



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, March 28, 2000**

**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*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 I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to two petitions.

\* \* \*

### ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, a number of order in council appointments recently made by the government.

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(1) these are deemed referred to the appropriate standing committees, a list of which is attached.

\* \* \*

### MARRIAGE (PROHIBITED DEGREES) ACT

**Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-463, an act to amend the Marriage (Prohibited Degrees) Act and the Interpretation Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, with all the confusion that has been going on around the definition of marriage, I thought it was appropriate to introduce a private member's bill that will amend the Marriage Act and the Interpretation Act.

It will say that a marriage is void unless it is a legal union of one man and one woman as husband and wife and neither the man nor the woman was married immediately prior to that union.

I believe with these amendments it will give guidance to the supreme court if there is a challenge in the future and it will clarify the issue once and for all.

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

\* \* \*

### CANADA EVIDENCE ACT

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-464, an act to amend the Evidence Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, my bill has to do with the expression of dates numerically. For example, 02/03/99 could mean either February 3, 1999 or March 2, 1999. That ambiguity has always been there, but now that our year numbers are also less than twelve there is a great multiplication of ambiguities possible.

My bill would set it out so that if it is not explicitly stated, the numeric designation would be year/month/day and it would end all these ambiguities.

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

\* \* \*

• (1010)

### ENDANGERED SPECIES SANCTUARIES ACT

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-465, an act respecting the creation of sanctuaries for endangered species of wildlife.

He said: Mr. Speaker, there are over 300 species in Canada today that are in danger of imminent extinction. What is the greatest failure in our not dealing with that? It is the failure to protect habitat.

This private member's bill will do just that through four mechanisms. The first is an objective identification of species at risk using COSEWIC, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, which will recommend to the minister those species that are in imminent danger of extinction.

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The second is to provide for the establishment of sanctuaries on federal land and for agreements with both provinces and private land owners.

The third is to provide for expropriation or restrictive cognizance to be placed on those lands when there has been a failure to negotiate in good faith. When that has occurred, compensation would be given to both the provinces and private land owners at fair market value.

The fourth is that it enables individuals to donate land that has been deemed to be sensitive habitat and they would get an income tax break for doing so. I hope the bill passes. It would go a long way toward protecting endangered species in Canada.

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

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

## CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of some 250 people from the St. John's area who are very concerned with the issue of child pornography.

The petitioners want to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the British Columbia Court of Appeal on June 30, 1999, dismissed an appeal to reinstate the appropriate section of the criminal code making it illegal to possess child pornography.

They quite rightly make the point that the well-being and safety of children are now in jeopardy as a result of that ruling. They call upon government to invoke section 33 of the charter of rights and freedoms, the notwithstanding clause, to override the B.C. Court of Appeal decision.

## BREAST CANCER

**Mr. Réginald Bélair (Timmins—James Bay, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today. The first one deals with breast cancer.

Canada has the second highest incidence rate of breast cancer in the world, second only to the United States. The United States has had a mandatory mammography quality assurance standard since 1994. Canada has no legislation for mandatory mammography quality assurance standards.

Therefore the petitioners call upon parliament to enact legislation to establish an independent governing body to develop, implement and enforce uniform and mandatory mammography quality assurance and quality control standards in Canada.

## CANADA POST CORPORATION

**Mr. Réginald Bélair (Timmins—James Bay, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my second petition has to do with rural route mail couriers.

These couriers often earn less than the minimum wage and have working conditions reminiscent of another era. Rural route couriers have not been allowed to bargain collectively to improve their wages and working conditions.

Therefore the petitioners are asking parliament to repeal subsection 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act in order to allow these Canadian workers to earn decent wages and to collectively bargain their rights as workers.

\* \* \*

**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 Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

● (1015)

[Translation]

**CANADIAN INSTITUTES OF HEALTH RESEARCH ACT**

**Hon. Jim Peterson (for Minister of Health)** moved that Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, to repeal the Medical Research Council Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Health, I am very pleased to speak today in support of Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian institutes of health research, at third reading stage.

Last week, on the very day that this House completed debate on the report stage of this bill, members of Canada's health research community gathered together to bid farewell to the Medical Research Council, and to greet the new era of the Canadian institutes of health research.

Farewells are often tinged with sadness. But that is not at all an accurate description of the prevailing mood. Instead of sadness,

there was excitement. Instead of regret, there was tremendous optimism and hope.

Throughout the day, at the MRC-sponsored symposium, researcher after researcher spoke about the tremendous gains in knowledge that had been made by Canadian researchers under the Medical Research Council, and about the potential for new knowledge, for new discoveries, under CIHR.

The CIHR concept brought together the largest coalition of interests in the history of Canada's health research community. This concept was not imposed from above by government, but created and developed as a direct result of the efforts of so many members of the community from across the country. It would not be fitting to let this occasion pass without paying tribute to Canada's health researchers who took up the Prime Minister's challenge to excel in our areas of strength, in particular, members of the original task force on CIHR, as well as members of the interim governing council of CIHR. The interim governing council devoted tremendous time and energy meeting together and engaging the broader health research community in discussions to ensure that CIHR would meet the priorities of the health research community, of Canadians and of Canada as a whole.

Special mention must be made of the truly special efforts of Dr. Henry Friesen, president of the Medical Research Council, and chair of the interim governing council and the IGC vice-chairs Dorothy Lamont and Eric Maldoff.

[English]

The Canadian institutes of health research is an achievement that was brought about by the hard work and deep commitment of a great number of people

To the 75 men and women who served on the task force persuading the Government of Canada that this concept could become a reality and to the 35 members of the interim governing council who have worked so very hard to find solutions to the challenge of expressing that vision in legislation and addressing the tough issues of structure, processes and accommodation between diverse disciplines, I want to express my gratitude and my admiration.

As we all know, every great cause needs a leader, and a leader in the work to create these institutes was Dr. Friesen. Dr. Friesen had already secured his place of honour as a result of the remarkable leadership that he had provided as president of the Medical Research Council since 1992. He saw the possibilities and seized the opportunities as only a true leader can.

Let us not underestimate the size and complexity of the challenges that he overcame. In designing and defining the institutes, he must have sometimes felt that his task was like building an

airplane in the air. Somehow he made it fly and somehow he has brought it safely to ground.

[Translation]

On behalf of Canadians and the health research community, I want to express our sincere appreciation to all these individuals for their tremendous contribution.

• (1020)

With Bill C-13, the Medical Research Council hands on the torch of health research to CIHR. Over the past 40 years, the MRC has been a godsend for researchers, providing them with the support they needed to devote themselves to research full time.

It is very easy to say that Canada's health researchers are among the best in the world. As I reflect on the MRC's legacy of excellence, from the early days, with Wilder Penfield and the surgical treatment of epilepsy developed in Montreal, to more recent achievements, such as the discoveries of Jude Poirier and Peter St. George-Hyslop in connection with Alzheimer's, May Griffith and her artificial cornea, and Arthur Prochazka and his bionic glove, I marvel once again at the talent and creativity to be found in our universities, hospitals and other research institutions.

Canadian researchers are making a difference in health, in the well-being of Canadians and of people the world over.

[English]

Today there are many reasons for all of us, no matter what our role, to feel a strong sense of occasion. We are, after all, sharing a moment of history as one great Canadian institution is retired to make way for another. What a past to celebrate.

For 40 years the Medical Research Council has nurtured and enabled the Canadian research community that has pursued excellence expanding human knowledge, improving human conditions, putting worldclass standards at the service of humanity both here in Canada and around the world.

Our purpose today is not only to celebrate that legacy and to honour that tradition. It is also to savour the new opportunities that are upon us and to prepare for a limitless future. We are about to embark on a new era in health research in this country. The Canadian institutes will transform our research enterprise providing a new and even better way to carry on the process of discovery, to broaden its scope and deepen its worth, to quicken its pace and to enrich its value.

We shall now move beyond medical research to health research linking investigators in the biomedical sphere to those who pursue inquiry in the clinic setting, connecting that work with those who would better understand how to deliver health services, and grounding it all in a better understanding of how illness can be prevented and how good health can be promoted. New and better

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treatments, better strategies for health protection and promotion and for managing the health system, all these things will be crucial to improving and sustaining Canada's health system and the health of our people.

The concept of the institutes is as novel as it is simple. It will create a network of knowledge linking investigators who tackle similar issues from different angles.

I recall reading some months ago a simple explanation of how collaboration can enrich inquiry. An investigator wrote to a colleague in the following words "I give you my idea. You give me yours. Now we each have two ideas and together we have four". That is the arithmetic of a shared inquiry, adding in order to multiply, sharing information in order to accelerate discovery.

[*Translation*]

The nature of modern health research is changing and the issues that arise are more difficult than ever. Today these issues cover a vast array of disciplines representing many perspectives and approaches.

The CIHR is a direct response to these contemporary challenges. It is based on a new integrated approach to health that is focused on understanding the factors underlying health and illness.

The CIHR will create a link between researchers in a broad variety of disciplines, enabling them share their knowledge and work towards common goals.

• (1025)

It will transform the manner in which health research is conducted in this country by giving a national character to Canadian efforts. By promoting the acquisition of new knowledge, CIHR will help to improve Canada's health care system and the health of Canadians. It will help make Canada's research community a community of hope and encouragement where the grants awarded to researchers will be comparable to those awarded in other countries. The CIHR will be the principal Canadian health research enterprise of the next century.

Thanks to additional large investments by the federal government, CIHR will do more than support excellence in existing research in Canada. It will promote new synergies among researchers, helping to resolve complex and difficult health issues through comprehensive, collective and multidisciplinary approaches.

The CIHR will build on research in Canadian universities, health institutions and research centres, provincial and federal government teaching hospitals, and the volunteer and private sectors.

The integration of health research into a network of virtual institutes will make it possible to address important health issues more effectively by using resources from four intersecting health research approaches: basic biomedical research, applied clinical research, research into health care systems and services, and research into the social factors underlying health.

The institutes will serve as centres for the transfer of knowledge to local communities and the monitoring of Canadians' social and health environment, as well as to present related reports.

For a new generation of researchers, this new orientation will result in the creation of training and innovation opportunities in Canada. As a result, Canada will be among world leaders in health research.

The creation of CIHR is a direct response by the federal government to the opinions expressed by health research directors, who were calling for change and modernization generally of this activity in Canada.

And they are not alone. There is also a vast coalition of researchers representing all views and disciplines in Canada. These researchers know that CIHR is the most innovative and best integrated approach to health research in the world.

Let me cite the enthusiastic and eloquent comments of our Minister of Health:

We believe that CIHR will help us to attain the health research policy objectives supported by Canadians throughout the country. It will improve the effectiveness of our health care system, further enhance Canada's image as a world leader in health research, create new jobs in key sectors of the new economy and, finally, curb the departure of our best researchers and clinicians. Above all, CIHR will help improve the health of Canadians.

[*English*]

CIHR will change the way we fund and carry out health research in Canada. It will make the main priority of all research endeavours in the country, first and foremost, about improving the health of Canadians. A closer examination of the objectives of CIHR as set out in its mandate reveals just how profound the change will be.

• (1030)

The main aim of CIHR will be to co-ordinate and support multidisciplinary health research across Canada. The legislation states that CIHR's mandate is "to excel according to internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence in the creation of new knowledge and its translation into improved health for Canadians, more effective health services and products, and a strengthened Canadian health care system". How will it do that? The legislation says that it will meet its objective by forging an integrated health research agenda across disciplines, sectors and regions.

CIHR brings together researchers from across regions and disciplines. It includes all four key areas of health research: biomedical; clinical; health systems and services; and population health research. It is an approach that will see research travel from laboratory to bedside and to communities.

[*Translation*]

Health research in Canada already involves a multitude of bodies with partnership potential. These are: the federal research councils, charitable organizations involved with health, universities, teach-

ing hospitals, community groups, research institutes and private industry.

Associated with greater financial resources, this more integrated and more dynamic research framework that the institutes represent will generate new knowledge, which will result in improving the health of Canadians and improved health care, earlier discovery of new treatments, and enhanced possibilities of effective political intervention.

The institutes will foster the establishment of an integrated health research program which will make it possible to make discoveries earlier in identifying new health threats and their treatments. They will deal with the increasingly numerous statistics indicating that some of the most significant health factors are not being addressed by clinical and biomedical interventions.

The institutes will provide a far better liaison for the health research partners already in place, and will encourage co-operation with the volunteer, community and private sectors.

Hon. members will have understood that the role of these institutes is not, first of all, to invest in bricks-and-mortar structures, but rather to put into place in the form of a network in synergy with researchers in other disciplines with different horizons, within the framework of what we have already named the virtual institutes around various themes.

To give one example, in a research institute focussing on asthma, basic genetic research might be carried out in a hospital in Quebec, while clinical trials and evaluations of asthma treatments might be carried out in Saskatchewan or Ontario. Research assigned to social science specialists or public health authorities might be done in rural areas of Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador. Finally, evaluation of such a pilot project with a view to determining the best treatment approach might be done in another part of Canada, British Columbia or PEI, for instance.

Thus the institutes are intended to bring together researchers in the social sciences into a solid national network, which is then, in turn, part of a broad international health network. This national network would work in conjunction with scientists in other disciplines of health research, with researchers in such areas as sociology, psychology, education, social work, nursing, psychiatry, economics and public health, demographics, epidemiology, and public administration. All of these could be associated with health research in one way or another, according to the role planned for the institutes.

I would also like to point out that a number of organizational principles will guide the selection of institutes. First of all, there will not be just one model of institute.

• (1035)

Each institute will be able to take a different path as far as its programs, its structures and the number of projects funded are

### *Government Orders*

concerned, depending on the determined needs of the community. Second, all health researchers will have the opportunity of a place within the institutes.

Identification of the institutes, which will be 10 to 15 in number, will be based on several criteria, including their fundamental capacity to contribute to improving the health of Canadians.

The structure of the institutes must be simple and cost-conscious. Finally, the institutes will encourage interdisciplinary research in the four key health sectors already referred to.

[*English*]

A key element of CIHR's stated objective is to facilitate the Translation of knowledge into better health services and a better health care system for Canadians. Research has little value if its result cannot somehow be applied whether into new directions for further research, new ways to maintain the health of individuals and communities, new treatments and cures for disease or a new understanding of how best to deliver health care to Canadians.

By building the translation of knowledge gained from research into practical applications right into CIHR's legislative agenda, we are ensuring that we achieve the utmost value for our research investment.

[*Translation*]

There is another key element in the institutes' agenda. Promotion of research projects and assistance in their completion must be according to internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence. Peer review is the best guarantee available to government and to the Canadian public that taxpayers' dollars are being directed to science of the highest quality.

The institutes will build on a longstanding tradition in this country of rigorous evaluation of research proposals to ensure that we may continue to meet international standards of scientific excellence and take into account the special requirements of the institutes' expanded mandate.

The legislation before us provides as well that the institutes will carry out their mission by assuming a leadership role in Canada's research community and by co-operating with the provinces, volunteer organizations and the private sector.

Having the institutes organized by theme will bring together all the principal stakeholders—researchers, donor agencies, research users—to develop a strategic research program promoting researcher creativity while meeting the needs and priorities of Canadians. Herein lies the test of real leadership.

This leadership, need I point out, will be exercised in co-operation with the provinces, whose responsibility it is to provide health care to Canadians. This leadership will be exercised in the respect

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of provincial jurisdiction. We consider such federal-provincial-territorial co-operation vital not only to the advancement of health research but to the promotion, dissemination and implementation of new knowledge with a view to improving the health care system and services.

Canadians take a special sense of pride in their publicly funded health care system. They believe that leadership in the areas of health care, research and education are key elements of the Canadian advantage that will help us maintain a quality of life that the United Nations continues to consider the best in the world.

The government shares that belief. The institutes are part of a deep and abiding commitment that we have made to supporting health research in this country.

• (1040)

[*English*]

The Government of Canada understands that it must do its part if the new enterprise is to succeed. By next year in relation to 1998 we will have doubled the annual federal funding for health research in Canada to a total of almost \$500 million per year. If as we expect the institutes' promise is fulfilled, that will not be the final point, it will be a new point of departure. The CIHR is only part of a determined effort by the Canadian government to encourage and reward innovation.

[*Translation*]

Over the past three years, we have invested more than \$5 billion in direct and leveraged funding. We have continued to fund and expand the network of centres of excellence, seven of which focus on health related topics.

In 1997, we established the Canada foundation for innovation, and, this year, we contributed an additional \$900 million to it. A total of \$1.9 billion is helping to modernize and improve the research infrastructure in our hospitals, universities and other research institutions. We also established the Canadian health services research foundation to provide us with the data we need of how to deliver excellent, efficient and cost-effective health services to Canadians.

In the latest federal budget, presented a month ago, the Minister of Finance announced the creation of 2,000 Canada research chairs, a \$900 million investment intended for researchers at the peak of their careers and the most promising researchers still at the start of their careers. As well in this budget the Minister of Finance announced a special one-time allocation of \$160 million to Genome Canada to fund five genome science centres in Canada.

On top of all these initiatives, in two years, government investment in the institutes will be double the amount it had invested in the MRC. And this is only the beginning. We fully expect that, in future years, the federal government's investment in health re-

search through the institutes will continue to grow. The end result of these investments will be a country where researchers see opportunities for support and innovation throughout their careers. A country others throughout the world see as the place to be for health research. A country which offers its citizens the very best in research and health care based on a solid foundation of excellence in this field.

[*English*]

I want to reiterate that our government understands these kinds of investments must continue to ensure that Canada can cultivate, keep and attract the very best and brightest. By creating an environment for research excellence where good people take up challenges with enthusiasm and confidence, we strengthen the vitality of our country and we enhance our economic dynamism and competitiveness in a shrinking world. We have produced results particularly when we speak of health research which makes our communities and families healthier and happier.

Someone once said that the best way to predict the future is to invent it. I believe that is what those who have developed the institutes have done. Our future will be assured because of the hard work we are doing now which will be to the benefit of generations to come. What is more, the institutes will be an exercise in national solidarity linking not only scientists but also Canadians with each other in a common cause.

• (1045)

[*Translation*]

The institutes represent the most deliberately innovative and integrative approach to health research. They form a structure uniting individuals and networks of researchers in a broad range of perspectives on health research. I sincerely believe that the institutes will set the example for the world.

As the Prime Minister of Canada has said, the institutes will truly make Canada the place to be for researchers in the field of health.

The Standing Committee on Health heard from a wide range of witnesses during its hearings into Bill C-13, representing different regions, different areas of health research, different perspectives. Despite their differences, though, there was one constant point of similarity. Every individual, every group appearing before the committee began by expressing their strong support for the establishment of this new vision for health research in Canada.

I would like to salute these witnesses and thank them enthusiastically for their support and their contribution to the advent of the institutes. The expression of such unanimity during hearings for a piece of legislation is extremely rare, we must confess, but this is the extent of the support shown by the health research community: researchers, volunteer organizations, universities and the private sector.



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In conclusion, I would like particularly to thank my colleagues, the members of the Standing Committee on Health, who made a considerable commitment to their work. In addition, I would encourage the members of this House—including those of the various opposition parties, whose co-operation during the examination of this bill I wish to recognize—to show the same commitment to excellence in health research in Canada through their unanimous support for this bill.

[*English*]

**Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill C-13, a bill which would create the Canadian institutes of health research.

As the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan and the deputy critic of health for the official opposition, the Canadian Alliance, I am pleased to state that we will be supporting this bill. However, before I go into the actual body of the bill and give a bit of a critique on the substance of it, I would like to say a few words about our health care system in Canada today.

If we look at the most recent opinion polls asking Canadians the question “What is the most important issue that you believe this country faces today?”, health care comes out on top. Health care is the most important issue to Canadians. Why is that? We do not have to look very long or very hard to see why this would be the case. Simply put, we have a health care system that is in crisis.

When we look at why the health care system is in crisis we can see that part of the reason is the lack of funds. While the provinces are responsible for the delivery of health care services, we can see that the majority of this problem rests with the federal government. Over the past five years it has cut back transfer payments to the provinces which would have supported the provincial health care systems by some \$2.5 billion.

The government has made a great deal about the fact that it is going to put back into health care some \$14 billion over the next four years. If I have done my math correctly, that still leaves a considerable shortfall.

• (1050)

This shortfall will be downloaded to the provinces, which will then force the provinces to prioritize their spending. They will have to take spending from other places, like education, road building and things like that, and they will have to put the money toward health care, which is the number one concern of Canadians across the country.

It puts the provinces in a tremendous dilemma. How will they prop up, fix or change a health care system that is in crisis when they do not have the money to do it?

If we think that there is a health care crisis now, wait for the next 10 years or so when baby boomers start to demand the kind of health care that is needed when people reach the age of sixty-five. We know what happens. That little bit of arthritis in the knee or the hip joint gets worse and pretty soon a hip operation is needed. Or, in the worst case scenario, the cough that is persistent turns out to be lung cancer.

As those things come on in later years as we grow older, we become more of a burden to the health care system. There are 9.5 million people who will put an incredible strain on the health care system. There will be a need for more facilities, more nurses, more doctors and more innovative research, all the things that go into making a good health care system.

Over the last number of years as the deputy health critic of the Reform Party, now the Canadian Alliance—and I am very proud that we have become the Canadian Alliance, with a huge mandate from reformers across the country—I learned a great deal about health and health care. I have come to have a deep admiration for the many people who operate and run our hospitals and our clinics: our very dedicated doctors, nurses and medical researchers.

We all know that care is not something which comes out of a bottle or a box. We simply cannot prescribe care. It is not something we can send by courier. It comes from within the people who interact and attempt to make life better for the patients in our health care system.

Time after time during the past number of years the federal Liberals have attempted to talk about health care in strictly monetary terms. The health minister or the finance minister will stand during question period and refer to the millions of dollars which they will put back into the health care system. Like the compensation package that was offered to the hepatitis C victims, we have not seen a great deal of it yet.

What they fail to acknowledge is that the Canadian people are not as gullible as the Liberals would like to think. Canadians know and understand that the Liberals have taken away far more than they have returned.

Let us examine some of the facts in a bit more detail. In 1993 when the Liberals took power the Canada health and social transfer per taxpayer was \$1,453. In the 1999 budget the Canada health and social transfer was \$1,005 per taxpayer. That means that the federal government is giving each province \$448 less per taxpayer for health and social programs. That is a 31% drop in federal transfers to the provincial governments.

In fact, since 1966 when universal health care was introduced in Canada, the Liberals' financial commitment to health care has dropped from 50% to 9.4%. How can the system be sustained on that kind of funding? It cannot.

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We know that health care delivery is a provincial matter. Unfortunately, paying for it has also become a provincial responsibility. The Harris government in Ontario pays more annually to health care in that province alone than Ottawa does for the whole of Canada.

Let me repeat that. Ontario pays more annually to health care in that province alone than Ottawa does for the whole of Canada. There is something deeply wrong with the Liberal commitment to health care with those kinds of statistics.

• (1055)

Taken as a cumulative total, in 1993 the Canada health and social transfer was \$18.8 billion. In the 1999 federal budget, even with the so-called new money, the new total was \$14.5 billion, a difference of \$4.3 billion. That is money taken out of the national health care system. It represents \$143 for each person in Canada today.

It is not just in dollars that the Liberals have failed. They are responsible for violating the universal health care system of this country in many ways.

We all know that there are five main tenets which make up the universal health care system: accessibility, portability, comprehensiveness, universality and public administration. While I could speak at length to all of them, I would like to give two examples of where the government has failed to meet these principles.

First, I would like to speak to accessibility. Where the system is to be equally accessible to all Canadians, the British Columbia NDP government, which has a pristine record of being in favour of a universal health care system, regularly sends its Workers' Compensation Board claimants with knee injuries to the United States or to a private clinic in Alberta. This amounts to nothing less than queue jumping, sanctioned by government, promoted and paid for by a quasi-governmental body. This sounds a lot like two tier health care, the same two tier health care which the government loves to rant against when indeed it is responsible for the creation of it.

Second, I would like to speak to portability. The universal health care system is not intended to penalize any province against another. Full and equal services are intended for all. However, the province of Quebec—and it is not the only malefactor—will only reimburse other provinces \$450 per day for Quebecers who are in other provincial hospitals. The rate for a day of hospital care in Ontario is about \$745. Based on this rate difference, Quebec owes millions of dollars to the other provinces. This goes on all the time across the country. The federal government allows this to take place and allows the violation of the principle of portability under the Canada Health Act.

In reality, who has created two tier health care in this country? The Liberal government. Our hon. colleagues across the way do not like to hear that, but when truth stares them in the face they have to admit it.

How does this affect you and I, Mr. Speaker? We are the ones who pay for this. When our knees get to the point where we have to have an operation, when the arthritis is too bad, what are we to do? What is the net effect of this loss of money to the system?

One of the first things that we see is the waiting time that many Canadians experience when they or a loved one needs a health care service. For instance, in 1993 if a person wanted to see a specialist, on average he or she would have waited 3.7 weeks to see a specialist in Canada. In 1998, five years later, the average waiting time would have increased 38%, up 1.5 weeks. Is that acceptable in a country which is purported to have the best health care system in the world?

Many of us may have experienced even longer waiting times, as these times vary from region to region and according to the specialist who is required. We have all heard the horror stories of the cancer patient who needs radiation treatment and is forced to wait 10, 12 or 14 weeks, and in some cases much longer, for treatment to begin.

I recently heard a gentleman on a radio talk show which originated in Vancouver at CKNW. The program spent a whole week on the health care system in Canada. This gentleman phoned in and told the very sad story of his wife who, at one point in her life, had been discovered to have a very small spot on her liver. The waiting time between the time she could get to a specialist and then eventually get treatment for her disease was so long that she died in the process. That is the sad story, repeated time and time again across Canada, because of the inadequacies of our health care system. It has to change.

• (1100)

It is at that personal level when it actually affects people that the federal government loses its credibility. While it looks at the money it has failed to recognize the human quotient. The cancer patient, the person waiting for an organ transplant, the elderly family member who is immobile and requires a hip replacement are people who have feelings. They may be in pain or their quality of life may have been diminished. They have family members, loved ones around them. They may be missing work and therefore unable to fully provide for their families and contribute to the economy both locally and nationally.

The real impact of the serious health care crisis in Canada is not just monetary. It is flesh and blood. As people are forced to new levels of stress, they are forced to make difficult choices for their loved ones.

There are lots of ways to split up the problem. We could look at the number of hospital beds that have closed. We could acknowledge the doctor shortage in rural areas, the inadequate pay level of nurses and the conditions that many of them work under. We could tabulate the tax level and the effect of the brain drain and losing

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some of our best and brightest medical people to south of the border.

However the Liberals will never acknowledge that this is a problem of their own doing. This is a problem they have created by wantonly cutting the Canadian health and social transfer and failing to keep the principles of universality without realizing the full effect upon the people who need to use the health care system.

As the official opposition we believe it is important to address all these issues, to get them on the table, and to have this huge consultation from coast to coast with medical people, with professionals, with researchers and with Canadians. We need to find new and better ways to cure the diseases that affect those around us: our loved ones, our friends, and in some cases ourselves.

As we enter the 21st century communication and technology are moving at an unprecedented pace. As we all know, it is now possible to do work, research and communicate worldwide through the benefits of Internet and e-mail.

This brings us directly to Bill C-13, a bill to create the Canadian institutes of health research. In spite of the concerns I have about the government's handling of health care, I acknowledge that this is a good step forward on behalf of the government, and that is why we support it.

The technology available today allows an individual or a small company the opportunity to work and communicate with a major university, a public institution or a private company. I believe the sharing of data, theories and information between large and small parties, regardless of location, has the potential to be of enormous benefit to all Canadians, and indeed citizens of the world.

While I support the bill I believe, however, that there are ways that the bill could be improved. We are always in need of improvement. Mr. Speaker, I am sure you would agree that you are not perfect. I am not perfect and none of the bills in the House are perfect.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to several issues. I believe the bill should have a new section, for instance, limiting administrative bureaucracy to a maximum of 5% of the total budget of the CIHR.

While the scandal continues over the HRDC grants and the damning audits pouring out of the department of Indian affairs, the EDC and other financial fiascos will undoubtedly be added to the list, it is imperative that transparent and accountable financial controls be placed upon all government spending.

I suggest that Bill C-13 should contain directives that the governing council must ensure that no more than 5% of its annual budget is directed toward administrative expenses, using definitions that are normally applied to departments by the treasury board.

I believe, if handled appropriately and based upon the positive results received through research, that the CIHR should strive for partial or complete self-sufficiency based upon funds raised through new medical technology, through the use of patents, licensing, copyrights, industrial designs, trademarks, trade secrets or other like property rights held, controlled or administered by the CIHR. There exists the opportunity for the Canadian institutes of health research to recoup a portion of the public dollars invested in research institutes. It is a novel idea. Imagine a government agency that actually recovers financial resources rather than simply spends them.

• (1105)

I also believe that it is an opportune time to ensure that the selection of the research that will be funded through the CIHR will be based upon scientific merit. The allocation research funding should be based upon the validity of the project, not on the basis of employment equity groups or one province versus another. Funding should be upon merit alone.

If the goal of the CIHR is to strengthen and ensure that we have improved health for Canadians through more effective health services and products and a strengthened Canadian health care system, there must be a transparent and accountable process using standard acceptable accounting procedures. The research must be valid and likewise the financial accountability must be clear as well.

I also believe that this act and the Standing Committee on Health itself missed an opportunity to strengthen the section of the bill dealing with ethics. Topics such as biomedical research, reproductive technology, gene therapy advancements and other future ethical issues will be a part of future medical research.

While not all solutions may be determined now, the framework for an ethics board will provide future direction. The preamble should state that it will take into consideration ethical issues with special attention to the highest value and dignity accorded to human life. This is an issue that will be fraught with contention in the future and a resolution process should be included.

As we have witnessed most recently with the HRDC debacle, political patronage cannot and must not be part of the decision making process. The research that is done must be seen to be without political interference. The decisions must be seen as being valid and necessary and with the broad based support of Canadian medical researchers. Without this support the CIHR will only be viewed as another Liberal slush fund.

The CIHR should be subject to a parliamentary review every five years. While I support the premise of the CIHR, there may come a

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time in the future that it needs to be revisited, revised, modernized or perhaps eliminated together with something better that comes along. That is exactly what we did with the Canadian Alliance. We now have the opportunity to ensure that we undertake such a review on a regular basis.

If the CIHR remains the most appropriate venue for conducting health research then we should endorse the program and ensure that it continues. If it can be improved we need to take the necessary steps to improve it for the next five years. We should always look ahead to the future, never looking backward.

As with any organization consistency is appropriate. However I also believe that positive gains could be made by bringing in new council members. By having a maximum of three terms for each council member, there is sufficient time to ensure consistency over the long term and yet allow a regular planned turnover of council members, thus ensuring a steady influx of new thoughts and ideas. Furthermore, for the same reasons I believe each member of the advisory board should serve a term of no more than five years and a maximum of three terms.

If the CIHR is to begin and remain non-political, I would support the premise that all governor in council appointments be ratified by the Standing Committee on Health by a two-thirds majority. The accountability process must extend to all aspects of the CIHR. In order to achieve this level of transparency the membership should be ratified by more than just the government majority on the Standing Committee on Health. Such appointments should move beyond the partisan politics of the House and ensure that the health of all Canadians is maintained.

