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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, May 10, 2000

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 10, 2000

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

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

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

HUNGARY

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the country of my ancestors, Hungary, the year 2000 marks a special anniversary. The Hungarian state is 1,000 years old.

At Christmas in the year 1000 AD, almost 500 years before Europeans stumbled upon the new world, Stephen, the first king of the Magyars, was crowned with a crown sent by Pope Silvester II. King Stephen later became St. Stephen, canonized on August 20, 1083.

Many celebrations are planned in Hungary for this historic milestone. On May 19 and 20 in Budapest the Hungary 2000 Conference will be convened. The Canadian parliament will be represented by a delegation of the Canada-Hungary Parliamentary Friendship Group led by me.

I look forward to extending congratulations on behalf of all parliamentarians as Hungary celebrates 1000 years of statehood, the Magyar millennium.

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DIVORCE ACT

Mr. Paul Forsyth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, one year ago today the Minister

of Justice said in response to the special joint committee report “For the Sake of the Children”, “Canadians agree that when families break down, the needs and best interests of children must be the highest priority”.

Sadly, a year has elapsed and this high priority item is nowhere to be seen. The minister has caved in to the bureaucratic insider systems agenda of just leaving the Divorce Act as it is. The concerns are the same wherever I go in Canada about the shortcomings of the Divorce Act for the child-parent relationship.

We need shared parenting put in the law. The act must serve children’s needs first and grandparents must be permitted their rightful place in the law. Maintenance should reflect the principle of ability to pay and demonstrated need. There must be easier access to the superior courts and all orders must be easily enforced, especially child access terms and parental guardianship. The act must respond to false allegations.

On behalf of parents, grandparents and most of all the children, I pray that the House of Commons does not have to hear a similar plea for action on May 10, 2001 but rather, that the Canadian Alliance government will have already acted.

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CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to a ceremony which took place today. The Canadian National Railway donated a vast collection of photos collected by it over the last 150 years of railway building to the Canadian Museum of Science and Technology.

From the Grand Trunk Railway to the National Transcontinental, to the Newfoundland railway system and the Canadian Northern, railways have been the building blocks that have made our country.

These pictures are available to Canadians on the web. This shows how the new technologies being learned by Canadians can help celebrate our past history and culture.

On behalf of parliament, I would like to thank the CNR for its contributions to making the stories of the building of our country available to all Canadians so that we can appreciate the struggle that has made Canada the great country it is today.

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ISRAEL

Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is the 52nd anniversary of the establishment of the state of Israel.

Israel is not simply the Andy Warhol of the international media. Rather, it must be seen and understood as the drama and development of civilization itself, as a first nation of humankind.

In a word, the Jewish people are a prototypical aboriginal people just as the Jewish religion is a prototypical aboriginal religion and Hebrew an aboriginal language.

The Jewish people still inhabit the same land, bear the same name, worship the same God, study the same Bible and speak the same language as they did 3,500 years ago and whose abiding hope and dream is to live in peace with the other indigenous nations and peoples of the region, the Arab nations and Palestinian people.

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NATURE CONSERVANCY OF CANADA

Mr. Rick Limoges (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to advise all hon. members that the Nature Conservancy of Canada invites them to a dedication of its latest conservation project. This project is made possible with the assistance of Shell Canada Limited and local partners in memory of the late Shaughnessy Cohen, my friend and your former colleague. This event takes place this afternoon from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the dining room of the National Press Club.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, grassroots aboriginals continue to phone me and send me faxes, e-mails and letters pleading that the Government of Canada hear their concerns.

● (1405)

These aboriginal men and women detest being treated like beggars in their own communities by their own band councils while at the same time being ignored by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. These desperate citizens want equal treatment under local government as other Canadians enjoy. Their neighbours in rural municipalities, towns and villages elect men and women who must practise openness and accountability and who know there are severe penalties if they contravene legislation.

All the natives ask is to be treated equally. They want bondable licensed and trained administrators to handle their financial trans-

actions approved by the band council. They want annual budgets and an annual external audit.

Why does the government show contempt to the petitions of grassroots natives who are being denied time proven legislation and the accountability and responsibility enjoyed by other Canadians?

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MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month. The MS Society of Canada has led the way for people living with MS. During the month of May, volunteers across Canada participate in fundraising and awareness campaigns to support MS research and to provide services.

This year the MS Society of Canada hopes to build on past successes and raise even more than the \$19 million generously gifted by Canadians from coast to coast. These funds enabled the MS society last year to direct an additional \$3 million to 13 potentially groundbreaking research projects and 36 research scholarships.

Colleagues, please join me in urging all Canadians to join these dedicated volunteers in achieving their goals. Congratulations to the MS Society of Canada; you make an incredible difference by helping the people living with MS.

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[Translation]

ALEXI BÉRUBÉ, MP FOR A DAY

Ms. Caroline St-Hilaire (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to welcome to Parliament Hill Alexi Bérubé, MP for a day for Longueuil.

As the winner of the second “MP for a day” contest in the riding of Longueuil, Alexi Bérubé, a secondary IV student at École Jacques-Rousseau, distinguished himself out of some fifty students in the national history course who participated in the contest.

I must admit that the choice was not an easy one, because all 11 finalists, whom I had the pleasure of meeting, presented worthwhile qualities. I want to congratulate the other ten finalists for their excellent performance, as well as all the other students who took part.

During his stay in Ottawa, Alexi, who is accompanied by his teacher Jean-Paul Bohémier, will have the opportunity to familiarize himself with the parliamentary duties of MPs.

With this contest I wanted to interest young people in the world of politics, and to familiarize them with it, for they are the decision makers of tomorrow.

On behalf of all my colleagues, I welcome Alexi and wish him an enjoyable stay among us.

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CANADA-FRANCE PARLIAMENTARY DAY

Mr. Yvon Charbonneau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw to the attention of this House that today is the third Canada-France parliamentary day, organized under the auspices of the Canadian group of the Canada-France Inter-Parliamentary Association, in co-operation with the Fédération canadienne France-Canada, the Embassy of France, and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Once again this year, the day will begin with a symposium on “Cultural diversity and the new technologies”, at which French and Canadian experts will exchange views and hold discussions with participants.

There will also be a working meeting between the Canada-France federation and our parliamentary group, and the day will close with a dinner at which the Secretary of State for the Francophonie and the Ambassador of France will speak.

As hon. members can see, France and Canada are collaborating closely to promote cultural diversity in a changing world characterized by new technologies and the globalization of trade exchanges, within the enhanced Canada-France Action Program signed in December 1998 by the prime ministers of France and of Canada.

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[*English*]

DR. MARY PERCY JACKSON

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. Mary Percy Jackson, a rural medical pioneer. Dr. Jackson passed away last Saturday in Edmonton at the age of 95.

In 1929 Dr. Jackson was fresh out of medical school in England and was looking for adventure. She found it in the Battle River area of the Peace River country where she became the resident doctor and made her rounds on horseback.

Her patients, who were mainly Cree and recent immigrants, pitched in to buy her a horse. The working conditions were rough and isolated. Supplies and provisions were scarce. In spite of that she was successful and highly regarded because of her dedication to her patients. She used her ingenuity to overcome the isolation, transportation challenges and lack of medical equipment.

In 1990 Dr. Jackson was awarded the Order of Canada in recognition of her service.

I had the pleasure of knowing Dr. Mary Percy Jackson and of listening to her stories of practising medicine under tough condi-

S. O. 31

tions. I debated health care issues with her when she was almost 90 years old.

Her memorial service will be held on June 3 in Manning and Keg River, Alberta.

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• (1410)

PENSIONS

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, imagine being a senior citizen having worked hard all of your life and planned for a modest retirement on fixed income with just enough money to pay for essentials and drugs with a little bit left over to treat your grandchildren. Then imagine \$2,000 or even \$5,000 a year being yanked from your savings because the federal government signed a treaty with Washington.

Eighty thousand Canadian retirees face that very problem. Until 1996 these pensioners were taxed on 50% of their social security. Today it is 85%.

Last week I met with CASSE, a group appealing to their Windsor MP and the finance minister to restore the 50% exclusion in effect when they planned for their retirement. Because of the sudden drop in income, seniors are being forced to move into cheaper apartments, are being ejected from nursing homes and are suffering erosion of their modest lifestyles.

I call on the finance minister today to restore the 50% exclusion or at the very least grandfather this rule so that it will no longer punish people who are already retired.

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[*Translation*]

MUSICAL GROUP HARM'MANIK

Mr. Ghislain Fournier (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like today to honour the brilliant performance by the musical group Harm'Manik, which has 70 members, students between the ages of 15 and 17 who attend the Manikoutai composite high school in Sept-Îles.

At the most recent New York Heritage Festival, held on April 28 and 29, they did so well that the jury gave them two firsts and one gold and one silver award for the scores they received.

Their excellent performance earned the Harm'Manik group an invitation to the Dallas Gold Festival in 2001, an honour in itself. Of the 3,000 musicians taking part in the New York Heritage Festival, only the Harm'Manik group was invited.

Speaking for myself and all the residents of Manicouagan, I congratulate Harm'Manik and wish them every success in their preparations for Dallas 2001.

Oral Questions

[English]

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB BOOK DRIVE

Mrs. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today the members of the National Press Club of Canada are launching a book drive to help provide books for the community of Cambridge Bay, Nunavut whose library burnt down in 1998.

The Cambridge Bay book drive kick-off is tonight at the National Press Club. Anyone wishing to donate books can drop them off at the press club at 150 Wellington Street until the end of May.

The recent book drive spearheaded by my colleague the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier resulted in an astonishing 125,000 pounds of books for the Aqsarniq Middle School in Iqaluit, therefore enabling us to donate to every community in my riding in Nunavut.

I thank the National Press Club for its interest and wish it every success in its book drive and sincere thanks on behalf of my constituents for everyone's generosity. Thank you, *mutna*.

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YOUTH

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House of a real success story involving Canada's youth.

The national youth at risk pilot project initiative resource collection "Open Your Mind—Open Their Lives" is the result of nine national organizations, 28 communities and hundreds of local partners in youth working together. Teen Express 2000 in Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough is one of seven profiled as extremely successful. Teen Express 2000 was established during the summer of 1998 as a co-operative venture among the Pictou County Women's Centre, New Glasgow Youth Centre, New Glasgow/Westville Police Service, YM-YWCA of Pictou County and Recreation New Glasgow.

Establishing partnerships and creating mechanisms for shared information between organizations related to youth is the goal. This is achieved by means of a four step process: building awareness, gaining commitment, implementation and sustainability.

Communities and organizations form partnerships that will provide support, leadership, expertise and the commitment needed to develop a sustainable program for youth and children. Many agencies and individuals are unaware of just how beneficial youth networking can be in their community. Teen Express 2000 is a shining example to all.

[Translation]

MOTHERS' DAY

Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Henri, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this coming Sunday, May 14, I will join Canadians in wishing happy mothers' day to all mothers in Canada.

They showed their children the way, they supported their husbands and they contributed greatly to the family's spiritual, cultural and financial growth.

Today, I want to wish all mothers in the riding of Verdun—Saint-Henri a happy and rewarding mothers' day.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

• (1415)

[English]

ACOA

Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister for ACOA seems to have a dreadful addiction for fiction. Yesterday he said "Today and for the past five years we have been giving only loans which have to be paid back".

I have a list here of 123 grants totalling more than \$12 million. They are all grants. They were all in the last three years when the Liberals were in power and all of them were non-repayable. Why did the minister claim what he knew to be false?

Hon. George S. Baker (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members of the official opposition stood in the Chamber two days ago and for 15 minutes blamed ACOA for giving money to the Clarenville sportsplex, only to discover that they were wrong, that it was an infrastructure program that did it.

Before that they blamed ACOA for spending all this money in 1997, only to discover that they were wrong and that it was fisheries money. Yesterday they claimed we gave out grants to businesses. They are wrong because they are only loans. I ask the leader: What does it feel like to be wrong 100% of the time?

Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, at least I will feel free to admit it when I have made a mistake. I would like to remind the minister about what he said yesterday.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Miss Deborah Grey: Yesterday the minister said "we have been giving only loans which have to be paid back". He talks about

Oral Questions

infrastructure. Everyone thought that was sewer and water, not sportplexes. He says ACOA is about loans but really over the past five years 70% of ACOA spending has been on contributions. Those are giveaways, as far as I know.

Why is the minister pretending that ACOA is simply a lending agency when he knows that is not the case?

Hon. George S. Baker (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I have said consistently is the truth, that one cannot walk into an ACOA office anywhere in Canada as a business person and ask for a grant. They will say “We only have loans and they must be paid back”.

The information that the official opposition has is zero based on facts and 100% based on fiction, pulp fiction.

The Speaker: Order, please. We are getting a little close on both sides with the fiction, pulp or otherwise.

Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it would seem to me that golf courses, let us use that as an example, would be equivalent to a business. I thought they made money.

I have a list of four golf courses here that ACOA funded in 1998-99 under a Liberal administration to the tune of more than \$2.5 million. That is a business. It came under grants and contributions. We see now that ACOA really did fund golf courses. When it comes to golf courses, should not this minister just improve his lie?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. I would say the hon. member is pretty close to being out of bounds on that shot.

Hon. George S. Baker (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member said improve his line. I think that was what she said.

To clear up the confusion in case the hon. member's research bureau cannot do it, one can get grants, non-repayable contributions, if one is transferring money to the provincial government to do something that is a provincial government priority in these agreements, or under infrastructure, or if one is a non-profit organization, but there are no forgivable loans for businesses. On these lines, if these lines keep up, they—

The Speaker: That is enough on lines for today.

• (1420)

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the ACOA minister's storytelling abilities know no

bounds. I suppose that is necessary, since the details of ACOA spending is one strange tale indeed.

However the little overblown agency that he has come to know and love seems to have a very big problem with its bookkeeping. Since the Liberals have come to power, ACOA has spent more than \$19 million on projects they refer to as “rationale unknown”.

Why is it the policy of the government to hand out millions of dollars of taxpayer money without knowing why or how that money is being spent?

Hon. George S. Baker (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members of the official opposition gave an example yesterday of this unknown category—

Mr. Chuck Strahl: Are you going to answer the question?

Hon. George S. Baker: I am answering the question. They gave an example as Bombardier ACOA grant unknown and then they said Mirabel, Quebec. That was a loan. It has been paid back. It set up a business in Fredericton, New Brunswick. It employs over 30 people. The only unknown thing here is where the opposition is getting this terrible information.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Well, Mr. Speaker, the similarities between the ACOA minister and the human resources minister are becoming more obvious every day.

Both hand out millions of dollars of taxpayer money. Both kind of know where the money went. They just cannot figure out why it went to those agencies: \$19 million under rationale unknown. If ACOA cannot explain why the money is needed, why does the minister continue to write the cheques?

Hon. George S. Baker (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they also claim that 58% of the money from ACOA goes to big business.

Statistics Canada did a study in 1997. It examined over 6,000 ACOA clients. It found that 92% of the money goes to small and medium size businesses. Who do we believe, the reform alliance or Statistics Canada?

* * *

[Translation]

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable that the Department of Human Resources Development, which has an army of public servants, which has access to all kinds of documents and which has the power to investigate and audit, still paid \$700,000 for the transfer of jobs.

Oral Questions

How can the minister display so much ignorance and incompetence in this matter, when a simple audit would have shown that the payment of the \$700,000 to Modes Conili was totally unjustified?

[English]

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last few days the party opposite has brought to the House's attention some new information.

At the present time the department is reviewing that new information. If any additional steps are necessary on this file they will be taken promptly.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. No one in the department was able to obtain letters signed by the presidents of the two companies and received by all the employees, the same employees who were laid off, who applied for employment insurance benefits and who were hired by the new company.

Is this not further proof of the total incompetence of this government in the management of the Department of Human Resources Development?

[English]

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is trying to get a second day's news out of yesterday's news.

This is exactly the information that we are now reviewing as a department. Steps will be taken if the information suggests they should be.

• (1425)

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is both funny and sad.

There are always documents missing in the files obtained under the Access to Information Act. In the case of Placeteco, it was the invoices and in the case of Modes Conili it is the report that could support the government's claims.

If everything is so perfect for the government, why does it not have the documents to prove its claims?

[English]

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the access to information process is there at arm's length from the government. The party opposite has chosen to go that route.

The member knows there are legal requirements that must be followed when publicly releasing personal or business information. I am confident that all the information the member is requesting that can be released will be released, as is the usual practice.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is much simpler than that. No jobs were created at Modes Conili. Employees were simply transferred from one plant to the other.

When will the government ask the recipient to repay the grant?

[English]

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, the department is reviewing this information as we speak. If action is necessary, it will be taken.

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CBC

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. CBC's corporate plan states "to be national one must first be regional". Yet today English regional television is being gutted: in Nova Scotia, 220 staff reduced to 145; in New Brunswick, 48 to 9; P.E.I., 36 to 6; Newfoundland, 85 down to 35; *Hear and Now*, Newfoundland's highly successful local news program, gone.

Why has the government abandoned its commitment to build a strong national broadcaster by building on strong regional programming?

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is not abandoning the CBC at all. The government has stood by the mandate of CBC.

I encourage the member of parliament opposite, her constituents and the constituents of all members, if they have concerns about the plans of the CBC, to express those concerns to the members of the board or to the president of CBC before the decision is made, because it has not yet been made.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians want to hear from the Prime Minister on this issue. He must know that the Broadcast Act directs the national broadcaster to reflect Canada's regions to regional audiences.

Regional broadcasting is not optional. In this Internet era and with growing demand for local programming, centralization not only defies the law. It defies the cry for nation building. What is the government's response to the CBC proposals to abandon regions like Atlantic Canada?

Oral Questions

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is not abandoning the regions. The government has stood by the CBC Act and its mandate of reflecting Canadians in each region of the country to each other.

I advise the member that her own critic has asked the heritage committee to meet with the president of CBC, which the committee agreed to do before the next board meeting, so that it could be apprised of the concerns expressed by Canadians to some members of the House. In the meantime, before the next board meeting where decisions and recommendations will be—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saint John.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, in the last 24 hours the Department of National Defence has confirmed that at CFB Cold Lake there are five known cases where tuberculosis skin tests have come back positive.

We thank God that none of these cases are active right now, but as I stated yesterday we have been informed that there is at least one active case in the military today.

Will the minister tell the House what percentage of the total base population at CFB Cold Lake has undergone TB tests, and will he call for all base personnel to be tested immediately?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all who go over to the Balkans where there have been difficulties with tuberculosis are tested before they go over and when they come back.

There are only five cases in Cold Lake where there has been a positive skin test, meaning that there has been exposure to tuberculosis. It does not mean they have active tuberculosis. In fact, none of the five have active tuberculosis. All of them are receiving treatment for this. It is in fact totally 100% curable with treatment.

