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(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, April 13, 1994**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent**

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 13, 1994

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

### FREESTYLE SKIING

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to offer my sincere congratulations to young David Belhumeur, a resident of Pierrefonds in my riding, who just won the World Cup freestyle skiing in the combined.

Quebec is well represented in this category, when we consider the achievements and reputation of Brassard, Langlois and Laroche.

After winning this important event, David now belongs to the new generation of Olympic champions.

I urge this young athlete to keep up the good work. He has a very promising future ahead of him.

On behalf of all residents of Pierrefonds—Dollard, I wish him good luck and every success in his next events.

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### DEFENCE INDUSTRIES

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonneuve):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in an important statement in the Quebec National Assembly, Gérard Tremblay, Minister of Industry and Trade, asked the federal government to meet its commitment to support conversion of defence industries.

The federal Minister of Industry was reassuring about the future of Oerlikon in Saint-Jean and referred to an apparently well-filled order book.

However, it is not clear whether the company will be able to maintain its operations in Quebec. If the Minister of Industry were to act in a manner consistent with the commitments of his own party to defence conversion, he would examine the company's plan for diversifying toward environmental technologies, which would guarantee its long-term survival.

Yesterday, the Quebec Minister of Industry and Trade said he was prepared to consider such a proposal, provided the federal government agreed to participate. What is the minister waiting for?

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[*English*]

### ENVIRONMENTAL SECRETARIAT

**Mr. Hugh Hanrahan (Edmonton—Strathcona):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to express my concern regarding the appointment of the environmental secretariat to Montreal. How can a government that claims to be fair, honest and open on the one hand turn around and admit openly that a major government decision was made through partisan politics of the past?

I would like to state in this House that the city of Edmonton would have been an excellent host for the environmental secretariat. The city of Edmonton met the original requirements and therefore should have been a front runner, yet it was not.

The west wants in. We want the federal government to stop pandering to the wants of one region over another and start treating all provinces as equals.

I call on the government to reconsider the decision to establish the environmental secretariat in Montreal.

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### REFUGEES

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex):** Mr. Speaker, social upheavals in countries across the continent have resulted in over 19 million refugees throughout the world. As arms struggles continued, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees spent approximately \$1.1 billion in 1993 caring for the world's refugees.

Canada has developed an international reputation as a caring and compassionate country and we are committed to protecting people who have been forced to flee their homes and their countries.

I commend the efforts of the constituents of London—Middlesex who worked to make the community aware of the issues and concerns affecting our refugee neighbours and friends. I encourage all Canadians to work to ease the settlement of true refugees in our country.

*S. O. 31*

### GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

**Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce):** Mr. Speaker, this past Monday on a U.S. news show, “Day One”, it was reported that the Santa Monica Freeway destroyed by the massive California earthquake was set to reopen more than three months ahead of schedule.

U.S. and state officials call it a miracle because some experts predicted that it would take upwards of nine months to complete the repairs.

This early completion was no miracle but the result of common sense. Indeed, it was the eliminating of government red tape and paperwork that allowed the contractor to complete the work in record time. The elimination of government interference saved millions of dollars in transportation costs.

We as parliamentarians can learn a valuable lesson from this situation and work together to lower and eliminate needless government red tape and paperwork which have strangled Canadian businesses.

As we have said many times before, Canadian businesses can and will create the jobs if given the right environment. What better way to create jobs than to eliminate needless bureaucratic intervention?

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### CRIME PREVENTION

**Mr. John Murphy (Annapolis Valley—Hants):** Mr. Speaker, as we have seen in recent weeks there is a growing concern that our safe and peaceful communities are being threatened by crime.

To properly address this issue, I believe that we must examine the root causes of crime. Poverty, child abuse, underfunded social services and low levels of education are all issues on which we as a government must focus our attention.

Many of us have groups in our ridings which work toward crime prevention through public education. We must offer our support to these organizations and their efforts to prevent crime in our communities.

The Minister of Justice has stated that we will create a national crime prevention council as part of our integrated strategy for crime prevention.

I urge all members of this House to support this action. Only by addressing the underlying causes can we effectively deal with crime in our communities.

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[Translation]

### NATIVE LANGUAGES

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean):** Mr. Speaker, in his 1993 annual report, the Commissioner of Official Languages commented on the dire state of aboriginal languages in Canada.

Statistics indicate that less than one third of aboriginal peoples can speak an aboriginal language well enough to carry on a conversation and that only one quarter have sound language skills.

(1405)

While I deplore this situation, I wish to remind this House that it is in Quebec that aboriginal peoples have the best chance of retaining their language due in large measure to the support of the Quebec Department of Education and the open-mindedness of Quebecers. Studies carried out in 1991 show that 47 per cent of Quebec's aboriginal people speak a native language, compared, for example, to 21 per cent in Ontario. When compare to the rest of Canada, aboriginal people in Quebec are better off in most areas, for example, housing, income and health. These statistics are worth noting.

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[English]

### HALIFAX WEST HIGH SCHOOL

**Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, last week I had the ultimate privilege of seeing into the future. I attended a model parliament and read the speech from the throne at Halifax West High School.

Andrew Cook was elected prime minister with a majority government and it represented the concerns and aspirations of young people today. Its speeches emphasized the need to reform the economy, the criminal justice system and the parliamentary system.

Mr. Cook and his government represented the Reform Party of Canada in Halifax West.

Apparently in some parts of the maritimes the youth of today and the voters of tomorrow are no longer happy with the old style of politics. The old solutions do not work any more and the young people of this country are more aware of that fact than anyone.

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### SIKH NATION ANNIVERSARY

**Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton):** Mr. Speaker, Sikhs around the world are today celebrating the 295th anniversary of the birthday of the Sikh nation, the Sikh faith, the Khalsa. April 13 also marks the first day of the Sikh new year.

Over a quarter of a million Sikhs live as peaceful and full participants in Canadian society. In spite of numerous difficulties encountered by the first Sikh immigrants at the turn of the century, today they are a full and active component of the Canadian mosaic.

As the first turbaned Sikh member of the Canadian Parliament I am sure all members would like to join with me in congratulating the Sikh community on this auspicious occasion and hope that we all continue to work together to promote harmony and

good will in order to keep Canada an exemplary country in which tolerance and compassion abound.

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#### NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough):** Mr. Speaker, in shorthand this government's mandate is job creation. In longhand the mandate is to modernize, streamline and stimulate the national economy and deal with the deficit and the debt by generating jobs.

The national infrastructure program is a good illustration of this. It is thought of as a job creation program and will create thousands of jobs but it will also improve the efficiency of our economy by modernizing and improving our national infrastructure.

In addition, it is an attempt to stimulate the economy directly by encouraging responsible and productive spending all across the country.

That is why it is so important that the decisions on the thousands of construction projects are being made by local municipalities like Asphodel, Belmont-Methuen, Douro, Dummer, Ennismore, Havelock, Lakefield, North and South Monaghan, Norwood, Otonabee and Smith, all in Peterborough county.

Names like these have not been heard in this House for many years. This government is reaching out to the grassroots of our economy because it knows that is where the economy can be stimulated most effectively and where most jobs can be created.

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#### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I extend my congratulations to the Ottawa Police Department and Chief Brian Ford for a job well done.

Three offenders were arrested just hours after the recent drive-by shooting in the capital of Canada. Community leaders, business representatives and local police expressed their views at the public safety forum held in my riding last week.

Some of the recommendations were to increase from five to ten years the maximum sentence for a young offender convicted of first degree murder; to create the category of dangerous youth offender, allowing young offenders to be tried in adult court; to increase access to rehabilitation programs for young offenders; to ban all handguns with the exception of police, military, licensed collectors and sport gun club members; to ban the sale of ammunition to minors; to establish a permit system for the purchase of ammunition.

*S. O. 31*

(1410)

I know that most of these recommendations will be dealt with by our government and my community supports them.

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[*Translation*]

#### MIL DAVIE SHIPYARD

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans):** Mr. Speaker, in the daily newspaper *La Presse*, the president of the MIL Davie shipyard says that he needs two contracts from the federal government to complete the military to civilian conversion of the company. These two contracts are to build a ferry for the Magdalen Islands and to build a multi-purpose "smart ship".

Analysts say that the world market for merchant ships will grow strongly for ten years starting in late 1995.

MIL Davie is in the midst of restructuring and has made major productivity gains since 1991. These gains will be even larger once its conversion plan is implemented.

Through its lack of vision and indecision on all employment-related issues, the government is endangering the survival of a potentially profitable shipyard which generates thousands of jobs in the Quebec City region.

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[*English*]

#### GUN CONTROL

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East):** Mr. Speaker, on Monday of this week the Minister of Justice told reporters he was going to bring in further restrictions of handgun ownership in response to the tragic events in Ottawa and Toronto.

He will recall that the Auditor General this year stated that Canada's present gun control program is controversial and complex, and an evaluation is essential. The Auditor General is saying there is no clear indication that existing gun control legislation is working.

Yesterday the Minister of Justice stated we should not be making knee-jerk reactions and yet he is demanding tougher legislation without evaluation, an obvious knee-jerk reaction.

When will he start to come down hard on criminals, the cause of concern, and not law-abiding gun owners? Does he have any idea of the level of concern he raises with his present statements?

*S. O. 31*

### ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY CENTRES

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John):** Mr. Speaker, a consultation report entitled "Environmental Industry Strategy for Canada" was released by the Minister of the Environment and indicates that a network of three national environmental technology advancements centres will be created in western Canada, Ontario and Quebec. These centres will form the cornerstone of the federal government's environmental industry strategy. The report indicates the process by which employment opportunities for Canadians would be maximized.

I bring to the attention of the Minister of the Environment that Saint John, New Brunswick, is the industrial centre of Atlantic Canada. I would ask her to consider Saint John as a place for one of these centres to help us to maximize our environmental problems and to work them out.

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### HEALTH

**Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to urge the provincial government to grant funding for hemodialysis equipment for citizens in York Simcoe.

Presently a number of residents of this area have to travel to downtown Toronto to undergo treatment, often with life-threatening consequences. This is not only time consuming but often extremely difficult for patients who are physically incapable of making these trips. There are many people who would benefit by access to this equipment in the region.

I implore the provincial government to allocate funding for this equipment. It is essential that equal access for this treatment should be provided across Ontario.

The provincial government should not tie its purse strings at the expense of these patients' health. These people should not have to suffer more than they already are.

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### RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to speak to the House.

As we have heard in the past few days there is great concern about the railroads in Canada, particularly CP, CN and VIA, again seeking to curb costs by making ad hoc restructuring to operations and thereby upsetting many Canadians.

I call upon this government through the Minister of Transport to undertake a long overdue review of the rail transportation system and bring to this House a new rail transportation strategy for Canada to meet the needs of Canada in the 21st century.

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### DISASTER RELIEF

**Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie):** Mr. Speaker, people remember last summer's flooding in the U.S. midwest and the damage done to crops and communities there. The U.S. federal government responded generously and so did ours, sending PFRA technicians and engineers to assist with the the dykes and dams.

Our own flooded and snow covered crops in northeastern Saskatchewan and northwestern Manitoba, however, have so far been ignored. There were no large centres to be flooded, only acres and acres of flat black soil which were later covered with snow and subsequently trampled by wildlife, making most of it unrecoverable.

(1415)

Not only has last year's crop been lost but conditions are such that probably this year's will not be seeded on those lands either.

Since such circumstances are not addressed under existing programs, I have asked the federal minister of agriculture to initiative third line of defence actions which are to be triggered when existing programs fail. Why has he not acted? Why are these farmers and communities being left to fend for themselves?

I know the red book ignored farm policy but surely the government cannot ignore this.

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### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

**Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, all across the country communities are determining their uses for their portion of the national infrastructure money.

Remember, this money, every cent, is borrowed from future generations of Canadians, future generations that will have no say in the way their money is spent today. Their standard of living will be reduced because they will be paying the bills our generation incurred.

Therefore it is vitally important that infrastructure money is spent exclusively on infrastructure such as roads and sewers. This is the use intended by the Canadian Federation of Municipalities. Not one cent should be spent on private enterprise, including hockey arenas.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***MANPOWER TRAINING**

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Yesterday, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs discounted the possibility of an agreement with Quebec on the transfer of federal responsibility for manpower training prior to any social program reform.

We now know that Ottawa is considering a simple temporary agreement limited to the joint leasing of buildings. This kind of intransigence prompted the Premier of Quebec, Mr. Johnson, inspired no doubt by healthy fear of the eve of the election, to ask the following question: "Who is in charge in Ottawa? The political powers or the bureaucracy?"

Why does the Prime Minister refuse to conclude the agreement that Quebec has been urging its federalist ally to sign? And, following Mr. Johnson's lead, I would also like to ask him this: Who is in charge in Ottawa? The Prime Minister or his bureaucrats?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, my government has entered into negotiations on this matter with all of the provinces, including Quebec. We are making progress. We have undertaken a complete overhaul of federal social programs and we are trying to eliminate as much duplication as possible. The answer given yesterday by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs was correct. We are trying as best we can to work out an agreement. If the hon. member would take a moment to think about it, there is no question that the real power lies on this side of the House, not on his side.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** That is right, Mr. Speaker, the perverse power to say no to Quebec, to deny it jurisdiction over pressing matters—

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Bouchard:** The Prime Minister is fully aware that the unemployed are the ones who are paying the price for the arm-wrestling match and endless discussions between Quebec and Ottawa.

I wonder if he shares the opinion of his federalist ally, the Leader of the Quebec government, Mr. Johnson, who says that Quebec is in the best position to deal with such matters. If the Prime Minister does agree with this statement, why then is he putting off transferring to Quebec responsibility for a sensitive area such as job creation?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, all these programs contains an element of equalization. Under the Canadian federal system, money can be transferred from those who are employed to those who are not. And unfortunate-

ly, Quebec has more unemployed people than the rest of Canada. The situation is worse still in Atlantic Canada where the unemployment rate tops that in Quebec. These programs were introduced to allow us to take money from the more prosperous regions in Canada and redirect it to areas which are not as well off. And it is in this spirit that we want to resolve the problem. We believe that all of Canada can work together. There is nothing twisted about wanting to ensure that the least fortunate in Canada receive money from the rest of the country. Our system is based on generosity and we are not about to dismantle it on a whim.

(1420)

We are currently undertaking an in-depth review of the system and we will listen to the views of all parties in this House in order to devise a system that will satisfy all Canadians. To resolve only part of the problem would be like taking a step backward, rather than forward. We have at heart the interests not only of Quebecers, but of the less fortunate provinces as well. We want to ensure that social justice prevails throughout Canada.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has just described Quebec's deepest aspirations as a whim. This is one issue on which all players in Quebec, be they economists, politicians, employers, employees or trade unionists, firmly agree. It is shameful to dismiss in this manner an issue which has brought together all players in Quebec, both in the public and private sectors.

My question for the Prime Minister, since his proposal—one which has not yet been formally made but which has been announced by his minister—has already been rejected by the head of the Quebec government and since it would maintain the current mess and the single window system for all federal and provincial programs, a system which confounds everyone, is this: Will he now admit that he must review this stillborn proposal to bring it in line with Quebec's aspirations?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, his voice breaking with emotion, is trying to be convincing, when he knows very well that even if we did have an agreement in this area, tomorrow morning he would still want to take Quebec out of Canada. This from the same member who, only a few years ago, defended francophones outside Quebec and who today, does not have the courage to rise in this House to defend bilingualism in this country. This is ironic, coming from someone who changes his mind as often as the Leader of the Reform Party changes suits. We are taking a serious look at ways of providing all Canadians, including Quebecers, with the best possible social security system and job creation initiatives.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, for five years, there has been a broad consensus in Quebec on the need to repatriate all powers with respect to manpower. Five years of

*Oral Questions*

amicable negotiations, as the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs put it, have proved fruitless.

Finally, yesterday, Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker:** Question, please.

**Mr. Gauthier (Roberval):** Finally, yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the answer came: “Not for another two years”. Does the Prime Minister realize what this means? If nothing is done for another two years, \$600 million will be wasted, \$600 million that could have been used to help the unemployed in Quebec as well as those who are waiting for job training.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, Question Period is not the appropriate time for speeches, but if you want me to make a speech, I will. No question was asked. This is sheer hypocrisy—

**The Speaker:** This is a day for caucuses.

(1425)

I would ask hon. members to put their questions as succinctly as possible. This is not speech period but question period.

The Chair recognizes the hon. member for Roberval.

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, we want answers. That is what I am trying to get across to the Prime Minister.

Are we to understand from what he said that all this pussy-footing around at the expense of the unemployed in Quebec is sure proof that the federal system does not work and never will? That system is rotten because of infighting between ministers within his own cabinet.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. member is ranting and that he will do the honourable thing and resign his seat after losing the referendum on Quebec separation.

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[English]

**GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES**

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to interrupt the family feud and bring us back to sanity and an issue of concern to all Canadians.

Yesterday the Prime Minister three times affirmed that the government will be making additional spending reductions not presently included in the budget to further reduce the deficit.

We welcomed that announcement. We assume it is supported by all members of cabinet and now expect various ministers to bring forward revised estimates containing these additional spending reductions.

My first question today is for one of those ministers, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. What

additional expenditure reductions will he be putting forward in his \$5 billion departmental budget in order to further reduce spending as the Prime Minister has promised?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, it was not a very suitable way for the Leader of the Opposition to put a question. I would like to tell the leader of the Reform Party that it was not a family fight. I understand there was one on Monday night in his family.

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

**Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice):** Mr. Speaker, I have been elected by three times as many Canadians in English Canada as he has. I am the Prime Minister of all Canadians. I resent him trying to portray my defence of Canada as a family fight with the temporary Leader of the Opposition.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice):** The question of departmental budgets is the responsibility of the Minister of Finance in his budget. He presented a very good budget and it has been voted on by the House of Commons. When spending cuts are made by the government, they will be announced in due course.

The technique of having every minister get up one after another is nothing but grandstanding which shows they do not know how to operate in the opposition. The leader of the Reform Party should know that type of question should be asked of the Minister of Finance.

(1430)

**The Speaker:** If the questions are long and the answers are long, we could have a very long question period.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, the intensity of these answers reminds me a little bit of the old preacher who got fired when his—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. I am sure we would like to hear the story about the old preacher, but I would like to hear the question from the member.

**Mr. Manning:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister made a commitment that there would be spending cuts in addition to those already contained in the budget. My line of questioning today is to try to find out from the other ministers who must have been a part of that decision precisely what those cuts are going to be.

The Prime Minister has not allowed the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to answer, so I would like to direct my question to another minister.