Another aspect of transparency should extend to the companies and individuals that grants and resource funds are allocated to. At no time should there be a connection between members of the governing council, institute chairs and the recipients of the resources. To do otherwise does not ensure that the allocation remains transparent. Canadians are demanding full government accountability.

● (1110)

In order to achieve financial accountability and transparency through the CIHR I believe the report of the auditor general should be made public, for without public accountability all the measures in the world are for nought.

With the use of the auditor general and his reporting mechanism to all Canadians we can be assured that the highlights and low lights of the financial accountability of the CIHR will be seen by all.

My final point on the bill is to enshrine a method of rebuttal within the CIHR. The governing council should develop a subcom-

mittee that can act as an ombudsman for complaints brought forward by researchers or their private sector partners. We all recognize that disagreements will occur. Rather than wait for a problem to arise, let us put a dispute resolution process in place. It would take so little effort now, and yet the bill does not contain this kind of allowance.

I am in favour of the intent of Bill C-13. I believe the bill has the potential to partially address the problems of our medical brain drain. We need to be sure to attract and keep our best and brightest. Our loss of these people is definitely some other country's gain. We cannot allow this to continue.

Of course a major part of this problem involves taxes. However I will save that particular part of my argument for another day. Bill C-13 is an improvement over the Medical Research Council. Throughout the committee hearings we heard from numerous medical and associated groups which asked that the bill be passed at our earliest convenience, and I agree with their comments.

The bill could be better, as any bill could be better, but the comments I have offered today could improve Bill C-13 in the future. In the broader perspective the Canadian Alliance and I personally are very happy to support the bill.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will try to pull myself together, even though I am not in a great mood, and begin by saying that we agree with the principle of the bill, but we will not be able to support it at third reading.

We tabled amendments, on which I will elaborate later on and which would have greatly improved this bill and made it much more acceptable. More importantly, these amendments would have made the bill extremely compatible with the scientific policy statement proposed by the Quebec department of science and technology, while also making it respectful of Quebec and of its policies in the area of science and technology.

Be that as it may, committee members from both the government and the opposition worked very hard. I do not think I missed a single committee meeting and I took a great interest in this issue, which involves research and a major concern to us, namely health.

Let us begin by the beginning. If we wanted to look at the historical background of this legislation, we would go back to 1994. At the time, I was a young member of parliament full of idealism, an idealism that is not totally gone. A report published by the OECD indicates that Canada lags far behind when it comes to public spending on research. During the pre-1994 years, Canada was far behind the other OECD members.

Not only is Canada far behind in terms of public spending and initiatives to promote research, but research is also fragmented,

there is a lack of co-ordination and the myth of Professor Calculus, whom our young pages will surely remember, a researcher who works in isolation in his laboratory and has little interaction with the other members of the scientific community, was somewhat pertinent here in Canada, in the early nineties.

• (1115)

This is why we support the bill in its intent, which is to put researchers in contact with one another and to establish virtual research networks from very precise thematic orientations so that they can communicate their results to one another.

A few months ago, the government established a board of directors consisting then and now of really interesting people from all walks of life. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their involvement in the scientific community, because some of them have been involved for many years.

I am thinking of Dr. Henry Friesen who, as everybody knows, chaired the Medical Research Council of Canada. The bill before us will abolish this council. I am thinking, of course, of Michel Bureau, from the Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec, who also worked very hard to guide the interim board of directors. I am thinking of Andrée Demers, the director of the research group on the social aspects of prevention, of Eric Maldoff, who is a lawyer, which goes to show that one may be trained in law and be interested in research, of Dr. Yves Morin, professor emeritus at the faculty of medicine, of Cameron Mustard, the director of research at the Institute for Work and Health, of Dr. Louise Nadeau, an associate professor, and of Dr. Neda L. Chapel.

I also want to thank Maria Knoppers, an assistant professor at the University of Montreal faculty of law, who is a specialist on ethical issues relating to research protocols and on the precautions to take to ensure that research complies with the ethical standards that we are entitled to expect.

I will make a digression to point out that it is rather strange to see that research work has been done in Canada for over 50 years but the government has never felt the need to put in place a policy on ethics in research. There are of course granting agencies such as the Medical Research Council, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council that came together and drafted a common policy. The fact remains however that the government itself has failed to do it.

I think of course of Paul Lucas, whom I know, as I have been very interested in the whole question of drug patent review, who is the chairman and chief executive officer of Glaxo in Mississauga. I think of Robert Mackenzie, who is the dean of advanced studies research at McGill University; of Murray Martin, the chairman of the board of the Vancouver Hospital; of Robert Perrault, a medical consultant in heart health; of Robert Pritchard, from the University

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of Toronto, and the list goes on. We must remember, however, that a provisional governing council has suggested directions.

The intent of the bill before us is to get researchers into a network so that the whole scientific community can benefit from the results of the work done by a particular group of researchers.

This is not what we have a problem with, and I will have an opportunity to revert to this point. What we do have a problem with is the fact that—and we find this quite strange—the provinces have not been associated with this bill. We will have some numbers to provide on this later. We know there is a great deal of catching up to do in Quebec, in the field of *intra muros* research, research done in federal laboratories.

For example, Quebec, which is developing a science policy, has provided \$400 million over two years. Quebec, which represents 25% of the population, has managed to provide in its budget \$400 million for research over two years, while the federal government will provide \$500 million for all of Canada, at the most important point in the establishment of Canadian institutes of health research. It seems to me it would have been interesting to associate the provinces with this, to agree to take their recommendations into consideration.

• (1120)

It is especially important to recognize that health care is a provincial jurisdiction. The fact still remains that, when the government was seeking to establish the Canadian institutes of health research, it called on a number of actors. It called on people from industry, representatives of consumer groups, colleges and universities, which are responsible, as we know, for most health research; it also called on the hospitals. As I said, the provinces were consulted very weakly, very reservedly and very timidly.

To show where things stand in health research, I will take the year 1998 as an example. I will take great care to speak slowly. I realize that, in the past, I have made things a bit difficult for the House interpreters; I was criticized for it and, in the next few months, I intend to adjust my speed.

Members of the House will surely join me in applauding the interpreters who work very hard for us. Thus, it is important that we keep delivering our speeches calmly, which makes them easier to understand anyway.

I was saying that, according to available data for 1998, which is therefore fairly up to date, \$2.3 billion was spent on health research. For clarity sake, here is a breakdown of how the responsibilities were divided: 27% of health research was carried out by companies and 7% by provincial governments. This is a national average. Understandably, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec invest more; an average being a measure of the central tendency, this can reflect a biased reality.

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The federal government invested 16% of the funding available for research, while the others, namely private lenders, invested 18%; foreign sources, 8%; private non-profit organizations, 12%; and hospitals, universities and institutes, 12 %.

We can see that it is primarily the private sector that is funding research in Canada, when the total of \$2.3 billion is broken down by source.

However, if we were to apportion intra-muros research mandates, namely the research being done by public institutions—as opposed to extra-muros research which is done in the private sector—by various federal laboratories and by various governments, the breakdown would be as follows: hospitals fund 18% of research and private non-profit organisations, 6%.

During the 1990s, the OECD reminded us that the federal government, which funds only 3% of the research, had to make a effort to catch up.

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel:** This is truly shameful.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** This is truly shameful. I agree with my colleague from Chambly, who is a trained notary. I like to point that out because I know he has pleasant memories of his training years on the North Shore, if I am not mistaken—

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel:** At Laval University.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** At Laval University. If memory serves, he also hated administrative law, yet it does not prevent him from having an interest for politics.

Furthermore, provincial governments fund 1% and the private sector, through mandates and partnerships with the public sector, funds 27%. The most interesting information I want to point out is the fact that hospitals and universities fund 45% of research.

• (1125)

Close to 50% of health research is performed in hospitals and universities. It is therefore important to have a bill which will take this fact into account.

If I asked who is responsible for health institutions and hospitals, who has jurisdiction constitutionally, I believe that we would all be tempted to answer that it is, of course, the provinces.

We are facing a situation we have questions about. The federal government wants to invest in research and development. I remind the House that the Bloc Québécois, an eminently responsible political formation, has always asked an investment be made in research.

I wish you had been there in 1993 during the electoral campaign led by an extraordinary campaigner, Lucien Bouchard. The current

Premier of Quebec and his team of candidates asked the federal government to put an end to our historical lag in the area of research and development, with data to support that request. We repeated the request in 1997.

But it took two electoral campaigns, masterfully led by the Bloc Québécois in Quebec, for the federal government to finally understand this request and to invest in research. The government is to be thanked for investing in research, but there is a problem.

I am convinced that my colleague, the member for Chambly, will agree. Let me digress for a moment just to say that, according to the referendum results, the riding where participation was the highest in 1995 is Chambly. I know that down deep the member for Chambly must be very proud of that fact.

Getting back to the subject at hand, I was saying that we hope there will be some major investments in health research. However, could we not be led to believe—I ask the question to my colleagues who all seem extremely interested in that bill—that what we have here is a nation building bill? By presenting this bill on Canadian institutes of health research, is the federal government not looking for greater visibility?

If its main objective were to consolidate biomedical research and to promote greater interaction between researchers who work in that field, it could have allocated money to the provinces. Members should not forget that Quebec has its Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec, chaired by Dr. Bureau. Quebec has had a policy for several years already and has been investing in research and has defined major directions.

There is a paradox in the bill. There is an insistence on nation building and, yet, there is a divorce between where the research will be conducted and the responsibility the Canadian government wants to have confirmed by this bill.

This is not to say that historically research is exclusively a provincial jurisdiction. No. We know better on this side of the House than to suggest that. What we say, however, is that it might have been more interesting, for efficiency's sake and out of respect for the provinces, to allocate money to existing initiatives, especially considering that half of the medical research is done in universities and hospitals, which are themselves agents of the provinces.

The Government of Quebec is not comfortable with such a bill. Things would have been a lot simpler if the government had accepted the amendments moved by the opposition.

• (1130)

We said “Yes, let us establish institutes of health research.” I will, if I may, digress, because if people take a cursory glance at the

bill, they may get the impression—and the minister said this many times publicly—that 15 institutes will be established.

The government says that there will a budget of \$240 million to begin with, that \$500 million will be provided at the most crucial phase, in 2001-2002, that the Canadian institutes of health research will have a thematic focus.

Each institute will have four major research focuses: bio-medical research, clinical research, research to improve people's health of populations and research on our health care system. Yet, because I have been extremely vigilant in examining this bill, I noticed that there will be only one institute and that the governing council is very centralized.

This centralized institute will oversee 15 other institutes that are not really independent. They will not have genuine operational independence, at least not according to what is provided in this bill. This is a trap and is of concern to us.

Just to show that there is no genuine operational independence, the bill provides that all equipment acquired shall remain the property of the federal crown. All research projects submitted to the different advisory committees in each institute and approved by them will have to get the approval of the governing council. I think members will agree that we have seen better instances of operational independence.

There is another paradox. The chairperson of the governing council and the chief executive officer are the same person. I hope that the parliamentary secretary, my friend from Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, with whom I share a passion for Montreal, will remember that we asked him questions about that in committee. We asked him why the two functions were performed by the same person.

I will give an example for the enlightenment of my colleague, the parliamentary secretary. Let us take the Régie des installations olympiques—\$500 million is a lot of money—whose board of directors recently had a new roof made for the stadium. This organization has a budget of less than \$500 million. Yet, as is the case with most crown corporations and other public organizations, it was felt that the chairperson of the board and the chief executive officer ought to be two different persons.

Such a distinction is important and, according to philosopher Montesquieu, it is essential in order to have checks and balances. The chief executive officer must make decisions for the day to day administration of the health institutes so they can fulfil their terms of reference.

The role of the chairperson of the governing council is one of supervision and control, that of a watchdog. Are we to conclude that this role of monitoring, of control, this eminently desirable watchdog role when the public's money is concerned, can be properly exercised when we realize the chairman of the board and

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the CEO are one and the same person? Really now, that makes no sense.

The government has failed in its duty. I repeat, we are in favour of the principle of this bill. We acknowledge the government's desire to create links, forums for interaction, for exchange, for focusing researchers' efforts. We agree that this is the path modern research needs to take, but we believe this bill has a certain number of flaws, and have sought to improve it.

• (1135)

I must admit, however, that the government has unfortunately turned a deaf ear to our amendments. It has not, in fact, accepted a single one. We introduced about thirty of them, each one more relevant than the last, and these were amendments which witnesses had called for. Unfortunately, the government turned a deaf ear to them. That is its prerogative, but I am forced to say that the bill would have benefited considerably from them.

Before going into any further detail on the research institutes, I would like to point out that, on February 14, the Government of Quebec, the government of Lucien Bouchard, through Mrs. Marois, the Minister of State for Health, and Jean Rochon, whose name is always mentioned with pleasure in this House because of his past accomplishments, wrote to the Minister of Health, over the signatures of the two ministers but on behalf of the entire government, to express its opposition.

I will read the letter in question, if I may, for the sake of transparency. I will also say that we moved 33 amendments of every nature, and that it would have been desirable for the government to agree to them. I will now begin reading the letter:

This is pursuant to the introduction in the House of Commons, on November 4, 1999, of Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, to repeal the Medical Research Council Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Your government had already announced, in its February 1999 budget, that this new structure would be responsible for distributing \$240 million to fund research projects until the year 2001-2002.

Therefore, it is no surprise that Bill C-13 was welcomed by the scientific and research community which, needless to say, was severely affected by the federal cuts made in recent years.

I will continue reading this letter, but I want to take this opportunity to remind the House that the federal government cut \$33 billion in cash transfers and in transfer payments to the provinces. Obviously, when the government makes cuts to transfer payments, it affects the provinces' ability to support the research efforts of the various granting agencies for which they have primary responsibility.

The next excerpt is very important. I do not know if my comments can be heard in dolby or in stereo, but I hope they will be clearly heard in the House, particularly by the Parliamentary

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Secretary to the Minister of Health and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, who is here with us today.

While the Government of Quebec shares and understands the satisfaction expressed by the research community in Quebec in that regard and recognizes that it is necessary for our two governments to co-operate in the area of research, it is troubled—

The term used here is quite strong, and meant to be. Could someone give me the Latin root of the word troubled? Does the hon. member for Chambly remember?

**Mr. Yvon Charbonneau:** It comes from the word trouble.

**Mr. Réal Ménard:** It comes from the word trouble, as in troublemaker. The Government of Quebec is troubled. I will go back to the letter:

—by the fact that Bill C-13 seems, unfortunately, to reflect the federal government's determination to exceed its jurisdictions by trivializing those of the provinces and by distorting the sharing of powers provided for under the Canadian Constitution.

The fact that a government would use such strong wording as constitutional powers is quite something.

• (1140)

The letter further states:

Health is an area under provincial jurisdiction. In fact, what successive governments in Quebec have always claimed has indeed been recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada in various matters, including in *Bell Canada v Quebec*.

The Government of Quebec reminds the federal government that health is first and foremost an area under provincial jurisdiction, as recognized by the supreme court. In that context, certain aspects of your bill reflect a centralizing vision and a desire to reduce the provinces' powers and responsibilities, with regard to health, which we cannot accept.

In other words, the Government of Quebec wants funding for research, but it has some concerns about the fact that this bill could open the door to interventionism and interference. With regard to research, the letter says:

The approach based on networking, interdisciplinarity and the pooling of knowledge and experience is part of a trend that already exists in Quebec, where researchers in several areas are already used to working as part of a network on an interdisciplinary or inter-university basis.

Of course, the Government of Quebec, which, each year, allocates more than adequate budgets to research funding, supports the objectives of this networking approach.

The federal government must not think that there is anything new in asking researchers to do team work. It is a practice that the Government of Quebec has enshrined in its research policies.

I apologize if sometimes I do not keep still, but by way of historical background, I will remind the House that Henri Bourassa, whose last nationalist speech was delivered in the eastern townships, used to move or walk about a lot when he was a member

of this House. I have read that in the archives. I will stay close to my microphone, because technology is much more advanced now, but that does not mean that we are not inspired by Henri Bourassa.

He was an ultramontane. He was also a very committed nationalist who opposed the conscription bill motion tabled in this House, as the member for Chambly undoubtedly knows since he is a scholar.

The Quebec government blames the federal government for not consulting it. I read further and I hope you will get the gist of the letter:

However, by giving the institutes a leading and centralizing role in health research and by mentioning the development and implementation of an integrated health policy, Bill C-13 reflects a federal government's desire to assume responsibilities it does not have in that area under the Constitution.

I mentioned Henri Bourassa for a reason. We have had young nationalists, like Henri Bourassa and Armand Lavergne, who were great orators. Why is there a strong sovereignist movement constantly striving to assert itself, which is about to succeed? Because throughout Quebec's history, and that of Canada, the roles assigned to each level of government have systematically not been respected.

It is very important to note that this government's health department alone employs more public servants than all the provincial departments, whose primary responsibility is health.

• (1145)

This is typical of Canadian history. The history of Canada is riddled with encroachments, all unjustified constitutionally, on other jurisdictions.

If I may, I would like to quote again Ministers Rochon and Marois:

There is cause for concern to have a bill which, while recognizing the provinces' role in health, tries to relegate them to the level of actors, just like any other Canadian or foreign individual or organization that have an interest in health.

This is quite something. Clause 4 of the bill puts the provinces and voluntary organizations on an equal footing. We have nothing against voluntary organizations. We believe on the subject of Canadian institutes of health research, all sectors having an interest in research, namely consumers, voluntary organizations and industry, should be heard.

I am sure members will agree that there is nevertheless a distinction between the voluntary and community and the various governments. The bill pays lip service to co-operation between the federal government and the provinces, despite the fact that health care is primarily a provincial jurisdiction.



I believe that the Government of Quebec is right to be concerned by this bill and that we were also right in moving more than 30 amendments to the bill.

The letter goes on:

The Government of Quebec can only welcome any action taken by the federal government to increase the funding of health research, as long as such action does not encroach on Quebec's responsibilities and role in this area as well as in other areas which it considers a priority.

However, it is totally unacceptable for your government, under the guise of action taken in the area of research, through agencies under its control, to seek to have an influence on the directions, the management and the implementation of health care services and programs over which, it must be pointed out, the federal government has no jurisdiction.

I believe members get the point of this letter. At the end of my speech, I will seek unanimous consent of the House to table this letter so that every member can benefit from of it.

I also want to emphasize that the Quebec government has priorities. It has identified areas where it has developed know-how, a specific expertise.

I am referring to the whole area of genome, heredity and genetics. I am referring also to AIDS. AIDS is part of the large family of concerns that is virology and immunology. Quebec has concentrated on its territory a number of researchers extremely conversant with broad international trends in that field of research. I am also thinking of cancer, which has taken an enormous toll, as we know.

I dare hope that in establishing the Canadian institutes of health research the government will take into account the strengths and the weaknesses of every province.

Mr. Speaker, you are indicating that I have only three minutes left. That is unbelievable; it feels like I just started to make a number of important points. I will have to speak quickly of the amendments we have put forward. I have only three minutes left, but it is not totally unthinkable that I could get the unanimous consent of the House to continue my speech. In the interests of good relations, it would certainly be possible to obtain such consent, as ought to be the case, obviously.

• (1150)

I would like to recall five of our amendments. We would have liked to have the following in the preamble:

Whereas Parliament recognizes the full jurisdiction of the provinces over health services—

Had the government agreed to incorporate this amendment in the bill, we would have voted for Bill C-13. We think it important in the field of health to establish clearly that the provinces have the primary responsibility.

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We also would have liked to amend clause 4 as follows:

—by replacing lines 23 to 26 on page four with the following:

(iii) have the provinces participate in the choice of directions and decisions for research; and

This takes no special talent. It seems to me there is nothing outlandish in that.

In another type of amendment we would have liked to see agreed to, with regard to clause 5, we said that there was a need to:

(b.1) involve the provinces in the choice of directions and decisions and form partnerships with them;

This means more than just co-operating. It recognizes the central role of the provinces, which must be involved in the choice and in the directions.

The most significant I would have liked to see agreed to, in addition to the recognition that this is a matter of provincial jurisdiction, is the one in which we said:

7.1 The Governor in Council shall appoint the President of the CIHR and the—members of the governing council from lists of names provided by the provinces.

Would this not have been a good example of co-operative federalism, as the provinces could make proposals? Not only would they make proposals, but the federal government would agree to draw, for the appointments to the various governing councils and in the various institutes of health research, on the lists provided by the provinces.

In view of the wild enthusiasm my speech elicited, I wondered, Mr. Speaker, if you could make sure that the letter sent to us by the Quebec ministers of health and research be first made public for the benefit of all parliamentarians.

I will conclude on three points. This is a nation building bill. We would have been pleased to vote for it had the responsibilities of the provinces been recognized. Despite all, we are pleased the federal government is investing in research. I hope as things unfold that the federal government will involve the provinces and their networks of researchers.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent of the House to allow the hon. member to table the documents to which he has alluded?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

[English]

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity on behalf of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party to express all our concerns about Bill C-13.

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There is no question we are talking about a bill that makes progress in terms of health research in this country today. The New Democratic Party from day one has indicated that we support the principle of the bill.

We support the idea of increased dollars for health research. We support the idea of transforming the country's health research agenda to ensure that it includes the whole range of health concerns, that it approaches health care and health research on a holistic basis and that it looks not only at biomedical research and applied research, but also at the soundness of our health care system and those determinants of ill health so much at the heart of everything we are dealing with today.

I want to make it perfectly clear that we support the idea and spirit of the bill. However, at the outset when the bill was before the House at second reading we said that we had serious concerns which we were prepared to raise at committee and would propose serious and constructive amendments. We looked to the government to listen to those concerns and to respond where those concerns were clearly identified and reinforced by testimony from witnesses.

• (1155)

I have to say with some anger and bitterness that we were not successful for one second in moving the government to consider any changes to the bill. From the beginning of the committee process right through to the completion of report stage yesterday, we did not have the ear of the government. We did not have any kind of interest on the part of Liberal members in improving the bill to address those concerns.

We are very disappointed and disturbed at the arrogance of the government in its refusal to broaden its approach to allow for democratic participation on the part of Canadians everywhere. It is with profound regret that today we stand in the House to express our opposition to Bill C-13.

Let me put it in the context of the health care system as a whole because one cannot, as some have tried to do in the House today, separate our health care system from our health research agenda.

All members in the House know that we have very deeply felt concerns about the general direction of our health care system. Time and time again we have raised the degree to which our health care system is being privatized. We have asked the government time and time again to provide leadership and direction to ensure that the private sector is not the major dominant force in our health care sector.

It is no coincidence that today we are dealing with Bill C-13 at the height of Canadians' concerns on the future of medicare and our health care system. It is interesting to note that today as we debate this bill there are Canadians all over this city and in this place, the House of Commons, talking to, lobbying and pressuring Liberal members of parliament to rethink their direction on health

care and for the government to come to its senses on what Canadians treasure the most and what needs to be done. Privatization of the health care system on the one hand cannot be considered separately from what is being done by the government in terms of health research on the other hand.

From the beginning we have had four or five major concerns with Bill C-13. We have tried to seek changes in those areas. We have been unsuccessful so our concerns remain. Let me clearly outline those major concerns with the hope at this last minute of having the ear of the parliamentary secretary and other members of the Liberal government. It is hoped that we will be able to make some changes at the last moment or at least work toward redressing these serious issues in the future.

The first concern is the degree to which our health care system is being privatized and commercialized. This bill is about research. It is about the role of the Canadian government in advancing public health research. The bill is about how we can actually address the causes of ill health and move to make our system more efficient and equitable. One of the measures of a bill is the extent to which it ensures that the public good is preserved and that there is no explicit reference in legislation to allow the private sector to take precedence over the public agenda.

Our concerns have been very clearly outlined in the House and at committee on a number of occasions. Those feelings, sentiments and opinions have been reinforced by dozens of witnesses who appeared before the committee and made representations to the government.

• (1200)

Obviously, if we are concerned and interested in advancing the public research agenda in the country today, we have to take extra special steps to ensure that the public good is protected at all costs.

This bill, however transformative in nature, does not address the fundamental question of ensuring that the public good is paramount at all costs. The bill leaves open the question of the degree to which commercial efforts, private health sector forces, can have control over the health care agenda and the health research agenda in the country today.

Many of the reputable organizations that appeared before the committee raised those concerns. I do not need to go through the whole list, but I remind members that this is not an opinion coming from one small part of the country. It is not just coming from the New Democratic Party members. It is a concern that was raised by professionals, health activists and ordinary citizens from one end of the country to the other. When it comes to health research, the role of the government should be to protect the public interest and advance the public good.

While this bill makes progress in terms of transforming our health research agenda, it does not address that fundamental

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question of ensuring the public good is paramount. If we look at the bill we will clearly see the reference to commercialization as part of one of the objectives of the new Canadian institutes for health research.

Our objective at committee was straightforward and simple. While acknowledging the role of the private sector in Canada today and the role of the government in ensuring the commercial advantage of Canadian businesses in society, we felt that the bill should specify that the public good was paramount. We tried to convince the government to take a simple step and acknowledge that concern and eliminate any ambiguity in the bill. We called for the government to entrench in this legislation words that would show that any commercialization of research would be secondary to the public interest.

We presented some 15 amendments, all of which were turned down by the government. They were hardly considered for a moment by the government. We suggested that the government could have, in all seriousness, changed the wording of the bill and improved it by adding the words "consistent with the public interest". Does this not sound simple? It only had to add the words "consistent with the public interest" so that there would be no ambiguity and no doubts remaining about who was controlling the agenda.

Liberal members on the committee gathered together, brought their members out and defeated that straightforward proposition to ensure that the public interest was protected.

How in good conscience can we support a bill that could not even ensure that a fundamental principle was attached to the content? How can we support the government's move to change the research agenda if it is not prepared to be upfront and clear about the direction in which it is taking the country? I do not think we are asking too much by requesting the government to remove that ambiguity and protect the public interest. I do not think it is too much given the kinds of incidents and situations we are dealing with on a day to day basis.

I do not have to remind members about the situation facing Dr. Nancy Olivieri, a scientist who did considerable research on a particular drug dealing with—

**Mr. John Solomon:** A very good scientist.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** Yes, a very good scientist, as my colleague from Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre just said. She was doing research on a particular drug called L1. She was trying to help people with a blood disease called thalassemia and who needed repeated transfusions. She worked very hard on this drug and came to the conclusion that the side effects might be greater than the actual benefits. She chose to inform the drug companies sponsoring this research about those concerns. As a result of that expression of concern, she was silenced. To this day, she is still

fighting for the right as a scientist to operate with integrity and to ensure full disclosure of any information that would be important in terms of the public good and the public interest.

• (1205 )

I do not need to tell members about Dr. Anne Holbrook, with the Centre for Evaluation of Medicines at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton, Ontario, who was threatened recently with a lawsuit by a major pharmaceutical company when her findings showed that the company's widely sold ulcer medication had essentially the same effect as two cheaper medicines.

I do not need to tell members about the outcry from scientists in the government's own Bureau of Veterinary Drugs who felt pressured by representatives of one of Canada's largest drug companies, Monsanto Canada Inc., on the whole issue of reviewing bovine growth hormone, or BST.

I do not need to tell members about how the government, in one of its first initiatives when it took office in 1997, eliminated the drug research bureau, the one independent body within government to provide ongoing analysis on an independent basis of drugs approved in this country.

I do not need to tell members about how the government gutted the food research laboratory and how the government has, at every step of the way, weakened the capacity of government to ensure ongoing, independent, science based research around the drugs Canadians must take, the food we eat and the medical devices that are essential for health and well-being.

I do not need to tell members about the auditor general's recent report, following its review of the most serious incident of food borne disease in this country to date. It documented very clearly the question of scientific investigation being influenced by owners of, in this case, a meat packing plant and documented interference right from beginning to end around the safety of Canadians when it came to food products being purchased in grocery stores today.

I do not need to tell members about the recent decision by the government to fast track drugs through a new provision that has no basis in law, the notice of compliance with conditions.

I do not need to tell members about how our whole Health Protection Branch has been under tremendous change and direction from the government to deregulate, privatize and off-load.

I do not need to tell members about how much danger Canadians are in because the government has made a decision to actually withdraw from the whole area of public research and independent science based investigation in this country today.

I raise all of this so that we can all understand just where this bill fits in with the broad Liberal agenda in the country today, and just

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how much is at risk because we are letting commercialization and privatization rule the day.

My plea today is for us to acknowledge the very important role of government to ensure that the public good is protected, that in whatever partnerships are developed between the private sector, the labour movement and the public sector, that we clearly understand and delineate the rules of government and realize its paramount obligation is, in the final analysis, to uphold the public good.

The whole issue of commercialization was one of our concerns. I see my time is going much more quickly than I expected.

My second concern has to do with the way in which this bill allows for appointments to the governing council. One way we can actually ensure that the public good is paramount is by having very clearly defined requirements in place with respect to appointments to the governing council. The bill does not provide for clear conflict of interest guidelines and regulations, something we tried very hard to get in our amendments that were, as I said at the outset, just ignored by Liberal members on the committee.

The bill permits the appointment of representatives from the pharmaceutical industry, the biotech industry and the medical devices private sector, which carries with it the potential for conflict of interest between the goal we have on one hand of improving the health of Canadians at the lowest possible cost versus the objective of increasing profits on the part of the pharmaceutical industry. This should come as no surprise when we realize that this government, when it was in opposition, promised to nullify the Mulroney patent protection legislation for drug companies but has failed to do so. Not only did it fail to keep its promise, it went a step further over the last number of years and has improved the conditions for brand name drug companies by giving them a greater share of the market and denying Canadians access to cheaper safe drugs.

● (1210)

We presented to the government some very concrete amendments for ensuring conflict of interest provisions were built into this bill to avoid precisely that kind of situation that all Canadians are worried about, and we failed.

We also made a concerted effort to ensure that the board would be more representative of the population by ensuring that smaller provinces, which do not have the ear of government the way stronger provinces have, would have a say on this governing council. We wanted regional balance. We wanted to ensure that the board reflected the population. We asked for gender parity, something the government claims is part of its ongoing philosophy and the way in which it governs as a political party. Did we get gender parity? No, we did not.

We tried to get a commitment from the government for a women's health institute to assist with their goals for promoting women's health policy. We were unsuccessful.

We tried to get the government to commit to addressing in a more serious way environmental and occupational health as part of one of these institutes. We were unsuccessful.

We tried to get a serious commitment from the government around aboriginal health, ensuring a very focused research endeavour in that regard. We were unsuccessful.

Finally, and this is a point I am sure my colleagues across the way will be interested in, we tried very hard, and were looking forward to measures being adopted at the report stage of this bill, to get more transparency and accountability. A five year review was something basic and something we expected would be adopted by the Liberal government when it came to report stage over the last couple of days. Did that happen? No, it did not.

The basic elements of transparency, accountability, protection of the public good over private interests, gender parity and ensuring that we actually have a new transformative research agenda based on population health, based on environmental illness and occupational problems, all of which have not been dealt with by this government.

