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Tuesday, February 7, 1995

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, February 7, 1995

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

The Speaker: My colleagues, I wish to comment on the matter brought to the attention of the House by the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands on December 7 and 8, 1994.

The hon. member explained that a serious omission had been found in a publication entitled “The Prime Ministers of Canada, 1867 to 1994”, a document prepared jointly by the House of Commons and the National Archives. Subsequently, other errors and inconsistencies were discovered and communicated to me.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands was justifiably upset by the omission of references to Kingston and the entry for Sir John A. Macdonald and was absolutely correct when he pointed out that all Canadians associate our first Prime Minister with the limestone city, and in case some of you did not know that is Kingston.

All members and their constituents recognize the importance a member’s riding and its history play in a member’s political identification. Some of the errors and omissions in this publication concerning members’ constituencies may be the result of editorial decisions designed to simplify the rather complex evolution of our political and electoral systems.

[*Translation*]

For example, at times in our history, certain constituencies have returned two members of Parliament in an election, or a member appointed to the ministry would have to resign his seat and seek re-election as a minister. Members were permitted to be candidates in, and be elected in more than one riding at a time, although these members ultimately would have to choose which riding to represent.

Regrettably, other difficulties with this publication seem to have been the result of an apparent misunderstanding between the House and the National Archives when the publication was edited.

[*English*]

An erratum has been prepared for the first edition and will be attached to all remaining copies of the book. A revised second edition is currently under production by the National Archives and members will receive their copies when it is available.

I believe that these measures will rectify the situation and I thank the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands for bringing this matter to the attention of the House.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government’s response to 19 petitions.

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[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the government’s response to the recommendations of the special joint committee reviewing Canadian foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, the first paper, which is the government’s response, will be followed by the policy statement that the government intends to table in this House.

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(1005)

*[English]***CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY**

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):
Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of rising in the House today to table the government response to the report of the special joint committee reviewing Canadian foreign policy.

My duty as foreign affairs minister has given me many opportunities to observe the role that our country plays in the world. It has been said in some quarters that our privileged position on the world stage would be called into question by the end of the cold war.

On the contrary, I am proud to note that our country continues to play an important role and that the international community's expectations of us have not diminished. Canada occupies a position of leadership among the open advanced countries which are becoming increasingly influential as world power is dispersing and becoming more defined in economic terms.

Canada's geographic location gives it an important advantage as new poles of political and economic powers emerge in the Pacific and Latin America. Canada's cultural heritage gives it privileged access to the anglophone and francophone worlds as well as to the homelands of Canadians drawn from every part of the globe who make up its multicultural personality.

Canada can further its global interests better than any other country through its active membership in key international groupings, for example hosting the G-7 summit this year and the Asia-Pacific economic co-operation forum summit in 1997.

Canada's history as a non-colonizing power, champion of constructive multilateralism and effective international mediator underpins an important and distinctive role among nations as they seek to build a new and better order.

[Translation]

Canada, thus, is in a privileged position to influence change and to benefit from opportunities as we move toward the end of the 20th century. The government will exercise that influence responsibly to protect and promote Canada's values and interests in the world.

The committee faced an enormous task, and I congratulate all of its members, in particular the two co-chairmen, Senator MacEachen and Senator Gauthier, who was then a member of this House and co-chair of this committee.

I think that the government's response had to reflect the depth and quality of the work done by all committee members from both sides of the House.

The government has kept the promise contained in the red book. It has made the development of Canadian foreign policy a democratic process by seeking the participation of Canadians and their members of Parliament. Both the joint committee and the government recognize that changes on the international scene will speed up rather than slow down. Unfortunately, the financial constraints that we face are not likely to go away in a hurry.

A responsible government must thus constantly re-evaluate its strategies openly and clearly, to reflect the interests and concerns of Canadian men and women more effectively.

(1010)

Canadians are increasingly aware that their actions, both individual and collective, have international consequences. The once-clear distinction between national and international affairs is quickly becoming blurred, forcing us to take a broader view of things. The number of stakeholders in foreign policy continues to grow.

In short, international relations are no longer the concern of governments alone, but of all Canadian men and women who work in non-governmental organizations and play a very important role in representing one aspect of our foreign policy.

The government is committed to continuing consultation and to giving members of Parliament and NGO officials a vital role in developing our foreign policy. Thus, in March 1994, the government invited Canadians from various walks of life to take part in the first national forum on Canada's international relations.

I wish to confirm today that we intend to make this forum an annual event. Since our term of office began, we have held five parliamentary debates on key foreign policy issues. I can assure you that Canadian foreign policy will no longer be developed behind closed doors; all Canadians and especially all members of Parliament will be involved.

With my colleagues, the two Secretaries of State and the Minister for International Trade, I held a series of consultations and round tables across Canada. I can tell you that we will continue these consultations throughout our term of office.

Based on these consultations and the report of the joint committee, and recognizing the need for a flexible and effective foreign policy, the government has identified three key objectives that will guide its activities on the international scene in the years to come.

These objectives are: first, to promote jobs and prosperity; second, to promote our security in a stable international framework; and third, to share our values and our culture. These objectives complement one another and reflect the government's national priorities.

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With regard to our first objective, I would like to begin by saying that the government is committed to implementing a foreign policy that promotes access of Canadian goods and services to foreign markets. The objective could not be clearer: to defend and increase Canada's prosperity, and to promote jobs and growth by diversifying our economic and trade relations.

The Government recognizes the growing importance of the major international financial institutions and firmly intends to discuss this with its foreign partners during the G-7 Summit in Halifax in June. I shall leave the task of providing a more detailed explanation of our objectives in this area to my colleague, the Minister for International Trade.

I shall now discuss the second objective, an equally important aspect of our foreign policy: promoting our security in a stable international framework. The hostile environment of the Cold War kept us from concentrating our efforts on combatting other threats no less real.

While the geopolitical upheavals of recent years have greatly reduced the immediate threats to our security, we must now, paradoxically, expand our definition of this concept.

(1015)

Today, security is no longer defined in terms of ideologies or boundaries. Environmental deterioration, massive, uncontrolled migrations, international crime, drug trafficking, AIDS, overpopulation and underdevelopment are the names of today's threats. Our security requires a deeper awareness of these new threats. The threat of war and armed conflicts may have diminished, but the modern world is just as threatened by the new problems that face people in every part of the world.

It is therefore essential that we, Canadians, in seeking to protect ourselves, do our best to help resolve these problems, in the interest not only of the security of those who are facing them, but also of our own. I think that we can say, and everybody will agree, that Canadians are proud of their country's unique contribution to UN peacekeeping operation. Canada will continue to participate in these missions.

But our decisions will be subject to specific criteria, as the committee recommended. As the UN and the regional security organizations have served us well, Canada will continue to serve them well. But to serve well also means identifying the structural problems, weaknesses and shortcomings of these organizations, and working relentlessly toward correcting them.

As I announced last September, Canada is working diligently toward improving the efficiency of the United Nations. With this in mind, we are preparing, among other things, a study on the rapid reaction capability of the UN, which we will table in September at the next General Assembly in New York.

The third objective of our foreign policy is to promote our values and our culture abroad. A country that isolates itself and fails to project its identity and values beyond its boundaries is doomed to anonymity and loss of influence. Our writers, artists, academics and researchers are the best ambassadors of our identity in all its diversity. They convey the creativity and knowledge essential to the prosperity, development and health of our country.

I can assure you that the restructuring and staff redeployment within the department will emphasize this third major aspect of our foreign policy. Like our entrepreneurs, those involved in the cultural and educational sectors have a product to sell. Like our exporters, they have a market to conquer. And like our business people, they are known for the excellence of their product. For them too, internationalization is essential to success and competitiveness.

The influence of the cultural and educational sectors on our economy is profound, as we can see. These sectors hold a good deal of potential for Canada, a potential that we must use wisely. The Government is committed to defending the competitiveness of our cultural industries and of the educational products and services of our universities and colleges, and to helping our artists penetrate foreign markets. To say that we have limited resources is no excuse for abdicating our responsibilities.

(1020)

On the contrary, it is an opportunity to consolidate our efforts and work with the departments and agencies concerned, and also with the provinces, to promote our culture and knowledge abroad.

Vitality in our cultural, academic and scientific interchange is essential to our success in the new knowledge based world economy. It is also essential to our growth, prosperity and success nationally.

In order to remain competitive, our institutions of higher learning, our students, our future workers need to adapt to a profoundly and constantly changing international labour market, to expose themselves to the new technologies, and to master new knowledge.

Canadians know that our problems are insignificant compared to the intolerable situation in which too many of the world's people still live. Official development aid is another important and integral part of our foreign policy, for it strikes at the very roots of conflict and of threats to security. Aid reflects the values of Canadians, values of compassion, co-operation and generosity.

In the statement we are tabling today, the government firmly intends to clarify the mandate of the Canadian International Development Agency, in order to give it a solid objective and clear priorities that will dictate the action it takes.

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These priorities are six in number: first, to address basic human needs; second, to support the participation of women in sustainable economic development; third, to develop in these countries the infrastructure services essential to a sound economic upswing; fourth, to defend human rights; fifth, to encourage the private sector in these countries, which need to prosper and take their place on the leading edge of the global evolution; and finally, a responsibility from which no one is exempt and which is fundamental to our collective future, and that is to protect our environment.

It is clear that these objectives support the three main principles of foreign policy that I have just announced: first, the promotion of prosperity; second, the promotion of security; and finally, the promotion of our values and our culture.

The government will encourage and help Canadians to participate and to continue to participate in co-operative development and will take measures to improve the effectiveness of the official development aid program.

[English]

In closing let me say that our country's foreign policy is a source of pride for all Canadians. Our foreign policy aims to bring people together to dialogue, to build bridges and to form ties. We must involve the people of Canada, including obviously their members of Parliament, non-governmental organizations, universities, provinces, cultural groups and those who are involved in the development of what we believe should be a good, proud, effective foreign policy.

(1025)

Indeed we ought to meet expectations because it is quite clear as we travel throughout the world that other people expect a lot from Canada. They count on us to be a partner, to be friends and allies in their efforts to strive in a new world of peace and security and prosperity for their populations.

The policy I am presenting today takes this into account. It is innovative in its openness to input from Canadians and from Parliament and it depends on continued support from Canadians to make it an effective foreign policy. It is innovative in its objectives which are more sharply focused than ever before.

Economic and trade factors have a primary place in it. Risks to security are looked at in a broad perspective, something that has never been done before. It has been more or less focused exclusively on military dimensions. For the first time we now have something much wider and which takes into account the reality of today in dealings and in trying to strive for a security policy that corresponds to our objectives and needs, but it is very much in line with the tremendous changes which have occurred in the world in recent years.

Finally, it also clearly sets out the particular importance given to the promotion of Canadian culture and values and the importance of working hard with others to ensure that the freedoms, the democratic system, the respect for human rights, and the promotion of individuals as we know in Canada will continue to make progress in many parts of the world where Canadians are asked to participate and influence the decision making process. Certainly that third dimension which deals with our values will be one on which we will work as hard as we are working on the two other dimensions of our foreign policy.

I conclude by thanking all the members of the joint committee for their excellent work, with the hope that the already well-established dialogue among governments, the people of Canada and Parliament will continue to bear fruit.

[Translation]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to discuss the policy statement tabled in this House by the government. The numerous upheavals which occurred on the international scene over the last few years have made it more urgent than ever for Canada to review its position and to define what its new role should be.

This morning, the government finally released the new objectives of Canada's foreign policy. Bloc Québécois members played an active role in the work of the special joint committee reviewing Canadian foreign policy. Canada's participation in UN peacekeeping missions, its development assistance, as well as its efforts to promote human and democratic rights explain to a large extent our country's international reputation.

Bloc Québécois members hope that this will continue to be the case, and it is with that in mind that they took part in the work of the committee.

However, I wish to remind the minister that the Bloc Québécois felt it had to express a dissenting opinion regarding certain recommendations contained in the majority report. Indeed, we felt that these recommendations were not likely to promote major changes in Canadian foreign policy. Consequently, we made recommendations to the government, based on what we feel is a more adequate reflection of the notion which Quebecers, among others, have of the world surrounding them.

(1030)

We sought to propose to the government another foreign policy which would reflect our abilities, serve our real interests, and which would be based on our experience. It is obvious, when you look at the policy statement released today, that the government missed the boat. There is virtually no concrete commitment in that statement, except for a confirmation of the about-face made by the government, which is resolutely turning its back on the promotion of human and democratic rights, thus

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relinquishing its historic responsibilities. I will get back to this later on.

Let me take a few moments to discuss the key objectives which, from now on, will guide the government on the international scene. The hon. member for Verchères will deal more specifically with the government's first objective, which is to promote prosperity and employment, while I will mainly discuss the second and third ones, which are the promotion of security and of Canadian values and culture.

First, as regards the issue of security, it is clear that the intentions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs are not supported by concrete action. Indeed, in spite of his being in favour of UN reform, which the minister feels is a pressing issue, he has no immediate steps to propose. Instead of immediately announcing the gist of the reforms this government will propose on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the UN, the minister has indicated he will wait until then to announce Canada's position on possible reforms.

Meanwhile, the UN remains incapable of taking effective action in the field, to prevent tragedies like those we have witnessed in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, the Sudan, and the list goes on. The minister does not seem to realize that reforms are urgently needed at the UN. The minister has been musing about this for more than fifteen months, but when will we see some concrete decisions? In fact, the minister is postponing decisions that should be made today.

What the minister had to say about some very important matters like the Arctic and non-proliferation of nuclear arms also merits careful scrutiny. The Arctic, the scene of constantly escalating militarism during the Cold War, should be given more serious consideration than what transpired from the minister's proposals. Instead of coming out in favour of a military withdrawal, pure and simple, from this territory, the minister proposes a plan for sustainable development to be implemented by the countries that share this immense territory.

What is the use of supporting this kind of scheme, attractive though it may be, if it is not supported by a firm Canadian position on the demilitarization of the area? Canada's firm position is reflected in a decision to spend \$1 billion on submarines, as provided in the latest white paper on Canada's defence policy. Is that what the minister means by sustainable development in the Arctic? Would it not be preferable to start discussions on this very worthwhile objective now with our partners the United States, Russia and the Scandinavian countries?

The non-proliferation of nuclear arms is another case of the government not practising what it preaches. How can we expect Canada to have any credibility, when our position is in no way reflected in concrete policies? Would the minister not have done

better to make exercising real control over our exports of nuclear products part of the government's trade policy?

As a world leader in the production of these strategic commodities, Canada undeniably has sufficient clout among the nations that buy our products. Here again, the minister prefers to take refuge in comments that seldom have much more than a cosmetic impact. It is really too bad the Minister of Foreign Affairs obviously was not listening to the many recommendations made by a host of witnesses who appeared before the joint committees on foreign affairs and defence.

Since it was elected, this government has constantly used consultations as an excuse, consultations that, unfortunately, are useless since the government lacks the political will to defend the convictions shared by Canadians and Quebecers.

(1035)

With respect to the government's third objective, culture, the spearhead of Canadian foreign policy, I would like to point out right off that, once again, the Government of Canada is refusing to acknowledge and to address the problem of Canada's two constituent nations.

In their dissenting report, Bloc Québécois members acknowledged that Canada needed anchoring against the overpowering culture of the United States. The government's approach in cultural matters, however, is based on the false premise that this is one nation with a single culture, a so-called Canadian culture. What is this Canadian culture, exactly?

Clearly Canada is having great difficulty defining itself. Its existential problem is that it is being torn apart by a double identity. The government's only response to this difficulty was to introduce the policy of multiculturalism. The minister is doubtless aware, as a Quebecer, that this policy is based not so much on a sociological analysis of the place of ethnic groups within Canada as on a desire to impose a single and common vision of Canada.

In our opinion, however, any policy intended to project the image of a homogeneous and unified Canada abroad can only lead to a denial of Quebec's culture. What the federal government is trying to do, in fact, is to use culture as a tool abroad to further marginalize and downplay Quebec's identity. Quebecers see through its scheme.

Before broaching the subject of international aid, I would like to consider for a few moments the issue of human rights. In his policy statement, the Minister of Foreign Affairs indicated, and I quote, "Human rights will remain a priority in the area of international aid". And later on, "The government will give priority to supporting democracy throughout the world in the years to come". In fact there is nothing concrete to support this wishful thinking on the part of the government.

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What aspect of the policy statement released today establishes democracy and human rights as fundamental elements of Canada's foreign policy? Could the minister tell us this? What are the fundamental elements of foreign policy? The government simply dismissed this role, which suits its purposes, all the while refusing to truly entrench it as one of the basic principles of its foreign policy. It does nevertheless include some of the values shared by Canadians and Quebecers as a whole.

Canada's foreign policy should instead demonstrate unflinching consistency and openness in this regard if it wishes to maintain the wealth of respect and prestige acquired by Canada and which a sovereign Quebec nation would like to perpetuate.

The government quite simply lacked the will to ensure that the key elements of its foreign policy in respect of democracy and human rights be made into guidelines by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and by CIDA. The government could have done this with the collaboration of non-governmental agencies and commercial corporations.

Such guidelines might have included a compulsory schedule for analyzing situations involving systematic and flagrant violations of human rights and could have been developed quickly. Instead, the government is satisfied with a statement that is meaningless since it suggests no concrete action.

Regarding international aid, the government has once again missed the opportunity to be innovative in the renewal of its foreign policy. While, as we know, CIDA is being submitted to all kinds of pressures, preventing the agency from meeting its main objectives, the government failed to give it a constituent act clearly defining its powers and mandate. Currently, too many commercial considerations enter into some of the projects funded by CIDA.

From now on, international aid will have to serve Canadian commercial interests first and foremost. The government made itself very clear on that. We believe, on the contrary, that the main objective of aid should be to provide the poorest nations of the world with the tools necessary to develop at a sustainable pace.

(1040)

What kind of mechanism is the government putting in place to ensure that public aid to development is only used to this end? No matter how hard we look, we cannot find any. Instead, the fact that priority will be given to commercial interests will result in cancelling the benefits of the Canadian public program of aid to development and contribute to widening the gap between rich and poor nations. The Quebec association of international co-operation agencies had also pointed this out to the government.

As far as enhancing the role of NGOs in the delivery of aid programs, the government is saying no. The Bloc Québécois' dissenting report and the committee's majority report agreed, however, on this issue: NGOs should have been granted a larger percentage of official development assistance.

In conclusion, I am inclined to say that the Minister of Foreign Affairs would have benefitted from attentively reading and taking into consideration the recommendations made by the official opposition in its dissenting report.

The government preferred not to respond to the observations and recommendations made by the official opposition in its dissenting report; this did not enhance democracy. Unfortunately, the policy statement issued by the minister this morning gives very few specifics. It is incoherent and short-sighted and is another demonstration of the federal government's inability to respond to the vision that Quebecers have of the world that surrounds them.

It is more important than ever that Quebec finally be able to be fully active on the international scene, to express its own hopes and to defend its own interests.

[English]

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to address the government's response to the report of the special joint committee reviewing Canada's foreign affairs. This review and the work with the committee was certainly rewarding and enjoyable for the most part, but when it comes to the minister's response I am somewhat disappointed.

I was very interested in looking at the government's response to the Reform Party's dissenting opinion in the final report. In this dissenting opinion Reform raised many important issues and areas of concern. We also made several constructive recommendations specifically intended to assist the minister in developing his program review. In other words, the Reform members of the special joint committee participated actively through eight months of meetings in the hope the minister would care about what we had to say.

Our dissenting report represented the issues and ideas we felt had to be addressed by the government, but to my very great surprise the government report has no section on our concerns. In short, our views were totally ignored.

When the final report was released we were suspicious when our dissenting paper and that of the BQ were included in a separate volume along with the lowly appendices. The government vehemently denied it was trying to marginalize our views and it claimed it was simply easier to include our paper in a second document because it was cheaper and easier to print two small documents rather than one large one.

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What seemed to be a lame excuse at the time now seems somewhat more sinister. Clearly our views were not important enough for the government to consider and this document proves it.

Realizing there was no section on Reform's views specifically, I checked to see how the government was dealing with the recommendations we believed to be of particular importance. Again we were very disappointed.

In the area of fiscal responsibility, which was our number one priority, I could not find a single spending cut or suggestion of cuts. While there was some acknowledgement that Canada faces tough economic times, there were simply no cuts, period. Even worse, there was a commitment to eventually increase our aid budget to 0.7 per cent of GNP, although the Liberals do not say when. This is misleading to NGOs, foreign governments and Canadians, and just impossible to achieve so why say it. If we were to do this today it would mean spending a couple of additional billions of dollars of borrowed money each year to finance this scheme. As Canada's economy grows and our GNP gets bigger, the target will only continue to get higher and higher as the years pass. Clearly this is not a realistic goal given Canada's \$40 billion deficit and \$550 billion federal debt. The taxpayers expect more accountability from the government than ever before.

(1045)

Another issue Reform very much hoped to see addressed involves CIDA. Reform and many Canadians want to give CIDA a true legislative mandate to increase its efficiency, accountability and transparency. A definite selling job has to be done to the Canadian public if we are going to continue to promote the ideas of CIDA. Unfortunately the government report rejects even the watered down recommendation in the special joint committee's report.