• (1430)

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the minister knows a little more today than he knew yesterday, but two of the five cases were detected in regular pre-deployment testing.

This situation was so serious that these two individuals were not deployed out of the country. It is serious.

Since then, the minister should know that I received a phone call from a lady by the name of Robyn Walters, a mother of four, who now has tuberculosis and she was at—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. Now we will have the short answer.

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would caution the hon. member on becoming an alarmist because this matter is under control.

The fact that a person has been tested positive in terms of exposure does not mean that they have tuberculosis or any illness. It does not mean it is contagious at all. In fact, it is all under control. In these five particular cases they are receiving appropriate medication.

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HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday when confronted with still another clear and flagrant abuse of \$700,000 of taxpayer money, the government used its tired and discredited line of pretending that the money had put people to work. It often uses this tactic to divert attention from suspicious circumstances surrounding one of its grants. Unfortunately new evidence blew that excuse apart.

Why was the House told that 162 jobs had been created when that was not the case?

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is mistaken. Yesterday I said that 162 people were working at the firm that received the grant and that they had applied for the jobs. This member, once again, is using her own tactics to twist the facts.

I also want to say that on this file the department is reviewing it as we speak. If action is necessary it will be taken.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that is just unbelievable. Let us examine the players in this unsavoury drama.

A Liberal MP ended up with a whopping \$7,000 from a grateful grant recipient. The HRD minister who approved the grant ended up winning the riding that had just received his generous gift of other people's money. The owner of Golf and Grants who brokered this sweet deal ended up doing business with his fired and re-hired workers.

Why did HRDC choose to ignore the evidence of political patronage and likely fraud?

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, you and I are old enough to remember the McCarthy hearings in the United States in the fifties. We also know that certain people took a set of circumstances and twisted them in a way that did harm to many people. I would suggest that party and that member are very good at that and would have fit in better in the fifties making spurious accusations against members—

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Order, please. I would ask members to please tone down the rhetoric a little. We are getting carried away on both sides.

• (1435)

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when they were in opposition not that long ago, the Liberals were calling for the resignation of Conservative ministers for things far less serious than what is going on at present within Human Resources Development Canada. Today the government has announced “We are going to audit this matter”.

Does the Prime Minister not understand that a government is responsible for auditing first and paying out the money later, not the other way around, as they have been so busy doing at Human Resources Development Canada?

[English]

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again the opposition is not listening. I did not announce an audit. I said that at the present moment the department is reviewing the new information and that if additional steps are necessary they will be taken promptly. I did not announce an audit.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government’s behaviour in this matter is the greatest example of incompetence I have ever seen.

How can this government, which came into power supposedly to bring integrity back to public administration, today continue to administer with a Minister for International Trade who is responsible for what is going on, a Minister of Human Resources Development who is still in her position, and a Prime Minister who still dares to look people in the eye? This is incredible.

[English]

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it odd that members opposite are talking about integrity if in fact further action is needed on the files that they are obsessed with. We could have moved sooner on them if only they had shared their information sooner.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Modes Conili grant scam is a disaster. The MP for Ahuntsic lobbied the government for a \$700,000 grant for Modes Conili and received a \$7,000 donation from Modes Conili, the single biggest donation to her re-election campaign. Then, instead of creating new jobs, we see jobs transferred from Paris Star to Modes Conili. There are people in prisons for scams less serious than this one.

Why did the minister allow this to continue three years after it was first discovered?

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we have these allegations of connections between political donations and government grants. I would challenge that member to say those things outside the House.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear. The truth is that \$7,000 went to the hon. member for Ahuntsic—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

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

Mr. Monte Solberg: Mr. Speaker, the government gave out money to this Liberal friendly firm. How can the minister expect us to believe that she is serious about rooting out all the scandals and problems in HRDC when they sat on their hands for three years after they first discovered the shenanigans going on with Modes Conili?

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct in that we did do a review in 1997, but with the information at that time, we could not establish that there was anything going on that was wrong. It is the new information that has been brought forward in the last few days that is causing us to review this file again.

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[Translation]

HEPATITIS C

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the CBC informed us that the Ontario government had improved its compensation package for hepatitis C victims who contracted the disease before 1986 or after 1990, who are excluded from federal compensation.

• (1440)

Initially, each victim was to receive \$10,000. This has now been increased to \$25,000.

Will the Minister of Health agree that he should take a page from the book of Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec and finally extend his program to all victims, regardless of when they contracted the virus?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have already shown our compassion. We have already responded to the needs of the victims of our blood supply system.

Oral Questions

Almost two years ago, we announced a program to introduce, in partnership with the provinces, services for those who were ill. This is what is most important for victims.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister has no compassion. I remind him that right now, according to our information, only the lawyers of those who were infected between 1986 and 1990 have received any money from the federal government.

My question, clearly put, is this: When will the minister finally decide to do something for the victims, who need this compensation badly?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois' position is completely absurd. We have avoided ten years of litigation. We have agreed with the provinces to offer compensation to victims and, with the provinces, we have established services for those who are ill. The measures which are—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. We will listen to the answer, if the Minister of Health wishes to conclude.

* * *

[English]

EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Export Development Corporation's alliance with the London Guarantee Insurance Company reeks of patronage and violates the spirit of NAFTA. By not tendering the contract, the EDC has left the door open for a NAFTA challenge.

Why did the EDC chose patronage over trade rules?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I obviously do not accept the allegations of the hon. member, but EDC's strategic alliance with London Guarantee is consistent with our NAFTA procurement obligations. EDC is not listed in chapter 10, the procurement chapter of NAFTA. Furthermore, insurance services are not covered by Canada in chapter 10 of NAFTA. Nothing in this alliance stops Canadian firms from insuring their sales with competing firms.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister told us that under NAFTA rules we cannot discriminate against firms seeking business opportunities in Canada but that is exactly what the EDC did by quietly awarding its insurance business to its political friends. The government chose to reward its friends and ignore our trade obligations. Why?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, the EDC had established 10 criteria for identifying the strategic alliance partner that it needed. KPMG advised the EDC on that. As I just mentioned, the EDC is not listed in chapter 10, the procurement chapter of NAFTA. The EDC is not listed in that chapter.

* * *

[Translation]

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with the government's inaction on the matter of the GMOs, the Council of Canadians, the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy and researchers Anne Clark and Bert Christie yesterday submitted a request to the auditor general, asking him to review the GMO regulations, labelling and approval process.

Does the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food realize that his lack of transparency and his government's lack of action in the matter of the GMOs are causing considerable harm to biotechnology by discrediting it in the eyes of the public?

[English]

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have stated before in the House, there is no question that Canada has one of the best regulatory systems in the world in registering food products, the products from advancing technology, including those of biotechnology.

The Minister of Health, the Minister of the Environment and myself have put in place a blue ribbon panel of very esteemed people to review the regulatory capability of our government in order to ensure that we are able to continue to do that and to continue to ensure Canadians that we have the safest food in the world.

* * *

• (1445)

SIERRA LEONE

Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. I understand that Canada recently received a request from the United Nations to provide airlift support to the United Nations' mission in Sierra Leone. How has the minister's department responded?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to that request I have today authorized that an Airbus be dispatched to these countries which will be providing troops to supplement the UN forces in Sierra Leone. Within 48 hours an Airbus will be active and it will be active for two to three weeks transporting troops into the area.

Oral Questions

We have been receiving requests with respect to some protective equipment. We are looking at other ways that we might be of support in this endeavour.

As well, my colleagues, the Minister for International Cooperation and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, are also dealing with this issue in a diplomatic and aid sense.

* * *

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Transport announced the creation of a special commissioner to oversee consumer complaints. While the minister claims that the bill will regulate Air Canada and make sure consumers' interests are truly looked after, the reality is that this commissioner has no authority to resolve complaints.

Why does the minister think that consumer interests will be better protected by the creation of a paper tiger than by ensuring that there truly is competition?

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a multitude of agencies, associations and legal bodies that are involved in the aviation industry in this country. Each and every one acts as a watchman regarding the kind of service that the aviation industry provides.

The bill which will come before the House in the immediate future will guarantee that we have in place a system that will provide for each and every complainant an avenue of access to have their problems solved.

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the minister prevents serious competition by denying the increase of foreign ownership, claiming that it is anti-Canadian. However, General Motors, Ford and Chrysler are three of the five largest companies in Canada and, despite being foreign owned, provide tens of thousands of Canadians high paying jobs and offer Canadian consumers a choice.

If competition works so well in the automobile industry, why will the minister not let it work in the airline industry?

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the aviation industry is fairly healthy in Canada. We are very optimistic regarding the future development of competitive patterns. Competition is taking place. As foreign avenues open up, competition will increase. There is no doubt about it.

When it comes to foreign ownership, Canadians from coast to coast have told us time and again that it has to be a Canadian operation, a Canadian company, owned by Canadians and controlled by Canadians.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, who runs our military? Is our military accountable to Canadians through this parliament, or is it really run by lawyers and the judge advocate general? Has the defence minister appointed a forces ombudsman purely for show, or is he willing to give him the tools to do the job?

The non-elected judge advocate general appears to be using stonewalling tactics to deny justice, treating military lawyers as untouchable and slamming the door in the face of our Canadian Forces ombudsman.

Will the Minister of National Defence instruct the judge advocate general and all military lawyers to co-operate fully with the forces ombudsman?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think everybody in the Canadian Forces is trying to co-operate with the ombudsman. It is a new and a unique vehicle for helping our personnel. I want it to succeed. I believe it will succeed. There are numerous requests that have been made to that office.

There is a difficulty with overlapping jurisdiction in some areas and we are attempting to resolve that matter just as quickly as we possibly can so that the ombudsman and all of the other people who serve the Canadian Forces, the judge advocate general for example as well, will be able to do so.

● (1450)

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the same minister.

Last year when the Nanoose Bay testing range contract was renewed we were assured that there would be no nuclear weapons in Canadian waters. Yet I have a document in which DND is advertising for trainers of DND personnel in the use of nuclear weapons components and construction and nuclear capable vessels at Nanoose and at CFB Halifax. These are nuclear weapons, not nuclear powered vessels.

Why this betrayal of the promise of no U.S. nuclear weapons in Canadian waters?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are nuclear powered vessels and submarines. To my knowledge, there are no nuclear weapons. There is certainly no testing of nuclear weapons that would be allowed in that range. The United States navy never confirms or denies whether any nuclear weaponry is aboard its vehicles.

Oral Questions

We have operated this test range for numerous years. It has always been done quite safely and quite successfully. We want to take extra measures all the time to ensure safety.

The Speaker: Order, please. When questions are being asked at one end of the House it seems that the noise from the other side is almost overpowering. I would ask hon. members, so that we can hear the questions and answers, if they have conversations to please take them outside the Chamber.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, the Government of Ontario has recently announced an additional \$25,000 for hepatitis C victims in that province.

I know this sounds quite bizarre, but our victims, those who fall under the Canada Health Act, have not received a nickel from the federal government. In other words, not a cent has come from the federal coffers.

How can the minister stand in his place and support lawyers who got paid? The lawyers defending the case have been paid but not the victims. Is it simply a case of lawyers come first, victims later?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the settlement we reached in that litigation will save those claimants at least 10 years before the courts. Those cheques will be going out soon under court direction and management.

The real question is, why will Ontario not accept the offer we made to provide money for services for sick victims? Instead of photo ops with the victims' groups, that premier should be accepting our offer, which could put millions of dollars into the hands of the Ontario government to provide services for those sick people this year. That is what Ontario should be doing. It should be accepting the services we are providing for sick people.

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, on another tainted issue, in the United States there is evidence to suggest that about 80% of the active ingredients used in prescription generic drugs come from third world countries. Those active ingredients from third world countries have been attributed to numerous deaths.

What assurances can the minister give us that the same situation cannot and will not happen in Canada?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the manufacture and sale of pharmaceutical products in Canada is done in accordance with exacting regulatory requirements to ensure the purity of product and the safety of consumers.

WESTERN GRAIN TRANSPORTATION

Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government today announced a package that will greatly improve the western grain transportation system.

Could the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food tell the House what that means for farmers?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the announcement made earlier today by the Minister of Transport, the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and myself is a very good announcement for Canadian farmers and for all those in the grain industry in western Canada. It will mean \$178 million in savings in transportation grain costs to farmers in western Canada this year. It will also mean that the federal government will contribute \$175 million over five years toward the improvement of grain transportation in western Canada.

● (1455)

The industry has said, and rightfully so, that we needed to make some changes to the system to make it more efficient, more competitive and less costly.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, according to reports today the health minister will be hiring additional health spies to ensure that the provinces adhere to the Canada Health Act. The premiers and provincial health ministers have been crying out for communication and federal-provincial co-operation.

How can the Liberal government expect to improve relations with the provinces when it trusts them so little that it has to hire more health spies?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this would be a concept entirely foreign to the right wing alliance that wants to destroy the Canada Health Act, destroy our system of health care and turn it over to the privateers. The Canadian public looks to the government as the guardian of the principles of the Canada Health Act and that is exactly what we will do.

I am happy to confirm to the House that we will indeed be reinforcing the resources at Health Canada to ensure that the principles of that act are respected throughout this country.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the army's ombudsman said, the day before yesterday, that the problem of domestic violence in the army is aggravated by the fact that the

Oral Questions

women facing this problem are in a totally military environment, for example, the doctors, the psychologists and other professionals are all military men.

If he really wants to help these women, should the Minister of National Defence not let community groups that help victims in civilian society intervene to help the wives of military men facing these problems so as to demilitarize the approach?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do that. We have family resource centres. We have 42 of them across the country and overseas where our troops are serving. They provide services for the spouses and the families of our forces personnel. They help to deal with stress related matters, health matters, matters of domestic violence and abuse.

As I said yesterday in the House, we will go beyond that. We will take the recommendations from the report that we received. We will create an action plan because we do not accept domestic violence. We do not accept abuse of our personnel, their spouses or their families. We will not tolerate that and we will take the necessary action.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the members who supported changes to the EI program.

This parliament recognized the importance of such changes for seasonal workers. Even the Prime Minister recognized their importance at the Liberal Party convention in March.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Will he launch the process of changing the EI program immediately, given that this parliament voted 100% in favour, thus indicating that the situation is urgent?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I answered this question before MPs and members of the Liberal Party at the Liberal Party convention held a few weeks ago here in Ottawa.

* * *

[English]

RCMP

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the solicitor general.

The minister should be aware that RCMP officers are in St. John's today questioning students in advance of the Prime Minister's visit to Memorial University of Newfoundland. Given the

way that the government has gutted funding for post-secondary education, the word is out that students may be holding demonstrations on the occasion of the Prime Minister's visit.

Why are the RCMP questioning students in advance of the Prime Minister's visit based solely on the fact that there may or may not be demonstrations being held in the city of St. John's? Why are the RCMP doing that?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure my hon. colleague is well aware that it is the RCMP's responsibility to ensure the safety of the Prime Minister, and in fact that is what the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are doing.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the past five years I have been working with various stakeholders and DFO to secure annual funding of \$8 million for the sea lamprey control program. That is an \$8 million investment for over \$80 million in direct returns.

I ask the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans today, why has DFO failed to provide this essential financial support? When does he intend to correct this oversight?

• (1500)

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate the member for Huron—Bruce. He has followed this subject very closely and worked very hard on this issue. The government recognizes how important the sea lamprey control program is for the health of the Great Lakes sports fishery and we will ensure that we continue to protect it.

From 1994 we have increased the budget for the sea lamprey control program from \$3.8 million to \$6 million to make sure we continue to play an important role.

* * *

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: We have a special guest with us today that I want to introduce to members. He is a gentleman who took part in the Mercury space project. He was one of the first astronauts and surely one of the first men to orbit the Earth. I present to you a former senator of the United States and truly one of the great heroes of the past century, Mr. John Glenn.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: For those members who want to meet Mr. Glenn, I am told there will be a reception in room 216 a little bit later on, hosted by the hon. Minister of Industry. All members are invited to attend.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the standing orders, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 20 petitions.

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan—King—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Finance regarding its order of reference of Tuesday, February 29, 2000.

Your committee has considered Votes 1, 5, L10 and 15 under finance in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2001 less the amounts voted in interim supply and reports the same.

* * *

● (1505)

PETITIONS

EAST TIMOR

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present petitions today which are signed by several hundred Canadians from coast to coast to coast on the subject of East Timor.

The petitioners note that the Indonesian military occupied East Timor for over 23 years in violation of UN Security Council resolutions resulting in the death of over one-third of East Timor's population.

They go on to note the participation of over 98% of eligible East Timorese in a referendum voting for independence and the ongoing human rights violations by the Indonesian military and their militia.

The petitioners therefore request that parliament call for a formal military embargo which would revoke all outstanding military export permits issued for sales of military goods to Indonesia, ensure that there are no new export permits issued for sale of military goods to Indonesia, ensure that companies which have already negotiated contracts to supply military goods will be withheld, suspend all Canadian co-operation and ties with the

Routine Proceedings

armed forces of Indonesia and would require consultation in parliament before being lifted.

Finally, the petitioners request that parliament work for an international military embargo against Indonesia.

BILL C-23

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition containing about 200 names mainly from the community of Fort McMurray in my riding.

The petitioners ask the House to reaffirm a motion passed in the House on June 8, 1999 to reaffirm the institution of marriage as being between one man and one woman exclusive of all others, and to reject Bill C-23.

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to table today.

The first petition is from a number of constituents in Fredericton calling on the government to withdraw Bill C-23, affirm the opposite sex definition of marriage in legislation and ensure that marriage is recognized as a unique institution.

CHILD POVERTY

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls on parliament to fulfil the 1989 promise of the House of Commons to end child poverty in the year 2000.

CANADA POST

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last petition is from a number of residents in northern New Brunswick calling on parliament to repeal section 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act.

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of several hundred constituents in my riding of Skeena, from the communities of Smithers, Telkwa, Moricetown, Hazelton, Terrace, Kitimat and other communities, I have the honour to present two petitions today which speak to child poverty.

Specifically, the petitioners call on parliament to fulfil its obligations and to fulfil the 1998 promise of the House of Commons to end child poverty by the year 2000.

CANADA POST

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present two petitions today.

In the first petition, the signatories ask that parliament repeal section 13(5) of the Canada Post Corporation Act.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

BILL C-23

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, it is my pleasure to present a petition signed by residents of my riding of Madawaska—Restigouche.

The petitioners call on the Parliament of Canada to withdraw Bill C-23 and to confirm the opposite sex definition of marriage.

[English]

THE DEBT

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan—King—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions.