The government had an opportunity to improve a bill that does make progress and makes an important transition from the Medical Research Council to a more holistic approach to health care but it failed in the final analysis to do what Canadians expected it to do, which was to ensure in that bill absolute guarantees of protection for public good, absolute accountability to the public and openness and transparency in the way it is run.

The government refused to give even a token of consideration to these very important amendments and to the testimony presented to the House of Commons by numerous experts and witnesses.

It is with great regret that we cannot support Bill C-13 in the final analysis. However, we will continue to do whatever we can in the days, weeks and months ahead to ensure that the translation of this legislation into research bodies and organizations that are reflective of the population will be carried out. We will be monitoring the appointment process and the way in which the institutes are established. We will be outspoken in our attempts to ensure that this bill in terms of its noble objectives are actually transformed into action so that the words and the reality are one and the same.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I guess the debate that is taking place here today is one of strange interest because so far all of the parties have indicated that they will be supporting the bill but that they have some reservations about it. I sometimes wish we could actually sit down with each other, maybe in a circle somewhere, and hammer these different ideas out.

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• (1215)

Of course, one always runs a danger when one expresses himself or herself in this Chamber. Come the next election even the slightest nuance of what one says can be misinterpreted, twisted and turned. Therefore, it is tough for me to formulate the question that I want to ask. It is, I suppose, a philosophical question: What is it that actually drives research?

I think of a number of friends who work not only in medical research but in other areas of research. It seems to me that Canada has a very great stifling effect on medical research, in particular because of the fact that we are so entrenched in the socialistic way of thinking. Somehow we do not think that we should reward those who come up with some really good ideas and inventions in the medical field, whereas we are quite willing to give those rewards to people in other areas where perhaps we are even more successful. Is there a Bill Gates on the horizon in the medical area?

I sometimes wonder why we have this great objection to the fact that somehow private enterprise should be involved in both the delivery of health care services and also in the development of new ways of doing things in the medical area.

I do not know whether the hon. member wants to respond. I believe that in the Canadian context we need to reach a balance. I would like to stop punishing people who do good work in medical research, sending them to the United States, which is the only place they feel they can get a reward for the magnitude of the good work they do. I would like that to end.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question and the very thoughtful issues posed by the hon. member.

With respect to his first comment, I too would have liked the opportunity to have avoided this kind of confrontational environment and found a place where we could sit down in a circle to seriously discuss where we are going in terms of health research and how we could balance the different interests in society today, one being the public interest and the public good, the other being the fact that, yes, we cannot as a nation deny that we need private sector involvement in the development of new products and new technologies, as well as ensuring Canada's commercial advantage in the world economy.

However, why do we see a role for the private sector in the bill in terms of driving the research agenda? Our point is very clearly this. There is a role for government to balance the private sector and the public research communities. This bill, in our view, does not make clear the lines. It does not differentiate between those priorities.

What we have said over and over again is that it is the role of government to ensure that the board, the governing council and the

structure that will be put in place will not be geared to allow private commercial interests to determine the agenda or to use public funds for profitability.

I think that is something we surely can agree on, that it is the role of government to fund our academic community, to fund our health research organizations and to develop partnerships appropriate in that context, but not for a bill to outline from the start that the commercial sector in the country has an advantage or is able to set the agenda and use public funds to advance private gain. I think the member would have concerns with that.

I would hope that we would at least understand the role of government in terms of public funds for advancing a public health care system and working on public health research which addresses the root causes of ill health and ensures that we have a much more comprehensive and broad based approach to these very difficult issues.

No one is opposed to the private sector being involved in research. What we are questioning today is the role of government in supporting, aiding and abetting commercialization and privatization to the detriment of the public organization of health care and serving the public good in the final analysis.

• (1220)

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Winnipeg North Centre for her remarks on this very important bill.

I would ask my colleague what distinguishes the New Democratic Party's view of health care from that of the Alliance-Liberal style government we have in the country. Could the member give us some pertinent information as to why we are at this point in health care and on the cutbacks we have seen over the years? Maybe she could give us some information as to actual numbers in terms of cutbacks and the pressures that have been applied to our very important health care system. Who basically drove the Liberal agenda? Was it the Reform Party's drive for two tier health care or the Americanization of the system? Maybe she could give us an overview as to how those positions differ from the NDP's.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that question. It is very pertinent to the debate today. We are at a crossroads in terms of where our health care system will go.

My colleague knows that the New Democratic Party has always stood for a universally accessible, publicly administered health care system. We have been strongly opposed to any move toward two tier, Americanized, privatized health care in this country. The

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same goes for health research. We are very concerned about ensuring that the public good is served at all times.

What is obviously the case in the House today is that the Liberal government has chosen the path of inaction and passive response in the face of those threats from the private sector, and has created the climate and conditions for the likes of Ralph Klein to proceed with the privatization of hospital service in the province of Alberta.

**Mr. John Solomon:** Did you say Ralph Chrétien or Ralph Klein?

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** It could be Ralph Chrétien or Jean Klein. We are talking about two peas in a pod.

I have to say, that is an agenda, from all I have understood and heard recently, which is supported by the Canadian Alliance.

Our biggest worry is that the Liberal government will not be able to stand in the face of the extreme pressure from right wing forces in the country today who want to open up our health care sector to market forces, something which we know will destroy medicare and make the five principles of medicare meaningless. It will put us on a direct path to a system of health care in which, if people have the money, they can get what is needed, when it is needed and at the best quality, versus those who do not have the money, who will have to stand in line and wait for handouts from the government of the day.

Medicare is a model that is worth sharing with the world, not destroying and tearing apart at this critical juncture. The idea of making a system universally accessible to all citizens, regardless of income or where they live in this vast country, is as good today as it was when Tommy Douglas first pioneered the notion.

I would hope that somehow we could convince the Liberal government to address how it has created this situation, with its tremendous cuts to transfer payments to the provinces and its failure to apply the Canada Health Act in the face of the likes of Ralph Klein. Surely it can hear the voices of Canadians from one end of the country to the other crying out for the restoration of funding cuts, for leadership in terms of a new vision of health care and for holding firm to the principles of medicare and upholding the Canada Health Act.

We have a battle ahead of us and I would hope I could convince my colleagues in the Canadian Alliance to rethink their position around private sector involvement in health care and start thinking about how we could creatively develop a public health care system which would be, in the long run, more efficient and more cost effective.

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my 20 minutes with our deputy House leader.

It is a pleasure to take part in this debate today. As my colleague from New Brunswick Southwest has said, it is the first major health bill to come before this parliament. The bill would establish the Canadian institutes of health research. It is worthy of support and we in the PC Party support it because we feel it is a very good initiative.

● (1225)

In the process of supporting it, my colleague from New Brunswick Southwest put forth a number of amendments. However, we know that government members have not been supportive of any of the amendments, even though they sought to make the legislation much better.

I am sure we all agree that this bill is long overdue. This initiative was taken by the United States and most European countries some 25 years ago. We are about 25 years behind the times in setting up these institutes for health research, so it stands to reason that we have a lot of catching up to do. It stands to reason that we have a lot of ground to cover if we want to be competitive with the rest of the world in terms of medical research.

We in the Progressive Conservative Party have other concerns, which include the makeup of the boards and who will pick the people who will sit on the boards. For example, the president of the Canadian institutes of health research shall be appointed by the governor in council to hold office at the pleasure of the government for a term not exceeding five years. The governor in council simply means the cabinet or the prime minister, who will, in the final analysis, appoint the president. As well, each of the 20 members of the governing council will be appointed by the prime minister.

We have a lot of concerns about the appointments. At the end of the day the prime minister has the ability to determine the agenda of the council. We are not saying that will happen on every occasion, but the prime minister does have the ability to determine the agenda of the council. It becomes a question of control. That is why the government is not willing to entertain any changes to the council, how it is set up and who will appoint the people to the governing body.

The bill is good news for Canadians, with the exception of the political overtones attached to it. As my colleague from New Brunswick Southwest has said on a number of occasions, it is incumbent upon the government to tell the House how these institutes will be guided in their work over the next number of years. That is our main concern and the main reason we have introduced the amendments.

We are suggesting that there is a better way to do this. The government had the opportunity to listen to the opposition, and I

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am told by my colleague from New Brunswick Southwest that many of these amendments were discussed in committee and voted down by government members. The government should take a very strong and a very long look at the makeup of these institutes and consider some of the amendments which we have talked about.

The Prime Minister has been around for a long time. He has a history of opposing appointments of this sort, whether appointments to a board, to a council or to the Senate. We are saying that the formula is flawed and the House of Commons is the place to change it.

• (1230)

The bill is good news for Canadians with the exception of who calls the shots. The question goes back to the arm's length relationship with government and the independence that we would like to see associated with these institutes.

Our party cannot see where there will be any independence for these institutes. We think that the strong arm of the government will still be present on the very bodies it has created. We ask the government, is there not a better way to set up a body that will take us into the 21st century in medical research? These are very serious concerns in my view.

Another concern the member for New Brunswick Southwest commented on was the reporting mechanism. There is no provision in the bill that will allow the House to debate the performance of the institutes. We are very much aware the minister will table a report of the institutes on a yearly basis, but that will be the extent of it.

Parliament will not have the opportunity to review the operations of the institutes to determine if the body is making its mark or whether it is missing its mark totally. That is a very legitimate concern. We want the institutes to get off to a good start so that the body will not find itself in the same mess as the health care system finds itself in today.

Over the past few years the country has seen unprecedented amounts of money cut from health care and Canadians have suffered a great deal. The bill is welcomed as a much needed initiative aimed at improving the health of Canadians through a greater network of research institutes. However, it is clear that something must be done to improve health care if the health care institutes are to be successful because it all goes hand in hand.

The minister did not provide stable, long term funding for health care in the budget. Instead he provided a one shot infusion of \$2.5 billion for health and education spread out over four years and spread out over 10 provinces.

The institutes should have their mandate expanded to examine the effect that all of this lack of funding has had upon health care.

Funding has been spread pretty thin over the last four or five budget years, for which the Minister of Health has been responsible.

In my own province of Newfoundland, our share of the \$2.5 billion which has been made available is only \$10 million a year for a four year period. If half that money is used for health care, that will be \$5 million spread over 34 hospitals and health care institutes in the province. That equates to less than \$150,000 per institution, or about the cost of maintaining one extra doctor per institution.

Maybe these institutes should be examining the effect of the lack of funding on the province. Common sense will tell anyone that the amount of money that has been cut from the system today is having a devastating effect upon the provinces.

In short the minister's prescription for the health care system is the same as putting a band-aid on a gaping wound. The health care system needs money. The Liberals seem to run from that. They keep denying the fact that the system needs money saying that a new vision of health care has to be created for the country. It is something they will probably take into an election campaign. One has to wonder if the problem here is that the federal Liberals are more concerned about getting political credit for health care than they are about the actual delivery of health care to our citizens.

• (1235)

I see that my time has expired so I will turn it over to my colleague, the deputy House leader.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, as we can see, when the truth is debated and spoken in the House, nobody speaks. So I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague whose speech has provided, I hope, food for thought for the government.

Little time has been allotted to each member to speak to a bill as important as this one. As my hon. colleague from Newfoundland has said, we are going to support this bill, even though we would have preferred the government to be more open on certain amendments that the Progressive Conservative Party, the real conservative party in Canada, and the other parties, proposed. We would have liked the government to have been more open. I will elaborate a little bit on three or four main themes for discussion or comments on this bill.

First, the provinces were mentioned frequently. My hon. colleague from the Bloc Québécois raised the federal-provincial constitutional and jurisdictional issue. This has been looked into. We are fortunate in the Progressive Conservative Party to have people with a good knowledge of federal-provincial relations and the Constitution. They considered whether, from a legal point of

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view, the bill was consistent with the constitutional laws of Canada. The answer is yes, it is legal.

However, even if it is legal in terms of jurisdictions, because shared jurisdictions do exist, as is the case here, we have no obligation to adopt the Liberal government's way of doing things, which is wanting to control everything and then saying to the provinces "Come to see me afterwards if you are not happy with something".

The government missed a golden opportunity to provide in the bill for much broader participation by the provinces. It forgot about that. Is overlap or duplication of the money invested in research possible? I hope not, but when people do not talk to one another, it is like when a husband and wife go out to buy Christmas gifts. If they do not talk beforehand, they might very well come back with two identical Pokemons for the same child.

In our view, it would have been wise to establish a permanent process in this bill so that the provinces and the other players in research could be partners. It is a matter of attitude and, once again, we find it most damaging even if it is legal. We would like to see the government reconsider it.

Yes, there is more money for research, but I remind members that the bill does not mention any amount. We will have to go from budget to budget to discover the amounts of money that will be made available for research.

My colleague from Newfoundland and Labrador raised the issue of patronage, of what is referred to here as the "governor in council", who appoints a lot of people. I do not know the exact number of people the governor in council is responsible for appointing. Some figures being mentioned are 200, 300, 400, 500, 600 or even 800 people. This includes, of course, the other house. It is a lot of people.

In this case, perhaps the government could have agreed to be a lot more open in appointing members to the governing council. It would have been nice.

Why did the Standing Committee on Health not take the time to look at the list and to listen to those whose names had been suggested? Some raised the question as to why, for example, 50% of the members of the governing council could not be suggested by the provinces. There could have been a certain number for each province or for each region. Why not?

• (1240)

Again, it is a matter of attitude on the part of the government, an attitude that, unfortunately, is not likely to change.

It would have been nice if parliament had been a lot more involved. With this bill creating the institutes, parliament will be

involved once a year and we do not know exactly in what way. The Auditor General of Canada will make his rounds and will report to the minister, who in turn will report to both houses of parliament, but nobody knows what will happen after that.

With all the scandals shaking up the government these days, it would have been nice if, while protecting the confidentiality of the research to be done, it had asked all parties to become its allies to avoid surprises. This government is beginning to have more than its share of scandals, but by involving other political parties, it could say "Look, if there are problems, it is parliament's fault and not the Liberal Party's fault". There could have been a new way of doing things, but the government decided to keep on helping its friends.

We find that somewhat unfortunate. In the area of health and health research, which Quebecers, Ontarians and all Canadians believe is the most important, everybody could have been involved and could have worked together.

That being said, the members of the governing council will be appointed to hold office during pleasure, to use a phrase commonly found in bills. Members are appointed for three years, but during pleasure. In other words, they may be removed, if such is the pleasure of the governor in council or the Prime Minister. They will play musical chairs. It will be like a game of Monopoly where houses and hotels can easily be moved around. The membership of the governing council will be easy to change.

This was seen in government agencies. If someone dares to speak up and raise problems, they may be removed in no time, unbeknownst to parliament. We find it unfortunate. Parliament has a constructive role to play. There are other very important points.

This is also a very complex bill. Reference was made to the role of the private sector. These last few years, Canada has become more open to the world because of free trade. Who was in office in the 1980s? Yes, indeed, it was a Conservative government, and this government implemented free trade. We have opened our business sectors to many more countries, particularly through free trade, but also under the World Trade Organization. It is important to bear that in mind when considering legislation.

I mentioned the private sector's role. Clause 26 of the bill provides that the CIHR may enter into a partnership with other government or corporate bodies, including private corporations. One thing will have to be monitored very closely, however, and the auditor general will certainly do so: the CIHR may incorporate by itself a corporation. When an institute is independent from the government and may duplicate itself, this causes problems. All our questions may not get answered.

I do not want to underestimate the people who will be there, but the bill states that the institute may enter into a partnership, or



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incorporate “by itself or with others a corporation, including a subsidiary”. It might decide to incorporate for a very specific purpose. This is dangerous, because we will lose contact with this institute.

It may also enter into a partnership with governments. I may not be a legal expert, but I was reading the bill and it does say “with any other government”. Great. May it enter into a partnership with the United States, France or agencies from these countries? Perhaps. Is this desirable? Why not? But once again, what is the quality of the parliamentarians’ relationship, the representatives of those who pay taxes?

• (1245)

These issues would not be raised if parliament were much more involved. With regard to the private sector, we will have to look into the structure of the institute to see how royalties and patent rights will be divided. If the institute may incorporate by itself, without coming under the direct control of the auditor general, if it may enter into a partnership with the private sector or with any other government inside or outside the country, to whom will patent and licence royalties belong? These are issues we will look at over time, but it would have been important, to reassure Canadians in general, that parliament played a much greater role in this sector.

My time is up. As I said earlier, we will support this bill, a bill that is 20 years late compared to other major countries.

[English]

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to make a few comments on what I believe to be a very important bill for Canada. Bill C-13 seeks to establish the Canadian institutes of health research.

By way of background so that hon. members will have an idea of some of the dynamics involved with the bill, the Canadian institutes of health research will create a series of institutes developed to link the research and health needs of Canadians. It is a very important concept. It means that we will make every effort to translate health research into health care for Canadians. This will improve the functionality, efficiency and effectiveness of health care. A very important principle is being espoused in the bill.

The institutes created under the Canadian institutes of health research will not be buildings. They will not be institutes that have bricks and mortar. In fact it is a virtual institute that will support the linking of researchers who may be located in universities, hospitals and other research centres to their colleagues in other institutions in other parts of the country and across all disciplines. In today’s society linking people, not physically but technologically and

through our communications vehicles, is extremely important to expand upon the synergy available to us so that people can share ideas and work for the common good of all Canadians.

A network of some 10 to 15 institutes will be established. It will bring together the top research minds to bear on the most critical health challenges and priorities of Canadians. There is no question at all that this is an important step for us to take.

One of the witnesses who appeared before the health committee described the institute as follows. This was echoed by many witnesses, but I thought this was well put. The witness said that this was a public body that would control millions of dollars, in fact about \$500 million of research money, and would probably be “the most decisive institution in Canada with respect to the health of Canadians”. Many other witnesses also said that.

That should not be taken very lightly. This is a very important bill. Notwithstanding the fact that all parties in the House agree with the bill, they may have some concerns about some aspects of the administration of the bill. In fact, no witnesses came before the health committee to argue against the creation of the Canadian institutes of health research.

It is very significant. This will be the replacement vehicle for the Medical Research Council, which heretofore has been responsible for the granting of research moneys. We have to do this right, though. That brings me to basically the theme I want to talk about in my comments: who said other things at committee other than this is a great idea.

• (1250)

I thought it was very interesting that many of the witnesses represented the who’s who of health care and health care research. They all came before the committee and they were talking about how important it was for their area of interest to be one of these new institutes.

We have to think about it for a while, but then we come to the conclusion that there are not enough institutes to provide for all people, all agencies and all groups in health research to have an institute. In other words there will be winners and there will be losers. That is an important aspect of the bill. As a result of the creation of these Canadian institutes of health research there will be losers. The losers will be fighting viciously to make sure everything they can possibly do is done to get their health research area on the agenda of the Canadian institutes of health research.

The very fact that there will be losers means that somebody’s interest is not being addressed. It could very well be the interest of Canadians. It could be the interest of the broad majority of Canadians that may not be fully represented. It is a possibility. I do

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not anticipate that would be the case, but the fact is we will not be able to do everything through this new concept.

A number of other witnesses came before the committee that wanted to talk about the administration of the act which deals with the Canadian institutes of health research. When we consider how so many had come before the committee and praised the creation of this new body, there were some who had some other observations and concerns. Members should ask themselves why anyone would have concerns. What is the motivation?

There are some reasons. It could very well be that what happened under the Medical Research Council was a situation that they were not happy with. They did not want us to take one institution and roll it over into a new institution and be faced with the same kinds of frustrations or problems. In fact some of those concerns were expressed. We have to be honest. As legislators we have to ask questions about why they are raising these issues.

The president and chief executive director of the Canadian Healthcare Association, Mrs. Sharon Sholsberg-Gray, said in her testimony:

To further strengthen this transparency and accountability, we recommended that Bill C-13 include the provision for a parliamentary review every five years. Given what is at stake in terms of innovation, global competitiveness, the health of Canadians, the effectiveness of our health care system, and the enormous amounts of money that will be involved—we hope they'll be even larger amounts those predicted now—a regular parliamentary review seems necessary and appropriate.

It is a signal that something needs to be addressed. Many of these agencies obviously have longstanding linkages with the health care system, with Health Canada, with the Medical Research Council and others. They were obviously very cautious not to be critical, but in a very diplomatic way they were trying to raise issues which might suggest to legislators that we have to be careful about how we are doing this and to make sure that we get it right.

There was also an intervention by Dr. Mary Ellen Jeans of the Canadian Nurses Association who said:

We believe the criteria for the selection for the proposed institutes, for their evaluation and monitoring, should be articulated in the legislation. We'd encourage the addition of a parliamentary review process to ensure true accountability to Canadians. We recommend that it take place very five years.

The theme comes up again. In Dr. Jeans' response to some questions she referred to historical inequities and lack of balance in health research. It is a question that has been posed to legislators to assess what happened and what is happening in the Medical Research Council, and what it is we want to ensure does not translate into the Canadian institutes of health research. She said:

I mean, I would anticipate, five years from now, a significant increase in research that addresses caregiving, quality of life, relief of pain and other symptoms, coping with aging and chronic illnesses, and so on.

• (1255 )

This is the vision of this group of caregivers, the Canadian Nurses Association. She went on to say that we should see that vision being reflected in the mandate and the actions of the Canadian institute of health research.

That is why they recommended a parliamentary review, so that they would have a place to go and tell legislators that they did not get it quite right and ask what changes could be made to make it right. That is why review and evaluation are critical. It was another reference to a concern about what has been going on historically and what should go on in the new institutes of health research.

I want to look at this issue from the standpoint of whether or not there was sufficient opportunity for parliament to have a review. Today the health critic of the Canadian Alliance rose to speak in favour of a five year review. I was absolutely shocked because just last night when I rose to put that motion in the House and ask for a vote on it, the whip of the Canadian Alliance looked me straight in the eye and said no. Unanimous consent was not granted by the Canadian Alliance, yet its health critic rose today and argued quite the opposite.

We need to know why it is that members of the Canadian Alliance can play political games with the health care system of Canada in parliament. Why can they not be consistent? Why can they not stand and be consistent in terms of what they believe in? If they believe in accountability and transparency, they should not have said no last night to the review by parliament. Canadians should know that when it suits their purpose they play politics with important issues related to Canadians. I think that is shameful.

Report stage Motion No. 56, which I had put on the order paper and which was in order, was not moved during report stage. The finance committee was meeting at the same time. I sat in my place at the finance committee and was unable to be here to properly move that motion. I came to the House during report stage debate, still having ample opportunity to put the motion on the table. All parties at that point agreed to provide consent to allow me to move that motion, but members of the Bloc Quebecois said no.

They said no for one simple reason, because my motion said that the review would be conducted by parliament. As we know, parliament as defined includes the House of Commons and the Senate. They withheld their unanimous consent to move this important motion related to accountability and transparency because they wanted me to amend the motion to exclude the Senate. They wanted me to say that the review would be done only by the House of Commons and not by the Senate, so I would have had to eliminate the word parliament to effectively exclude the Senate.

Here again are politics coming into play. I will not question the motivation of members of the Bloc Quebecois on why they wanted

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certain amendments. I am a backbench member of parliament. I came before the House to put a motion to amend the legislation so that the administration of the act dealt with the concern of witnesses and we would have a five year review of the administration of the act. The health minister, after consultation over several weeks, finally agreed and we worked out a way to bring in the resolution in a manner that would be constructive and useful for parliament to add to accountability and transparency.

Ultimately the bottom line result was that the Canadian Alliance, known then as the Reform Party, and the Bloc Quebecois said no. They both said no to transparency and accountability in parliament. They then said no to Canadians with regard to supporting the health care system and supporting research. It was all due to politics, and Canadians should know that.

During the review of report stage motions, and the critic for the New Democratic Party articulated this, a number of resolutions or suggestions were made on how to improve the bill. I thought there were some very interesting questions.

• (1300)

Under the bill the government will make order in council appointments to the Canadian institutes of health research, a governing body. Because they are order in council appointees, they are subject to the conflict of interest guidelines for the public service.

However, clause 10 of Bill C-13 says that the governing council may establish by bylaw an executive committee and other committees of the governing council. It goes on in paragraph 2 to say that the bylaw establishing a committee other than an executive committee may provide for the committee's membership to include persons who are not members of the governing council. In other words, in such an important body which will be responsible for about \$500 million worth of health research expenditure, there will be people who are appointed by the governing council who in fact will not be covered by public service conflict of interest guidelines.

It was an important and valid discussion. Generally in the terms of reference guiding the objectives and the operations of the governing council, certainly something like establishing conflict of interest guidelines for people who are not order in council appointees is an important element. I am sure they will do it. The request was to put it in specifically and I did not disagree. It is on the record.

I am sure the governing council will understand because of the importance and the sensitivity of the institutes of health research, that these kinds of measures are needed. Conflict of interest guidelines are needed to ensure that inappropriate actions are not taking place with regard to commercialization or special interest groups infiltrating committees by virtue of their lobbying of members.

I understand that these people will be of the highest integrity. They will be the best in Canada, guiding the shaping of research in Canada. They will be beyond reproach.

We are talking about an enormous virtual institution that will be influenced daily. If hon. members do not believe that those people will have any influence on the decisions, why is it that so many of them came before the health committee to lobby for one of the institutes to be for their special interest? They came before the health committee for one reason, because they believe they have the opportunity to influence.

We should never risk exposing ourselves to undue influence particularly when it comes to matters of importance. It is not debatable. We have to make sure that all the tools are in place. When I conclude my speech I will outline how I feel that parliament will still have the levers, notwithstanding that we do not have a five year review.

The bill lays out for parliament and Canadians what the governing council will do. The call was that health research objectives, priorities, et cetera should not be tied up with the legislators. They should be independent and at arm's length to make sure that our health care givers, those who are involved in the science of research and development in our health care system, are the ones who will measure the priorities and the importance to Canadians and develop a vision that will not be driven by political interests. That is why it will operate at arm's length.

These are the buzzwords of some of the governing council's objectives: to exercise leadership; to create a robust health research environment; to forge an integrated health research agenda; to encourage disciplinary integration in our health research; to promote and assist in undertaking research that meets the highest international scientific standards; to address emerging health opportunities; to foster the discussion of ethical issues; to promote the dissemination of knowledge; to encourage innovation; to build the capacity of the Canadian health research community; to pursue opportunities providing support for the participation of Canadian science and international collaboration; and to ensure transparency and accountability generally.

The governing council will have the opportunity to run its own show. But as I said, we need to make sure that the vision of the governing council of the Canadian institutes of health research is compatible and consistent with the needs of Canadians and with the objectives and the visions of all the stakeholders in health care in Canada.

• (1305)

We already have mechanisms in place. In January 1999 the Public Policy Forum published a proposed governing structure for

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the Canadian institutes of health research in anticipation of the importance of this to Canadians. This might be the most important institution driving the health care agenda in Canada. We need to think about the governance model.

The Minister of Health is going to be the primary lead on this matter in terms of accountability to parliament. The Canadian institutes of health research are going to be responsible to the Parliament of Canada. The minister has the opportunity to make or to cancel the order in council appointments. The auditor general is going to do an annual review. His report will include tests of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The report also recommended a five year review and appearance before committees. We do have the annual review of the estimates. I believe committees will have the opportunity to have the chair of the governing council come before them to talk about the success the Canadian institutes of health research have had in meeting the health care objectives of Canada and of all Canadians.

[Translation]

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, before asking my question, I would like to set the member who has just spoken straight on a few points.

He talked about moving Motion No. 56. First, he was not in the House. Second, he had presented the wording to our House leader, who had agreed to its being moved, even in the member's absence, on condition that certain words be changed. Third, after the motion was discussed or debated and brought forward with unanimous consent, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health arrived with a proposal to again amend what had been agreed on with the member who has just spoken.

So, when he accuses the Bloc Quebecois of playing political games in this connection, I think he is showing obvious bad faith.

As for the bill itself—and this is my question—when the president of the governing council of an institute of health research is also the organization's president—even an ordinary *caisse populaire* does not make this kind of mistake and the director of the board of directors of a *caisse populaire* is never the *caisse's* director because of the potential conflict of interest—I would say the government would do better not to present its bill as the best thing since sliced bread. In my opinion, it should—and this was suggested by the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve in one of his many proposals—separate the functions of president of the governing council and president of the organization. There is no need to look very far; it is immediately obvious. This is something that is open to criticism.

What can the member say about this without getting into political games? I would remind him that we are in parliament and

that we are just as entitled to express our views as he is. I would point out to him that 66% of Canadians did not vote for the Liberal Party of Canada in the last election.

[English]

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, let me refer the member to Motion No. 56.

The member knows that I had to leave the Chamber and go up to the Bloc House leader's office on the fifth floor to discuss this matter. The member was not there. I will not breach our conversation and relate it to the House. All I can say is that a proposal was agreed upon as to how we would deal with it in terms of getting consent. The member also knows that I can only move my own motion, I cannot amend it. Another member is responsible for delivering that amendment.

• (1310)

I came back to the House and got the consent of the parties to move the motion. Subsequently the member who was to move the amendment was not able to move the amendment in the form that the Bloc had it. There was no way to undo that other than to do the right thing which is exactly what I did. I rose in my place and asked for the unanimous consent of the House to withdraw the motion because I could not deliver on the deal. I did that. I wanted the motion badly and I think the House wanted the motion badly, but unfortunately as a backbench member of parliament I could not be running between the fifth floor and the lobby to figure out the deal.

I wish that rather than playing politics the parties would get together on matters of importance to ensure that we understand what is in the best interests of Canadians. I found it disgusting. I was very sad to see that politics overrode the best interests of Canadians.

With regard to the member's comments, I understand the points. We do not have time to debate it. I can say I have done my best as a parliamentarian to assess whether conflict of interest situations could arise and whether there was a control mechanism. I assure the member and all Canadians that I have satisfied myself as a member of the health committee and as a member of parliament that mechanisms are in place that are sufficiently appropriate to ensure there will be no reasonable possibility of any conflict of interest without parliamentarians knowing about it and having the tools to deal with it.

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly my privilege to talk about why we support the bill.

The previous speaker said that the health critic for the Canadian Alliance was guilty of some charge or other. I would inform the House that I am the health critic for the Canadian Alliance and that

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I have not spoken today about any issue. I would ask the member to clarify that.

It is rather interesting and rather amazing to hear the—

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member has just raised the matter that his party member did not speak. The Canadian Alliance spoke second in this debate. If he would check the blues, he would see his information is incorrect.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I do not think that is a point of order. I think it is a matter of debate but the point has been made.

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Mr. Speaker, we do not need to debate this. The fact is he did suggest the critic for the Canadian Alliance and I was just straightening him out on that item.

It is amazing to hear the double-talk from the member about how we should not play partisan politics. If anyone is playing partisan politics with health care I believe it is the member himself in his comments in the tirade he was on. Canadians are sick and tired of playing politics with the health care issue. Health care is too important to people to play partisan politics with it.

I also want to clarify the position of the Canadian Alliance. We are opposed to two tier U.S. for profit health care. We believe in universal health care for Canadians as all Canadians do. At no point has anyone in this party advocated two tier for profit health care where there is one system of health care for the rich and another for the poor. We are opposed to that and will continue to be opposed to that. Canadians are opposed to that. It is important that Canadians hear that firsthand.