The main problem with the true legislative mandate is that the government would no longer be able to use CIDA's \$2 billion budget as a slush fund into which the minister or Prime Minister can dip their fingers when it is time to dole out goodies to the international community. Heaven forbid that the minister should go to a country in Africa, Latin America or the Middle East without having some multimillion dollar gift from the Canadian taxpayer to herald his arrival. That apparently is one diplomatic tradition the government is intent on keeping.

In the government's response to the chapter on culture we were again surprised that the government, in a time of fiscal restraint, was willing to dole out cultural export subsidies to promote Canada's culture abroad. I guess this should not have come as too big a surprise, considering some of the recent grants doled out by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

It strikes me as highly ironic that a government which has, to its credit, pursued freer trade world-wide and called for the reduction of other types of subsidies, would then go on to support cultural subsidies. Not to mention that when we are cutting back on social programs here, does it really make sense to be spending hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars to, for example, send the National Arts Centre orchestra to Europe so that, to quote the minister: "European audiences will again have an opportunity to experience the creativity and quality of its music". It does not seem to make sense.

Reform would have much preferred to see a creative, modern partnership develop between the business community and the arts, facilitated by the government. In this way the strength of Canadian culture could be promoted to the fullest. How much better this would have been than the Liberal solution of big government.

As an aside, if the government does as good a job of promoting Canadian culture as it has done with our economy, then the musicians and artists of Canada had been look out.

Last, the government report makes a lot of hay about how great its consultation process has been. It claims to want to have real consultation with Parliament and parliamentary committees. What does the record show? I remember in the fall when parliamentarians were called for a special parliamentary debate on peacekeeping in Haiti. The government wanted to know what to do. Or did it really want to know what to do?

The main problem with the government's consultation was that I had already read the government's firm plans in the morning paper. So much for the consultation process. We can go through the former Yugoslavian debate, through peacekeeping. The announcements are made prior to us even debating in the House, so what validity do they have?

The report also goes on to indicate that the government will have future forums to help Canada's foreign policy to continually evolve, once again through consultation. While this sounds very nice on the surface, the Reform Party's concern is that only university professors, the friends of the Liberal Party and other elite will ever get invited to these. While we would love to be proven wrong, we will wait and see what happens to ordinary Canadians.

I suppose the way this whole process started is an indication of that. If we take a look at who was at the Congress Centre, I think it proves my point. If the government is really serious about continuing the consultation process, then I hope it will invite the Canadian grassroots. Maybe then it would find out what the people really want. If it did this then maybe it will also consider drafting a new government report, one that address the specific concerns of ordinary Canadians, a report that is up front about what will be funded and what will be cut.

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(1050)

I feel the government is as out of touch as it was in 1992 with the referendum and with many other issues that occur today. The report should give specific plans which the government will implement in a timely manner, not when economic conditions permit or any other such nonsense. Finally, the report should deal with the issues of greater efficiency, accountability and transparency for the good of all Canadians.

Mr. Robinson: A point of order, Madam Speaker. I wonder if I might seek the consent of the House to respond briefly on behalf of the New Democratic Party to the statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I am sorry we do not have unanimous consent. I recognize the Minister for International Trade.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a year ago I rose in the House during the debate that launched the foreign policy review. Today we conclude the first and most important cycle on what must be an ongoing, continuing process of creative adjustment to a trading world always on the move.

Yet at least one element remains constant. A year ago I began my speech by quoting from Lester Pearson's 1957 Nobel Peace Prize speech in which he wisely focused on the central role of free trade in achieving the intimately connected objectives of peace and prosperity. Today, one year later, the results of the foreign policy review reaffirm the enduring strength of that vision.

Trade creates jobs and growth. Trade, investment and technology flows do not comprise a zero sum game that produces as many or more losers than winners. Rather, trade, investment and technology together comprise a creative, dynamic process that encourages innovation and provides opportunities for those wise enough to seize them.

Trade rules, if carefully crafted, do not detract from sovereignty but rather add to it. International trade and investment rules extend abroad the rule of law. Rules inhibit the ability of those countries with the greatest market power to exercise that power unilaterally for their own narrower benefit. Rules provide greater certainty for producers, encouraging greater innovation and longer term planning rather than speculative activity. A rules based system permits a unified Canada to occupy a central place in shaping the outcome of that trade system's continuing evolution.

The foreign policy review which we are discussing today drew on the views of many individual Canadians, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, parliamentarians. In

the mid-1990s there is a broad recognition that something fundamental has happened to the global economy. Something is different in our global neighbourhood. There is greater consensus on economic fundamentals; greater competition for market share and quality investment; greater interest in freeing markets through rules based systems, whether regionally or multilaterally; and greater diversity in the partnerships that we can and should use in order to shape the rules to reflect Canadian interests.

The foreign policy review before us identifies two main objectives for Canada's trade policy. First, Canadians expect us to attract long term investments while eliminating barriers to our exports of goods and services. In this regard our objective will be to seek the further liberalization of trade and services and the removal of tariffs and non-tariff barriers, on a reciprocal basis, for all manufactured and resource based products.

At the same time, we shall work for further liberalization of trade in agricultural products, including the elimination of barriers to our important agricultural exports and a prohibition of export subsidies. The era of the tariff is finally coming to an end. We must increasingly address other, more pressing and difficult issues that distort business decisions about where and how to invest to the detriment of smaller economies such as that of Canada.

(1055)

Second, Canadians expect us to work closely with business and workers, not only to ensure that the rules we are negotiating underpin growth and job creation, but also to encourage our transformation from being a trading nation into a country that can proudly and fairly portray itself as a nation of traders. The government has re-evaluated in depth its trade development programs with a view to increasing significantly their impact and relevance. I shall return to that point in a moment.

Let me first briefly outline how the government intends to move forward these two objectives: the removal of barriers, the attraction of investment and the further promotion of an export commitment among Canadians.

First, we plan to work with our trading partners to deepen the international rules governing trade, investment and technology, to discipline practices that disadvantage Canada.

Foremost in this regard we must continue to manage effectively the Canada-United States economic relationship. A united Canada has done well in opening the U.S. market while protecting Canadian sensitivities in such areas as cultural industries and agricultural products. The ongoing, effective management of this special relationship requires vigilance and national teamwork to ensure that Canadian interests are defended whenever U.S. regulators or special interest groups attempt to bend the rules of either NAFTA or the new World Trade Organization.

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We shall pursue reforms that reduce the possibility of disputes with the United States concerning the issues of subsidies, dumping and the total operation of trade remedy laws. We shall seek better access to U.S. government procurement contracts and greater opportunities to compete with regard to financial services.

Multilaterally, we shall remain in the forefront of the work under way to ensure that the World Trade Organization becomes a dynamic force for extending rule making beyond the level achieved last year in the Uruguay round. The new World Trade Organization has an ambitious agenda of negotiations already under way in such areas as financial services, maritime transport and government procurement. There is also considerable unfinished business with regard to trade distorting agricultural subsidies. These are all important issues for Canada.

Moreover, past and present rule making and the increasing internationalization of markets are continually expanding the scope of domestic practices that require the attention of policy makers internationally to ensure that market access gains are not undermined by the use of new instruments to achieve old protectionist ends.

The new agenda of rule making will encompass such areas as product standards; anti-trust policies and the relationship with anti-dumping reform; the link between environmental and labour standards and trade; and the use of massive subsidies that distort decisions about where companies locate their investments to the detriment of countries such as Canada.

Second, we propose to widen our network of free trade partners to improve market access for Canadian exporters. Over the past year we have encouraged the expansion of NAFTA in order to ensure that this agreement is an outward looking, dynamic instrument.

Last December the first stage of our efforts was crowned with success when the Prime Minister joined the Presidents of United States, Mexico and Chile in announcing the beginning of the process that should see Chile become a full member of NAFTA by late this year or early next year.

(1100)

Accession to NAFTA requires a consensus among current members. Canada worked hard to achieve that consensus on Chile. We also intend to build on this success to meet the challenge identified in the Miami summit of the Americas, of constructing a western hemisphere free trade area encompassing the whole of the western hemisphere no later than the year 2005.

During last month's visit to South America the Prime Minister launched the process of consultations that will take us farther in that direction by proposing the initiation of discussions with the Mercosur countries, the countries of the southern cone of Latin America, with a view to integrating Mercosur and NAFTA.

We intend to build realistically and vigorously from this starting point. We shall also pursue the widening of free trade through encouraging and participating in negotiations leading to accession to the World Trade Organization by several major economies that currently operate on the margins of the international rules based trading system.

These economies are important players in the global marketplace. They include China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan. Moreover, we shall seek further commitments across the Pacific with our partners in the Asia Pacific economic co-operation forum, or APEC as it is more familiarly known.

These economies provide excellent markets for Canadian exporters. They are the source of much of the dynamism driving world growth today. Yet their commitment to the international trading system as measured by their level of acceptance of the obligations of that system is not yet commensurate with the benefits they derive from it. This must change.

Canada for its part will work actively to encourage the necessary commitment, including pursuing actively the free trade commitment made by APEC's leaders during their summit last November in Indonesia.

Then there is Europe. Although our ties of trade are proportionately somewhat less than a generation ago, they remain of the greatest importance. We also enjoy stronger than ever investment links across the Atlantic.

How then do we re-energize the transatlantic economic relationship, building on progress in regional agreements to maintain the dynamic of global trade liberalization? This is a question well worth pursuing whatever the precise answer or mechanism eventually developed to recharge our European links in the post cold war world.

While I have briefly outlined several of the key elements comprising our government's commitment to widening and deepening our network of rules based freer trade, this effort will have a considerably diminished impact for Canada unless Canadians take full advantage of the access secured through our international negotiations.

Rules help to open the door to prosperity and to keep it open. However, rules do not trade. It is companies that trade. Consequently, the government's third trade related objective is to rationalize and energize our international business development programs in light of the foreign policy review and extensive public consultation with both the private sector and the provinces over the past year.

We shall for our part redouble our efforts abroad to ensure that all our firms receive timely, relevant, accurate market information, access to foreign decision makers and the effective defence of their interest when authorities in other countries do not comply with their international trade obligations.

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Domestically we are committed to extending the Team Canada concept to include a more coherent, integrated approach toward co-operation with the provinces in order to help increase the export readiness of Canadian firms. We are also refocussing federal government assistance to encourage job rich, small and medium size companies to enter export markets while improving their access to export financing by launching greater collaboration between the private banks and by our Export Development Corporation.

(1105)

To facilitate Canada's full involvement in the global, increasingly knowledge intensive economy the government will also foster the acquisition and development of technology by Canadian businesses, in part through their greater participation in international research and development alliances. We shall also vigorously promote increased awareness among foreign investors of Canada's science and technology strengths.

Finally, we shall also focus more human resources on developing high growth markets in Asia Pacific and Latin America while targeting our efforts in western Europe more sharply on investment technology and strategic alliances.

Widening the reach of our free trade partnerships abroad, deepening the international rules consistent with Canadian interests and renewing and recharging our partnerships with business, large and small, and with the provinces, this is the government's basic trade agenda. It provides the basis for sustaining growth and for job creation at home in Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to be involved in the conclusion of a project to which my colleagues and I devoted considerable time in the course of 1994.

To their credit, the Liberal government's policies tabled today differ significantly from those of previous governments and take a somewhat new approach in terms of international trade. The need to tighten spending probably forced the government to make choices in its international trade promotion programs. The policies being presented today, however, are being presented as well thought out and considered.

The government's approach differs from that of its predecessor in that it is proposing diversification of markets outside North America and would appear to be dismissing or even denying the phenomenon of continentalization. Furthermore, it is proposing a vigorous strategy to promote free trade through multilateral organizations such as the WTO, regional organizations such as APEC, the North and South America free trade area and a still theoretical European and American free trade area.

Finally, the minister is initiating a series of measures to try to contain American unilateralism, which is viewed as a threat to Canada's commercial development.

This is, in fact, one of the most striking elements of the speech by the Minister for International Trade and of the statement of policy tabled today. With your permission, I would like to comment briefly on it. I will say right off that we reject the one-dimensional image of our trading partner being painted for us. Once again, the minister has described the United States to us as some sort of elephant to be constrained or a geopolitical and commercial problem to be managed, to use the minister's wording.

Given this analysis of Canadian-American relations, one can see why the minister seems to have had difficulty in developing a strategy consisting of anything more than, in a manner of speaking, aiming to contain, restrict, neutralize and indeed limit our relations with the United States. How can such an attitude be justified in view of the enormous market located just across the border whose influence will make or break our economic prosperity?

The minister translates his vision into policies with a similar perspective on the United States. He does in fact mention "taking a united stand", "protecting" ourselves and "assuming a defensive position". These overly cautious and defensive policies are born of this fearful attitude towards the United States and of a siege mentality.

Some people, I am sure, would tell me that the United States have not always fully respected the principles of free trade. I would gladly agree. In this regard, I would even add that the Bloc Québécois and I have not hesitated to criticize in no uncertain terms the unspeakable attitude of our neighbours to the south in regard to steel, wheat, timber, beer, uranium and, most recently, agricultural products subject to supply management as well as cultural products.

In fact, that is the reason why we strongly support this government's desire to work towards an international system based on respect of the shared rules of the game by all parties, even commercial giants.

(1110)

We support the initiatives presented to the World Trade Organization, which must now prove itself and study crucially important issues such as rules on dumping and subsidies.

We also support the government's wish to open NAFTA up to new players and to give us more weight against the United States.

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Furthermore, we support the trilateral discussions being held between the United States and Mexico in order to reach an agreement on dumping and subsidies before the end of the year.

We expect a lot from the Prime Minister's campaign promise on this issue. However, this undue wariness, this near mental blocking of the United States troubles us, because it blinds the government to business opportunities and to the huge potential the American market holds, especially for our small and medium size businesses.

Too preoccupied with the relative importance of the United States in our trade structure, the government refuses to see that we still have not exploited all of the potential there. Nevertheless, each year hundreds of small and medium size businesses baptize their export operations by naturally turning to the commercial entity which is geographically closest, where language is not a barrier, the culture is similar and, of course, where free trade rules apply.

In fact, for the vast majority of small and medium size businesses, the United States is the export market of choice.

As a consequence, the government should perceive the action plan for small and medium size businesses on the American market more in terms of development, exploitation and conquest of a new market. Policies on the promotion of international trade and the allotment of resources should take into consideration and reflect this inevitable reality.

Need I remind members that economic growth in Canada is closely linked to our businesses' exports to the United States? One has but to consider the extraordinary increase of 19.8 per cent in Canadian exports to the American market, and the increase of close to 30 per cent for Quebec in 1993. Growth in that area was almost six times greater than growth in our exports to Asia.

For the nine first months of 1994, our exports to the United States increased again, from 19.8 per cent to 21 per cent. These figures clearly show that our post-recession economic growth is not due solely to the new developing markets of Japan, China and other Asian countries, far from it.

Despite what the Liberal government may think or wish, Canada is part of the increasingly integrated North American market. Trying to diversify our markets is one thing, but ignoring Canada's inevitable economic and trade integration with the rest of North America is another.

This analysis brings me to the conclusion that we are now witnessing a re-emergence of the third option favoured by Liberals in the 1970s, namely replacing Europe with Asia as our main market.

This ambitious but rather ineffective, not to say unproductive, policy overshadows once again the government's statements and options, something that we find quite alarming. Government efforts to target geographic markets are generally not effective. Only businesses are in a position to identify their markets of choice, and the government must adjust to their choices. Eighty per cent of Canadian businesses want to do business in the U.S. If some of them feel up to exploring less accessible markets, all the better. We welcome their success, which creates jobs and generates wealth.

However, we cannot agree with efforts to redirect artificially, so to speak, Canadian trade toward other markets by unjustifiably neglecting to look forward with enthusiasm to the development of our full trade potential in the U.S. This would be a major strategic mistake.

Allow me to quote from our dissenting report remarks that appear to be more appropriate than ever:

However, it would be irresponsible to overlook the proximity of Europe and the enormous potential of this continent, particularly where Quebec is concerned. Is the St. Lawrence River not the most direct point of entry of Europe into the North American continent? Nor should we lose sight of the undeniable political advantages that Quebec enjoys because of its French and British roots.

—the European continent, reconciled from West to East, with a population of close to 600 million consumers, flush with capital and cutting edge technological and industrial expertise, is not a player to be dismissed lightly.

As Canada stands poised to redefine its relations with the world, it must rediscover the old continent from which it split and structure its foreign policy on the European axis, the counterpart of the American and Asian axes.

(1115)

In closing, I would like to touch on a number of concepts that have been incorporated in the governmental strategy before us. First, the government proposes the Team Canada concept. In clear terms, this means an Ottawa-based centralized approach to international trade. It may suit certain provinces, as is apparently the case of Ontario, who signed with the federal government a coordination agreement that could not be imposed upon any other province, especially not Quebec. Quebec has developed an extensive international trade representation network that is proven—I repeat, proven—and that it certainly has no intention of doing away with.

The Team Canada approach ignores the economic and cultural reality of Canadian regions. It would be incorrect to consider this country as one, single, homogenous market. Canada is made up of several regions, each of which has its unique characteristics and its own primary markets, industrial fabric, strong sectors and geographic and cultural ties. Nowhere in this policy does the government take this into account, let alone in this great levelling whole that Team Canada is.

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On the other hand, the government tells us in this policy statement that it intends to cut administration expenses and restructure international trade development programs. These good intentions are truly commendable and we are looking forward to seeing what will come of these good intentions, in concrete terms, in the upcoming budget. Moreover, we feel that the government's emphasis on small and medium size businesses is the obvious thing to do, since the current fiscal situation does not leave any other option and that big corporations need government support the least.

We also think that the government's intention to allow federal and provincial civil servants, as well as private sector people, take courses at the Canadian foreign service institute is an excellent idea, as well as a step towards greater utilization of government services.

It is also interesting to see that Canada is reviewing its political approach in Washington, given the new realities, and particularly the emergence of a strong U.S. Congress, more powerful than ever. We hope for concrete steps in support of this new approach.

In conclusion, we will ensure that the government implements the policies and programs which best serve the interests of all Canadians and Quebecers. We will continue to take a hard look at the controlling approach of that government. In order to ensure the prosperity and development of our businesses and communities, the vital importance of the American market must be recognized.

Moreover, that recognition must come before a necessary acceptance of that reality and a strong will to fully develop that potential.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is gratifying for me to see that a little over a year has just passed and we have had a foreign policy review in Canada and we have had a response to the foreign policy review by this government.

I was a part of that foreign policy review as well as my other colleagues on this side of the House and enjoyed the process very much. I enjoyed getting to meet the members of the standing committee who were involved and hearing the concerns of Canadians about where our foreign policy should be heading in the future. To a large extent this time around I believe foreign policy was driven by economic and trade policy.

It is a pity the government's response to this policy arrived on my desk about 20 minutes before I came into this House at 10 o'clock. It is very difficult for me to have an adequate response. I have to take this government to task for an ongoing series of short notices on these kinds of matters. What is there to hide here? I would have liked to have had adequate time to prepare my response and I simply did not have it. I must say I did get a

fax of the minister's speech overnight and I do appreciate that. By necessity then I will be keeping my comments short.

(1120)

My colleagues and I believe in trade liberalization and we believe in it wholeheartedly. We have viewed with great satisfaction the tremendous transformation as well of the government on this issue. We recall that not too long ago we had a Prime Minister who was denouncing freer trade with the Americans. Now we witness him trotting around the globe promoting trade as the granddaddy of free trade. We welcome that.

I would like to begin my response by taking the trade minister to task on his statement in the report. I quote him in saying that the era of tariffs is finally over. I wish that were true. I find his statement even more ludicrous because he ties it to a desire to eliminate trade barriers to export of our agriculture products.

How can the minister say the era of tariffs is over when we have tariffs of over 300 per cent on our supply managed products? They are coming down at a very slow rate. In fact, they are coming down by an average of 36 per cent over the next six years. However if you take into account that we have a minimum tariff reduction of 15 per cent on all tariffs plus a 51 per cent on minimum access, in fact the true figure would be more like a 16 per cent tariff reduction in supply managed products.

Therefore we will not see any free trade in agriculture products under the supply managed sectors during our time in this Parliament unless something is changed. They are still very high. I believe the government has to take some leadership in this issue of supply management, be honest with Canadian producers and tell them there is a real world out there that they have to adjust to. We have been saying this all along.

We are going to have retaliation from the Americans. It is starting to happen in this area. They are taking exception to our high tariffs in the supply managed sectors. They are looking for ways of retaliating. We have seen retaliation in the area of wheat. We see retaliation in the area of setting high tariffs on sugar products. Of course now we are going to have the cultural industries that are going to be hit.

We have to show leadership in this area and help our producers to make this adjustment. It is our view that the supply managed sectors should be given 10 years to move to zero tariffs so that they do not interfere with other aspects of our trading relationships, particularly with the United States. The government should sit down with this industry and try to work out a plan to make this happen. It should show some leadership.