The first petition refers to a falling debt burden which gives Canadians new economic freedom so that resources can be used to strengthen our health care system, provide tax relief, address social challenges and invest in all areas that will enhance productivity.

Therefore the petitioners call upon parliament to ensure that Canada's debt to GDP ratio remains on a permanent downward track.

• (1510)

TAXATION

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan—King—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition, the petitioners call upon parliament to announce a timetable for the elimination of the 5% surtax.

ABORTION

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today, on behalf of my constituents, mostly from the Battlefords area, to present two petitions.

The first petition decries the public funding of abortion in this country. The petitioners say that this is something that should be addressed very quickly.

DAY PAROLE

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with day parole, a very timely petition in light of what has just happened in British Columbia.

IRAQ

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition from people in the Peterborough area who are concerned about children and civilians in Iraq. They point out that Desert Storm and the sanctions since have devastated the Iraqi economy and estimate that it has caused the deaths of 5,000 children a month.

The petitioners call upon the Parliament of Canada to stop the suffering and death of the Iraqi people, and that excluding an embargo on military matériel, other sanctions be lifted. They urge Canada and the United Nations to vastly increase efforts to provide food, medicine and funds for infrastructure reconstruction in Iraq. They also ask that the compensation fund taken from the oil for food program be suspended.

THE SENATE

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a pleasure to present a petition, pursuant to Standing Order 36, on the topic of the Senate.

The petitioners point out that the Senate is a very expensive institution, that it does not make sense in today's democratic world, and the fact that it is an appointed House of Parliament makes it a totally undemocratic institution.

They are calling upon parliament to simply take whatever measures are necessary to abolish it once and for all.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition on an unrelated topic.

The petitioners, primarily from the Kamloops region, point out their concerns regarding the production of child pornography. They point out that a child has to be victimized in order to produce child pornography, that child pornography hurts children and therefore can never be justified, and that the possession of child pornography perpetuates the production of child pornography.

They call upon parliament once again to recognize the fact that Canadians reject any effort to legalize the possession of child pornography. They ask parliament to intervene in this matter to establish and strengthen the laws relating to the possession of child pornography to ensure that it will never, ever, ever be legalized.

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP): I have another petition, Mr. Speaker, on a topic that I know you also have strong feelings about, the issue of a national highway system. I should not put words in your mouth, Mr. Speaker, I am just assuming that you, like most other members of parliament, would be interested in this topic.

A large number of constituents point out the need for a national highway system. They point out that a national highway transportation infrastructure that is well developed leads to an improved quality of life for Canadians because of greater productivity, greater trade opportunities, greater job creation opportunities and a real boost to tourism.

They are calling upon the federal government to take the appropriate action.

* * *

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.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have two questions on the order paper, Question No. 28, which was first asked on March 23, 1999, and Question No. 29, which was first asked on March 24, 1999, which have never been answered. These questions go to the heart of the mefloquine scandal which brought the Department of National Defence somewhat into disrepute and the health protection branch of our country as well.

I think the questions are even more compelling and the answers would be much more useful given the current problems in Africa and the probability that perhaps Canadian troops may again be required to take mefloquine. I would like to know when I could expect an answer to these questions.

Mr. Derek Lee: Mr. Speaker, the member quite properly is seeking a more prompt response to his question.

• (1515)

The answers to his questions are being prepared as I have indicated to him in the House. I understand some modifications have been made to initial drafts to the answers to take account of the realities of the background and perhaps some changes that have evolved. I must tell the hon. member that the answers to his questions are imminent.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-5 in the name of the hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

Motion No. P-5

That an order of the House do issue for a copy of all documents, reports, minutes of meetings, notes, e-mail, memos and correspondence within the Department of

Government Orders

Agriculture involving an analysis of the inadequacies within the agriculture income disaster assistance, AIDA, program.

Mr. Derek Lee: Mr. Speaker, the intention of the agricultural income disaster assistance program was to target assistance to those farmers in the greatest need. The federal government is confident that the principles of AIDA remain a sound basis on which to design a disaster program for agriculture. Therefore the government, and the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food in particular, has not produced any document on the inadequacies of the program.

I therefore ask the hon. member to withdraw his motion.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, the answer that came back on the motion for the production of papers is totally inadequate and I will not be withdrawing my motion. I will be transferring the motion to Private Members' Business.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion is transferred for debate pursuant to Standing Order 97(1).

Mr. Derek Lee: I ask that the other Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CITIZENSHIP OF CANADA ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-16, an act respecting Canadian citizenship, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: There are 23 motions in amendment standing on the notice paper for the report stage of Bill C-16.

[Translation]

The motions will be grouped for debate as follows:

Group No. 1, Motions Nos. 1 to 3, 17 and 22.

[English]

Group No. 2, Motions Nos. 4 and 5. Group No. 3, Motions Nos. 6 to 8, 15, 16, and 18 to 21. Group No. 4, Motions Nos. 9 and 23. Group No. 5, Motions Nos. 10 and 14.

Government Orders

The voting patterns for the motions within each group are available at the table. The Chair will remind the House of each pattern at the time of voting.

[Translation]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 3, 17 and 22 to the House.

[English]

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been some discussions among representatives of all parties. I think if you were to seek consent of the House that the House might consent to put all the motions at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed that all the motions will be put to the House now in the order in which they are grouped?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-16, in Clause 4, be amended by replacing line 30 on page 2 with the following:

“(a) the person is born in Canada of a father or mother who was a citizen or a permanent resident at the time of the birth; or”

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-16, in Clause 6, be amended by replacing lines 14 to 22 on page 4 with the following:

“(a) beginning on the day on which the person claimed Convention refugee status under the Immigration Act and ending on the day before the person became a permanent resident, or”

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-16, in Clause 8, be amended

(a) by replacing line 11 on page 5 with the following:

“8. (1) Subject to section 8.1, the Minister shall, on application, grant”

(b) by adding after line 24 on page 5 the following:

(2) For greater certainty, the Province of Quebec shall continue to have full jurisdiction in respect of international adoptions, including the acceptance of any psychosocial assessment of adoptive parents and the issue of a letter of no objection to the adoption of a child.

8.1 The Minister shall, on application, grant citizenship to a minor child adopted outside Canada by a citizen domiciled or ordinarily resident in Quebec, although the adoption procedure has not yet been completed in accordance with the laws of Quebec,

if (a) the adoption is not intended to circumvent the requirements under any enactment for admission to Canada or citizenship; and (b) the adoption proposal has been approved by the administrative authority designated for that purpose by the minister of the government of Quebec responsible for international adoptions.”

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-16, in Clause 43, be amended by replacing line 25 on page 22 with the following:

“sections 8 and 8.1 have been met;”

[English]

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 22

That Bill C-16, in Clause 55, be amended by replacing lines 12 to 38 on page 27 with the following:

“55. Proceedings in relation to an application made under the Citizenship Act, chapter C-29 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985, pending on the day on which section 72 of this Act comes into force, must be dealt with under that Act.”

● (1520)

The Deputy Speaker: With regard to Motion No. 4, notice was given by the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park but there were other movers. Is the hon. member for Lakeland moving this motion?

An hon. member: Yes.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-16, in Clause 16, be amended

(a) by replacing lines 5 to 12 on page 7 with the following:

“16. (1) Where the Federal Court—Trial Division, on a proceeding commenced by the Minister under prior legislation or an action commenced by the Minister under this section, or the Federal Court of Appeal or the Supreme Court of Canada in the case of an appeal or appeals, has finally decided, on a balance of probabilities or by default, that a person has obtained, retained, renounced or resumed citizenship by false representation or fraud or knowingly concealing material circumstances, the Court shall make an order revoking the citizenship of that person or the renunciation of citizenship by that person if it has not already been revoked under prior legislation.”

(b) by replacing line 14 on page 7 with the following:

“that the Court specifies in the”

(c) by replacing line 16 on page 7 with the following:

“(3) For the purposes of this Act and prior legislation, a person”

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-16, in Clause 17, be amended by replacing lines 26 to 43 on page 7 and lines 1 to 8 on page 8 with the following:

“17. (1) A decision by the Federal Court—Trial Division under subsection 16(1) and a decision by any person, body or court performing similar functions under prior

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legislation, that a person has or has not obtained, retained, renounced or resumed citizenship by false representation or fraud or knowingly concealing material circumstances, may be appealed to the Federal Court of Appeal with the leave of the Federal Court of Appeal.

(2) Where citizenship or a renunciation of citizenship has been revoked under prior legislation and the Federal Court of Appeal or the Supreme Court of Canada finally decides, on a balance of probabilities or by default, on an appeal with the leave of that Court, that the person in question did not obtain, retain, renounce or resume citizenship by false representation or fraud or knowingly concealing material circumstances, that revocation shall be deemed not to have occurred.”

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-16, in Clause 24, be amended by replacing lines 43 to 48 on page 11 and lines 1 to 6 on page 12 with the following:

“24. (1) With the consent of the Prime Minister of Canada, the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons and the leader in the House of Commons of each party having at least 12 members sitting in that House, the Governor in Council may appoint a retired judge of a superior court for a period of three to five years to perform the duties and have the powers and functions of a Review Committee described in subsections 23 (4), (5) and (6).”

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-16, in Clause 31, be amended

(a) by replacing line 22 on page 15 with the following:

“31. (1) Subject to subsection (1.1), the Governor in Council may”

(b) by adding after line 25 on page 15 the following:

“(1.1) The Governor in Council shall not appoint a person who has been convicted of an offence under section 39 or 40 as a Citizenship Commissioner.”

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-16, in Clause 32, be amended by replacing line 37 on page 16 with the following:

“32. Subject to the approval of the standing committee of the House of Commons that normally considers matters relating to citizenship and immigration, the Minister may designate a Citizen.”

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-16, in Clause 43, be amended by replacing line 40 on page 21 with the following:

“(b) subject to alternative resolution of the House of Commons, specifying who may make an applica-”

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-16, in Clause 43, be amended by replacing line 18 on page 22 with the following:

“(e) subject to affirmative resolution of the House of Commons, providing for criteria to determine”

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-16, in Clause 43, be amended by replacing line 31 on page 22 with the following:

“(i) subject to affirmative resolution of the House of Commons, defining what constitutes a relationship”

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-16, in Clause 43, be amended by adding after line 34 on page 22 the following:

“(i.1) subject to affirmative resolution of the House of Commons, defining the expression “best interests of the child”;

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-16, in Clause 43, be amended by adding after line 40 on page 22 the following:

“(j.1) defining the expression “public interest” for the purposes of section 21;”

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-16 be amended by adding after line 15 on page 23 the following new clause:

“43.1 The coming into force of any regulations made by the Governor in Council under paragraph 43(c) is subject to approval of the regulations by the committee of the House of Commons that normally considers matters relating to citizenship.”

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ) moved:

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-16, in Clause 33, be amended by adding after line 21 on page 17 the following:

“(2.1) The Commissioner presiding over a citizenship ceremony shall, during the ceremony and in the presence of a representative of the Government of Quebec, give to every new citizen residing in Quebec a copy of the following documents and an explanation of their purpose:

(i) the Charter of the French Language (R.S.Q., c. C-11);

(ii) the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (R.S.Q., c. C-12);

(iii) the Election Act (R.S.Q., c. E-3.3); and

(iv) the Declaration by the Government of Quebec on Ethnic and Race Relations, signed on December 10, 1986.”

[English]

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.) moved:

Motion No. 23

That the oath of citizenship in the Schedule to Bill C-16 be replaced with the following:

“In pledging allegiance to Canada, I take my place among Canadians, a people united by God whose sacred trust is to uphold these five principles: equality of opportunity, freedom of speech, democracy, basic human rights, and the rule of the law.”

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance) moved:

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-16, in Clause 39, be amended by replacing lines 25 and 26 on page 19 with the following:

“not more than \$60,000 or imprisonment for a term of not more than seven years, or to”

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-16, in Clause 39, be amended by replacing lines 29 and 30 on page 19 with the following:

“more than \$20,000 or to imprisonment for a term of not more than one year, or to both.”

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-16, in Clause 39, be amended by replacing lines 33 and 34 on page 19 with the following:

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“\$60,000 or to imprisonment for a term of not more than seven years, or to both, if the person”

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-16, in Clause 40, be amended by replacing line 44 on page 20 and line 1 on page 21 with the following:

“not more than \$150,000 or to imprisonment for a term of not more than ten years, or to”

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-16, in Clause 40, be amended by replacing lines 4 and 5 on page 21 with the following:

“more than \$20,000 or to imprisonment for a term of not more than one year, or to both.”

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise at report stage debate on Bill C-16.

This bill has come up twice before, having started through the process and having failed for various reasons. It was started in this parliament again at first reading which was a surprise. It had been through committee once before but there was need for a lot of change. Unfortunately not nearly enough change was made to the bill to make it acceptable.

Many of the motions I propose today will improve the bill. If they are all accepted, they will improve it to a point where maybe we could support the bill. It is certainly in need of change. I start by speaking to the Group No. 1 amendments.

Motion No. 1 deals with the issue of citizenship at birth for people born in Canada. For the past several years any child born in Canada automatically becomes a citizen. Whether or not one of the child's parents was a citizen, whether or not one of the child's parents was a landed immigrant, it did not matter. If someone was just here on a visit or in our country illegally, it did not matter; if the child was born in Canada the child automatically obtained Canadian citizenship. This remains in the new act in spite of many concerns raised which I will talk about. Any child born in Canada, even if born of a person who is in our country illegally, will automatically become a citizen.

● (1525)

This concern has come up several times before. I deal with this concern in my amendment. My amendment would ensure that a child would only become a citizen if one of the parents was either a landed immigrant or a citizen. My proposal will ensure that the child will take the citizenship of a parent. Most Canadians see that as being reasonable.

Most Canadians understand that there is a lot of abuse of the current system. People come to our country as visitors or come here illegally and have children born in our country knowing that those children will automatically become Canadian citizens. That

has an impact in particular because of the Mavis Baker case to which I am going to refer in detail. Due to court rulings and the inaction of the government, there are situations where people claim that because they have a child who was born in Canada, even though they were here illegally at the time the child was born, it would be wrong to remove the parent from the country because the child is a Canadian citizen.

This issue was taken to court by Mavis Baker last year and the courts ruled on it. Mavis Baker was in the country illegally for years and had been ordered to leave the country on several occasions. She had children born in Canada. These children became Canadian citizens. In spite of all that, the court ruled that Ms. Baker would be allowed to stay in Canada. One of the main considerations was that her children were Canadian citizens. The court did not seem to consider that Mavis Baker could return to her home country, that the children would be citizens of that country and that they could live together as a family in the country of origin. The court did not consider that.

As a result and because of inaction on the part of the government, this situation will lead to a lot more abuse in the country. More people will come to our country illegally, have children and then use the argument that because they have a child who is a Canadian citizen they should be allowed to stay. I do not think anyone would deny that argument has been used for being allowed to stay in the country when people otherwise would not be allowed to stay. It is a problem.

I only have to refer to a recommendation of the House of Commons standing committee in 1994. Of course since 1993 House of Commons standing committees have had a majority of government members, as did that committee. The committee recommended that children born in Canada should be Canadian citizens only if one or both parents is a permanent resident or a Canadian citizen.

Did the government listen to the recommendation of that committee back in 1994? It was a very strong recommendation. The committee strongly encouraged the government to take it to heart and put it into law. That was in 1994. Here we are six years later and the government has ignored what the committee recommended.

That was not the only group that was really here at the will of the government. Again, that committee had a majority of government members. In voting the committee said that it wanted the law changed so that a child born in Canada would only be a Canadian citizen if he or she was born to one parent who was either a Canadian citizen or a landed immigrant.

Also, the Immigration Legislative Review Advisory Group was set up by the government in 1997. In its report “Not Just Numbers: A Canadian Framework for Future Immigration”, it made a

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comment on this issue. This is a quote from page 40 of the LRA "Not Just Numbers" report which stated:

In our consultations across the country we heard concerns about the abuse of the provision of the Citizenship Act granting automatic citizenship to children born on Canadian soil. The government should collect data, study the real effects and determine whether current policy should be changed.

• (1530)

That was three years ago, and still the government has not taken this recommendation to heart and put it in legislation. I think this change is long overdue and will remove some of the abuse in our immigration system.

Back in 1998 during a press conference on Bill C-63, which was almost the same legislation as Bill C-16, the bill we are now debating, the former minister of immigration said that she made no changes to this clause because no research was done on how big the problem was. They had not done the study after six years and they would not make the change because they did not really know just how big the problem was. She knew that the committee was set up on behalf of the government and that the committees have said there was a problem. She did not know how big the problem was so she would not make the change.

That change was not made, which is very unfortunate. That is why I brought this amendment before the House today so that the change would be made and we would respect the will of Canadians expressed through various consultation processes.

The government has a terrible reputation for ignoring consultation when it consults. That is a sad commentary. People become very cynical about government when they see that time after time the results of its consultations are completely ignored. That is what has happened here.

The former minister acknowledged that this was a problem. On May 12, 1999, during a committee meeting discussing the legislation, Greg Fyffe, assistant deputy minister for policy and program development, was questioned on how long it would take to gather the data needed. He replied:

We're looking now at a pilot project with the provinces to see if we can collect the data properly. I think when we discussed this we were talking in terms of approximately three years, plus or minus, before we would have enough data to make a declaration on this

Here we are in 1999 and the minister and her department are saying after six years since the House of Commons committee reported, three years since the commission set up by the government reported and both recommended change, that they will establish a study to see just how big a problem it is. This is shameful.

The government should have made the change and then do the study. If it felt it had made the wrong change, if need be it could

change it. Canadians supported the change so I doubt it would be wrong. I certainly do not believe it would be wrong.

There are several more motions in this group to which I would like to speak. However I will count on other of my colleagues to cover these issues since my time is up.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-16, particularly as we begin the debate on the motions in Group No. 1.

First of all, I deplore the fact that we are here debating this bill at report stage while the minister is appearing before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. There is something rather odd about that. But, as parliamentarians, we must be flexible and we will adapt to these realities.

• (1535)

Several members of this Parliament, like my colleagues on the committee, will remember the battle I led in committee with regard to clause 8, particularly on April 11, 12 and 13. Those who read the minutes of proceedings from the committee will notice that I raised a number of concerns about clause 8, which deals with international adoption.

Legal counsels for the Department of Immigration were present at the time. They had the opportunity to provide their interpretation of the impact of clause 8, but I expressed a number of reservations.

Why so many reservations when it comes to international adoption? There are, basically, two reasons, three even. The first is that it must be kept in mind that this is primarily a provincial area of jurisdiction, particularly in Quebec. The entire issue of international adoption comes under the jurisdiction of Quebec. I had indicated at that time in connection with this that, as long as there was no amendment to confirm Quebec's jurisdiction, it was clear that we would be bringing in amendments to clause 8.