To talk about the issue at hand, Bill C-13, the main thing is that we are creating research, we are creating an organization which will provide think-tanks and research which is so essential to improve our health care system.

Canadians tell us there is something wrong. The status quo of health care is not acceptable and it is not sustainable. We have to fix that problem. We have to do it in an unemotional, intelligent and scientific way.

• (1315)

That is the message which all of us as parliamentarians should be getting. This bill does that. It provides us with an opportunity for research to flourish in the country. For that reason it is important that all parties support it because the widening of research is important to us in the 21st century.

It is important to look at what the bill attempts to accomplish. There are some things lacking which should be pointed out. The themes of the health research will involve basic biomedical research. In that area, in talking to some of the scientists who are

working on things like reproductive technology and gene therapy, we have not seen anything yet in terms of what will be possible in the future to help provide a healthier, longer living Canadian citizen, someone who could have a quality of life far better and longer than ever before.

The application of clinical research, as well, is a theme of this research project, and the use of clinical research at the bedside has to be critical.

The third item concerns research on health care systems and services. We have to look around the world to see the changes that have occurred. We cannot stay with the 1960s, socialized, state run, health care system. There are countries which have done that, but unfortunately they are not at the top of the list and would include countries like North Korea and Cuba.

We should be doing much better than that and research into advanced technology is one way to do it.

Society, culture, the health of populations and preventive medicine are but a few of the many things which would provide for a healthier Canadian. We must also be very conscious of the demographics. Today one in ten Canadians is over the age of 65. In 26 years, one in five Canadians will be over the age of 65. The implications of that spell out the need for research and the need to improve the quality of life for people over 65. It is a major concern and something on which a great deal of research needs to be done.

A great many people told our committee what should happen. Of course, my associate was part of that and has forwarded much of what was said in the committee hearings.

The thing that struck me most came from Dr. Peter Vaughan, who is the CEO and secretary general of the Canadian Medical Association. We might itemize several of the things he said and think about what they mean.

First, he said it is very important to transfer research from the lab bench to the bedside. Strictly doing theoretical research is one thing, but actually improving the quality of health care with that research is quite another. To have this as an aim of the institutes is most important and should not be underestimated.

He said that we must focus on outcomes. The ultimate goal of the Canadian health care system is to improve health status and health outcomes for Canadians. One area where this needs to be addressed in particular is in the field of health services research, which is often restricted to either short timeframes which limit the ability to observe health outcomes or to the use of administrative data which more typically measures outputs rather than outcomes. It is important that we listen when a professional tells us the focus that we should be putting on this particular agency.

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• (1320)

With respect to the capacity for building, he said that the CIHR could play a key role in reversing the brain drain. Retaining and repatriating our health researchers will improve Canadians' access to quality care within our national medicare program.

We must recognize the fact that half of our graduates in the medical field leave this country. The average age of a specialist in Canada is 59 years. It takes 14 years to become a specialist, from the time that person begins as a student until he or she is able to treat patients.

It is essential that we keep well trained individuals in our country. It is important as well that we increase the number of courses for specialists, rather than the trend which has gone on for some 10 to 20 years in which universities have cut the number of students allowed into various specialty areas.

As an example, I have a daughter, about whom I will brag a bit. She is finishing her Ph.D. in Holland. She went looking for a job. She will graduate this spring. She had nine job offers, four of which were from Canada. One of them was at the University of Western Ontario. They offered her a position in which she could teach 80% of the time, mostly first year students, and she could do research on the side. To our disappointment, she accepted an offer from Germany.

She chose that offer because the job will give her 100% research. She will be working in a university which emphasizes the importance of research.

Obviously in Canada we have to become more attuned to those professionals who want to do research. This agency should help, and that is a positive.

The fourth item that Dr. Vaughan suggested was that we need balance. He stated:

—we recognize the need to work with others to improve the health of the population by addressing the determinants of health, including social, lifestyle and physical environmental factors. The need for this balance is underscored by the persistent social inequalities in health in Canada and other industrialized countries—

Obviously that looks at the big picture, at all of the things that influence the health of Canadians. These institutes will address that concern, and that is extremely important.

Fifth, he said that we must be internationally competitive. According to the OECD, and we have said this a number of times, Canada spends only one-third as much per capita on health research as any of the other G-7 countries, such as France, the United Kingdom, the U.S. and so on. It is to be hoped that the enactment of the CIHR legislation would help to change that significantly less funding which exists in Canada and has existed for a number of years.

These are the reasons we can support the bill. It is a step forward in providing us with that research base which is so essential.

We must also look at other factors. While we support the bill and we see the bill as a step forward, we also have to show some concerns. We have to look at keeping the issue of research in a non-political environment. We have to be conscious of the turf wars that are so much a part of our health care system. That goes right down to the researchers in the lab. We have to make these non-political, non-partisan, non-turf war institutes.

• (1325)

We also have concerns about whether the federal government could keep this in a non-partisan sort of format, or whether it could keep from tampering with research and approving some projects based on reasons other than merit. It seems most critical that merit should be the only reason research is funded and supported by these institutes.

As well, we must examine the Canada Health Act. It is extremely important to realize how seriously flawed our Canada Health Act is as it exists today.

We talk about accessibility. The Canadian health care system is not accessible. People wait three or four months, or longer, to see a specialist. That is not accessibility. Over 200,000 Canadians are on waiting lists. That is not accessibility. People are going to the United States for treatment. That is not an accessible health care system. We need to research that to see how it could be fixed.

I emphasize that we have to work with the provinces and not hammer them with an outdated Canada Health Act. We need to modernize it and work with them in a co-operative manner.

As far as it being portable, ask someone from Quebec who ends up in another province and needs treatment. Ask the people from Quebec what they are told when they enter that hospital. They are told that the Quebec system does not cover them when they are outside the province.

Ask about it being comprehensive. Look at the many areas which are not covered by medicare as we know it today. Each year more and more things are delisted. What do Canadians expect from their health care system? What do they want included and what do they want taken out?

I have already addressed the area of universality. I think that all Canadians want and would be proud of a universal health care system to which every Canadian would have access. That is what the Canadian Alliance wants. I believe that is what Canadians want. I think that is what the Liberals might want as well.

The final area is public administration. We have all kinds of problems there. The ownership of the actual bricks and mortar is not the main emphasis, but it is something that should be looked at.

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There should be a sixth point, and that should be results. Are we getting results from our health care system? Is it working for Canadians? What do Canadians think about that?

We listened to the Prime Minister say that the status quo of health care would be maintained. That is exactly what Canadians do not want to hear. They do not want the status quo because it is not working. It is not sustainable.

We often refer to Liberal members as the Jack Kevorkians of the Canada Health Act. They have not funded the system adequately. They have cut \$25 billion from health care. Sure, they put \$13 billion back, but they cut much more dramatically than ever before and they left the provinces to go their own way. If the provinces try something new the Liberals slam them with the Canada Health Act, the very act which they have not bothered to improve, fix or reform since the 1960s.

In closing, I would say that we will support this bill. In terms of research, we must do it. We are 23rd out of 29 OECD countries in terms of technology in health care. The health care system is broken and needs to be fixed. All Canadians want it to be fixed. The federal government needs to provide the leadership and work with the provinces to make this happen.

• (1330)

[Translation]

**Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member for Red Deer could give us his views on how this research should be managed.

We have a problem in the short term. Everyone agrees that the provinces do not have the resources they need to deliver health care, but our health problems require immediate solutions. The research institutes that the government wants to set up and support could pursue other objectives in the longer term. Indeed, the health of people requires long term planning.

I would like to know how the hon. member suggests this problem might be resolved? Does he think that investing in research is an immediate solution? If so, how? If not, how does he think the most urgent problems could be resolved in the short term, while ensuring that the health of all Canadian and Quebec taxpayers will be protected in the long term, this time by emphasizing prevention?

Could the hon. member tell us how he thinks these two objectives might be reconciled?

[English]

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Joliette for his question. He has raised several important points, the first one being the need for long term funding.

It is essential that when doing research one is not inhibited by grants that are there for one year and may not be there for the next year. Research is not an exact process and one needs to know there is sustainable funding in the research area. I think that applies here more than anywhere else.

Researchers do not know when they will find a cure for whatever it is they are looking for. To know they have the support and the long term commitment of parliament is critical. I think that should be written in. It is something that can be strengthened in this bill.

Another item of equal importance is the administration of research. More important, we should get to the nuts and bolts and say that the provinces are partners in this research. All the provinces are working with the federal government to provide research for all Canadians. This is why I emphasize the lack of partisan politics in this regard.

It is to be hoped that the administration will not fall victim to the things we have seen in HRDC and many other areas, because that will do more to hurt us as Canadians and to hurt our position. When we are 23rd out of 29 OECD countries, it is not a very favourable position to be in terms of our technological advancements. We need to improve dramatically. Co-operation in this whole area will be critical for it to be successful.

**Mr. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Red Deer mentioned partisan debate and partisan politics. I am sure there are times when all of us in the House are engaged in partisan debates and we use statistics to perhaps stretch our position or stretch the facts.

I heard the member for Red Deer and his colleague earlier. I also heard the Reform-Conservative Premier of Ontario talk about the transfers to the provinces for health care. The member opposite also talked about that.

If we look at the facts, they are clear. The federal government has restored the transfers to the provinces under the CHST to a new level of \$31 billion at a time when federal government expenditure has been reduced by \$4 billion compared to 1993. That is the direct program delivery.

How can the member for Red Deer face his constituents with the facts he has presented in the House, when the facts are clearly not what he speaks? How can he justify saying that in the House of Commons?

• (1335)

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Mr. Speaker, let us go through the numbers and we can round them off if the member would like.

In 1993-94 the money transferred for health care and education amounted to \$18.8 billion. In 1994-95, \$18.7 billion; 1995-96,

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\$18.5 billion; 1996-97, \$14.8 billion; 1997-98, \$12.5 billion; 1998-99, \$12.5 billion; 1999-2000, \$14.5 billion; and now for the next four years, \$15.5 billion. If we went back to the level and kept it frozen at \$18.8 billion from 1993 to the year 2004, the total would be \$36 billion less than what would have been transferred had the government just frozen it at the 1993 level.

That is very simple mathematics but obviously Liberal mathematics is quite different from pure numbers. Those are the facts and for whatever reason the Liberals do not want to recognize them.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am following this debate with great interest. I remember that initially the federal government was to support 50% of the costs relating to health, while each province supported the other 50%.

Today the federal government pays barely over 10%. It has reduced its involvement. If we look at its track record in a number of programs we can see a pattern where the federal government establishes programs and then withdraws from them, thus passing the buck to the provincial governments.

I have the same concern regarding the bill before us. The government is taking initiatives that will have universities and research centres buy equipment and train researchers. One day the funding these people need for their research may just stop. This means that these researchers would have to go looking for other research centres, possibly abroad.

I wonder if our colleague from the Canadian Alliance could give us his views on this.

[English]

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very real concern. Obviously, when we went into the whole medicare issue and the Canada Health Act, the agreement was that the federal government would provide 50% of the funding. For that it got control, making sure that the provinces lived by the Canada Health Act. That was a good deal for everyone. The provinces received financial assistance and Canadians got a health care system of which they could be proud.

The problem is that the federal government is now giving 13% to Alberta instead of 50%. Some other provinces are getting slightly more if other figures are taken into consideration. The important thing that also needs to be mentioned is that the \$580 billion debt on which we pay some \$40 billion a year in interest payments is also a very major factor in cutting funding for health care and for many other projects. Let us think of what we could do with \$40 billion in any one of these programs, or even part of it.

It is fine to say we will start the program and fund it for the next three years but, as the member pointed out, if they drop out after

that, research will stop, those scientists will be lost to us forever and we will not attract any kind of research in this country. That will put us even deeper into the hole and we will go from 23rd out of 29 to who knows where.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye:** Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to add a few words to my earlier remarks in order to have my Canadian Alliance colleague comment further.

The Tokamak project, it will be recalled, was, and I describe it in the past tense, a project involving a thermonuclear fusion reactor located in Varennes. Funding for this project was shared jointly by the federal government and the Government of Quebec. The federal government decided two years ago to withdraw from the project. Naturally, Quebec could not assume funding for the entire project on its own.

• (1340)

So this second generation reactor, which was on the leading edge of technology, will have to be sold at a loss somewhere else in the world. This is a dead loss of some \$150 million.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks of this dangerous precedent.

[English]

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Mr. Speaker, if we worked on it a bit, we could come up with an awful lot of burnt out projects like the ones that have been started, where the building was built, the funding stopped and the project collapsed.

That comes from a lack of long term planning. That is one of the reasons Canadians have so little confidence in government. Whether it is building ferries that do not float, whether it is nuclear projects or whether it is the Avro Arrow, if we want to go back in history, there are all kinds of examples of where the Canadian government has not continued its funding long enough to reap the rewards. Again the member is totally right. It is a major concern.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak on Bill C-13, which we are debating today in at third reading. Let us keep in mind that the purpose of this bill is to officially create the Canadian institutes of health research, which will be mandated to organize, co-ordinate and fund health research at the federal government level.

The federal government, while constantly faulting other governments for gaining their ends through devious means, has taken an approach in this matter which lets it off the hook in a way. It has appointed an interim committee council comprised of 34 members



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from the scientific and academic communities. That committee council worked for some weeks on the definition and operation of these institutes.

Far be it for me to cast doubt on the competency of these individuals to fulfil the mandate assigned to them, which is to organize, co-ordinate and fund health research in Canada. The federal government most certainly did not tell them "Take care above all in fulfilling your mandate not to overstep the jurisdictional boundaries of Quebec and the provinces".

Simply put, the Canadian institutes of health research will replace the Medical Research Council and will have a broader research mandate. They will make it possible for there to be new ways of doing research on biomedical themes but also on matters more directly related to the social sciences.

We now know that these will be virtual institutes and will, first and foremost, facilitate the exchange of information. Researchers in universities, hospitals and the other research centres across Canada will all be linked on a computer network.

The mission of the institutes includes some interesting and innovative aspects. There are some new concepts involved here, and many say that Bill C-13 constitutes a first in the history of health-related bills as far as ethics are concerned.

Final decisions on the institutes to be created have not yet been made. The interim task force council has, however, proposed some themes around which the institutes might be formed. Some examples are aging, arthritis, cancer, molecular biology, the health of children and mothers, health services, clinical evaluation and technology assessment, heart disease, strokes, and so on. So far, officials estimate they have received close to 150 applications for grants that will eventually result in the creation of these institutes.

The bill emphasizes the need for integrated health research, with co-operation between the groups, organizations and governments now responsible for research, an important component. The approach is clearly multidisciplinary. In addition, because the bill does not specify any particular type of institute, the permanent council will have its hands free to create whatever kinds of institutes it wishes.

• (1345)

One advantage of this is that it will allow the council to be flexible and to change its priorities quickly in response to the changing nature of society and to rapid innovation in the field of research. This is a positive approach and is consistent with the recommendations of the OECD, which since 1993 has been asking Canada to increase its investment in research and development.

The budget brought down by the Minister of Finance in February 1999 forecast a budget of \$65 million for CIHR in its first year of operation. In 2000-01, this amount will be increased by \$175 million in order to create between 10 and 15 institutes of health research in Canada. With the base budgets already allocated to the Medical Research Council, the government now anticipates that it will double its funding, over a three year period, and that the funds for Canadian institutes of health research will total \$500 million in 2001-2002.

The government set an extremely tight deadline and is trying to rush us so that this bill is passed as quickly as possible. As for researchers, the government made them believe that April 1, 2000 was a likely date for the coming into effect of this legislation. Therefore, it is not surprising that researchers really want the permanent governing council of the institutes of health research to begin its work on April 1, 2000, while hoping the government will not play tricks on April Fools' Day.

Once bitten twice shy, as the old saying goes. It is easy to see that, over the past 20 or 30 years, Quebec did not get its fair share of federal funds for research and development, given its demographic weight. On average, depending on the year, Quebec received between 14% and 18% of the federal funds for research and development. This is still the case today.

The Bloc Québécois fully supports the federal government's intention to significantly increase funds for health research, since that sector of activity is a fundamental one. We will closely monitor the distribution of these funds, to ensure that Quebec gets its share.

The Bloc Québécois supports increased funding for research and development. It also recognizes the efforts of the researchers who were closely involved in the drafting of the bill so they could have innovative equipment to improve the dissemination of information in the field of health and to be able to develop state of the art technologies in health.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that Bill C-13, as it is drafted, seriously infringes on the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces in health care. The bill refers, in several locations, to "issues pertaining to health", without ever recognizing the responsibility to the public of Quebec and the provinces in the field of health services.

With the government boasting about imposing clarity on others, the Minister of Health should have made sure his bill referred simply to health research and not to the health care system and to services provided the public.

And yet, throughout it, the bill refers not simply to health research but uses the more general issues pertaining to health.

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Quebec and the provinces are in fact nothing more than ordinary players, like the people and organizations with an interest in health. The federal government gives national mandates to the institutes without involving the Government of Quebec or of the provinces in this process.

The Bloc Québécois pointed this out at all stages of the bill. The Bloc Québécois supports the bill in principle, but cannot support it as it is currently written.

Let us make no mistake. It is not the creation of the institutes that is the problem. Research and development falls under the category of residual powers and therefore, in theory, comes under federal jurisdiction. The Bloc Québécois can live with the fact so long as Quebec is a part of Canada.

• (1350)

Where the problem lies, and it is a serious one at that, is that this bill makes it possible for direct infringement on an area under Quebec jurisdiction, health services to the public, without any prior consultation of Quebec and the provinces.

In order to remedy this major problem, the Bloc Québécois has proposed a series of amendments which were mainly aimed at emphasizing the importance of respecting jurisdictional divisions and at reaffirming the primacy of provincial jurisdiction over federal jurisdiction in the area of health.

Research and development investments are necessary, and much desired in the hospital and academic research communities. Moreover, a number of Quebec coalitions have made applications for funding to the secretariat of the CIHR's interim council.

It is also important for Quebec to receive its fair share of federal R and D funding. The Bloc Québécois is in favour of stepped up investments in research, particularly health research. In recent years Quebec has been heavily disadvantaged in this area and it is high time that the federal government remedied the situation by making available to researchers and universities additional funding to facilitate their research.

Needless to say, the Bloc Québécois is not opposed to this government's increasing R and D budgets through the creation of virtual institutes. This is why we support in principle the creation of these institutes.

It is important for Quebec to receive its fair share of federal funding, especially since we know that historically Quebec receives but 14% of federal R and D funding, as far as infrastructures are concerned.

It is, however, important to note that Quebec receives about 30% of funding to researchers when there is peer review. Clearly, since clarity is something this government is fond of, when funding is awarded according to criteria which take merit into consideration Quebec researchers have no problem holding their own in a competition.

Although increased research funding is necessary, it is important to point out that, by creating the Canadian institutes of health research, the Canadian government is clearly appropriating the power to impose its priorities and its convictions in the health field, far beyond research per se.

Moreover, we know that the Quebec government is currently developing a scientific policy and that it has stressed the importance of certain areas where Quebec researchers excel, including mental health, cancer, the genome and biotechnology. The federal government must respect the specificity and strengths of Quebec researchers so as to benefit from their success and expertise in their respective fields.

While we salute the multidisciplinary vision of Bill C-13, it is unacceptable that nothing was done to ensure that the provinces have a say and truly participate, including in the definition of mandates.

The Bloc Québécois is not opposed to better communications between researchers or to better networking to facilitate dialogue and the transfer of information. However, we cannot endorse standards that would be imposed right across Canada, and we cannot support any intrusion in the jurisdictions of Quebec and the other provinces. Therefore, it is critical to ensure that the Canadian institutes of health and research not infringe on the jurisdictions of Quebec and the other provinces, and that Quebec be a full fledged partner in the selection and management of these institutes.

The government's bill ignores the division of powers between Canada and Quebec and the other provinces. For the Bloc Québécois, it was important that this bill be about health research and not a possible broadening of mandates beyond research activity.

The Bloc Québécois wanted to make sure that the decisions about the choices and the principles underlying health networks and services provided to the public be under the exclusive control of Quebec and the other provinces. Without watering down the content of Bill C-13, it would have been possible to draft a bill that would have respected the division of powers between the various levels of government.

By refusing to propose such a measure, the Liberal government is denying the very principle of federalism. Respect for Quebec's jurisdictions must be at the core of any intervention in the health sector and this is why the Bloc Québécois is in the unfortunate position of having to oppose this bill.

• (1355)

Once again, for the benefit of those brave enough to be following the debate, I repeat that despite its feigned concern with health related issues, the government unilaterally and irresponsibly pulled out of health care funding in 1993 when it introduced its Canada health and social transfer.

It is all very laudable for the federal government to now invest more in research, but it must not lose sight of the need to restore transfer payments to the provinces. CIHR must not be a way for the federal government to interfere in provincial jurisdictions while ignoring its responsibility for the shameful cuts it has made to date and for those that provincial governments will still have to contend with until 2003.

The federal government must not turn a blind eye to the difficult situations which the provinces are facing in health care and for which it is directly responsible. Estimates are that Quebec will be \$1.7 billion short in social transfers in 1999-2000. Of this amount, Quebec has been deprived of close to \$850 million annually since 1993. For health alone, therefore, we are talking about a cumulative loss of close to \$3.4 billion.

The government can always stick its head in the sand or haughtily decline to step into the fray, but there is absolutely no doubt that it would have done better to have respected the jurisdictions of the various levels of government in establishing these institutes.

Bill C-13 should have stated clearly that the purpose of the institutes is health research. Finally, it should have ensured that the aim is to promote the sharing of information among researchers in order to improve health networks rather than the enforcement of rules defined without consulting the provinces.

Quebec has excellent researchers and institutions with an international reputation in fields ranging from cancer to mental health and genetics. It is essential that the mechanisms for designating institutes reflect the strengths and expertise of Quebec. It is vital as well that the provinces, alongside their researchers, be a part of the appointment process of these institutes.

It is unfortunate that the preamble to Bill C-13 does not recognize the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces over health services, but simply gives them a nondescript role in this field.

Furthermore, clause 14 provides that the governing council is responsible for the management of the CIHR, unless it decides to delegate its powers, duties and functions to one of its members, committees or to its institutes. The provinces have no power to choose the institutes.

Similarly, although clause 5(c) provides that the institutes shall consult other parties, including the provinces, for purposes of collaboration or partnerships, the wording of the clause is broad and dilutes the importance of the provinces by putting them on the same footing as the other interested parties.

It should have provided that the provinces have full responsibility for managing health services on their home territory and that their approval is necessary when the government wants—

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**The Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. She has another three minutes and may speak again following Oral Question Period. We will now begin with statements by members.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### DR. FRANK PLUMMER

**Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during a recent visit to Nairobi, Kenya I had the pleasure to meet Dr. Frank Plummer. He is an internationally respected Canadian physician specializing in HIV infection.

In sub-Saharan Africa, 10% of the world's population live on 1% of the global income and bear the burden of 68% of all patients with HIV infection in the world, most of whom lack access to the most basic drug treatments. In Nairobi alone, 500 people per day die from AIDS.

Through Dr. Plummer's research he has identified a group of African women whose immune systems are resistant to the HIV virus. He is conducting clinical trials on the transmission of HIV and possible vaccines which this government is proud to support.

On behalf of all Canadians I want to offer Dr. Plummer our continued support. I wish to thank him for his selfless dedication and tireless efforts.

\* \* \*

● (1400)

### HEPATITIS C

**Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I continue to draw the government's attention to its abysmal record regarding Canada's hepatitis C victims. Yesterday was the second anniversary of the health minister's plan to compensate these people.

What is the status of the compensation plan? To date, the lawyers have been paid. What about the actual victims who need the money? Well, the lawyers have been paid. What a sad excuse for compassionate health care.

Two years ago the Liberal government made a personal commitment to Joey Haché on behalf of all hep C victims. However, people infected with this incurable disease have seen no compensation and no apology. The only action the government has been consistent with is its failure to honour its obligations.

For each day the federal government continues to stall on this issue, more hep C victims are dying and losing their personal

*S. O. 31*

dignity. Not only has the government treated these people poorly, it has completely dismissed all other victims who did not fall into its arbitrary 1986 to 1999 window. How callous.

On behalf of all hep C victims, the Canadian Alliance will continue to hold this government accountable for its inaction regarding compensation. The government ought to be ashamed of itself.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**QUEBEC MINISTER OF TRANSPORT**

**Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Henri, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last Monday I was greatly surprised to learn from *La Presse* that the Minister of Transport for the province of Quebec did not consider it necessary to have a monorail or LRT on the ice-control structure of the Champlain Bridge in my great riding of Verdun—Saint-Henri. He prefers buses instead.

Can hon. members imagine the pollution, the noise, the heavy traffic that this will mean for most of Nuns' Island, not to mention the loss of the bicycle path, which is used by 125,000 cyclists? Property values on the island may also be threatened.

What a mess and what an insulting gesture coming from Quebec ministers who boast of wanting Montreal to have a good modern public transit system.

\* \* \*

[English]

**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY**

**Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the winners of the National Aboriginal Day poster competition who were honoured at a ceremony earlier today.

Christine Sioui Wawanoloath is a first nations artist in Quebec who won under the Celebrating First Nations category. Ramus Avingaq, a young Inuk from Nunavut, won under the Celebrating Inuit category. David Hannan is the Metis winner under the Celebrating Metis category. He is from Ontario.

The work of these aboriginal artists are bold beautiful pieces that now adorn the official posters for National Aboriginal Day.

June 21, 2000 will mark the fifth year Canadians will gather to celebrate National Aboriginal Day.

I invite all Canadians and all MPs to make this trio of posters available to their constituents so that we can all join together to celebrate the cultures and achievements of our national aboriginal culture through this day and throughout the year.

[Translation]

**CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY**

**Ms. Eleni Bakopanos (Ahuntsic, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, from sea to sea, the Canadian Cancer Society will start knocking on the nation's doors.

Thousands of volunteers will be out in all of Canada's residential neighbourhoods collecting donations for the Canadian Cancer Society.

Each year, the campaign starts with Daffodil Day, which is held on different dates in different regions.

[English]

Daffodils are flowers of joy. They symbolize our hope to find a cure to this devastating disease that affects so many Canadians. Daffodils show cancer patients and their loved ones that we care and we are all fighting for a cure.

[Translation]

The Canadian Cancer Society is a national volunteer organization. I congratulate all volunteers and members of this community-based organization whose mission is to eliminate cancer and also to improve the quality of life of people with cancer and their family members.

[English]

I ask all parliamentarians and all Canadians to support the efforts of the Canadian Cancer Society. Together let us find a cure.

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**NISGA'A TREATY**

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, on Thursday last week, Willard Estey, retired Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, made an appearance before the Senate regarding the Nisga'a treaty. His written brief, which every member of the House should read, was also presented on behalf of retired Supreme Court Justice McIntyre and retired B.C. Supreme Court Justice Goldie.

These pre-eminent experts, whose credentials are impeccable, warned the Senate that the Nisga'a treaty is unconstitutional and illegal. Their brief states, "An independent self-governing nation state will be created within the boundaries of Canada". The retired justices also stated, "There is good reason to conclude that the Nisga'a agreement contravenes the provisions of the Canadian constitution and accordingly cannot have the force of law".

• (1405)

The judges call on the Senate to delay ratification of the treaty pending a reference to the Supreme Court of Canada.

*S. O. 31*

The House failed in its duty to uphold the constitution. It remains to be seen whether the Senate has the courage to do what the justices have called on it to do.

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[Translation]

### CANADA STUDENT LOANS PROGRAM

**Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the success of a society largely depends on how it prepares for the future.

This is why the Canadian government is providing our young people with essential tools, such as student loan programs, to help them finance their post-secondary education.

The Canada Student Loans Program is the solution for many students. In fact, it is the key factor in allowing them to pursue their education.

Over 2.7 million students have received a total of \$15 billion under this program since its inception in 1964. This program provides assistance to more than 350,000 students every year.

The federal government is fulfilling a most important commitment: providing support to students in all regions of Canada.

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### PIERRE-ALEXANDRE ROUSSEAU

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on Friday, at the Canadian freestyle skiing championships held in Mont-Gabriel, Pierre-Alexandre Rousseau from Drummondville won the individual title for moguls. He succeeds Jean-Luc Brassard, who could not compete because of a knee injury.

Following a silver medal in Bormio and a third place in the World Cup general standings, this victory puts young Pierre-Alexandre Rousseau in an excellent position for the upcoming world championships, which will be held in Blackcomb, Canada.

Here is another young Quebecer who displays this ability that people back home have of representing us so well on the international scene.

On behalf of my fellow citizens, I congratulate Pierre-Alexandre Rousseau and thank him for this great victory.

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[English]

### WORLD THEATRE DAY

**Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, March 27 marked World Theatre Day. Thirty-nine years ago this day was first proclaimed by the International Theatre Institute, a

non-governmental organization founded by UNESCO and international theatre personalities to recognize the universal importance of theatre. It also promotes the importance of artistic creation to cultural development and the exchange of knowledge and practice in the performing arts.

This year the International Theatre Institute chose Canada's Michel Tremblay, the world-renowned Quebec playwright, to pen the International World Theatre day message. The message was read in countless theatres around the world and embodied within it Canada's value for theatre and the performing arts as a vehicle for creative expression and international harmony.

From Vancouver to Halifax, theatre groups celebrated the occasion in many different ways. This year, events were made possible through new and innovative partnerships among the Department of Canadian Heritage, its portfolio agencies and theatre organizations across Canada.

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### CANADIAN ALLIANCE

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, we have uncovered the top 10 reasons why real conservatives are leaving the Joe Clark party and joining the Canadian Alliance.

Ten: More people have joined the Canadian Alliance in the last month than the PCs currently have in their entire membership.

Nine: Contrary to what Joe Clark has said, things actually have changed since 1979.

Eight: They want a party that has not spent itself so far into the red that it makes a Liberal look like a tightwad.

Seven: We want a party where Jurassic only refers to a movie.

Six: They do not want a party where endangered species actually refers to them.

Five: They want a party where if the leader was arrested for being a conservative, the case would not be thrown out for lack of evidence.

Four: They want a party and a leader who can actually count.

Three: David Orchard.

Two: They want results in their lifetime.

The number one reason why real conservatives are leaving the Joe Clark party and joining the Canadian Alliance is that they want an opportunity to get in on the ground floor of an exciting 21st century political movement that will bring common sense to the House of Commons.

*S. O. 31*

**RENFREW—NIPISSING—PEMBROKE**

**Mr. Hec Clouthier (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a pleasure to welcome today the warden of Renfrew County, Barry Moran. I know that Warden Moran would want me to tell you that Renfrew county is the most scenic and largest geographic county in Ontario.

Bordered by the indomitable Ottawa River on the north, by the picturesque Algonquin Park on the south, by the lovely Laurentian lowlands and Arnprior to the east, and the mighty Mattawa plains to the west.

In the great county of Renfrew, we have traditional lumbering and farming industries which have been the mainstay for over 150 years. Our economy has been diversified for the 21st century, from high tech to manufacturing, to tourism. We capitalize on the talent of our people and the natural beauty of our land.

We also have two major federal institutions, CFB Petawawa and Atomic Energy of Canada at Chalk River.