The minister says that the government "must continue to manage effectively the Canada-U.S. economic relationship". We all know that the Americans are tough negotiators and they have the economic clout to carry through with their threats. I

ask: What is the point of not dealing decisively with these trade irritants that we have caused ourselves?

I will move to a second aspect of the government's response to the foreign policy review. On page three of the response the government states that it rejects the committee's proposal to establish a joint public and private consortium to assist in international business development. I am sorry to see that is the case.

This proposal would not entail any new government expenditures. In fact it would put into private hands some of the functions that government now performs thereby saving the government money. When we have a \$40 billion deficit I would expect that we would be looking for ways to do that. Trade promotion is one that could fall well within that category and this recommendation should have been adopted.

I would like to see the government devolve wherever possible tasks to the private sector that it can do better. This is one area I believe there is room to do something in terms of trade promotion.

The final point I would like to make is with a statement that appeared on the very first page of Canada's foreign policy report. The statement reads as follows: "Many witnesses stressed the importance of Canadians getting their own house in order in terms of fiscal management, making the economic adjustments necessary". I could not agree more.

We are going to be going through a process within a few weeks in this very House that has to deal very aggressively with Canada's debt problem. That is also causing a lot of problems for Canadian business. The high cost of doing business in this country is not allowing Canadian business the opportunity to take full advantage of the trade deals that have been made. We have the World Trade Organization, we have the signing of the GATT, we have a North American free trade deal and we have the Prime Minister and the trade minister trying to broker some other deals together. I think that is excellent.

(1125)

What we are missing here is a very important element. That element is that we have to concentrate on lowering the cost of doing business in this country. We have to get rid of internal trade barriers that are inhibiting our businesses, our opportunity to do business better. The concentration for the next while has to be here at home to resolve some of those problems; otherwise we are misleading our Canadian business people about the opportunities that are out there because we will not be able to take advantage of them.

We all know that when we have trade liberalization it is a double edged sword. I would like to see the government take a stronger approach to informing, to making our business people

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aware of what opportunities are out there, but also what they are going to be facing in terms of competition here at home.

In the past we have had barriers to trade within Canada, such as tariff barriers that have given our Canadian business people an opportunity to have all of the Canadian market or most of the Canadian market to themselves. That is no longer going to be the case. We are going to be facing increased competition at home and it is important that our business people realize that so that they can start to deal with this very important issue.

Only when our companies are competitive at home can we be truly competitive in the international sphere. I believe the trade deals we have signed are going to drag us kicking and screaming into the 21st century but it is a good thing we have done it.

Our party of course has issued a dissenting report the aspects on which it is based are: we have to have fiscal responsibility here at home; we have to tighten up in the area of the cost of doing business to our companies; we have to get our own house in order. We believe that trade promotion should be an aspect of business as well as government. We also believe that the cultural industries should be regarded as businesses in themselves.

We hear that the government in responding to the recommendations that it be involved in promotion, development and distribution of culture wants to pursue that. I believe that is a mistake. We also hear that some American distribution companies will not carry our cultural industries. I believe they are producing a good product. They will be carried in the same way that any other product is carried.

I do not think the government has a role in the area of culture. This should be left to the business sector or those sectors in the cultural industry that can do it for themselves. I believe they can compete very effectively.

With that, I welcome this response. I would like to have an opportunity to finish reading it. I have not had the time to do that with this short notice. I would ask that from here on in we be given ample opportunity to look at these issues with enough time to respond properly.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present the fifty-seventh report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees.

With leave of the House, I intend to move for concurrence in this report later this day.

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[English]

Madam Speaker, I think you would find the consent of the House to dispense with the reading of the 57th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

I think you will also find consent for the following motion. I move that the 57th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House earlier this day be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Does the parliamentary secretary have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

(1130)

OFFICIAL REPORT

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I asked the page for yesterday's *Hansard* in which I did table petitions and noticed *Hansard* reads Monday, January 6, 1995. I know the House will correct this *Hansard*.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): *Hansard* will be corrected. I thank the hon. member.

* * *

PETITIONS

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise and present three petitions signed by over 700 people from several communities in the constituency of Cariboo—Chilcotin.

My constituents feel that existing controls on law-abiding, responsible firearms owners are more than enough to ensure public safety and therefore call upon Parliament to support laws which will severely punish all violent criminals who use weapons in the commission of a crime, to support new Criminal Code firearms control provisions which recognize and protect the right of law-abiding citizens to own and use recreational firearms, to support legislation which will repeal or modify existing gun control laws that have not improved public safety or have proven not to be cost effective or have proven to be overly complex so as to be ineffective or unenforceable.

SERIAL KILLER CARDS

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of the constituents of Victoria—Haliburton who are vehemently opposed to the importation of serial killer cards.

This petition adds to the growing list of Canadians who are opposed to the killer cards which glorify serial killers and send a negative, violent message to the youth of our country.

This petition calls upon Parliament to amend the laws of Canada to prohibit the importation, distribution, sale and manufacture of killer cards in law and to advise producers of killer cards that their product, if destined for Canada, will be seized and destroyed.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present today which have been duly certified by the clerk of petitions.

These two petitions deal with common sense of the common people. The first petition deals with the repeal of section 745 of the Criminal Code which allows persons convicted of murder who were sentenced to life in prison, which is 25 years in this country, the ability to apply for a review after just 15 years of their sentence.

The petitioners are requesting the repeal of section 745; common sense of the common people.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the second petition adds to the growing number of Canadians, particularly in my riding of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, concerned about the proposed additional gun legislation.

The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to oppose further legislation for firearms acquisition and possession and to provide strict guidelines and mandatory sentences for use or possession of a firearm in the commission of a violent crime.

There are 42 names on this petition which, added to the other petitions received in my riding, adds up to 1,314 people. The common sense of the common people is clearly saying they fear a government that will not listen to the people more than they fear a law-abiding citizen with a gun.

[Translation]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Madam Speaker, I wish to table a petition signed by more than 90 per cent of the people of Saint-Clément-de-Rivière-du-Loup, in which the undersigned call upon the Parliament of Canada to do what is necessary to ensure that the Canada Post Corporation re-opens the post office in Saint-Clément, which

was closed in December 1992, so that the community will again enjoy the kind of service the crown corporation is supposed to provide.

I would like to remind the House that the Canadian government's moratorium on closing post offices came as a result of the efforts of the people of Saint-Clément and that a number of members here, including the members for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and Rosemont, went to support the people of Saint-Clément in their struggle. Paradoxically, today we have a situation where many post offices across Canada were saved thanks to the action taken by the people of Saint-Clément. Unfortunately, the people of Saint-Clément were not covered by the moratorium, and now they are asking to have this omission corrected. That is my purpose in tabling their petition.

(1135)

[English]

SEX OFFENDERS

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to present to Parliament a petition signed by over 400 constituents of my Red Deer riding.

With respect to the petition, the citizens express their concerns that the rights of repeat sex offenders are given precedent over the rights of innocent children as in the case of Sarah Kelly of The Pas, Manitoba.

Therefore, the petitioners humbly pray and request that Parliament enact legislation making the safety of our children a priority and request that changes be made to the Charter or Rights and Freedoms to enable residents to be notified when repeat sex offenders are released in the community.

I concur with this and present this on behalf of my constituents.

GUN CONTROL

Mrs. Marlene Cowling (Dauphin—Swan River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am presenting a petition today signed by 400 residents of my constituency of Dauphin—Swan River.

The petitioners believe that the proposed changes to Canada's existing gun laws are unfair to law-abiding gun owners. They believe the changes will have a detrimental effect on specialized business, will impose unrealistic restrictions on responsible, recreational firearms use and will have no effect in reducing the criminal use of firearms.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to refrain from passing any changes and amendments that further restrict the law-abiding gun owner.

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SAME SEX RELATIONSHIPS

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have several petitions to table today.

The first two, bearing 101 signatures, deal with sexual orientation. The petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the Canadian Human Rights Act to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

I concur with these two petitions.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions dealing with firearms.

The petitioners, 515 in total, request that Parliament support laws which will severely punish all violent criminals who use weapons in the commission of a crime, support new Criminal Code firearms control provisions which recognize and protect the right of law-abiding citizens to own and use recreational firearms, and support legislation which will repeal and modify existing gun control laws which have not improved public safety, have proven not to be cost effective or have proven to be overly complex so as to be ineffective and unenforceable.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have two additional petitions on pro-life.

Petitioners, 126 in total, pray that Parliament act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have a petition on immigration. The undersigned petitioners humbly pray and call upon Parliament to reduce immigration to the previous average level of one-half of 1 per cent of the population, or about 150,000 per year, with a basic intake of not less than 50 per cent of the total composed of carefully selected, skilled workers required by the Canadian economy and that our refugee acceptance rate be brought into line with the average of other asylum destination countries.

I concur with this petition.

EUTHANASIA

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Madam Speaker, there are 750 names on a petition dealing with euthanasia.

The petitioners pray that Parliament will ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting

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assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no changes in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

I concur with all of these petitions.

(1140)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a number of petitions. The first petition is signed by a number of residents of Toronto, Ottawa and my own constituency of Burnaby—Kingsway. It notes that acts of discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual Canadians are an every day reality in all regions of Canada. It goes on to document some of the forms that discrimination takes in Canada.

The petitioners therefore call upon Parliament to act quickly to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and to adopt all necessary measures to recognize the full equality of same sex relationships in federal law.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, the second petition is signed by residents of a number of communities in Ontario, Manitoba and in the province of British Columbia.

It notes that the current Criminal Code denies people who are suffering from terminal or irreversible and debilitating illness the right to choose freely and voluntarily to end their lives with the assistance of a physician.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to amend the code to ensure the right of all Canadians to die with dignity by allowing people with terminal or irreversible and debilitating illness the right to the assistance of a physician in ending their lives at a time of their choice, subject to strict safeguards to prevent abuse and to ensure that the decision is free, informed, competent and voluntary.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present two petitions signed by residents of Kingston.

The first petition calls upon Parliament not to amend the human rights code or the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships.

The second petition calls upon Parliament to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to protect individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

I am pleased to table both these petitions, although conflicting, in the House today.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 111 and 127.

[Text]

Question No. 111—**Ms. Beaumier:**

When will the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Health seek the co-operation of provincial governments to enforce the post-sentence detention of child sex offenders who are likely to re-offend upon release, through provincial mental health legislation and what is the timetable for having the necessary agreements in place?

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Federal/provincial/territorial ministers responsible for justice will be meeting with a delegation of ministers responsible for health in the latter part of January or early February, 1995. The report of a federal/provincial/territorial task force respecting dangerous offenders will be a topic of discussion on the agenda and the use of provincial mental health legislation to effect civil commitment will be an option among those discussions. The degree of consensus we can achieve at that meeting will largely determine the speed with which we can proceed.

Bill C-45 is currently before the House and contains amendments permitting the National Parole Board to detain persons with a high risk of offending against children until their warrant expiry date.

While legislative amendments and federal/provincial/territorial agreements/protocols will go some way to providing better tools to deal with offenders of this sort, it is doubtful that any failsafe mechanism can be found to eliminate all risk. Prudent attention to crime prevention behaviours will always be required by careful citizens.

Question No. 127—**Mr. Simmons:**

What action will the government take in reference to the claim made by the Auditor General in his 1994 report that "Health Canada cannot ensure that the food related and safety provisions of the Food and Drugs Act are applied fully and effectively to all food produced domestically or imported for sale in Canada," and what specific measures are being developed to deal with the gaps in information received from the provinces on "the nature, extent, timing and results of food safety inspections they undertake"?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Health Canada recently initiated a food safety audit of inspection programs of the other federal departments dealing with food namely Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Specific programs being audited include those for imported foods, shellfish inspection and food container integrity. The first phase of the audit, which is in

process, will assess the suitability of these programs. A second phase of the audit, to be completed in the next fiscal year, will look at the application of these programs. Comprehensive standards for the inspection of domestic plants producing a variety of foods have also been developed.

With respect to provincial issues, the responsibility for the inspection of food which is produced and sold within a province is the responsibility of that province. The only food inspection activities that are conducted by the provinces for which the federal government is currently responsible are those activities conducted by the provinces on behalf of the federal government. Health Canada is presently considering how the food safety audit program could be extended to cover these areas. This is being dealt with in the context of the recent Canadian food inspection system initiative to more fully integrate the various food inspection systems within Canada at the federal and provincial level.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would ask if you would be so kind to call Starred Question No. 95.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Starred Question No. 95 be deemed to have been made an Order for Return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 95—**Mrs. Lalonde:**

What have been the monthly unemployment rates from September 1993 to October 1994 in each of Canada's 295 federal constituencies?

(Return tabled.)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The questions as enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I therefore table the return and would ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I wish to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 33(2), because of the ministerial statements, Government Orders will be extended by one hour and 20 minutes.

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[English]

IMMIGRATION ACT

The House resumed from February 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to participate in this debate on Bill C-44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act.

Many of my constituents have expressed concerns regarding immigration and I welcomed the minister this past September in Guelph where he spoke to us about this important issue.

Guelph—Wellington has welcomed immigrants in the past and it wants to welcome immigrants in the future. According to the last census our community is made up of new immigrants from Great Britain, Central and South America, India, various parts of Europe and parts of the Caribbean and Asia. Guelph—Wellington residents speak Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, German, Armenian and a host of other languages in their homes. Italians, Ukrainians, Germans, Austrians and other ethnic groups have associations where children learn about their heritage and people come together with others from their native lands to celebrate what they have in common.

Each one of these individuals no matter what their country of birth or their language has a desire to live here in Canada. Their Canadian citizenship is the tie that unifies and joins them all with us.

(1145)

There is no doubt that Canada is the best country in the world. It is then obvious that people from every part of the globe would want to share our abundance and come to communities like Guelph—Wellington to begin to live new lives in freedom and with the hope of prosperity.

We have been generous as a people and a government, however my constituents have asked me to review the immigration system in order to ensure that our generosity is not abused. This bill is long overdue. It is necessary if we are going to restore integrity to a system that has been damaged by those who reject our generosity, ignore our laws, and fail not only every Canadian but everyone who wishes to immigrate to Canada.

Our immigration system has been built on the same elements that have made our country great. Determination, respect for each other and for our laws, hard work, and dedication to self and family have been the hallmarks of Canadians born here and elsewhere.

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Guelph—Wellington's workforce is well respected because of its people. They have a tradition of excellence learned from their parents and grandparents who brought with them from foreign lands the desire to work hard and build products that are durable and of excellent quality. We have had the lowest unemployment in the country because of these qualities. Our business leaders have names like Samuelson, McCarthy, Bries-tensky, Sleeman, Youngman and Hasenfratz. By working together, old Canadians and new, natives and immigrants have built Guelph—Wellington into one of the finest communities in Canada.

This bill recognizes that abuses have occurred and places our generosity on notice. This bill attempts to address the concerns of the people of Guelph—Wellington and elsewhere all through the country who have witnessed a desire for fairness being questioned and challenged by individuals who have no respect for our laws. We are doing something about those who fail to recognize that our society does not tolerate criminals and criminal acts.

Bill C-44 is another example of a government that listens. Canadians have expressed legitimate concerns about current abuses. Every member in this House has heard them. This legislation is intended to help police forces do their jobs more effectively. I recently met with police in Guelph—Wellington who are frustrated by obstacles that hamper their important work.

We have listened and we are acting now. My constituents have demanded that serious criminals who are a danger to the public not be allowed to claim refugee status as a means of delaying their removal from Canada. This bill ensures that a refugee application is not a tactic for stalling.

My constituents have asked the government to eliminate the opportunity for one person to have several refugee claims processed at the same time. This bill answers those concerns.

My constituents have also asked that persons with summary convictions, whether obtained here or abroad, not be allowed to enter this country. This bill responds to that concern as well.

My constituents agree that refugees should be welcome to Canada under certain circumstances. They have watched the horror and famine in Somalia, the destruction caused by the war in Bosnia, and the plight of children in Romania. They want to share their abundance and protect genuine refugees, but they will no longer tolerate those who use the refugee system to hide behind criminal convictions and avoid deportation.

My community has examples of refugees who have been forced to flee from their countries of birth and have made successful lives in Canada. Sadly this is not always the case. Guelph—Wellington residents are tired of those who abuse our

system. They are disappointed that their concern and care have been rejected by those who have no respect for their generosity.

I welcome the amendments that have been brought forward by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. These amendments clarify the definition of criminality and improve the enforcement package that was put forward by the minister.

(1150)

These amendments also clarify timeframes and various technical points. All members of Parliament should be proud that the work of our committees and the work of the immigration committee is finally coming to fruition in this legislation. This is what our constituents have been asking us to do.

Bill C-44 gives the minister and senior immigration officials the tools to deal effectively with the concerns raised by my constituents and millions of other Canadians. This legislation, together with the immigration package recently announced by the minister, increases the credibility of our immigration system.

Canadians and those applying for immigration status at embassies and consulates at every corner of the world want a system that is fair, balanced and credible. Constituents who visit my office daily or write to me with immigration application concerns want fairness. They know there are the few who make it even more difficult for their children, their spouses, their parents and siblings to make application and be accepted into this country. They want fairness too. Those who abuse make it difficult for those who want to come to Canada to be reunited with their families and contribute to our society.

Bill C-44 prevents exploitation of our generosity. It speaks to fairness and attempts to end abuse. Who in this House would not want that? The bill recognizes the hard work and contribution of immigrants, while realizing that Canadians no longer accept criminal acts by bogus individuals or those who attempt to come to or remain in Canada to perpetuate their criminal lives. They will not stand for it.

Liberals have a long history of tolerance and fairness. We helped build Canada with people of every race, from every part of this world. Tough times have made us question our ability to welcome new immigrants.

It is my belief that we can encourage new Canadians to become active participants in our great society, while recognizing the legitimate concerns of our citizens, many of whom are first or second generation Canadians themselves. This legislation informs those who question our generosity that we will no longer allow abuse.

Our country can be shared, but with those who respect our laws and want to contribute to make this nation great. My

constituents have demanded no less. For them this legislation, Bill C-44, deserves every member's support.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the member has clearly outlined the concerns of her constituents. Those concerns have been expressed right across this country as Reformers have brought these matters to the attention of this House and forced this debate.

I would like to point out to the member she was not present when any of the witnesses stood forward at the standing committee and testified to their concerns about this bill.

Since the member has chosen to debate the matter, what does she intend to advise the government, or how will she express her concern when it comes to matters of insufficient numbers of people on the front line to enforce any provisions of this act and the present act? Many of those provisions are already there.

There are insufficient numbers at the front line. There are insufficient numbers in the enforcement agency of immigration itself to carry out deportation warrants. The detention centres are already overcrowded because of lengthy hearings and removal processes that are literally hindering efficiency.

What does the member intend to do to direct her government to address those problems? They are there whether Bill C-44 exists or not.

Mrs. Chamberlain: Madam Speaker, I would certainly like to respond to the comments that Reformers have brought this issue to debate. That is not so at all. Every single Liberal member here has brought the same concerns forward from across this country. We, the Liberals, have brought this bill forward in conjunction with a committee report.

(1155)

As I stated in my speech, I think every member should be proud to support this bill. It is a very real mistake if people do not support it. As the hon. member has said, I think he will find his constituents will not be happy if he does not support a bill that will address such things as refugee claimants who have committed serious crimes being denied access to Canada.

The member keeps calling out to me to answer the question. The question I think he put to me is how will we enforce it. Let me assure the member we will enforce it. We believe in it, and this government is not about to make legislation it cannot enforce.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Madam Speaker, I do not share the views expressed by the member for Guelph—Wellington. I think that this bill tends to add fuel to a climate of hostility and even panic among immigrant communities in Canada.

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This morning, I received a call from Toronto's Latin American community. Several Argentinians have been detained. They are in a jail near the airport. Children have been taken out of school to be deported. People do not want to go to Our Lady of Guadalupe, a Latin American church in Toronto, because they are afraid of being arrested. They are not criminals.

I will tell you about the case of Taramatie Seeratan Kamsuhag, a woman from Trinidad and Tobago. She will be deported in the next few days but her husband, who assaulted her, will stay here because he is remarried to a Canadian woman, and has thus acquired permanent resident status. Is this the kind of tolerance toward immigrants and refugees that the Liberal Party of Canada is talking about?

In September 1993, in Montreal, the Deputy Prime Minister promised that no female victim of violence would be deported if the Liberals were elected. Fourteen women are being deported. What are you doing to prevent these women from being unjustifiably deported? I repeat, they are not criminals. These women have children, some of whom were born here in Canada, and they are now being deported.

[*English*]

Mrs. Chamberlain: Madam Speaker, the member is bringing up specific cases. It is most difficult to comment on particular cases when I do not know the facts about those cases, but first I would say we have the fairest system in the world.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): The most liberal system in the world.

Mrs. Chamberlain: You are right, it is a liberal system. You are absolutely right and we are proud of it.