At that time I said that I was concerned enough to think twice about supporting Bill C-16. On April 12, I raised my first question and expressed my first concern.

The second concern I expressed to the Immigration Canada legal adviser involved the specific nature of Quebec and one of the things that distinguishes it, namely the Civil Code, which is not, unfortunately, taken into consideration in Bill C-16, particularly in clause 8. I therefore expressed a second concern: the fact that the bill did not take the Civil Code into consideration.

My third area of concern was the discrimination I feel will affect Quebec children, and of course Quebec parents, during the processing of the adoption.

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I must point out first of all that, under its legislation, Quebec is responsible for adoption, which is allowed only once the process is complete. The process is complete when the child arrives here in Canada, and more specifically on the territory of Quebec, and when a Quebec court hands down a decision. That is part of the system, of the reality and of the distinct nature of Quebec.

However, the bill, as it is worded, states that the adoption will be complete once the following criterion has been met, that the adoption "was in accordance with the laws of the place where the adoption took place and the laws of the country of residence of the adopting citizen".

Clause 8 of the bill has a direct effect, because we think it discriminates to some extent against the children and the parents of Quebec. We also feel that there is some loss of benefits for the children and the parents. It is clear, moreover, that Quebec parents will not benefit, as will parents in the rest of Canada who decide to adopt abroad, from the same rights and benefits.

• (1540)

This amendment is fair, because I had already made the committee aware of it, on April 13. The deputy minister was in attendance at the hearings, and I was assured there would be bilateral negotiations, that Quebec's views, the Civil Code and Quebec's jurisdiction in the area of international adoptions would be respected.

The department's legal counsel went even further addressing this issue of bilateral work. It was not new. I remind the House that the international adoption secretariat, especially for Quebec, had made requests. It had indicated that it hoped bilateral work would be undertaken so that Quebec would be consulted in the various stages of the process, before the federal government granted citizenship.

It is not new. The minister woke up and her officials woke up two weeks before the passage of this bill, when the Bloc Québécois said in committee that there was a problem. So things had to be activated and negotiations initiated.

Quebec gave negotiations a chance. As late as yesterday, the deputy ministers were talking. They wanted amendments to be made, they wanted the government to respond to the wishes expressed by the Government of Quebec so that Bill C-16 could conform to the Quebec Civil Code and the Quebec reality.

Now, close to 12 hours after these negotiations have failed, we have no other option. In committee, I told the minister that I would be patient and that I would not propose amendments. I said we would give bilateral negotiations a chance.

As members know, it is sometimes better to have a negotiated solution than direct proposals. Today, we have no alternative but to

present this motion at report stage. That motion, which seeks to amend clause 8, reads as follows:

For greater certainty, the Province of Quebec shall continue to have full jurisdiction in respect of international adoptions, including the acceptance of any psychosocial assessment of adoptive parents and the issue of a letter of no objection to the adoption of a child.

We also proposed the following:

The Minister shall, on application, grant citizenship to a minor child adopted outside Canada by a citizen domiciled or ordinarily resident in Quebec, although the adoption procedure has not yet been completed in accordance with the laws of Quebec, if

(a) the adoption is not intended to circumvent the requirements under any enactment for admission to Canada or citizenship; and

(b) the adoption proposal has been approved by the administrative authority designated for that purpose by the minister of the government of Quebec responsible for international adoptions.

The amendment that we are proposing has already been submitted to the deputy minister. It was also communicated to the Minister of Immigration very recently, on May 9, in a letter from Minister Robert Perreault.

It is our hope that, even though negotiations have failed, the government will support this amendment, which only seeks to ensure respect of Quebec's Civil Code.

• (1545)

[English]

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments in response to the motions brought forward by my colleague from Lakeland with respect to Bill C-16, beginning with Motion No. 1, which would amend clause 4.

While the intent of the motion seems to be reasonable, the reality is that the member is calling for quite a shift from the way Canada has been doing things for over 100 years and what many democracies around the world have been doing.

I do not understand the motivation for his motion, which would deny a child born in Canada the right to citizenship. The member is indicating that there is a problem. Aside from the very few cases that have been reported in the media, I do not believe there is a problem.

Many people were born in Canada while their parents were visiting or on a diplomatic assignment to our country. When these individuals returned to their home countries, many of the children turned out to be people who held high positions in their country's government and they became very good friends of Canada.

On many occasions when I served as a parliamentary secretary I came across people who were very successful in their own coun-

tries. The only link to Canada which these individuals had was the fact that they were born here, and they are very good friends of Canada.

Many Canadian diplomats and tourists travel abroad and give birth to children in foreign countries. Their children require citizenship in those countries.

This issue cuts both ways and I do not see it as being a problem. I do not consider it to be a major issue that we need to be concerned about. I hope to God we do not spend a lot of money studying the magnitude of this issue because I believe it is not a major problem.

I also want to make reference to Motion No. 2, which would amend clause 6 of Bill C-16. If a refugee claimant claims refugee status in Canada, he or she would be required to wait up to 365 days for citizenship.

I believe that what we have in place at the present time is fairly efficient and fairly good. A claimant who has already been accepted as a convention refugee can accumulate that period. I do not think that amendment to the legislation would make any sense at all.

I find that the two amendments put forward by my hon. colleague are a bit odd, a bit out of place and just do not fit into the bigger picture.

The member indicated in his first amendment that a child would have to be born to a person who is either a Canadian citizen or a landed immigrant. What would happen in the situation where someone is a convention refugee and his child is born here? Would that mean we would have to start a process for the child in order to process the child through the system? That would create a huge amount of unnecessary paperwork and unnecessary complications.

It is my hope that the House will not support those two motions.

[*Translation*]

With respect to Motion No. 3 brought forward by a member of the Bloc Québécois, the member for Rosemont, new clause 8(2) is unnecessary because provincial jurisdiction over adoption is already provided for in the Constitution. The Citizenship of Canada Act in no way interferes with Quebec's authority in this regard. In addition, clause 8(c) stipulates that citizenship may not be granted until the adoption is in accordance with the laws of Quebec.

If we were to approve the motion, citizenship would then be granted even though an adoption was not in accordance with the laws of Quebec.

• (1550)

In addition, the motion introduces the new concept of "domiciled or ordinarily resident", which is incompatible with the

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definition of residence in the Citizenship of Canada Act, which requires physical presence.

The proposal does not take into account the criteria in clause 8, which were developed so as to cover both the best interests of the child as well as international adoption fraud.

Clause 8 has been drafted in such a way as to treat the provinces and territories on a equal footing, while ensuring that their respective adoption laws are respected without interference from the federal government.

We note the difference between the "laws of the country of residence" in the English text and "lieu de résidence" in the French. The English is the equivalent of the French. The applicable law involves all of a country's adoption legislation.

The term is general and was chosen because it was also necessary to take into account the adoption of a child in another country by a Canadian resident.

For Canada, "laws of the country of residence" can only refer to laws of the provinces and territories, because the Constitution has expressly given them full jurisdiction over adoption.

For all these reasons, the government will not be supporting this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it has often been said that Canada is a country of immigrants. I too am one generation from an immigrant in that my American mother was born in Missouri. My oldest brother was born in North Dakota. At that time, of course, when immigration was taking place in the west, we did not experience many difficulties. We did not have all of these rules and regulations that we are discussing today.

It is of interest to know what we would do to our own citizens under this act. I refer to a border area where there are a lot of marriages on each side of the border. A lot of people move to the U.S. and are married by a justice of the peace. By necessity, a lot of people rush to hospitals in the U.S. because they are closer than the hospitals in Canada. Therefore, when they give birth in the U.S. the child is automatically a Canadian citizen by birth. There are problems.

We penalize our young people in this country who marry someone, particularly from the United States. It is more difficult perhaps in other areas. Let me cite two cases which I have had to deal with.

There is a young girl who lives not too far from where I live and she is going to a special school. As young people do, she fell in love. There is nothing new about that. She decided to get married. The complications that this girl faces in moving to the United

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States are unbelievable. It is a story book in itself, not just from the Canadian side but from the American side as well. There has to be a better way.

Let me give the House an example of the most recent case. There is a young fellow who has found a girl, I believe in Wisconsin. They fell in love. Guess what? They want to get married. Immediately the young fellow living in this country applied to bring his fiancée to Canada.

• (1555)

When I got married I was not asked how much money I had. If I had to measure up to Immigration Canada today I probably never would have been married because I never made that much money. When this young fellow applied to bring his spouse to Canada, the Department of Immigration said “No, your T-4 slip says you are not making enough money”. That was bad enough, but the young fellow had to put up \$500 or \$600 with his application. When he obtained proof that in the year 2000 he would be making considerably more money, Immigration Canada said he would have to resubmit his application. That represents another \$500 or \$600.

What I am saying to the House and to people across Canada is that when we mention the words citizenship and immigration they have bad connotations in many areas. People think of refugee status, the smuggling of refugees and people smuggling, and the inability to deport. Yet when it comes to our very own citizens, people of high quality, young people, we impose restrictions on them that should not exist.

I wish we could become more amenable to the idea of looking at people and their character and why they want to marry and live with their spouse without having to be married and then separated for a period of almost a year. That happens. That ought not to happen. There is no reason for that to happen. I have dealt with a case in which it took a man over a year to bring his wife to Canada, and there was no good reason for the delay.

We can discuss this bill all we like, but we have to look at what is happening within our country. All of the motions, all of these things, will not mean too much if we do not deal with reality. I am speaking particularly of our young people who choose a spouse outside Canada.

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the amendments in Group No. 1 to Bill C-16 put forth by the critics for citizenship and immigration. I am not our party's critic for immigration. The critic for our party is the member for Compton—Stanstead, but I am glad to have the opportunity to speak to the amendments.

In dealing with the motion put forth by the member for Lakeland, our party does not agree that either the father or the mother should have to be a citizen or a permanent resident for a child to have Canadian citizenship. Citizenship in this country is precious

and should not be thrown around frivolously. However, if someone is born on Canadian soil, he or she should be recognized as Canadian. It is for this reason that we have a problem with this amendment.

Concerning Motion No. 2, we do not feel that an individual should claim time toward permanent residency status after having made a refugee claim. When an individual makes a claim there is not even a guarantee that he or she will achieve refugee status. We support the present provision in the act, which states that a person begins claiming time toward permanent residency status once he or she has been determined to be a convention refugee.

With respect to Motions Nos. 3 and 17, the hon. member for Rosemont has been quite concerned about the adoption provisions for some time. The amendments he proposes solidify the fact that adoption is a provincial area of jurisdiction. We support the autonomy of the provinces in their areas of jurisdiction and would gladly support the hon. member for Rosemont; however, he specifies only jurisdictional powers over adoption for the province of Quebec. If the motion had specified all of the provinces in Canada we would have supported it.

• (1600)

We support Motion No. 22 put forward by the hon. member for Lakeland. During the course of debate on Bill C-16, this party raised concerns about the coming into force of this act. It stipulates in the bill that all citizenship cases will fall under the new act once it is proclaimed. We did not like this. What kinds of extra paperwork and headaches will this cause for cases which are smoothly making their way through the system under the current act? There should be some sort of cut off point for cases presently going through the system. Perhaps there could be a period of one year to give the department and applicants alike time for adjustment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is one aspect of the bill on which I must insist, and it concerns international adoptions.

Under this bill, an adopted child could be granted citizenship even before arriving in this country. This goes against current practice under the Quebec Civil Code.

What worries me here is not current practice in Quebec, which could be changed since the Quebec National Assembly has full power over its Civil Code. What I find troubling and even shocking here is to see a federal bill that goes completely against a practice under the Quebec Civil Code.

Quebec has the indisputable right to decide upon its own legislative practices under the Civil Code. It has always exercised that right. It is free to change its legislation as and when it sees fit. It does not have to follow dictates set out in federal legislation.

This is the fundamental problem I see with this bill. It is not the substance of the bill as such, but rather the tone of this federal attack on Quebec's civil legislation. With this bill, the federal government is interfering in an area that is beyond its jurisdiction. Ultimately, this bill, if passed, could even be challenged on this point in the courts, because it oversteps the jurisdiction of the federal government.

Provincial governments have rights that are guaranteed by the Constitution and by tradition. The Civil Code, the content and form of which were recently revised in Quebec, forms a longstanding tradition going back two and a half centuries to an undertaking given by the British crown to the French crown that it would respect the French civil legislation known as the Napoleonic Code.

The rights enjoyed by Quebecers today are acquired rights dating from two and a half centuries ago, rights over their own civil legislation, and their own Civil Code, which differs from the British common law applicable in other provinces. These rights were agreed to by the British crown at the time of the conquest; they are rights which continue to apply, rights which the Confederation has guaranteed, rights which, to all intents and purposes, are constitutional.

• (1605)

What we are seeing today with this bill is an intrusion in a jurisdiction that belongs to Quebecers and to the National Assembly of Quebec.

My problem is with the approach, not with the issue of adoption itself. This approach is unacceptable. If this bill, as it stands, were to be passed by a majority of the members of this House, which would not include us, it would clearly leave itself open to a court challenge. We certainly do not want this for adoptions.

The Government of Quebec, in correspondence of May 9 to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration signed by the minister of public relations and immigration, Robert Perreault, proposed amendments that, without changing the essence and merits of the bill before us, would permit it to respect Quebec jurisdictions and avoid potential legal problems.

If this bill were to be passed, clearly Quebecers wanting to adopt a child abroad would not be able to take advantage of the measures otherwise available to them.

I appeal to the common sense and good judgement of this House. Whatever is necessary will have to be done to ensure that this bill honours the constitutional rights of the National Assembly of Quebec and the rights of the citizens of Quebec, my rights.

[English]

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to once again speak

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on immigration issues. It has been some time I dare say since I held the portfolio of immigration critic.

I suppose, when we analyze it, not a whole lot has changed as far as cleaning up some of the problems within the immigration ministry as it reflects down to the immigration offices located in the various regions of the country, right down to the communities.

The first group of motions deal with a burning issue for a lot of people in our country, both for immigrants and those who were born here. Many of those immigrants who arrived years back, and even some more recently, struggled to reach the level required to be admitted into the country. While they were happy to have been accepted, they continued to struggle to meet the requirements of citizenship.

Another issue that has always been of concern to both them and others who have been established here for a long time, is the issue of children being born to visitors in our land and being granted citizenship at that point.

The minister is well aware of that particular issue. She was aware of the issue when she took office. The previous immigration minister was also aware of the issue when she took office, and so on down the line. I could go all the way back to when Sergio Marchi was the immigration minister. He was very well aware of the issue of children being born in Canada to parents who were not Canadian citizens but visitors. Each one claimed that they would look at the issue. They also agreed that it was an issue to a degree, but that they needed to know how important it really was.

• (1610)

When I served as the immigration critic, the matter came forward and the immigration minister at the time was going to examine the problem to see how significant it was; in other words, collect some data and make a decision. That was good because that was the way it should be done. In his two years in that portfolio he did absolutely nothing. I do not know if he even collected any data even though it was not very difficult to collect that kind of data. That has been the case with every Liberal immigration ministers since I have served in the House.

It is shameful to think that a minister or ministers procrastinated, stalled, refused and ignored those requests raised by both the opposition and Liberal backbenchers. I am sure there are members in the government who have raised this issue with their specific ministers. I do not think that is the response that should be coming from a minister.

I know the present minister stated that she made no changes to this clause because there was no research done on how big a problem the citizenship at birth issue really was. She further stated that hospital records do not request the nationality of parents and changing this would require provincial co-operation. Why does the minister not take a little trip over to the city of Vancouver? It is

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well known that a hospital there is a target for those visiting this country to do that very thing, to register their births in that hospital and with the province. One hospital in particular handles a number of them.

If the minister was truly concerned about collecting data, and I believe that the data is already there, she would make that effort and do it forthwith. Obviously, she does not want to do that. She does not want to question status quo immigration policy.

I have a problem with that. We must question status quo immigration policy. We have an immigration document or an immigration code that gets thicker every year. We bring in more and more legislation but none of it really corrects the problems that exist. If it is poor legislation or inadequate legislation, why are we here? Is it just so we can add to the immigration act year after year?

I have to shake my head at the ministers sitting across the floor who do not seem to want to correct some of the major or glaring issues of the day, specifically the immigration policy which is often generated from legislation. This is a great shortfall and there are series of flaws in the process and in the legislation. That it does not address serious problems concerns a number of Canadians. I will make the reference again. When I say "a number of Canadians", I mean those who have come here as immigrants and have had to wait and wait in line and those who were born here.

• (1615)

I am in a quandary on how to get a point across to that side of the House on very significant issues which have been expressed time and time again and are of concern to Canadians in general. There has been no action taking place over there in spite of the fact that it has been raised numerous times. We have had five immigration ministers since 1993, the length of time reform and now the alliance has been in the House.

The government pointed out that it likes consultations. I can remember as an opposition critic for immigration that we were involved in consultations. The consultations consisted of dropping around to various spots in the country and talking to people in the department, to advocacy groups, to lawyers and to consultants.

We had consultation after consultation. Yet shortly after all the consultations took place, lo and behold an interdepartmental survey landed on the desks of several opposition members. That survey clearly outlined all the problems within the immigration department and even recommendations on how to fix them. There were not only serious breaches of policy but serious flaws within the act and how it was carried out.

I rest my case. The bill before us is inadequate. The issues of concern to most Canadians will not be addressed.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The recorded division on Motion No. 1 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The recorded division on Motion No. 2 stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 3. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

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Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

• (1620)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The recorded division on Motion No. 3 stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 17.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 22. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The recorded division on Motion No. 22 stands deferred.

Pursuant to order made earlier this day the motions in Group No. 2 were previously moved and seconded. This group contains Motions Nos. 4 and 5.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to debate Motions Nos. 4 and 5 which are before the House. The proposed legislation that is outlined should be addressed to its fullest. It is quite significant when certain groups of people can be excluded from the advantages of our legal system. Not that I say our legal system is all that great, but if there is an entitlement there should be an entitlement. It means having access to legal opinions of the courts of our country as citizens and another group not having that access. We will support Motions Nos. 4 and 5.

The proposed legislation does not allow individuals equal access to the legal system in spite of the fact that they may be granted

citizenship. Even if there were fraud I think there is entitlement. I find it passing strange that this provision is in the bill when a judgment was made in the Supreme Court of Canada in 1985 which declared that refugees have complete and total access to our legal system. That was under the Singh decision.