Renfrew County and the riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is a microcosm of our great country Canada. We embrace and explore our cultural and ethnic differences. We cherish and celebrate our heritage, as should all Canadians.

\* \* \*

• (1410)

**HUDSON BAY ROUTE ASSOCIATION**

**Mr. Dennis Gruending (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Saskatoon I spoke to the annual meeting of the Hudson Bay Route Association and it has a message for the Minister of Transport.

The association is based in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and its members believe we would achieve benefits by making greater use of the port of Churchill.

The only way to move grain and other products to Churchill is by rail, so the association is very interested in anything related to rail transportation.

The association, as I mentioned, wants to send a clear message to the transport minister regarding the Estey Report and its follow up. The message is this: The federal government must maintain the statutory rate cap on the movement of western grain by rail. This is necessary to protect farmers against railway monopoly. Second, the Canadian Wheat Board must retain its current prominent role in the assembly and shipping of grain by rail.

This is what most farmers want, and they want me to send that message to the minister before he makes up his mind on what to do about the Estey report.

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the third annual employment insurance monitoring and assessment report confirms that seasonal workers, women and young people are the main victims of the system. The results also confirm what the Bloc Québécois has been repeatedly telling the Liberal government.

We also have the results of a recent study by the Canadian Labour Congress, which indicates that over 70% of unemployed women—low and middle income women, young women and new mothers—receive no benefits. However, the Congress reminds us that the opposite was true ten years ago: 70% of unemployed women received benefits.

Statistics Canada researchers go even further, recognizing that EI cuts are the most important factor in child poverty in Canada.

With an annual surplus of \$6 billion, the Minister of Human Resources Development must put a stop to this scandal and amend the EI scheme as soon as possible.

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[English]

**CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY**

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, every April from coast to coast the Canadian Cancer Society's fundraising campaign takes place across Canada to collect funds in the fight against cancer.

The Canadian Cancer Society's campaign is kicked off each year with Daffodil Days. The support and dedication of the staff and volunteers helped raise more than \$5.5 million in 1998.

I hope all Canadians will help in the fight against cancer by purchasing a daffodil during this year's Daffodil Days.

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**STUDENT SUMMER JOB ACTION PROGRAM**

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC):** Mr. Speaker, on Friday I questioned the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of HRDC about the deadline for applications for the student summer job action program. She said the deadline was March 31.

The federal government changed the deadline to March 10, causing a lot of misunderstanding and missed opportunities for students and employers.

Now the government is saying that the deadline is being extended to March 31, but for some reason this information was only released on Friday, March 24. That means that from March 10

*Oral Questions*

until March 24 the program was effectively closed. Now all of a sudden applications are being accepted for another week.

I am sure that this information will be of interest to people who missed the unusual March 10 deadline. However, it makes me wonder how and to whom the government expects to disseminate this information about the extension. All students and employers deserve an equal opportunity to access federal programs like this one. This is another example of the HRDC minister's incompetence.

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**ORGAN DONATION AWARENESS**

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of spring, a season that has come to symbolize new life and new beginnings, several campaigns are now under way to raise the awareness of organ donation.

Last spring, for example, the city of Ottawa was touched by a campaign inspired by the Craig family's courageous decision to donate the organs of their 11 year old daughter, Sandrine, after she tragically lost her life in an accident. The Craig family's gift helped to save six lives and the campaign raised awareness by handing out 90,000 donor cards.

April is a time when volunteers, businesses, government and the public at large can work together to help thousands of Canadians who are waiting for much needed organs.

Schooley-Mitchell Telecommunications staff and their franchisees across Canada will be providing organ donor cards to Canadians to promote awareness and participation during National Organ Donor Awareness Week.

Let us all get behind it and support it. It is very important and Canadians need to do their part.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

• (1415)

[English]

**HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it turns out that the residents of Shawinigan not only have a lovely fountain to celebrate, they have the suds to celebrate with.

The PMO intervened in the grant application for a local micro-brewery and a tourist attraction. He got them \$700,000. The

brewery got its grant just two weeks after the corporation was formed. That is pretty slow actually by Shawinigan standards.

When it comes to taxpayer funded boondoggles in his riding, just how much is too much for the Prime Minister?

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is possible the hon. member is making reference to a project called Le Baluchon, which was an undertaking to help develop the tourism industry in la Mauricie. I am glad to say that \$300,000 went to this project with the expectation of creating 20 new jobs, but in fact 28 jobs were created. From our point of view that is a good investment.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, but I am sad to say that government officials were wary of funding these projects all along. They said, "Analysts from financial institutions are very critical as to the profitability of the project". But the Prime Minister pressed on. After HRD officials had a discussion with the Prime Minister's office, the TJF grant was upped to \$15,000 per job. That was \$5,000 more than even the provincial government recommended.

Did the Prime Minister think that he knew better in this case, or did he just figure that taxpayers deserved another hit?

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what we thought was that 20 people deserved the opportunity to be employed in this area of la Mauricie. We are very glad, as I pointed out, to indicate that 28 people are now working. In fact the average cost per job is about \$10,000 which is in concert with the recommendation of the province of Quebec.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** What a concert, Mr. Speaker.

In fact I bet that 20 people could get a job here. Maybe we could have the great Canadian boondoggle museum. There could be model canoes, armouries, fountains, security roads, golf courses and maybe sell figurines of René Fugère and Gilles Champagne. There could be weekly seminars entitled "My Time at the Trough: A Liberal Retrospective". Of course we know there is no shortage of accommodation for the out of towners.

The Prime Minister said, "It is a great Canadian story". Was he referring to Canadian taxpayers that are now in the brewery business or was it that he wanted to bleed them for another boondoggle?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the Reform Party were to do a little bit of research it would find that this project, Le Baluchon, has been recognized by the provincial authorities as the best tourist project. It is visited by thousands of people and it is creating more jobs than expected.

*Oral Questions*

They are expanding all the time. They have made another application to expand because it is a very good operation. I am very proud that people now can visit the Saint-Maurice valley and enjoy the beauty of this great part of Canada.

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the PMO was directly involved with the HRDC minister's office to ensure that the TJF subsidy for the brewery got approved at \$15,000 per job. This is precisely the sort of interference that HRDC officials have been complaining about in their radio ads. Moreover, after the interest free loans from Canada Economic Development were included, the cost per job shot up to \$20,600, exactly the type of problem that CED audits warned about.

If these types of programs are so legitimate in their own right, why do they require so much political interference?

[Translation]

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in one of the Baluchon files and in other files as well, the Economic Development Agency of Canada intervened to help develop la Mauricie region.

As we know, this region has extraordinary potential for development as a tourist site. What we are doing is developing its capacity to attract tourists internationally.

On this side, based on our Liberal values and on our desire to help in regional economic development, we will continue to intervene not only in the Mauricie region but throughout the Province of Quebec.

• (1420)

[English]

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, what is extraordinary is that the Prime Minister's riding seems to be a bottomless pit for money. Every time we turn around we uncover another file that the Prime Minister has interfered with. Audit after audit complains about too much flexibility and too many broken rules.

Is it not true that this flexibility is deliberately designed to allow these kinds of Shawinigan shenanigans?

[Translation]

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the extraordinary thing here is having a party that would have eliminated all regional development agencies criticizing our intervention in regional economic development. It is shameful.

We are acting as a responsible government. Our priority is to create jobs. So long as we have regional development agencies, we will continue to intervene in all regions.

I hope that in the next election campaign, people throughout Canada will remind them that a government is there as well to help the people as a whole.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in accordance with clause 10.1 of the contracts between Human Resources Development Canada and the recipients of funding:

The following constitute a breach of contract by the recipient: the recipient becomes bankrupt or insolvent, the recipient is in receivership or invokes any legislation in force at a given time relating to bankruptcies.

How could the minister authorize the payment of a grant of \$1.2 million to Placeteco, in violation of the terms of her own department's contract, when Placeteco was under the protection of the Bankruptcy Act?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Again, Mr. Speaker, we have responded to issues on this file on a number of occasions. It has been clear that at the senior level of officials in my department this project has been reviewed. The invoices that we received clearly supported the transitional jobs fund program.

From our point of view, what was important was to make sure that the 170 people who are working in these two projects now continue to work. I cannot expect or believe that the hon. member opposite would rather have them out on the street looking for work.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, Placeteco lost jobs, it did not gain jobs.

The matter is a very simple one. Funding cannot be given to a company which is under the protection of the Bankruptcy Act, in accordance with clause 10.1 of her own contract.

How could the minister violate the terms of her department's own contract by creating a trust, against the advice of Treasury Board? That is what I would like her response on, and I would like her to stop using the workers as a camouflage of the illegal acts that may have taken place in her department.

**The Speaker:** Once again, I remind hon. members that care must be taken about words such as illegal acts.

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I only want to reiterate that it has been very clear not only to this side of the House but to people like



Bernard Landry, like the Government of Quebec, like the PQ member Claude Pinard, that investments in that part of Quebec are very important ones.

In the context of this undertaking, officials have reviewed the file and found that there was no overpayment created. Again I repeat that while the numbers of employment have been up and down, today there are 170 people working and that—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, neither Bernard Landry nor anyone else from the Government of Quebec ever signed that contract. It is Human Resources Development Canada that signed a contract with Globax, a contract which led to the \$1.2 million grant to Placeteco.

Why did the minister give the grant to Placeteco, considering that the contract clearly provides, in clause 10.1, that she cannot and must not do so?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, from our point of view again what is important is that we give people opportunities to work. I would like to quote from a recent article in *La Presse*:

[Translation]

This article says:

Since 1994, the image of La Mauricie has changed. The tourist industry has been developed and we have succeeded in changing people's defeatist attitude.

This was said by Claude Pinard, the PQ MNA for the riding.

• (1425)

[English]

He is no friend of this government but certainly he is a man who understands that investments in la Mauricie are important and that they are making a difference.

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is simple: What is the use of the minister's signature if she herself does not respect it when she gives grants?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, everybody is advising me to clarify that Mr. Pinard is not a Bloquiste but a Péquiste. That allows me to make the point again that in these undertakings the Government of Canada is not alone, that it is together with the Government of Quebec which appreciates these investments. Individual members

### Oral Questions

provincially appreciate these investments. It is absolutely clear that the people of la Mauricie appreciate the investments because they are working.

\* \* \*

### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

We have built our health care system on the principle, on the dream that health care would be there for Canadians when they need it regardless of their financial circumstances and regardless of where they happen to live. Canadians are rallying here on Parliament Hill behind that dream because the federal government has walked away from the health care partnership, has failed to enforce the Canada Health Act and has actively encouraged privatization.

When and why did the federal government give up on the dream of a universal, not for profit, public health care system?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member were to be objective she would recognize that the only government that ever took money away from the provincial governments because they were not respecting the five conditions of medicare was the government of today.

I said very clearly to Premier Klein that he has to respect the five conditions of medicare. He told me that he wants to respect them. Good for him. But if he does not respect them, he will be revisited the same way he was visited a few years ago.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the premier of Alberta is not respecting the five principles of medicare now and he is not being penalized.

How can the Prime Minister pretend that the universal, not for profit, public health care system is healthy? Tell that to patients who are forced to pay \$4,000 for routine eye surgery. Tell that to patients who are paying \$400 an hour to get access to operating rooms for essential surgery.

Is that the government's idea of a public, not for profit, universal health care system?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has already demonstrated its commitment to the Canada Health Act. We know that private, for profit delivery of services is not the way to go. It does not help with waiting lists. It does not help control costs. It does not provide equal access. We do now and we will always stand for the principles of the Canada Health Act.

\* \* \*

### CANADA LANDS

**Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC):** Mr. Speaker, in November 1997 Canada Lands sold 30 acres of prime industrial

*Oral Questions*

real estate to John di Poce for \$1.7 million. Thirty days later Mr. di Poce resold the same land for \$5 million. That is 184% profit.

Does the Minister of Public Works and Government Services believe that this deal was a good deal for Canadian taxpayers?

• (1430)

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this property was on the market for resale for 18 months and Canada Lands did not get any offers.

It put it for sale again and had an offer. I have been told that it was a normal transaction. A few months later someone came with a better offer and it was sold. For 18 months this property was for sale and we did not have anyone to buy it.

**Mr. Gilles Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think they looked too hard for 18 months. The average selling price for industrial land in north Brampton in 1997 was \$225,000 an acre, but the Liberal government decided to dump 30 acres of land across the street from the Chrysler Corporation for only \$58,000 an acre. My question for the minister is why.

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, I do not think the hon. member has the dates right. I think he should also call his friend, this gentleman who was involved in this piece of land, who strangely enough is very supportive of the Conservative Party. If he has anything to ask, maybe he should call the Harris people.

\* \* \*

**HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT**

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, when the government has to kick in over 50% of the funding for a business deal and government officials question the viability of that deal, taxpayers are put at risk. In the case of the PM's brewery, over \$1.25 million of the \$2.1 million spent on this project was public money.

Why should taxpayer money be risked on a project that the private sector would not touch with a 10 foot pole?

[Translation]

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think the problem here is not what we are doing. The problem is that they know very well that, since 1993, the Reform Party—I cannot keep track of what they are called, they have changed names so often—or the new party would never have taken into account all regions of Quebec and of Canada.

I am proud to say that since 1993 this Liberal government has built links with all regions of Quebec and of Canada. We have created some wonderful partnerships. We will continue to do so and, during the next campaign, all Canadians will remember the great job we have done.

[English]

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, with beer and bringing home the bacon, I am sure Bob and Doug McKenzie are firmly on side. This is yet another example of a boondoggle in the Prime Minister's riding.

Why does this government, this minister and the Prime Minister continue to hose taxpayers with their own money?

[Translation]

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what we are now doing, not just in the riding of Saint-Maurice but throughout Quebec, is making smart investments, investments that will further the cause of all regions.

But first, what is needed—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. minister.

**Hon. Martin Cauchon:** Mr. Speaker, what they refuse to hear is that since 1993, with the review of economic development programs, we have introduced refundable contributions.

Second, again in 1993, the public sent us a clear message. It wanted the government to be able to position itself according to the real situation and needs of individual regions.

We have developed a program called the regional strategic initiatives program and in partnership with the community we are developing the international tourism capacity of the large Mauricie region of which we are proud in Quebec, and we are going to continue as the government.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are questioning the Minister of Human Resources Development on the matter of contracts her department signed with the businesses receiving grants.

Clause 10.1 was included in the contracts to protect the government and public funds so that no grant money could be paid to a bankrupt or failing business.

Were the Placeteco lobbyists not effective and influential to get the minister to set aside the contract she signed and break her department's rules?

*Oral Questions*

• (1435)

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me say again that this file was reviewed by the highest level of officials in my department. It was reviewed in detail and it was assessed that the invoices that had been received were in concert with the transitional jobs fund program.

Indeed there were issues with this file in terms of the company itself and the associated companies, but in the end the decision was the right one because people continued to be employed and they would not have been had we not continued to support this undertaking.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. We are accusing the minister of failing to honour the contract between the Department of Human Resources Development and Globax. This is what we are accusing her of.

Was the fact that the Placeteco lobbyist was so effective not due to his being the lawyer for the individual purchasing the company, the creditor of the company and the government's trustee all at the same time?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I reject the allegations being made by the hon. member and say again that from our point of view ensuring that 170 people continued to work at Placeteco and at Techni-Paint was the right thing to do.

They may have wanted to pull the plug there and found alternatives for those people, but I am not sure where they would have gone. From our point of view the partnership founded by this government, the Government of Quebec and by the private citizens was the right thing to do, and the people working there know that is true.

[Translation]

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister intervened in the application for a grant made by a micro brewery in his riding. The financial experts said that the project was not cost effective.

Instead of canceling the project, why did the Prime Minister insist the grant be increased?

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can understand that on the new party side they do not have an inkling of the meaning of "regional development". But, thank God, on this side

we have people who take into account the economic development of all regions.

I will simply say that since 1994-95 we have reorganized our programs. We intervene on the basis of the real needs of all regions. We created the strategic regional initiative program, which applies in the Mauricie region, where we are developing international capacity in the great Quebec City region in the context of technology, and internationally as well, in the Gaspé region, in the eastern townships and we will—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Macleod.

[English]

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, what we would like is for the rules to be followed in these programs. Let us listen to what the old HRDC minister said on October 9, 1997: "The Prime Minister has never lobbied or influenced me".

We now have evidence that the PMO lobbied directly on this file. My question is simple. Was the old HRDC minister so worried that he had to protect the Prime Minister?

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will repeat it in English. It is quite simple. We are talking about economic development of all the regions of the province of Quebec and across Canada as well.

I want to tell the hon. member something. We did very well since 1993 in the Mauricie region and across the province of Quebec. As they do not know about economic development and we want to make sure that we keep being involved in all the regions across Canada, my friends and I will campaign in western Canada next time.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## TRANSGENIC FOODS

**Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, consumers, farmers and even scientists have concerns about the consequences of genetically modified organisms and the lack of government control.

How can the Minister of Health justify his investing in advertising on the safety of GMOs when there has been no study of their long term effects?

• (1440)

[English]

**Mr. Joe McGuire (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that party and the people who criticize us for giving information to Canadians are the same people who accuse us of hiding information on biotechnology.

*Oral Questions*

What we are doing is providing information to Canadians on food safety and biotechnology in Canada.

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since 1994, the government has paid close to \$6 million to biotechnology industries in order to promote GMOs. It recently spent \$300,000 in advertising in order to tell people they are being well protected.

Instead of wasting people's money on promoting GMOs, would the minister not be better off investing it in studies informing us of their real consequences?

[English]

**Mr. Joe McGuire (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member should at least wait until June to see what is in the advertisements rather than criticize something she knows absolutely nothing about.

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**EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the government recognizes the many leaders we have in my party. The Export Development Corporation says that it will adhere to the highest standards of environmental protection.

My question is simple. Right now the former minister of HRD is wasting hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer money to fund clear-cutting companies in Indonesia and to fund gold companies in the Far East that are putting toxic tailings into the ocean. Why is the government wasting taxpayer dollars to fund environmental disasters?

**Mr. Bob Speller (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that the Export Development Corporation has rigorous rules when it looks at these projects in other countries.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade recently did a study on the Export Development Corporation and made recommendations to the government regarding the environment and transparency. It will report on this issue by May 15.

Primarily our discussions at committee were to make sure that the Government of Canada was in no way funding environmentally damaging corporations in other countries.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, sure they have rules. The problem is that they break them all the time. That is the problem. I have a list on

my desk of over half a dozen gross environmental disasters that this government is using taxpayer dollars to support.

Once again my question is very simple. The government is using taxpayer dollars to fund these toxic megaprojects, which people say the government has no rules on. Why is the government wasting taxpayer dollars to fund projects that violate international norms and in fact violate the rules the member just mentioned?

**Mr. Bob Speller (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from the Reform Party, the united alternative, the Canadian reform alliance party or one of those parties should know—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor if he wishes to use it.

**Mr. Bob Speller:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that the Government of Canada looks vigorously at environmental situations in other countries. We take them very seriously. Before the EDC can give loans to corporations dealing with these other countries it has to go through rigorous standards.

• (1445)

The EDC has just gone through a review by not only the House of Commons standing committee but also an independent group, Gowlings, which gave messages of endorsement in terms of what the EDC does and in terms of keeping Canadian environmental standards in other countries.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**BILLBOARDS**

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport has confirmed that Mediacom billboards would be installed in the vicinity of Montreal's bridges and along some of the highways, on land belonging to the federal government.

Can the minister tell us whether the language of the signs will be governed by Quebec's Charte de la langue française or the federal Official Languages Act?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, these are federal properties and I believe the federal legislation will apply.

I must however contact the president of the bridge corporation for clarification.

\* \* \*

[English]

**INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

*Oral Questions*

What is the Minister of Industry doing to ensure that Canadian corporations have leading edge statutes in order to promote better job growth?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne the government made the commitment to modernize our legislation to improve Canada's chances of winning head offices from global corporations around the world.

On March 21 we tabled in the Senate a bill to update and renew the Canada Business Corporations Act and the Canada Cooperative Associations Act. The legislation will bring many of these changes to bear, including, in particular, expanding shareholders' rights and helping Canadian corporations by clarifying the role of directors, officers and shareholders. In short, it is responding to the needs of a consultative—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary East.

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**EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday the Minister for International Trade told the House that the Export Development Corporation acted at arm's length from the government in deciding to fund the Three Gorges dam project, and yet we know that Canada account loans of over \$50 million must be approved by cabinet.

Why did cabinet time its decision to fund the Three Gorges dam project to coincide with the Prime Minister's team Canada trade mission to China?

**Mr. Bob Speller (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member continues to talk about the Export Development Corporation like it is a corporation that does not do a good job in the country.

Let me quote from Malcolm Stephens, former head of the British equivalent of the EDC, who said "In my experience the facilities available to Canadian exporters are flexible and are administered with a professional expertise which few rivals in other countries have".

This is a corporation that is needed by Canadian small business and medium sized enterprises to help them compete internationally with other—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary East.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the parliamentary secretary is not answering the question because he does not know the answer. Perhaps the Prime Minister can answer.

On March 21 the Minister for International Trade told the House that the EDC works at arm's length from the Government of Canada, and yet on June 8, 1998, Ian Gillespie, the president of the

EDC, wrote a letter to the former Minister for International Trade recommending who should conduct an independent review of the EDC. If the EDC is truly independent and at arm's length from the government, why is the EDC's chairman telling the government who to appoint in its review process?

**Mr. Bob Speller (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, clearly the Government of Canada, through the Minister for International Trade and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is responsible for the crown corporation. They report to this parliament.

It is the Government of Canada which sends the message to the EDC and helps in terms of the export support it gives to medium and small enterprises.

• (1450)

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce said: "Export credit agencies like the EDC play a vital bridging role which lend the support companies need to break into foreign and high risk markets".

The Government of Canada is sending that message.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health likes to speak in very general terms about the Canada Health Act, but we would like to get down to specifics.

Alberta's eye clinics are now charging fees for enhanced services, which amounts to queue jumping. Clinics in Montreal are charging patient fees of \$400 per hour for the use of operating theatres.

We want to know why the minister is not taking action in these cases. Does he deny they are happening, or is it because he believes they are consistent with the Canada Health Act?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, some of the matters referred to by the member, if she is referring to the same cases I have in my mind, are already being investigated by provincial and federal officials.

I can assure the member that if practices are in place which contravene the act, then steps will be taken to make sure they do not continue. If the member has information about events that we do not have in mind or that we have not investigated, I urge her to provide me with those details and I will see to it that the appropriate inquiries are made.

[Translation]

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the minister does not support the five principles of the Canada Health Act.

*Oral Questions*

Not only is the minister not taking clear action against the bill to privatize health care in Alberta but today, in Montreal, patients must pay \$400 an hour to get on the operating table.

What we are looking at in Canada today is private health care.

Does the minister not realize that his failure to take action is having a terrible impact on citizens who are entitled to a universal health care system?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week, we heard about inappropriate practices in a private clinic in Montreal. Minister Marois and I both announced that we were taking steps to investigate the matter and to determine whether unacceptable or illegal practices exist, and I intend to do just that.

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**CANADA LANDS COMPANY**

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, here is a cute little story.

The Canada Lands Company owned a large industrial lot in Brampton. This was a 30-acre lot. It decided to sell it for \$1.7 million. What happened? With every day that went by, the property's value increased by more than \$100,000. One month later, it was worth \$3 million more.

A week ago, the vice-president of the Canada Lands Company had not even heard of this. Could the Minister of Public Works reassure the House and explain how Canadian taxpayers benefited from that transaction?

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, that property was up for sale for 18 months and the Canada Lands Company never got a reasonable offer. After 18 months, we received an offer that represented about 80% of the property's market value and we decided to sell.

I would like to remind the hon. member that he should do his homework before asking a question. A property adjacent to the one in question sold a month earlier for \$20,000 an acre, or 60% more. I believe Canadians got—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, there is someone somewhere who did not do his homework, as the Reform Party wants to do.

What we are saying is that, within 30 days, someone pocketed \$3 million. A week ago, the vice-president of the Canada Lands Company did not even know about the case.

Will the minister, who was surely not aware of it either, order a full inquiry to find out what happened?

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for the Canada Lands Company and for myself this was a regular transaction. When we learned from the media about this alleged huge profit over a four month period, I asked Canada lands to provide me with a report, and it did so.

• (1455)

Based on the information that I received, this was a normal transaction at the time and it still is. Four months later, people with specific needs made a better offer.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CANADA POST**

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, postal services are very important for Canadians. I would ask the Minister of Public Works and Government Services if he could tell the House when we can expect Canada Post to sign a collective agreement with its employees.

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to inform the member and the House that yesterday Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers signed a three year contract. This is a new beginning for labour and management relations in Canada Post. I encourage Canada Post management and the labour union management to work together to make sure that Canadians have the best postal delivery system and that employees have job protection.

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**TORONTO WATERFRONT**

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday Robert Fung unveiled an ambitious multibillion dollar plan for the redevelopment of Toronto's waterfront. In order for this magnificent vision to become a reality the federal government must be a major financial partner.

I would ask the Prime Minister today whether he is prepared to rise in his place and indicate to the people of Toronto that the federal government will contribute its fair share to the redevelopment of Toronto's waterfront. In other words, when does the Prime Minister intend to show the people of Toronto the money?

**Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank His Worship for the question.

*Oral Questions*

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I would ask members once again to call each other by their proper titles.

**Hon. David M. Collette:** Mr. Speaker, when I use that title with Mel Lastman he is quite happy.

As I said yesterday, if we can realize this dream it will be fantastic not just for the greater Toronto area but for all of Canada. The federal government has a role to play, but a role only in concert with the other levels of government, the province and the city. We will work with the other levels of government to make sure this magnificent dream becomes a reality.

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**EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the EDC loaned \$50 million to Suharto's daughter in Indonesia for a pulp mill which is said to burn clear cut rain forest wood. The EDC loaned \$50 million to a gold mine in Kyrgystan, the site of a poisonous cyanide spill. The EDC loaned China \$130 million for a hydro project just a few weeks after the massacre at Tiananmen Square.

Why are Canadian taxpayers bankrolling environmental disasters and ruining the world's environment against Canada's own policies and rules?

**Mr. Bob Speller (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is a member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade and he should know that the committee looked at all of these issues. They had over 40 Canadians representing groups from across this country look at the EDC. There was a consensus that the EDC was doing a good job across this country in terms of making sure that small and medium sized industries can compete internationally.

The Government of Canada believes that the EDC plays a very important role in this country.

\* \* \*

• (1500)

[*Translation*]

**GASOLINE PRICING**

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, to our great surprise, the Minister of Industry announced in this House that the provincial governments are the ones who can do something about gasoline prices.

If the gasoline pricing issue is a provincial matter, can the minister tell us why the federal government has commissioned a \$600,000 study, which will be of no use in the end?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I merely said that the provincial governments can regulate retail

sales prices, that is all. It is true, and I believe the hon. member agrees.

But if he wants information on markets and market interrelationships, he will have to wait for the study.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last April the auditor general of Canada indicated that the DFO was managing the shellfish industry in the same manner that it managed the groundfish industry prior to the cod collapse in 1992, which, by the way, cost the taxpayers of this country billions of dollars.

Now disturbing reports out of Newfoundland show that the fragile snow crab industry is in serious decline.

First the west coast salmon, the east coast salmon and the cod, and now the snow crabs off Newfoundland.

Will the minister heed the advice of his own scientists and put measures in place to protect the resource, or will he again ignore the advice of his own scientists and allow the crab to go the way of the cod?

**Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important to understand the commercial fishery of Newfoundland.

When we came to power in 1993, the landed value of the commercial fishery was \$208 million. At the end of 1999 the landed value of the commercial fishery in Newfoundland was \$515 million. That is a 148% increase in the time that we have been in power. Liberal times are good times.

**Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's wharfs have been neglected by the government for years.

Is the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans prepared to commit in the House today to provide emergency funding to repair the wharves between Port Lorne and Delaps Cove which were severely damaged by a severe winter storm on January 21st?

**Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last Friday, Saturday and Sunday I had the opportunity to visit the maritimes. I had the opportunity to personally visit those wharfs that were damaged by the storm. In fact, if the hon. member had been following our actions he would know that I have already announced money to fix some of the wharves that were damaged by the storm.

\* \* \*

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Shri T. Baalu, Minister of Environment and Forests of India.

*Speaker's Ruling*

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

\* \* \*

• (1505)

[Translation]

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC):** Mr. Speaker, during Oral Question Period, I asked the Minister of Public Works a question about a problem relating to a land sale in Brampton. The minister spoke of a report that would provide answers to a variety of questions.

I would like to ask the minister to table that report in the House, for it would surely enlighten all hon. members. The matter has raised a lot of questions.

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services informed this House of the existence of a report but did not quote from it.

According to Marleau and Montpetit or Beauchesne, the standing orders of this House do not require a document to be tabled if it has not been quoted, and to my knowledge it was not.

**The Speaker:** I will look at the blues to see what was said. If I recall correctly, the report was not quoted from, but I will look at what was said and will get back to the House on it if necessary.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PRIVILEGE**

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for London North Centre on Friday, March 17, 2000. I would like to thank the member for having drawn this matter to the attention of the House. I would also like to thank the hon. member for Lakeland, the hon. government House leader and other members for their assistance in bringing the facts of this situation before the House.

The hon. member for London North Centre, who chairs the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, indicated that the hon. member for Lakeland had, in his opinion, breached the privileges of all members by the premature disclosure of a draft report from the committee. This disclosure was made by way of a press conference which the hon. member for Lakeland held on March 16 using facilities provided by parliament after issuing a

media advisory using CPAC and the internal communication services of the House. Subsequently, the charges against the hon. member for Lakeland were repeated in the first report of the citizenship and immigration committee tabled on March 21.

In responding to these charges on March 21, the hon. member for Lakeland raised a number of issues. He pointed out that there had been a deliberate decision of the committee at its meeting of March 2 to undertake the study of its draft report on refugee determination and illegal immigrants in public session. A motion to that effect can be found in the committee's minutes of proceedings of that date. The hon. member held that, while the meetings at which the draft report was considered may have actually been held in camera, the in camera nature of the meeting itself was contrary to an express decision of the committee. In protesting what he took to be an irregular proceeding of the committee, he made reference to an earlier ruling of the Chair given on October 9, 1997, in which all committees were cautioned that care is necessary in laying out the manner in which draft reports will be dealt with.

[Translation]

I want to say, first, that it is not the role of the Speaker to oversee the internal conduct of committees. Committees are masters of their own proceedings, and with that freedom goes the responsibility to see that they carry out their work in conformity with the appropriate rules and practices of this House.

• (1510)

The hon. member for Lakeland may well have a legitimate grievance with the manner in which the citizenship and immigration committee has conducted its affairs. However, when members disagree with decisions made by committee chairs, either tacitly or explicitly, our rules provide avenues either to appeal those decisions or to air those concerns openly in the committee before colleagues.