I would like to ask the Minister of Industry what additional spending reductions he is contemplating in his \$2.7 billion departmental budget in order to further reduce the deficit as committed to by the Prime Minister.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry):** Mr. Speaker, let me say to the hon. member that I am sure he is aware the budget making process is one that is under the direction of the Minister of Finance. If a further budget is to be presented it will be up to the Minister of Finance to do it.

However let me say as well that the budget we are directing in Industry Canada is very much targeted at those sectors of the economy in which we expect to see the greatest economic growth. The key to reducing our deficit is not just to cut expenditures but is to see growth in the economy. That is the objective of the government.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, we are not having much luck in finding these expenditures. I therefore would like to direct my second supplementary question to another minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Could the minister tell us what additional expenditures he is planning in his department's \$3.7 billion budget in order to further reduce spending as the Prime Minister has promised.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, that is a waste of time of the House of Commons and a lack of imagination of the leader of that party. I know he has a problem with his neighbour next door. He should work with him in order to solve his problem, along with the members from Calgary.

He keeps asking the types of questions that are irrelevant in the House of Commons. We have a normal budget process.

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

**Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice):** No, no, we have a Minister of Finance for that.

If he does not perform very well, Mr. Harper, his neighbour, will give him a promotion to the third row.

**The Speaker:** It would probably facilitate matters in question period if we did not refer to the names of members.

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[Translation]

**MANPOWER TRAINING**

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

This morning's *Toronto Star* confirms that the government is about to launch its jobs plan for youth. This strategy will include an apprenticeship program for young people. But in Quebec, where the procedures are different, this program does not work and, according to the daily newspaper *Le Devoir*, only \$2 million out of a total of \$225 million will be spent on young Quebecers.

Does the Minister of Human Resources Development admit that the federal apprenticeship program cannot be adapted to

Quebec's own needs and realities and will only increase the inefficiencies and overlap already hampering job training in Quebec?

(1435)

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, if I may be allowed one small correction, the proposals we have put forward for the employment of young people across the country were not announced in today's *Toronto Star*. They were announced in the red book campaign platform last October which was endorsed by something like eight or nine million Canadians, including a large number of people in Quebec. That is the real source of the youth employment program.

The member will see that the benefits of the program we hope to be able to announce very shortly will be broadly shared by all Canadians in every province and in every region.

[Translation]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis):** Mr. Speaker, instead of dodging the issue, could the minister promise today to give Quebec its share of the apprenticeship program funds so that it can invest them itself according to its own needs and priorities?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, it strikes me as exceedingly strange that the hon. member is building a whole set of questions upon an event that has not yet happened.

It is about as accurate as the figures used by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday when he said that there were 20,000 people still waiting to receive training in Quebec. In fact the number has been reduced to 14,000 in the last five months of this government because there has been a change in government and a change in attitude.

I would say that the questions of members opposite are about as reliable as the facts they use.

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**GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES**

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt):** Mr. Speaker, it is a real shame the Prime Minister feels that budgetary matters are irrelevant to the Canadian people.

Yesterday the Prime Minister affirmed three times that the government would be making additional expenditure reductions not presently included in the budget in order to further reduce the deficit. We on this side of the House and millions of



*Oral Questions*

Canadians are simply trying to find out where these additional expenditure reductions are coming from.

Could the Prime Minister tell me what additional expenditure reductions the Minister of Transport will make in his \$2.8 billion departmental budget in order to reduce spending as the Prime Minister has promised?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry):** Mr. Speaker, I get to be Acting Minister of Transport as well today so I get another one of these questions. I frankly do not understand the idea that the Reform Party has of asking open-ended questions.

If the member has some specific suggestions about where he would like to reduce spending in the transportation sector I can assure him that my colleague, the Minister of Transport, will be happy to undertake to review his suggestions. I can give the undertaking with all assurance that his considerations will be given to the hon. member.

**Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt):** Mr. Speaker, we are just trying to determine that there will be additional cuts as the Prime Minister stated yesterday. Surely members of cabinet must have talked this matter over. I hope the minister of defence is not the only minister who is bearing the brunt of these cuts. I know he is pulling his hair out over them.

The minister would suggest that his department is not making those significant expenditure reductions so I will direct my supplementary question to the Minister of the Environment. What is that minister going to do to reduce her \$737 million departmental budget in order to further reduce spending as the Prime Minister has promised?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised the member would ask that question given that when his leader responded to the government's budget the comment his leader made was that one department that should not be cut was the Department of the Environment because of its importance.

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[Translation]

**BILINGUALISM**

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. During his recent visit to Regina, the Prime Minister made an ardent plea for bilingualism to support his particular vision of Canada.

(1440)

The report of the Commissioner of Official Languages once again pointed to a major decline in access to federal services in French across the country and deplored the fact that French-language education was still not available in many locations in Canada.

Will the Prime Minister admit that despite all the rhetoric we have heard from the Prime Minister, especially today, the implementation of the government's policy on bilingualism has been a failure, a fantasy from the Trudeau era, and that it is false to claim, as he does, that a person can live, work and receive a decent education in French anywhere in Canada?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, when I see people who want bilingualism everywhere in Canada but do not want it in Quebec, I see people who want a double standard.

I maintain that the French fact has made considerable progress in this country. We have 325,000 anglophones in French immersion across Canada. My colleague next to me learned French in Hamilton, Mr. Speaker. We have come a long way.

I agree that in some locations service to the public is not adequate. A committee of the House of Commons, chaired by a French Canadian from outside Quebec, will examine the problem and help the government ensure that its policy on bilingualism operates as it should. It is not perfect, but we have made considerable progress, and we intend to keep up the good work, although francophones outside Quebec are complaining that Quebec's separatist francophones are undermining their efforts to maintain the French fact outside Quebec.

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata):** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I wish the Prime Minister would read the commissioner's report, because he would see that all this progress is an illusion. We are not getting anywhere.

I want to say to the Prime Minister, who hails from Quebec and who keeps talking about his French Canadians, that he should treat them as well as English-speaking Quebecers are treated. We treat them well in Quebec. When will you start treating French Canadians as we treat English Canadians in Quebec?

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata):** I wonder how the Prime Minister can expect to maintain his credibility and can sing the praises of bilingualism, when in its latest budget, his government cut financial assistance to all francophone associations outside Quebec.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, we have a problem here. On one side we have the Reform Party that wants us to more or less get rid of bilingualism across Canada, and on the other side we have people rising in the House today with a lump in their throats, and I really appreciate that, to defend the cause of francophones outside Quebec, but as soon as they achieve their objective to separate Quebec, one million francophones will lose their language because of the irresponsible actions of these people. That is why we intend to defeat them in their quest to separate Quebec from Canada.

[English]

### GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister committed his government three times to cutting the budget.

We have asked the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development where he is going to cut and we have not had an answer. We have asked the Minister of Industry twice so we would have a chance to see where he would cut. We have asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs where he is going to cut and we have not had an answer. The Prime Minister has deferred to the Minister of Finance. We want to know who is in charge over there.

(1445)

Will the Prime Minister please tell Canadians which ministers are going to be cutting their budgets to fulfil his commitment of yesterday? It is not only us who want to know. Canadians want to know. Investors who are buying their bonds want to know. We feel we deserve an honest and forthright answer.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, we have presented a budget to this House of Commons. It was voted on and it is the budget of this government.

What I said in the House of Commons is it is the task of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and every other minister to make sure that every expenditure in every department is looked at very carefully. When they find some opportunities for cuts they should come forward right away.

I have asked the minister responsible for the renewal of the public service to do that task with every department. Already ministers are coming forward with suggestions. There will be a lot of rationalization.

Fundamentally the budget that we presented and which was approved by this House of Commons is the base of our economic policy. We will achieve our goal. As we mentioned so clearly in the budget, in our program in the period of three years the deficit in relation to GDP will be 3 per cent. We are determined to achieve that goal.

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister committed himself and his government to additional cuts beyond what was presented in the budget yesterday. We are trying to find out how much these cuts are, who is going to be cutting and where they are actually coming from.

Since he will not answer that question, will the Prime Minister please tell us how much we can expect in additional cuts beyond what was presented in the budget? His figures regarding

### Oral Questions

the deficit and the cost of the debt are out to lunch because of rising interest rates through their mismanagement of government.

**Some hon. members:** Question, question.

**The Speaker:** The questions and answers sometimes tend to go on on special days. I would ask the hon. Prime Minister to answer the question which was put if he would like to.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** I will repeat the statement I made a minute ago that every minister is working to have more reductions. More reductions will be announced when they have been made. Every minister is working very hard at that.

The fundamentals of the budget have been presented to this House of Commons. They have been voted upon. It is the budget of this government.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### BILINGUALISM

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Since the Official Languages Act was passed 25 years ago, we have witnessed an accelerated erosion of the number of francophones living outside Quebec. Statistics Canada tells us that the proportion of francophones outside Quebec has dropped by 40 per cent over a period of 20 years.

My question is this: Does the Prime Minister realize that the alarming assimilation rate of francophones outside Quebec is proof that Canada's bilingualism policy is a total flop?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the actual number of francophones outside Quebec has increased, and the francophone community outside that province is more dynamic than ever. That community now has universities. It seeks to protect its rights. However, it also deplores the fact that some francophones like the Parti Québécois and Bloc Québécois members are the ones who create the most serious problems for it.

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf):** Mr. Speaker, beyond the issue of costs, will the Prime Minister recognize that the mere fact that the Commissioner of Official Languages recommends eliminating bilingualism bonuses is, in itself, another proof of the failure of the bilingualism policy coast to coast?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I believe the Commissioner said that we have to look and see if these bonuses are still useful and necessary. The Leader of the Opposition said that such an exercise was necessary. I think so too, and we are going to review the situation. The fact remains, however, that considerable progress has been achieved.

*Oral Questions*

For example, last month I had the pleasure of visiting the University of Moncton. This is an exclusively francophone university and some of its students are anglophones from all over Canada who go there to study in French, because it is a good institution which was set up after official bilingualism became a fact of life in Canada. The same situation exists elsewhere in the country. Progress was made but nothing is perfect. If the hon. member wants to help, he should say that it is possible for Canadians to live in French outside Quebec and to live in English in Quebec. Then he will make a positive contribution to help the French fact in our country.

\* \* \*

(1450)

*[English]***CANADA PENSION PLAN**

**Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Currently if a proprietorship or partnership incorporates during the year Canada pension plan premiums start anew. Employees are subject to a refund of Canada pension plan premiums on filing their income tax returns. Small incorporated businesses are not eligible for such an overpayment.

Will the minister address this inequity which results in a form of indirect taxation on small and medium sized businesses as well as acts as a hindrance to business formation?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for bringing that particular issue to my attention.

As I understand it that particular regulation has been in the CPP book since about 1966. As he points out it could impose a special burden on small and medium businesses at a time when we are trying to encourage them to create jobs and create growth.

Based upon the representation of the hon. member I will undertake to review that regulation and see if we can make a change.

\* \* \*

**GUN CONTROL**

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice or the parliamentary secretary for justice.

The government continues to talk about gun control for legitimate gun users.

In August 1993 Frederick Stephen Dieno was arrested in a shootout with the RCMP in Surrey, B.C., while fleeing after robbing a pharmacy with a gun. Mr. Dieno was originally charged with 40 offences, including eight armed robberies and accompanying use of a firearm during an indictable offence. However, in a plea bargain arraignment last week Mr. Dieno pleaded guilty to two charges of robbery. All charges of using a firearm were dropped.

How can the minister ensure that Canadians can feel safe from the improper use of firearms when charges of using a firearm during the commission of an offence are routinely plea bargained away?

**Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, for the next few weeks the Minister of Justice and the department will be studying very closely the possibility of making changes to the gun control laws. These changes if decided upon will be brought forward and dialogued with all members of Parliament.

I want to say that questions relating to the administration of justice and plea bargaining are under provincial jurisdiction. As such they are not within the responsibility of the Minister of Justice.

**Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see there will be co-operation with the government side in making some changes to the gun control legislation. Unfortunately, I have every reason to believe it is in the wrong direction and it is against legitimate gun users.

We are asking for changes in the law. We want to know if the government is prepared to make changes in the law to prohibit plea bargaining away existing gun control on the illegal use of guns.

**Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member that plea bargaining away charges on armed robbery should not take place.

This question relates to the study the Department of Justice is conducting on gun control. It is doing it very intensely and with the same concern the hon. member presents to this House. I am sure we will have something to tell the hon. member and indeed all members very shortly.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***BUDGET CUTS**

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said in Edmonton on March 4, 1994 that the only cuts to be made in the next three years were those announced in the Budget; however, the Minister of Finance said in London on April 11, 1994 that there would be more deep cuts.

*Oral Questions*

(1455)

*[English]*

Speaking of possible cuts, he said: "I will make the answer very clear." That means yes, he will cut. So said the Prime Minister in Ottawa on April 12, 1994.

Who was telling the truth, Mr. Speaker? The Prime Minister in Edmonton, the Prime Minister in Ottawa or the Minister of Finance in London?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the very large cuts that the government made, especially in Defence and elsewhere, in programs that we are now reviewing, criticized by the opposition, when we always said that we would make those cuts. That is the basis of our budget. I said in Edmonton and here that the ministers could try to reduce government spending outside the budget, on a daily and weekly basis.

The results of this operation will be known every week or in the weeks to come. I think that in the next few days, for example, some ministers will have an opportunity to announce that some programs or institutions in their departments can be abolished right now. They will make announcements when they are ready. At the end of the year, we will see how much more was cut, in addition to what we promised in the budget.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has just disowned his budget. He has just said that his budget is no longer worth anything.

Now that he has admitted the need to make additional spending cuts, now that it is clear that he cannot do the job on his own, is the Prime Minister prepared to involve Parliament in this process by creating a parliamentary committee to review the government's finances, as we have been asking him from the beginning?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** It is the duty of all parliamentary committees, when they review the appropriations of every department, to make the appropriate recommendations. If members of the Bloc Québécois and the Reform Party want to make recommendations, the committees are there. They sit every week and I am sure that all committee chairs will be very pleased to consider all recommendations for spending cuts and that will make the hon. members very happy. I asked our party to do so, because we want our members to be involved. There is no problem, then. You will have the estimates of all departments and you can make the suggestions that you want to make. They will be considered by the committee and forwarded to the government in due course.

**IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Yesterday in the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration the minister revealed that he wants to attract more immigrants from Europe. I ask the minister to assure this House he has no intention of introducing ethnic or racial criteria into the government's immigration policy.

**The Speaker:** I believe that this matter is in committee now. However on a more general type of question perhaps the minister would like to respond to that.

**Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, this side of the House is having some degree of difficulty in trying to understand the nature of the question.

On the one hand the hon. member is talking about the legitimate promotion of our immigration program through Europe. On the other hand he talks about a program in terms of ethnic or cultural lines.

The fact of the matter is we have a balanced program. We have a number of doors through which individuals can apply to enter, whether it be the refugee stream, humanitarian, family class, independent skilled, or business.

When I was in the London, England office which is our biggest office in Europe, I on behalf of my government suggested that the perception in Europe that our doors are closed is wrong. I believe we need to promote immigration from that part of the world and also to target it with respect to business class and independent skilled. Many trades, such as aerospace, are overheating in Great Britain. We could certainly do with those skilled tradespeople coming over.

(1500)

There is nothing incompatible in saying that we want to have independent, skilled and business applications coming in, and at the same time maintaining our family and humanitarian programs which have been a hallmark of this country for a long time.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast):** Mr. Speaker, my question was to determine the policy of the government and whether it was going to introduce racial or ethnic criteria.

Reformers welcome immigrants from all over the world. I ask the minister, in trying to attract more immigrants from Europe, is he suggesting that immigration from other parts of the world be curtailed or is he suggesting that the total immigration numbers be increased? It has to be one way or the other. Which is it?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, the member is missing the boat completely and he is all wet.

If the hon. member looks at the immigration plan we presented to the House just a few weeks ago, he will note that we increased, as per the red book, the number of independent skilled people. Canadians, including I am sure members of his own party, have wanted to take advantage of skilled individuals who can find an economic niche.

All I am saying is that the proportion of people with independent skills coming from Great Britain and the rest of Europe will increase over 40 per cent in keeping with the increase in our independent skill levels.

No, the government does not create policies based on the colour of one's skin, or religion or creed. We base policies on sound facts and we try to not divide people but bring them together in unity.

\* \* \*

**POTATO INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the parliamentary secretary to the minister of agriculture.

I and my colleague from Malpeque, the P.E.I. potato industry and others have been working with the agriculture ministry for the past five months trying to solve the PBY-n compensation problem.

We were all expecting cabinet to make a decision on the issue this week, thereby putting an end to a four-year ordeal by the P.E.I. potato seed industry.

Can the government tell the P.E.I. potato industry when a decision will be made on this issue? A lot of farmers' futures depend on it.

**Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has been pursuing this very important issue since it was first raised with him almost immediately after his appointment as Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food.

He has met with Prince Edward Island potato growers. He has met with the Potato Growers' Association. He has met with the premier. He has met with the MPs from that province and discussed this. He started and completed some analyses so that he could become fully and fairly informed on all the facts.

The process has taken some time. He has made sure that all of the facts have been before him. The process has been slowed up a little bit and interrupted by the launching of a lawsuit by some Prince Edward Island growers and the government has no alternative but to defend itself, and the government will.

In the meantime, the minister will continue to treat this as seriously and as thoroughly as he has in the past. It is now in the hands of the courts and nothing more can be said at this time.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**[*English*]**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

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

\* \* \*

(1505)

**PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AGREEMENT ACT**

**Hon. John Manley (for the Minister of Transport)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-22, an act respecting certain agreements concerning the redevelopment and operation of terminals 1 and 2 at Lester B. Pearson International Airport.

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

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]**CRIMINAL CODE**

## CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-234, an act to amend the Criminal Code (facsimile advertising), and Bill C-235, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I am introducing today two bills which deal with related subjects, so I will speak on both together.

First of all, as we know, of course, masses of unsolicited advertising material are delivered to our homes regularly. A number of our fellow citizens would prefer that Canada Post not deliver this kind of material.

The purpose of one of the bills I am introducing is to allow people who do not wish to receive direct mail advertising or unaddressed mailing to so advise Canada Post Corporation and stop receiving such material.

Let us now move on to another type of unsolicited advertisements, the type we often receive by fax, not on paper paid for by the originator but rather on our own paper. Sheet after sheet after sheet of ads that we never solicited pile up overnight in our offices.

The purpose of this bill is to prohibit the use of faxes to advertise the sale of goods or services to individuals or corporations which did not solicit it.

(Motions deemed agreed to, bills read the first time and printed.)