The second point is the fact our ministers are prepared to examine individual cases, and will act on those individual cases. We have to have trust and faith in the process if we put the right legislation in place. Bill C-44 will speak to the abuses in the system.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is now February 7 and the Liberals have been in power since October 26, 1993. There are existing provisions in the Immigration Act dealing with refugees and the enforcement of these provisions to deal with people who come into Canada and commit crimes, and people who come into Canada through the use of devious means. These provisions have been in existence since the Liberals were elected in 1993. The Liberal member for Guelph—Wellington is saying to us and to the Canadian people: "Now that we have Bill C-44, now that we are going to get this bill passed"—they have the numbers, unfortunately—"we are going to start to deal with this thing".

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(1200)

My colleague from Calgary Northeast asked the question: “Why aren’t you using the existing provisions of the Immigration Act, existing provisions that are already in force?” That is the question Canadians have been asking for the last year and one-half. We see these criminals running around our country laughing at our laws, laughing at the fact that the immigration department is powerless and have no people on the front lines to enforce the act.

This is a haven for criminals who cannot get along in their own countries. They come to Canada because they know that governments like this current Liberal government support this bleeding heart, liberalized legislation.

Mrs. Chamberlain: Madam Speaker, I am shocked. It is easy to stand up and refute everything. That is the basis they start from across the way. The reality is looking at what the bill does. The hon. member asked why we do not use the laws we have. We are, but we are also improving them. There is nothing wrong with improvement.

The world goes on and the world changes. As it does the government will look at each individual case, as the Bloc member mentioned. It will also continue to pass legislation that will address current concerns that my constituents have talked about.

I am sure the member from the Reform Party has had constituents asking him about some of these various things. Can the member say to me that his constituents would not be happy to see any refugee that has had two summary convictions not allowed in Canada? Would the member say that if a refugee claimant has committed a serious crime, he should not be denied access to Canada? These are things that I am sure this member’s constituents want too.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is really a pleasure to talk to this bill today. I like the way the Liberals take credit for all of this immigration change we are talking about. As we have said, the majority of these changes have already been enacted. However, any change that has moved the government off its position has come from our critic from Calgary Northeast. He should be congratulated.

The folks over there have not gone far enough. I am going to talk from personal experience, from my time in immigration hearings and refugee board hearings out of necessity and out of requests from people in my constituency. They are requests from victims. That is who we are talking about.

I really take exception when the Liberal government starts talking about the vast majority of people saying that we are only talking about a very small minority. That is true, but it is not a

small minority when we count all the victims that lie in the wake of some of these creeps it is allowing in.

Let us make one thing very clear and concise on this whole issue. It really does not matter what all of the rules are from the day a person comes into the country until he or she leaves the country. What really matters is whether they can leave the country on demand from Canada. That is where the fault lies with the philosophy that is expounded over there. I am going to demonstrate that with letters I have from the minister.

One might ask: “Is there not something that will work in the bill?” That may be. There may be some things that work in some aspects of these changes. The Liberals have had an opportunity until now to undertake the actions that are outlined in the act. They have not taken them. In many cases they will not get these people out even if they say they are going to deport them.

(1205)

I discussed a recent case with immigration officials who, by the way are very frustrated at the inaction of this government. They say that Bill C-44 will not work. People on the task forces talk to us rather than these people because they know that at least we understand what the position is.

What about the 10 Vietnamese fellows arrested and on deportation orders by a task force? All have been released because they could not get travel documents. A travel document is necessary if we are to send these people back to Vietnam. If Vietnam is not going to take them back, then they do not go.

What happened? They brought these 10 scum in off the streets and then let them out again. These Vietnamese are walking around Vancouver. If the Liberals think we like these kinds of people, let us talk about the young man who shot a kid in the face in Vancouver; another one who has been charged with sexual assault with a weapon; another one B and Es and is a member of a gang; another one has robbery, assault, trafficking times four in heroin. He is out on the streets again. Another one who must have been his buddy has trafficking times four in heroin. They probably have a company going.

Liberal members are talking about all of the rules up to the point of getting them out of our country. However when it comes time to boot them out they let them out on the streets because they cannot get a travel warrant. That is not addressed in Bill C-44.

There was another fellow I was contacted about by immigration. This guy was ordered deported. He lost his deportation appeal. He cannot get a travel warrant. They have been trying for a travel warrant since September 1993. They cannot get him out of the country no matter what rules we are applying in Bill C-44. He must be a harmless guy. Why not let him out on the streets? They did. In 1990 he had a sexual assault conviction. He has two

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outstanding criminal charges. He ripped up a government office in British Columbia and he is on welfare.

The Liberal government sanctimoniously talks about how well it is doing and how it is going to get these people out of the country. It is false. It is all rhetoric. It is rhetoric like half a dozen other bills it has put through the House. We are sick and tired of it.

I wrote to the minister in July. When he announced the task force to move these people out I suggested to him that since he has this task force and he is trying to oust these animals, why could I not give him some names to put on his list, the list that he said he had. I did. I gave him the name, José Salinas Mendoza, from my area. The minister stood up in the House and said: "That's an isolated case. You are making the whole system look bad because of José Salinas Mendoza". He has only 12 criminal convictions.

I gave him another name, another isolated case in my community, Karel Kral. I talked a bit about good old Karel who has been in this country for 17 years, 14 of which he has been behind bars for so many convictions we lost count.

Then I wrote the minister a letter about Charles Dennis Martin who has only been ordered deported and escorted out of Canada nine times. Wow, what a track record the government has.

I received a letter back from the minister which stated: "While I appreciate your interest in these matters, the Privacy Act prohibits the release of information on our clients". They are clients. Because of the Privacy Act I cannot find anything out about these guys.

(1210)

I said: "Gee, am I exempted?" "Oh yes, except to members of Parliament and Senators who are seeking to assist the client in solving the problem". I am not the least bit interested in assisting the client to solve a problem. I am really interested in getting some of these creeps out of the country, which is directly opposite to what the government is attempting to do.

"In the case of Karel Kral" the minister says, "you state that he is currently awaiting trial on a sexual assault charge. The conclusion of the criminal proceedings and the serving of any prison sentence supersedes any action by immigration officials". I am going to get back to that in a minute.

Lots of problems have not been addressed. In this bill the government has not addressed removing these people from our country. It has not addressed the major understaffing at our borders with our enforcement people, at detention centres. If members took the time to talk to their own employees in immigration and on these task forces they would tell them so.

The immigration officers do not really have the authority of arrest of the police. You would expect them to go to approach

some of these creeps, heroin and narcotics dealers. Some of them are murderers. Does you expect them to go to them and say: "I am from immigration. How would you like to be arrested today? Do not use the Uzi in your back pocket".

They have to be given some authority. They have been asking for this and they have been denied it. The Liberals have in no way addressed those inept individuals on parole boards and on the refugee boards. I am going to talk about a few of those.

Actually the member did address one, Marcelle Brisson, who actually gave a decision in 15 minutes on Bounjan Inthavong who I am going to talk about. The member addressed her all right. She got another three year agreement to stay on. None of that is addressed in here. That is what really counts. That is the meat of the issue. The government is not addressing what is important.

Let us talk about my three favourite buddies in my riding. What an interesting chap is Karel Kral. He has been in this country for 17 years. Why would I bother addressing Karel as a refugee, as an immigrant, whichever he came in on. I am not sure of that. Why would I bother?

He has been in and out of prison for 14 years of that time, not at one time. He has so many records against him that it is a real shame. I was asked by Joan to give her some moral support, go to the sentencing, go to the court case and see what goes on with good old Karel.

Karel sexually assaulted Joan in my riding. Joan is 63 years old and good old Karel attacked her with a needle full of cocaine. He got his due, did he not? He was sent up for four years. He is getting out after the sentence. He was sentenced in November. He will be out on an unescorted day pass in May.

I was told that the privacy laws prohibit me from getting his record. Fortunately we have some responsible people within the system who got me the record anyway.

An hon. member: The Liberals would fire those guys.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Yes, Liberals fire people like that. We thank them.

In the sentencing the judge says this. This is a first. "In view of the elite circumstances surrounding this offence and the reasonable and realistic fears of the victim relating to possible actions of the accused upon his release, deportation be effective prior to the accused's release from prison to protect this and any other victim".

That really does not happen in the courts today and we made the point of saying: "We have to get this guy out". He actually had deportation orders twice before he sexually assaulted Joan. That is kind of sad.

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(1215)

A letter from Joan to the hon. minister says that she was the assault victim. Let me give a couple of words from her letter: "He has a long criminal record and has spent 14 of his past 22 years or so behind bars in Canada". It was 22 years. "As a taxpayer I find this intolerable. Many years ago I became a landed immigrant in the United States in order to be able to work there while my husband was attending university. I can recall that the American immigration authorities made it abundantly clear to us that if either of us committed a criminal act or became a charge on the state in any way we would be immediately deported".

What does that say for Canada? What does that say for Bill C-44?

Joan wrote again to the minister: "I have not had any response to my letter of September 30". That is not all that uncommon. "One statement your assistant made struck me as being quite absurd. I asked her what Canada's position would be vis-à-vis the Czech republic if the Czechs refused to take back Mr. Kral. In other words, how does Canada retaliate? Your assistant said that she could not answer that and that I should call the foreign office. I said surely your department is in touch with the foreign office on this matter, and she indicated that she could not answer this".

By the way, she said in her letter: "Mr. Kral's GST refund cheque came back to our address recently. Is he allowed to receive this while he is in prison?". Just ask this group across the way.

There is a letter here from the minister which reads: "The Hon. Sergio Marchi, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, asked that I respond to your transmissions of September and October. While we appreciate your interest in this matter Canada's Privacy Act prohibits us from releasing information on an individual's case without his or her written consent".

Can you imagine good old Kral saying "Give it to them. They want to move me out of the country".

The letter continued: "As a result I am unable to discuss the details of Mr. Kral's situation, other than to confirm that he was made the subject of a deportation order some time ago and to say that the order will be carried out in due course".

That is a load of hogwash because it has not been done.

I wrote to the chief crown prosecutor because I was trying to find out what Kral was all about, to see how bad he was. I wrote to her, Wendy Young, and I said that I found it incomprehensible that an MP is not allowed access to the public decisions of our country's courts and that neither her office nor the RCMP nor the Matsqui police would provide the criminal record of Mr. Kral.

The answer was predictable: "The disclosure of criminal records is governed by either the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or the federal Privacy Act which limit the circumstances in which such records can be disclosed and provided for the method of making requests for such information. It would be a breach of law to furnish you with Mr. Kral's record".

It is really interesting how on the one hand they come up with all of these nice rules to remove people but in the final analysis they are not going to do it.

I got a letter from the manager of hearings and appeals. I do not think this was the guy who was promoted, since he bungled up José Mendoza's problem, but it is one of them. The letter read: "As you have observed, Mr. Kral was ordered deported on March 29, 1994 as a consequence of a lengthy criminal record. We intend to remove Mr. Kral to the country of his formal nationality as soon as possible. However", and this is the critical aspect, "he must first obtain a travel document". We will not get that because Czechoslovakia will say: "Why do we want this guy back? You keep him". All of the frills up front on this thing are just rhetoric. You know it will not work and the minister knows it will not work.

(1220)

Let us talk about Inthavong Bounjan. This fellow came to us from Thailand at the age of 14 as a landed immigrant. He has not had a bad record, mischief, theft under \$1,000, assault with a weapon, failure to comply with a disposition as a young offender. I believe he is 23 now.

Good old Inthavong at a shopping centre beat young Kirby Martin over the head with a bat in front of 100 witnesses until he was laying on the street.

This guy was supposed to get five years. He got out in less than three. He is on the streets. He had a deportation order. The deportation was appealed. The appeal took two years. He has been on the streets all that time. To protect him from getting deported his legal aid lawyer went to the refugee board. The incompetence on that board gave him refugee status in 50 minutes. That was used in his favour in the deportation appeal. We asked for a fast decision on it, but of course it has not come yet.

He must be a good guy. He was actually chumming, he said, with the countess group. The countess group is a gang. It is not a group. When asked what he does with the countess group at night he said they sit around, talk and have coffee. I would say in someone else's house after they broke down the door and ripped the furniture apart.

This is what you are keeping in this country. You are not going to remove these people. That is the fallacy in Bill C-44. You know it and we know it. All of the stuff in between counts for nothing.

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Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yesterday when you were in the Chair it was incumbent upon me to explain due process. Today I guess it is going to be incumbent upon me to explain some of the amendments to the bill.

The hon. member opposite talked about unescorted day passes in his speech. With the greatest of respect I would like to let him know that there is an amendment, which I presume he has read, preventing the release on day parole and unescorted temporary absences of inmates who have been ordered removed and who are the subject of an immigration detention order pending their removal from Canada. That seeks to minimize the risk of escape so as to ensure that criminals will be deported at the end of their sentences.

There are a number of things that the member has brought to our attention here this morning that have been problems in a very small but nonetheless serious number of cases. It is a big country guys.

At this point I can only say to the empty barrels on the other side that what they really need to do is read the bill. I find it very interesting that the hon. member who just spoke did not know about the amendment to clause 20 which changes the day parole problem.

I wonder if thus there are other things in the bill that the hon. member has not read and therefore does not support. Certainly his party is not supporting this. I would like to echo the words of the member for Guelph—Wellington who said she was pretty sure that there were members on the other side who had constituents who would support this bill very strongly.

I would like to ask the hon. member a question and he certainly will have a chance to respond. I wonder if the hon. member has read the 11 amendments which came through at report stage and if he has read the bill.

(1225)

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Madam Speaker, I have read the bill. I suspect I know it as well or better than the hon. member. I suspect I have a little more experience at some of the creepy crawlers in our country.

What is wrong here is that if they will not enforce these laws then nothing matters. I would like one of these people across the way to address whether they will have travel documents or travel warrants to remove these people because everything else in between is really a bit of waste now, is it not, if we cannot get them out. They know darn well they cannot remove them.

We know with the experience of the front row here already, with the failures in the fisheries department, with the failures of the human resources programs, with the failures of public works building the \$3 million tunnel down the road, all of these

failures here, there is no exception with the minister of immigration. This is rhetoric. People out there who believe that they are actually doing good in immigration are getting the blindfolds put over them again. This is rhetoric. You not have one clue how to effect deportation—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Order, order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. Would you please address your comments through the Chair.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Madam Speaker, through you to them, in three years from now when the hon. member for Calgary Northeast is immigration minister we will work out the flaws in Bill C-44. We will have to balance the books too but that is okay. We will have to fix up the problems in HRD that they have now blown out the door. However, the important part here is we will effect deportation, they will not. Regardless of all the rules they put in they will not effect deportation, mark our words and read our lips.

[Translation]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to make a preliminary comment. We are told that there are several Canadian criminals abroad, especially in Latin America, an area that I know quite well. There are Canadians in jail in Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Costa Rica. Would you like them to be treated the way you want to treat foreigners in this country? I do not think so. However, what I observed in Latin America is that all Canadians are welcome. The fact that a small number of Canadians are occasionally involved in drug trafficking does not reflect on the way other Canadians are treated. People make a clear distinction between this small group and the vast majority of Canadians.

Here is my question: Yesterday, the hon. member, who is immigration and citizenship critic for the Reform Party, said that we must reduce immigration to solve this problem. By extrapolating this simplistic reasoning, we could say that if we did away completely with immigration we would no longer have any foreign criminals. However, it is impossible.

How do you explain that last year you were asking for a maximum of 250,000 immigrants, this year 200,000 and in the future even less? Considering that the birth rate is very low in Canada, what are you going to do? How are you going to cope with an aging population, a very serious situation in Canada and all industrialized countries? How are you going to fulfil Canada's international obligations in the area of political asylum? Canada signed a convention. Do you think that we can refuse to receive refugees in order to do away with immigration or criminality problems? How are you going to solve the problem? Are you going to keep on lowering the number of immigrants you accept, while the birth rate continues to go down? In the next century, our population will start to decrease if we no longer accept immigrants. How are you going to solve that problem?

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(1230)

[English]

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Madam Speaker, it is ironic that comes from one of the separatists from Quebec. I am not too sure whether the proportionate share of immigrants and refugees is quite received in Quebec as it is elsewhere.

We said that we should reduce the level of immigration. We acknowledge there is a need for immigration but we do not acknowledge the high levels. We acknowledge the need for genuine refugees on a humanitarian basis. That is not what this discussion is about.

Regardless of how many people come into the country, a proportion will be criminals. We acknowledge that. We know that of the citizens within this country a certain number are criminals. There is no question about that. We have to acknowledge that those people coming in who do not abide by the laws, who terrorize innocent victims in Canada should not be allowed to stay. That is what C-44 is trying to address.

My whole theme on this discussion is the fact that we cannot necessarily get travel warrants to remove them from the country. The minister told me that yesterday. Therefore what is being put into C-44 and what is actually going to be achieved at the end are two different things.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I did read the hon. member's lips when he was debating this topic. I heard from those lips the words "these animals".

I have been in this House for 11 years now but I have not heard any member refer to a group of people as "these animals". They may have committed crimes, some very serious, but they are still people. They are still human beings. They are not animals.

I did not raise this on a point of order because I think the table will find it is parliamentary and acceptable language. However I am giving the hon. member this opportunity to withdraw the words "these animals".

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Madam Speaker, my reference was clearly to some of these people trafficking times four in heroine, robbery, assault, sexual assault, rape. I cannot refer in a kind way to a person like José Salinas Mendoza who had 12 criminal convictions, one a sexual assault of a young lady and another sexual assault charge where he got out of the country, in the trunk of his car I presume. I cannot refer to that person as a nice individual. How would the hon. member like me to refer to him?

Ms. Clancy: People.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): I do not think the victims would agree.

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am most pleased to speak on Bill C-44 now before the House.

All of us have heard countless stories of successful immigrants to Canada. As representatives of the Canadian people we know in each of our ridings the stories of people who have chosen Canada.

Even before there was a Canada, waves of immigrants, many penniless, swept ashore to scratch out a life in this new country full of promise. Thousands were escaping famine, grinding poverty, religious persecution and other horrors too awful to mention.

Today despite the progress the world has made, immigrants still wash up on our shores escaping the same horrors, the same persecutions and the same unimaginable poverty. Some still climb blinking and stunned into the sunshine of a Canadian dockside after a perilous trip by ship. More step fearfully off an aircraft at one of our airports.

However, each immigrant has the same questions and the same fears as the immigrants of 150, 200 or even 50 years ago had: Will this country allow me to live here? Can I work to make a better life for my family in this place?

(1235)

This bill marks a progression in the approach of this government and this country in the respect we accord people from around the world who come here. It also marks a step forward in the way we see Canada's role as a protector of individuals who are refugees from oppression.

The reasons for this improvement are numerous. They are not comforting reasons at first glance, but when we take away the rhetoric and the posturing the reasons for this progression are abundantly clear.

Since the very first immigrants came to this country a very minuscule number of newcomers have entered this country as criminals, liars, thieves, murderers and opportunists who seek to prey upon newcomers and citizens alike. One would suspect that even the earliest Vikings who settled and explored this land had their share of people with less than honourable intentions.

It is an immutable law of the human condition that there has always been and will always be those who are bad people. It is also an immutable law of the human condition that the vast majority of immigrants to any country are hard working, honest, loyal and very grateful to the country that opened its doors and its heart to the newcomer.

This is true of Canada. It has been true in the past. It will continue to be true in the future. However, we have before us a collection of amendments to the Immigration Act that seek to change Canada's response to this law of the human condition.

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Bill C-44 may become very popular with the racist element of this country. Some may point to this bill as proof that all immigrants are crooks and dangerous to this country but they are wrong.

Bill C-44 is designed to honour the hard working immigrants to this country. Immigrant gangs and criminals grab more headlines and take up more air time than stories about immigrants who have contributed to the growth of Canada. As a result, the public has a false perception of our immigrant community.

Statistically, new Canadians are less of a burden on the public purse than natural born Canadians. They are less likely to commit crimes, steal, cheat, rob and murder, and they only want that which our own forebears wanted when they came to Canada: to be left in peace to make their way in this land of opportunity.

Bill C-44 promises to play a pivotal role in removing the minuscule percentage of the immigrant population who seek to steal, deal, intimidate, extort, rob, injure and even murder.

This may seem like using the heavy hand of legislation to solve a small problem, putting out a candle on a birthday cake with a fire hose if you like. However, the confidence of the Canadian people in our immigration system has been dealt many sensational and disheartening blows through the evil actions of a very few. Therefore, we will make it easier for all of us, descendants of immigrants, old immigrants and relative newcomers, to remove the bad apples from our country. We will do this with the provisions of Bill C-44 and the Immigration Act.

These conditions will demonstrate to Canadians that we will act vigorously with the full force of the law. The naysayers will have no response. Canadians of all walks of life will continue to respond generously to newcomers, secure in the knowledge that the new Canadian down the street, across the hall or in the next seat on the bus is a person worthy of the privilege of Canadian citizenship.

Canadians have demanded that their immigration and refugee systems not only be fair and effective but efficient and well managed. Bill C-44 represents a careful, reasoned approach to the principles of fairness and tolerance with the balance of the respect of the rule of law.

Bill C-44 closes loopholes that unscrupulous people have exploited. It gives the enforcement authorities the means to remove the thugs who would abuse our society, abuse our people and dishonour the name of new Canadians everywhere.