[English]

I have a different role to play. When a committee feels that a situation is so irregular that it must be reported to the House then this is where I am called on. As I mentioned earlier, a report on this incident was tabled by the chairman of the citizenship and immigration committee on March 21. The hon. member for Lakeland has stated that he quite consciously and deliberately held a press conference for the purpose of making public the contents of the draft report. He felt that he was entitled to take such action because the document was discussed by the committee during a meeting which he believed ought properly to have been a public meeting. Nonetheless, the minutes of the proceedings of the committee for March 16, 2000 clearly indicate that the meeting was held in camera. Similarly, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration rejects the member's view for its states unequivocally in its first report:



*Speaker's Ruling*

The members of the committee considered the matter...and felt that their privileges had been breached and that the in camera process had been jeopardized because of the disclosure by the member for Lakeland, Alberta.

[*Translation*]

As Speaker, I am not called upon to judge the manner in which the committee reversed its earlier decision and, since the committee has seen fit to report this incident to the House, then I, as Speaker, I must take very seriously the committee's complaint.

[*English*]

Our rules are clear on the matter of the divulgence of a draft report. At page 884 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* members will find the following statement of principle:

Committee reports must be presented to the House before they can be released to the public.

It is further stated on the same page:

Even when a report is adopted in public session, the report itself is considered confidential until it has actually been presented in the House.

The Chair appreciates that this rule may, at times, prove inconvenient to some hon. members or to committees themselves and that there are divergent views on how committees should conduct their business when deliberating about the text of a report to the House. However, as you Speaker, I am bound by the rules as they exist. In the present case, I have concluded that I have no alternative but to find that a prima facie breach of privilege has occurred.

I invite the hon. member for London North Centre to put his motion.

**Mr. Joe Fontana (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate you having taken the time to look at this very serious matter. On behalf of myself and the members of the committee, I move:

That the matter of the premature disclosure of the committee report by the member for Lakeland be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

• (1515)

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated your earlier ruling on this matter. The one question that was raised which I do not believe you answered in your ruling, and perhaps you could clarify it for me, was the question of whether a standing committee of the House of Commons could go into camera without moving a motion that it is going in camera.

It does seem odd to me. I do not know who has the power to decree such a thing or to make it retroactive. It seems to me that it does require a motion to move in camera. Otherwise, I do not know how those decisions come about if it is not by a motion.

**The Speaker:** That will be decided by the committee itself, whether indeed they did move into camera according to procedures

that were developed at that time. That will be answered when we are in committee.

**Mr. Bob Kilger;** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a totally different matter. Perhaps I could ask for the indulgence of the House to dispose of the following matter. There have been discussions that—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. We will wait for that. The hon. member for Lakeland has 20 minutes for debate and 10 minutes for questions and answers.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I have some questions that I would like to put. I would appreciate it if members of the committee could answer these concerns at some time, whether it be in debate in the House in the question and answer session after my presentation or in committee at a future date. There are some very interesting points which should be answered and should be responded to.

The first point raised by my colleague, the House leader for the Canadian Alliance, is the question of whether the committee acted properly, by the rules to which the committee has agreed to have a vote before going in camera. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker that did not happen in this case. There was no vote to go in camera and therefore the procedure was all wrong.

It seems interesting that the committee and the chair of the committee can just throw aside the democratic process on a whim, it seems, ignore the process agreed to by the committee and go ahead in a dictatorial fashion to have this discussion of the report in camera. Somehow that does not seem like anything they are particularly concerned about.

On what I believed to be very honest consideration of the matter, I decided that because of the improper procedure, because it was in the minutes of the March 2 meeting that in fact this report would be discussed in public. Because of these things I thought that meeting should be considered to be a public meeting.

I am quite concerned that the chair of the committee would have the nerve to stand in the House of Commons and express concern about what I did, believing that this was a public document and calling a press conference, not leaking this document to the media in the way the Liberals leaked the documents.

We brought points of privilege to you, Mr. Speaker, on several occasions expressing our concern that reports which were confidential reports without a doubt were leaked by Liberal members. They could only have been leaked by Liberal members. We have done this time and again. In those situations, Mr. Speaker, you have ruled that we should not do these things but there was nothing you could really do about it.

*Speaker's Ruling*

• (1520)

In this case the chair of the committee has the audacity to come to the House of Commons and say that I am wrong because I did this publicly and not in a sneaky fashion. They routinely leak public documents. Most of the budget was leaked. We knew what was in the finance minister's federal budget before it was actually presented in the House, because it was leaked piece by piece by piece. This has become completely routine, and I do not think that is right.

Nor did I have any intention of doing anything wrong. The last thing I would want to do is anything which would show a lack of respect for the House, for the committee and for the rules of these institutions. That is the last thing I would do.

You have ruled, and I respect your ruling, that under these circumstances you have no choice but to put this back into the hands of the committee. I respect that, Mr. Speaker. I am sure you have examined the issue and I trust your word on that.

I would encourage the chair of the committee and other members to respond to this apparent contradiction that somehow it is okay to routinely leak documents which are clearly confidential, which is what Liberal MPs have done again and again. It is undeniable. I did it openly and honestly in a press conference. I presented a report which was marked confidential, but which I truly believed could not possibly be considered confidential. Because I did that in a public fashion, somehow I am in breach of the rules of the House in some way. I am interested in hearing the committee explain this. It is a very interesting contradiction, and I am looking forward to that.

As I said in my presentation to the House last week, if you look, Mr. Speaker, at the minutes of the March 2 meeting—and I tabled a copy of those minutes at that time—it said clearly in the minutes that it was agreed that this report would be discussed in a public meeting of committee, not in camera. I take the decision of the committee on matters like that quite seriously.

Also in *Hansard*, as you pointed out, Mr. Speaker, the committee did agree to have a vote of the committee before ever going in camera. That did not happen in this case. Furthermore, at the very meeting before the committee went in camera, I asked the chair of the committee to allow me to put forth a motion to reaffirm it was the rules of the committee that we have a vote before going in camera.

The chair would not allow the motion but said “You do not have to worry about that. We all know that and I respect that”, or something to that effect. That can be seen in the *Hansard* of that March 2 meeting as well.

It takes an awful lot of nerve for the chair of the committee and for the members of the committee to come to the House claiming that I have done what is wrong. I respect your ruling, Mr. Speaker, that this should go back to the committee, but I am saying the

committee should decide that in fact, no, I have not acted improperly.

Yet they are saying I did, when they completely ignore the rules of the committee which have been reconfirmed and reaffirmed by the committee at the very meeting before the committee went improperly in camera.

I am extremely concerned by the loss of democratic process in this institution, not just in committee. In these committees the process and the lack of respect for democracy, for the rules, the very rules that are agreed to, to govern the committees, are ignored routinely. I do not find that to be a laughing matter. I take that as a serious matter.

If we look at the House generally, the lack of respect for the democratic process has become routine. I have many people back home telling me that they see our House of Commons behaving more like an elected dictatorship than a democratic body meant to govern a country. They say that because they understand the Prime Minister and a few key people make the decisions, the big decisions, in governing the country.

• (1525)

Do backbenchers and MPs in the governing party have influence on the Prime Minister's decisions? I would suggest very little to none. The only influence seems to be what can be exerted by the members of opposition parties through the use of the media. We can take an issue which we think is an important issue, go to the media and get coverage. Through that method public reaction can come against the government. That seems to be the only way that we can have an effect. It is the only way that any member of parliament, other than the Prime Minister and his little group, have any effect on what goes on in the House. I am extremely concerned about that, and I have expressed my concern about that before.

Let us look at the issue of time allocation. It was a very few years ago when time allocation or closure in the House was something that was used rarely. Since this government took office in 1993, how many times would you think, Mr. Speaker, that time allocation and closure have been used in the House of Commons? It is approaching 60 times.

Look at the last 10 bills that have passed through the House and see how many times time allocation has been used to end debate prematurely on legislation. How many times do you think in the last 10 pieces of legislation which have passed in the House? A majority of cases.

This has become absolutely routine. Debate is not allowed in this place the way we expect it to be allowed on extremely important pieces of legislation like the new elections bill. The very act that will govern elections in this country, Bill C-2, passed through the use of time allocation. Debate ended after a very few hours. It is completely unacceptable. The official opposition, which is sup-

*Speaker's Ruling*

posed to be given ample time to present our case to try to have an impact on legislation, was given only a few hours of debate on this important bill.

This has become routine. It is shameful. That is why it amazes me that the chair of this committee and the members of this committee would have the nerve to accuse me of doing something improper.

Look at the relative importance of these two issues. What was my great crime? My great crime was presenting in a public way, not in a sneaky way as they do, to the media a document which I believe truly was a public document. I believe I was doing nothing wrong. I was not willing to do it in a sneaky way, as the Liberals have done in so many cases. That is my great crime.

At the very meeting after it was agreed that this report would be discussed in public, after it was undeniably reaffirmed that this committee could only go in camera, into secret meeting, after a vote passed committee, in fact the committee went in camera without a vote. Does that sound like democracy? Does that sound like respecting rules of the committee? It just is not.

Look at the relative importance of the two wrongdoings here. You have ruled there was wrongdoing and I respect that, Mr. Speaker. At the time I believed there was not. Yet the chair knew he was violating the very rules of the committee when he took that committee into secret meeting in camera without having a vote of the committee and against the minutes as written in the document I tabled from the March 2 meeting.

Because I understand that you have now put this into the hands of the committee, Mr. Speaker, I ask the committee to seriously consider the relative importance of the violations that have taken place. As I suggested to you, Mr. Speaker—I asked you to rule on it and I understand that you could not—I would like the committee now to consider whether the chair of the committee should be removed from his position as chair.

• (1530 )

To me, violating the very rules which were agreed on to govern the committee is a serious breach. There is no way that could have been done without the chair knowing exactly what he was doing, because I made a point of that at the very meeting before and *Hansard* will show this. I made a point of that in a way which could not be easily forgotten. It was that important I felt I should do that and that is what I did.

Mr. Speaker, I fully respect your decision. There are many more points I could make. I am sure there will be more debate on this, but I would like to ask the chair and the members of the committee after contemplating this issue, to deal with the issue of the actions of the chair. I would like them to seriously consider removing the chair from his position in the committee and I would like the committee to move on from there.

Last year with the former chair of the committee, we had a committee which I would say was completely dysfunctional. It just was not working. With the new chair we had a committee which I thought functioned quite well. We went into what was an honest discussion at committee dealing with the very sensitive issue of illegal migration into this country.

Mr. Speaker, you know what happened this summer. About 600 people came into the country illegally by boat. Every year around 23,000 people come into the country illegally through our airports, border crossings and by boat.

The committee debated. Witnesses came from across the country to deal with this extremely important issue. A Conservative member on the committee asked for assurance that the work of the committee would be considered in drafting the new immigration act. That assurance was given.

I received a leaked draft of the new act along with a schedule which showed that the new act went to the provinces for approval on February 25 and that the minister was going to approve the new act on March 7. The committee report which was supposed to be considered in the new act was not tabled until last week.

So there we were. Witnesses came to the committee in good faith and presented their thoughts on the issue of illegal migration. How are they to feel now knowing that their thoughts were not even considered in the new act?

The new act was not put together in a few weeks. It had to have been virtually a done deal back when we started with this issue before committee. Certainly the report tabled last week in no way could be considered in the new act because the act was a done deal at least three weeks before that. That is when I received my leaked copy of the new act.

Those witnesses gave of their time, their efforts, their money. They came to committee and presented their views believing they might actually have an impact on the new act. How must they feel knowing that they have been used by the committee? They have been used by the committee because what they reported to committee was completely ignored. The legislation was in place before the committee even reported.

That shows an incredible disrespect for Canadians, for people who care enough about an issue. In this case it is an issue which is important to the security of our country, illegal migration. They cared enough that they came and they spoke. I listened to them. Other committee members listened to them. They were completely ignored. How must they feel?

It is sad. When Canadians see these things happening they must completely lose their respect for politicians, for the House of Commons and for the committees of the House of Commons. They cannot possibly do anything but become cynical about the whole political process.

*Speaker's Ruling*

• (1535)

It is a sad thing when Canadians have that reinforced in the way they did by the chair and the committee. They ignored the committee rules and decided to discuss the committee report, a draft document, in secret and only then did they report it to the House.

The committee is functioning poorly now. At the previous meetings we were not even discussing a draft document. We were only discussing the witnesses we had heard and the committee went in camera. In other words it discussed the issue in secret. The reason had to be because the Liberals on the committee, a majority of government members who have control, were afraid that something they might say would be heard by their constituents and would reflect poorly on them.

Mr. Speaker, I see that I have no more time to debate this issue. I am looking for debate from others who feel that this is an important issue. I am looking in particular for a response from the chair of the committee. I also hope others will get involved in the debate because what debate in the House could possibly be more important than a debate on respecting the democratic process and respecting the rules of the House and of the committee? What else could be more important than that? The issue is that the chair of the committee and the committee did not respect the rules.

I appreciate having had the time to present my views. I look forward to hearing the views of other members.

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we all know that any committee draft report is marked confidential in big letters. I am a member of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. We all respect and have a clear understanding that we must honour such confidentiality. Mr. Speaker indicated exactly that in his ruling.

As an all-party committee, we have worked very hard but the hon. member repeatedly broke the rules and walked out on a very important discussion. That is disgusting. It was without any concern for his duty and his responsibility. The hon. member not only breached the trust of all committee members with his disrespectful attitude but with purposeful disregard he held a press conference. I ask the hon. member how could he have such nerve and disregard for his duty as a member of our committee?

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question. She again expresses the concern about the document marked confidential.

I explained why I believe the document was not confidential. The committee had improperly gone in camera. I would like to ask

the member about her lack of respect for the rules of the committee. I assume she was at the meeting where the committee went in camera. At that time the member did not say to the chair, "It is improper that we are going in camera. We discussed this at the last meeting". Why did she not do that? Unfortunately I was not at that meeting. I was away on other matters of parliamentary business.

She talked about my not being at some of the meetings. I challenge her to have my attendance records at those committees compared with those of any other member of the committee. I have taken part in most of the meetings of the committee. I have been involved. I took part in the debate.

When I found out that a copy of the new immigration act had been leaked, I realized we had all been taken for fools. That bothered me. My co-operation at that point dwindled somewhat because this is a serious issue.

• (1540)

I would like to ask the member why at that committee she did not stand and say, "This is improper. I am going to have no part of it. I am going to respect the rules of the committee. I am not going to allow you, Mr. Chair, to go in camera on this issue without a vote. Mr. Chair, I am not going to allow you to go against the minutes of that March 2 meeting and now decide to have the discussion on the draft report in camera, in secret".

I would like to ask the member why she has so little respect for the rules that she did not stop that.

**The Speaker:** That is out of order. We are still on questions and comments of the hon. member for Lakeland.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question.

I heard the member say that he was of the very strong conviction that it was a public meeting. He said that was decided by a majority vote of the committee. I am asking him to confirm that was the case. Also, has he looked at the records of the committee and was there a motion subsequent to that which rescinded, reversed or changed that?

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I would like to clarify that in fact the committee had agreed I believe it was at the start of the fall session pursuant to the normal rules of committees, that before going in camera there would be a vote. That should not have to be reconfirmed by a committee, but I have seen those rules breached often enough that I wanted it to be reconfirmed. My memory says this was done back in the fall but I cannot say for sure. However it was reconfirmed

*Speaker's Ruling*

when the committee went in camera when we were discussing not even a draft of the report, but just what the witnesses had said.

That meeting improperly went in camera. I made a point of bringing that issue before the committee and asking why we were in camera and that we should go public. There was no vote held to have the committee go in camera. Therefore it should have been a public meeting. Through my pressure the committee agreed that the meeting was improperly in camera and it was going to be made a public meeting and it was.

It was at that time I tabled a motion that before going in camera again there will be a vote of committee members. The Chair brushed it aside and said there was no need for that, that we all knew the rules. At the very next meeting the chair took the committee improperly in camera. I was not at that meeting. I was on other parliamentary business. All of the members of the committee allowed it to happen. Not one member raised his or her voice to stop it. That is improper.

The other thing from that meeting is the minutes of the meeting said that the draft report was to be discussed publicly. I would argue that issue should not even be a particularly important one because the committee had agreed not to go in camera without a vote and there was no vote.

I brought the improper procedure before the committee. I said there was no way we should be in camera that we should be holding the meetings in the open. The chair continued to call it an in camera meeting. That is when I decided it was improper. The rules were not being respected. It was not truly an in camera meeting and therefore the discussion should not be considered to be confidential.

That was my decision at the time. It was a decision which I made considering the evidence before me. I would suggest that it was a good decision. I would be interested to hear from other members of the committee. I would like them to answer the question as to why they did not prevent the committee from improperly going in camera and why they did not ask for a vote. I would suggest that one of the reasons might be that there is seldom quorum at this committee. We cannot hold a vote when there is no quorum. We often have three or four Liberal members at committee out of a possible seven or eight. The attendance of the Liberal members is not exactly something I would think they would want to brag about.

• (1545)

**Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the member's remarks.

First, the reason there was no quorum at the time I tried to move my motion suggesting that the minutes of the committee come out

of in camera and be published as soon as the report was tabled was because the Reform MPs had left the committee. In fact, every time I tried to do something with respect to the minutes being in camera, I could not move the motion because the member opposite and his colleagues had left the committee.

I ask the member opposite how he can take this position, especially with me who has always argued that committees should not be in camera if they can possibly not be in camera. In this case the chairman explained very clearly that it had to be in camera up until the time the report was released. That was fair but we all agreed that the minutes could be released as soon as the report was released. Would that not have satisfied the member?

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, what the member says is absolutely incorrect. At the meeting where the chair improperly went in camera, I was not even in attendance. How could I have left? To my knowledge, I never left the committee when a member was trying to present such a motion. There was never any talk of such a motion. I invite the member to review the record because that is absolutely not what happened.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I should tell you that I happen to be vice-chair of the committee and have found it necessary on occasion, when our chair was tied up with other committee business, to run some of the meetings. I have been very actively involved in the writing of this report, as have most members and certainly most government members in having input.

I am surprised that you, Mr. Speaker, did not rise to your feet when the member opposite finished saying that he thought his decision even today was a good decision. I would interpret that as being a statement that he does not particularly agree with the findings that you, Mr. Speaker, brought forward before this place where you found in favour of the Chair that there was a prima facie case of violating the privilege of the committee members. Mr. Speaker, I heard you say that.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I made it very clear that I respect your ruling. I do not see a contradiction.

**The Speaker:** We are in debate now. Rather than interrupt each other on these points of order, I would prefer that we have a full run at it if we can, which is what we did on the other side.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, I sat here with my blood pressure boiling up as I listened to the hon. member.

**An hon. member:** That is not uncommon.

*Speaker's Ruling*

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** No, that is not uncommon. However, I must say that I waited until I had the opportunity to have the floor. I can assure the House that this member will agree with very little that I am about to put on the record. If he wants to jump up every time he disagrees with me, hopefully, Mr. Speaker, you will rule that those are not points of order.

• (1550)

If the member wants us to read *Hansard*, I would invite him to do exactly the same when *Hansard* is printed wherein he said that he thought his decision to hold a public press conference was a good decision, in spite of the fact that you, Mr. Speaker, have found him guilty of violating the privileges of members of the committee. I do not know how that can be interpreted in any other way than to say that he does not like, agree with or respect your decision. He thinks what he did was right.

There are a couple of basic principles here. One is that when you are trying to get out of a hole you should stop digging. The other one is the axiom that when a lawyer represents himself, he is often said to have a fool for a client. When I hear the defence that has been put forward by this member, it is incomprehensible.

Prior to this unfortunate incident, I thought the member was making good contributions to the committee. This obviously was not the first issue we have dealt with. He was dedicated and worked hard. I very seldom agreed with his position, the one which the Reform Party said, through him, that it considered anyone who arrived in this country as a refugee as an illegal. We had a long debate over the use of the term illegal. This member considers all refugees to be illegal. I certainly do not agree with that but I respect his right to hold that opinion as long as he does not mind me telling everybody that is his opinion so they can judge for themselves the attitude the Reform Party and this particular member have in relation to new Canadians, refugees and immigrants.

You, Mr. Speaker, read from the rules which state that a committee report is considered to be confidential even if it is discussed in public at committee. Whether or not the committee is in camera is totally irrelevant to the fact that this member decided to make the document public on his own volition.

I could accept it if he was willing to stand and say "Mr. Speaker, I made a mistake". Instead, he stands and says "What I did was good. What I did was right". It is black and white, Mr. Speaker, as you have obviously found out.

If we want to talk about denigrating the democratic process, what does it do? I will take members back to the meeting on March 2 which was held at the Promenade. It was to be an in camera session. Why? As you, Mr. Speaker, and all members would know, committees represent the 301 members of this House. The reason for that is that we are unable to sit on all the committees. While

everyone might want to be on the finance committee or on the citizenship and immigration committee, not all members can be. We have to share the workloads and spread the responsibility.

As a result, the committee does its work when it writes a draft report and brings it into this place to show our colleagues, the members of parliament, those who are duly elected to represent the people of this country. We do that before we go public with it. We do not release committee reports in draft or in final form until we have completed our responsibility which is to deliver it to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the House of Commons. The member knows that but he continues to try to defend the indefensible.

It says on the document "Confidential until reported to the House". I ask the member: What word in there does he not understand? Confidential means it is confidential. It cannot be reported to the public until it has been reported to the House. It is a very difficult concept. This means that after the report is brought to this place, laid on the table and reported as a public document the member is then not only entitled to but probably obligated, as a critic, to hold a press conference and to say everything he is saying. I do not have a problem with him accusing the committee of not listening to witnesses. I do not agree with that but if I were in opposition I would probably say the same thing. I do not believe it is true, but he has every right and indeed as a member of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition he has a responsibility to do that. I respect that.

• (1555)

In that meeting of March 2 at the Promenade, the member spoke up and said that he did not want the meeting to continue in camera. The Chair, quite appropriately, told him that the reason the meeting was in camera was because it was dealing with a draft report and that it must stay in camera and confidential until the report was presented to the House of Commons.

This member then said that he had a tape recorder. He showed it to us and said that he was going to tape record the proceedings of the committee if we refused to pass a motion to move out of in camera. Can anyone imagine the audacity? He used the word nerve; how the committee has the nerve to ask you, Mr. Speaker, to decide on whether or not he has violated our privileges. Imagine the nerve of a member of parliament in this great democracy, called Canada, to come into a committee room and, for whatever reason, actually threaten members opposite and even members on his own side that he was going to tape record the in camera proceedings and then selectively release the information as he saw fit.

In my 20 years in public office, I have never felt so insulted by a member who would come in and say that. If he wanted to fight the good fight he should have put a motion to move out of in camera. I would not have had a problem with that. The committee could have voted on it. He did not do that. The Chair, in a conciliatory way, the

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same Chair who this member is now castigating and asking to be removed from the committee, said that he would agree to a suggestion by the member for Hamilton—Wentworth that the minutes of the committee would be made public once the report was completed. The member agreed not to tape record the proceedings and agreed with that suggestion. All of this was agreed to before any press conference was held.

You can imagine, Mr. Speaker, how surprised members of the committee were when we heard there was actually going to be a press conference the next day.

I will now deal with that issue. The member said that he got a copy of the draft legislation that was put out by the ministry and had apparently been circulated to provincial legislatures, ministers or stakeholders. Why would that happen? The member said that it was for approval. In reality it was for input. If the government were to change the Immigration Act or any act without getting the input of the stakeholders that are directly involved, we would be accused of the most dastardly things by the opposition members, of not listening, of not seeking other opinions and of not caring what their beloved provinces might have to say about an issue that could have a tremendous impact on the future of those provinces.

It is absurd to suggest that sending a draft-for-comment piece of legislation to other interested stakeholders is wrong. That is not wrong. That is consultation. It only makes sense to do that.

Instead of just perhaps questioning that at committee and saying "I have a concern", what does the member do? He decides to take the document that all of us have been working so hard on, that people have had input on, that is stamped draft and is not even 50% complete, an issue that became rather embarrassingly obvious at the press conference, and he calls a press conference with it.

• (1600)

Let me tell the House why it was embarrassingly obvious that it was incomplete. One of the reporters apparently asked the hon. member what it was that he objected to. He said that he did not like certain words, such as the word "should" where the recommendations said "this should happen" or "that should happen".

While he was busy getting his notes ready for his press conference the rest of us were going through the document. I put a motion at committee—and members who were there will remember this—that we should delete the word "should" and we should send a strong recommendation to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration that would not say "this should happen" but "this shall happen".

The entire report, at the direction of the committee, was rewritten by the clerk to eliminate that somewhat soft approach of saying

"this should happen" and it changed the whole nature of the report. That one change took that document from being a very thorough but somewhat soft document to becoming a firm report with clear cut directions.

The hon. member did not even have the sense to release the final report. It is incredible. He released a report that was 50% done in the oven because he got all upset that, my goodness, there was a draft piece of legislation that had been sent to the provinces. It is truly hard to understand.

I would invite anyone to research the minutes of the committee or the committee evidence or anything else concerning the committee. It is standard practice for a committee agenda to be sent out to all of our offices, saying that the committee on whatever will meet tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock in Room 308 West Block to consider the following items. Then it will say the draft report of whatever the report happens to be. Then it will have stamped on it "in camera".

If a member objects to that, the member can say so. That member can put a motion. That member can call for a recorded vote. In no instance did this member do that at the meetings which he attended. He did complain, I give him credit for that, but he did not follow through. He accepted the recommendation and the concept, which did not need to be formalized in some kind of a motion with which the chair agreed.

The real issue here is that this member could do an awful lot for his party, the Reform Party, as I will continue to call it if members do not mind, and he could do an awful lot for his own integrity if he would simply rise in this place and say "Thank you for your ruling, sir. I appreciate the diligence and the time. I am sorry that you had to come to that conclusion, but I would respectfully ask for the House to forgive me for making the error which I made". If he would not like to use that term, he could just stand and say "I am sorry. I made a mistake".

It would be absolutely brilliant to hear that from that member. I highly doubt that we will. Instead he rose to argue his case. Guess what? When this motion goes to committee, this member has just given us all the prosecution we need. We will just get *Hansard* and say "Here is what he said". He said it was a good idea, that it was a good thing and that he was pleased he did it. He does not care what the Speaker said. He does not care what committee members said. He does not care about the opposition. Mr. Speaker, he just does not care.

It is absolutely unforgivable, unless the member was to accept responsibility for his actions, rise and say to the members of the committee "I apologize for my mistake. I still do not like the report. I still do not think you did the right job. I still do not like the minister"—whatever. I do not care. I understand and respect all of that. But to actually stand here and try to defend something which

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the Speaker has ruled on, when it is so clear, when it is so black and white, I can only conclude by telling you, Mr. Speaker, as one parliamentarian to another, that I find it embarrassing.

• (1605)

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, this member is truly very talented. He can say all of these things, but he seems to ignore completely the reality of the matter. His version of what happened at committee is suspect at best. He is a very talented member of parliament, but it would be much appreciated if he would stick to fact and reality.

If I misunderstood the ruling of the Speaker, and if the Speaker did rule that something I did was wrong, then I certainly apologize for that. I understood that the Speaker had referred the matter back to the committee for the committee to decide. That was my understanding.

Again, I want to make it very clear that I respect the Speaker, and if the Speaker ruled that I had done something improper, then I apologize for that. If the Speaker said that this will go to committee, then we will deal with it at committee. I believe that is what he said.

That I will find out. I will look over *Hansard* later. I want to show no disrespect for the Speaker.

The memory of the member who has just spoken is very interesting. First, he referred to the March 2 meeting, and what he said about that meeting was absolutely incorrect. He said at the time of the March 2 meeting that we were discussing a draft of the committee report. We were not. At that time we were discussing notes put together by the researcher about what the witnesses had said. All we were doing was discussing that to rehash what the witnesses had said. The chair decided to go in camera to discuss that. I raised a fuss about it at the meeting and the chair agreed that it was improper and he made it a public meeting after that. That is what really happened at that meeting.

The member is very talented, but not very factual. I would prefer that he work on his memory and make it a little less selective. I think that would be beneficial.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, I guess being one out of two is not bad. It would be nice to have at least a 50% success rate. I will take talent.

I can be as accurate as the member wants.

Let me respond. The member is saying that the staff of the committee and the clerk were doing something improper because they brought forward the document. They said it was a discussion of the draft report. If the member wants to hang his defence on whether we were dealing with the notes from the researcher that

would lead us to draft a report or whether we were dealing with a draft report, if that is his defence, I would suggest that he not step on to the gallows. It is a bit flimsy.

Mr. Speaker, do not worry about my memory because I am going back about three weeks. The member should think about his own memory and go back about 30 minutes or so. He would find if he checked that the Speaker's ruling was not to refer the matter back to committee but to refer it to the procedure and House affairs committee, which is the hangman. It will pull the lever and kick the sandbag out as the body drops to the ground.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, all of this is talk, but the real issue is the behaviour of the chair of the committee and the committee and how it could decide to break the very rules which the committee had set for itself and which the House has set for committees. That is the issue.

• (1610)

Across the floor they laugh about breaking those rules. They think it really is not that important. The member brings up all of this fluff, much of it inaccurate, and seems not to understand the importance of respecting the democratic process and respecting the rules of committee, which they routinely break.

As the procedure and House affairs committee reviews this issue I hope it will look at the behaviour of this chair and of this committee, because it is important.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, really, this is almost silly. If there had been a request by the committee to review somehow the behaviour of the chair and the Speaker had come in and made some kind of ruling, I suppose maybe we would be dealing with it.

I do not know if I am hearing a plea for mercy, an act of contrition or the launching of some new defence. These guys launch new things every day, so who knows, maybe the hon. member has come up with a new way to try to defend being caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

**Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows that I am a member of the committee. My colleague also knows that I have a recollection of what took place.

I am sitting here listening to the member in his defence talking about people who break the rules and people who have no respect for the democratic process.

I would like my colleague to comment on the day—and I speak for my privileges as a member of the committee—when he reached out and put on the table in front of him, in full view of the entire committee, a tape recorder and said that he was recording.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** That is scary stuff.



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**Ms. Jean Augustine:** Yes, it was very heavy stuff and it was very threatening, because what we were discussing at the time were very sensitive matters. The member put a tape recorder on the table and threatened us that he would be taping whatever was said.

I wonder if my colleague remembers that occasion and the sense that we had across the way as we saw that tape recorder.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, in one sense I was outraged and in another sense I was highly amused. The meetings are recorded anyway. Everything we do and say in committee is recorded. It is made available in the record.

We had agreed that the transcript of the meeting held in camera would be released to the public. I said to myself "Let me understand this. The hon. member will be tape recording what is already being tape recorded". Boy, that is pretty scary.

Scary is not the right word. The thing that was so offensive—and the member was right to bring it up—was that a member could come in and actually threaten that kind of silliness, that kind of nonsense, show that lack of respect for members of the committee, for the committee process and indeed for this place. That is just not appropriate behaviour on the part of any member of any party in this place. It is shameful and it is to be hoped that this member would realize the error of his ways and stop this kind of nonsense.

I would add that if the member had put as much energy into helping us write the report as he did in playing all of these silly games, he might have had an opportunity for some input of his own. As it was, he was no help at all.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in this debate I do not want to impute any motives to my colleague from Lakeland, who sits on the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, far from it.