\* \* \*

(1510)

[English]

### MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT

**Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-236, an act to amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act (at age 60, 10 years service).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the bill is to prohibit former members of Parliament from collecting a pension while employed by the federal government, an agency of the Government of Canada or a federal crown corporation. This would eliminate the so-called practice of double dipping.

The bill also states that a former member is not eligible to receive a pension until reaching age 60 and has served at least three consecutive terms with a minimum of 10 years consecutive service.

Finally, under the bill beneficiaries of a member or former member who died before the age of 60 would not be able to collect a pension until that member would have been 60.

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

**Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to move that the first Report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament, which was tabled March 22, 1994, be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to.)

\* \* \*

[English]

### MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

### Routine Proceedings

That pursuant to the Memorandum of Agreement between the Speaker of the House of Commons and the National Archivist of Canada dated June 8, 1993, all documents presented to a committee of the House of Commons sitting in camera and any other documents so designated by the Speaker which have been or will be deposited in the National Archives of Canada for safekeeping, including any such records deposited prior to the date of the Memorandum of Agreement shall be identified as Secret Records;

[Translation]

That, Secret Records shall not be made available by the Archivist to any person for a period of thirty years from the close of the Parliamentary session in which the Secret Records were created, unless the House of Commons or one of its committees directs otherwise, and

That, twelve months before the expiry of the thirty year delay, the Archivist will inform the Speaker that unless the Speaker directs otherwise, the secret documents will be made public according to the terms of aforementioned Memorandum of Agreement.

[English]

I ask for unanimous consent for this motion.

(Motion agreed to.)

\* \* \*

### PETITIONS

#### HOUSING

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce):** Mr. Speaker, I have petitions sponsored by the Community Council of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce which contains over 200 names. The petitioners refer to the critical need for more social, co-operative and non-profit housing in Montreal and ask Parliament to lift the budget restraints imposed on CMHC for the development of social and co-operative housing.

(1515)

THE SENATE

**Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie):** Mr. Speaker, I have several hundred more names to add to the thousands that have already been presented from my riding and surrounding areas calling on the Parliament of Canada to urge government to abolish the Senate.

CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present four duly certified petitions on behalf of my constituents, three of them dealing with the same subject from the towns of Shaunavon, Cabri, Maple Creek and Gull Lake.

The gist of the petition is that whereas section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada requires a convicted murderer sentenced to life imprisonment without chance of parole for 25 years may apply for a review after 15 years, and whereas the murder of a Canadian citizen is a most reprehensible crime, wherefore the undersigned humbly pray and call upon Parliament to repeal section 745 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

*Routine Proceedings*

The fourth petition from residents of Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan, and environs contains some 150 signatures dealing with section 241 of the Criminal Code.

The petitioners beg that Parliament not repeal or amend section 241 of the code in any way and to uphold the Supreme Court of Canada decision of September 30, 1993 to disallow assisted suicide and/or euthanasia.

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, I think you would find the consent of the Chamber to revert to presentation of reports by committees. The chairman of the fisheries committee is here and wishes to present a report and I wonder if we could do that at this point.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to revert to committee reports?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present in both official languages the first report in this Parliament of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans in relation to the Atlantic fisheries adjustment programs.

I want to thank all the individuals who have co-operated with us, most particularly members of the committee on the Liberal side, the official critic and the member from the Bloc Québécois as well as members from the Reform Party.

I also want to thank the over 92 witnesses who participated, allowing us to come to some consensus on a number of issues relating to the tragic situation of the collapse of the Atlantic groundfishery.

Some of the technology that we used such as teleconferencing, which at first perhaps some, including myself, were a little leery of, has proven to be very beneficial in allowing Canadians access to their parliamentarians and to committees.

I hope that at least some of the recommendations in this committee report find their way into government policy.

This was broadcast live from coast to coast. The process we went through does show Canadians that Parliament can work better and that it can work without animosity and that partisanship can be put aside when we do the job. Our job obviously as members of this place is to represent to the best of our abilities the interests of the citizens of this country, no matter where they live and no matter the political stripe of the individuals who sit on a committee.

I also understand that we have some minority reports which will be appended to the document and there may be one of the members opposite who may wish to add a few words to the record.

(1520)

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé):** Mr. Speaker, given what the chairman just said, I think I have the unanimous consent of the House to append our document as mentioned. We had to proceed and co-operate with the government to hear the 92 witnesses who testified before us. It was not easy and that is why, given the need to proceed quickly, the Bloc Québécois as the Official Opposition party wants to point it out. We also want to append to the Standing Committee's majority report a minority report stating the missing elements that, in our opinion, would enable the government to make the right decision.

Our report is generally concerned with the lack of industrial strategy. There is also the question of job training on which a lot of money will be spent. There is a constitutional dispute on the Quebec-Canada agreements, and we wanted to point it out in the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will start by asking, as the hon. member indicated, for unanimous consent to give him the floor. Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member from the Reform Party to say a few words also?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[English]

## MINORITY REPORT

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to echo the words of my colleague from the Bloc and of the governing party. The committee worked very well during the hearings. Unfortunately we were rushed at the end in an effort to get the reports together.

I would like to present a minority report. I think there are some issues on which we were in disagreement with the majority. These issues deserve to be heard as well.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, the following question will be answered today: No. 18.

[Text]

Question No. 18—**Mr. Deshaies:**

*Government Orders*

Has the Federal Infrastructure program made provision to allocate funds to the federal-provincial-territorial co-operative program entitled Canada's SchoolNet and, if so, how many Quebec schools will participate in this program and what are the names of the Quebec schools or school boards concerned?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure):** The Canada infrastructure works program is a series of agreements with the provinces to support regional and local needs over the next three years.

The Canada-Quebec infrastructure agreement was signed February 7, 1994. Under the terms of the agreement, the program in Quebec is divided into four parts: infrastructure repair, expansion and construction for municipalities with a population of 5,000 or more; infrastructure repair, expansion and construction for municipalities with a population of less than 5,000; projects involving new technology, and major projects affecting urban areas.

As in other provinces, there is no specific allocation to programs such as SchoolNet or to other similar programs, but the criteria would allow for projects that could support the use of SchoolNet. To date, no proposals have been made to the province of Quebec regarding SchoolNet or the school boards.

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** Question No. 18 has been answered.

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

[English]

### MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that the single notice of motion for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Shall the notice of motion stand?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT SUSPENSION ACT, 1994

**Hon. Fernand Robichaud (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons)** moved that Bill C-18, an act

to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Suspension Act, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak at third reading of this very important bill which has been introduced in the House and which has received considerable support on all sides.

I recognize there is some opposition in the Reform Party to this bill but I suggest it is misplaced opposition and that in the end the Reform Party will really appreciate the fact that this bill has been introduced and dealt with in the House because it will be so pleased with the final result of the thing when redistribution has finally been accomplished.

The member for Kindersley—Lloydminster shakes his head and looks dubious but that has been his problem all along. He has been a doubting Thomas in respect of this bill and I think when he sees the outstanding work that the committee of which he is a member will do in coming up with a new law he will be gratified with the results and say he cannot understand why he did not agree with this bill in the very first place.

The hon. member knows, and all members know, that in dealing with a subject of such importance as redistribution, of great importance to the members of this place, a government is always loathe to act unilaterally and in a way that is unfair, or perceived as unfair, to the other players in the political process.

(1525)

In this case I suggest that what the government has done is move in a very fair and reasonable way. What has happened as a result of this bill? The purpose of the bill is to shelve the current redistribution process for a period of 24 months. If at the end of that time there is no new mechanism put in place by legislation, the redistribution commissions will restart their work, presumably using much of the material they now have and come up with a new set of maps.

There will be public hearings that follow as there are under the current regime, and everything falls back in place again. This is simply a delay of 24 months. Let us look at the history of this. Why is the government operating in this way? Why would we argue for a 24-month suspension at this point?

Redistribution should have been effected following the 1991 census at an earlier date than this because the very first figures released in 1992 on that census were the ones for redistribution of seats in the House of Commons. However, the previous government, the Mulroney government, introduced a bill in this House to delay the process for 12 months because there was a committee doing a study of the report of the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing which had been presented to the country by the royal commission in early 1992. Maybe it was late 1992, I cannot remember the date, I must admit.



*Government Orders*

That report was referred to a special committee of the House of Commons. It was to study the report and come up with recommendations. It seemed pointless at the time. There were one or two in the NDP who disagreed but almost all members agreed that the proper course was to defer consideration of redistribution until there had been a study of the royal commission's report because the royal commission recommended changes to the redistribution law of Canada. The aim was to have that study by the committee done so that legislation could be introduced in Parliament to make changes.

The committee ended up with a short timeframe for such an extensive study of the act because the referendum intervened in the process and disrupted the entire committee work. It took so much time to do the referendum bill and then Parliament did not sit for months and months because of the referendum.

Nothing was done in respect of the redistribution recommendations contained in the royal commission report and nothing was done to change the redistribution law. The law was left in place and began its operations during the summer of 1993, just when Parliament had been adjourned for the summer, and at the subsequent election because Parliament did not sit again until well after the election was called.

There we were in a situation in which these commissions were beaver away across the country preparing draft maps that were subsequently made public and members suddenly discovered that redistribution was back on the table, here were the maps and the public hearings started in another month. These maps were unacceptable to the vast majority of members in this House.

We heard yesterday at length from members of the Bloc Québécois.

[*Translation*]

They made several speeches. It was unbelievable to hear so many speeches on that issue yesterday, but each of these hon. members had problems with the boundaries in his or her constituency.

[*English*]

We responded to this. That is partly why the government acted with alacrity to bring in this bill and suspend the process. We spoke in advance with members of the other parties to ensure that there was some agreement on this. We suggested a motion to refer various matters to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in order to allow that committee to do a detailed study.

We invited comments from the opposition and we got some very constructive comments from both parties in opposition. We included in the motion various items at their specific request to

make the committee process more palatable to them, to make sure we covered the points that were of concern to the opposition. I think we have covered them all.

The difficulty was that some hon. members on the other side have made speeches in the House decrying this. They wanted us to write in what the committee was to do; that is, if the committee was to bring in a report saying this. We as a government said we will let the committee make its own decision on how it will report to the House. It will consider all these matters but the report is the committee's decision. We would not prejudge it. We would not instruct the committee to do certain things such as limit the number of members of the House of Commons to 295 or reduce the number of members of the House of Commons or increase it no more than by  $x$  number. We said the committee would have to look at all the options and come up with a report. That turned some members of the opposition in the Reform Party in particular into nervous Nellies. They became quite upset at the thought that the committee might—

(1530)

**Mr. Hermanson:** Wise owls.

**Mr. Milliken:** The hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster says: "Wise owls". I say: "Nervous Nellies".

They were afraid the committee would go out of control and come up with something worse than we now have. I suppose that is possible, but I think the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster needs to look at the composition of the committee. He is a member of it and a very responsible member of it.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Bellechasse also sits on that committee and he is very competent. We have several competent members and, as chairman, I can do certain things to assure committee members that everything will go just fine. So, I support this bill because we now have a motion on the Order Paper to refer all these issues to the committee, and that motion is acceptable to the vast majority of members in this House. I am convinced that once the legislation is passed, the Reform Party will support our motion to the effect that the whole issue should be referred to the committee.

[*English*]

I know their doubts will vanish. The committee will be able to conduct a study and come up with a new bill.

How is the new bill to come into operation? I would hope we would have the bill passed so that we would not have the 24-month delay any more. It will simply get rid of the current system and replace it with a new one which would start as soon as the new bill has passed Parliament.

*Government Orders*

The question is when it will pass. That matter rests very substantially in the hands of the committee because we have adopted for the motion to be referred the new procedure in Parliament of instructing the committee to bring in a bill on the issue.

The committee would come back with a bill to the House. The government could then table the bill. Debate on second reading stage would be very short, as hon. members know, assuming the bill complied in all respects with what the committee recommended. We would have shortened debate and rapid passage of the bill based on the new procedure. The committee would do the work and would do it in advance.

I know hon. members will strive to have the committee achieve agreement on all major points before it. We will look at the alternatives that are available for dealing with the issue for the benefit of all Canadians.

Some members of the Reform Party have said there is not a public outcry on the issue. Of course there is not a public outcry on the issue. Members of the public are not particularly involved in the redistribution process and have never shown a particular interest in the redistribution process. Most members of the public do not worry particularly about where they are voting.

When the new boundaries are in place there will be outcries from people: I do not want to vote with that group; why do I have to drive this far to vote; why is my part of the riding cut off from all the rest, all my friends and neighbours that I normally voted with; why are we suddenly lumped in with so-and-so as our member of Parliament?

That will not happen until the redistribution is complete, the election campaign starts and people find they are in different ridings. In spite of all the advertisements of the commissions most people do not look to see which riding they are in. I have gone around my constituency and have asked, and most of the people I would be losing to the neighbouring riding in this scheme—and there are not many—are totally unaware of it. Members of the public do not know and there is no public outcry.

The people who are interested in the legislation for the most part are right here in the House. It is members of Parliament who have to work with those boundaries during the time they are elected to serve the people in their own geographic areas.

Imagine, if the redistribution came into effect today or very shortly as planned, what members of the House who are losing their ridings would do for the next four years. Who are they going to be representing? Would it be the people who elected them or the people whose ridings they think they are going to be running in the next time?

From the point of view of the public the bill makes sense because it defers the process so that if redistribution is com-

pleted in time for the next election it will be done shortly before but not a long time before the election. Members of the public will be fully represented by their MPs during the time they are elected to serve them, without having to cast an eye on neighbouring ridings where members might be running the next time. That is important. It is a significant advantage for members of the public, let alone for MPs. To ignore that reality is perilous, and there are many constituencies that are disappearing.

(1535)

I suggest that members of the Reform Party, many of whom are suffering substantial shifts in the process and know it, particularly those in British Columbia, must be apprehensive about it. I know they are. I know many members of that party are very concerned about the boundary proposals that have been put forward.

Here is a chance to come up with a new scheme. I am not saying the committee is going to sit there and draw boundaries; far from it. We will come up with a new arrangement that will allow for a redrawing of boundaries on a more equitable basis. We think we can come up with something that is fairer and better for Canadians.

It may be that there should be a more specific requirement for consultation with members of Parliament on the issue, or at least with political parties in the existing constituencies. I do not know what will be the best solution, but the reference to the committee is open-ended and we can look at all possible solutions in the committee.

I know hon. members on the other side are anxious to get on with the work. As chair of the committee I am anxious to undertake the work to see what we can discover. There are plenty of experts on the issue of redistribution in Canada who are familiar with it. Members of these commissions may have views they wish to make known to the committee. It is important for the committee to get on with the work and hear from those people. Passage of the legislation will ensure that will happen.

I invite members on all sides to bury the hatchet they have been wielding in recent days and support the bill. I know the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster particularly has his doubts, but I invite him to cast his doubts aside and walk with confidence into the future the redistribution process holds for all members and for the benefit of the Canadian public. It is a good bill. I know the hon. member in his heart of hearts thinks so and I invite him to support it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak on third reading of Bill C-18, an act to suspend the operation of the electoral boundaries readjustment process in Canada.

*Government Orders*

I listened with interest to the speech made just now by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, and I am sure he will want to show the same interest in what I have to say about this bill at this particular stage.

When considering a bill that has long-term implications for the future of the Canadian federation, it is always necessary to define the role of the sovereigntist member with respect to such legislation. I have never made a secret of the fact that I was elected by the constituents of Bellechasse to defend and promote the interests of Quebec, which includes promoting the sovereignty of Quebec.

As was pointed out, not by the hon. member from Kingston and the Islands but by the hon. member for Calgary West and also by the hon. member for Fraser Valley West, the seats in this House are ours on a temporary basis. We have them in trust, as it were. We do not own them. It is up to our constituents to determine who will sit in those seats. Of all the members sitting opposite during the 34th Parliament, only one member is left in this House, and this happened when constituents across Canada freely expressed their will that it should be so. It is always useful to recall that this House is not owned by anyone, that these seats are not anyone's property and that we occupy them on a temporary basis, until we are recalled by our constituents or decide otherwise or reach the end of our career.

That being said, I may be a sovereigntist, but it would be irresponsible of me to deny that a decision on the sovereignty of Quebec is still a decision that must be made by Quebec voters in a referendum that will be held in a few months, in Quebec. It will be held after the Quebec elections which, according to the Canadian Constitution, will have to take place in the fall, at the latest.

(1540)

Since we, on this side of the House as on the other side, of course, are all in favour of supporting the rule of law, the very essence of democracy, we must operate within the confines of the present legislation.

At the present time, we still belong to the Canadian federation, and we must think ahead in case our ultimate goal—we can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel, since the Quebec referendum is only a few months away—should that light fade away for one reason or another, these seats will still be Quebec's. That is why we cannot afford to ignore the implications of this bill, if there were a change in the membership, since the Bloc Québécois was elected for a specific term. That is why I took an active part in the study of Bill C-18 at every stage.

I must point out that once again, the government has acted belatedly in presenting this bill. They could have presented it 10 or 15 days earlier, so that it could have followed the normal

process. But they chose to wait until the last minute when provincial commissions, especially in Quebec, had already started to hear witnesses or were about to hear them. As a matter of fact, these commissions are operating at the present time.

The way the debate has been going on has forced the government to bring a motion for time allocation, commonly called closure. My colleagues from Calgary West and Kindersley—Lloydminster rose in opposition to that motion. They were protesting against closure, and rightly so, I think. We did the same, even though we support the bill, because we will never accept closure on such a bill. We have been just as vocal as our colleagues from the Reform Party in opposing it.

The bill was passed at second reading and referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs which tabled its report in the House. Then my colleague from Kindersley—Lloydminster, seconded by the hon. member for Calgary West, proposed three amendments at report stage. And curiously, the party which complained so bitterly about time allocation, because debate was cut short, hardly intervened on its own motions. It is the Official Opposition which had to do the job of the Reform Party, which is a bit ironic. Why did they complain about time allocation, and choose not to speak yesterday? There is a logic there that I do not get. Could it be that their caucus meeting, Monday night, caused a number of them to lose their voices? I do not know.

Anyway, we will do our job at third reading. I do believe that Bill C-18 is necessary if we want to review the 30-year old rules on electoral boundaries readjustment. In my humble opinion, we should start this review process, immediately after the bill is passed, by studying carefully section 51 of the Constitution Act, 1867.

(1545)

It is the basis for the entire decennial readjustment process provided for by our Constitution. It will no doubt be the first section we will have to consider in hearing testimony and debating various amendments to provisions of section 51 of the Constitution Act, 1867. We may also have to review section 51(a), the so-called senatorial clause, which prevents a province from being represented by fewer members in the House of Commons than senators in the Senate and which presently applies only to Prince Edward Island.

