is a failure to communicate". Truer words were never spoken when it comes to this program. I would like to give a few examples to support that.

When the minister of agriculture was in the province of Saskatchewan at Prince Albert last July, he refused to meet in any meaningful way with the farmers of Saskatchewan who had very grave concerns about the AIDA program. When the Prime Minister was asked by my leader to go out and inspect the flooded regions of Saskatchewan and Manitoba last July, he declined that invitation. So far as I know he has never gone there or flown over it to inspect it.

When the premiers and the farm lobby from Saskatchewan and Manitoba came last week to meet with officials in Ottawa, they were what can only be politely described as sandbagged by government officials. All of a sudden there were new numbers. They would not release the numbers.

Adjournment Debate

Those numbers have been released as of today. For the record, it says that Saskatchewan remains significantly below the previous five year average and is expected to remain significantly below the previous five year average in the year 2000. Nevertheless that was reason enough to say that they could not give them any more money at this point because the numbers did not jibe.

Today I had an opportunity to meet with alfalfa dehydrators from Alberta and Saskatchewan. These folks are diversifying. They are doing value added, primarily in the two western prairie provinces. They are doing exactly what the government wanted producers to do, to diversify, to do value added and to have more folks working in that part of the world, rural development.

International prices on alfalfa have dropped far below their cost of production. The Europeans are subsidizing to such an extent that our folks cannot compete. Once again there is no additional money for an industry that is not yet mature but has been growing and has had a strong track record. We simply cannot compete with European subsidies. It is another example of a failure.

The AIDA deadline was extended yesterday for farmers in four provinces, including Manitoba and Saskatchewan, who had significantly expanded their operations. My office had a call this morning from a farm family who did not even know there was a program under AIDA for significant expansion. We were running around frantically yesterday because the deadline was November 1, only to find out after they got the forms in the mail that it has now been extended to December 31. They were running around literally like chickens with their heads cut off.

There are half a dozen examples of glaring failures to communicate effectively with the western Canadian agriculture sector. My point is that unless this is rectified immediately it will result in a very large problem in western Canada.

Mr. Joe McGuire (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to confine my discussion tonight to the question that was asked on

October 19. I know a lot of things have happened since then to which the member for Palliser has alluded.

We are also concerned. I know he is very concerned about farmers in his home province of Saskatchewan. That concern is shared by the government. The government understands that we need a national approach. We are looking to all shareholders to work together to decide on the best course of action.

The Government of Canada and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food want to work in partnership with all provincial governments to address the income situation facing farmers in Canada.

The minister of agriculture continues to work with concerned farmer organizations and is listening to their advice on program design issues for existing programs as well as for the long term direction of safety nets.

• (1925)

The government has programs in place that have helped and continue to help farmers across Canada and particularly those on the prairies. The NISA and AIDA programs put money in the hands of farmers who are in need. For example, in Saskatchewan 55,900 producers have about \$1.1 billion in their NISA accounts. To date, over 12,300 producers in Saskatchewan have withdrawn \$113 million from NISA this year. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada estimates that AIDA will provide approximately \$170 million in Saskatchewan for the first year of the program. Across Canada we have been providing this kind of support.

Members can see that when the NISA withdrawals are combined with the AIDA payments, the government is helping farmers through these difficult times.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.26 p.m.)

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