Nor do I intend to turn this into a heated debate, as the government and official opposition members are trying to do.

• (1615)

I do, however, want the Liberal members to hear what I have to say, because it is basically representative of my understanding of the meeting of March 2 in particular.

I would remind hon. members that we received a notice to appear, as is the case for all committees. I did indeed receive such a notice, in proper form, a few days before the committee sat.

I was initially rather surprised to see that session 15 was to be an in camera session. Why surprised? On the one hand, because the

notice indicated that we were going to examine a draft report, whereas we had never received such a draft report.

A few days before the committee sitting, I recall very clearly receiving a document in proper form, a well-prepared document, as is usual with the research staff. To my mind, this was far from being a draft report; it was instead a summary of options and of the appearances of witnesses throughout the entire examination of the refugee status determination system.

This document summarized what the witnesses had had to say. It went so far as to provide summaries. This document contained no potential recommendations. At no time did we have the position or statements of position from the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

I recall that I spoke at that point in committee, and I would refer you to the transcript of the committee meeting on March 2. I had said clearly that the meeting should have been declared in camera, not on the basis of the report we had at our disposal, but rather on the basis of a study of a draft report.

I quote my statement of March 2:

However, I would hope that we would study the real draft report in camera, the one our researchers have prepared for us on the basis of the options we choose.

I stress the fact that basically I wanted the meeting in camera because of the draft report for two reasons. First, I felt that all the committee work we were starting and the report we would be producing several weeks later had to be done as fairly as possible, on the basis of the recommendations and evidence gathered during deliberations.

Second, it seems basic to me that the meeting should be in camera when a draft report is involved. Why? Because we had to be sure we were free from influence from interveners outside the committee, which could have affected our proposals and recommendations.

That seemed so important to me that I said on March 2, and I refer you again to the transcript of the committee's proceedings:

If we study the report in camera, I hope we take the necessary steps, as responsible parliamentarians, to ensure there are no leaks.

• (1620)

What I said at that time was that we could have a public meeting. We could have outside interveners come to our committee, based on the summary of options prepared by the researchers and the Library of Parliament. There was nothing confidential in that.

There was just a series of statements that we had heard in committee and that we were examining. This is why I was surprised to see, when I read the notice, that the meeting would take place in camera, because of the document that we had in hand. I questioned the committee and I expressed my astonishment.

*Speaker's Ruling*

I said "My first reaction was one of astonishment when I received the notice about this committee meeting and saw that we were going to study in camera the document that was sent to us. It was supposedly confidential, having been prepared by the library". Again, I am quoting the transcript. I was surprised to see that we were having an in camera meeting on the basis of that document.

I was prepared for a public meeting, so that outside interveners could read the summary of options. However, I was hoping from the bottom of my heart that the review of the draft report, which was supposed to be ready after March 2, would be conducted in camera.

I readily admit that I was disappointed to learn from some assistants that this report, which I believed to be confidential and which was jointly drafted by opposition and government members, had been leaked and could be found in the pages of newspapers outside Quebec.

This is my interpretation or my version of these events. I believed and I fundamentally think that the review of the draft report should be conducted in camera.

[English]

**Mr. Joe Jordan:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am not on the committee but in following this debate I am a little confused. Perhaps you could provide some clarification.

Did the Speaker rule that there was a prima facie case against the member? If that is true, this is going to go to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. On the surface the Speaker found there was enough evidence that the member leaked a document to the public prior to tabling it in the House.

This debate is redundant. It could take place at the procedure and House affairs committee when it tries to sort out what it is going to do. The member might be a little confused. He thinks it is going back to the immigration committee.

Mr. Speaker, maybe you could clarify the ruling for the member and we could get on to the orders of the day.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The Speaker was asked to rule on whether there was a prima facie case of a breach of privilege made by the member for London North Centre. The Speaker ruled that in fact there was. Then the member who brought the original complaint moved the motion that the matter go to the procedure and House affairs committee. Subsequently this debate has to do with that.

The debate upon whether or not this will go to the procedure and House affairs committee will go on. It is not up to the Chair to determine what is going to happen in this debate. The Chair has no recourse other than to keep us in this debate. Theoretically we could debate this for two or three weeks.

**Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North—St. Paul, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a very brief comment.

It is very sad that events like this should happen in the House of Commons and that there would be a breach of privilege. It tells us that we are less mature than we ought to be and that we could break the rules of decorum and procedure. That is very sad.

• (1625 )

At the same time, I am heartened that the member for Lakeland is prepared to apologize. The Speaker made a final determination that there has been a breach of privilege. The member for London North Centre deemed it right to refer this matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs for a more thorough study of the facts of the case.

When the motion goes to that committee and the issue is brought forward for further study, let me convey a message to that committee through you, Mr. Speaker. The member for Lakeland had a grievance about the behaviour of certain members of the committee. Let me state one principle. Even granting that those things happened and without admitting anything for the sake of argument, let me say with respect to mistakes that two wrongs do not make a right.

For future guidance, if we have a grievance against a process within a committee, let us still abide by the rules that cover all of us in the House. That is my contribution to this debate at this point. With respect to mistakes, two wrongs do not make a right.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has said that it is important to follow the rules. I believe it is indeed important to follow the rules and it seems to me that the rules indicated precisely that the absolute confidentiality of this committee needed to be guaranteed in order to ensure that its work might be carried out in keeping with the rules and respecting the evidence given in committee throughout the week, and sometimes more, sometimes two or three weeks. It had to be guaranteed that the committee would be leak-proof, therefore, in order to avoid press reports which might, regardless of their possibly good intentions, influence certain committee members.

It is important for these debates, the statements of position and the formulation of recommendations to be carried out in total objectivity. This is why I wish absolutely, and with no malice whatsoever toward the hon. member for Lakeland, for him to apologize to the House. I believe we have already seen a step in the right direction on his part.

At the present time, I believe that it is the confidentiality of the committee that requires us to refer this question to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

*Speaker's Ruling**[English]*

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the member from Winnipeg said to the Bloc critic that it is important that members respect the rules of the House. I believe that to be true.

I would like to ask the member why it is that Liberal members on committees routinely leak reports? We know that is true. We have brought forward questions of privilege on this issue time and again and the Speaker has said that they really should not do that, that they are naughty and to go on with it from there.

I have a direct question for the Bloc critic. He commented on the need to respect the rules.

• (1630)

I want to ask him questions about the committee respecting the rules. First, I want to ask the Bloc member whether or not it is a rule of committee that a vote be passed in committee before the committee goes in camera. Second, was there a vote passed at committee to have the committee go in camera?

I have two straightforward, simple questions and I would really appreciate my colleague from the Bloc answering them.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Mr. Speaker, as I explained in my speech, it is my fundamental and total belief as an MP and a committee member that, when the draft report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration was being examined, the session would be in camera.

I said so, and expressed my wishes for this in my statement on March 2. I would also point out that when I finished speaking that day, the chair's reply was "That is true. Thank you".

At that time I believed totally that we were in camera and that the in camera status would continue throughout the study of the report.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, Gasoline Pricing.

*[English]*

**Mr. Joe Fontana (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to perhaps a little debate here. My colleague, in a very objective way, has tried to point out what all members of the committee are feeling regardless of political party, except for the member of the Reform Party, now known as the new Canadian Alliance. Old name, new name; it is the same old stuff.

I do not think he gets the point of what the chair already ruled on. It is unfortunate that he does not appreciate what the chair said. It has absolutely nothing to do with whether or not a meeting was in camera. I look forward to the opportunity of putting that case to the committee.

A standing order of the House protects the integrity and the privilege of every member of the House. The point is that if there is a confidential document it cannot be reported to the public before it is reported here. That is the issue. That is what the Speaker ruled on, that you are in breach of that privilege. It is not whether or not we had a meeting in camera.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I hate to interrupt, but particularly in a debate such as this one it is important that members address each other through the Chair. This is an interesting question and comment as we are doing it kind of in the third person.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Mr. Speaker, this must not turn into a two way debate between the Canadian Alliance and the Liberal Party.

The fundamental issue that must be examined is whether there has been a breach of privileges. From what I understand, the meeting was being held in camera. Was a vote held or not? No, no vote was held on that issue.

However, my interpretation is that the committee was sitting in camera. Out of respect for the members of the committee, it was fundamental that this draft report not be released, but some members of the House decided to do so.

My understanding is that the committee was working in camera regarding this issue.

• (1635)

*[English]*

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I feel privileged to be able to stand in Canada's House of Commons once again in defence of democracy and in defence of the people whom we are here to represent.

The issue before us this afternoon is a very serious one. It has to do with an allegation that my colleague from Lakeland has disclosed a document which was marked confidential. It was brought to the attention of the House. The Speaker has ruled that in fact there was a prima facie case.

As a result the chairman of the immigration committee has made a motion. Since we have not heard it for a while, I will take this opportunity to read it so that we know what we are debating. The member for London North Centre moved:

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That the matter of the premature disclosure of the committee report by the member for Lakeland be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

That is the motion we are debating and the vote that will subsequently be held on this question is whether or not the issue should be referred to the committee.

If we vote against it then it is the end of the matter. If we vote in favour of it then the issue will continue in the procedure and House affairs committee which, after hearing more evidence, getting down to the nitty-gritty and hopefully ferreting out the facts, will come back with a report to the House.

That report, if it finds the member guilty, will probably include some sanctions. If the committee finds the member not guilty then it will so recommend. When the report is brought back to the House there will be another motion that says we concur in the report. Whatever the report says, if that motion carries then the member will have to live by that decision. It is a long, drawn out process.

However, I would like to point out to the people who perhaps are a little fuzzy on what is exactly happening that a deeper principle is being attacked or debated here: the degree to which this place is democratic.

I certainly concur with the fact that in order for us as the board of directors of the corporation called Canada to direct our affairs in a proper way, we must have rules which regulate our debate and regulate our work in committees. It is absolutely important for all of us to agree with and to follow those rules. It must be done in an orderly fashion. There is no question or debate on that part.

We do find from time to time that while members of the Liberal governing party have a majority not only in the House but also in the committees, there are too many occasions in which the rights and privileges of members who are not part of the governing party are ignored, abused and sometimes trampled on.

It is very interesting. I happen to be a member who on one occasion did go to the procedure and House affairs committee. It was one of these cases where we had a huge question on whether or not it was proper or improper to display a little flag on the corner of our desks. Thinking that was fairly proper, I said that I would display my flag. When the Speaker ruled that was not acceptable, I accepted that ruling strictly and totally because of my commitment to making this place work.

I know the Speaker made the ruling. I also know that by the rules, just like in a hockey game, I am not permitted to challenge the Chair. We need some place of final authority. We may not always like it. I will tell you frankly, Mr. Speaker, I did not like it, but I did accept it.

Members will notice that since that time some five years ago I have not displayed my little Canadian flag on my desk strictly out of respect for the process, even though I disagree with it.

• (1640)

I suppose I would do the same if I were falsely accused of some bad crime and landed in jail. I would gladly spend my time there because I agree with the process even though I was improperly convicted. I do not know how committed I would be to the cause at that time, but that is how it works in this country.

I think this member has expressed his frustrations in the committee. I have experienced those same frustrations. I remember one occasion when I was substituting in the committee. I guess I have a reputation, at least in our party, of always being available. Whenever someone has to go away on other parliamentary business and there is a vacancy for a representative of our party in a committee, they will phone me and ask if I can go.

I was substituting in committee. We got to the point where we were doing clause by clause consideration of a bill. It was late at night. It was one of those bills that the Liberals thought they had to get through. It was probably 10.30 or 11 o'clock at night. A strange thing happened. The chairman said shall clause so and so pass. My colleague and I said yes and no one said anything else.

You know the rules, Mr. Speaker. If you call for a vote and there are two votes in favour and none against, does the thing pass or fail? The fact of the matter is that if two say yes and no one says no then it should pass.

As I recall, in our motion we were trying to amend a particular clause. Two of us having said yes and no one having said no, I was surprised when the chairman said that the motion was defeated. I said that the chairman could do not do that. He said "I just did".

We must remember that this was a Liberal chairman of the committee. I said "No, you can't, based on the rules of democracy". Every organization in this country is based on democracy. When there is a vote, the vote must be declared according to what the members said. Two of us had said yes. Nobody said no. The motion had passed. That is what I said to the chairman, and he said "No".

At that time the sleepy Liberals woke up when we got into a bit of a shouting match. I would not let it pass because it was wrong that the chairman could overrule the decision of the group. I objected, and I objected louder and louder. I would not let him off the hook.

Finally he said he would call for a vote to see whether or not the ruling of the chair should be upheld. By then the Liberals had awakened. There were one or two more of them than the rest of us. Even though they did not know what had gone on, since they were sleeping, they at that stage, on command, voted in favour and upheld the ruling of the chair.

*Speaker's Ruling*

Consequently I rose in this place on a question of privilege and told the Speaker what had happened in committee. I related the story. I will frankly confess to you, Mr. Speaker, that I was very disappointed in the Speaker's ruling. The Speaker ruled that the committee was champion of its own affairs. It can do whatever it wants. The ruling stood and our amendment stood defeated because the chairman declared it so, even though the majority of the votes in that particular meeting said it had passed. That was the end of the matter.

This is the first time I have raised it since it happened a number of years ago. The only reason I am talking about it now is that it fits in the context of what we are debating. Again, I did not like the ruling of the Speaker but he is the final authority. I accepted it, and that was the end of the matter, but it is still wrong for a chairman of a committee to have such unilateral power. That is not acceptable.

**Hon. Jim Peterson:** Oh, come on.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** It is not acceptable that the chairman can do things which are straight out and out undemocratic.

• (1645)

**Hon. Jim Peterson:** He did not do that. He is the best chairman I have ever seen.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I have just related the story. I was there, the member was not. I was there and that is exactly what happened, and there were other people who heard it.

Mr. Speaker, I will not listen to the heckling member on the other side who does not want to listen to facts. I want to talk about the issue that we have before us.

It is on issues like this on which democracy is trampled by a majority government. I say this as kindly as I can to Liberal members. They have an obligation, as do you, Mr. Speaker, to preserve the democratic process. When there are decisions made which run roughshod over the opinions and the ideas of other members, the frustration level grows.

In the instance that we have before us, I would say that it is not only because the member for Lakeland is in the riding adjacent to mine that I stand in his defence, but because of his proximity I frequently run across little things that he does in the riding. Sometimes people come to me and say "We have such and such a problem" and I ask "Where do you live?" and find out that the person lives in the other member's riding. So we have some dealings back and forth.

When the hon. member stands in the House and says "When I did what I did I thought I was doing what was correct because we had voted in committee that this was to be a totally public process", my inclination is to accept that what the member is saying is in fact how he interpreted it at the time.

There is the other argument, which I will let other members make, that even though the committee voted that this was to be totally public, in fact the final report was not to be released before it was tabled in the House. That argument could be made and I will let others make it. It has validity.

However, I have a very serious question to pose. Every committee that I have been on since I was first elected in 1993 has issued a number of reports and I cannot think of very many which actually remained secret until they were tabled in the House.

There were a number of times when I was quite convinced that indeed Liberal members were talking to the press about specific issues which were in finance committee reports. There were some things which were in the reports that were leaked to the press before they even came to the committee in the wording that was quoted in the press. No other member even knew about it, except for the chairman of the committee.

That is almost impossible to prove and I can understand why the Speaker has been in a dilemma on numerous occasions when we have pointed it out. Not being able to prove which individual leaked it, as there is no paper path, it is very difficult to follow it through. The Speaker has, on every instance, until this one, ruled that that is the way it is. This time that is not the way it is.

This time we are told the member for Lakeland must stand in front of a tribunal to defend his actions. In his own words, the only difference between what he did and what the Liberal members have done over and over again is that he did it openly, in front of cameras, at a press conference, whereas they did it surreptitiously. That is the only difference.

The last budget is a perfect example. How many reports were in the press in the weeks leading up to the budget? It used to be that ministers of finance would resign if the budget was leaked, and that was not very long ago. But in this particular round of government, with the Liberal finance minister that we have, all of these ideas are floated out there and then in the end we are amazed to find that the budget speech given on Monday was fairly accurately reported in the press the Saturday before.

• (1650)

There are no repercussions any more. It seems to me that the true lack of respect for this democratic process has come from the government on the other side because it enjoys a majority. Government members won the election. They will not win the next one if I can help it, but they won the last election and they won the one before that, so they have more members than we do.

I appeal to them that in order to gain and to keep the respect of the Canadian citizens for this boardroom we must respect each other. As I must respect government members, I appeal to them to respect those of us on this side and stop routinely defeating every amendment that we put forward.

*Speaker's Ruling*

There were a lot of people who wondered about the long Nisga'a vote. I have had conversations with people. They asked me if that was the best we could do in parliament, to stand up and sit down for four days. In my more jovial moods I said that maybe somebody recognized that I needed the exercise.

However, there is a deeper answer. Yes, we did vote on many amendments to Nisga'a, not only because of members of our party, but because of the people we represent and in fact thoughtful Canadians right across the country who were very opposed to that bill in the form in which it was presented.

We had a few substantial amendments which would have ameliorated the concerns, but the Liberal government, with its majority, would have none of those. We said that the issue was so important that one way or another we would spend at least a week of the time of parliament on the issue, not one hour or two hours.

The government has the habit of using time allocation. I have a list here. There are several bills which have been before the House on which the Reform Party has only had maybe 30 minutes of debate before the government has invoked time allocation. There is no respect for it. So I said to some people that when we have—

**Hon. Jim Peterson:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, please stop your stopwatch.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I cannot recognize the point of order because the member is not at his place, so there is no point of order.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I view that simply as a tactic to reduce my speaking time.

I said to many people on that occasion that our reason for voting was because we were going to spend a week on it. It was an important issue for thousands of Canadians. The Liberal government had the choice to decide whether we would use that time debating or whether we would use that time voting, because I believe it had advance notice that we would oppose that bill with every means possible. We did that because the government said "Closure. Time allocation. This is finished". We had no choice but to spend that time voting because of the importance of the bill to members of our society.

I plead for better democracy. I plead for giving our members an opportunity to really be heard and not to be ignored. I insist that all of us in the House, elected by the people in our ridings, are here to do a job.

In conclusion, I would amend the motion that has been put by the hon. member. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting the word "premature".

• (1655)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The amendment is in order. Debate is on the amendment.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member putting forward the amendment understands the word premature. It seems to me that the word simply means something that came early, as in a premature baby. How about that? Something came before it was ready. The fact that the report was released by the hon. member when it was only 50% completed might, although it is a stretch, qualify it as being premature.

How can the member justify putting what is almost a comical amendment—even though it is in order, as you have ruled, Mr. Speaker—to delete the word premature, which obviously is the crux of the matter? If the report was not prematurely released, then perhaps the member would not have been found guilty of releasing it prematurely by the Speaker.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I can answer that question. That is exactly why it was removed. It presupposes the guilt of the person before it goes to committee. That is why we would rather have the motion state that there was a disclosure and let the committee determine whether there was something untoward in that action.

I will answer his question. Do I understand the word premature? Yes, I do.

**Mr. Joe Fontana (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the committee to comment on the important work that we try to do as a committee.

I have spoken many times to the member for Lakeland and thanked him very much, not only for his questions in committee but for his approach to the subject matter, our refugee determination system, which is of concern to Canadians. We must ensure that the system works well.

The committee was working well together in dealing with this issue, which is important to all Canadians. It is unfortunate that it has come to this procedural wrangling, and it is unfortunate that the member released a report that was still in progress and still being worked on.

The Speaker has already ruled that there was a prima facie case of privilege. At that time I could have moved a motion to censure the member, but I did not. I said that I wanted this issue to move to the procedure and House affairs committee where it could be aired and where the member for Lakeland and other members could talk to the committee. I sat on that committee for two years and had to

*Speaker's Ruling*

deal with some of the issues which hon. members have talked about, such as the leaking of confidential reports by all members of the House.

The procedure and House affairs committee found that to be an unacceptable way for members of the House to conduct themselves. At the end of the day, all we are trying to do in this place is the nation's business and the work as well as we possibly can.

The point that seems to be missed here, which the member for Lakeland is trying to confuse, is not whether it was appropriate to go into in camera meetings, but whether there was a motion duly put to the committee as to whether we ought to go in camera. We were discussing options. We were discussing a summary of what the witnesses said. We had yet to move to debate on the confidential document, and for that we all agreed that it should have been, and was, done in public.

The moment we start to draft a confidential report with recommendations, at that point we must all respect the rules of the House. We must respect one another. We cannot sit on every committee. Therefore, it is incumbent upon every member to do the nation's business in committee on behalf of all 301 members of the House, and only release information to the public after it has been reported to the House. That will ensure that members of parliament will get to know and decide before the public as to what should be made public and what should be concurred in.

• (1700)

I must admit that the member for Lakeland was upset so he decided to release the report which was confidential and in fact that is why it was contrary to the rules. Perhaps he was upset because he thought the immigration minister had already written a piece of legislation without the input of the committee.

We tried to point out that was not the case. It was not the case. A minister and the ministry over a period of time have to consult with Canadians, provincial counterparts and a number of people on a number of issues before a bill is put forward.

Because he was so disturbed that perhaps all of the hard work that was done by the committee would be for naught, the member decided it was incumbent upon him to take a confidential report which was only half complete and call a news conference for the purpose of letting the public know what the committee was dealing with in regard to our refugee determination system.

The Speaker earlier today heard all of the evidence put forward by me and the member for Lakeland, and in fact he found there to be a prima facie case of privilege. I might be mistaken but I also heard that the member for Lakeland expressed an apology. I hope that is the case.

Some members are saying those are the rules of the House. We are trying to be helpful here. We are trying to learn from one

another. We are trying to ensure that the House is respected, that we can move forward and work together as much as possible in a non-partisan way in doing the nation's business.

If the member has already apologized to the Speaker and to the House, I would suggest that the House would be best served if I withdrew my motion. I ask for unanimous consent to withdraw my motion on the basis that the member has already apologized to the House for the breach of privilege.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I am sorry I was not paying close attention, but I have been informed that the member for London North Centre is prepared to withdraw his motion. If the member is prepared to withdraw his motion, then he would have to do it formally.

**Mr. Joe Fontana:** Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to formally withdraw my motion. I do that on the basis that there has been consultation among the House leaders and that I heard earlier this afternoon that the member for Lakeland has apologized to the House for breaching the privileges of the House and for releasing the report.

Perhaps you could ask him to confirm that he has apologized to the House. If that is the case, with the unanimous consent of the House I am prepared to move that I remove my motion to refer the issue to the committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Because it is the amendment that is before the House, we would have to ask to remove the amendment and the motion. Speaking for the Chair, it would be an elegant way to move beyond this.

The hon. member for London North Centre must request that the amendment and the motion be withdrawn.

**Mr. Joe Fontana:** Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of moving beyond this, I had asked whether or not the member for Lakeland was prepared to confirm that he had apologized to the House.

I just asked him personally while you were standing and asking me to do so. He said that he was not prepared to confirm that he apologized to the House. Therefore I am not moving that my motion be removed.

• (1705)

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that the hon. member for Medicine Hat, the finance critic for the Reform Party if that is what I should call it, has not had an opportunity during a month of question periods since the budget to ask any questions about the budget, I would be happy to answer any questions on it that he might have at this time.

*Speaker's Ruling*

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have presented the situation as I see it. I have pointed out some concerns I have with the way the committee is operating. I have also heard the ruling of the Speaker.

Since I have examined the ruling of the Speaker, it is clear that the Speaker said that a motion should be put forth to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs because I had violated some rules.

Because of that ruling by the Speaker, I do apologize. I would never intentionally breach the rules of this House. I do apologize. I hope that the committee can move forward in a much more democratic fashion in the future.

**Mr. Joe Fontana:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. On the basis of what the hon. member for Lakeland has just said, I would move, with the unanimous consent of the House, that my previous motion to send the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and the amendment be withdrawn.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Does the hon. member for London North Centre have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am losing track of to whom I am directing the question. Is it the hon. member for Elk Island?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The hon. member for London North Centre was on debate. Therefore the question or comment will have to be directed to him, but I am sure the hon. member for Elk Island is all ears.

**Mr. Joe Jordan:** Mr. Speaker, when the issue is stripped down what I am hearing is that the Reform member is arguing that the ends justified the means. He expressed frustration at the rules of the House and then knowingly broke them, I guess to invite confrontation.

When there is a document that is marked “confidential until tabled in the House” and a member has a press conference on it, I would say that the member has knowingly and deliberately broken the rules of the House. I do not know how we could come to any other conclusion.

Does the hon. member share that view? Is this simply an argument of the ends justifying the means?

**Mr. Joe Fontana:** Madam Speaker, I would hope that is not the motive of the hon. member for Lakeland or the game he wants to play.

This is a very important issue. The committee went in camera to discuss not the options paper but to discuss the draft report along with the recommendations. We spent the better part of a day looking at that discussion paper and recommendations. The member participated.

• (1710)

He objected to the fact that he found in a brown envelope legislation that the minister had already drafted. We went to great lengths to point out to him that it was not a piece of legislation that was before the House or before a committee and in fact it was one way that ministries obviously look at consultation.

Before he held his news conference, I went over to him to plead with him not to release the hard work of the committee, that we still needed to do 50% of the work and we still needed to have two additional meetings. I invited him to attend the meetings. He refused to participate any further in the meetings.

I told him that over the course of the six months that I have been Chair and he has been a committee member that he has done some very useful work. I pleaded with him to respect the rules of the House, that when a committee is looking at something in confidence he ought to have respect for his fellow members of parliament and deal with it in a very conscientious and serious manner. I said that if he had some procedure problems he may not agree with that belong to the House and to the committee, then perhaps he should put those concerns on paper to the Speaker so the procedure and House affairs committee could deal with them once and for all.

The ends do not justify the means. The fact is the House wants to do some very good work and needs to do it. The standing orders say that if there is a confidential report, it cannot be released before it is tabled in the House. To do so a member would find himself in breach of privileges. That is precisely what the Speaker found this afternoon, a prima facie case of breach of privilege to the House and to all of its members.

This kind of action is not to be condoned at all. It is reprehensible when confidential committee reports are leaked by any member of the House, regardless of whether or not they are members of the government.

We are to respect the rules of the House. That is what democracy is all about. It is about respecting rules. It is about changing the rules if in fact we feel they must be changed.

The ends do not justify the means. Just because members do not like the rules does not mean they call a news conference for the purposes of making public something that should remain in confidence until the House has had the opportunity to debate it.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I would like to bring to your attention on page 140 of Erskine May a ruling of the Chair in a previous situation similar to what we



*Speaker's Ruling*

are dealing with here today. About halfway down the page in dealing with these complaints of breach of privilege it says that when the member accused has made a proper apology for his offence, the incriminating motion has usually been withdrawn.

That is exactly where we are right now. The member for Lakeland has said that having examined the ruling of the Chair earlier, he has made an apology for his actions. He understandably has some problems with how the committee is run, but that fight is going to have to be fought in committee and will continue hopefully without rancour in the days to come.

Nowhere does Erskine May say that the motion has to be withdrawn with unanimous consent. It just says the motion has usually been withdrawn. I would ask the Speaker to ask both the mover of the motion, and the mover of the amendment in this case, if they are prepared to withdraw their motions. It seems to me according to Erskine May that should be acceptable and we could get on with the business of the House because I think that is really what we are all here to do.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** If I understand correctly, the hon. member is saying that such a motion which was presented earlier does not need the consent of the House. I do not believe that is so. Any motion brought before the House needs the consent of the House. What I could do at this time is put the question again and see whether we have consent.

• (1715)

Does the hon. member for London North Centre have the unanimous consent of the House to withdraw the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** Because of the time we took to deal with the point of order, the time for questions and comments has expired.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay:** I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. I want to know if we are going to debate Bill C-13.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** For the time being, the debate is still on the motion before the House.

[*English*]

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I believe the debate is now on the amendment.

It is my pleasure to rise and debate this issue. It is important that we have a chance to really talk about what is happening. Despite what we have heard from the Liberals across the way, this is about more than whether my colleague did something that broke the rules of the House by releasing a document that was supposed to be

confidential. We already know that my colleague has very graciously apologized for anything that he did that may have violated the rules. He has done the right thing. This gives us an opportunity to talk about a larger issue and that is very important.

A minute ago my colleague from across the way and, previous to him, another Liberal colleague, said that the ends do not justify the means. I suggest that the rules that govern committees really are the means that justify the ends. This is a situation where rules have been put in place that allow the governing side to do whatever it wants and that justify any decision it makes without really having to put up with the messy business of democracy.

I will explain exactly what I mean. We have a situation where my friend has complained that the committee agreed that the issue of the draft report would be discussed only in public. It then affirmed in a vote that the issue would not be discussed in camera. It was to be discussed publicly. What did it do? It did not vote to go in camera, it just went in camera. The chair said "We are in camera now". Apparently that is all that is required. Mr. Speaker rose and said "That is the way it is in committees. Committees govern themselves".

**Mr. Joe Fontana:** Madam Speaker, we were gracious enough to put the motion to withdraw but there was no unanimous consent from this side. I wonder if you could clarify this, Madam Speaker. On the point of relevancy, it seems to me that the Reform Party is again challenging the Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I am afraid that is debate not a point of order.

**Mr. Joe Fontana:** Madam Speaker, in terms of debate, there is a question of relevancy to the point. It seems to me that what some members over there are talking about is challenging the ruling of the Speaker with regard to this prima facie case of privilege.

• (1720)

**Mr. Chuck Strahl:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member for London North Centre knows full well that is not a point of order. It is a point of debate. If he wants to debate he should get on during questions and comments. Let the debate continue.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault):** I believe that the hon. member for Medicine Hat was using his time for debate properly.

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Madam Speaker, the point I was making before my friend started to challenge the ruling of the Speaker was that this is a situation where the government has done everything that it can to ensure that the rules that govern committees favour the government. There is no question about that.

I have already recounted what has happened to my colleague. He admits that he violated the rules and, out of frustration, went to the lengths that he did, and that is absolutely relevant. It also points to

*Business of the House*

the problem in general of a mouthing of a commitment to democracy in this place, but when it gets down to brass tacks as to whether we are really a democratic institution, I think the answer is no. We are not nearly the democratic institution that we could be, and there are so many examples of that. I am sure I could give a long list of examples but I do not want to scare people.

I want people to consider what happens when we select committee chairs in the first place. The opposition comes in, the government members come in and not far behind them is the whip. The whip sits there—

**Mr. Jay Hill:** The government whip.

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Yes, the government whip sits there to make sure that we have a democratic vote. All the government people sit and vote in favour of a Liberal to be the chair of that committee. That is democracy Liberal style. If they do not, they will be punished. That is why that government whip sits there every time and that is how that works.

I remember very well that when I sat on the Canadian heritage committee a few years ago the Bloc Quebecois was the official opposition. This was a Canadian heritage committee protecting Canadian heritage. It was of course Bloc members who were made vice-chairs of that committee because the government members were told that they had to support—

[Translation]

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if you might seek unanimous consent of the House to suspend debate on the motion and begin Private Members' Business at 5.30 p.m.

On a number of occasions now, for a variety of reasons, we have put off debate on the hon. member's bill on shipyards. He would be very happy if we could have unanimous consent to suspend debate on the motion and proceed with Private Members' Business.