First they were allowed or permitted an oral examination. Then a process was set up which I think was unnecessary, but be that as it may we have it right now. It could be changed. A process was set up whereby they could fight the matter in the tribunals, in the courts, all the way up to the federal court and tie up the courts for long periods of time fighting cases to which there is never any conclusion, except the federal court will say whether or not they are refugees.

Then it goes through the tribunal process again with the legal minds jumping into the fray. The lawyers all line up, just like they were when the Chinese boat people ended up lined up on a dock on the west coast wanting to fight their cases. They knew there was a legal entitlement and a battle to be fought.

Yet we have provisions in this bill that even though citizenship is granted and then for some unknown reason fraud is found or misrepresentation determined they are not permitted to fight the case on legal grounds.

• (1625)

There is an irony in this part of the bill. On the one hand we see abuses taking place within the immigration process where those fighting their cases with legal representation are caught up in a whirlwind. They are constantly going around and around with nothing ever being resolved. This costs taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars and in fact billions over time.

That is acceptable, but on the other hand someone who may have committed some act is still entitled to legal representation by the mere fact that he or she has been granted Canadian citizenship. Is that not somewhat of a paradox or a contradiction? I think it is a contradiction.

Even a judge listening to a case, despite the fact there may have been fraud or there may have been suspicion of misrepresentation, could make a decision on whether there is fraud and could say that the individual after being found guilty is no longer entitled to legal representation. It is clear that she or he has committed fraud, and everybody goes on his way. However that is not what the bill provides.

There are lawyers sitting across the way. It is odd that we do not hear too much from them. Many times there are charter arguments surrounding the issues of which we speak, but there has been substantial silence on that side of the floor. I find that passing strange.

The point in question is the issue of citizenship. My hon. colleague from the Vegreville area, the critic for immigration, put it

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quite eloquently. Once citizenship is granted it must be assumed to be genuine. Once it is revoked then another matter must be dealt with such as deportation.

There is no mention of that in the bill at all. We deport people who commit fraud, who lie, who misrepresent. That is not even mentioned in the bill although I would assume there are provisions in another part of the act which might deal with that. When there is a violation of the law as blatant as a misrepresentation or a fraudulent application, it should be spelled out here that a course of action will be pursued against the individual. It all comes back to the fact that there should be an entitlement to fight the case and to present the evidence. It has to be adversarial.

Unfortunately that side of the House has either overlooked this point or maybe wants some other legal entanglement which will take off in a new direction in our courts. The Immigration Act is fraught with all kinds of weak areas that continually require argument in our courts and tie up our courts.

It is about time we had some good, clear policy and legislation that can be easily interpreted without the courts so that everyone knows where he or she stands. When there are arguments, which would be fewer by far, they could be settled in the federal court. I find the whole proposal lacking. On the other hand, my colleague, the immigration critic, has addressed those issues in Motions Nos. 4 and 5, and I fully support them.

• (1630)

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me first say that I support the bill before the House because it would give greater value to citizenship for those Canadians who are citizens by choice and not by birth.

When we look at Bill C-16 we notice that clause 12 talks about people who become citizens by choice having all the rights and responsibilities of every other Canadian. I am one of those five million to six million Canadians who are citizens by choice. Let me tell hon. members that it is a very central part of my identity as a person.

When my family left Hungary in 1957 we came through mine fields. I was a young boy. There has to be something pretty desperate to motivate a family to cross mine fields. The situation has to be pretty bad. When I arrived with my family in Canada I could say that we felt we had arrived in heaven. It is important for Canadians to know that.

The problem with the present act in dealing with the revocation of citizenship pertains to the fact that it is the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, who, under section 17, could proceed on grounds with a notice stating that it is believed an immigrant at some point in time obtained citizenship by fraudulent means. The

person has 30 days to respond from the time the minister sent the notice, not from the time of receipt of the notice.

If the immigrant wishes to dispute the allegations of the minister, there will be a hearing before a federal court judge in the trial division. What is important to understand is that there is not an opportunity to appeal the decision of that judge.

Think about it. The whole history of jurisprudence in Canada and the western world is based on the right to appeal. It is the recognition that no one judge is infallible. If judges were infallible we would not need courts of appeal, nor would we need the supreme court. The fact of the matter is that judges are human and they are prone to error. It is the ability to appeal the decision to revoke somebody's citizenship to a higher court that really underlies the judicial system in its finest sense.

Under the present system there could be a case of an individual who got here by fraudulent means, whom the crown strongly believes got here by fraudulent means, but a judge could make a mistake and say that the immigrant did not come here fraudulently. The crown would not have the option to appeal. Conversely, if a judge makes a wrong finding and says that an individual is guilty of coming here by misrepresentation, the immigrant would not have the right to appeal.

What happens is this. The minister is the prosecutor in the case. She goes to the federal court trial division. The decision of the federal court trial division goes to the minister, who, under the present act, has to act as an appeal court and also has to make a report to cabinet. The cabinet makes an order on revocation.

• (1635)

As a Canadian by choice who values his citizenship, like many other Canadians by choice, if I am to lose my citizenship I want to have the due process of law. My family came across mine fields because we wanted to be in a country that is ruled by law, not where the politicians or the prime minister of the country decide what my rights are as an individual citizen.

This is a good motion. It reflects the views of all of the people who made presentations before the committee on Bill C-63, which was the predecessor to Bill C-16. They included people from right across the country. We had the B'nai Brith. We had the Ukrainian Congress. We had the Immigrant Lawyers' Association. We had the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. What was so unique about it was that they all agreed that there should be the opportunity to appeal.

The motion before us was prepared mainly through the work of Kenneth Narvey, who is a legal researcher for the Coalition of Concerned Congregations on the law relating to war crimes and crimes against humanity, including those of the holocaust. It captures the spirit put forward by the B'nai Brith and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, as well as the Ukrainian Congress—all

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those groups representing people across this country, who are in many cases citizens by choice.

The law on revocation goes back to 1920, which is one of the darkest periods of our immigration history. If we think back, we had the Asian exclusion act. We did not want Asians coming to this country and we made laws to keep them out. We had the head tax to keep the Chinese out.

We had the time of the *Komagata Maru*, a ship from Asia which arrived legally. The popular belief was that we did not want those kinds of people in this country and laws were passed to turn them around and send them back.

It was not long ago that we had a policy in this country that related to Jews which said "None is too many". We only have to go back to the second world war. To our collective shame in the western world we turned away the *SS St. Louis*, which had almost a thousand Jews on board. They were sent back to the gas chambers. That is the timeframe in which this piece of legislation concerning the revocation of citizenship goes back to.

The right to my citizenship as a citizen by choice is only as good as the least popular among us in the country.

We have made some great strides heading into the new millennium. We have a premier of British Columbia who is from India. We have a governor general who is from Hong Kong. We have a Minister of Citizenship and Immigration who is Jewish. I urge my colleagues in the House to go the rest of the way. Let us get rid of this archaic piece of legislation on revocation. If we are going to revoke citizenship, let us revoke it by the due process of law, let us trust our legal system that we have built and supported, and let us not have second class citizens in this country.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, Human Resources Development; the hon. member for Québec, Parental Leave; and the hon. member for Mississauga South, Trade.

[*English*]

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am glad I was in the House to hear the parliamentary secretary speak. He certainly did a fine job in helping us to relive some of those things. He also experienced great danger in coming to Canada. I have talked to many people like him. It is always very emotional when individuals have the desire to live

in Canada. People like the parliamentary secretary inevitably make good citizens.

My area of Canada is much younger than that of Ontario. We are still very much akin to groups of people who came over in this century, even as late as the twenties, who still maintain their nationalist ties. One of Canada's few Romanian settlements is located some 20 miles north of where I live, and there is another settlement about 100 miles from my home. These people are very proud Canadians today.

The hon. gentleman mentioned some of the dark periods in Canadian history. I think about the time of Confederation when we became a nation. That was the time of the plight of the Irish. I can remember Irish people during the famine trying to immigrate to Canada, but there were people in this country who were quite willing to send them back. That is another dark story, another era in our Canadian history of which Canadians are not very proud.

I think my hon. colleague is also somewhat taken back by the number of illegal immigrants who somehow get into Canada. All of the people I know who have immigrated to this country are concerned about the way in which people get here, how long they stay and how they abuse the name of the legal immigrant. These people, like me, are concerned.

I want it understood that I am not anti-immigrant. I am not against the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. I am, like most Canadians, which has been shown in poll after poll, against the policies of the government which do not tighten up the immigration policy. Not too long ago most of the crimes being committed in certain areas were being committed by illegal immigrants.

I say to the hon. gentleman that he should take his case and his story to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. If we have people of his calibre applying to enter Canada, then for goodness sake let us speed up the process and bring these people in. We have not done that.

We have been home to too many people who have been here for years and years. In some cases these individuals have committed crimes and have never been deported. Our whole immigration policy, our whole citizenship department, has taken on a very bad name.

• (1645)

There were three people in my office not too long ago. They were all immigrants within the last 10 years. That was exactly their complaint, that they were finding it difficult because of the headlines flashed across the papers and stories about a very lax policy toward immigrants coming into Canada. They were taking the brunt of the jokes in society. That is not right and we could do something about it.

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The other day one of the members opposite referred to the member for Calgary Northeast as being anti-immigrant. I am not anti-immigrant. I have tried my best in every case to speed up the process when I knew it was legitimate. I am against the lax deportation and the inability to deal with people who are abusing our Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

The hon. gentleman has presented a very worthy case. I want to support him and I want to support this. However, I want to put the idea out there that we need to honour those people who are legitimate immigrants. We need to move very quickly and deport those people who are not legitimate immigrants and not follow the practice we have right now.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it gives me pleasure to talk about an issue that is very important to Canadians and to Canada, the idea of citizenship and immigration, and to reiterate some of the thoughts that my colleagues have expressed when it comes to the proposed changes. I also want to talk about how strongly we feel about citizenship and immigration.

We are basically in agreement with the government on Motions Nos. 3, 4 and 5 in Group No. 2. When it comes to giving rights to citizens in this country, and once they obtain citizenship, they should be treated equally, as my colleague just mentioned. Specifically we cannot take those rights that are given to Canadians once they receive citizenship lightly. They have to be taken very seriously and treated equally.

Before I carry on in addressing these particular motions pertaining to the bill, I want to congratulate my hon. colleague from Lakeland who is our immigration critic. He has worked tirelessly to make sure that the Liberals are kept accountable, that our immigration system works as best as it can, that people from across the country give their feedback on the changes we are debating and that there is the most involvement possible. I know my colleagues would agree that immigration and citizenship is something we should all take an interest in. We should not take it lightly. It is very important to take a moment to congratulate him. He has worked tirelessly on the bill and on the changes that have been proposed.

As I said, the official opposition wants to support these particular motions. As two of my colleagues mentioned in this round of debate, currently the proposed legislation does not provide individuals who have been granted Canadian citizenship full access to the legal system if their right to citizenship is challenged, that is due to misrepresentation or fraud or any of the particular cases where someone's citizenship can come up for question.

From what I understand, during the course of the committee hearings department officials insisted that this clause was not of serious concern. However, the issue caused great concern to members of the committee and a vast majority of the witnesses. I

started out by saying when citizenship is granted to any Canadian we have to make sure their rights are treated equally if any possibility of suspicion or misrepresentation comes up surrounding the granting of their citizenship.

• (1650)

We cannot just have the minister being able to revoke that citizenship without any discretion. That is the big concern we have with this part of the bill and the motions put forward. We are happy to see that the Liberals as well realize this in this part of the debate and do not want to leave that kind of blatant discretion in the hands of the minister, but instead allow the proper legal channels to work in the case of suspicion of anyone's citizenship or any fraudulent activity when it comes to citizenship.

The alliance agrees that once citizenship is granted, it must be assumed to be genuine because hopefully the person who has obtained the citizenship has gone through the proper channels to obtain that citizenship. The revocation of citizenship is not something to be taken lightly and must be done only under complete and thorough scrutiny by the Canadian legal system. That is the point of these motions. We have to go through the proper channels. There cannot be the blatant ability for any person, or any minister for that matter, to revoke someone's citizenship unless the person has been proven guilty.

The only thing I found a little odd during the course of reviewing the committee hearings and especially in raising this point of debate is that during the course of the committee hearings my colleague from Lakeland tabled an amendment which was very similar to the two Liberal amendments. I think it is in clause 17. There were a few Liberal members on the committee who wanted to support that but in the end for some reason it was voted down. That is unfortunate.

I will take a moment to review what is being done on committees. I sit on the environment committee and I often want to see a sense of co-operation and collaboration. If there is any member on the committee who brings forward an amendment to government legislation to make it better, one would think the government would support it and still take credit for it anyway.

It seems to me that the partisanship in this place gets to be too much to handle for all of us. We forget that we are here to make legislation better for Canadians, not just to make ourselves look good. I think that is why most members of parliament got involved in the business they are in.

It would be nice once in a while to see the initiatives of the opposition when it comes to making legislation better supported by committee members and especially by the government. A committee is supposed to be a non-partisan effort to make legislation better. I have seen in many cases during my short experience here sitting on committees that that very rarely happens. In the case of my hon. colleague from Lakeland, his amendments, which are

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almost identical to the motions, were voted down at the committee level, which unfortunately was not a good thing.

Now that we see that these amendments are virtually the same, we want to support these amendments. As I said we do feel, and my hon. colleague from Lakeland attempted to bring this before the committee, that these amendments will help to protect citizens who are under suspicion of having fraudulent citizenship. They will protect those people who are innocent but are under the suspicion of having fraudulent citizenship. It will take the discretion out of the hands of the minister.

If we put this part of the bill into perspective of how many revocations of citizenship there are in the overall scheme, I think there is usually fewer than one per year. It is not something that happens very frequently, thank goodness. At least on that level citizens of Canada can rest assured that when citizenship is given to them, it is something that is taken seriously. However, in the problems which do come up from time to time, if there is suspicion of any fraudulent activity when it comes to citizenship, people can rest assured that their rights will be protected. The equality of all citizens and Canadians will be taken very seriously.

Ms. Carolyn Parrish (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is with great respect for my colleague on this side of the House and his poignant remarks on our history and his personal experience that I reluctantly stand.

I do not support these motions. I want to correct the member opposite who just spoke. In fact the Liberal government is not sponsoring these two amendments. They are being sponsored by the Canadian Alliance.

• (1655)

I speak as one who has a riding of 40% immigrants. Those immigrants are law-abiding, hardworking, productive members of society. I also speak as someone who does not have the story my colleague beside me has, but I come from immigrant stock from eastern Europe. My grandmother chose to be a Canadian by coming from Poland in a cattle boat separated by one thin wall between the cattle and herself in the bottom of the boat.

I have read the amendments carefully and I do not support them. I would like to give my reasons.

I would like to speak on behalf of the almost 100%, as just pointed out, of legitimate immigrants who would not support citizenship for those who have entered this country through stealth, or acquired citizenship through lying or any other means that were other than honest.

I am going to use the previous immigration critic's own words. I find it passing strange that his party supports lengthy court

referrals. He talked about it as being a paradox and a contradiction. He has in the past, and so has his party in one of its previous incarnations and its current incarnation, not supported putting too much power in the hands of the courts. As a matter of fact this has been a hue and cry of that party.

Now members of that party are talking about putting power back into the hands of the courts and taking it out of the hands of parliament. They also railed against too many lengthy procedures when the Chinese boats arrived off the shores of Vancouver. They were most vociferous that those people should be deported immediately. Therefore, I am again finding this whole argument coming from the opposite side of the House passing strange, a paradox and a contradiction.

Let us be clear about what the motions would do. The motions would make citizenship revocation solely a court proceeding. The revocation process under Bill C-16 is the same process that has been government policy for over 20 years, tried, true and reinvestigated. The federal court makes a determination of facts, deciding whether the person obtained citizenship by misrepresentation or by concealing material circumstances. Following that determination the minister makes a report to the governor in council and the governor in council decides whether to revoke citizenship.

The motions before the House would remove the roles of the minister and the governor in council and would leave the decision of fact and of whether to revoke citizenship to the courts. Again, the party opposite has constantly said that we are giving too much power to the courts.

Revocation of citizenship is a very serious matter that the federal government does not take lightly, but a pillar of parliamentary tradition—

Mr. Leon E. Benoit: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member opposite has indicated that this motion was not a Liberal motion when in fact this motion was given to the clerk by the member for Parkdale—High Park. When it came time for the member to move the motion, she was ordered not to do so. I did it as a co-signator.

I want to clarify that for the member. The motion did come from the government originally. It is a good motion and she should be supporting it but I will talk about that in my debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): That certainly clarified things for me but it may have got the rest of us even more confused.

Ms. Carolyn Parrish: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite and I will agree to disagree as we do on many things.

I wish to go back to my point. Revocation of citizenship is a very serious matter that the federal government does not take lightly. A pillar of parliamentary tradition is the principle of responsible

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government. A decision to revoke citizenship should remain with cabinet which itself is accountable to the Canadian people through parliament.

Further, adding appeal rights or giving exclusive power to the judiciary to decide revocation will lengthen the revocation process of suspected war criminals and terrorists, people who were never entitled to Canadian citizenship in the first place.

Let me also add that the revocation process under Bill C-16 guarantees due process for persons undergoing revocation of citizenship and many opportunities to state their case. The motions before the House would also allow any revocation done under the 1977 or 1947 acts to be appealed to the court of appeal or the supreme court.

• (1700)

If that appeal results in a finding that the person did not obtain citizenship by misrepresentation or concealing material circumstances, the revocation would be deemed to have not occurred, that is the decision of the governor in council would be overturned. This would be a radical shift in the way citizenship revocation is done.

Now is not the time to make a radical shift in citizenship revocation. Now is the time to pass the new citizenship act which has been 15 years in the making. It has been reviewed extensively across the country. There has been much consultation, particularly with immigrant groups. Again I would like to state that the government does not support these amendments.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, as I start my comments on the motions in Group No. 2, I feel I must respond to what the member from the Liberal Party just said.

She said that she does not want to support these motions because they would be making a substantial change to the current citizenship act when in fact the replacement act we are debating today has been in the process for 15 years. I do not understand the logic in that. It seems ludicrous if there is a change that makes sense.

There is a change in a motion which was originally put forth by a Liberal member of parliament. He was not allowed to actually read the motion today so I as a co-signator put it forth. It is a good motion, supported by members of the party opposite. Some have told me they will support the motion so I will assume they will. The argument this member put forth is that it is just too much of a change to put into the new citizenship act which has been in the process of being amended for 15 years. I cannot understand the argument.

The second issue to which the member spoke was the issue of too much power in the hands of the court. That is interesting in that right now the revocation of citizenship is in the hands of cabinet.