Perhaps there should also be a section 51(b) forcing the government to take a member from Prince Edward Island from within its ranks and make him or her a cabinet member, which is presently lacking. Why does a province with such a glorious history as Prince Edward Island have no Cabinet members in this government?

There is another question, but I will not get into it either. We can ask ourselves the question anyway. The criteria have not

been reviewed since 1964. I have no intention of going through the whole list, but it is high time that they we review them.

In 1964, the government of the day, the Pearson government, had the brilliant and worthwhile idea of taking the electoral boundaries delineation process out of the hands of Parliament and members of Parliament and putting it in the hands of independent commissions.

Grasp all, lose all, the saying goes. Perhaps the right balance has not been struck between the role of the legislator and that of the commissions. These are also questions we have to ask ourselves because a number of members have risen in this House to disagree with plans currently before the various provincial commissions.

We need to act, not hurriedly, but swiftly nonetheless, as we are facing some form of danger, a constitutional danger I would say. As I see it, the danger results from the fact that, during the 24 month period when readjustment is to be suspended under Bill C-18, during that time, the Procedure and House Affairs Committee will have to continue to work. The government will make its bed and eventually present a bill or accept the one proposed by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. But we should not face the next federal election with a seat distribution based on the 1981 census.

One thing is certain, for the legal security of all Canadians. With all due respect, I wonder whether it is appropriate for the government to submit Bill C-18 with all its consequences, namely that we still have a distribution based on the 1981 census and that the 2003 election could still be based on 1981 census figures. Are we not in violation of section 51 of the Canadian Constitution, which provides for a decennial census and a readjustment of representation after each decennial census?

The Constitution is there for a reason. If it requires us to conduct a census, a census will be conducted, and then we will say, "We need a readjustment". If every time we are about to undertake such a readjustment, some bill cancels or postpones it, it is as though this provision were no longer enshrined in the Canadian Constitution.

I urge the Canadian government to use the authority of the Governor in Council to refer the constitutional problem to the Supreme Court of Canada for advice, so that any challenge is not left to ordinary Canadians already overburdened by taxes, and so that it can be dealt with as quickly as possible.

(1550)

Bill C-18 also provides for the abolition of existing provincial commissions, a measure which we fully support since we cannot keep on standby—in spite of the comments made by the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster, which will certainly be corrected later—and pay the members of those commissions to do nothing.

### *Government Orders*

This provision should also apply. We can start all over again later. When I say "we" I mean this House, because we do not know what the situation will be in 24 months, and what the House will look like. Who knows, there may be 75 fewer seats. It is pointless to discuss the architecture of this House. After all, if the 75 seats from Quebec disappear, there will be enough room for larger desks, to accommodate those who have put on some weight because they do not have time to exercise in the Wellington or Confederation building. This could prove a lot cheaper than tearing down walls, as suggested by our friends from the Reform Party.

We Quebecers will do an immeasurable service to this House by freeing a little more than a quarter of the seats here.

Of course, I am pleased because I did not hear any terms such as break up or collapse. Things went smoothly and I was able to discuss the issue. In fact, I wonder why, when I raise the issue of sovereignty for Quebec, I hear some hon. members use those expressions— but not everyone, far from it. In fact, fewer and fewer do so, and it may be because they understand more and more that Quebec's sovereignty is not directed against anyone: rather, it must be done for our own good. As I mentioned yesterday to the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas, Quebec will always be as open as it is now with its neighbours, and particularly its Ontario friends, who are very close, not only from a geographic point of view but also in terms of the affinities which we have developed. Quebec is a state which tomorrow, just as it was yesterday and is today, will remain open and receptive to the world around it.

Again, Quebec's sovereignty is not directed against anyone. Let me give you an example. If, tomorrow or in the near future, the people of British Columbia decided to become sovereign, I will not get frantic. I will simply say: very good, this is your decision as British Columbians. That is fine, let us try to make some agreements, this is an emancipation for you, this is your choice and I see no point in criticizing it. I will not say that someone is trying to dismantle the country, to tear it apart, to blow it up or whatever. I think that we will have to consider very calmly the implementation of new structures for this country which has already gone through several structural changes. Since 1763, it has been known as Canada, but during the period when it was made up of Upper and Lower Canada, and even before that, at the time of the Quebec Act and the Royal Proclamation, it was a small country. It grew quietly, over the years.

My comments are totally relevant to the debate, Mr. Speaker. In 1949, Newfoundland joined the Canadian federation, but Newfoundland was not destroyed because it decided to give up its status as an independent Dominion. Newfoundlanders were never told that they had destroyed their country. They were congratulated on choosing to join the Canadian federation.

*Government Orders*

In the second 1949 referendum, because there were two of them, Newfoundlanders voted 52.34 per cent in favour of joining Confederation, while 47.66 per cent voted against. However, that referendum was somewhat special, and we will not have the same kind of referendum in Quebec.

(1555)

For instance, in the riding of Labrador, the number of registered voters in the second referendum on July 22, 1948, was 2,886. The number of votes cast was 3,447, which means a participation rate of 119.44 per cent in favour of union with Canada. The people in the riding of Labrador were way ahead of the riding of Ferryland, where 3,791 voters were registered but 3,965 cast their votes, which meant a participation rate of 104.59 per cent in the second referendum, which is not bad!

The first referendum was held on June 3, 1948. There again the participation rate showed that the people of Newfoundland, and probably their ancestors as well, were interested in voting in the referendum, because as they say, we have to vote, not just for our own sake and our children's, but for the people in the cemetery. I think that is what happened there!

If we look at the riding of Grand Falls, in the first referendum on June 3, 1948, the number of registered voters was 11,458, but the number of voters on June 3, 1948 was 12,580, which gives us a participation rate of 109.79 per cent, which is quite good! Grand Falls had the best rate, closely followed in second place by Humber, with 10,745 registered voters and 11,588 people who cast their votes, producing a very respectable participation rate of 107.84 per cent. St. John's West was a close third with 19,586 registered voters and 19,880 votes cast, producing a participation rate of 101.5 per cent.

And last but not least among the ridings with a participation rate of more than 100 per cent—something not even members of the former Soviet Union have been able to do, the best record so far being 99.9 per cent in one of the former Soviet republics—the riding of St. John's East, with 16,313 registered voters and 16,322 votes cast, producing a participation rate of 100.5 per cent. A number of ridings reached 95, 98 or 99 per cent. But in spite of all that, the final result was 52 to 48. That did not prevent the Right Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie King, then Prime Minister of Canada, from saying in this House, after the results of the second referendum in Newfoundland were announced, that “It was clear from these figures that the majority of the huge number of voters who cast their votes were in favour of Confederation. It would seem that the outcome of the plebiscite was “definitely beyond a shadow of a doubt” a sign of support for union between the two countries. The government, and surely the Canadian people as well, welcomed the results of this plebiscite”.

I trust that with the standards now in effect and Quebec's legislation that is almost unmatched for its rigour, a result of 50 per cent of the vote, plus one, will be accepted when Quebec makes its decision.

That being said, you will no doubt allow me to say a few words about my own riding, which is also affected by the bill as all other ridings are. Several of my colleagues in the Official Opposition spoke about their ridings yesterday and I did not yet take the opportunity to talk about mine in the other stages of the debate.

Mr. Speaker, I invite you to visit my riding of Bellechasse. You will always be welcome and I will be pleased to host you if you do not have anywhere to stay, but there is excellent accommodation almost everywhere. Anyway, it will be a pleasure for me to receive you when you come. The limits of the federal riding of Bellechasse are as follows: it is bounded on the east by the riding of Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, represented by my hon. colleague. On the west, it is bounded by the riding of Beauce; on the east, by the State of Maine in the U.S., and on the north, by the St. Lawrence River, although my riding also includes some islands in the St. Lawrence, one of which is Grosse Île, where thousands and thousands of Irish families stayed on their migration to Quebec or Canada.

(1600)

The riding of Bellechasse could now be described as a rectangle going from Saint-Pamphile in the southeast to Lac-Étchemin in the southwest, and from Saint-Jean-Port-Joli in the northeast to Saint-Anselme in the southeast, Saint-Anselme being the parish adjacent to my own parish of Sainte-Claire-de-Dorchester.

With the new electoral map as proposed, which takes into account regional county municipalities or RCMs, the riding of Bellechasse would include two more parishes in the RCM of L'Islet, namely Saint-Roch-des-Aulnaies and Sainte-Louise, which are now in the electoral district of Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, so that the whole RCM of L'Islet would be in the riding of Bellechasse.

More to the west, the riding of Bellechasse would gain the municipalities and parishes of Saint-Cyprien, Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague, Sainte-Rose-de-Watford, Saint-Benjamin, Saint-Prosper, Sainte-Aurélie and Saint-Zacharie, which are all located in the RCM of Etchemins. My federal riding of Bellechasse would then include every parish of the RCMs of L'Islet, Montmagny, Bellechasse and Etchemins, for a total of about 64 parishes and enormous distances we still measure in miles because the numbers are too high when they are measured in kilometres.

The homogeneity is very nice, but the distances are a little ridiculous as a single member of Parliament responsible for such a vast area cannot properly serve all of his constituents. The criteria for readjusting electoral boundaries in Canada must be reviewed.

*Government Orders*

In closing, since we are talking about redistribution, it would be interesting to say a few words on the redistribution of seats in the other place. We would be in favour of an immediate and total redistribution of the 104 seats in the other house where unelected people are highly paid to sit. I think our friends in the Reform Party would wholeheartedly agree with us that we should abolish, in their present form, all the constituencies in the other house of the Parliament of Canada. We do not need a second house whose members would be working as they are now.

I for one am in favour of the proposal put forward by the Reform Party, namely a triple-E Senate, an equal, elected and effective Senate. In my view, that respects the principle of equality among provinces, where all provinces would have the same number of representatives and all regions would be represented.

Even though I said I would be in favour of such a proposal, I do have one very fundamental reservation. The proposal would probably be acceptable to English Canada, but never to Quebec. Quebec does not belong in another house where there would be equal representation of all provinces. Quebec will have nothing to do with that, nothing at all.

In 1965, the premier of Quebec, or the man who would become premier the following year, in 1966, Daniel Johnson Sr., the “real one” as some people call him, wrote in a book entitled *Égalité ou Indépendance* that Canada will be binational and biethnic or it will not exist.

(1605)

It is up to my colleagues and of course to you, Mr. Speaker, to determine if Canada has become binational and biethnic. Not only do we not hear the word biethnicity anymore, but outside the province of Quebec, a lot of people even deny the existence of the Quebec nation—and I use the word nation in the English sense of the word, in its sociological sense, where it means people rather than country. No matter what Mr. Trudeau says in his private meetings, the word nation in French can apply to the existence and values of the Quebec people today, a people who have demonstrated their collective willingness to live in a given territory, to prosper there in their own language while respecting their minorities and to create within this territory a national state, a home for francophones in America.

That is the goal that we, the Official Opposition, along with Quebec sovereignists and nationalists, will continue to pursue until we succeed, hopefully within a few months, in convincing our friends and colleagues in Quebec that Quebec sovereignty is as good for Quebecers as Canadian sovereignty is good for Canadians and as American sovereignty has been good for Americans. Quebec sovereignty is the affirmation of a people

who have finally achieved political maturity. In that spirit, we will vote in favour of Bill C-18 at third reading.

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to participate in the debate on third and final reading of Bill C-18, an act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. First of all, I want to state my party's position. We in the Reform Party are against this bill and continue to oppose it. It is obviously a waste of the time of independent commissions established under legislation passed by this House. Also, it is rather strange to stop the process as public hearings are starting or about to start.

I will be discussing the policy of this government as well as its motives. I must also comment on the remarks made by my colleague from the Bloc Québécois and his party's position. I understand that the Bloc supports this bill, but I cannot figure out why.

Basically, I do not see why the Official Opposition would support the government in establishing boundaries in Quebec for elections which, they say, will never be held because Quebec will have achieved political independence. I understand the Bloc Québécois's position on Quebec's independence, but not their position on representation in this House. I do not understand their position on this bill, not at all. I am puzzled by a number of things.

(1610)

The hon. member for Bellechasse mentioned that we Reformers had moved amendments to this bill yesterday. We made the points we wanted to make. Five or six of our members have spoken on the bill. Now the Bloc, which supports the bill, continues to debate the amendments we moved and that they oppose, thereby delaying passage of a bill they support. I do not understand that and, as I said earlier, I do not see the point, for the Bloc Québécois, of supporting suspension of the readjustment of electoral boundaries and of the number of seats in a future election if, as they claim, they are not interested in those seats because they would have no use for them in view of the events to come in Quebec.

*[English]*

It is a position I do not understand. I understand somewhat better the position that the government has put forward. I listened very carefully today to the words of the parliamentary secretary who gave for the first time somewhat of an explanation of how the government arrived at its position and how it has conducted itself. I will not comment on that at length. I have said a great deal about it already in the House and in committee.

If one examines very carefully the position of the parliamentary secretary, what he really is saying is that politicians should decide whether these boundaries are appropriate or not. Many of us, Liberals and apparently Bloquiste aussi, think they are not and therefore that really justifies the bill. I know there was more

*Government Orders*

sophistication to the argument than that. But I heard that as the core of the argument and that troubles me a great deal. It is a fundamentally different concept than the one we have about the redrawing of political boundaries. It is the reason we are concerned about delaying the process for two years and diverting it to a parliamentary committee, dominated by the government majority and then, of course, having on that committee an official opposition that does not think these seats are going to be important to it four years from now.

Let me just comment a little further on that. We had a committee hearing on this bill. We passed the bill on the Thursday before the House rose. Within hours we were in committee and within a couple of hours of that the bill was passed.

The hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster and I were there. Officials from Elections Canada including the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Kingsley, appeared before the committee. I want to put on the record part of the exchange from that committee if I could because it is very instructive on what the motivations for bringing this legislation were. Let us be clear. They have very little to do with the process that is now under way. I will summarize a few points from that hearing.

The hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster asked Mr. Kingsley:

—were you yourself or Elections Canada in general consulted about the suspension of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act prior to its introduction into the House of Commons?

Mr. Kingsley: —there was not what I would call consultation with me or my office about this bill.

Mr. Hermanson: Is this unusual?

Mr. Kingsley: Well, I've been in the position for four years, and previous amendments to legislation relating to the office have involved consultation with my office—

Mr. Hermanson: —I want to know if the commissions have completed their work under the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act to this point? Would that be fair to say overall?

Mr. Kingsley: The answer is yes, they have. They've done their work in accordance with the schedule and in accordance with the requirements of the statute. They are on time.

Mr. Hermanson: Do you know whether they're on budget?

Mr. Kingsley: In terms of the budget that had been fixed, the answer is yes, they are on budget.

Mr. Hermanson: Were the commissions themselves properly constituted as required under the act?

Mr. Kingsley: To the best of my knowledge, yes.

Mr. Hermanson: Was there any indication of incompetence on the commission? Were there any obvious errors or mistakes reported to you or that you observed in supervising their work?

Mr. Kingsley: The answer is no.

Mr. Hermanson: Are you aware of any meetings having been held improperly, say, without a quorum or something like that?

Mr. Kingsley: I am advised the answer to that question is no.

Mr. Hermanson: Do you feel Elections Canada was able to meet the needs of the commissions by providing the maps, the census information and other information you were required to provide to them?

Mr. Kingsley: That is certainly my view because I have heard absolutely nothing to the contrary from anyone.

Mr. Hermanson: There has been no suggestion there were inaccuracies in any of the information received? The census information was correct?

Mr. Kingsley: No information to that effect at all.

(1615)

Mr. Hermanson went on to ask whether the commissions have the latitude if they hear representation from the public in the public hearing process to make more largely definable changes in the boundaries. Mr. Kingsley replied that in accordance with the statute the commissions have all the latitude they wish on that matter. That is the point of the exercise. I will go on.

I had asked Mr. Kingsley to confirm that the first notification was really with this particular bill. Did it occur after the tabling of the new proposals or the new maps? In other words I was asking if the government showed any particular interest in this to Elections Canada before there were specific boundary proposals that affected Liberal members. Mr. Kingsley confirmed essentially that yes it was after the tabling of the maps that the question was drawn to his attention.

Mr. Hermanson: Are there already a number of people who have applied to meet before these commissions? Are you aware of that?

Mr. Kingsley: Apparently requests have come in throughout the land.

I know that because I was one who along with several other members of our caucus had prepared submissions and made contact with the commissions. I should add that considerable money had already been spent setting up the public hearing process which is now under way.

Mr. Hermanson asked if a review were going on in committee, in other words the review proposed under the government's motion to look at the process, would it hamper in any way the current work of the commissions. Mr. Kingsley replied that from a purely technical point of view he would have to answer no. Of course we do have the bizarre situation that the hearings are now proceeding because the commissions have to do that in law. Of course there is still the intention to shut down the process.

I asked Mr. Carol Lesage, assistant director of operations, electoral boundaries, whether some of the people on the commissions were qualified. Mr. Lesage made the following observation: "In the majority of cases the commissioners are university professors in political science and in most cases specialize in questions dealing with representation".

*Government Orders*

In fact when I asked my research assistant to find some detailed articles on these questions so we could call some witnesses it turned out that many of the names she came up with were in fact commissioners.

I asked Mr. Lesage whether to his knowledge the commissioners had any particular partisan background. Of course the answer to that was no.

Mr. Hermanson: Has Elections Canada received extensive complaints that the process is too slow, or too fast?

Mr. Kingsley: I am advised that we have not received any complaint in that respect.

Mr. Hermanson: Have you had a large number of calls requesting more information or registering complaints regarding the maps that were distributed?

Mr. Kingsley: I remember looking at some statistics. The number of calls has increased recently as a result of this exercise at the 1-800 number.

It would appear furthermore he went on to say, that a number of those calls were directly related to the fact there were advertisements that the public hearing process was about to begin. It is now under way.

It is fairly clear there is no malfunction in this process. It simply does not suit the political self-interests of members of Parliament, particularly members of the government. It apparently does not suit the political interests of members of the Bloc Québécois. However I do not understand precisely what those interests are. I am sure they have nothing to do with the referendum in Newfoundland 50 years ago.

(1620)

There has been a certain amount of public reaction to this event and this bill in the media. Let me just review that because this is what people are reading across the country concerning this piece of legislation.

I will not go on and on about this but the Vancouver *Sun* said: "So much for fair play". That was its editorial on March 25.