At the same time, we will honour the millions of new Canadians who over the years have built this country. We will honour our ancestors by forcing those who choose lawlessness to pay for their actions.

We will not open our doors and hearts to those who have little interest in contributing to our country's society in a positive

way. We will not open our doors and hearts to those who seek to manipulate and pervert the refugee system.

We will do this because our newcomers deserve no less from us than that we as people of Canada expect of ourselves.

(1240)

Canada does not tolerate lawlessness. That is our collective word. We will demonstrate that our sentiment about freedom, rights, tolerance, openness, and generosity are not merely words but ironclad pillars of character.

In closing, Bill C-44 is not about punishment. It is about standing by our word. It is about delivering on the promises that every Canadian and every immigrant to this country has ever made. We owe our new Canadians no less than we owe ourselves.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened very carefully to the speech of my colleague. I agree with several paragraphs in that speech, but the problem is in reconciling a compassionate speech with a bill that is not compassionate at all. It is very regressive and unworthy of a democratic society such as Canada.

Unfortunately, my colleague did not take part in the meetings of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. She would have been able to hear testimonies of people coming from Ontario, Quebec or other provinces. They all criticized this bill very severely. Some even asked for its withdrawal; they were lawyers, legal experts and even members of the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, that is of ethnic communities in Canada. Not a single ethnic community came to say: Yes, we agree with this bill; go ahead with it. They all said no or showed a great reluctance toward the bill.

For instance, someone who has lived here for 40 or 50 years, who is still a permanent resident and has never become a Canadian citizen will be able to be deported because they have committed a crime punishable by 10 years or more. In fact, they were only sentenced to two years in prison or a fine or a probation period. The bill will allow these inequities.

There are people who came to Canada at a very young age, children who never became Canadian citizens for whatever reason. They could be deported, yet they are the product of this society. They were educated here. They were influenced by this society.

These inequities will be allowed if this bill is passed. I would ask my colleague to give us her response on that.

[*English*]

Ms. Minna: Madam Speaker, it is important to point out that the bill is not dealing with people who have come to this country and have abided by the laws of this country, have respected the laws of this country and have tried to become productive

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citizens of this country. It is talking to people who have tried to subvert the system in one way or another.

The hon. member mentioned an area on which I must say I agree and on which I have some concerns myself, that is, those individuals who have come here at a young age. To me, they are the product of our society and that is an area we must address and look at. That is an area I have had some difficulty with for some time because young people who come here at the age of four or five or whatever the age—I came here myself at the age of nine—once they have been here for 20 or 30 years they are products of our society. We need to take responsibility for that.

Apart from that, the rest deals very effectively with the problem that we have with people who come in and out of this country. Some of them have been deported and have come back in again and we do not even know they are in the country. We need to address those kinds of problems and make sure that once and for all individuals who refuse to abide by Canadian laws and who do not respect Canadian citizens are not allowed to stay in this country.

I do not see that as being draconian or unacceptable. It is the normal way any society should proceed. It should make sure that those immigrants who come into this country who are law abiding, who come here to improve their lives and to participate in and contribute to Canadian society are freed from the oppression sometimes that these individuals put on them in their own communities.

The bill speaks very clearly to this issue. It is important to make sure that when a country has open doors and open hearts the way we have that we also deal with the reality of some of the bad apples that do come in. They are a very small minority. I do not ascribe what the Reform Party has been doing over the past six months where we seem to be looking at the immigrant criminal of the day every single day. We need to deal with the issue, so let us get on with it.

(1245)

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address this bill.

I find myself in an interesting position on this bill as I am Canadian born and raised and obviously a white male. I think one would say I am probably not the individual who might be the most experienced on an immigration bill, even though members of my own family came to this country as immigrants and settled in a rural location. They went through bankruptcy, drought and picked themselves up and success ensued.

Since I recognize my own inadequacies in this area and stand here as someone who was raised in Canada and has not experienced the hardship of immigration, I asked immigrants for their

advice and help so I could better understand their circumstances.

Since I have been in Ottawa the immigrants I have been able to query the best and get the best advice from are the taxi drivers. I would like to title my little discourse here today as, "taxi tales". I have talked with taxi drivers from a number of different countries such as Lebanon, Iran and Afghanistan in the last week.

The member opposite says they are Canadians. They are recent, hard working immigrants. They are individuals whose opinions I value, although it is possible the member opposite would not.

I speak with them and ask their opinion of Canada as a place for immigrants to come. They speak glowingly of Canada. They speak of Canada as a place they value that gives them opportunities they did not have in their home countries. They speak of opportunities to work hard to advance and improve their lot, and give their children the opportunity to improve and use the educational opportunities Canada provides.

As recent immigrants to Canada, they tell me there are problems with our immigration system. I would ask members opposite to listen to what they say and not to what I say. As I have already said, I have not had those personal experiences.

A young man from Iran told me he came to Canada to work and he immediately looked for a job. He was told not to worry too much about finding a job because he could collect welfare. He said he did not come to Canada to collect welfare, but to find work immediately. He thinks Canadians are very foolish to very visibly offer the opportunity to go on welfare as soon as immigrants arrive here.

A fellow from Afghanistan who left a country in turmoil told me immigration must be acceptable to Canadians or immigration will fail. He made comments about those individuals breaking the rules who Bill C-44 is trying to go after.

Yesterday the minister said Canada wants to keep the porch light on. I agree. The porch light for immigration should be glowing bright and attracting immigrants to our country.

Bill C-44 is going after a very small group of people in our society. It is going after those individuals who have broken the rules.

(1250)

Reformers say over and over again the whole premise of Bill C-44 will break down unless we have the ability to hold back those individuals coming in who are known criminals, or remove them if they have committed crimes. I am trying to say in the most reasoned way I can if we cannot deport it is no good to have a deportation order. If we cannot send those individuals

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home there is no point in putting a flag up and saying deportation will happen.

Bill C-44 says a person who commits a serious crime will be deported after he or she is sentenced, but I say good luck. I have watched the task force the minister set up for this very purpose. He identified some 1,800 serious criminals in Canada who had deportation orders and his task force was designed to pursue and remove those individuals. The information I have is that 30 people have been deported from Canada through that task force. These criminals have not done insignificant crimes; they have committed major crimes.

Who do they seem to be able to deport? In my own riding a woman from the Philippines came here and married a Canadian farmer. Before she was able to process her documents to become a Canadian the farmer died. Because she did not understand and could not speak English very well she went over the time limit to report her husband's demise. She was deported. A self-supporting, law abiding, clean living, perfect immigrant was sent down the road back home. What do we do with those individuals who slit people from stem to stern? We cannot get a travel document so we keep them in Canada. Bill C-44 does not do what it was intended to do.

We say literature that could be used by individuals trying to stay in Canada inappropriately will be intercepted at the border. I say fat chance. One of my confreres went to the border not so long ago and sat with the border guards. He had not sat there very long when he saw seven transport trucks go by without stopping at the border. He asked why they had not stopped and was told the guards take down their licence numbers and put them into the computer because they do not have the people to enforce Canadian laws. So now we are going to intercept literature at the border and stop these inappropriate passports. I say fat chance.

We are going to prevent day parole. I listened to a member opposite say day parole for criminals would no longer be possible. That is a good step, but at the end of their sentences what do we do with them? We put them back out on the street. We cannot get travel documents.

Has anybody figured out we should be paying more attention to getting travel documents for deported criminals rather than looking for other rules to put another bunch of deportees on our streets? We line them up one after another and end up with thousands more who cannot be deported. Does anybody think it would be more sensible to find travel documents? It is a simple solution. We have had lots of discussion on this topic and I do not think it is being heard.

I want to turn the focus a little. Reformers say it will not work if we continue to have an overflow of these individuals who should be deported. We think there should be a mechanism to

actually deport if they are deportable. But at the other end with the open tap, what are we doing in our country? I want to switch focus by saying we are bringing in another group of individuals as immigrants and refugees who I do not think should come to Canada.

(1255)

One example comes from a recent CBC radio article and involves a lesbian woman from Costa Rica whose sole reason for admission to Canada is the fact she is gay. I am sure Canadians sitting in lines waiting for social services would be interested in knowing that is one of the criteria that allows an individual to come into Canada as a refugee. She was being discriminated against in Costa Rica because of her sexual preference.

Another example is an HIV positive Polish refugee who is 25 years of age. His reason for admission into Canada was that he was being persecuted because of this HIV positive status. He was present in Canada for three years and living in Montreal on welfare of \$670 per month. He could not work initially because his English was not up to par. His health now prevents him from working and he has no incentive to work. He does not feel good enough. His drug costs of \$200 per month are free because he is on welfare.

I went over the transcript of why he came to Canada. "So you came here mostly to get proper medical care?" "Yes, quite right. In Canada they have proper medicine available". "Do you think a lot of Canadians or many Canadians hearing your story might be angry? What would you say to Canadians who would say, 'Why should we have to pay through our taxes for the medical care of all the people in the world who are HIV positive and come from countries where the health system is not prepared or equipped to deal with these cases?'" The answer was: "It is a serious problem".

I thought this must be a very unusual case. Surely we cannot be accepting HIV positive people into Canada with that as the criteria. Surely that cannot not be true. I found out that one refugee advocate has had 30 cases exactly like this in the last two years. Three quarters of them were allowed to come into Canada.

What do the Canadian people think when they line up for our social services? What do the students in Canada think when they line up and cannot get into university? What do the individuals here think who have HIV positive problems and line up unable to access services? Do they think we should take on all the problems of the other countries of this world?

The member for Calgary Northeast put a bill in front of this House not so long ago suggesting HIV positivity would disallow admission to Canada along with tuberculosis, parasites, leprosy and the other reasons we say people should not come into Canada if it would add to our Canadian medical burdens. What happened to that bill? It was shot down in flames by the two

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other parties in this House who told their constituents we have lots of resources in Canada so we can accept these people.

I am sorry. We should look after our own people first. As our resources shrink and we cannot look after our own, these individuals opposite will have to face that music.

Immigration is good for Canada when immigrants are skilled and able to converse and fit into our Canadian job situation quickly. When refugees come along we treat them with all the compassion we can muster.

(1300)

Numbers must be flexible. Immigration cannot be static. When our economy does wonderfully well, the immigration numbers should rise. When our economy is struggling, immigration numbers should fall. Members who ask the taxi drivers who are recent immigrants those questions will hear them say: "I agree". I challenge them to do that. Talk to the recent immigrants. Ask them that question.

Members of the Bloc say they disagree with this bill on the other end of the scale and I say we have a great lesson to learn from those Quebec members.

Quebec has taken immigration and put it into a much clearer frame of reference than the rest of Canada has. Quebec has said that immigration must have specific goals for Quebec. Interestingly enough Quebec accepts fewer immigrants than the rest of Canada does. It puts criteria on those immigrants for language ability, for employability and those criteria allow them to be far more flexible as they look at Bill C-44.

I admire what those members have done. They are right in what they have done, 100 per cent on. Not everything that Bloc members say do I agree with, but the reason they are able to say this I agree with.

I repeat that immigration is important for Canada. It is a significant improvement for Canada. Bill C-44 starts out in all the right directions. However it misses the mark completely because we cannot remove those individuals who have done wrong here. We cannot send them where they belong. It is for that reason, and I cannot say it strongly enough, that Reformers will not support this.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I was interested in the comments of my colleague just a minute ago. I want just by way of comment to expand on them a bit and then get his response.

It is rather interesting that in the last election in the wisdom of the voters of Ontario they elected 98 out of 99 members to this House from the Liberal Party, but I wonder who really speaks for the people of Ontario. The reason I ask that question and wonder why this issue has remained dormant as far as the follow-up

from the members from Ontario is that with respect to what my colleague was just saying, there is federal funding to help with immigration settlement.

I am working from documents provided by the government which show that \$90 million goes to the province of Quebec to help with the settlement of immigrants. There is \$110 million that goes to the province of Ontario.

It is relevant to note the proposed immigration levels for 1995. In Canada the total immigrant and refugee intake is proposed to be 190,000 to 215,000 of which Quebec is only going to take 40,000. That is relatively interesting because if I divide 40,000 into 200,000 for a percentage it comes out to significantly smaller than the number that were accepted.

With respect to immigration by metro area in 1993, Toronto alone accepted 28.3 per cent of the immigrants coming to Canada which equalled 71,964 people. Why there are no Liberal members speaking up on this particular issue is beyond my comprehension. Clearly the Reform Party has to do it for them.

(1305)

I do not really understand how they can take the figure from 1993 of Toronto accepting 71,964 immigrants and Quebec only accepting 40,000 in 1995, not quite half, and Quebec is guaranteed \$90 million for the settlement of immigrants, whereas the entire province of Ontario only gets \$110 million. There is obviously a lack of voice for the people of Ontario in this Chamber, particularly in the area respecting immigration.

I wonder if my colleague has any further comments he would like to give on this.

Mr. Hill (MacLeod): Madam Speaker, it would be very easy to use this issue and say we could somehow be divisive about it.

I simply say that I believe those individuals from Quebec who are making the decisions are on the right track. We are talking now that there must be some benefit both to the immigrants and to Canada in immigration. In my view Quebecers have figured out that there is a balance. They have looked very specifically at what their needs are and I believe they are trying to meet those needs.

I would encourage those members opposite to think very carefully about that. Is there in fact an imbalance? I will leave that up to the colleagues on either side to think of very carefully.

[Translation]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his remarks. He made a few references to the situation in Quebec. We are very proud, in Quebec, of having a Department of Cultural Communities and Immigration, something you will not find anywhere else in Canada.

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I do not understand why there is no department of immigration in Ontario, with the most immigrants, or in British Columbia, the province with the most immigrants in Canada on a per capita basis.

Quebec signed agreements with the federal government and receives transfer payments, because Quebec subsidizes COFIs, which offer French courses to new arrivals and help them get settled, find work, housing and so on.

The federal government and the provinces share jurisdiction for immigration. But English speaking provinces are at fault for never taking on any responsibility for immigration. Why? The constitution is very clear on this point: the jurisdiction is shared.

Quebec is expecting 40,000 immigrants this year; 42,000, next year; 44,000 the following year, because we have the power to decide on and set our own immigration quotas. I invite people from the English speaking provinces to put pressure on their individual governments to sign agreements with the federal government. This way, some of the problems can be resolved.

Mr. Hill: Madam Speaker, Quebec's approach is the answer for everyone in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Clifford Lincoln (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Madam Speaker, like many of us here on all sides of the House I was not born in Canada, I am an immigrant myself. Many of us here are immigrants. I think it would be fair to say that immigration has provided Canada with many blessings.

The collective contribution of immigrants to Canada has been immense. We have built our farms, we have built our cities, we have built our quality of life, we have built our railways on the work, on the toil and on the immense sacrifices of the immigrant community.

We have to recognize that immigration has been to us a great benefit, a blessing. At the same time, we must live in the reality of our world today. I was interested in listening to my colleague from Bourassa. I must commend him for the way in which he approached the debate in measured tones and a constructive spirit. I appreciate this.

(1310)

The hon. member says that we are going far too far, that the government's legislation is very regressive. On the other side of the House colleagues from the Reform Party are saying that the government has not gone far enough, that this legislation will not serve its purpose.

We stand in the middle of what may be two positions at either end of the spectrum. We say that today the reality in Canada is

that a tiny minority—I think we all agree it is a tiny minority—abuses the system.

What we want to do is to say that if you are a legitimate immigrant, if you live by the rule book, by the law of Canada, then you are most welcome. The hospitality we give will be the hospitality that you have always received here. At the same time, if you breach our laws, if you use unfair or criminal methods to jump the queue, if you use fraudulent means to come into Canada or if when you are here you abuse the system in such a way that you prejudice the rest of us new and older immigrants and natural born Canadians, then there is a price to pay.

What this bill says in effect is that we will reward and will recognize the legitimate, the fair immigrant. At the same time we will say to the immigrants who take advantage of our system that enough is enough and they cannot do it.

Mr. Abbott: Then he will just say: "I am a refugee".

Mr. Lincoln: I gave you your chance to speak. Give me my chance to speak. Be courteous at least.

This bill wants to give certain powers to the immigration ministry and the immigration minister so that certain cases of extreme abuse are rectified.

[*Translation*]

The legislation will give the minister the power to intervene to prevent appeals against deportation where the deportee has been convicted of serious criminal offenses. The legislation will give us the authority to interrupt the process of Canadian citizenship acquisition when the applicant's claims are being investigated. This will make it possible to declare non eligible for immigration the persons convicted on summary proceedings in Canada or abroad.

[*English*]

We propose to remove the right of appeal for all persons involved in crimes of violence, involved in crimes involving weapons, sexual assault or drug offences, those crimes that have been punishable with sentences of 10 years or more. I do not think this is extreme. I do not think this is abusive.

I find it sad. I must join my seatmate here to say that I found it sad, that I felt the member for Fraser Valley West lowered the standard of debate in referring to animals, creeps and creepy crawlers.

His colleague from Macleod gave him a very good example. We can debate. We can differ. At the same time, we can use language that is measured in tone, that is constructive, that makes a point. You convince people far more readily that way than by using abusive terms such as animals, creeps and creepy crawlers. I do not think this kind of language helps the debate. It certainly does not raise the standard and it convinces very few people.

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(1315)

My hon. colleague from Kootenay East raised the question of statistics between Quebec and Ontario, whether it should be \$90 million to Quebec, \$110 million to Ontario, and dividing and adding and multiplying. When I listened to him in this debate I thought to myself what about human beings? What about people? People are not statistics. Human beings are not statistics.

We should all remember back to our First Nations, to our aboriginal people who have been there for thousands of years. All of us, regardless of our political stripes, regardless of the colour of our skin, regardless of our faith, regardless of whether we are young or old, are all immigrants. They have accepted us here, sometimes not willingly, but today with great calm, with great patience and fortitude.

We have to remember that all of us, whether we were born here or not, were immigrants too. We have to give a chance to the others who want to join with us. At the same time that we give them a chance we want to make it a fair game and say "Those of you who want to make a contribution, those of you who want to be true Canadians, we will help you, we will support you, we will give you all the blessing of our hospitality and welcome. At the same time, those of you who do not want to play the game, who want to abuse the system, there will be a law, a fair law to use in cases of abuse". That is the reason I support Bill C-44.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Madam Speaker, continuing with the parliamentary secretary in this debate I believe the issue is for the people, particularly of the Toronto area, who presently under the current socialist government in Ontario have seen their taxes increase very significantly. As revenue critic we are frequently bringing up the issue that probably this federal government is going to be increasing taxes. They see their municipal taxes increasing and then at the same time they see that another jurisdiction, the Quebec jurisdiction as opposed to the Ontario jurisdiction, is given approximately twice as much money for the immigration settlement.

I wonder if the parliamentary secretary might not agree that if we are attempting to create an environment in which people are not going to be hostile toward legitimate immigrants coming in—I agree with him, building Canada but I cannot help but wonder when there is this imbalance that the Liberal members from Ontario and particularly Toronto are not raising this particular issue. Would he not agree that with this imbalance, where Quebec has taken its affairs into its own hands and has said that it can afford to assimilate 40,000 people, whereas the federal government seems to be imposing much larger numbers on Ontario, particularly on the Toronto area, and the practical fact that people are seeing their dollars going further and further awry, that this is part of the reason for the hostility, some of it

founded, some of it unfounded, nonetheless this does contribute to the problem.

Mr. Lincoln: Madam Speaker, the answer is very clear and simple. Are Quebecers agreed under flexible federalism, under federalism that works, that shows that it works, to share immigration duties with Canada? It provides all kinds of services to new immigrants that the federal government transfers money for.

It is perfectly legitimate. If tomorrow Ontario chose to do the same and take over a lot of these duties that would be worth compensation.

(1320)

I think this is really fair under the system of federalism. If there is one example that is so clear of federalism at its best, it is the immigration system which is in use in Quebec.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I wanted to address the matter to this member regarding the difference between Quebec and the rest of Canada as far as immigration policy is concerned.

Reform has been saying for some time that all we want is a similar type of agreement for the rest of Canada as what Quebec now enjoys and really prospers under. That is the only thing we are saying. Quebec's numbers and levels are very satisfactory given the economic situation of the country. Quebec also cited for low immigration levels, the reason it had decided to go lower on its immigration levels, was economic problems within the province.

Does the member not think there is an economic problem in the rest of Canada too when he sort of favours the view that Quebec has taken on this immigration debate? It really is not part of the debate. It already has the matter settled in its own province.

The member basically accuses Reform of belittling the parliamentary process by so-called name calling and the like in the immigration debate. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has been much more cutting in her viewpoints of Reform and the position we have had. This parliamentary secretary has said absolutely nothing.

I would suggest the parliamentary secretary look to his own party and perhaps attempt to assist it in being more diplomatic in its viewpoints.

Mr. Lincoln: Madam Speaker, very briefly, I have never liked to wear Paris hats, Quebec versus Ontario, Ontario versus British Columbia. I have never been that kind of person. I am a Canadian. I believe in the Canadian state.

At the same time, fair is fair. The immigration system as it is today allows all the provinces to enter the same kinds of agreements that Quebec has entered.