We have several members of our party who were not born in Canada. If I, a Canadian Alliance member of parliament, had come from another country and if the cabinet had a political reason for wanting to expel me from the country, the ultimate power is with the cabinet, the way it has been laid out in the new citizenship bill.

That is unacceptable. That is old style. That is something one would expect from the 1920s, perhaps, because democracies were not as well developed then. Back in 1920 is exactly when it was put into the act originally. With modernization of democracy surely it is time to make a change so that it is wrong when someone is threatened with revocation of citizenship, which is an extremely serious thing to have happen, and when the ultimate control is in the hands of cabinet.

I fully support the motion that has been presented. It would give that ultimate power to the courts so that a less partisan body would be making the ultimate decision. That is what the motion is meant to do.

The member will have to answer to her constituents. Many of them will be upset by it. Anyone who has come to our country and is in Canada now should be concerned about it. They should be asking this member and all other members of the government why they did not support a motion which would put that authority in the hands of the court rather than in the hands of cabinet.

I cannot believe the member made this argument. It looked as though she had been given a speech by the minister or by the particular public servant who is responsible for that. She read it, but she should have looked at it first. Some members have already spoken in support of the motion from the government side because it is a good one.

As to the power in the courts, the government for some reason does not have any particular desire to interfere with power given by the courts when it comes to the Singh decision. I do not believe it is a correct interpretation. It leaves a situation where anyone coming to our country who is not a Canadian citizen or a landed immigrant and has no status here is entitled to the full protection of the charter of rights and freedoms, including the complete judicial process.

• (1705)

They seem to be happy with that. It is something that no other country offers. In the new immigration bill that has been proposed they do not even have to be in Canada to be offered charter protection. If they want to apply to come to Canada and are not citizens, have no status and live in another country, they will have access to the protection of our charter.

Yet the government refuses to grant the same protection to people who have become citizens of our country during their lifetime. It is an absurd concept and I expect the government to have to answer that concern, not to me but to citizens in its constituencies.

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I have heard from many constituents, as have some of the members opposite. I would be very curious to hear how the hon. member responds to that and how members of the government who brought forth this new Citizenship Act and yet refuse to make this change, which is a good change, can live with themselves when they wake up in the morning and look in the mirror. I really do not understand.

The Citizenship Act is very important. It could lead to individuals being thrown out of our country when they have become citizens. It is all wrong that the ultimate power is going to cabinet.

The two motions in this group both deal with this issue. I encourage the government to reconsider. I believe some members will support them. I encourage them to talk with their colleagues and change their minds. If government members decide to change their minds on this issue between now and when we vote on these motions, I can guarantee that there will not be one bit of heckling from this side of the House. There will not be one negative word from this side of the House.

Instead there will be congratulations because they will have listened to a good idea which has come from the opposition but originated with members of the governing party. I give them credit for that, but they will not let it pass. I encourage them to change their minds and I look forward to their doing exactly that.

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to take up much time in this debate, but I want to use it as an opportunity to raise an important issue for my constituency.

It has to do with a family from the former Yugoslavia that has been trying for some time to enter Canada. These folks have experienced extreme persecution in their country. They have lived a period of horror in terms of their personal lives. Unfortunately they have been trying, I must say unsuccessfully, to enter Canada. I have recently asked them to put their case clearly on the record so that I could present it to the Minister of Immigration, which I have done.

I asked the minister of immigration to involve herself and make a decision based on compassionate and humanitarian grounds to enable this family from the former Yugoslavia to enter Canada and to join with extended family members who have been here for some time and have integrated very successfully into the fabric of Canadian society.

I am fortunate to know one of the families that has been working very hard on behalf of extended family members in the former Yugoslavia. While all sorts of people are using various ways to get into the country, these people have chosen the legitimate way, the honourable way, the correct way, the appropriate way. They have gone through all the appropriate channels.

They have been informed by our foreign service people abroad, particularly those responsible for immigration, that the former Yugoslavia from which they come, and particularly the neighbouring area of Macedonia, is not an area of serious problems. These people on a personal basis have experienced severe persecution and extreme harassment. The spouse of the head of the family has been threatened with rape. Their children have been threatened in the school yards with repeated beatings because they happen to be of the wrong ethnic group in this case.

• (1710)

I am not sure this is the appropriate time to do it, but I will use this occasion to raise their plight and concern. I hope and pray the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration will see fit to grant this family entrance to Canada based on compassionate and humanitarian grounds so they can join extended family members here. I know they will make a very positive contribution to life in Canada and will be able to leave a very unfortunate circumstance behind them in Europe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Is the House ready for the question.

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The question is on Motion No. 4. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): A recorded division on Motion No. 4 stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 5.

Pursuant to order made earlier this day the motions in Group No. 3 were previously moved and seconded. This group contains Motions Nos. 6 to 8, 15, 16 and 18 to 21.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the motions in Group No. 2. I

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want to talk about what has been happening with regard to the government and its management of the House.

We have the citizenship bill in report stage before the House today and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is in committee at exactly the same time. Also at the same time the government makes an announcement that it has finally managed to deport a small portion of the 600 people who arrived illegally by boat this year.

That is the way the government seems to manage. It cannot co-ordinate things even in the House. The minister cannot co-ordinate her own time. She should be here. She is the minister responsible for citizenship. I will not say whether or not she is here but she should be. The minister should be taking part in this debate and listening to this debate. Her time management and the way she manages herself and her department are so poor that she has three things going on at the same time. That is completely unacceptable. Many members who would like to be taking part in the report stage debate of Bill C-16 are at committee. That is unacceptable.

Motion No. 6 deals with consultations between the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of any party recognized in the House, in other words any party with over 12 members, on the issue of appointing a retired judge who in certain cases will take the place of the security review committee. This would be done on very serious issues, usually security issues. The minister would be asked to appoint a retired judge to preside over the hearing. For some reason the government does not want the security review committee to do that. To add some measure of protection in the act, it has said that the minister must consult with all party leaders. This motion would require the minister to get agreement from all party leaders that this judge is an acceptable person and that he or she will be able to deal with security issues or a very touchy issues. I do not think that is too much to ask.

• (1715)

I do not believe any of the party leaders, current or in the future, would let partisan politics stand in the way of such an important appointment when dealing with the security of our country and an issue that affects human beings in such a serious way. I do not understand why the government would reject Motion No. 6, and I hope it will not.

Motion No. 7 points out that in this legislation there are no provisions preventing the appointment of a citizenship commissioner who has been found guilty of an offence under clause 39 or 40 of this bill. I will run that by members again, because it is important to take careful note. The government has put no protection in this proposed new citizenship act against appointing someone as a citizenship commissioner who has a criminal record as a result of breaching this proposed new act. It is unbelievable that would be the case.

I pointed this out in committee on several occasions and yet the government insists that it wants the minister to decide on the

appointment. It is an unacceptable process. The minister is willing to allow someone who has breached the new citizenship act, the very serious clauses 39 and 40, to be appointed to the position of citizenship commissioner in spite of having committed these serious crimes. One has to wonder why.

Is the government suggesting that it has political friends whom it would like to appoint to these positions? Everyone in this group is a political appointment. That is why they are grouped together and that is why I have brought forward these motions. The government seems to be so concerned that it cannot find enough of its political friends, who have not breached the citizenship act, to appoint to this position of commissioner that it has to open it up to those who have broken the law under the very bill we are debating today. It is unbelievable. Any other government would turn red-faced or maybe white-faced at this type of thing going on and someone pointing out that it should be changed. I would hope that the government members would support this motion but I doubt very much that they will.

Motion No. 8 deals with another instance of patronage. It is the same type of thing. The Canadian Alliance understands that the government wants to ensure that the senior citizenship judge who is appointed reflects the government's principles and way of thinking. I am talking about only the top dog here, and I understand that. I am not saying that there should not be a political appointment at the top. I am saying that in this position the government naturally would want someone who reflects its values.

All we are asking for is that the appointment be at least monitored and scrutinized by the appropriate standing committee of the House. Does that not make sense?

• (1720)

When the Canadian Alliance forms the government in a year or a year and a half, which I hope and believe it will as there is a good chance of it, we will take this act and completely overhaul it. The person who ultimately will be responsible for the granting of citizenship will reflect the principles of the party. All other members will not be patronage appointments. This government has left dozens and dozens of patronage appointments in this citizenship act so it can give its political friends these lucrative jobs. That is unacceptable.

We are saying that it is okay for the top person to reflect the values of the government, but that a House of Commons standing committee should scrutinize the appointment. That is all Motion No. 8 does. It is completely reasonable. We will see whether the government supports the motion or not, although I doubt it. It just does not seem to want to support anything that comes from anyone other than itself. If it steals the idea from someone else and passes it that is okay but if it misses that opportunity, which it often does, and an idea is brought forth by someone else, then it is not a good idea. That is not the way government will be when we are in power, which will not be that far from now.

This is the last chance I have to talk about Motions Nos. 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21. They all deal with the fact that too much is left to regulation in different areas of the bill. This is something this government is guilty of on more occasions than I can say. In fact, the new immigration act, Bill C-31, which was tabled by the minister a few weeks ago, is so full of holes that we could navigate one of those rusty illegal migrant ships through it with no problem.

I had to run out of here today to go to committee in order to take part as the official opposition immigration critic. When I asked the minister some questions about the new act, she said that it was not really a new act, that it was a framework act. She knows that it was so full of holes it will not work.

The Liberals have left everything in Bill C-13 up to regulation which is the same thing they have done with Bill C-16. Too much is left to regulation. In no way should the minister, civil servants or the department be making decisions on such critical issues as who can make an application on behalf of a minor, on how a relationship between a parent and child should be defined, or on what is in the best interests of the child. They are all found within the new act but that have no definition and there are not guidelines.

In no way should this government or any civil servant be left to decide what constitutes adequate language knowledge or other knowledge in order to be eligible for citizenship. However, that is what this new act will do. These proposed motions would say that this cannot all be left to regulation. We will put it in legislation so at least the principle of the new act can be understood. That was not done and that was what we wanted. I encourage the government to support these motions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to indicate that we will support the motions in Group No. 3. These motions deal with a couple of topics, including of course the whole issue of the citizenship commissioner.

This is a fundamental issue. Why are we asking that the standing committee have a say in these appointments? It is to ensure that the work of the commissioners is done in all fairness, but also in a way that will respect the legal character of citizenship.

Under the law, citizenship is based on rights and responsibilities, but we, in the Bloc Québécois, want it to be even broader. We want it to allow various groups, individuals and new Canadian citizens to be aware of the importance of the democratic rights that have been shaped in Quebec over the last few years by our own charter of rights and Election Act.

• (1725)

We want the commissioners to be able to pass on this information and the standing committee to have a say in their appointment.

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The proposed motions deal more specifically with clause 43, the regulations clause. Our motions call for these regulations to be made, subject to ratification by the House of Commons. In our opinion, this is fundamental.

As my colleague from the Canadian Alliance has said, there is a tendency for this government to govern and pass legislation on the basis of regulations that cannot be debated by parliamentarians. In a democratic system, if a government does not bother informing parliamentarians of what it is doing through clauses in a bill, I believe it is a basic requirement that such regulations be debated in the House.

To give an example, clause 43(a) reads:

(a)—including medical evidence to establish parentage, and the times when those applications and notices must be made;

When Bill C-63 was being looked at in the standing committee, adoptive parents from Quebec made recommendations and proposals to it. What they wanted to tell us was that they wanted medical evidence, records of medical examination, to be transmitted before the proposal of adoption, so the parents could be aware of the child's medical status. This is fundamental.

In the regulations there is reference, among other things, to the best interests of the child. Some of the motions are aimed at defining what the child's best interests are.

If the prospective parent is not aware of the results of the medical examination, does not know the child's health status, this might to some extent affect the child's best interests. It is important that the parent be aware of the child's health status in order to ensure that his or her vital needs are being met. If information on the health status of the child is not provided within a reasonable length of time, the best interests of the child might be compromised.

In this bill, nothing tells us what the expression "in the best interests of the child" means. There is no definition. There is nothing specific as to when the results of the medical examination of the child must be given to the parents. We do not know if it will be before or after the proposal. Adoptive parents were clear on this issue.

When the bill was studied in committee, a number of proposals were made. We wanted these fundamental aspects to be considered. I think that, for the sake of transparency and due to the fact that the government refused to include in the bill certain details regarding the regulations, we must have a debate in this House on all the regulations pertaining to this bill.

I will conclude by saying that my party will vote in favour of the motions in Group No. 3.

Government Orders

● (1730)

I will have the opportunity to speak to the motions in Group No. 4 some other time. That group includes a very important motion. I wanted to propose it, but my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve had already done so. It deals with the oath of citizenship.

* * *

CANADIAN TOURISM COMMISSION ACT

The House resumed from May 9, 2000 consideration of the motion that Bill C-5, an act to establish the Canadian Tourism Commission, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-5.

Call in the member.

● (1800)

[English]

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

*(Division No. 1289)***YEAS**

Members

Adams	Alcock
Assadourian	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Bélair	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Blaikie	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Bonwick
Boudria	Brison
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Caccia
Calder	Caplan
Carroll	Casey
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Chan
Charbonneau	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Clouthier	Coderre
Comuzzi	Cotler
Cullen	Davies
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Dromisky	Drouin
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duhamel
Earle	Eggleton
Finlay	Folco
Fontana	Fry
Gagliano	Galloway
Godfrey	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Goodale	Gray (Windsor West)
Grose	Guarnieri
Harb	Hardy
Harvard	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Lavigne

Lee
Limoges
MacAulay
Malhi
Manley
Matthews
McDonough
McKay (Scarborough East)
McTeague
Mifflin
Minna
Muisse
Myers
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peterson
Pratt
Proud
Redman
Riis
Robinson
Saada
Sekora
Shepherd
St. Denis
Steckle
Szabo
Thibeault
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Wayne
Wilfert—143

Leung
Lincoln
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Maloney
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCormick
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McWhinney
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Murray
Nystrom
O'Reilly
Paradis
Peric
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Price
Proulx
Reed
Robillard
Rock
Scott (Fredericton)
Sgro
Speller
St-Julien
Stewart (Northumberland)
Telegdi
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Whelan

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Alarie
Asselin	Bailey
Bellehumeur	Benoit
Bergeron	Bigras
Cadman	Canuel
Cardin	Casson
Chatters	Crête
Dalphon-Guiral	de Savoye
Desrochers	Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Duceppe	Dumas
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Fournier
Gagnon	Gauthier
Gilmour	Girard-Bujold
Godin (Châteauguay)	Grey (Edmonton North)
Guay	Guimond
Hanger	Hart
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner	Jaffer
Johnston	Konrad
Laurin	Lebel
Lunn	Marceau
Marchand	Mark
Mercier	Pankiw
Penson	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Reynolds
Ritz	Solberg
St-Hilaire	Strahl
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)	Turp—58

PAIRED MEMBERS

Lefebvre	Normand
Nunziata	Peterson

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Industry.

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

Government Orders

SALES TAX AND EXCISE TAX AMENDMENTS ACT, 1999

The House resumed from May 9 consideration of the motion that Bill C-24, an act to amend the Excise Tax Act, a related act, the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, the Budget Implementation Act, 1997, the Budget Implementation Act, 1998, the Budget Implementation Act, 1999, the Canada Pension Plan, the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, the Customs Act, the Customs Tariff, the Employment Insurance Act, the Excise Act, the Income Tax Act, the Tax Court of Canada Act and the Unemployment Insurance Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-24.

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, if the House would agree, I would propose that you seek unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion, with the exception of the hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant who had to leave to attend another meeting, be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yea.

The Speaker: Is there agreement to proceed in such a fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, members of the Canadian Alliance will be voting against this motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Speaker, members of the Bloc Québécois will vote against the motion.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, members of the New Democratic Party will be voting no on this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, members of the solid Progressive Conservative Party will be voting no on this motion.

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner: Mr. Speaker, I vote no on this motion.

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

(*Division No. 1290*)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Assadourian
Bakopanos
Bélair

Alcock
Baker
Barnes
Bélanger

Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Bonwick	Boudria
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Caccia
Calder	Caplan
Carroll	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Chan	Charbonneau
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	Clouthier
Coderre	Comuzzi
Cotler	Cullen
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Dromisky	Drouin
Duhamel	Eggleton
Finlay	Folco
Fontana	Fry
Gagliano	Galloway
Godfrey	Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvard	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keys
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Lavigne
Lee	Leung
Limoges	Lincoln
MacAulay	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Matthews
McCormick	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague	McWhinney
Mifflin	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna	Mitchell
Murray	Myers
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Peric
Peterson	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt	Proud
Proulx	Redman
Reed	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Scott (Fredericton)	Sekora
Sgro	Shepherd
St. Denis	St-Julien
Steckle	Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Torsney
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Volpe
Wappel	Whelan
Wilfert—125	

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Alarie
Asselin	Bailey
Bellehumeur	Benoit
Bergeron	Bigras
Blaikie	Brisson
Cadman	Canuel
Cardin	Casey
Casson	Chatters
Crête	Dalphonf-Guiral
Davies	de Savoye
Desrochers	Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duceppe
Dumas	Duncan
Earle	Elley
Epp	Fournier

Private Members' Business

Gagnon	Gauthier
Gilmour	Girard-Bujold
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Godin (Châteauguay)
Grey (Edmonton North)	Guay
Guimond	Hanger
Hardy	Hart
Hill (MacLeod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner	Jaffer
Johnston	Konrad
Laurin	Lebel
Lunn	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Marceau	Marchand
Mark	McDonough
Mercier	Muise
Nystrom	Pankiw
Penson	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Price
Reynolds	Riis
Ritz	Robinson
Solberg	St-Hilaire
Strahl	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)	Turp
Wayne—75	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Lefebvre	Normand
Nunziata	Peterson

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

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

The Speaker: It being 6:04 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1805)

[English]

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, section 163 of the Criminal Code should be amended to reflect a new definition of obscenity as follows: "For the purposes of this Act, any matter or thing is obscene where a dominant characteristic of the matter or thing is the undue exploitation of any one or more of the following subjects, namely, sex, violence, crime, horror or cruelty, through degrading representation of a male or female person or in any other manner."

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to my Motion No. 69 regarding the issue of pornography.

Today in Canada sexually explicit material generally characterized as pornography is more available, more explicit and more violent than ever before. Most Canadians support the prohibition or restriction on what is considered beyond society's level of toler-

ance. Pornography is viewed as amoral and that it portrays sexes and their relationship as basically repugnant. It is also considered to cause harm and as a result, strong legislation is considered appropriate.

On the other hand, there are those who would argue that there is no convincing evidence of any causal relationship between pornography and actual physical harm significant enough to justify infringement on the constitutionality guaranteed—

Mr. Svend J. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Could the hon. member just indicate the number of the motion so that I might follow the debate carefully?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It is Motion No. 69.