The Calgary *Herald* of March 25 urged the government to play by the rules. The Calgary *Herald* said: "The Reform Party is right. On this issue, Reform at least appears willing to play by the rules rather than work them to its own self-interests". I have to mention that because I certainly do not have an endorsement from the Calgary *Herald* for the election and I do not suspect I will have one in the future. However, I think it is worthwhile to note that endorsement.

Winnipeg *Free Press*, March 26: "A Liberal fiddle". It goes on to point out the inequities that this legislation will perpetuate.

The Montreal *Gazette*: "Redrawing the boundaries. Ridings should reflect reality, not Liberal politicking".

[Translation]

In *La Presse* of March 29, Pierre Gravel wrote: "Electoral map—millions wasted". He points out, and I agree with him, that "Since they arrived in Ottawa, the Bloc has pleasantly surprised its opponents, even in English Canada, by behaving as a responsible opposition party." This is an editorial from Quebec. But he also adds that "This is the first important issue on which one can criticize it for not playing its role."

[English]

The Ottawa *Citizen*, March 26: "So much for principles. Crass partisan interference by the Liberals in the redrawing of electoral boundaries ensures the next elections will be unfair".

Edmonton *Journal* March 26, Norm Ovenden: "Liberals protect personal kingdoms. Proposals from independent commissions for new riding boundaries would have cut some MPs out of the political picture". Of course some of them may be cut out in any case.

The *Globe and Mail* wrote a number of articles on this. One in particular I want to quote at length: "Ottawa moves to scuttle revisions to riding boundaries. Grits cut off debate, introduce law to help process of redistribution. Using arguments that affected MPs traditionally raised at boundary revision time, Liberal MPs said yesterday that the proposed changes would disrupt traditional communities and social links within ridings and would eliminate historical riding names. The realignment of rural ridings to give them similar numbers of residents to urban ridings would also make them larger and more difficult for MPs to travel". That is what we heard.

"However, at a closed caucus meeting two weeks ago, Liberal MPs from central Ontario said that the boundary revisions would adversely affect local campaign organizations especially in weakly held ridings. The MPs burst into applause when Solicitor General Herbert Gray, the minister responsible for elections legislation, promised that the government would block the process. The government's move to close off debate yesterday prompted some dissension within the Liberal caucus. Some senior ministers objected to using time allocation so early in the party's term on an issue not crucial to Liberal policy or programs".

"Sources say some Liberal MPs facing another four years with hugely overpopulated constituencies were persuaded to support the move with warnings that realignment could boost the Reform Party's chances in Ontario. Other MPs were told the government will assign additional constituency staff to crowded ridings". I should add that all three parties have agreed to assign this additional staff through the Board of Internal Economy, which we did in any case.



*Government Orders*

(1625)

We all know we cannot believe everything we read in the newspapers. However this is a disturbing report, not refuted to my knowledge by anybody in the government to this point. I think the motivations, perhaps not as openly painted by Liberal members as in the article, have been clearly expressed in the Commons that this does affect personal political needs.

I want to shed a little more sympathetic light on this situation. First of all I am glad to see in that article, and I did suspect and have reason to believe there are Liberal MPs and cabinet ministers who do not support what is going on. I wish they had been listened to here.

However I do think there is a problem we should be frank about. Why has this particular issue proceeded this way at this time? In the past there has been a ruckus and concern about riding redistribution. There always will be. Sometimes in the past Parliament has intervened to change the process but it has always given a public policy reason before. It has changed the amending formula in the Constitution that only it can alter, some of the particulars of that. It has through that suspended the process and it has restarted again. Never has it stopped the process without a clear public policy objective other than to study it.

Why did that happen this time? I think the reason is very clear. I saw the map in the Ottawa airport recently. The partisan map of Canada after the last election is very interesting. I know there are some differences here and there, but if you stand back a few feet you see a green bar on one side, the Reform Party and our strength in Alberta and British Columbia. You see a red bar through Ontario where the Liberal Party won most of the seats. You see a purple bar through Quebec where the Bloc Quebecois won almost all of the francophone majority ridings; most of the ridings won by the Liberal Party were ridings with larger anglophone or allophone populations. Then there is another red bar on the other side of Quebec in Atlantic Canada.

What does that mean? It means that you cannot go to an independent commission and make proposals that appear to be sticking up for your own riding without appearing to be against a caucus colleague. You cannot say your riding should be altered a certain way and therefore change the riding next to yours, unless of course you get together as caucus colleagues. That has made it more difficult. I sympathize with that situation because we have had to deal with that in our caucus in terms of preparing our own submissions.

As difficult as that situation is, that cannot block redistribution forever. It certainly is not right to have people represented in the year 2000 on a census that was conducted in the early 1980s. That is ridiculous.

With that all said this is an argument for many, many things. It is an argument for the independence of the process. As the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster pointed out to me today, it is probably also in many ways an argument for the Reform Party policy of fixed election dates every four years.

It is an argument for some of the things that have been raised to restore the Senate to its role of regional representation. It is also an argument for the need for a second chamber. When there is a dominant majority in this Chamber that operates on confidence and insists that the most wildly unjustifiable thing go through and it slams it through as quickly as possible, there is an argument for an elected independent or second legislative chamber. I repeat elected. It would reconsider that measure and force the government and force the House of Commons into some reasonable compromise.

The Senate itself is in a very awkward position in these kinds of situations. The Senate has a clear legal and constitutional mandate which allows it to revisit and to block any piece of legislation. Its unelected status puts it in an extremely difficult position. I am not going to mince words on this, but I hope the Senate studies this thing as carefully as it believes it should be studied. I hope it examines very carefully all the questions, including the constitutional question. To delay this past the year 2000 is in fact a potential violation of our Constitution.

(1630)

If the Senate believes that is the case, the appropriate thing for it to do, because of its unelected nature, would be not to block the bill, not to vote it down, but insist that the government get a constitutional reference to the Supreme Court on this so that we can be sure that we are not doing anything that is constitutionally or legally untoward. That is very important.

I have spoken a lot on this bill before. I have spoken at length today. Our point is clear. There will be other speakers from the Reform Party and I believe they will all be opposing the bill and we will be opposing it at third reading.

In closing I would like to move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following therefor:

Bill C-18, an act to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, be not now read a third time, but that it be read a third time this day three months hence.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion appears to be in order.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C-18 at third reading. I would like to remind you that during debate on second reading, I stressed the fundamentally democratic nature of the Bloc Quebecois and its

intention to respect the character and autonomy of the people it represents in every riding of Quebec.

I would like to draw the attention of the member from Calgary West, who is wondering about our intentions, trying to understand our approach, to the strongly held democratic beliefs of the Bloc members. I would add that one of our party's main objectives—particularly when it comes to Quebec independence—is, as I have already said, to follow the democratic process every step of the way.

We are taking part in this debate for much more significant reasons than party politics, since, as a number of my colleagues stated in this House, the decentralization process started a few years ago in Quebec is being accelerated and decision-making powers are being transferred back to the regions.

Today I want to say again that the Bloc Québécois is in favour of Bill C-18, a bill to suspend the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act for a two-year period and abolish the 11 electoral boundaries commissions. Our goal in supporting this legislation which suspends the operation of the Act for two years is, as you will have understood, to respect the regional character of the population and, at the same time, to avoid hampering the process of decentralization towards these same regions that is now under way in Quebec.

(1635)

Yesterday, I was pointing out in this House that the government in office, the Liberal government, does not usually understand the deep meaning of decentralization. In our fundamental reasons in favour of that readjustment, we are stressing that if, and I repeat if, Quebec is still in the Confederation when this step takes place, we would want to make sure at that time that all of this decentralization pursued by Quebec would be fully respected.

However, as I mentioned yesterday, the Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-18 with some reservations. First of all, it seems essential that we denounce once again the arbitrariness and inconsistency of some boundaries established in the past. To that effect, we must emphasize the importance of administrative divisions in Quebec. I remind you that these administrative zones not only have a strategic importance for Quebec, but they are also based on fundamental geographic, economic, industrial and cultural considerations, and we must fully understand all the work done by the economic, cultural and geographic communities in Quebec.

As long as Quebec remains part of the Canadian Confederation, the federal commissions readjusting electoral boundaries will have to take into consideration regional county municipalities as well as administrative regions.

### *Government Orders*

As I said in my first speech, and this is the reason for our second reservation about Bill C-18, we consider decision-making an essential element of regional policy for the year 2000. Yet decentralized economic and social development is absent from Canadian policy as seen by the highly centralizing Liberal government. Again, the Liberal government's centralizing thrust works against the process and the work being done in Quebec.

Let us not be afraid of words; let us not deny history; it is high time that Quebec broke free from this centralizing federalism which is extremely costly and leading us to bankruptcy.

Decentralization of the political and economic decision making process appears to us equally essential to the creation of jobs in RCMs, particularly in my area of Sherbrooke, in Val-Saint-François and in the Asbestos region. Therefore, in the spirit of the reform of the Minister of Regional Development of Quebec, Mr. Picotte, and following the consolidation of regional development councils, the Bloc Québécois commits itself to entrust the regions with political and economic decision-making.

The Bloc Québécois proposes that the Government of Quebec should not be the only one involved in the developing of a consistent economic policy. The general direction of development must be defined by the regions in the first place.

I personally support the approach proposed by the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, according to which regional authorities are synonymous with regional government. Regional development councils will enjoy the credibility that comes with being elected and have the authority to pass regulations and raise taxes.

The rest of the provinces have to be told that. This way, Quebec remains original and authentic in its approach to regional development.

Decentralization of a central government, this bureaucratic monster which is well known to civil servants, must come from political sovereignty.

The Bloc Québécois believes that decentralization of government funds and political power is the only way to promote development in eight regional strategic areas defined by the regional council of Eastern Townships, which brings us to the redistribution of all constituencies in the Eastern Townships.

Last spring, in the five-year development plan for the Eastern Townships, local decision makers were able to identify three major development themes.

First, development strategies are defined according to problems caused by delays and all the catching up to do. By promoting resource development, manpower training, research, technological development and business networking, these local

*Government Orders*

decision-makers are influencing economic development throughout the country.

Hence, we truly believe that people should feel they belong to their region and that ridings should be defined according to common interests shared by municipalities. That basically explains our position on Bill C-18.

(1640)

Second, in any forward looking approach, it is primarily at the local level that development policy can be defined based on natural and cultural assets of the RCMs and on environmental protection.

Third, we should always start from a decision at the local level, when defining a set of criteria for building on our strengths through investments to modernize our agriculture, forestry and mining sectors and make them more competitive. Therefore, it is primarily for structural reasons that we support this bill.

If my colleagues will bear with me, I will try to explain the reasons behind specific actions by Quebec. Human resources development, manpower training, the potential for natural and cultural development, research and development, environmental protection, natural resources industries and business networking are a priority for my team, and we believe that the RCMs of my riding of Richmond—Wolfe and other Quebec ridings, and the revised electoral boundaries, will be the basis for economic development.

My question is: Should we be always waiting for federal subsidies to boost research and development in the RCMs of Val-Saint-François and Sherbrooke? No. The Bloc Québécois replies that the time has come to repatriate all powers and public funds which belong to us as a sovereign country and to share them with the regions which represent the real power.

In Richmond—Wolfe, the Bloc Québécois wants to do more than change the structure and the riding boundaries. We want some logic.

**Some hon. members:** Good.

**Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** The members across the way are reacting to these words because they are not familiar with them. Do they know the words logic and decentralization? Decentralization is part of a logical process of regional self-management based on grass-roots democracy. Does that mean something to you?

Our approach favours the emergence of very decentralized and unbureaucratic organizations. Having read the Auditor General's report, we know the high cost of this bureaucratic monster, which is leading us straight to bankruptcy. In short, we oppose all authoritarian social and economic management poli-

cies of unified and centralizing administrations, like the Liberal government, which are ruining this country's finances, let us get that clear it once and for all.

By favouring the decentralization of decision-making, we will help the people in the ridings work for regional development instead of trying to develop an impossible Canada.

Adopting Bill C-18 on third reading is a good thing, but, in closing, I wish to say to hon. members that the next stage, consideration by the Senate, is not really essential for us. That institution costs us \$43 million a year, but does not produce anything. Nevertheless, Bill C-18 is now at third reading, and we support it.

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech of the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe and I had the feeling that maybe the one who wrote his speech is the same person who wrote the speech of the hon. member for Bellechasse, because both have nearly the same theme. I wonder why he can discuss sovereignty or the separation of Quebec in a speech on new electoral boundaries throughout Canada. It is incredible! Maybe logic defies reason in his speech. In any case, I have a question for the hon. member.

(1645)

Does he think that he will stay in this House after a referendum, if Quebec says yes to Canada and wants to stay here with other Canadians? If that is the decision, will he remain a member in this House and will he participate as a member, as he is doing now, and abandon his ideas of sovereignty and separation in order to defend his constituents' real interests?

**Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the hon. member is so receptive to the idea of openly discussing sovereignty in this House and that he is prepared to accept some of the arguments that have been raised here so that together we can consider what lies ahead for us.

Our course of action will be quite straightforward. Yes, the Parti Québécois will win the next election in Quebec. A referendum process will be launched and will be won by the Parti Québécois. The members of the Bloc Québécois will be pleased to work in Quebec with considerable open-mindedness with a view to laying the groundwork for negotiations with English Canada. Yes, we will be participating in the process.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup):** Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to comment on the speech by my colleague from Richmond—Wolfe. In my opinion, his comments were most relevant to this debate, unlike what the government member had to say.

He spoke at length about decentralization. I would like him to explain to us a little more how he would go about ensuring that

the will of local communities is respected if and when the process of redrawing the electoral map is undertaken.

**Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe):** Mr. Speaker, to provide an adequate answer, I must point out that regional county municipalities in Quebec—as my colleagues have explained in detail—are municipalities grouped together and whose economic, cultural and social activities are closely related and involve people commuting between home and the workplace. These regional county municipalities were asked to develop strategic plans and first review all the problems experienced in their region, in terms of employment and social, educational and cultural development.

Once the diagnosis was established, a strategic plan was developed for each regional county municipality. Let me use the example of the Eastern Townships, where there are seven regional county municipalities. Together, these municipalities examined and put together their strategic development plans, and then quickly selected major thrusts and common development projects, favouring a decentralization of the Quebec government to the regions, a transfer—the hon. member opposite should listen—of funds to the decision makers at the regional level and, consequently, a decision-making process with real spending power.

When we look at the proposed electoral reform, we realize that this structure is not understood and is simply ignored. The powers that be in Ottawa do not understand this structure and they draw electoral boundaries which systematically undermine an effort which has already been going on for some ten years in Quebec. These are the major structuring arguments which lead us to participate in this debate, and this may be the reason why some hon. members are not listening to what we are saying.

(1650)

If hon. members are receptive, they will understand that what is taking place in Quebec is really a decentralization in favour of the real decision makers, those who are key players in the field. First, these people can identify problems and, second, they can provide original and effective solutions.

[English]

**Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate on the proposed suspension of the operation of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. I rise to oppose Bill C-18 and to support the Reform amendment to that bill.

There are three issues here that need to be addressed and have been addressed. I would like to put my thoughts to them. The first one is the issue of government interference with due process; the second is the issue of proper representation for the people of Canada; the third is the proper use of funds and the affordability of the process that we are looking at.

### *Government Orders*

In terms of government interference there are several things I feel the government is doing in proposing this bill. In 1964 the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act put into place a system that was non-partisan and operated under general principles, a system to look at electoral boundaries within our country and make a choice in a system to make it fair to Canadians.

On a whim the government has decided to dismantle a due process. The people of Canada look at the motivation and wonder what motivates this and what in future might happen the same way, as well as government interference in the process here in this House in terms of time allocation and the closure on bills.

I have a quote here from a few years ago of a former member of this House who represented a constituency in B.C. when closure was enacted by a former Conservative government to enact the legislation that this government is trying to annul.

Let me quote from *Hansard* of December 17, 1985. The Right Hon. John Turner stated:

The proposal of the government to impose closure on Bill C-74, an act which in effect amends the Constitution of this country with regard to the number of members who have the right to sit in this Chamber, cuts very deeply into the ability of the House to represent adequately the people of Canada. The House of Commons, its make-up, its essence and how we operate should not be tampered with in a careless, callous and cavalier fashion.

I warn those who sit on all sides of this House, particularly those who sit on the backbenches of the Conservative government, to take heed and pay close attention to what the government is attempting to do, because it affects all of us and our ability to represent adequately the people who did us the honour of sending us to the House.

This is the first time in the history of the House that a government has made redistribution a partisan issue.

Now we have a second time.

At all times previously redistribution, a measure to redivide the seats of the House of Commons, has been done in a non-partisan, impartial manner. There was all-party agreement, in fact for 30 years.

If the action so heartily condemned by the leader of the Liberal Party was wrong then, why is it suddenly so right now? Does time change these things, or is it power? Suddenly debate and a thorough review of the best approach to take in an atmosphere of freedom are no longer valid concerns when he is the one in power.

Is it any surprise that MPs on this side of the House are now suspicious of the government's motives and undefined plans?

Government interference is also in the fact that it is allowing or seeks to allow or disallow the input from the public, from Canadians. Instead it wants to put the decision to a parliamentary committee of which of course it would control the outcome.

The very act of redistribution takes at least two and a half years, possibly longer. It involves the striking of commissions, it takes a look at geography, drafts boundaries, involves consultative processes and perhaps, as we saw in 1981, court challenges in the process.

*Government Orders*

(1655)

Besides that, Elections Canada has to look at it and put into place all the returning officers needed. Polling districts have to be set up.

The 1988 election had to operate from a 1981 census. The potential of the process that we now see if this is delayed for two years as suggested would be looking of course at something that would take us into the year 2000 before we had redistribution.

We would be looking at 1981 numbers and I would like to reflect that in my own area. My constituency right now is made up of three centres, Coquitlam, Port Moody and half of Port Coquitlam, and happens to be one of the fastest growing areas in the lower mainland.

In the 1992 referendum there were 77,900 voters and in the 1993 election there were 86,324 voters. According to Statistics Canada in the three centres the population in 1991 was 136,000; in 1996 that is projected to be 158,000; in the year 2006, 197,000.

There was 21 per cent growth from 1986 to 1991 in Coquitlam alone, and 26 per cent growth in that same period in Port Coquitlam. By the time we come to the year 2000 which is potentially where we would be if the process is shut down and the representation is not there we would be looking at numbers that do not reflect the proper representation by population. The skewing would be that much worse than it has been.

I was interested to see the numbers that were assigned to this project that has happened and hopefully in the public consultations this will be looked at.

The target number in our particular area was 96,000 voters. Certainly some of these things need to be reviewed.