Government Orders

There are negotiations going on now with other provinces. If a province wants to take over the immigration there are negotiations going on now with the provinces. To introduce Quebec and this other debate is not very constructive. I will not get into this game at all.

It is important to make sure that people always come first, regardless of whether they immigrate to British Columbia, Newfoundland, Quebec or Ontario.

With regard to the tone of the debate I will mention what I heard today. I heard one member speak about animals, about creeps, about creepy crawlers and I said that does not raise the tone of the debate. That detracts from it and that really makes it very unfortunate because it does not convince anybody. That is all I said.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Lachine—Lac—Saint—Louis for his speech. I think it was a good speech, although I do not agree with its substance. As he stated, he is a Canadian federalist and I am a sovereigntist.

Nevertheless, I should like to pay tribute to the English speaking community in Quebec for its interest, support and financial contributions in the areas of immigration and refugees, especially the Jewish community, which is heavily involved with refugee matters in Montreal and other cities. Having experienced hardship, I believe they never forget it, just as I never lose sight of my immigrant origin.

But I would put the following matter to my fellow member. It is difficult to accept that in regard to international mail, for example, an immigration officer may open and seize international mail if he believes that it may contain identity papers or passports which might be used for fraudulent purposes.

(1325)

To my knowledge, no democratic country in the world gives civil servants the authority to open mail. It is always up to the judge to do so once reasonable grounds have been established to believe that a crime has been committed or is in the process of being committed.

The other part of my question pertains to senior immigration officers who are entrusted with several new powers. Immigration officers will for instance be authorized to issue warrants for arrest. In all democratic societies, a judge would normally do this, but this bill allows it. What do you say to that?

Mr. Lincoln: Madam Speaker, unlike my hon. colleague, I did not get the chance to participate in the parliamentary committee as I am not a member. However, my colleagues who took part told me that there were numerous representations. There were representations from the Canadian Bar Association and other very credible institutions, who said that the bill was

valid, that the principle of the bill was sound. This is not a stand-alone bill; it is part of a 10-year immigration reform. It must be seen as part of a whole package.

We took into account the representations made by these credible institutions and made 11 amendments. In today's context, I think that this bill makes sense. There will be a debate here in this House and I think that the bill in its present form is worth supporting. I hope that you will think it through and that we can count on your contribution and support.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): As I see no other members rising, is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Call in the members.

And the division bells having rung:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a) I have been requested by the chief government whip to defer the division until a later time.

Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 45(5)(a), the division on the question now before the House stands deferred until 6 p.m. today, at which time the bells to call in the members will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

* * *

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION ACT (FEDERAL AGENCIES)

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.) moved that Bill C-65, an act to reorganize and dissolve certain federal agencies, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

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He said: Madam Speaker, I welcome this opportunity today to take part in the debate on Bill C-65, an Act to reorganize and dissolve certain federal agencies, and to explain to hon. members the substance of the bill and announce certain measures for public service renewal.

(1330)

Bill C-65 is part of a concerted effort to act on our commitment to government renewal, as part of our promise to give Canadians good government and restore public confidence in government. The purpose of this bill and other measures we are taking, which I will describe briefly today, is to usher in a new kind of federal government, a government that is less costly and more efficient and that concentrates on its fundamental roles and responsibilities, in order to give Canadians government services better suited to their needs.

[English]

As we said in our red book, the most important asset of government is the confidence it enjoys of the citizens to whom it is accountable.

During the last election, and since then, the people of Canada have spoken. Their message was loud and clear. They are tired of large government. They have entrusted us with the task of ensuring the careful management of public funds. They want honesty and integrity restored to their federal institutions.

The previous government made a process of selecting friends when making appointments to the many agencies, boards and commissions that cabinet is required by law to carry out.

Madam Speaker, you may recall that in the last budget the Minister of Finance announced that we would have a full scale review to examine the size and relevance of existing boards, agencies, commissions and advisory bodies in order to both achieve cost savings by shrinking the size of some boards and commissions and by eliminating those that no longer play a useful role.

Over the last year we have listened to Canadians and taken action. An obvious measure of the importance that we attributed to the renewal and downsizing of the federal government was the Prime Minister's decision to ask me to assume responsibility for public service renewal. In this capacity the government has moved simultaneously on three fronts which will lead to a leaner, more cost effective and efficient government.

Bill C-65 will bring into force some decisions taken last July to reduce the numbers of, the size of, and otherwise streamline the operations of certain agencies, boards and commissions where this is in the interest of Canadians.

As hon. members will recall, on July 8 of last year I issued an interim report on progress to date. With the co-operation of my cabinet colleagues I was able to report that decisions had been taken affecting 41 agencies in nine different portfolios.

The legislation before the House today will place into law those decisions requiring legislative action.

[Translation]

More specifically, this bill will make it possible to abolish, or significantly streamline, 22 agencies and advisory bodies. As a result, we will be able to eliminate 150 positions staffed by the Governor in Council. In concrete terms, this will mean an annual savings to taxpayers of \$1.5 million, and this is only the first set of such measures.

I am sure you realize, Mr. Speaker, that it would take too long to mention all these measures individually. However, perhaps a few examples will serve to illustrate how proper planning can yield major dividends.

The Board of Directors of Petro-Canada Limited, which now has 15 members, will be reduced to three members. This agency has no employees, its sole function being to manage the remaining accounts receivable of Petro-Canada, which was privatized in 1991. By reducing the number of members on the board and replacing them with employees of the Department of Finance, the government will be able to achieve a substantial savings.

(1335)

The Canadian Saltfish Corporation, which was created almost 25 years ago, is being abolished because there is no longer any need for it. When it closes, 24 positions filled by governor in council appointees will disappear.

The staff of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Board will shrink from 18 to 7, which will allow it to rationalize its activities in Cape Breton and enlist more help from Enterprise Cape Breton to implement more effective programs in that region. Seven positions will disappear when the board of trustees is abolished for the Queen Elizabeth II Canadian fund to aid in research on the diseases of children. In the future, the Medical Research Council will administer this fund.

This is a very good example of what I mean when I say that good planning pays dividends. Continuing to study childhood diseases is essential. However, since the government supplies the funds but does not carry out the research, it is illogical in these times of fiscal restraint to keep paying for a board that only administers the fund.

By being more pragmatic and logical, we tried to expose areas of overlap and to see if we could merge or group together certain functions. This is what we did for the Fund to aid in research on the diseases of children. We managed to save the fund by having it administered more effectively by the existing Medical Research Council of Canada.

Another example of this kind of amalgamation was the elimination of Emergency Preparedness Canada as a separate agency. Emergency preparedness remains necessary and Canada will be well served in that area, except that this function will now be performed by DND.

The functions of each agency were also reviewed for relevancy, to see if they were still useful or had become redundant.

Government Orders

Where it was determined that we had to keep the agency, we then looked at its structure with a view, if at all possible, to fulfilling its role with fewer people, less money and, perhaps, more efficiency.

Some agencies had very large staffs. Given the present financial situation, that seemed difficult to justify.

Internal structure is also an important criterion and one that we have taken into account. For example, at the National Capital Commission, it is essential that adequate regional representation be maintained on the board.

[*English*]

Similar criteria of course apply to many types of boards and we have been careful to maintain appropriate representation of the boards that we will be reducing in size.

Over a dozen organizations will have their number of board members reduced, resulting in significant savings. Just to mention but a few in this group are the Canada Council, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Arts Centre and the boards of four of Canada's national museums.

I believe that hon. members will agree that this demonstrates, as I said last summer, we want to ensure that federal agencies continue to be relevant and that they are serving Canadians as effectively as possible. Bill C-65 will give effect to our objective which is the identification of sensible and practical actions to eliminate overlap and duplication and simplify government wherever possible.

Program review and efficiency of the federation: As I have already mentioned the review of agencies, boards and commissions is one aspect of the government's overall approach to streamlining and restructuring government.

(1340)

The program review and our work in improving the efficiency of the federation are two additional initiatives. The efficiency of the federation initiative has allowed us to work jointly with the provinces in reducing overlap and duplication. With nine of the provinces and with two of the territories we have signed action plans which deal with specific sectoral issues where overlap and duplication can be reduced or eliminated within specific time frames.

I will soon report on the progress that we have made in this important area which will result in more effective and less costly government for all Canadians.

The program review is the other very significant initiative that will give the government a new look, a substantially different government which focuses on its core roles and responsibilities. The government is at one in understanding the absolute necessity for the government to renew itself, to restructure

itself to better meet the evolving needs of our society during the next century.

As members know, the full details of the results of the program review will be announced by the Minister of Finance when he tables his budget.

[*Translation*]

Third, there is no such thing as the status quo; the federal system is evolving. What I have just described to you is but one example of this evolution in government. If we are able to take the steps I just referred to, it is because our system is flexible, adaptable and capable of meeting the changing needs of our society and our country.

Similarly, federalism is a form of government characterized by the capability of adjusting. Our history demonstrates the extreme flexibility of our government system.

[*English*]

Madam Speaker, if I can refer to my opening remarks of a few moments ago, where I mentioned the wishes of the Canadian people, I am certain that you and all colleagues in the House will agree that the government is taking the measures that will meet these expectations. Perhaps more than anything else, Canadians expect and want their government to be more responsive. A more responsive government will result from the efforts I have outlined here today.

[*Translation*]

To conclude, I invite all the hon. members to support Bill C-65. It is with legislation like this that we can give you a modern and efficient government. In closing, I would like to advise the hon. members that we will be introducing in a little while another omnibus bill to finish the job started with Bill C-65.

By the time our review is over, we will have dissolved many other agencies, boards and commissions; eliminated more than 600 positions and effected savings of over \$10 million a year for the taxpayers. I cannot wait to be done with this review.

Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise following the speech made here this afternoon on Bill C-65 by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal. In the context of that legislation, the minister is also acting as President of the Privy Council.

Bill C-65 is a measure to reorganize and dissolve certain federal agencies. The bill amends and reorganizes 15 federal agencies by reducing the number of their members. It also dismantles seven other federal organizations. I say dismantle because, in some cases, the mandate of these agencies is transferred to the sector department or is merged with that of another body.

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For several months now, the minister has been making a lot of statements regarding his reorganization of the federal public service.

(1345)

Let us take a closer look at the effect of these cuts in the context of the public service taken as a whole. In its current form, Bill C-65 seeks to restructure the boards of 15 federal organizations and reduce the number of their members. As the minister said himself, the changes proposed in that legislation would result in the elimination of 150 positions held by governor-in-council appointees, as well as in savings of about one million dollars.

At the same time, the government is about to eliminate 45,000 jobs in the federal public service. If we estimate the average cost of these positions to be \$40,000, a figure which includes the salary and the fringe benefits, these cuts could result in savings of \$1.8 billion for the government. Compared to these drastic cuts and their impact on the government's budget, the changes proposed in Bill C-65 seem very minor indeed. They look more like a device to attract the public's attention than like a real change in the government's way of managing.

The savings which would result from the minister's piece of legislation represent merely one eighteenth of one per cent of the savings related to the anticipated elimination of the 45,000 jobs mentioned earlier. As you can imagine, the minister's interest in such cuts is great, given their impact on the budget; on the other hand, the savings resulting from the reorganization and elimination of some federal agencies, which amount to a million dollars per year, seem minor.

The fact is that all this publicity about savings of one million dollars is designed to prepare the ground and show that the government is setting an example. The aim is to show that political positions are being cut, before public service positions. Let us not forget that most of these political positions are part-time positions, and the people in them usually have another income. This is not the case for public servants, who work only for the government.

A bill, in proper form, to save one million dollars is far too little, when public service positions are about to be slashed. This is not good enough. In many cases, the savings will not be real. Costs will simply be transferred to the public service. The government wants us to believe the bill will reduce waste in public spending. What we need are fewer political positions, that is appointments by the Privy Council, in other words, by the Prime Minister himself. This bill is simply a smoke screen.

Saturday's *Globe and Mail* made it very clear that there was no shortage of political appointments under the Liberals. The article is headed: "It pays to be a Liberal" and goes on to list 84 Liberals who have been appointed by the government. Certain

well-known Liberals were named to important positions. Some of them had supported the Prime Minister at the leadership convention; others had lost out in the October 1993 elections and others were longtime Liberal supporters.

This omnibus bill creates the illusion of government transparency. The red book makes the following promise: "A Liberal government will review the appointment process to ensure that necessary appointments are made on the basis of competence. Persons appointed by a Liberal government will better represent women, visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, and people with disabilities". Are the 84 appointments listed in last Saturday's *Globe and Mail* based on the red book's criteria? Or are there double standards? I shall let you judge for yourselves. We heard one speech during the election campaign, but, having been elected, they are singing a different song now. The same Liberal credo as usual.

The elimination in the bill of all legal references to commissions and advisory boards leads us to doubt that the Liberals are seriously committed to transparency in government operations. Will Parliament and elected members have the right to examine appointments to such advisory boards, which in fact will no longer be legally constituted?

These agencies will no longer be required to submit annual reports to Parliament. The expected savings may be quite minimal and government appointments may become even more concentrated in the hands of the executive. Is this the transparency that the Liberals promised us during the last election campaign in October 1993?

(1350)

They have also been silent on the issue of consultation with the provinces. Is that the flexible federalism promised by the Liberals? At the National Capital Commission, the legal obligation to have a member representing each province has been lifted in favour of local representation, that means representation for the city of Hull and for the city of Ottawa.

And the government is still wondering why Westerners feel alienated? Why do Canadians from the west feel they are getting less than Ontarians and why was the government unable to have a majority of members of Parliament elected in the west of the country?

The North Pacific Fisheries Convention Act will be revoked and the International North Pacific Fisheries Commission will be created. Was the Government of British Columbia consulted during this process and on the changes proposed by this act? Again, the minister remains silent.

The Canadian Saltfish Corporation is being dissolved, says the minister, and the Saltfish Act, revoked. There is no more saltfish to sell anyway. The corporation was already inactive. Why has the government sat 15 months in office without acting?

Dissolving this corporation was not the decision of the century, you will agree.

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency Act is being amended. Have the governments of the four maritime provinces been privy to discussions leading up to this decision? Have they been included? Once again, we are in the dark.

There will no longer be representatives of the armed forces on the National Film Board. The government finally recognizes that the NFB is not a propaganda machine. Does it also recognize that Canadian taxpayers should not be helping to pay for partisan propaganda? Is the government prepared to stop funding the Council for Canadian Unity and let pressure groups from the no side in the next Quebec referendum pick up the slack?

The government says it wants to put an end to political appointments and senseless references to advisers. Seven advisory councils have been abolished. This is all very fine and well, but the directors of agencies can still call on the services of these people for advice of all sorts. The same group of friends of the regime will therefore continue to hover around government agencies, but more informally, less visibly than before.

The government plans to table a second omnibus bill, the minister tells us, after bringing down the budget, while an examination of all federal bodies continues under the responsibility of the minister himself.

All in all, the two bills will affect fewer than 300 positions, the majority of them part time, and will save one million dollars at best.

As we mentioned, the reorganization of these 15 federal bodies and the winding-up of seven others provided for in Bill C-65 will abolish a total of 150 political positions. This initiative should be pursued, although it still strikes us as much too timid.

The government should be directing its attention to the process of appointing people to these organizations. This is the sore point. The existing appointment process leaves the door open to taxpayers' money being used to reward friends of the party in power. There will be fewer of these political appointees, I agree, but they will still be Liberals.

What has changed? Let us look more closely at the nature of this administrative reorganization by the Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal. The number of members of the Canada Council has dropped from 21 to 11. The position of assistant director is no longer mentioned in the bill's provisions. The Council could, however, create such a position without any other approval. Parliament is losing control. The position of secretary of the Canadian Film Development Corporation, Tele-

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film Canada, is in fact no longer mentioned in the bill. The creation of such a position will therefore be up to the corporation in the future.

The Minister of National Defence is henceforth responsible for emergency preparedness, the organization formerly presided over by the minister, but under the direction of the executive director.

(1355)

Emergency Preparedness Canada is no longer required to submit an annual report on its operations. Of course, the risk of politicizing emergency preparedness for partisan purposes is still there and we must remain very vigilant in this regard. It is a matter of government openness and parliamentary control.

The established policy of no longer requiring departments to submit annual reports is part of the cheeseparing economies this government is trying to achieve, when its mismanagement in all areas is costing us billions of dollars.

A one-point hike in interest rates increases the deficit by \$1.7 billion, which is close to the \$1.8 billion to be gained by eliminating the 45,000 public service jobs targeted by the government.

The abolition of the National Advisory Council on Fitness and Amateur Sport was already announced in the 1993 budget of the Conservative government. Are the Liberals taking credit for these savings or are they using the same data a second time?

Any legal reference to the National Archives of Canada Advisory Board and the National Library Advisory Board is eliminated. Management at the National Archives and National Library will thus be free to set up an informal advisory committee that will be beyond control.

The minister said that other changes would be implemented as part of the reorganization through separate legislation, orders-in-council or administrative measures. These additional measures will eliminate 125 governor in council appointments and save \$4 million. Did you notice that this government's estimated future savings are always much bigger than the savings generated by these concrete measures?

Bill C-65 and the second omnibus bill that will be introduced after the budget is tabled will eliminate 300 jobs and save \$1 million, while future measures will cut 125 jobs and save \$4 million. This second series of measures to be implemented in the coming year will thus save four times as much. The jobs that will be cut must pay much better than those already abolished.

The Speaker: It being two o'clock, pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

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STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is International Development Week. As we focus on our own problems, we Canadians must also remind ourselves from time to time that the vast majority of humankind is not as well off as we are. We must also recognize that our own interests and values require that we aid others in development.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs said this morning, aid for development attacks the threats to our own security that are posed by over-population, poverty, disease and conflicts in other countries. It also allows us to share our Canadian values of tolerance and pluralism; aid women in development; encourage the establishment of a vibrant private sector in developing economies; and help others create the foundations for democratic government that make this country so great.

In this development week we salute the non-governmental organizations, churches and other Canadian institutions, and the millions of individual Canadians who make such a tremendous contribution to others in the world, while enriching us all in the process.

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[Translation]

SOCIAL HOUSING

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this government is contemplating raising to 30 per cent of income the rent geared to income in low cost and co-op housing, in order to save on social housing and apply these savings to reducing the federal deficit.

We recognize in this measure the unimaginative, heartless ways of the Liberals, and particularly their lack of vision. What this raise means, in real terms, is a 20 percent per year rent increase for the 110,000 Quebec families in social housing.

Given an average income of \$10,000, these tenants will have to pay \$500 more in annual rent, or \$40 to \$50 more per month.

Instead of going after the undue privileges of the rich—family trusts, tax loopholes and unpaid taxes—the federal government argues: let us make the poor pay.

[English]

THE DEBT

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on January 27, I participated in a debate at the University of Manitoba entitled “Generation X—Inheriting the Debt”.

I sat in utter astonishment as I listened to the Liberal member from St. Boniface say to these students whose futures are in jeopardy because of decades of Liberal and Tory overspending that continued deficits have been worth it because “look at all the good things we have”.

My astonishment turned to utter disbelief when the same Liberal member from St. Boniface stated that all the talk about MPs’ pensions being so rich is just a crock. As this member and other Liberal trough feeders continue to extol the virtues of deficit spending and point to the frugality of their pension plans, one can be sure that the Canadian taxpayers recognizes that this Liberal defence in fact is just a crock.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville, Ind. Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for 15 months now Canadians have supported the federal government’s policy of deficit reduction and job development. We are all acutely aware of the impact these policies will have on the economic development of Canada.

Now with the impending budget Canadians are getting nervous because deficit reduction targets will not be met. They are nervous because of strong rumours of proposed tax increases in the budget.

Low and middle income Canadians have been taxed enough. They have been burdened by government mismanagement and excessive spending for too long.

I have proposed a solution to the Minister of Finance, a solution that every low and middle income earner in Canada will support. The solution is to designate 1995 a tax freeze year for low and middle income earning Canadians. It is time for the federal government to show leadership on this matter.

* * *

CHINESE NEW YEAR

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week members of the Chinese Canadian community celebrated the beginning of the Chinese New Year, the year of the boar.

In Vancouver the Chinese community celebrated all week. I had the privilege to participate in many of the festivities ushering in the new year.

Parades, lion dances, colourful fairs and rich banquets brought Vancouver East to life. Even the dragon made an appearance.

The Chinese Canadian community is a great asset to our Canadian mosaic. Dedicated members of their community, Chinese Canadians are a good example of Canadian citizenship. Their will to generously share their traditions and culture with the rest of Canada is but another contribution of this great community to the building of a multicultural country.

They once again proved that the values they hold so dear are the values of many other communities: family, respect, friendship, work, hospitality. The Chinese Canadian community also enjoys, as do many other communities, good food, good fun and a great love for celebration.

Let me wish everybody Happy New Year, Kung Hey Fat Choy.

* * *

OXFORD

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Prime Minister for success in forging new trading relationships with the far east, the Americas and eastern Europe.

My riding of Oxford has many industries that want to benefit from these new trading opportunities. This was demonstrated by representatives from many sectors of my ridings' economy, including food processing, agri-business, manufacturing and education who met with representatives of the Canada-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce this past December in Woodstock.