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, Motion No. 69 is a private member's motion. It is non-votable which means that this matter is here for debate tonight. I want to take some latitude simply because the issue of pornography, particularly child pornography, has seized Canada with regard to a particular case which has now been appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Canadians generally support prohibitions and restrictions with regard to pornography. There is some concern that there is direct causal harm. The problem is that there are others who argue very strenuously that there is no significant evidence that there is a causal relationship between pornography and actual physical harm significant enough to justify infringement on the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression. That is the issue, freedom of expression.

I believe that in our laws today, freedom of expression and the rights of the individual continue to be promoted by the courts. It continues to be argued that individual rights in fact are now in conflict with the greater good, the greater right, and of the society as a whole. That is a serious issue.

Harm is said to flow from pornography in two ways. First, it is theorized that there is a direct causal link between violent pornography and violence against women so that such material can act as a trigger to aggression. Second, it is said that pornography contributes in a general way to the myths about sexuality and about women which ultimately makes violence and degradation more acceptable to a society as a whole. It can however be difficult to find objective proof of the harmful effects, according to some.

There are three potential sources of proof available. The first is anecdotal evidence. Police or press reports may say that a sex offender was a habitual consumer of explicit material or victims may claim that their assailants had been influenced by pornography. The second is statistical evidence which attempts to show a correlation between the prevalence of pornography and the incidence of violent crime. The third is experimental evidence, ac-

Private Members' Business

counts of experiments which attempt to measure the reactions of individuals to the stimulus of pornography, particularly aggressive or violent material.

Anecdotal and statistical evidence suffer from the defect of being unable to establish a causal link between pornography and violence. The Library of Parliament produced a little report for me. It notes that the presence of such material may be merely symptomatic of antisocial behaviour rather than its cause. It also points out that some research has purported to show that many rapists report having little exposure to pornographic material.

• (1810)

As for statistical evidence, rates of sexual assaults have increased but not significantly more than those of other forms of crime. In any event, establishing a statistical link of this sort is extremely problematic.

As I was researching this subject matter I came across an article in a publication of Focus on the Family called "Citizen". It talked a bit about the harm effects. The article which is dated May 1999 states:

Pornography is a root of all kinds of evil. A 1988 study by Queen's University psychologist Dr. William Marshall found that 86% of convicted rapists and 77% of convicted child molesters admitted to being regular or habitual users of pornography. According to one journalist who covered the trial of Paul Bernardo, convicted in 1995 of kidnapping, torturing and brutally murdering two teenaged girls in Ontario, "the most frightening realization" was the appetite he had developed for hard core pornography as a teenager, to the point that he eventually graduated "from using it to doing it. Bernardo's trial was, in part", she concluded, "a trial about pornography".

These are the kinds of things which I suspect motivated me to bring this issue to the House in a way in which it would promote discussion and maybe some thoughtful consideration by members of parliament about the issue of pornography.

In the Criminal Code of Canada the word pornography is actually not there. It is the word obscenity. I would like to read into the record what constitutes obscenity In the Criminal Code of Canada. It states:

For the purposes of this Act, any publication a dominant characteristic of which is the undue exploitation of sex, or of sex and any one or more of the following subjects, namely, crime, horror, cruelty and violence, shall be deemed to be obscene.

It is legal language but it basically says that violence, crime, horror and cruelty in themselves are not obscene. It says that if there is a sexual activity and it is in conjunction with crime, horror, cruelty and violence it shall be deemed to be obscene. It struck me that it is very difficult to segregate obscenity on the basis that there must be sexual content.

As a consequence, I drafted an amendment to the existing criminal code definition of obscenity which tried to do a couple of things. I have had some input from others that maybe some of the

language is not absolutely necessary. The principal change within the definition that is being proposed is that it makes obscenity, whether it is undue exploitation of any one or more of the following subjects, namely, sex, violence, crime, horror or cruelty, through degrading representation of a male or female person or in any other manner.

I am well aware that this is a significant change in the definition. The issue for me has more to do with social values and the tolerance and standards which society establishes for itself.

Evidence has clearly shown that the prevalence of pornography in our society continues to grow. Consider what has happened in the past 20 years. We have evolved to a point where pornography involving adults is broadly acceptable within society, but add a child to it and the entire country is outraged. It is amazing to me that to achieve the age of 18 would all of a sudden somehow change the social acceptability of pornography. I do not think so. Yet socially, adult pornography has been a massive industry.

I wanted to raise this issue with the House of Commons because I felt that the whole question of dealing with child pornography had to take into consideration the social realities with regard to adult pornography.

• (1815)

I have raised it and I will be interested to hear members' questions, but I want to leave it at that, only because it is now on the floor and in the hands of the members to deal with if they want to talk about it.

I want to make some comments about the B.C. court case in which John Sharpe was acquitted of possession of child pornography. It spawned an outrage right across Canada.

Members of the House will know that the consequence of the original decision was basically to strike down the laws with regard to the mere possession of child pornography in the province of British Columbia. At the same time, the laws of Canada remained intact and were in place in all other provinces and territories. However, that did not matter because the laws of Canada were under attack. As a consequence, there was an immediate appeal to the B.C. courts on the same matter.

Again, after all of the consideration and after all of the outrage that was expressed by Canadians, the B.C. appeal court upheld the decision of the lower court and basically tore down the law. It did not sustain the law of Canada with regard to the possession of child pornography. The case is now before the Supreme Court of Canada.

The case was originally heard in January 1999. On June 30 the B.C. court of appeal upheld the decision. It was a two to one decision. Madam Justice Mary Southin and Madam Justice Anne Rowles felt that the current law was an unreasonable violation of

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the guarantee of freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression contained in the charter of rights and freedoms.

Here we are back to the fundamentals. It is the rights and the freedoms of the individual in conflict with societal values and the tolerance level for what constitutes an undue exploitation, in this case of children.

There has been much written about this case. Much of it refers to the legislation that was put in place in the 34th parliament with regard to child pornography. It was admittedly a rushed piece of legislation. It was a piece of legislation which many criticized as being so broad that it would even constitute a violation if a person had certain thoughts. Certain things written in a diary could be subject to problems within the law.

This is a very serious situation. I wanted to raise this aspect of the discussion of pornography because in a short time we will hear from the Supreme Court of Canada and I have some fears about that.

In the B.C. appeal court Chief Justice Allan McEachern disagreed with the other two judges. He believes that the harm caused by child pornography justifies handling the law. This question of cause and effect and is there harm is a very serious issue.

I had an opportunity to discuss this issue with the justice minister so that I could better understand some of the nuances of the law and the judicial system. My view is that the protection of children is enhanced by the prohibition against simple possession of child pornography. I cannot state it any more simply. I believe that the protection of children comes before the rights and freedoms of the individual guaranteed by the charter of rights and freedoms.

It is in conflict, I suppose, in terms of a statement; but in terms of a value system I believe that the starting point in this discussion, the starting point with regard to the legislation, has to be with the children.

In the event that the supreme court appeal is not successful—in other words, the decision of the B.C. lower court and the court of appeal that Mr. Sharpe is not guilty because it was an intrusion of his rights and freedoms—we have the opportunity to do something under section 31(1) of the charter, commonly known as the notwithstanding clause.

The Minister of Justice, in response to the B.C. court of appeal, said that the notwithstanding clause should only be used as a last resort and only after every available legal recourse has been exhausted. I tend to agree with the justice minister. I believe that the notwithstanding clause is for extraordinary circumstances. I do believe, though, that should the supreme court render a judgment which does not uphold the laws of Canada, it should be dealt with by a swift response of the government in invoking the notwithstanding clause and then dealing with the points of law or

legislation which the courts have identified as leading them to render those decisions and make those corrections.

• (1820)

I do not believe it would be appropriate for us simply to accept the supreme court decision and continue to study or ponder the consequences. I do not believe Canadians would tolerate a protracted consideration of a negative supreme court decision.

I want it to be dealt with promptly. I believe I have the support of colleagues in this place. I believe that members in this Chamber would say that the notwithstanding clause is our first available option with regard to a negative supreme court decision. I hope we will be able to have that consensus in this place so that we can act swiftly when a decision comes down.

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by the member for Mississauga South and I welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate on Motion No. 69.

Just a few minutes ago members of the House were in the Speaker's office shaking hands with John Glenn, a man who has gone up into space twice, once as a younger man and once as a man in his seventies. That proves that in this world we can do anything we want to do.

This type of legislation is something we should support. With respect to the pornography issue, if we do not get a favourable decision from the supreme court, I agree with the hon. member that it may be the first time this parliament will have to use the notwithstanding clause. It should be used if the supreme court does not make the proper decision.

Motion No. 69 calls for an amendment to section 163 of the criminal code and would broaden the definition of obscenity. The member's motion states, in part:

For the purposes of this act, any matter or thing is obscene where a dominant characteristic of the matter or thing is the undue exploitation of any one or more of the following subjects, namely, sex, violence, crime, horror or cruelty, through degrading representation of a male or female person or in any other manner.

I should say at the outset that I see no problem with this amendment to section 163. In fact, it is more reflective of our times. After all, the definition of obscenity in section 163 of the criminal code was written in 1959. Surely times have changed, particularly the manner of transmission of obscene material.

I believe the impetus for this motion by the member for Mississauga South comes from the leading supreme court case on the issue of obscenity. I am talking about *Regina v Butler*. In that case the supreme court upheld the ban of obscenity as constitutional. In essence, the court ruled that banning obscenity would be an

infringement of the freedom of expression, but is saved by section 1 of the charter as a reasonable limit.

Sex that is degrading or dehumanizing will be considered undue because it is harmful to society, particularly women. However, material which offends against community standards could be saved if it was necessary for the serious treatment of the theme. The stronger the inference of the risk of harm, the lesser the likelihood of community tolerance.

Sex with violence will almost always be undue exploitation. Explicit sex that is degrading or dehumanizing may be undue if the risk of harm is substantial. Explicit sex that is non-violent and non-dehumanizing will almost always be tolerated. That seems to be the manner of law in the interpretation of obscene.

The member for Mississauga South does not appear to be objecting to the supreme court case involving Butler. For background, the Butler case involved an individual, Mr. Butler, who was a purveyor of hard-core video tapes. In the first case the court said that charges of obscene were inappropriate and that the video tapes were acceptable. The court of appeal did not agree. The supreme court used the harm test and agreed that the tapes were obscene.

In Motion No. 69 the member's definition of obscene still contains the word undue, which leads to the community tolerance test.

I believe the member for Mississauga South has picked up the notion of degrading for the genesis of his motion. The effect of this motion is simply to make undue exploitation of violence, crime, horror or cruelty as obscene even if no sex is involved. For example, if I have interpreted the member's rationale correctly, under his proposed definition beating someone to death in a degrading manner, torture without exploiting the person sexually, no rape, would be obscene. If that is the case I have no problem with this step forward in amending subsection 163(8) of the criminal code. In fact, I would welcome this new definition.

• (1825)

Some may say that it goes too far and may unduly restrict the publication of photos by legitimate media sources. I do not believe this could happen. In light of the defence of serving the public good, which is contained in subsection 163(3) of the criminal code, it seems unlikely that any legitimate media would be threatened by Motion No. 69.

I am also pleased to see any reference made to amending section 163 of the code. As I said previously, that section dates back to 1959. I have always believed that the code is an evolutionary document which must reflect the times.

If we take a close look at section 163, which is entitled "Offences tending to corrupt morals", we will find some archaic

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and startling sections more reminiscent of the 1950s. Paragraph 163(1)(b) states that it is a criminal offence to make, print, publish, distribute, sell or have in one's possession for the purposes of publication, distribution or circulation a crime comic. Yes, Mr. Speaker, a crime comic. Surely this is a bit out of sync with the times and suggests to me that section 163 needs a complete review and a complete overhaul.

Paragraph 163(1)(d) states that anyone who advertises or publishes an advertisement of any means, instructions, medicine, drug or article, intended or represented as a method of restoring sexual virility or curing venereal disease of the generative organs, is guilty of a criminal offence. This is another example of the 1950 attitudes existing in our criminal code.

Surely we have moved beyond that thinking. Section 163 is out of touch with our times. That is why I have no objection to Motion No. 69, which seeks to amend subsection 163(8) of the criminal code.

Motion No. 69 reflects the need to deal with the issue of degrading and reflects community standards and norms of today. It is in step with the times, which I support.

I would like to close by once again talking about the notwithstanding clause. It comes up many times in the debates of the House. Sometimes it is said that we should only use it in extraordinary circumstances. The constitution of the country was drafted by people from across the country. There was a very good reason the premiers in certain segments of the country insisted they would not sign the constitution, the bill of rights, unless it contained the notwithstanding clause.

We have never used it in this House and I find that rather strange. It lets the supreme court and any other court in the country know that the elected members of the House form the supreme body of this country. We have gotten away from that.

I had a debate today with a reporter who said "No, you are wrong. The supreme court runs the country". He was serious. He really believed that the supreme court had the final say. When I brought the notwithstanding clause forward he said "But you have never used it". He is correct.

Perhaps now is the time. The member for Mississauga South talked about the child pornography case. If a ruling comes down which is not agreeable to the majority of members of the House, I would hope we would have the courage to use the notwithstanding clause to make a law that the majority of members of the House would agree with. We know what the majority feel. We saw it in a letter from a number of members on the Liberal side to the Prime Minister about using the notwithstanding clause in this particular case. Yet they voted the way they had to vote when we put the motion before the House.

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I know there will be a public outcry on this issue if the supreme court allows this case to go the way it has been going through the other levels of the courts, even though it was not unanimous in those courts. I read the minority decision of the Chief Justice of British Columbia, Allan McEachern. I have a lot of respect for him as a lawyer and as a judge, not only in this case but in other cases before him in British Columbia. He disagreed with the other two honourable justices in that case.

• (1830)

I hope his view is the one that the supreme court will take. If it does not, we must let the supreme court know that this is the supreme body of Canada, the body that makes the laws which the majority of people in the country want.

We will support the bill. We also look forward to support from the other side when that pornography issue comes down, if it is not the right decision by the supreme court.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I would echo much of what has already been said in terms of the timeliness and the importance of this debate. I am very pleased to participate in a debate of such a very significant nature.

I want to begin by commending my colleague, the hon. member for Mississauga South. I know he has been a tireless worker with respect to issues such as this one. I know the particular motion comes from a very purist and principled motivation to protect children. I could not embrace in a more enthusiastic way anything that we as legislators and we as members of parliament do that will enhance protection for children.

The motion would amend subsection 163(8) of the criminal code. It would basically tighten up an existing definition. Without casting any aspersions at all on what the hon. member is trying to accomplish, that current section sets out significant protection for individuals who would be victims of exploitation under this type of activity. However, as has been referred to, there is certainly a need to have clarity in this type of legislation and in some cases to provide some direction for judges who might interpret too broadly this type of activity.

The references to the case that is pending before the supreme court, *Queen v Sharpe*, was highly publicized and received a great deal of response nationally although it arose out of a court in British Columbia. It has sparked very much a debate and a need to revisit this type of legislation. Anything that would depict children in such a way as to be defined as pornography or exploitive is something on which we have to move swiftly and very starkly to oppose.

My only regret, as this case has progressed through the courts and has been argued before our justices of the supreme court, is that

the Minister of Justice did not act in a more swift and decisive way to refer the case immediately to the supreme court so that the decision would have been made and the signal would have been sent.

Any suggestion that the possession of child pornography, let alone its production and distribution, is constitutionally valid is asinine. Any type of activity that leads to the production of child pornography obviously has to be what has created the opportunity for someone to possess it. It is not beyond logic to follow that someone had to produce it for a person to be in possession of it. We have to send a clear message that it is absolutely offside.

The current practice is to let these matters progress through the courts. As the hon. member has stated there may very well be the need in the near future, if things do not go as they should in the supreme court, for the government to act swiftly and to invoke the notwithstanding clause. We know that is a very severe intervention and it is one that is very rarely implemented. It is the equivalent of a legislative nuclear bomb. It brings in a legislative bar on further discussion on the particular issue and suspends any further litigation in that area.

This issue is of importance. I agree very much with the commentary we have heard already on the subject matter before us. I agree wholeheartedly that it is a perfect example of something where parliament should very much consider, if need be, invoking the notwithstanding clause. I know we can all speculate and that there is not a great deal of merit in doing so at this time, but let us hope that step will not be necessary.

When we are dealing with issues that involve charter rights it is something that we have to contemplate carefully. There are fundamental freedoms which are very much protected by our charter. I am sure the Chair would agree that the charter has also led in some instances to very perverse decisions where community rights are used to stomp on individual rights and vice versa. Individual rights are often displayed in such a way that the majority of people are very much taken aback by a court's decision.

• (1835)

The law is and has been referred to many times as a living tree. We have to be careful when we cross into the area of legislators telling or restricting judges in what they can and cannot do. I for one still have a fair bit of faith in our judiciary. We have some very talented judges. Just like it is not popular to defend politicians, it is sometimes not popular to say that we have some very able and very competent judicial minds.

However, there is ample evidence to suggest that when it comes to children and the protection of children there are times when it is incumbent, not just our responsibility but our absolute right, to intervene on behalf of children. I can think of many instances where that is the case. One that comes to mind quite quickly is the

potential change to the criminal code with respect to conditional sentences.

Conditional sentences should not be handed down by judges when it comes to sentences for sex offences, offences of violence or offences against children. That is something that should not be contemplated. I am sure it was not contemplated when the legislation was passed. The government should very much consider revisiting the particular issue.

Similarly I think we can do more to protect individuals from sex offenders. I have a private member's bill before the House that would amend the conditions of probation which attach under section 161 of the criminal code with respect to putting a bar on a sex offender attending a private dwelling house when a child is present.

There are more examples of what we can do to tighten up and very much close in on anyone who would cross that line and harm a child. It goes without saying that the harm done to a child by even the mildest display of violence or sexual intrusion carries with that child for life. It is a life sentence imposed and has absolutely drastic and far reaching effects on the life of a child.

This type of debate is very useful when it comes to looking at these types of issues, examining what more we can do. We in this place are tasked to do everything we can to protect young people, people of all denominations, ages and creeds across the country.

I believe the hon. member would very much agree that we should have a national strategy to combat child pornography. We should be doing more to study this area. We should have a national databank with respect to those who are convicted of pedophilia and crimes of such a nature.

We could do a great deal more if we had a national sex offender registry that would inform those who are most at risk. We know that the use of the Internet, the use of modern technology, allows us to expand the horizons of information and availability. Technology has broken down many barriers in terms of making information available.

There is much to be done. We should have legislation that would allow for testing of sex offenders for communicable diseases such as AIDS. That is another suggestion I am sure many members of the House would embrace.