I was interested to review that the United States House of Representatives has in total 435 representatives. They represent ridings of approximately half a million people. That maximum is set by their constitution and like ours their boundaries are adjusted every 10 years.

Britain, on the other side of the scale, has 651 members. There are so many members and so little room in the House they cannot accommodate these members. In fact to vote they have to file past the Speaker. This limits debate. It shortens the question period.

We do have to look at numbers and in fact the Canadian people are saying they do not want the numbers increased. The cost is high enough in this House.

What do the Canadian electors want? My second point is they want proper representation. Effective representation comes from representation by population. The numbers that come from each constituency should reflect the population. Those numbers should be equal as much as possible for the constituency.

However, outside in rural areas to make up for that we need reasonable regional representation.

Once again I would make a point of the importance of the other place, representing regionally and equally across this country, an elected Senate that is effective and therefore equal representation of all Canadians.

The third thing we have to remember is the affordability of the process. The process that is in place has met the criteria proposed by the body that the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act is proceeding on budget. It has accomplished to this point its purpose on budget and would be wasted if the process were put aside. I propose that what we do need is proper use of funds. We should let this proceed to the point at which the public can be consulted, the input is in place and we get the feedback that Canadians want from this process.

(1700)

It is true that we do not need more seats in Parliament. The Reform stand is that Canada is already one of the most governed countries of the industrialized world. Do we need more representation? No, we need better representation. Do we need more costs? No, we need better representation.

We need representation by population. We need regional representation. We need proper use of the money that has already been spent and a step in the right direction for public input on how best to spend money in future electoral processes.

With these comments I would like to support the motion for the amendment to put aside or to postpone Bill C-18, as proposed by my Reform colleagues.

**Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam in her speech stressed very greatly the importance of not increasing the number of members of this House.

In the negotiations that were carried on there was some discussion about that issue and I know that members of the Reform Party pressed to have a committee to not only consider whether there would be any increases but to have a commitment that it be frozen. It would have been happy had such a clause been included in this bill.

*Government Orders*

I have two questions for the hon. member. First, did she in making her statements bear in mind the fact that this bill merely suspends the process for two years? It is not a bill that in any way interferes with the process or changes it. The process will resume in two years time if nothing else has been done. Did she bear that in mind when she quoted from the speech by the Right Hon. John Turner who was after all criticizing a bill that changed the process right away? This was not a case of a suspension bill, this was a change in the process. I note there is no change in this process in this bill.

Second, would she support this bill if it contained a clause that limited the number of members of the House of Commons to 295?

**Mrs. Hayes:** Mr. Speaker, in answer to the first question, a suspension of process, what does that mean? That means an interruption in a process that is already in place. What this does is take it to a Liberal dominated committee again. What is its intention? We do not know. Why suspend it if you feel that it will proceed? Let us carry on with what is there and use the process that is there.

As to the other question, if the number of members were limited to 295, certainly that would be an improvement and from the feedback from my constituents they would heartily endorse a freeze on the number of members of Parliament. Perhaps this should be looked at more carefully over time and perhaps that could even be reduced depending on what we would find to be the proper representation by population and the proper regional representation model that would apply to the Canadian people.

**Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario):** Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member on her comments. She certainly made some efforts at researching this issue. The hon. member has also referred to her own riding in the context of where she might be if we do not have redistribution in the next 10 years.

(1705)

The hon. member may not know that my riding currently has about 210,000 constituents. I had absolutely no difficulty in attesting to and recommending that this government proceed with the legislation as it had planned for the very simple reason that the riding next to me had only one-third the number of constituents.

The member talked about the prospect of capping the number of seats that we have in this great House. Given the situation in which one may have a riding that does not have as many as the hon. member's riding does, would she not agree that it might be better to redistribute between the existing ridings?

Perhaps more important, rather than talking about the waste that might occur by having to suspend the electoral boundaries, we might be doing something that helps the Canadian public and the taxpayer.

**Mrs. Hayes:** Mr. Speaker, there are many things that can be done to help the Canadian public and certainly—I hope the Liberals are listening—the Canadian taxpayer.

It is not simply electoral boundaries and that is another thing I hear loud and clear. There are inequities in the system right now. There are very large ridings and very small ridings but with the process in place, I believe in the public input that would be given to that process. Many of the things that the hon. member asked would be put on the public agenda and discussed. Then something very real could come out of that.

I feel that should be put in place and followed through as it is already very much along the way. Finish it and get the public input. It is not just the hon. member and I. The public wants a voice in this as well.

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin):** Mr. Speaker, as some of the other speakers have in this debate offered an invitation to you and indeed to the rest of the House to visit their ridings, I would also like to do that. I am certainly proud of my riding.

I would have to admit that I am just a little biased as far as that riding is concerned. I was born in that riding as was my father. His father was born pretty much in this area of the country and then emigrated to Alberta and homesteaded in this constituency. I am about the third generation Johnston in that area. I guess members can understand my affinity for it.

As far as redistribution is concerned, or representation by population, I guess it is always difficult to arrive exactly at representation by population when one considers what a huge country Canada is and that over the last many years the population has more or less gravitated from the countryside to the larger cities.

In my opinion to try and arrive at true representation by population would be extremely difficult if one does not take into consideration, as one would have to, some method of considering the size and vastness.

My riding has many small towns in it. The population continues to grow as opposed to some in rural Saskatchewan where the population shift is really dramatic from the country to the city.

It is interesting to note that the guidelines state that Alberta constituencies should not exceed a maximum population of 122,000 approximately or a minimum population of around 73,000. Certainly my riding does fit into those upper and lower limits.

I agree with my colleague who included an amendment to this bill that would limit the amount of seats in the House of Commons and put a cap on it at 295. I would feel quite comfortable supporting the bill in that form. Why the government chose not to put that in the bill is really a mystery to me. This could have been one time when we had unanimity in the House.

*Government Orders*

(1710)

The west side of my constituency is quite sparsely populated. As we move into the cities, which are along the corridor of No. 2 highway, they are really the largest populated centres of our constituency. As we move to the eastern side of the constituency again we come into an area where the population dwindles off.

In one of the local papers recently faxed to me the editorial was that they have not seen much of their MP lately. That is a problem. The larger the constituency gets as far as area is concerned, the bigger problem that becomes. It becomes a physical impossibility to be seen the desired number of times in a given area of the constituency. It is something that we find in these large areas. If one tried to get anywhere near 100,000 people in southeastern Saskatchewan one would have to take in a very large area of that province. To a certain extent that holds true in the southern portions of Alberta as well.

My party suddenly needed a speaker.

**Mr. Milliken:** We could have a vote right now.

**Mr. Johnston:** At any rate, it certainly gives me an opportunity to brag about my constituency. I also have to say that we have an extremely well informed electorate there as is evidenced by the fact that I am here today. It was given a choice. We presented the constituency with six candidates to choose from and I was the fortunate person to come here and share this experience with the House.

As far as postponing the process, I have in my constituency many people saying that they would like to present briefs to this panel and have their views heard as to what they plan to do as far as the constituency and what they would like to see done. I am really at a loss as to what to tell these people. I tell them that we would really like to see this bill die in the House but that we do not think there is any danger of that. We have to recognize the simple mathematics that the people who introduced the bill certainly hold sway over the result of the bill.

As a result of that I have people in my constituency looking to me and asking what to do. Apparently there is very little they can do. Maybe what they should be doing is preparing their brief now for what will take place in maybe a year or two from now.

We talk about the difficulty of trying to represent a rural riding. I have never had the opportunity to try and serve an urban riding but I would assume that the transportation problem, the physical problem of trying to get around the constituency is somewhat less of a burden. It would seem to me that whatever formula the committee ultimately comes up with must take into consideration the actual physical territory that the member has to cover. Surely it is not just the plains that have this difficulty. I

know my neighbours to the west in British Columbia have large tracts of terrain they have to cover.

(1715)

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite you to my constituency. I would be pleased to introduce you at our annual stampede and rodeo, and that goes for all members of the House. It is an event that is second only to the Calgary Stampede as far as being an excellent show. I am a little prejudiced but I think that you are a little closer to the action at our show. I believe the Speaker has actually been to the Ponoka Stampede and I would very much like to invite all members of the House to come and join us on the July 1 long weekend.

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great attention to the speech of the hon. member and I congratulate him on the discourse. He said, if I heard him correctly, that if the bill had a cap on the number of MPs at the present level of 295 members—I think he said 195 in his speech but I am sure he meant 295—he would have supported the bill.

That being the case, how can he justify the comments of his colleague who moments before him said that the bill distorted representation by population. If that is true, how could he vote for such a reprehensible bill?

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, I am not 100 per cent sure if I have the question straight, but to answer a part of the question, if the bill did cap the number—the hon. member is completely correct, I meant 295 not 195—I would be tempted to support the bill.

Perhaps my colleague is not prepared to support the bill. That is her prerogative. But I would be prepared to at that point.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated the speech by the hon. member for Wetaskiwin. I thank the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands for allowing a more adequate vision of the hon. member for Wetaskiwin.

The hon. member gave us a good description of the role of a member of Parliament representing a rural riding, as I do. Does the hon. member agree with current standards allowing a variation of 25 per cent of the provincial quota for a riding, in many if not most cases, to compensate for the size of the territory and reduce the number of constituents the member must represent when he or she has many communities to visit?

(1720)

The hon. member for Wetaskiwin said that some of his constituents had not seen him since the beginning of this Parliament. Well, it sometimes takes several months or even an entire year to cover a whole riding.

I also want to ask how the hon. member for Wetaskiwin can reconcile his party's objective of limiting or reducing the

number of electoral districts with that of adequate representation for rural ridings requiring much more travelling. And while we are on the road, of course, we cannot meet with anyone.

[English]

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, in an attempt to answer the member's question, the 25 per cent allowance for geographic size in many cases would be adequate. In my view there are cases where it would not be adequate.

It is most difficult in larger ridings. We find that people in the large ridings, the electorate, are really very mobile. They have to be in order to live in areas that are sparsely populated. Rather than MPs continually make house calls it would be incumbent upon them to have meetings in a central area, advertise them well and make sure that people got there to make their representations.

Further, it is most important to reform the Senate to the point where it is elected, equal and effective. It is most important in my view. In that way we would be looking after more regional representation. It is one of the facts of Canadian life that the population is very widely but not very evenly distributed.

Therefore it is all the more important that we have regional representation, a Senate with equal representation from each province that is actually effective in blocking, revising or sending bills back to the House or committee and is elected by popular vote. That is absolutely essential in Canada.

**Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Red Deer, as many Reform MPs have suggested, recognizes the importance of representation by population as well as regional representation.

We have had debate on Bill C-18; we are coming to the end of it. The Liberals proposed that something was terribly wrong. Reform looked at the situation. We were sincere in reviewing it. We were sincere in our agreement with Canadians that there were too many seats. We looked for ways and looked for a commitment from the government to find solutions. When that was not forthcoming my colleagues and I became very concerned about the whole process.

We are amused at why Bloc members who do not seem to have an interest in the matter would be so concerned. Once again it is—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I gather from the hon. member's remarks that he is speaking on debate rather than on questions or comments. Is that correct?

**Mr. Hermanson:** I have a question. I am trying to say we hear Bloc members and wonder who they are speaking for. We hear the Liberals and we know they are speaking for themselves. Canadians have to ask who can represent them on this issue. On many issues it seems like Reform has been representing the people.

*Government Orders*

Has the hon. member for Red Deer consulted with constituents? Does he feel he is representing them on Bill C-18?

**Mr. Johnston:** Just to correct my colleague, Mr. Speaker, the riding is Wetaskiwin.

Actually I have consulted with my constituents not only federally but at the provincial level as well. I made representation a couple of years ago to the commission that was looking at redrawing the electoral divisions in Alberta. I think I am representing the wishes and views of my constituents here today.

(1725)

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

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 30)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Benoit	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bridgman	Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Chatters	Cummins
Duncan	Epp
Forseth	Frazer
Gilmour	Gouk
Grey (Beaver River)	Hanger
Hanrahan	Harper (Calgary West)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Harris
Hart	Hayes
Hermanson	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner	Johnston
Manning	Mayfield
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)	Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Penson	Ringma
Robinson	Schmidt
Solberg	Solomon
Stinson	Strahl
Taylor	Thompson
White (Fraser Valley West)	White (North Vancouver)
Williams—45	



*Government Orders*

**NAYS**

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Assadourian
Asselin	Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Bachand
Barnes	Beaumier
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Berger	Bergeron
Bernier (Gaspé)	Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Bhaduria	Blondin—Andrew
Bodnar	Bonin
Bouchard	Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Brushett
Bryden	Béclair
Bélisle	Caccia
Calder	Canuel
Catterall	Chamberlain
Chan	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Clancy	Cohen
Collenette	Collins
Comuzzi	Copps
Crawford	Crête
Culbert	de Savoye
Deshaies	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dingwall
Dromisky	Dubé
Duceppe	Duhamel
Dumas	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton
Fillion	Finlay
Flis	Fontana
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Gagnon (Québec)
Galloway	Gauthier (Roberval)
Gerrard	Godfrey
Godin	Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Harb
Harper (Churchill)	Harvard
Hopkins	Hubbard
Ianno	Iftody
Irwin	Jackson
Jacob	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)	Kirkby
Kraft Sloan	Landry
Langlois	Laurin
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lebel
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lee	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Leroux (Shefford)	Lincoln
Loney	Loubier
MacAulay	MacDonald
MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys)	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marchand	Marchi
Marleau	Massé
McCormick	McGuire
McKinnon	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
McTeague	McWhinney
Mercier	Milliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Murray	Ménard
Nault	Nunez
O'Brien	O'Reilly
Ouellet	Pagtakhan
Parrish	Paré
Patry	Payne
Peric	Peters
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Pickard (Essex—Kent)	Plamondon
Proud	Péloquin
Reed	Regan
Richardson	Rideout
Ringuette—Maltais	Robichaud
Rocheleau	Rompkey
Scott (Fredericton—York Sunbury)	Serré
Shepherd	Sheridan
Skoke	Speller

St-Laurent	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo	Telegdi
Terrana	Thalheimer
Tobin	Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	Tremblay (Rosemont)
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Venne
Verran	Volpe
Walker	Wappel
Wells	Whelan
Wood	Zed—184

**PAIRED MEMBERS**

Brien	Caron
Dalphoné—Guiral	Daviault
Debien	Discepolo
Goodale	Lalonde
Lastewka	Lefebvre
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Mifflin	Peterson
Pomerleau	Rock
Sauvageau	Young

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the amendment negatived.

**Mr. Gagliano:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe you will find unanimous consent for the question to be put now on the motion for third reading of Bill C-18 and that the vote just taken shall be applied in reverse to the motion for third reading.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

*(Division No. 31)*

**YEAS**

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Assadourian
Asselin	Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Bachand
Barnes	Beaumier
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Berger	Bergeron
Bernier (Gaspé)	Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Bhaduria	Blondin—Andrew
Bodnar	Bonin
Bouchard	Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Brushett
Bryden	Béclair
Bélisle	Caccia
Calder	Canuel
Catterall	Chamberlain
Chan	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Clancy	Cohen
Collenette	Collins
Comuzzi	Copps
Crawford	Crête
Culbert	de Savoye
Deshaies	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dingwall
Dromisky	Dubé
Duceppe	Duhamel
Dumas	Dupuy
Easter	Eggleton

Fillion  
Flis  
Gaffney  
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)  
Galloway  
Gerrard  
Godin  
Guarnieri  
Guimond  
Harper (Churchill)  
Hopkins  
Ianno  
Irwin  
Jacob  
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)  
Kraft Sloan  
Langlois  
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)  
LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso)  
Lee  
Leroux (Shefford)  
Loney  
MacAulay  
MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys)  
Maloney  
Marchand  
Marleau  
McCormick  
McKinnon  
McTeague  
Mercier  
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)  
Mitchell  
Murray  
Nault  
O'Brien  
Ouellet  
Parrish  
Patry  
Peric  
Phinney  
Pickard (Essex—Kent)  
Proud  
Reed  
Richardson  
Ringuette—Maltais  
Rocheleau  
Scott (Fredericton—York Sunbury)  
Shepherd  
Skoke  
St-Laurent  
Stewart (Brant)  
Szabo  
Terrana  
Tobin  
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)  
Ur  
Vanclief  
Verran  
Walker  
Wells  
Wood

Finlay  
Fontana  
Gagliano  
Gagnon (Québec)  
Gauthier (Roberval)  
Godfrey  
Gray (Windsor West)  
Guay  
Harb  
Harvard  
Hubbard  
Ifody  
Jackson  
Keyes  
Kirkby  
Landry  
Laurin  
Lebel  
Leblanc (Longueuil)  
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)  
Lincoln  
Loubier  
MacDonald  
Malhi  
Manley  
Marchi  
Massé  
McGuire  
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)  
McWhinney  
Milliken  
Minna  
Murphy  
Ménard  
Nunez  
O'Reilly  
Pagtakhan  
Paré  
Payne  
Peters  
Picard (Drummond)  
Plamondon  
Péloquin  
Regan  
Rideout  
Robichaud  
Rompkey  
Serré  
Sheridan  
Speller  
Steckle  
Stewart (Northumberland)  
Telegdi  
Thalheimer  
Torsney  
Tremblay (Rosemont)  
Valeri  
Venne  
Volpe  
Wappel  
Whelan  
Zed—184

**NAYS**

Members

Abbott  
Benoit  
Bridgman  
Chatters  
Duncan  
Forsyth  
Gilmour  
Grey (Beaver River)  
Hanrahan

Ablonczy  
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)  
Brown (Calgary Southeast)  
Cummins  
Epp  
Frazer  
Gouk  
Hanger  
Harper (Calgary West)

*Private Members' Business*

Harper (Simcoe Centre)  
Hart  
Hermanson  
Hoepfner  
Manning  
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)  
Mills (Red Deer)  
Penson  
Robinson  
Solberg  
Stinson  
Taylor  
White (Fraser Valley West)  
Williams—45

Harris  
Hayes  
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)  
Johnston  
Mayfield  
Meredith  
Morrison  
Ringma  
Schmidt  
Solomon  
Strahl  
Thompson  
White (North Vancouver)

**PAIRED MEMBERS**

Brien  
Dalphond—Guiral  
Debien  
Goodale  
Lastewka  
MacLaren (Etobicoke North)  
Mifflin  
Pomerleau  
Sauvageau

Caron  
Davialt  
Discepolo  
Lalonde  
Lefebvre  
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)  
Peterson  
Rock  
Young

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed.)