At this meeting business people learned about the developing Ukrainian economy and the opportunities it presents to Canadian business.

The attitude of the people present was one of confidence in the skills and products they had to offer and willingness to investigate joint ventures and exchanges.

I can assure the Prime Minister and this House that Oxford will be doing its part in creating new jobs and new opportunities for all Canadians through increased trade.

* * *

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT PENSIONS

Mrs. Karen Kraft Sloan (York—Simcoe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to move on its promise of MP pension reform.

(1405)

The Minister of Finance will deliver a tough budget at the end of this month. Canadians understand the difficult financial challenges facing our country.

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Canadians want a budget that is fair and equitable, that ensures that those who do not pay their fair share do so and the things Canadians value the most are protected, our health, our children and our natural environment.

However, to be fair and equitable we must put our own House in order first. I campaigned on pension reform. I urge the government to act now.

* * *

[Translation]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the social program reform gives the federal government an opportunity to treat young people like second class citizens.

At a time when young people must build a future in extremely difficult conditions, given the problems of unemployment and government debt, the Minister of Human Resources Development, with the support of the Liberal majority within the committee, jeopardizes their ability to get university and post-secondary education by triggering a significant rise in tuition fees. Moreover, the minister and the Liberal majority want to make it more difficult for young people to get UI benefits.

Because of such measures, which show contempt and a lack of understanding, the federal government fully justifies the dissatisfaction and resentment young Quebecers and Canadians feel toward leaders who do not care at all about their future.

* * *

[English]

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT PENSIONS

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last November I rose in this House to share the concerns my constituents and I have over the Liberal's inaction in dealing with excessive MP pensions.

Today I rise again on the same subject. Almost three months have passed since trough day, the day 52 members of the House became members of the pay cheque for life club, courtesy of the extravagant MP pension plan. This government is famous for putting off major decisions. Meanwhile the cheques keep flowing from Ottawa and Canadians keep demanding an overhaul.

In a recent Cariboo—Chilcotin householder survey over one quarter of all responses voluntarily singled out the MP pension plan as an area to be cut. My constituents are angry that this government has done nothing.

Reformers stand with all Canadians in demanding MP pensions be brought into line with those seen in the private sector. It is time the Liberals live up to their promises. Stop wavering on

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the issue and bring forward an affordable pension plan for the members of this House.

* * *

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today joining us in the House of Commons are some 40 students from Concordia University who represent the views of Concordia students, faculty and staff in strongly opposing the changes in post-secondary education funding proposed by this government.

I join in condemning these unfair measures and call on the government to stop fighting the deficit on the backs of students and workers, particularly women, people with disabilities and visible minorities, and instead close tax loopholes for the wealthy and corporations, lower interest rates and put people back to work.

The Minister of Finance can set a personal example by ensuring that CSL Steamship Lines Inc. hires Canadian mariners with Canadian standards to crew vessels built in Canada and subsidized by Canadian taxpayers. Instead, six of these vessels are registered in the Bahamas using cheap labour and substandard conditions.

Finally, let us make sure that we fully fund post-secondary education in this country and strengthen social programs, not weaken and attack them.

* * *

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in recognizing the principle of no new taxes, we should also recognize that continued investment in advanced scientific and technological research, oriented toward industrial production and export abroad, particularly in information science and biotechnology in which Canada is a world leader today, is one of the keys to improving Canada's revenues and trade balance, thus increasing employment and reducing the deficit.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have received hundreds of letters from concerned constituents of Bramalea—Gore—Malton, all demanding no new taxes.

My constituents want the government to reduce the deficit and eliminate duplication of services. People want the government to create a climate beneficial to economic growth. They want more support for small business.

Ordinary Canadians would like tax loopholes to be closed, government spending reduced, and MPs' pensions brought into line.

(1410)

I urge my fellow members to support the government in these worthwhile objectives.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DOUGLAS WARNOCK

Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we may be living in a selfish world, but a ray of hope shone over my riding of Verdun—Saint-Paul during the Christmas recess.

I refer to a local hero, Douglas Warnock, and I do not use the term lightly. On January 8, Mr. Warnock dove into the icy waters of the St. Lawrence River to haul a young mother and her daughter back to safety. When he got out of the water, he was told about another young girl, unconscious and floating downstream. He dove back in and brought her to shore.

Shivering and freezing, Mr. Warnock went back to the Verdun yacht club to warm up, leaving the victims to be cared for by others in the crowd that had gathered. Today, that mother, her daughter and her friend are alive thanks to this man's bravery.

[*English*]

I ask all Canadians to join me in thanking Mr. Warnock for giving us hope by demonstrating that there are still people who care enough for others.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in March 1994, the Federal Court's Appeal Division ruled that by refusing to pay members of the RCMP a bilingualism bonus since 1977, the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had acted unlawfully.

In other words, the commissioner had been acting unlawfully for more than 17 years. Today, members of the RCMP demonstrated on Parliament Hill to claim a fundamental right already enjoyed by other employees in the federal public service: the right to form a union. Members of provincial and city police forces already have that right.

Members of the RCMP see this as a way to stop this abuse of power by the RCMP commissioner, who is their employer and, as far as their grievances are concerned, is both judge and jury. It would be in the best interests of Canada to have an open RCMP, where police officers can do a good job and enjoy full recognition of their basic rights.

Oral Questions

[English]

(1415)

THE BUDGET

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the constituents of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt to give fair warning to the government in anticipation of its pending budget.

Canadians have been contacting Reform Party members of Parliament to express their rage about any possible taxation of dental benefits and RRSPs by the Liberal government. We have received thousands of calls, letters and petitions.

The Reform Party opposes any increase in the general tax burden imposed on Canadians. The budget must be balanced, but through expenditure reductions rather than tax increases.

Does this government not understand that Canadians want a reduction in the burden of government? In my riding over the last three weeks my constituents have made it perfectly clear: reduce the deficit without increasing taxes. Our voices of protest must stop the Liberals from making any tax grab.

I give fair warning to the government: do not tax dental benefits or RRSPs, do not raise any taxes, reduce spending.

* * *

CANADIAN AIRBORNE REGIMENT

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the comments made by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands denying any racism in the video depicting the conduct of some members of the Canadian Airborne Regiment indicate how difficult it is to understand racism.

In the video a black paratrooper, like his white colleagues, was personally humiliated but in addition he was challenged and degraded at a second level. In the video his captors wrote on his back with excrement "I love the KKK". Had they written that message on a white recruit the meaning would have been lost. Its intended effect was only achieved because its host was black. In this case the individual was humiliated but as well all members of his race were implicated and humiliated.

This is racism in its simplest form; so simple that it can become systemic in our society.

We can say and be proud that Canada is not a racist nation. However, if we do not recognize racism when it exists and when it occurs I am afraid that our protestations may become hollow and untrue.

LIBERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, economic development, growth and jobs are the priorities of the government. I encourage the Prime Minister and the government to continue with this agenda during 1995.

During the past year this government has created an economy and the confidence to enable thousands of permanent jobs to be created across Canada. As a matter of fact, our country is a leader in growth among all G-7 nations.

This agenda is working. We are on the road to recovery and Canadians have renewed pride and confidence in our country and in our economy. Atlantic Canadians have a goal of self-sufficiency and the jobs and growth agenda is an important part of the future achievement of this goal.

We must continue with our agenda for jobs and growth to build and even stronger economic climate that will provide the opportunity for employment for all Canadians.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

INCOME TAX

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, now that the financial community is becoming increasingly sceptical about the government's willingness to deal with the deficit, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have refused to promise not to raise taxes in the next budget. Once again, the government is about to attack the middle class, which is already heavily taxed.

My question is directed to the Prime Minister. How can the Prime Minister claim that, three weeks before the budget, he still does not know whether the government will raise taxes and, above all, how can he renege with such impunity on a campaign promise that he would not raise taxes during the first two years of his mandate?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the final decisions concerning the budget have yet to be made, so it would be premature for me to say anything definitive on certain aspects of the budget.

What we have to do is not an easy job. Decisions are in the process of being made, but they are not final. As soon as we have finished the job, the Minister of Finance will be able to announce the budget date, and members will get their answers on the night the budget is brought down.

Oral Questions

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, the Prime Minister's arguments do not release him from his commitments. He was elected on the basis that he would not increase taxes during the first two years of his mandate.

I want to ask the Prime Minister whether he agrees that during the past year, his government's failure to cut spending was mainly responsible for increasing mortgage costs by up to \$200 per month for the same taxpayers who would be affected by his surtax.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have said it before and I will say it again, a budget will be brought down in the House a few weeks from now. I want to point to hon. member that Canada's economic performance has been exceptional.

We have achieved higher growth objectives than any other western country. We have had a year with zero inflation. For the first time in a very long while, the forecasts of the Minister of Finance with respect to the deficit have been reached. This will be explained in the budget.

Our performance was excellent, and we intend to keep it that way. And when the Minister of Finance rises in the House to propose budget cuts, I will be delighted to see the hon. member supporting those cuts.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if we are in such good shape, why not promise not to raise taxes? Why this reluctance to make certain decisions, when the government is prepared to make decisions like the one I am about to mention?

Considering the present state of our public finances, how can the Prime Minister justify a decision to give away \$2 billion in tax credits to the wealthiest taxpayers in this country who can afford a vacation home in the United States?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member ought to know that what this means is, that we negotiated an agreement with the United States to avoid double taxation of Canadians.

(1420)

Formerly, a Canadian who had a residence in the United States had to pay taxes unless he had a tax credit, and the same applied to an American who had a residence here. Since many Americans have residences in this country, what we did was to protect Canada's tax base.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Just yesterday, the Minister of Finance asked the official opposition to make suggestions for reducing expenditures. Yet on December 15 in this House, he denounced proposals made by the Bloc Québécois and denounced the fact that they would only amount to a reduction of \$5 billion.

Rather than contemplating another tax increase for the middle class, why does the government refuse to act on the suggestions made by the official opposition, such as collecting \$6 billion in unpaid taxes, eliminating duplication which costs \$3 billion in Quebec alone, scrapping over \$1 billion in unproductive subsidies to companies, cutting the defence budget—

The Speaker: Order, please. I remind hon. members that they should ask questions and not give little speeches. I would ask the hon. member to state his question immediately.

Mr. Brien: What a shame, Mr. Speaker, I still had a few hundred million dollars earmarked for the Minister of Finance.

Why is he considering raising taxes for the middle class instead of following the suggestions made by the Bloc Québécois?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only suggestions offered by the Bloc Québécois were the same ones as the Auditor General made. In congratulating us, the Auditor General also congratulated the Minister of National Revenue on his efforts in this regard. There is nothing new in their suggestions.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance.

Does the Minister of Finance intend to act on the warning against increasing taxes given him by the business council on national issues, which said that the overall tax burden in Canada is already too high, jeopardizing investment projects and, more seriously, hampering efforts to reduce unemployment faster?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have said repeatedly that we intend primarily to cut government spending. As to specific decisions, we will have to wait for the budget.

I find it somewhat of a paradox, however, with the whip of the Bloc Québécois having just suggested that we should pay no attention to business leaders, to have the member for Témiscamingue ask us now to listen to what the business leaders have to say. There seems to be a bit of a lack of consistency here.

[English]

THE BUDGET

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the finance minister said it would be fruitless for Reformers to ask questions about the budget because he would not under any circumstances get into specifics. Yet representatives of the financial institutions seem to be learning a great deal about the budget from off the record conversations with government insiders. For example, Sherry Cooper, chief economist of Nesbitt Burns says that those in the know tell her the government will save \$5.25 billion in spending reductions next year and \$7 billion in 1996-97.

Will the minister provide the House with the list of institutions and others who have been provided with this type of information about the forthcoming budget and will he explain why he is not willing to provide the same details to this House and the Canadian people?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the leader of the third party that no such information has been provided to any financial institutions and therefore he has his answer.

I did participate in a telephone conference call with Sherry Cooper along with 50 or 60 others, including a full representation from the financial press.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the finance minister wants to try to con the markets and outline his budget strategy to financial analysts. They are uncertain and worried about the government's fiscal direction. The Canadian people are also uncertain and worried about the government's fiscal direction and they need some reassurances.

(1425)

How is it that the government can find ways to reassure financial analysts on the size of the budget deficit and spending cuts, but will not tell the Canadian people anything about pending tax increases? Why the double standard? It is their money.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been able to reassure financial markets because we have been able to say that this year, as the Prime Minister has said, for the first time in a long, long time the Canadian government is going to hit its deficit targets. We have also been able to reassure financial markets because we have said that in the years to come we are going to continue to hit those targets.

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We have been able to reassure the Canadian people and those who are in need when we have said that we will not engage in the kind of fiscal savagery recommended by the Reform Party.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if you set your targets low enough, even the Conservatives can hit them.

The government seems to be finding ways of getting information to the money markets about the budget in order to prepare their reaction and calm their fears, but it is unprepared to provide the same information to this House and the Canadian people who have an even greater stake in the budget.

I am wondering whether the Prime Minister condones this double standard or whether he is willing to be as frank with the Canadian people as his finance minister is apparently willing to be frank with financial analysts.

Is the Prime Minister willing to tell the Canadian people today, yes or no, whether the government intends to increase taxes in the forthcoming budget? Be as frank with them as the minister is with the analysts.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, you will have to be patient because we will be asked that question every day until the day of the budget. Everybody knows we cannot reveal the contents of the budget before budget night. We will respect the rule that has existed for a long time.

One thing is clear. This government has said to the Canadian public and the business community that we would meet our targets and the targets will be met.

* * *

[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Of all the recommendations made in the Liberals' majority report on social program reform, one is particularly heinous since it aims to require that young people work more weeks than the rest of the population in order to qualify for unemployment insurance, even though young people already have a hard time finding stable jobs.

Does the Minister of Human Resources Development endorse the recommendation made by his Liberal colleagues, which, in an underhanded and discriminatory way, sets up a two-tiered unemployment insurance system with the lower level of coverage going to young people?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first if I might I would like to take the opportunity to thank all members of the committee on

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human resources who completed their work in sometimes somewhat trying circumstances. I want to tell them I appreciate very much the way in which they made a real effort to reflect the views of Canadians.

As far as the specific recommendations are concerned, we will be looking at all the views and recommendations contained in the committee report submitted, both the majority and minority reports. We will be looking at them very carefully as we go about preparing government programs for the reform of our social institutions.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that, during the consultation process, not one of the witnesses told us that a system penalizing young people was needed.

How can the minister justify his government's determination to make young people second class citizens, by forcing them to increase the debt load they accumulate during their studies and by restricting their access to unemployment insurance, even though they often hold unstable jobs?

(1430)

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just explained a committee report is not a government policy. It is very important that we clarify the distinction.

On the other hand, I would say that having read the majority report very carefully, I was very impressed by the number of recommendations made concerning the way in which we could begin to target more assistance directly to young people to help them get into the job market.

It seems to me that one of the most important initiatives or directions the committee majority report recommends is that we devote far more resources to things like internship programs, transitions between school and work, helping students get better aid and assistance to go back to school.

Providing positive programming is really the direction we have to go in. That was certainly the spirit in which the majority committee report was expressed.

* * *

GOVERNOR GENERAL

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today the Reform candidate for Ottawa—Vanier said that the soon to be appointed Governor General should be required to

pay his fair share of taxes. I and I am sure every other Canadian wholeheartedly agree. Now that the Queen pays income tax, why should her representative in Canada not pay?

My question is for the Prime Minister. Will he send a positive signal to Canadian taxpayers by asking the new Governor General to voluntarily pay income taxes like the rest of us?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to begin with, the Governor General has voluntarily returned his pension to the crown. He was not obliged to do that. There was no obligation at all, yet he accepted to do that.

This legislation has been in existence for a long time. Perhaps we might have to review it and adjust the circumstances to that reality, but this is the way governors general have been treated in Canada since 1867.

We will look into that and see if we can do something. At the same time we have to treat this Governor General the same way we treated the governors general in the past.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, of course the Queen set the precedent in 1993 when she offered voluntarily to pay income taxes.

Things are different now from what they were in 1867. With today's harsh economic climate when Canadians are being forced to make do with less from sea to sea, a \$95,000 salary tax free plus benefits does seem a little steep.

The government has talked a lot in the last few weeks about making the taxation system fairer. Why not start at the top with the Governor General? Equal means equal.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not necessary to tell the House that the Governor General on his private income, if he has other income, is paying his taxes. It is exactly what the Queen has offered to do in England if I am well informed. She is paying taxes on her private income, not on her public income.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in its policy statement on foreign affairs and international trade tabled today, the government expresses its firm intention to diversify our trade relations with Asia since, in its opinion, Canadian trade is too focused on the U.S. market.

Nowhere in its statement does this government describe the U.S. as a strategic market for Canadian exporters. It sounds like an updated version of the famous third option favoured by the Liberals in the 1970s.

Oral Questions

Does the Minister for International Trade intend to cut human and financial resources allocated to the promotion of trade with the U.S. and reduce the number of trade commissioners, as suggested by Liberal senators and members of Parliament on the special joint committee?

[English]

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Canada's search for additional international markets it is not in any way our intention to play down opportunities in the United States. They are real, they are tangible and of course they represent the greatest part of our foreign trade.

Our programs of support range across a whole spectrum. Some relate to the border states for example. Some relate to small and medium sized enterprises entering the export world for the first time, principally in the United States. It is our intention to continue to support those programs.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister claims that he cares about human rights; why in that case did he not see fit to raise this issue during his meeting with Central American leaders, including the President of Guatemala, a country denounced by Amnesty International for its systematic violation of human rights?

(1435)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I raised this kind of issue several times whenever circumstances allowed it. In fact, I raised this very issue, in the presence of the President of Guatemala, at the breakfast meeting we had with the six Central American government leaders.

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[English]

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the report tabled by the human resources development committee offered the curious vision that social programs are working brilliantly yet they are desperately in need of reform.

Almost all of the recommendations are based on three false assumptions: that governments create jobs through ever increasing public spending; that a government monopoly is the best means of caring for those in need; and that ever increasing government debts and deficits are justifiable if they are spent on government run, make work projects and social programs.

Last week the Minister of Human Resources Development told the news media that deficit reduction had overtaken social

program reform as the top priority. Can the minister tell Canadians if he will proceed with social program reform only if he can spend more money and control program delivery?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious the hon. member was so busy reading his own minority report that he did not bother to look carefully at the majority report.

It very directly says we must put social reform in the context of a stable fiscal economic system because we have to build upon that base of stability. This is something we are certainly favouring because we do believe that part of social reform is to have a well functioning economy which is not subject to the kind of vulnerabilities and volatility we are now receiving in the international finance market.

Beyond that it said it is very important to look at many of the existing programs and shift resources for those programs to much more active employment development so that we can get people back to work. After all, the ultimate strength of our economy is to have more Canadians going back to work. That is how we will build this country, by investing in people.

The Speaker: Once again colleagues, it is early in the year but I would appeal to you to make the questions brief and the answers brief.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if the government would get its fiscal house in order there would be a lot less need for social programs.

I travelled with the Commons committee for five weeks. Many ordinary Canadians I heard were not saying the things that are in this report. It is obvious the government is paralysed because it has spent too much time listening to government funded special interest groups.

Can the minister tell us, is his government going to continue the Liberal tradition of social programs dominated by decisions made in Ottawa and make promises it cannot keep and add to the worry of average Canadians because of its lack of vision?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the vision we put forward in the social paper was to ensure that a wide range of Canadians would be able to fully participate in the process.

I am glad to report that well over 100,000 Canadians participated mainly through the efforts of members of Parliament who held town hall meetings, through the work of the committee itself and through the effective work of the department in getting out workbook questionnaires. It probably has been the largest exercise of public involvement in any decision on public policy.

Oral Questions

I go back to what the member's hon. leader said during the election, that we must listen to the judgment of the people. This exercise is listening to the judgment of the people and that is the best vision to have.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in this House, the Prime Minister continued to maintain, after checking with the Privy Council, that there are federal public servants who are paid to sit around and do nothing. And again, yesterday, he was contradicted by his President of the Treasury Board, who said that he was aware of no one being paid to stay at home and do nothing.

The Prime Minister must have made further inquiries since yesterday. Can he tell us now how many public servants, in the Privy Council's estimation, are being paid to do nothing and where they can be found?

(1440)

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no discrepancy with respect to the remarks that have been made in this matter.

We are heading toward the budget and the downsizing that is going to occur in the public service as a result of the program review exercise. We are concerned about being able to deal fairly and reasonably with our employees so that we will not have anybody staying at home collecting money and not working. We simply will not tolerate that circumstance.

However, in the course of dealing with our employees we will deal with them fairly and reasonably.

[Translation]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, both statements cannot be true. How can the President of the Treasury Board stand up and say that no public servants are being paid to do nothing when his Prime Minister said exactly the opposite?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no discrepancy between the Prime Minister or myself on this matter.

I indicated that I was not aware of this matter. That is not to say that there were not people involved in the past. What we are saying as we get into this exercise of downsizing is that we simply cannot tolerate that if there is no work there can be no

pay. That is what both of us have very clearly said to the people of this country.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

The biggest concern in my riding of Halifax West is with jobs and the economy. The Prime Minister recently led a trade mission to Latin America with 200 Canadian companies.