[English]

**Mr. Bob Kilger:** Mr. Speaker, given the intervention of my colleague from the Bloc Quebecois, I understand that there are some discussions going on among the leaders of the parties, and although we are getting close to 5.30, I would give advance notice that I would decline unanimous consent at this point to the request of the member. Hopefully between now and 5.30 the matter might be resolved.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** The member for Rimouski—Mitis has put a request for unanimous consent, so I will put the request for unanimous consent before the House.

Is there unanimous consent of the House to go to Private Members' Business at this time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Mr. Speaker, I hope I can finish what I want to say. People keep interrupting me.

There are many examples of how the government mouths a commitment to democracy and simply does not follow through, and the rules allow it to do this. As Mr. Speaker pointed out in his ruling, we have a situation where committees are really the masters of their own affairs. When we have government members sitting in a majority position on these committees, it effectively means that they have carte blanche. There is no such thing as individual rights for members of parliament.

• (1725)

A minute ago I mentioned the situation a few year's ago when I was sitting on the Canadian heritage committee. At that time the Bloc Quebecois was the official opposition, but there was some support for an opposition member other than a Bloc member to be a vice-chair of that committee. Duly we saw the whip come in and ensure that the Bloc Quebecois became the vice-chair on that committee. We see this over and over again on other committees, even the last time we put committees together. I think that is wrong. Canadians expect the highest legislative Chamber in the country to be the most democratic.

Completely to the contrary, we have a situation where we see an elected dictatorship. I hate to use that term. My friend, the transport minister, says "Oh no, oh no", but we have a situation where Canadians from coast to coast say exactly that and they correctly suspect that we have a situation where between elections Canadians are effectively gagged because members are not allowed to represent their constituents. We have rules in place that impede that.

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**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The time is getting very close to a certain magical hour. I would therefore ask hon. members for unanimous consent to move the following motion. I move:

That the debate on the motion concerning the question of privilege be deemed to have been concluded, that the question be deemed put on the amendment and a recorded division be deemed required and deferred until Wednesday, March 29 at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders;

That the question be deemed to have been put on the motion for the third reading of Bill C-13, an act to establish the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, to repeal the Medical Research Council Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Wednesday, March 29 at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders.

That the House proceed forthwith to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's order paper.

*Private Members' Business*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Is there unanimous consent for the government House leader to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

• (1730)

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

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

### SHIPBUILDING ACT, 1999

The House resumed from February 9 consideration of the motion that Bill C-213, an act to promote shipbuilding, 1999, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Discussions have taken place among all parties and the member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière concerning the taking of a division on Bill C-213 scheduled at the conclusion of Private Members' Business today. I believe you would find consent for the following:

That at the conclusion of today's debate on Bill C-213 all questions necessary to dispose of the said motion for second reading shall be deemed put, a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Wednesday, March 29, at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As the member sponsoring this bill, I agree to this proposal. However, I would just like to make sure at the same time, with the unanimous consent of the House, of having the right to respond for the three to five minutes usually given all members sponsoring a bill.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** Habitually the right to a five minute response is for non-votable bills, but by unanimous consent it would be possible at the appropriate time. As members say, we can do anything by unanimous consent.

Is there unanimous consent that the member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière have the last five minutes of debate?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** There are 45 minutes left in debate, 40 minutes not counting the member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon to enter the debate on Bill C-213, an act to promote shipbuilding in Canada and to make Canadian shipyards more competitive.

• (1735)

First I congratulate the shipyard workers who have worked together tirelessly with industry representatives to press the federal government to keep the commitment it made, upon coming to office, to put in place a shipbuilding policy for Canada and, I might add, to do it before it was too late.

Why do I say before it was too late? Despite the proud tradition of our shipbuilding industry throughout the history of the country and despite its importance to our economy, our regional economies and our total national economy, it is unbelievable that through the 1990s the Canadian shipbuilding industry has been cut by more than one-half.

Seven thousand jobs and over \$250 million in annual wages have been lost to regions that desperately needed that infusion into their economy but, most important, they were lost to families who depended upon those jobs and those wages.

I take the opportunity to acknowledge the presence in the gallery today of a number of representatives of those hard working shipyard workers. They have kept the campaign going, kept the issue before the Canadian public, and gained the support of municipal governments, provincial governments, industry representatives, labour representatives, and a very broad range of Canadians.

In part, this debate is about how in the name of heaven we will win the support of the federal Liberal government to put in place the Canadian shipbuilding policy that is so badly needed.

[*Translation*]

I wish to congratulate the member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière for introducing this bill. It is very brief—only three pages long. But I must say that if we could convince the federal government to establish a nationwide policy on shipbuilding, the impact would be enormous.

*Private Members' Business*

It would be enormous for shipyard workers throughout Canada. It would be enormous for the Canadian shipbuilding industry. It would also be enormous for our coastal communities, those of the Great Lakes region and the St. Lawrence Seaway.

[English]

In a way the fight for a national shipbuilding policy is about more than shipbuilding. It is about thousands of desperately needed jobs in the least prosperous areas of Canada. It is about skills that are crucial to our capabilities as a coastal and seafaring nation. In that sense it can be said that this is a fight that is not just about shipbuilding but is about nation-building.

Let me say as a member of parliament who is privileged to represent a constituency that is one of those communities with an important shipbuilding component, I am very concerned about the future of shipbuilding in Canada.

I would be less than honest if I did not say that I am extremely angry at the federal government. The federal government was given the privilege and the opportunity to govern. It promised the people in Atlantic Canada and across the country that if it were elected in the 1993 election it would make Canadian shipbuilding a priority. Some priority. Seven years and people are still waiting, seven very lean years for shipbuilders.

Last week I wrote to the Minister of Industry, as many people have done. I pleaded with him to be willing, at the very least, to respond to the pleas of shipyard workers and industry representatives to convene a national summit on the future of Canadian shipbuilding in a global marketplace before the entire shipbuilding industry sank in the wake of Liberal neglect.

What the bill before us proposes is very practical. It is concrete. It is doable. They are measures that should comprise part of the Canadian shipbuilding policy.

• (1740)

[Translation]

The aim of this bill is reasonable. It could allow Canada to enjoy the same opportunities as our competitors.

[English]

This problem has not just developed over this decade. The fact of the matter is that in the early eighties the then Liberal government removed some very important support to the shipbuilding industry. Since that time we have witnessed a steady severe slide in shipbuilding, particularly so for anything but government purposes, defence vessels or patrol vessels. The fact is that shipbuilding for commercial markets has been very limited because Canada has placed itself at a very severe competitive disadvantage.

Let us take one moment to look at what the situation is in the United States, our nearest neighbour and our largest competitor.

The United States has put in place a comprehensive policy to support its own shipbuilding industry. It actually succeeded in getting Canada to agree to grandfather the Jones Act in the flawed free trade agreement which had in place and kept in place very distinct advantages that made perfect sense for an economy to protect for its own benefit. The Jones Act continues to apply and continues to require a very significant number of ships to carry the goods being transported in and out of the United States. It is also supplemented by title 11 financing.

What is title 11 financing? It is an aggressive industrial policy to build for rapidly growing new markets in shipbuilding. It is a policy that recognizes there needs to be a transition and in fact has put in place measures to ease the transition from military contracts to commercial vessels. Surely Canadians deserve no less than a comprehensive national shipbuilding policy for Canada.

Let me simply repeat the obvious and why it is so obvious to most Canadians and so obscure for the federal Liberals to understand. We need to put in place a Canadian shipbuilding policy or we will not have the shipbuilding capacity or the shipbuilding jobs we need. At the very least, we should convene that summit, face the challenges squarely and examine what our competitors are doing that makes it so difficult for us to compete.

I congratulate the member for putting forward the bill. I hope Liberal members will see the wisdom and the importance of supporting it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** There are six members who would like to speak and we have 24 minutes left of debate. I realize this is a little unusual, but if we try to get everyone to limit their interventions to no more than four minutes we will be able to let many more people speak. We will do this with unanimous consent. Otherwise we will go to 10 minutes as we normally do and we will only get a few people in.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent that for the remaining 24 minutes of debate members will speak for only four minutes each.

[Translation]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I understand that members may be excited to speak on this issue. I find it difficult to object, in fact I am pleased, but we have the same time limit. I think each party should be allowed at least one speaker. It would be important that each party be able to express its views on the matter.

• (1745)

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** All parties have already had a number of speakers. We either have this before the House or we do not. We will do it or we will not.

Does the House give its unanimous consent that the remaining members will be limited to four minutes, with the exception of the hon. member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière who already has five minutes?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Fanshawe, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to this private member's bill, put forward by the hon. member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière. Frankly, the bill sounds a bit like a broken record and essentially repeats the same old demands for subsidies and tax breaks which our government has been hearing from the shipbuilding industry since 1997.

The industry is asking for a tax haven, but the Canadian taxpayers are asking for tax breaks.

Canadians are very clear. They do not want government to artificially prop up industries through interventionist and costly financial measures like the one suggested in Bill C-213.

During the second reading debate the hon. member for Elk Island argued that the bill's proposed loan guarantee program, similar to the American Title XI program, would be cost free. He said "The American taxpayers have not shelled out one red nickel in order to implement the program".

Let me put this myth to rest right now. Loan guarantee programs are not free of cost. In 1998 costs to the American government were roughly \$3 billion U.S. for contingent liabilities and almost \$2 million on default payments. Based on our neighbour's experience it is evident that such a program would be very costly to set up.

The hon. member also contended that if ships built in Canadian shipyards were exempted from the regulations relating to lease financing, the existing depreciation rates for ships would apply without any restrictions. Consequently, he argues, the tax disadvantage that prevents ownership or lease financing of ships would be eliminated.

The fact is that the shipbuilding industry already has access to accelerated capital cost allowances. These are more generous than for any other industry in Canada, and even more generous than tax credits in the United States.

Furthermore, Canadian taxpayers would never accept both an accelerated CCA and an exemption from leasing regulations. If this were permitted the cost of a ship could be written off more than once and it would create a tax shelter. That is what the current leasing regulations help us avoid.

A third measure proposed in Bill C-213 is yet another demand for a tax break. It would create on a national basis the same type of program that Quebec set up in 1996-97. The tax measures proposed

### *Private Members' Business*

in the bill are not only costly to taxpayers, they are old, tired, interventionist tools from the past, the very tools which Canadians want us to stop using.

We must take charge of the future, not by returning to the past, but by investing in innovation, by training smart workers and giving them upgraded equipment and production techniques to do the job, and by forging alliances that will lead industries in the pursuit of excellence.

The policy instruments used by the federal government are modern instruments. They concentrate on areas that can make a real difference and that use taxpayers' money wisely. The acquisition of new builds in Canada by the federal government is done on a competitive basis and is restricted to Canadian sources.

I know that we have agreed to a four minute limit. There is much more I could say in explaining in detail why this is simply not a good suggestion in the private member's bill, however well intentioned. Canadians simply do not want to return to those kinds of mistakes from the past.

• (1750)

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am not unsympathetic to the private member's bill put forward by my colleague, because I understand his concern. Canada was once a great shipbuilding nation and there are niche markets in which we could probably still operate, given the opportunity.

Unfortunately, there is a severe overcapacity in the shipbuilding industry worldwide. The origins of that overcapacity in shipbuilding relate directly to heavily subsidized operations in other countries. Indeed, protected markets and subsidies are major obstacles facing Canadian shipbuilders. Nonetheless, we do not help matters by slapping a 25% duty on non-NAFTA imports ourselves. I think that sets the wrong tone.

The world is fraught with overcapacity and trade distorting subsidies, and the future is not bright for these industries.

The Canadian government could help. It could do something about this. For example, we could take on the U.S. in trade negotiations and try to strike down the Jones Act, which is hurting Canadian shipbuilders to a great degree.

We could do other things. We could try to get relief by having worldwide subsidies reduced through trade negotiations at the WTO.

We could do something at home. We could reduce taxes, not only to the shipbuilding industry, but to all industries in Canada. That would be a big help. We could move to a different tax regime in which we would have accelerated capital cost write-offs. Those are things which we could do something about in our own backyard.

*Private Members' Business*

The Canadian Alliance believes that there needs to be a healthy shipbuilding industry as well. Certainly there are things like ferries and tugs and special niche markets in which Canada could operate, given a level playing field. Unfortunately, we do not have that level playing field, just like we do not have it in agriculture. Other countries are subsidizing their shipbuilding industries. Canada should not be the boy scouts in this kind of situation. We should not stand by when our industries are being severely affected. The agriculture and shipbuilding industries are severely disadvantaged. We have to take a much stronger stance at trade talks and we have to protect our vital interests.

Having said that, I believe that our shipbuilding industry, along with other industries, has to operate within the confines of a market economy. Once we are able to achieve those negotiations, if we are able to achieve them, then the industry should be able to stand on its own two feet and not receive subsidized loans from the federal government. That is our position. We should have a strong shipbuilding industry, but we have to put the proper environment in place.

**An hon. member:** That would only take about 10 years.

**Mr. Charlie Penson:** I hear a magpie from the other end of the House. I assume he will have his chance to talk sooner or later.

My point is that Canada has to set the proper environment through tough trade negotiations to set some of these matters straight, and then we could have a strong industry.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in spite of the limited time at our disposal, only four minutes, I want to take a moment to congratulate the hon. member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière for his extraordinary work in the past two years to set up a coalition of employers and workers all across Canada.

During that period, our colleague managed to visit every shipyard in Canada, as well as some in Asia, including in Taiwan, and in the United States. He made numerous representations to the Minister of Industry and to the Prime Minister. He also had his bill signed by 100 members of the opposition, which allowed him to introduce it. Our colleague did an extraordinary job and the community in Quebec and Canada can never be too grateful to him.

It is to be hoped that, in spite of the comments made earlier by the Liberal member, the government will wake up and stop ignoring the perfectly legitimate demands of managers and unions on this issue.

Shipbuilding has traditionally been a key sector, and for good reason, since Canada is bordered by three oceans and we have the St. Lawrence River and the largest seaway in the world. It is only

normal and legitimate for Canada to have had, and this should continue to be the case, such an important naval shipyard industry.

The hon. member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière has had to face incredible apathy from the members opposite. We just had evidence of that earlier, once more. In spite of all his representations, our colleague's efforts have so far been in vain, unless some Liberal members, in private and behind the scenes—the Liberal excel at that—have shown some form of openmindedness in the recent past.

● (1755)

It is most surprising and even vexing to hear such things as we just have, because in recent history the Liberals made commitments in the red book, as they had on the GST and NAFTA, saying that they would look after the shipyards. I can read a resolution passed in a recent Liberal convention, one filled with whereases, which states as follows:

Be it resolved that the Liberal Party of Canada strongly urge the Canadian government to immediately develop a national shipbuilding policy in order to provide assistance to that industry and thus to maintain and reinforce the level of excellence of the technologies that have earned us a high reputation we are now in danger of losing.

These are the words of the Liberal Party and yet the Liberal government will absolutely not budge on this matter. There is nothing but total lethargy; it refuses to do anything. To give an example, not only is it doing nothing, but as far as the measures are concerned which the hon. member for Lévis—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière is suggesting and which tax legislation can improve, loan guarantees and tax credits, the Government of Quebec has already established tax credits for Quebec shipbuilders.

What has the Liberal government done since then, despite its commitments in the red book, despite the proposals made at the Liberal Party's convention? They are taxing the tax advantages Quebec shipyards have received because of the Quebec government's tax credits. That is what collaboration and openmindedness means to this government, which is as lethargic in this matter as in others, a government the people are going to get rid of within a few months, perhaps.

There are thousands and thousands of jobs at stake. A few years ago, Canada's shipyards provided 12,000 jobs and now the figure is less than 3,000. What is at issue here is international competition, with Asia for example, where there is a 30% subsidy, with Europe and its 9% subsidy, and the United States with its protectionist measures with which everyone is familiar. The Canadian government must bring itself up to speed.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to speak to this issue. I want to congratulate my colleague from the Bloc Québécois.

[*English*]

I am very pleased to rise to speak in support of this bill. There was no hesitation whatsoever coming from Atlantic Canada and

coming from the Progressive Conservative Party in lending our unfettered support for this motion.

Shipbuilding has had a long and proud history in Atlantic Canada and throughout the country. My riding of Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough has played a major role in the shipbuilding industry in Nova Scotia and around the world, particularly in the days of wood, wind and sail. The tradition has been carried on through the recent efforts of MM Industria in Pictou, Nova Scotia.

MM Industria constructs some of the finest yachts in the world and is contributing greatly to the local economy in revitalizing the historic Pictou shipyard.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada has been clear and consistent in its call for a national shipbuilding program. The government has yet to commit, in typical Liberal fashion, to Atlantic Canada, which led of course to its very poor showing in the election results of 1997.

Our party supports Bill C-213, an act to promote shipbuilding, which was introduced in the previous parliament as Bill C-493 by the hon. member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière. The bill does not involve direct government subsidies, as has been previously suggested, but rather it proposes tax measures which would create jobs and move toward a more productive and co-operative business atmosphere.

The bill essentially asks for three measures, which are called for as well by the Canadian Shipbuilding Association. First, the thorough establishment of a program whereby a maximum of 87.5% of the money borrowed by a company from financial institutions to purchase a commercial ship which would be built in a shipyard located in Canada would be guaranteed by the federal government. Second, it would bear a rate of interest comparable to other available loans from financial institutions. Third, it would be repayable on terms compatible with those usually granted by financial institutions to large and financially strong corporations.

There are a number of very positive aspects to the bill. It is aimed at enhancing the age old industry which has been very productive for Atlantic Canada and for other parts of the country.

• (1800 )

Many Canadians in coastal regions have wondered why Ottawa has done nothing in this regard after other countries continue to announce and reannounce their support for shipbuilding in their countries. The government tries to rest on its laurels but the reality is that it does not have any to rest on. The government's legacy, which is becoming very tired, stagnant and arrogant—we know the terms—shows no vision. It rewards mediocrity. It prefers to do nothing, which is what it is bringing forward now.

### *Private Members' Business*

It is ironic that an Atlantic Liberal report entitled "Catching Tomorrow's Wave" tabled in November 1999 stated that the Atlantic Canadian economy is hitting an all-time low and part of the solution to the problem is to bring the shipbuilding industry back up to its potential and proven strength by adopting a new national shipbuilding policy. Not a single member from Atlantic Canada on the Liberal benches had anything to say about this private member's bill, not a word. It is very curious that they have decided not to participate in the debate.

The Prime Minister shrugs and says "Higher taxes? Better jobs in the States? Go ahead and leave". The same approach is taken when it comes to an important industry like shipbuilding. Shipyard workers are suffering and so are the spin-off industries and the Liberal government has chosen to do nothing.

It is like the Liberal promises on all kinds of other issues. It is like the dense fog before the election; after the writ is dropped and the election is over, it disappears. It evaporates. That is what we have come to expect from the Liberal government.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec East, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to express my gratitude to the member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière for all of his efforts on this issue.

For quite some time, for a number of years, he has formed a coalition of people from the shipbuilding industry, unions, builders and industrialists in the sector to draft Bill C-213. I think the government should support it if only to help this major industry.

At one point, the industry was thriving in Canada. It had considerable potential for creating good, high end jobs. To think that this government was elected on the promise of jobs, jobs, jobs, and that today, at least according to my colleague, the member for London—Fanshawe, it appears to be wanting to smother this industry.

Bill C-213 contains some extremely constructive proposals that have none of the wastage found at the Department of Human Resources Development and in other departments, as is being shown increasingly these days. There is no wastage. On the contrary, it is a framework, solid support, similar to what already exists in the United States under title XI, which, since its passage, has not wasted a single cent. In fact, all the projects, all the programs set up in the United States in the context of title XI, the guaranteed loan, have paid off handsomely.

Why not institute a similar program here in Canada? Because the government lacks confidence in the shipping industry and lacks vision and does not have its heart in the right place to want to create jobs of this calibre.

*Private Members' Business*

The fact that in a country such as Canada, which opens onto two oceans, which has a seaway among the finest in the world, the government does not want to go to the trouble to support this bill, I find quite deplorable. I find it deplorable that the Liberals do not want to support this bill as it should be supported, because it is an excellent bill.

It could go a long way toward helping create jobs in this sector. Once again, I would like to close by congratulating my colleague, the member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière on all the work he has done in preparing this bill.

• (1805)

[English]

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me tremendous pleasure and pride to rise on behalf of my brothers and sisters in the shipbuilding industry, those hardworking people who build the greatest ships in Canada and around the world to speak to this very important and timely bill brought forward by the great member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière. My party congratulates the member for his outstanding work in bringing Bill C-213 to the House.

I am very happy that the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough mentioned the Conservatives' report although we would like to know what Joe Clark would have to say about it. We only wish that the Conservative government when it was negotiating the free trade deal, had included shipbuilding in that deal, similar to what the United States did when it protected itself with the Jones Act. If that had been done we probably would not be having this debate right now. That is old history. I have a little more history for the Liberals.

I see one of my good colleagues and friends over there, a soccer player whom I admire greatly. In the 1993 red book, their election promise was, "Vote for us. Trust us and we will give the country a shipbuilding". It is seven years later and not one damn thing has been done about that, not one.

The government continually misleads the general public. Its Atlantic caucus is saying very clearly to the government and to the members of the Liberal Party that in order to improve its electoral chances in Atlantic Canada it needs a shipbuilding policy. What does the government do? It ignores its own backbench members. It is absolutely scandalous.

I am going to give the Liberals who are here listening to this a lesson in election 101. If they want to win any seats in Atlantic Canada, then put a shipbuilding policy in now. Organizations like

the CAW, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the chambers of commerce, provinces and others are on side for a shipbuilding policy so that we can protect and preserve the thousands and thousands of well paying and skilled jobs that are in Atlantic Canada in Marystown, Saint John, my great city of Halifax and in other ports across the country.

It is absolutely insane that the government does not listen to the people of Atlantic Canada, western Canada, Quebec and Ontario. These people are not asking for handouts. They are asking for jobs, jobs that other countries have. Other governments support their workers and industry.

One of the greatest sins in the House of Commons is that the finance minister who runs Canada Steamship Lines Inc. has his ships built in other countries. It is an absolute disgrace that he can stand up in the House and say that he wants to lead Canada in government, that he wants to be the prime minister, yet he turns his back on Canadians and those hardworking people of Atlantic Canada. It is an absolute disgrace.

Tomorrow we are going to have a free vote on Bill C-213. I only hope and pray that the government along with the Reform Party can actually see what has been happening in Atlantic Canada and will vote with their minds and their hearts in support of Bill C-213.

**Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a very important public policy issue that has been advocated by a number of members of parliament on both sides of the House.

There will be a vote on Bill C-213. All the vote is about is whether the bill merits being sent to committee to be studied further. If there are particular aspects of the bill that certain individuals do not advocate, it is their opportunity to use the parliamentary procedure that exists to amend it in committee.

There are four initiatives in the bill put forward by the member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière.

The first initiative is to ensure that we re-establish bilateral trade talks with the Americans.

The second initiative is to ensure that we have accelerated depreciation within Revenue Canada leasing regulations, which is a tax cut and not a subsidy.

The third initiative is to have a loan guarantee program very similar to what the Americans have, known as title XI. This loan guarantee program ensures that potential purchasers both domestically and abroad have access to capital in the most prudent and cost effective manner possible.



• (1810)

The formula the hon. member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière is advocating is similar to a program the Americans have had since 1936 and there has not been one loan default.

I ask all members of the House to understand that we will be voting on whether the bill merits being sent to committee. I challenge all members to at least advance this public policy issue and support it at second reading.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. members for having given unanimous consent to allow me to respond and to conclude this debate.

First of all, I would like to thank all members who spoke to this bill, not just today, but also in the first two hours of debate. I am truly grateful. That goes for Liberal members as well. We live in a democracy, and they expressed their views, which I believe is important.

I was very pleased to see that the leaders of the New Democratic and Progressive Conservative parties took the time to speak during the debate today. Seeing the opposition party leaders speak during a debate on a private member's bill is a great honour for me.

I also wish to thank the 100 members who signed my bill last spring so that it could be given priority. Had they not done so, I would still be waiting for the luck of the draw and there would be no debate today. I therefore thank these 100 members, 40 of them in the Bloc Québécois, because not everyone could be present, all members of the Progressive Conservative and New Democratic parties, and 20 members of the Reform Party, now called the Canadian Alliance.

I wish to pay tribute to the member for Elk Island, who came to support me at public meetings. The former Canadian Alliance critic attended a press conference, as did the leader of the New Democratic Party, the leader of the Bloc Québécois, and a representative of the Progressive Conservative House leader. Canadian Alliance members had supported the idea of this bill last year. They wanted a debate to be held.

I appeal to the Liberal members. Because of the size of the majority, several have told me individually that they were sensitive to this issue. I checked with the whip, and the position of the Liberal party is that there should be a free vote on a private member's bill.

I am well aware that some members represented the Minister of Industry's view in the House. In recent months, when the Minister of Industry began visiting people in the Atlantic region or elsewhere, we saw that he was becoming more sensitive to their problems.

*Private Members' Business*

I also noticed that the Minister of Labour was concerned as well, as a member representing a riding in the Atlantic region. Unfortunately, I did not hear many members from the Vancouver region.

To say no to this bill is to say no to 150,000 people who sent a postcard to the Prime Minister telling him that they support this bill. To say no to this bill is also to say no to all the provincial premiers. Twice during federal-provincial conferences, once in 1997 and again in 1999, in Quebec City, they urged the Liberal government to support a shipbuilding policy.

To say no to this bill is to say no to the Liberal grassroots who, at the Liberal convention, two years ago, passed a resolution in favour of such a policy.

To say no to this bill is to say no to a joint request from Canada's shipyard owners, the largest shipyards, and it is also to say no to all the workers who, through a labour coalition, reached a consensus and decided to support their employers and make the same request. Why? Because, in 1993, there were 12,000 workers in Canada's shipyards. There are barely 3,000 now. Two great shipyards are facing closure.

• (1815)

When the Minister of Industry says there is an overcapacity worldwide, I suggest he read the *London Journal of Commerce*, which says that demand has revived and that, at present, Canadian shipyards, like the English shipyards, are capable of entering this field.

I address my remarks to the members of the Canadian Alliance, who think there are grants where there are none. There are no grants, but tax measures and a program of loans with automatic pay back like the one they have had in the U.S. since 1938. The American government has not lost one cent in a similar program.

As for the tax measures, they come after construction. When people are put to work, revenues, taxes and the GST enable the federal government and the provincial governments to recover their costs. All those who wanted to create "jobs, jobs, jobs" have their chance now. We know that second reading deals with the principles of a bill, and the purpose of this bill is to help shipbuilding.

I close by saying that a vote against this bill is a blow to the shipbuilding industry.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** I want to thank all hon. members for co-operating in the debate tonight and moving it right along. I think members will see that if people are speaking extemporaneously from their hearts, the debate is much more meaningful and works well.

*Adjournment Debate*

Pursuant to order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion are deemed put and the recorded division deemed demanded and deferred until Wednesday, March 29 at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

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

### GASOLINE PRICING

**Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on February 22 I asked the Prime Minister why it was that the U.S. energy secretary could find 17 things to do to help Americans with respect to the energy crisis but that he could not think of one thing to help Canadians.

The Secretary of State for International Financial Institutions, who is the brother of the former Liberal Premier of Ontario, David Peterson, responded. In his response, as to whether or not the government had any kind of action plan to defend the Canadian economy from the OPEC oil cartel, he was so confused, so uptight and so upset that his brother was beaten by the NDP that he made an error. I will quote from *Hansard*. He said:

—when the NDP government was in power in Ontario and it raised the Ontario excise tax on fuel twice, taking it from 10.9 cents to 14.3 cents. As well, it increased the provincial excise tax on gasoline twice, taking it from 11.3 cents to 14.7 cents.

That would make the provincial tax on fuel in Ontario 29 cents. It is of course only 14.7 cents in total. Whereas the federal excise tax is 10 cents and the GST is about 4.9 cents right now. There are actually more taxes applied to oil in Ontario than in any other province.

The supplementary question I asked was related to putting forward an action plan to protect Canadians and the economy from soaring energy prices. Rather than getting a response from the secretary of state, I received a response from the Minister of Natural Resources who avoided the question entirely as did the secretary of state. He said:

—to set the record clear. . . Canada is not a member of OPEC and we do not support that approach in the marketplace.

This had nothing to do with my question.

I wanted to know the government's plan. The U.S.A., the land of free enterprise and capitalism, is establishing a 17 point action plan to defend its economy and its consumers from the OPEC oil cartel price fixing situation with respect to energy. Canada has no such plan and no such action.

I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister asking him if he had a plan. If he did not have a plan, I wanted to suggest one to him. He called the provinces and the major stakeholders in the energy business to an energy summit. At the energy summit he locks the door, caps the energy prices and says, "Let us find a solution before I unlock the door".

• (1820)

I have some suggestions. Have his officials examine suspending the GST until the price of energy declines. He could look at an emergency fund for low income families who are under pressure with respect to the high costs of home heating fuel. He could look at a low interest loan to help truckers and small business through this high price energy situation. He could examine regulating the industry as has been done in other parts of the world. He could undertake to facilitate an energy conservation component. He could toughen up the Competition Act.

These are suggestions that his energy summit should be undertaking to review. Instead we had the frivolous inane responses from two ministers which had no bearing or relationship to the questions that were asked.

I ask the parliamentary secretary tonight, what is the government's action plan to defend the Canadian consumer and the Canadian economy from the OPEC oil cartel price fixing situation as it applies to energy?

**Mr. John Cannis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know when the member for Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre speaks on this issue he speaks from his heart. He has good intentions to try to do the right thing not just for his constituents and the people in Saskatchewan but for all Canadians.

This is indeed a problem that we are faced with today. Sometimes we have to be responsible in what we say and how we respond.

The member referred to the 17 point action plan and what the government was doing. He referred to regulations as well. Let me point out very clearly that this issue has not just come to the forefront today. I remind the member and everyone in the House tonight that 47 Liberal members of parliament took on this issue quite some time back. They exhausted the research and brought the data forward. One of their main recommendations was to have an extensive study. That is why the Conference Board of Canada has been selected to address this issue.

*Adjournment Debate*

As the ministers have pointed out in the past in their responses to the questions in the House of Commons, the Government of Canada is greatly concerned with this issue for businesses and consumers. The price of gasoline is not set by government; we all know that. It is set by competitive market forces internationally, depending of course on demand. Many factors influence the price factor, how it is produced and how it is brought to market.

Let me point out three things the government has done. First, Canada has joined its partners in the International Energy Agency in calling upon the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and other crude oil suppliers to increase oil production in order to better balance global supply and demand.

Second, the federal government has contacted the provincial governments to determine what actions are being taken there since,

I stress again as I have in the past, they have the authority to regulate prices at the pump should they wish to based on Canada's constitution.

Last, as I mentioned earlier, we have asked the Conference Board of Canada to do an extensive study on this issue. This is an inclusive process. It is not exclusive. We want to engage in this discussion and the findings, not disengage.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland):** 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 6.23 p.m.)

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