Fundamental changes can be made. I think the hon. member is moving in the right direction with his suggestion under this motion. Obviously a lot can be done. One of the greatest fears against which we have to be guarded is the creeping complacency or apathy that exists, desensitization by the prevalence of pornography and violence and its perpetration as some form of art. We have to do more to ensure that this is not the case in the House. That is not

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what Canadians expect us to do. Although I am very quick to point out that freedom of expression is something we always have to be conscious of and respect, freedom of expression never involves the exploitation of a child.

I have no doubt that we will be discussing the Sharpe case again at some point in the future. As I have indicated, I hope it will not come to pass that it will be incumbent upon this government or any government to intervene with the notwithstanding clause. Should that happen, I expect that the hon. member will echo the remarks he has already put forward. I support him in that. The charter is there as a shield and a sword. Similarly we have to be prepared to use the particular piece of legislation when it is necessitated, when it is incumbent and when it is proper.

• (1840)

I support the hon. member in his efforts. I commend him and congratulate him again for bringing the matter forward. Debates of this nature help Canadians to understand the issues. They help in furthering the drafting and presentation of legislation that would improve the protections which currently exist in our criminal code. In conclusion, I support the matter and I fully hope that all members of the House will do likewise.

Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity this evening to speak to Motion No. 69 introduced by the hon. member for Mississauga South.

The motion seeks to amend the current definition of obscenity as it appears in subsection 163(8) of the criminal code as follows:

"For the purposes of this Act, any matter or thing is obscene where a dominant characteristic of the matter or thing is the undue exploitation of any one or more of the following subjects, namely, sex, violence, crime, horror or cruelty, through degrading representation of a male or female person or in any other manner".

[*Translation*]

I praise the member for his efforts to protect Canadians from any material containing violence. He is well known for his work in this area and I congratulate him. However, I am not sure the aim of the motion is clear enough.

[*English*]

First, let us examine the effect of the proposal before us. The proposed definition of obscenity would extend the notion of obscenity beyond the bounds of its common understanding. The current code definition requires the undue exploitation of sex or the combination of sex and at least one of violence, horror, crime or cruelty in order to be considered obscene.

Obscenity is understood to include some notion of sexual immorality or indecency. The proposed definition of obscenity in

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the motion would include materials that unduly exploit violence, crime, horror or cruelty alone. To include within the definition of obscenity strictly violence, horror, crime or cruelty would not fit in within the common and legal understanding of the concept. Other changes to the current definition of obscenity proposed by the motion would have little or no effect on the manner in which the term is currently applied.

The replacement of the word publication with matter or thing is not necessary. The courts have already held that the definition of obscenity in subsection 163(8) applies to all matter whether or not it is a publication. There is no need therefore to make this change.

Second, the addition of through degrading representation of a male or female person is also unnecessary because it is included within the judicial interpretation of the current definition of obscenity.

As has been referred to tonight, the Supreme Court of Canada said in *R. v Butler* that material which depicts explicit sex without violence will usually also have to depict degrading or dehumanizing treatment in order to be constitutionally prohibited.

As mentioned by the court, explicit sex that is not violent and not degrading or dehumanizing is generally tolerated by society and will not qualify as undue exploitation of sex. Where there is undue exploitation of sex alone, therefore, it is unnecessary to specify that it includes degrading representations because that is implicit in the context of undue exploitation based on the interpretation given by the Supreme Court of Canada.

The motion also proposes to add the phrase "in any other manner" as a qualifier of undue exploitation. The type of manner contemplated by this wording is unclear but it would appear unnecessary as well. For reasons similar to those I have already referred to, the provision as it currently appears in the code leaves the notion of undue exploitation unqualified so as to allow for more flexible interpretation.

The definition proposed in the motion would qualify the phrase undue exploitation with through degrading representation of a male or female person, with the result that the possible interpretations of the phrase would be narrowed. It then attempts to broaden the definition with the addition of the phrase "or in any other manner". This addition is unnecessary and needlessly complicates the current wording with the possible result that judicial interpretations of the new definition may not turn out to be what the motion seeks to realize in proposing this definition.

• (1845)

[Translation]

Just like the hon. member, we want to protect children from the harmful effects of material containing violence. But there may be other, more efficient ways to go about it than to legislate.

[English]

First, we must trust the conscientiousness of Canadian parents to adequately supervise the activities of their children and regulate the types of materials to which their children are exposed.

In addition to parental supervision, the broadcasting industry has adopted a voluntary code regarding violence in television programming to respond to the public's concern over the issue of violence in the media and in society in general. The voluntary code states that:

It is the responsibility of the broadcaster, the regulator, the cable operator and cable delivered programming services, in conjunction with parents, teachers and individual viewers to work cooperatively to inform and educate society on how to best manage this technological revolution which has created an endless video buffet of programming choices.

While the government must certainly play a role in protecting children from the harm occasioned by violence in the media, all sectors of society must work co-operatively to achieve this goal. The criminal code is a blunt instrument. It is not the sole instrument or even the most effective instrument available to deal with social or moral behaviour. It may be used to deal with certain discrete types of behaviour but we must resist the tendency to rely too heavily on it as a panacea for all that we wish to repair in our society.

In conclusion, I would also like to join with other members in thanking this hon. member for his contribution to the debate on this subject.

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I want to say, particularly to those people looking in across Canada, that they indeed should pay tribute to the hon. member for Mississauga South for bringing this motion before the House. No other issue has brought more attention from across Canada than this issue.

Frankly, I totally disagree with the parliamentary secretary. What he is doing is giving credence to an issue that goes beyond any reasonable doubt about the content and how the courts should act.

We have an issue that the lower courts and the supreme court of B.C. have agreed on. It is now before the Supreme Court of Canada. The question Canadians want answered is, what happens if the supreme court agrees with the two lower courts? Canadians from coast to coast are worried about that. Is it not the responsibility of the House to draft new legislation? It cannot be any clearer than it is now.

The only recourse we have is the notwithstanding clause. If that clause was to be used only on rare occasions, then this is that rare occasion. How can any elected official in this House not know full well that when those pornographic films are made somebody's

child or grandchild is being abused? I cannot believe the defence of the system. It simply goes beyond my imagination.

The motion introduced by my hon. friend is a new definition for obscenity. Obscenity takes place in many different ways. How far does freedom go when the two lower courts of B.C. based their dismissal of the case on the grounds of freedom of expression?

• (1850)

Let us take freedom of religion. If we look around the House we see people of different religions. No one for one moment would accept a member of the House criticizing a Jewish member and using degrading representation or degrading remarks. The member would be called totally out of order. However, out in society and in the media it is fair game to attack one religion, that religion being Christianity, and it is all done in the freedom of expression. It is even creeping into the House.

A reporter came up to me the other day and asked me what I thought about the baggage a leading politician was carrying. I told him to wait for a minute and then I asked him what he thought about the baggage I was carrying. He said that I was not carrying any baggage. I told him that I happened to believe in God, in prayer and in fellowship, and that I too volunteered my time as an administrator for a private Christian school. He asked me why I called that baggage. We are allowing this in many different ways.

The supreme case under the charter of freedom of expression has allowed two court decisions to make a mockery out of decency and a mockery out of everything that this country has ever stood for since Confederation. We cannot pass the buck by simply saying that we have to train the parents or we have to stop it on TV. We have to say to the courts that this House is supreme when it comes to decisions like that.

What will we do, I would ask the hon. member? I congratulate him for bringing this forward. I have never had so many cases of representation.

I would say to the hon. parliamentary secretary and government members opposite that if they had a free vote they would bring in the notwithstanding clause just like that. They would bring it in tomorrow if they had to. This is not a party thing. It is a thing of principle, of morality and of decency. However, here we are in limbo. We will let the courts decide.

In the meantime, possession of pornography is legal, and by information that I have been able to acquire, it is growing. Why would it not grow? If it is legal in B.C. it will soon be legal all over the country. Hon. members should ask the RCMP and their police forces. It is growing.

Hon. members may think I am carrying some baggage. They may also think that what is happening in this country is all right.

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We know about the interference with the clergy at the Swiss Airlines memorial. We know that people were told what to do. That was interference in the freedom of religion. Now, under the guise of freedom of expression, we sit here as legislators with the possibility of the supreme court agreeing with the two lower courts on this terrible issue.

After the passing of the charter of human rights, one of the supreme court judges said that they would finally get a chance to make laws.

Our whole democratic system is built on the principle that there is a big stone wall between the legislature and the judiciary, but we are quite willing to let the judiciary do its thing and make rulings that affect the lawmakers of this land.

In closing, I want to congratulate the hon. member. When the decision comes down and then comes before the House, I know where he will stand. He will stand in defence of children. He will stand against child abuse. He will stand against pornography.

• (1855)

When I was home in Saskatchewan for the weekend I experienced a big debate in the provincial legislature on pornography. This debate was not about child pornography. It was about a crown corporation and the government giving money for the production of a pornographic film of gays and lesbians to be shown at government expense. This is freedom of expression. This is wrong. Nobody can defend it.

I want to say to the House and to people across Canada that they should rise up and take control. Canadians elect us. They should say that it is not up to anyone but the people in this place to make the laws. They should say that it is up to us to protect the people with the laws, not to interpret according to some feelings of the people needing to be politically correct.

We are so worried about being politically correct that we have become obscene within ourselves. Let us face indecency, corruption and immorality the way we should. We should not be passing the buck. It is our responsibility to do it in this place.

My hon. colleague in the Conservative Party and my hon. colleague in my own party have spoken. There will be no change. I say to the member for Mississauga South that when this issue comes up again he can bank on my party's full support in what he is doing.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank all my colleagues who took the opportunity to participate in this debate on an issue that will unfortunately continue to seize this place.

I know that the question of the Sharpe case will certainly be one that we will be waiting in anticipation for from the supreme court.

Adjournment Debate

It is certainly our wish that the court will uphold the laws of Canada to make possession of child pornography illegal and that we will be sustained.

Hopefully, from all three levels of the courts, we will have received input with regard to those areas of the existing legislation which may lead to this kind of problem where there is some ambiguity as to whether or not those laws are an unnecessary and undue infringement on the rights and freedoms of individuals.

Some things that were said in the House today were useful and constructive. From that standpoint, I feel that Motion No. 69 served a purpose.

The parliamentary secretary took me to one other dimension of this whole issue. He talked about the role of parents. There is no question that we all have to be part of the solution. We cannot legislate morality. We cannot legislate behaviour. All we can do is provide some of the thinking and some of the principles under which we should guide Canadians.

Let us look at the case of David Trott, the 20 year old B.C. man who has been charged with the murder of Jessica Russell, a nine year old child. This is a very tragic case. We have to look at the facts not at the victim, which in itself is a terrible tragedy. When we look at the accused, he is somebody who is 20 years old and has a criminal record that would make anybody understand that this is a serious problem. He is also a person who was sexually abused as a young child. It is linked to this debate.

• (1900)

What happened? This 20 year old Canadian was born with fetal alcohol syndrome. He is a person for whom there is no recovery. He has permanent brain damage. He is a person who was physically and sexually abused. He is a person who dropped out of school and abused drugs. He is a person that anybody who has known him throughout his life has said that he is a bomb waiting to explode. They could see it.

Why have we failed in society to help people who cannot help themselves? As a consequence the tragedy is amplified by the tragic death of young Jessica.

These are the kinds of things I want to talk about here and I know many members want to talk about it. I throw it back to the parliamentary secretary and say engage parliamentarians in some of the principles that have to guide us in making the laws. Not only can we make good laws, but those laws can also be an inspiration to parents to provide the guidance to their children, and for those in society who are in the company of those children and for those

parents to step forward and intervene in a constructive fashion as appropriate to make sure that these tragedies do not happen.

We have an opportunity to be a part of the solution. That is why Motion No. 69 came forward. It has been a constructive debate. I thank hon. members for their kind comments.

We know that the starting point is children. We know that the notwithstanding clause is the tool that parliament has in the event that parliamentarians do not agree with an unfavourable decision. We have to look at that seriously.

I raise this as another dimension of the debate on Motion No. 69 from the standpoint that as time goes on the House may find itself in recess when this decision comes down. I want to be absolutely sure that people start thinking today about what happens when that decision comes down and it is unfavourable. Have we got a clear understanding of the views of this place? If not, maybe we should.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. As the motion has not been designated as a votable item, the order is dropped from the order paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

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

PARENTAL LEAVE

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on the subject of parental leave, further to a number of questions I have raised with the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The government's intentions with regard to making the system more flexible and to extending it to pregnant women and parents wanting to take maternity or parental leave are unclear. The minister talks of her desire to expand parental leave by doubling it. It would increase from 25 to 50 weeks.

In her answers, the minister says that the Government of Quebec broke off negotiations in 1997. We ask her to be of good faith in this exercise, to truly want to help parents by giving them parental leave, to extend a hand to the Government of Quebec so Quebecers may be entitled to parental leave as sought by the Regroupement pour un régime québécois d'assurance parentale. This group represents Quebec organizations.

Adjournment Debate

• (1905)

I want to provide some information to the minister, because it is very nice to want to double the length of parental leave and let women look after their children for a year at home, but one must have the means to do so and be able to qualify for that leave.

We asked the minister to reduce the number of hours of work that is required. The minister says she wants to give more flexibility to her parental leave policy, but she should first take a look at the working conditions of women. Just take a look at the current reality in the labour force: women hold non-standard, temporary and part time jobs.

The figures confirm our concern about who can qualify. How many of those who qualify will be able to afford parental leave? We all know that the 55% provided under the federal parental leave program is totally inadequate. If women hold non-standard, part time or temporary jobs, their income is small; so, 55% of their salary during a year spent at home is totally inadequate. Obviously, the Minister of Human Resources Development did not look at the whole issue of parental leave.

The figures speak for themselves. Since 1997, when the changes were made, 10,000 fewer women than before have qualified for maternity benefits. Why? Because 700 hours are now required to qualify. That number has been reduced by 100 hours, but it had gone from 300 to 700 hours and, in the last budget, the government only reduced by 100 hours the requirement to qualify for parental leave. This is totally inadequate.

It is nice to be generous, but everyone knows that only 49% of women who are eligible for maternity leave take advantage of the additional parental leave, because they either do not qualify or cannot afford it. Very few women take the whole parental leave because they cannot stay at home too long, as their income is essential to balance the family income.

Who will be able to afford it? Those who work full time, those who have fringe benefits. Once again, a large percentage of the female population will be excluded.

I ask the minister to examine the whole issue of parental leave, to show openness and to negotiate, so that Quebec can finally implement its parental leave policy, which is far more generous. The federal government could have responded to Quebec's request for extended parental leave for self-employed women who want 70% of their income. That is the whole issue with regard to parental leave.

[English]

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maternity and parental benefits are a longstanding part of the Government of

Canada's commitment to children and families. These benefits are provided to Quebecers like all other Canadians.

In October 1999 the government indicated that it would extend these benefits to provide greater flexibility to parents to better balance work and family needs. Our priority is to implement our improved parental benefits.

The recent budget announcement on the extended parental benefits now allows parents up to one year of leave instead of the traditional six months. We have also made parental benefits more accessible by lowering the eligibility threshold to 600 hours, about four months on a 40 hour week and five months on a 30 hour week, and giving more flexibility to parents by removing the second waiting period.

In 1997 the Government of Canada did enter into negotiations with Quebec so that it could establish its own parental leave plan. At that time we made a fair and equitable offer to the Government of Quebec but the Government of Quebec walked away from these negotiations. For our part, at the moment our government is focused on providing extended EI maternity and parental benefits to Quebecers and to all other Canadians.

• (1910)

TRADE

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is May 10 and a couple of our colleagues have birthdays today. I want to wish them a happy birthday. We are going to share a dinner. They cannot share it with their families at home because they are here working. I want to let everyone know that we are still trying to remain whole even when we cannot be with our families, but we hopefully will make it up in other ways.

Recently I had an opportunity to ask a question of the Minister for International Trade. He is the Minister for International Trade not of international trade. It is a fine distinction. He pointed out to me at a trade exposition in Mississauga a couple of weeks ago that we are for trade.

In preparing for my intervention tonight I pulled out the annual report of the Export Development Corporation which has been getting a lot of attention in the House of late. I wanted to look at the section on increasing Canada's competitiveness. It states:

Canada is enjoying renewed prosperity. Unemployment is at its lowest point in 20 years, inflation is low and under control; private spending is up and fiscal deficits are down. Canada is experiencing robust growth, which is expected to remain strong in 2000. The economy is continuing its shift to the high-tech and services sectors that look set to dominate the 21st century economy.

The combined impact of trade liberalization and growing trade integration within North America have heightened Canada's dependence on trade—

Adjournment Debate

It is that wording, our dependence on trade, that triggered the question. I asked the Minister for International Trade to give us some indicators of how we have benefited from trade and also to deal with the myth that somehow what we produce in Canada for export is ostensibly either low value added or in fact raw materials or commodities and that maybe we are not getting the amplification or the leverage from high quality export trade.

The minister gave some very interesting statistics. He said that our exports now total 41% of Canada's GDP versus 27% just 10 years ago. He also clarified that in fact our commodities exports were down from some 60% some years ago to a low 30%.

In that regard could the parliamentary secretary provide a bit more information about how vital trade is to Canada and possibly how this is going to translate into Canada being more competitive in a global economy?

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade has said in the House that among the G-7 nations, Canada benefits the most from trade and therefore is the most open to trade of the G-7 economies. Our exports plus imports add up to the equivalent of over 80% of our GDP. The next closest to us is the United Kingdom at less than 60%.

More of our production at home depends on export markets than any other G-7 country. By the same token we have made the global market our market to a greater extent than any of our competitors.

Finally, we have to see the importance of global markets to Canada's emerging new economy sectors. Our trade numbers show

that we are having some success. Some of our new economy exports such as earnings from royalties and licences and research and development have consistently been the strongest components in our services exports. These grew by 16.8% and 15% per year respectively since 1993. Services are the key to the new economy and we are starting to do very well here.

It is true that we ship a lot of rocks and logs. We have and will continue to have a strong comparative advantage in many resource sectors. The numbers show that the relative size of the resource sector in total Canadian exports has fallen over the years. But the good news is that we have not been losing our resource sector. Rather, we have been gaining vibrant manufacturing and services sectors that have become world class competitors in their own right.

This points to what I think is the most significant way in which trade and investment are benefiting Canada. Our integration with the global economy is not type casting us as producers of raw materials. It is paving the way for Canadians to enjoy the benefits of a vastly more diversified economy with more knowledge based economic activity and more rewarding jobs than an inward orientation possibly could offer.

[*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 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.15 p.m.)

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