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6.14 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's order paper.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[Translation]

**HIGH SPEED TRAINS**

**Mr. René Laurin (Joliette)** moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should immediately take the required measures to authorize the construction of a high-speed train (HST) linking the cities of Windsor and Quebec City, as well as the necessary infrastructure.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise again today to speak about the high speed train between Quebec City and Windsor.

For the Bloc Québécois, this public transit system, which is effective, fast, convenient, comfortable, pleasant and environmentally friendly, is a key component for the economic development of our main urban centres in Quebec and Ontario.

We all know that communication links inevitably entail trade deals and industrial business. This was well understood by our ancestors who invested in railroads between both our provinces to start with, and then throughout Canada.

Traditionally, prosperity in Quebec and in Canada has been very closely tied to our investments in transportation. Our standard of living and our competitive position largely depend

*Private Members' Business*

on decisions that are taken today regarding the transportation infrastructure of tomorrow.

Unfortunately the railroad network and facilities used for the transportation of passengers and goods in Canada are considerably behind and our obsolete infrastructure has progressively given a competitive edge to other means of transportation such as cars, buses and airplanes.

Has the government forgotten that the increasing use of airplanes between Montreal and Toronto has put more pressure on airports and the highway system? Has it forgotten that increased dependency on cars has wasted more energy and hurt the environment? The government appears to have neglected facts which are nevertheless obvious.

It is more important than ever that Canada and Quebec have an efficient public transportation infrastructure which promotes the use of non-polluting and renewable energy resources in order to protect our ecosystems as much as possible, in keeping with the concept of sustainable development.

The government must consider this high-speed train project, which will make the transportation system more productive and provide technological benefits as well. It must establish a general policy involving Canadian transportation technology considered one of the most advanced in the world. It offers a unique opportunity to engage in an international industrial strategy that will allow Canadian and Quebec entrepreneurs to be leaders in introducing the high-speed train to North America and to the developing world.

(1820)

The high-speed train, also called the HST, or the TGV in French, is the logical way to develop passenger rail transportation in Canada. Some 10 million people, that is 40 per cent of the total population of Canada, live in the Quebec-Windsor corridor. This section, which covers the most densely populated area of Canada, is used every day by 10,000 people. The Canadian HST could take over at least 35 per cent—and, according to another realistic scenario, up to 45 per cent—of the total passenger market between Montreal and Toronto. Such a concentration is sufficient to support an HST which will definitely improve the quality of service in the most densely populated urban corridor of Canada and relieve congestion in the airports and on the roads.

Besides, we firmly believe that the government should have committed itself to putting into place permanent job-creating projects that would really help stimulate economic growth while reducing unemployment. For the Bloc Québécois, a high-speed train for the Quebec City-Windsor corridor is an initiative which largely meets these objectives.

The HST will bring about the creation of some 120,000 jobs, directly or indirectly related to the construction of the system and its equipment, operation and maintenance, to the technological transfers and to the industrial agreements to follow, not to mention the positive impact that it will have on the tourism industry.

The crucial role of the corridor for the Canadian economy has been stated many times and the high-speed train is practically the most efficient mode of transportation between larger cities. The European experience clearly shows that the high-speed train draws people to hotels, office buildings, convention centres, restaurants and other commercial or tourist activities.

A high speed train service will have additional economic spinoffs beyond those directly related to building and operating the train. Indeed, the increased number of passengers travelling the Quebec City—Windsor corridor will spend money for meals on board, accommodation and entertainment, and developers will invest in infrastructure to provide additional services needed to meet the growing demand.

Thus, a high-speed train will encourage the public and private sectors to better promote their communities and to develop package deals for tourists travelling aboard this train. Several communities along the corridor will also benefit from a faster connection to much larger cities and, consequently, improve access to their numerous facilities.

At the same time, connections to other modes of transportation intended to improve the total passenger transportation system will be an important advantage for some of the communities close to cities on the HST line.

(1825)

I take the case of Trois-Rivières and Kingston which will also be able to benefit from considerable social and economic spin-offs. That might facilitate the transportation to Kingston of our future students who will have to abandon the college in Saint-Jean.

Keep in mind that a community located close to a high speed train line would regain prestige because it would be seen as a modern and expanding community. The proof of this can be found in France where communities located close to the high speed train line capitalize on that in their written and oral publicity.

The Bloc's proposal is not just to promote tourism or economic development of local communities and job creation. We also consider it essential that Canada and Quebec invest in a railway infrastructure that is modern and better adapted to the realities of the 21st century. With improved facilities, we will be better able to face the challenges of the year 2000.

*Private Members' Business*

To do so, we must opt for a rail transportation system that will reduce ground and air traffic which has reached the saturation point, that will use non-polluting and renewable energy resources, and that will improve our industrial co-operation with a series of technological transfers between different European and Canadian companies, allowing them to become a technological bridge-head of high speed rail on the North American continent.

Research, development, innovation and technology transfer are one of the best solutions to economic problems and that is why we must speed up our efforts in that direction.

In Quebec and Canada, we have a critical mass of high-tech companies that creates a favourable climate for the development and implementation of advanced technologies. In addition to providing attractive opportunities for our scientists and technicians, these companies are a source of major spin-offs in terms of production and exports in the manufacturing sector. It is therefore essential for the future of our economy that we promote research and development and technological upgrading by supporting the strengths we already have in our high-tech companies. One of our serious problems in this respect is the delay in disseminating and implementing new technologies. The construction of a Canadian HST would make good use of our industrial capabilities in one of the sectors in which we excel, namely transportation equipment.

How much have governments invested in the past 20 years in developing or upgrading our airport facilities and how much will have to be invested in the years to come? What does it cost to maintain our road network and how much will future improvements cost?

We agree all these investments are necessary, but it is high time we took the same kind of action to rejuvenate our passenger train services. More government subsidies for developing transportation by bus or by air means the Canadian HST project is less likely to be realized.

We all know the HST project has been examined a number of times in the past ten years: there was a study by VIA Rail in 1982-84, updated in 1989; there was one by GEC, Alsthom-Bombardier in 1988-89 and another study by the Quebec-Ontario rapid train task force in 1989-91.

All these studies come to the same conclusion, which is that the potential market is sufficient to ensure the profitability of a high speed railway transportation system. The HST project would certainly enjoy the support of communities that would be able to take advantage of an HST service.

(1830)

In June, a feasibility study on the construction of high-speed rail lines in the chosen corridor is to be made public by the

federal, Quebec and Ontario governments. It will be very interesting to see the results of the cost benefit analysis carried out by the tripartite committee on technologies available to build a high speed train. Hopefully, all these exhaustive studies on a high speed train will eventually result in its construction and not gather dust on a shelf. On the other hand, once convinced of the undeniable potential of this project, governments and the private sector should jointly undertake a comprehensive feasibility study to determine the cost of the whole project and how to share responsibilities for this venture.

It is estimated that it will take \$7.5 billion over ten years to build a high-speed line between Quebec City and Windsor. The tax revenues generated by this project over the construction period should reach \$1.9 billion. At this rate, the high-speed line will be paid for very quickly. One must also take into account that the government's expenditures will be reduced since the high-speed train will provide transportation between cities at a much lower cost than that of upgrading the road and air networks. This is what you call rationalizing government expenditures.

That is why the Bloc Québécois recommends the construction of a high speed rail transportation system which will provide the following advantages: 120,000 jobs per year in Canada during construction; nearly \$1.9 billion in tax revenues also during construction; funding provided mainly by the private sector; use of a well proven Canadian technology allowing speeds of 300 kilometres an hour; new construction and urban renewal in communities all along the HST corridor; increased competitiveness for the corridor cities; a more economical and accessible mode of transportation for individuals as well as for businesses and communities established along the corridor; an environmentally-friendly mode of transportation; decreased highway and air traffic, reducing the need for new infrastructure; finally, technological expertise giving Canadian industry a strategic leading edge on the American high speed train market valued at approximately \$250 billion.

Without any hesitation, the Bloc supports the HST project because nowadays, no society and no region can afford not to use its innovative resources.

Construction of the HST would guarantee Canada and Quebec a prosperous future filled with benefits like those I mentioned earlier.

Construction of the HST in the most densely populated area of Canada is a unique investment opportunity. By investing right now, Canada and Quebec would reap dividends for decades. There would be immediate spinoffs during construction, and benefits for Canadians and Quebecers would continue to accrue throughout the project.

*Private Members' Business*

(1835)

The Quebec City–Windsor high–speed train project is undoubtedly a much more useful and desirable investment than the defunct helicopter project was. Particularly in the greater Montreal area, which was so badly hit by unemployment, it will provide an opportunity for industrial conversion in a field where export opportunities and therefore job opportunities are excellent.

I will conclude by telling you that, with the high–speed train, Canada will make the most profitable investment in transportation in its entire history. This investment by the Canadian government will not increase the Canadian debt and will contribute to VIA Rail's profitability. I hope that my colleagues will understand the importance of supporting this project, which fits part of our natural economic development and a good way to use the skills we have acquired.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I recognize the parliamentary secretary to the minister of agriculture who, I believe, has the unanimous consent of all members of the House to speak very briefly about an urgent matter.

\* \* \*

[English]

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri–food):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the members of the House for the opportunity to clarify what has been a misunderstanding of a statement I made at the end of question period today. Unfortunately the time allotted to me did not allow me to make a very critical part of that statement regarding the PVY–n virus in Prince Edward Island and the potato growers there.

As I said then, the minister recognizes and continues to give serious attention to the issue, as he has for the number of months he has been appointed. He recognizes that legal proceedings are inevitably lengthy and expensive to all parties that may be involved. The minister sincerely hopes that protracted litigation may be avoided and can be avoided. He will seek through legal counsel and continuous discussion with the industry to achieve that result.

I apologize to the industry for any misunderstanding that may have been caused by the incomplete statement earlier today.

I again thank the House for the opportunity to clarify this.

\* \* \*

**HIGH SPEED TRAIN**

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Joe Fontana (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the member for Joliette for his very informed speech on high speed trains.

I have no quarrel whatsoever with his enthusiasm for a technology that we are obviously considering. He alluded to the fact a report and a study on which \$6 million is being spent by Ontario, Quebec and the federal government is to be released in June. Surely he wants to be true and honest with Canadian taxpayers by at least waiting for the report and until such time as government and Parliament can make a decision on it.

As I said, the governments of Quebec, Ontario and Canada have embarked on a major study to determine the viability of a high speed rail system in the Quebec City to Windsor corridor.

The present study covers a broad range of subjects that have been identified in previous works and is so designed to provide the most comprehensive evaluation of the potential of high speed rail in the corridor.

The three governments hired a consortium of consultants as managers of the project. The consortium is responsible to produce the benefits and the costs and the financial analysis for the overall project.

In addition the consortium is supervising and co–ordinating the following component studies, all very important to the decision making: data gathering, passenger and revenue forecasting, technology assessment, including the operating and strategy and costing.

The member alluded to one technology but he also should know that two technologies were under consideration. New technologies are being developed even as we speak.

The member talked about \$7.5 billion. I do not know where he got those figures. The study has not been finished yet and some of his figures, unfortunately, are from previous reports or previous studies that have been done.

Also included are the industrial strategy and the economic benefits, institutional options and the legislative and labour issues, trends in intercity passenger transportation and government support, environmental aspects, impacts of the urban system and settlement patterns and the light freight and station concessions. This study builds on the findings and recommendations of the Ontario–Quebec task force report which identified several shortcomings in its work and the work of previous studies.

(1840)

One of the main concerns in the task force report work was the inadequacy of the data that formed the basis for the passenger and revenue forecasts. To address this concern one–third of the total allocated budget of \$6 million for the current study has been devoted to the gathering of data concerning travel patterns

and attitudes of the travelling public and to the forecasting of future usage.

This is the most critical aspect of the high speed proposal. Will people use it if in fact it is built? Previous studies of passenger travel in the corridor were conducted in a short timeframe and did not address the seasonal variances that may exist.

The quality and reliability of the base data have also been greatly improved over previous works. We have obtained 60,000 survey responses, three times more than had been obtained in the previous studies. This level of response was possible through the full co-operation of all the carriers in the corridor. Complete access to their passenger facilities and equipment was obtained to facilitate the conduct of the surveys. This is the first time researchers have been able to gain this unconditional co-operation. The survey results were also provided to the individual carriers to validate accuracy and reliability.

We have exerted a great deal of effort to improve the quality of the data to be used as the base for the study. This information is presently being incorporated by many of the consultants who are still in the midst of their work. It would be inappropriate and naturally premature to presume the outcome of their work.

In October 1989 the federal government established a royal commission on national passenger transportation with the objective of reporting on a national integrated, intercity passenger transportation system to meet the needs of Canadians in the 21st century. The commission reported its findings in 1992 and recommended with respect to high speed rail that governments only invest in high speed rail if the overall benefits exceed the costs and taxpayers do not have to pay an operating subsidy.

Furthermore, the commission recommended that there be public consultation on the implications of the government's decision and that the government establish a regulation under which high speed rail would operate, including safety and environmental regulations.

Clearly the royal commission has indicated through its recommendations that a hasty decision should not be promoted and that the full impacts of high speed rail are known prior to making a decision.

The Canadian debate on high speed rail has been ongoing for a long time and has intensified over the last few years with the release of several independent reports. These reports indicated that the governments will have to play a major role in any high speed project in Canada. The scope and the nature of the federal government's participation are yet to be determined or defined.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport addressed the question of the role of the federal government in high speed rail and reported its findings in March 1992. The

### *Private Members' Business*

Member should know that the theme of that whole report was a leap of faith.

The standing committee's recommendations are to a large extent addressed in the many component studies underway within the scope of the present study. Once again, these results will not be known for some time and the government should have all the information at hand prior to deciding on the future of high speed rail.

Canada's national rail passenger service has undergone many changes over the past few years. VIA Rail operations have been downsized in order to reduce subsidies. High speed rail is an option to improve the quality of service that is presently provided by VIA Rail.

A decision on the role of the federal government on high speed rail should not be made in isolation but would have to be addressed in the light of the broader context of the overall transportation needs in Canada. Canada's freight railways, CN and CP, have incurred substantial financial losses over the past 10 years. The railways are preparing proposals for the consolidation of their networks in Canada and some rail rationalization may be inevitable. This does not mean that valuable right of way which can be redeveloped for future purposes will be forgone. However, it would be beneficial to include this aspect in the decision on any high speed rail system.

(1845)

As I stated earlier, the creation of jobs is a priority mandate of the federal government. A high speed rail project during the construction period will create significant employment. We do not argue with that. The economic impact study which has yet to be completed will quantify the levels that would be generated by a high speed rail project.

The choice of technology is another area that must be identified. As I have indicated, we are looking at more than one technology. A high speed rail project will not see the light of day without significant contributions from the private sector. The motion should not be moved forward without the benefits of the study.

We are prepared to further discuss this matter once the \$6 million study, paid for by the Canadian taxpayers, is brought forward and presented to Parliament.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak on Motion No. 112 proposed by the hon. member for Joliette.

The motion calls for the federal government to authorize the construction of a high speed train link between Windsor and Quebec City. That is something which has been talked about in government circles, not to mention within the transport industry itself for many years but to little avail.

Before such a rail line could even possibly be seriously considered by the federal government, a wide array of important details and snags would have to be studied and worked out after

*Private Members' Business*

a long period of planning and public consultation. This is a project that could have far reaching ramifications to Canada well into the 21st century.

Although the good side of the coin is pretty evident for all to see, we should first take a good hard look at what some of the potential downsides of such a plan might be. I do not believe the hon. member's motion really addresses any of the essential specifics needed by the House before it could possibly see itself as being well enough informed to consider such a complicated issue.

Transport Canada is presently studying the high speed rail issue at length. Until it releases its report on the matter tentatively for some time in June, I certainly would not consider it wise for this House to blindly approve the sweeping motion put forward by the member for Joliette.

I understand as this is a private member's motion I am speaking on at the moment, it has little chance of successfully passing the skeptical eye of government benches. I nevertheless feel I have not seen enough by way of concrete information that would allow me to support the motion in good faith.

At present the motion before us in the House is simply a standard motion. It basically says there is something we should do and that is about it. There are no details, no dollar figures and of course nothing concrete or of an analytical nature.

Let us not be mistaken here. Properly constructed, a high speed rail line would cost somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$5 billion to \$7 billion. That is a little more than pocket change even for free spending members on the other side of the House.

The first question I would have to ask the hon. member for Joliette is where he would suggest the funding for such a project might appear. Is it expected to miraculously materialize out of thin air? Or, does the member actually have some ideas in mind as to where he would raise the necessary funding for this bold and innovative proposal? There is no mention at this point in his motion. Quite frankly that concerns me.

There have been all sorts of rumours flying of late as to who would or should shoulder the burden for such a major expenditure. On one hand let me say right now I would be much more apt to throw my support behind a high speed rail proposal if I had some concrete assurances that the entire multibillion dollar cost of such a major undertaking would be handled entirely by private industry. Unfortunately I have been hearing a number of disconcerting things that would have me believe otherwise.

The concept of a 50:50 funding split between the private sector and various levels of government, including our own here in Ottawa has been discussed and certainly has not been ruled out. From what I understand this possibly means the federal

government could be asked to shell out as much as \$2.8 billion toward the construction of something that sure sounds nice but carries the potential of turning into a bottomless money pit.

If this \$2.8 billion figure is anywhere near accurate and truthful as the truth now stands in the mind of the hon. member for Joliette then I would strongly suggest it may be time to set the alarm bells ringing over this one.

(1850)

The arguments that have been floating around in favour of publicly funded high speed rail lines are always the same ones we end up hearing when requests for government handouts come up, something to the effect of "do not worry, Mr. Prime Minister, sure you are putting up a big chunk of money but do not be concerned. This is a profitable enterprise and we are going to cut you a chunk of the profits".

As charitable and generous to the government as this offer may seem at first glance, let us be realistic. In the past so-called profitable endeavours the government has been foolish enough to get itself into have turned out to be total financial busts more often than not. The record of government involvement in the sphere of industrial development has been a dismal one as far back as most of us can remember.

This rotten record speaks for itself and it speaks volumes. Ottawa is unable to effectively manage its financial investments in the private sector and this will probably never change, nor should it.

If the high speed train link is supposed to be such a financial benefit for the federal government in the long haul with all the profit sharing that will take place why let us in on a share of the profits in the first place? Certainly it cannot be because private business has suddenly become enamoured with the likes of the Ottawa political crowd.

Considering that the political elites of Ottawa have not had the competence to turn an annual budgetary surplus since the early 1970s, I would certainly be surprised if any viable industry would want to enter into a working partnership with the federal government.

What could possibly be the justification for government participation in this high speed proposal? In short, the crux of the issue is very simple. If the rail line is a financially viable project then the federal government should give its full legislative backing to such a plan, provided there is no fiscal component involved. If that is not proven to be fiscally viable, why then would the government want to sink any of its non-existent money into such a plan? It certainly would be nice for us to be the North American pioneers of high speed rail transportation. If the logic is not there, neither should the taxpayers' money be.

The whole issue of taxpayers' dollars becomes even more acute when one considers the potentially far reaching ramifications of the upcoming Quebec referendum. If Jacques Parizeau and his Parti Québécois are successful in their next run at the voters, as many polls seem to indicate, then we would certainly expect to see the whole separatism issue shoot to the forefront, a public debate yet again.

As unappealing as I personally find this considering my preference for a strong and united Canada, we certainly must take this situation into account when we examine the possibility of assisting any major infrastructure project between Quebec City and southern Ontario. As distasteful as this may sound to some ostrich-like Liberals with their heads buried in the political sand, it stands to reason that the federal government should have the common sense to refrain from throwing any further multi-billion dollar funding allotments to Quebec until such times as the future of that province is settled democratically and decisively, hopefully once and for all.

Even if the government had wads of money spilling out of its coffers at this point, which it certainly does not, there would be no sense in undertaking a major high speed rail link, a third of which would be located in Quebec, as long as the separatist threat continues to loom over the economic and political well-being of this great country.

As with the citizens across the rest of Canada, voters in Quebec are no longer willing to allow their support to be bought off with their own taxpayers' dollars. That time has long passed. People from the Atlantic to the Pacific are aware that the national and provincial treasuries are as bare as the trite promises contained in the Liberal's red book. They are no longer willing to let their elected representatives throw oodles of their own hard earned money at dubious megaprojects, especially ones that would be completely lost to Canada in the event of a successful Quebec separatist effort.

These are the hard facts of the late twentieth century, and though they may seem confrontational or narrow minded they are not meant to be so. They are simply meant to set out the honest truth, alarming and brutal though it may be.

I have not arrived at my conclusions lightly, nor have I arrived at them without significant consultation with other various official sources within the transportation sector. This includes extensive and recent meetings with representatives from Bombardier, the Quebec based company hopefully planning to receive a significant chunk of any contractual work which would arrive out of this high speed link.

(1855)

Despite the admittedly optimistic outlook of Bombardier officials I am afraid past experience has shown Canadian people

### *Private Members' Business*

that their politicians should look a little more before they leap. That is precisely what I am attempting to do now by avoiding making hasty commitments to this very shaky concept. As such I find I am unable to support the motion made by the hon. member for Joliette.

The homework has not yet been done. I believe the proposal for a high speed train line, though intriguing, is simply too much too soon at this point in time.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to say that Quebecers who are listening to us, and also some Canadians, must be convinced, when they hear comments such as those coming from the Reform Party, that Quebec should become sovereign. I thank the Reform members for behaving in such a way, because they are helping our cause.

Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank you for allowing me to support my colleague from Joliette who moved this motion in the House, by asking him to demand that the government take the required measures to authorize the construction of a high-speed train linking Quebec City and Windsor.

As early as February 1, I had the opportunity to address this House and explain why the government should implement this project as soon as possible. I was recently followed by the youth wing of the Quebec Liberal Party, which is determined to pressure the Johnson administration to hold to it. That same federalist youth wing tabled this resolution at the policy conference of the Quebec Liberal Party in Montreal in March. The leader of the Parti Québécois, Jacques Parizeau, often asked the former premier of Quebec, Robert Bourassa, to put this project forward as an economic recovery tool. I am telling you all this because the implementation of the HST in the Quebec City—Windsor corridor has almost universal support in Quebec. To be convinced of that, you simply have to look at the 1991 report of the Task Force on the Quebec—Ontario High-Speed Train, co-chaired by the honourable Rémi Bujold, the former member of Parliament for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

I know that the government is expecting a report by this summer, which will make comparisons between competitive technologies. However, this is a question of form, not of substance. I am sure that the report which will be presented to the Minister of Transport will indicate a strong desire to go ahead with the HST and will suggest several ways to do so. Recently the dollar has been in a free fall while interest rates have been rising—we cannot know how high they will go—and the stock market has been very volatile.



*Private Members' Business*

In these circumstances, it would be easy to criticize the Minister of Finance for not having reduced our deficit. It would be easy to criticize the Governor of the Bank of Canada for having allowed a rise in interest rates. It would also be easy to ask the government to review its borrowing policy on foreign markets in order to protect ourselves from the fickleness of foreign investors from all parts of the world. But, Mr. Speaker, Canadians are worried and in need of a leader, of a government which will restore their self-confidence, a government which will give them hope in a better economic future in the short term, with an extraordinary venture, the construction of a high-speed train.

Why such a train? The government claims that it is ready to provide venture capital to promote high-tech industry, but are these empty promises? What is it waiting for to give the go ahead to the HST project? In two years it will be too late. The Americans will have forged ahead, depriving us of any hopes of winning contracts for high speed lines. We will not be able to export \$200 billion worth of technology over the next 10 or 12 years. At stake are many value-added jobs as well as our competitive edge in the high tech transportation field.

Why a high speed train? Because it will travel a corridor more than 1,200 kilometres long. It means more than 120,000 jobs over a 10-year period.

(1900)

A high speed train will allow municipalities in the corridor to build the infrastructure necessary for the economic development of their citizens and will give them hope for a better future for their children. This venture, worth some \$7.5 billion, will be the highlight of this last decade, a landmark future generations will remember about the 20th century in Canada.

When I have the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life in my riding of Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, the same two issues keep cropping up: the fears of seniors and the exasperation of our youth with our generation.

Let us look at the fears of seniors. They are concerned about developing our country, educating the next generation, establishing in our society all the required structures for education, hospital and other health services, transportation, environmental protection and good quality of life in general. Ten years ago, these people were not worried about their future, they believed the next generation would take care of them and they would reap what they had sowed a hundredfold. But as soon as they meet with economic difficulties, all governments, including the one in place, ask seniors to pay the bill.

Let us look now at young people, those who dreamed of a better world, those who worked hard to acquire a specialty and university degrees, those who were promised a leisure society in

the year 2000, those who are presently discouraged, jobless and frustrated because they see the previous generation—our generation—enjoying conditions they will never be able to obtain. We have to give them faith in and hope for a brighter future. We must leave them something besides an accumulated debt of \$500 billion. We must show them that we were daring and that we left them with big projects and the opportunity to develop them in the years to come.

The HST project is exciting, visionary and affordable. Affordable in the long run if we learn to expand it according to our means; affordable because each dollar invested will create real jobs for the long term, not temporary employment like the municipal infrastructure program.

Railway companies are less and less interested in operating regional lines. They would rather be travel wholesalers operating only the main lines. After studying the situation in several countries like Italy, Germany, Japan and the United States, we concluded that rail transportation is a state responsibility almost everywhere. Decisions on operation and expansion are always taken by government, which is also involved directly in construction and financing either through subsidies or loan guarantees.

There would be nothing wrong with following the same model used for the bridge between Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, which will be done with the help of the private sector and some generous subsidies from the federal government. As for the environment, it is interesting to know that, even when running at 300 kilometres an hour, the HST uses close to half as much energy as a car and four times less than passenger jet aircraft.

The HST would not cause air emissions and would use a type of energy that is abundant in Ontario and in Quebec. Following the cancellation of the agreement with New York State, these provinces have an enormous electrical potential to support this new transportation mode. Besides, this means of transportation is not so new since most big North American cities used this type of energy for their transit from the 1900s to the 1950s. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, our ancestors left us everything we need. Now, all we have to do is demonstrate a willingness to innovate in a transportation corridor that presents many opportunities.

(1905)

Finally, I strongly urge this House to adopt the motion presented by my colleague from Joliette and to demand that the government rule immediately on its substance, in other words to give the go ahead to the HST, subject to a review of the terms and conditions which will be presented to the Minister of Transport in June.

*Private Members' Business**[English]*

**Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a brief remark before I start my speech on the TGV.

Goodness knows I am a federalist and I am a deeply committed Canadian. I feel very differently from the people across the way in the Bloc Québécois. At the same time I would be less than truthful if I did not feel hurt as a resident of Quebec, as a citizen of Quebec, by some of the remarks made by the member for Kootenay West—Revelstoke.

I do not believe extreme statements about any part of the country, whether it be Quebec, the west or Atlantic Canada, help Canadian unity. I have always believed in constructive dialogue. We are adversaries at times. At the same time I do not think that loud and extreme statements help.

*[Translation]*

I am pleased to address today the motion presented by the hon. member from Joliette that the government should immediately authorize the construction of a high-speed rail service between Quebec City and Windsor.

Before stating the government's position on the motion, I would like to provide some background information which will assist in understanding our response to the motion put forward by the hon. member for Joliette.

In November 1991 the federal Minister of Transport of the day, along with the ministers of transport from Quebec and Ontario announced a joint study of the feasibility of operating a high-speed train service in the corridor between Quebec City and Windsor where the prospects for viability are surely the highest in Canada. This study was to take between 18 and 24 months to complete, at a cost of \$6 million to be shared equally among the three governments.

The decision to conduct the study was based upon the recommendations of a joint Quebec–Ontario task force report released in May 1991 which examined the merits of high speed rail service in the corridor. This task force was created by the premiers of Quebec and Ontario in 1989.

The task force concluded that a final decision on whether to proceed with a high speed train project could not be made without undertaking a more detailed study covering such areas as traffic forecasts, routing, available technologies, environmental issues and funding alternatives by the private sector and the three governments. The report also recommended that the Government of Canada should be an active participant in this new study.

So, in keeping with these recommendations, the federal government agreed to participate with Ontario and Quebec in undertaking this more detailed work.

Based on the foregoing, the objective of this feasibility study is to recommend whether governments should initiate and/or support the development of high-speed rail service in the Quebec City–Windsor corridor.

The study is based on a review of representative technologies which would operate over various routes. Six such technologies are currently under consideration. The study enables realistic projections of impacts, including revenues and costs, to be evaluated and involves the participation of some thirty consultants on various aspects of the analysis. Obviously, we are talking about a very serious examination.

The study was initially scheduled for completion in the fall of 1993 but has been delayed as a result of the magnitude and complexity of the work. I should point out, however, that the study is still within its original \$6-million budget, which, as I said, is shared equally between the three governments. The present schedule provides for the completion of a draft final report a few months from now.

As we are just coming out of a recession, we are faced with very high unemployment. Owing to high deficits, governments will want to ensure that projects will not require large amount of public funds. It could be argued, on the surface, that the implementation of a high-speed rail service would be a major initiative for considerable job creation and a major economic stimulus. The results of the economic impact studies will give an idea of how many jobs could be created by such a project.

The jobs would not be created in the short term, however. Should this project be approved, it would require at least several years of detailed environmental studies and assessments.

*[English]*

The government is faced with another reality which has been addressed by the Minister of Finance in a recently tabled budget, namely the deficit and the question of deficit reduction.

The government has demonstrated for the benefit of all Canadians its commitment to deficit reduction in the budget. We must address the unemployment problem in a constructive fashion. Care must be exercised in ensuring that any potential job creation initiatives will not have an adverse impact on the deficit but, on the contrary, should be such as to result in a steady reduction of both our deficit and national debt.

The benefit, cost and financial analysis will only be known at the completion of the study which as I mentioned previously will not be available for some months. Therefore it would not be appropriate to speculate on the results and to precipitate a decision as tabled by the hon. member for Joliette.

*Private Members' Business*

It is obvious that for a national government any decision on the potential of a high speed rail service must be examined in the light of the broader context of the overall transportation needs in Canada of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Furthermore a decision of the potential of a high speed rail service should be examined in light of the broader context of the overall transportation needs in Canada, as I mentioned earlier. High-speed rail service has gained prominence throughout the world. France, Sweden, Spain, Italy and Japan are some of the countries that have benefited from the introduction of high speed rail services.

While recognizing the very obvious merits of such technology, we should be cautious and not jump to the conclusion that high speed rail service could have similar results in Canada, at least not until the review now under way is completed. Conditions that exist in Canada such as climate, demographics, intermodal competition, and the institutional and regulatory environment are all real concerns and could determine whether a high-speed rail service is viable or not.

Much closer to us, all attempts to initiate a high-speed rail service in the United States have failed. The most promising, namely the Texas project, has failed to raise the required private funding.

At the present time, it appears that only one high-speed train project will proceed in the United States. That is the Northeast corridor project between Washington, New York and Boston. The success of this project depends, to a great extent, on major government subsidies.

The difficulties encountered in the United States are a valuable lesson that we should not ignore and provide a further incentive to proceed carefully only once we have all of the information needed to make a sound decision.

While we treat the initiative proposed by the hon. member for Joliette with all the objectivity and seriousness it deserves, and we think it should be considered objectively and seriously, I believe that it would be wise and appropriate to wait to review this matter until the joint study has been completed. It would be totally irresponsible to rush into a project of this magnitude without taking the time to review it from every angle.

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the item is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

It being 7.14 p.m. the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 7.14 p.m.)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Wednesday, April 13, 1994

---

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### **Freestyle Skiing**

Mr. Patry ..... 2967

### **Military Industries**

Mr. Ménard ..... 2967

### **Environmental Secretariat**

Mr. Hanrahan ..... 2967

### **Refugees**

Mr. O'Brien ..... 2967

### **Government Intervention**

Mr. Steckle ..... 2968

### **Crime Prevention**

Mr. Murphy ..... 2968

### **Native Languages**

Mr. Bachand ..... 2968

### **Halifax West High School**

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West) ..... 2968

### **Sikh Nation Anniversary**

Mr. Malhi ..... 2968

### **National Infrastructure**

Mr. Adams ..... 2969

## **Young Offenders**

Mr. Harb ..... 2969

## **MIL Davie Shipyard**

Mr. Guimond ..... 2969

## **Gun Control**

Mr. Abbott ..... 2969

## **Environmental Technology Centres**

Mrs. Wayne ..... 2970

## **Health**

Mrs. Kraft Sloan ..... 2970

## **Rail Transportation**

Mr. Richardson ..... 2970

## **Disaster Relief**

Mr. Althouse ..... 2970

## **Infrastructure Program**

Mr. McClelland ..... 2970

## **ORAL QUESTIONS**

## **Manpower Training**

Mr. Bouchard ..... 2971

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) ..... 2971

Mr. Bouchard ..... 2971

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) ..... 2971

Mr. Bouchard ..... 2971

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) ..... 2971

Mr. Gauthier (Roberval) ..... 2971

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) .....	2972
Mr. Gauthier (Roberval) .....	2972
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) .....	2972

### **Government Expenditures**

Mr. Manning .....	2972
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) .....	2972
Mr. Manning .....	2972
Mr. Manley .....	2973
Mr. Manning .....	2973
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) .....	2973

### **Manpower Training**

Mr. Dubé .....	2973
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre) .....	2973
Mr. Dubé .....	2973
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre) .....	2973

### **Government Expenditures**

Mr. Hart .....	2973
Mr. Manley .....	2974
Mr. Hart .....	2974
Ms. Copps .....	2974

### **Bilingualism**

Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata) .....	2974
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) .....	2974
Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata) .....	2974
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) .....	2974

### **Government Expenditures**

Mr. Williams .....	2975
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) .....	2975
Mr. Williams .....	2975
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) .....	2975

### **Bilingualism**

Mr. de Savoye .....	2975
---------------------	------

Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) .....	2975
Mr. de Savoye .....	2975
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) .....	2975

**Canada Pension Plan**

Mr. Shepherd .....	2976
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre) .....	2976

**Gun Control**

Ms. Meredith .....	2976
Mr. MacLellan .....	2976
Ms. Meredith .....	2976
Mr. MacLellan .....	2976

**Budget Cuts**

Mr. Loubier .....	2976
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) .....	2977
Mr. Loubier .....	2977
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice) .....	2977

**Immigration**

Mr. Hanger .....	2977
Mr. Marchi .....	2977
Mr. Hanger .....	2977
Mr. Marchi .....	2978

**Potato Industry**

Mr. McGuire .....	2978
Mr. Vanclief .....	2978

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**Government Response to Petitions**

Mr. Milliken .....	2978
--------------------	------

**Pearson International Airport Agreement Act**

Bill C–22. Motions for introduction and first reading deemed adopted .....	2978
--	------

Mr. Manley .....	2978
------------------	------

## **Criminal Code**

### **Canada Post Corporation Act**

Bills C-234 and C-235. Motions for introduction and first reading agreed to. ....	2978
Mr. de Savoye .....	2978

## **Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act**

Bill C-236. Motions for introduction and first reading deemed adopted .....	2979
Mr. McTeague .....	2979

## **Committees of the House**

### **Library of Parliament**

Motion for concurrence in first report .....	2979
Mr. McWhinney .....	2979
(Motion agreed to.) .....	2979

## **Memorandum of Agreement**

Mr. Milliken .....	2979
Motion .....	2979
(Motion agreed to.) .....	2979

## **Petitions**

### **Housing**

Mr. Allmand .....	2979
-------------------	------

### **The Senate**

Mr. Althouse .....	2979
--------------------	------

### **Criminal Code**

Mr. Morrison .....	2979
--------------------	------

## **Committees of the House**

### **Fisheries and Oceans**

Mr. MacDonald .....	2980
---------------------	------



Mr. Bernier (Gaspé) .....	2980
---------------------------	------

**Minority Report**

Mr. Cummins .....	2980
-------------------	------

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

Mr. Milliken .....	2980
Mr. Eggleton .....	2981

**Motions for Papers**

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

**Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Suspension Act, 1994**

Bill C-18. Motion for third reading .....	2981
Mr. Robichaud .....	2981
Mr. Milliken .....	2981
Mr. Langlois .....	2983
Mr. Harper (Calgary West) .....	2987
Motion .....	2990
Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe) .....	2990
Mr. Milliken .....	2992
Mr. Crête .....	2992
Mrs. Hayes .....	2993
Mr. Milliken .....	2994
Mr. McTeague .....	2995
Mr. Johnston .....	2995
Mr. Boudria .....	2996
Mr. Langlois .....	2996
Mr. Hermanson .....	2997
Amendment negatived on division: Yeas, 45; Nays, 184. ....	2998
(Bill read the third time and passed.) .....	2999

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**High-speed Train**

Mr. Laurin .....	2999
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Motion .....	2999
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## **Points of Order**

### **Comments during Question Period**

Mr. Vanclief .....	3002
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## **High Speed Trains**

Consideration resumed of motion .....	3002
Mr. Fontana .....	3002
Mr. Gouk .....	3003
Mr. Guimond .....	3005
Mr. Lincoln .....	3007
Appendix .....	3008