Can the minister tell the House what this mission accomplished in terms of jobs and the economy?

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the basic purpose of the trip was of course just that, to create jobs and increase prosperity in Canada.

In the case of Argentina, the mission led by the Prime Minister signed some \$400 million in contracts; in the case of Brazil, some \$600 million; and in the case of Chile, some \$1.7 billion.

The Prime Minister was also able to assist Chile in furthering the accession of that country to NAFTA. Elsewhere in South America he was able to give greater reality to our commitment to free trade throughout the western hemisphere.

* * *

CRTC

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

On January 1, the CRTC forced the country music television network off Canadian cable systems. As a result CMT has shut Canadian country artists out of a global audience estimated at 32 million world-wide.

Yesterday the United States government announced it was considering further retaliatory measures against the Canadian broadcast industry, placing our trading relationship with that country in jeopardy. The minister is moving down the dangerous path of cultural protectionism.

Does the Minister of Canadian Heritage not realize he is harming Canadian culture and Canadian artists by sanctioning the CRTC decision?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the decision taken by the CRTC is precisely designed to protect Canadian artists and the Canadian cultural industry.

CMT, which is owned by The Nashville Network, was informed by the CRTC when it scheduled in Canada that if there was another channel opened by Canadians it would have to move out. There is no surprise there. The CRTC has taken its decision with full regard to the trade obligations entered into by Canada.

Oral Questions

(1445)

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, that is a completely unacceptable answer in this day when technology is being over-ridden by outdated regulations which do not serve our Canadian artists. This is cultural exploitation at its extreme.

My supplementary question is for the same minister. Why is he putting up roadblocks for our very fine Canadian artists? Our cultural industries are among the best in the world. We need liberalization in order to compete more effectively instead of trying to restrict our artists from developing in the international economy.

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, far from putting up roadblocks, we are opening an information and cultural highway for them with great success.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

We have learned that not only did the CBC chairman meet the federal Liberal caucus in Toronto to discuss the budget of the corporation, but that he also had a meeting with the members of the Quebec wing of the federal Liberal Party to discuss coverage of the referendum campaign by the CBC.

How can the Prime Minister justify the fact that Mr. Manera participated in a second meeting which only involved federal Liberal members from Quebec and the Minister of Canadian Heritage, specifically to discuss coverage of the referendum campaign?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reason is that the Liberal caucus is very large. Consequently, the CBC chairman first met Ontario members, and then Quebec members, the next day, after they had arrived.

In fact, the chairman had sent an invitation to meet Bloc Québécois members, but the hon. member was not in her office to find out what was going on.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Oh! What a terrible thing to do, Mr. Speaker. For your information, the letter arrived on February 3 and I came back to my office on the sixth. My supplementary is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Following his blunder with the CRTC, and given his ministerial responsibility, how can the minister justify participating in a meeting on the CBC's coverage of the referendum campaign, thus directly jeopardizing the autonomy of a crown corporation of which he is supposed to be the guardian?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, surely the hon. member knows that members of Parliament attend caucus meetings. However, she forgot to mention that the Premier of Quebec has also asked for the resignation of the heritage minister, but I will provide an explanation. The reason is that the Premier is so desperate to find a Quebec minister of culture that he is now turning to Ottawa; however, I have no intention of doing him that favour.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a brief question for the Prime Minister.

The chairman of the Prime Minister's leadership campaign in Newfoundland in 1984 and a failed Liberal candidate on numerous occasions since 1972 was sworn into the CRTC last Monday.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister to enlighten us as to whether or not there were any other candidates for the job or just a Liberal?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people are appointed regularly to boards. We look for competent people. It just so happens that because more people belong to the Liberal Party than any other party, we have to pick one once in a while. Last week, in order for the *Globe and Mail* to write these articles it had to rely on the chief patronage officer of the previous government who is an expert.

I have been in this party for 32 years and in all the lists I saw in the *Globe and Mail* on Saturday, I did not know more than 60 people personally. There are a lot of people who have worked in Canada in different functions. If the hon. member can prove that the person is incompetent we will not give him or her that job. However, he has to prove other candidates are competent which is exactly what we are looking for, good, competent people who have good judgment.

(1450)

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): You would have to go a long way to find a Liberal in my riding, so I do not know where you are coming from.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member to always address the Chair, please.

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister would have to go a long way to find a Liberal in my riding.

The Prime Minister's appointments director, who happens to be the wife of the Minister of National Defence—if you can figure that out—says that ability, merit, integrity and honesty would be the criteria for job handouts. Charles Roth was

Oral Questions

appointed as a director of the Mint after contributing to the Liberal Party. I would like to ask the Prime Minister: If you donate to the Liberals does that give you a licence to print money or just a job at the Mint?

The Speaker: I am not sure that the question relates directly to the administration of government. However, if the right hon. Prime Minister would like to answer it, I give him the floor.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Callahan has been a journalist all his life. He has been the editor for many years for newspapers in St. John's, Newfoundland. It would be very difficult to find someone better qualified to serve in information services like the CRTC than a person who has worked all his life as a journalist.

I would like to say to the hon. member who talked about political parties that I remember some months ago members of the Reform Party asking us to call byelections. There will be three byelections on Monday. We will see how much support they get.

* * *

BANKING

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, small and medium sized businesses are struggling for funding from Canadian banks. Time after time business people in my riding of St. Catharines tell me the same story: they have a good business, they create jobs and they are the engine of the economy. However Canadian banks are forcing these businesses out of business.

When will the Minister of Industry follow the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Industry?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the key recommendations was the appointment of a financial institutions' ombudsman.

The member of Parliament for St. Catharines who posed the question has used his office in an extremely effective way on behalf of his small business constituents, working effectively as an ombudsman to help solve their problems with the banks. He has set an example for other members of Parliament on how they can make a difference.

We are going to reply to the report of the industry committee in the required time. Since the committee reported, the Canadian banks have put out a code of conduct. They have also proposed an alternative dispute resolution system.

I would like the members of the industry committee to look at those proposals and to give us their views on how far they go in solving some of the important problems that small business has with the banks.

[Translation]

**CANADIAN SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING
FEDERATION**

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. The Canadian Synchronized Swimming Federation is still refusing to explain the real reasons why it chose Edmonton instead of Montreal as training site for the olympic team in preparation for the 1996 games in Atlanta.

With more than half of the athletes in this discipline probably coming from Montreal, it seems that this decision is politically motivated.

Can the minister explain why Synchro Canada—

(1455)

[English]

The Speaker: As much as possible we should not in our questions impugn motives of any kind as to why decisions are taken.

[Translation]

I will invite the member to proceed with his question.

Mr. Sauvageau: I apologize, Mr. Speaker, I did not want to impugn motives. I was just telling the truth. Can the minister explain why Synchro Canada is unable to demonstrate clearly that Edmonton's bid is better than Montreal's?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member would like me to make a commitment and start interfering in the operation of national sports organizations. I will not do so because they have the right to their autonomy. However, I have asked for further information regarding this decision.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Canadian Heritage committing himself to disclosing the information he has asked for?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am confident that I will have some information for the member and that he will not be left dangling over an empty swimming pool.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AID

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government is now committed to increasing spending on aid to 0.7 per cent of GNP when the Canadian fiscal situation permits it. To accomplish this taxpayers would have to spend billions more on aid every year.

Points of Order

Given Canada's \$550 billion debt, impending cuts to social programs and possible tax increases, will the government please tell Canadians why we are committed to increasing our aid spending?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is able to read as well as all of us the document that was tabled today. It is quite clear that the Liberal Party of Canada, which now is the government, is committed to a long term goal of 0.7 per cent. In fact it was a recommendation of the parliamentary committee and we stand firm on this long term commitment.

In the meantime it is false, as the hon. member is trying to pretend, that we will put additional expenditures to the taxpayers. Obviously the budget will give more detail about this but it is absolutely incorrect for the hon. member to come to the conclusion that he is making by reading the document that has been tabled today.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the foreign affairs minister has surprisingly announced spending of 5.6 million tax dollars on public service reforms and tax reform in Lebanon.

With cuts and tax hikes on the way for Canadians, what are the government priorities, higher taxes to Canadians to pay for tax reform in Lebanon?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that Canadians who listen to the hon. member, and know how important our aid program is to many people throughout the world, will understand the total lack of generosity on the part of the member and his party.

The budget of CIDA is a known budget. The amount of money that has been committed to this project is within the budget allocated. There is no additional amount in it.

I can assure the hon. member that this investment in allowing a country like Lebanon, which has gone through 15 years of war, to be able to become again a prosperous country which will deal and do business with Canada is a—

* * *

(1500)

SOCIAL PROGRAMS FUNDING

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister.

Last year the government undertook the social security review, and based on a document put out by the Minister of Human Resources Development, Canadians from across the country gave their time and energy to comment on those proposals.

It now seems all of that was in vain because the government is now clearly contemplating something that was not in those proposals at all; that is, a transfer to the provinces and territories of block funding for social programs, health and post-secondary education.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister directly, is it his government's intention to adapt the Reform Party's policy of abandoning national programs in health care, social programs and in post-secondary education?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it would be very helpful if the hon. member would take the time to read the report that was just tabled yesterday by the majority of the House of Commons committee. It clearly points out that the proposal for block grants, which was part of the green paper proposal and clearly part of the set of ideas we presented to Canadians, was put forward as a way of also looking at how we can ensure a sense of national equity and fairness across the country.

Many of the existing transfer programs have no conditionality whatsoever attached to them and therefore national standards and principles are not being recognized right now.

* * *

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw to the member's attention the presence in the gallery of a former colleague of ours in the House of Commons, and now the Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta, the Hon. Gordon Towers.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order arising out of statements by ministers this morning.

The hon. member for Peace River in his presentation remarked that he had not received certain copies of government documents from the Minister for International Trade until 20 minutes before he made his remarks in the House.

I want to point out first of all he admitted he received a copy of the minister's speech. I am also informed that at 5.45 p.m. yesterday the minister's staff attempted to deliver copies of the two documents that were tabled this morning at ten o'clock to the member's office but it was closed. They were taken to the post office and put in his post box at that time.

I am further advised that copies of the same documents were delivered to the hon. member for Red Deer through the Reform

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House leader's office and were therefore available to him as a co-member of his committee.

I can only say that if the hon. members opposite do not share the information they receive in order to make intelligent comments in the House the government cannot be responsible for that.

The Speaker: I do not know if that was a point of order. Perhaps it was a point of clarification.

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I think the kind of partisan comment we just heard is quite uncalled for. I had to make phone calls from 4.00 p.m. until 6.30 p.m. to get those documents.

The Speaker: As I mentioned to the hon. member, I do not feel this was a point of order. We are clearly now getting into debate.

I accept that all hon. members are very busy. We all do our jobs as best we can. I am sure all hon. members know that sometimes papers do not arrive on time or they are occupied otherwise and that should be taken as an explanation.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

(1505)

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION ACT (FEDERAL AGENCIES)

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-65, an act to reorganize and dissolve certain federal agencies, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): If I am not mistaken, the hon. member for La Prairie still had a few minutes left. Therefore, he has the floor.

Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, why did we not abolish these positions first, since every million dollars saved has an impact on the deficit?

The Auditor General certainly made the point in his 1993 annual report. A few billion more in spending increase the deficit and, in less than a decade, inflate the accumulated debt tens of billions of dollars because of compounded interests.

In his July 8 press release the minister said that he had undertaken a thorough review of the 350 agencies and advisory boards, hoping to find reasonable and practical ways to eliminate overlapping and duplication, and to streamline in the best possible way government operations.

The minister did not say whether he consulted his provincial counterparts. Is he really going not only to reduce overlapping and duplication within the federal system, but also streamline management of the public sector in Canada, considering that there is only one taxpayer, at the federal and provincial levels?

It is so true that the main brokerage firms and credit rating agencies are talking more and more about the public sector debt in Canada.

The increased pressure resulting from public borrowing reduces the taxpayers' capacity to pay. Streamlining public administration requires agreement between the federal and provincial levels of government, and the minister did not seek the agreement of his provincial counterparts.

The most tragic in all this is that in the time it took the minister to deliver his speech, the debt of the federal government increased by \$1.3 million, while the whole bill will produce less than one million dollars in savings. In the time it took me to deliver my response to the minister's speech, the debt went up two million.

In his July 8 press release, the minister said that he does not have a set objective as to the number of agencies which will be affected or the savings which could result. He added that it was the government's aim to identify the logical and practical changes to be made to improve the workings of government.

The minister does not appear to have a structured or well defined approach. He has no specific streamlining objective in mind. This does not come from me, or the Bloc Québécois or the Reform Party, but from the actual press release issued by the minister's office.

The President of the Privy Council, who should be providing the coordination, leadership and training needed to make the project a success is leaving most of the responsibility for recommending changes within their portfolios to the ministers themselves. How can the ministers do the job? There is no objective, no plan, no decision-making criteria or parameters and no decision grid for either the departments or the ministers involved.

Are the decisions made by guess and by gosh? Is this a rigorous approach? The poor results show how poorly the thing was thought out.

All of this upheaval, this whole game of musical chairs in political appointments for a saving of less than a million dollars, which we are not even sure about, since a number of jobs have been transferred to the public service.

On the recommendation of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, five advisory bodies will be eliminated because they are no longer active, we are told. It is only normal, in our opinion, to abolish them. What do they advise on, when there are hardly any more fish to be caught on the east coast.

The minister's press release of December 21 promises that a total of 72 agencies will be abolished and 16 others will be restructured.

(1510)

This in fact represents only 25 per cent of all federal agencies. We are told that this should result in the elimination of 589

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positions, the incumbents of which are appointed by the governor in council. The total savings should amount to four million dollars. When will we see a piece of legislation enacting these promises?

Each press release from the minister's office mentions old measures to which some new ones are added, every time, to reach the magic four million number, but we are still waiting for a piece of legislation enacting these measures.

In our view, Bill C-65 does not go far enough in the present context. Eliminating 150 positions, adding up to a real saving of less than one million dollars, is not enough when the federal debt is growing at a rate of more than 100 million dollars a day.

We should, instead, review federal advisory bodies in the context of the fiscal restraints we are facing currently. First of all, the government must maintain the integrity of its tax base. It must recover the \$6.6 billion in unpaid taxes, deal with tax evasion, tax havens and family trusts as well as the underground economy, all of which the Bloc Quebecois has denounced on several occasions. Taxes must not be increased. The middle class is paying enough as it is. We must fight resolutely and unwaveringly on all fronts to wipe out the deficit.

Bill C-65 only skims the surface and shows a lack of determination and political will on the part of the government. We must first and foremost reduce the deficit and this will demand steps much more significant and substantial than those the minister is suggesting in the bill before us today.

All this will only amount to savings of four million dollars, of which more than three have not materialized yet. I will admit that the original idea was good, but in the end the objective is not bold enough. We must act much faster and go much further. In view of the huge deficit, Bill C-65 seems like a drop in the bucket of necessary reforms which can no longer be avoided.

[English]

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise in the House today to add yet another perspective to what is happening here today with Bill C-65.

The government has undertaken to reduce the membership on some of the boards. It has even undertaken to eliminate some of the boards and direct their activities to other government departments or agencies. My first response is to give a mild cheer because this is definitely going in the right direction.

I cannot help but relate an analogy that came to my mind. I remember when I was a very young lad on the farm in Saskatchewan before we used tractors exclusively. For a while we had tractors as well as horses. I remember on one occasion the tractor got stuck and we had to use the horses to pull it out of the

ditch. My dad hooked up the horses and lined them up perfectly in the right direction. Then he said 'chlick, chlick', because that was how one got the horses to go, but they just tightened up the traces. They did not make any great effort. So my father again went 'chlick, chlick' and still nothing happened. The tractor would not move. Then very unexpectedly he hauled out, brought down his hand on the rump of one of the horses in the team and gave a yell like I had never heard my father give before. The horses leaped forward and pulled the tractor out of the ditch.

I want to applaud the Liberals because I think they have the horses lined up. The problem is we need to give them a yell; we need to give them a motivation. I will not use the one we used on the horses but we need to get them going. We need to get them moving. While they are headed in the right direction, they have not yet begun to move.

One might say that cannot be because we are going to reduce costs here and this is really significant. We are going to cut government expenditures and help balance the budget. Yes, that is true. As I am going to show in a few minutes, the direction is correct but unfortunately, all we have done is just barely tightened up on the traces. We have not yet begun to pull the tractor out of the mud. It is still firmly bogged down.

(1515)

This act has a lot of potential to look good in the press. There is a possibility here of some good symbolism, because as I said, it is moving in the right direction. Unfortunately, I do not believe it has enough substance. It is not substantive enough to do anything real and tangible. As a matter of fact, it will be very interesting to see whether there actually are savings that result in basically terminating the employment of a number of board members in these different agencies; then turning around and hiring a bunch of them back.

Undoubtedly these different departments and components of government need leadership. However, the real problem is not so much how many people are giving that leadership as how much money those departments and different agencies are spending. I briefly looked at the list of organizations that are being revised.

In the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency Act the number of board members is being decreased from 18 to 7. Yet, we know the proportion of money spent in the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency Act is very small with respect to the board members as opposed to the money they are giving away.

Perhaps we ought to look much more seriously at how they are spending their money and how that can be reduced instead of reducing simply the number of people that are, shall we say, trying to manage the affairs.

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In the Broadcasting Act the number of members is decreasing from 15 to 12. In the Canada Council Act the number is decreasing from 19 to 9. I could keep on going all the way down the list.

The National Advisory Council on Fitness and Amateur Sport is being dissolved. That is a very wise decision in the sense that nowadays there is so much awareness already of the need for physical fitness that individuals should be taking the initiative on their own. We do not really need a government bureaucracy that is taking taxpayers' money in order to try to promote this.

One of the items I noted in the minister's statement was that there was a full review of all of the agencies. That too is good. I am one who is much in favour of looking at a problem, analysing it, trying to break it down into smaller pieces if possible. Identify the problems. Identify all of the possible solutions. Choose from the better solutions and eventually nail it down to those solutions which will work.

Presumably that is what this review was all about. However, it is not possible for us to get a copy of the review. I find that rather distressing. As members of Parliament who have input into whether or not this act will pass and whether it is good, we will be dealing only with the issues the government has decided to bring forward. The whole review is in fact being kept under wraps.

This is a violation of a principle of democracy as well as being a substantial violation and a breaking of a promise of the government members when they were running for election. They promised more openness and accountability. We are not receiving that in this particular process because of the fact that the total report of the review is not being made available. We are told succinctly that it is not available to us.

Why does the government not release these findings? Why is the government keeping it a secret? Speculation is all I can do because I do not have the report. Perhaps the reason might be that there were more cuts identified by the review than the Liberals are prepared to go ahead with.

(1520)

Consequently they choose the few they want. Really what they have here are a few cosmetic changes, minor reductions in the number of board members but no substantial cuts in terms of total cost and the total efficiency of these organizations and groups.

Some of these reductions appear suspect in any case. The way the act is written is rather interesting. It says that all of the members will cease their employment, but then when that takes place the government will be ready to reappoint new members. It does occur to me that perhaps one reason we have the legislation that way is because a number of the members of these boards are probably carry overs from a previous government of a

party which essentially no longer exists. There is now an opportunity to replace the members of the board from those old appointments with brand new appointments where the government so chooses.

Frankly, this adds to my cynicism and the cynicism of Canadians who are observing this. We all ought to look at that type of activity very carefully. Again I am speculating. We will be watching with interest to see what happens when this bill is passed. I am certain it will; it is a government bill. The Liberals have the majority. We will speak and will show the obvious shortcomings of it, but in the end it will pass because of the majority and because of the rule of voting with the party. Consequently, it will pass and then we will watch to see how many of the new appointees have Liberal connections.

I would also like to speak very briefly about the need to go beyond reducing. I guess this is the part of getting the horses moving. We are going in the right direction when we say: "Here is a department or an agency and we need to cut back". However, perhaps what we ought to do is to start pulling Canada's fiscal tractor out of the mud by getting the horses moving.

That might involve complete elimination of a number of these agencies. Instead of reducing from 15 board members to nine perhaps we ought to be reducing from 15 to zero and winding up the agencies and what they do. We do not as taxpayers save money if all we are doing is taking the money spending function of these people and moving it to another government agency. The money is still going to be flowing through. We need to do some hard work to eliminate the deficit. That can only happen if we reduce spending. We can only reduce spending by eliminating programs which are no longer needed and which are at the lower end of the priority level.

I am going to say again what I say in probably every speech I make here. Even just a few minutes ago there was an innuendo from the member for Yukon who said that the government might want to take the Reform Party tactics and eliminate health care and education. That is wrong. That is not our policy. We have said it, we have written it, and we will just keep on repeating it and hammering it until members opposite hear.

Our members and the citizens of this country we represent have told us very clearly that health care and education are of a top priority. That is why we want government costs and expenditures reduced and the budget balanced, so that we can continue to provide the things which Canadians have placed at a high priority.

They are empty promises to say we will keep those programs if we lose our ability to deliver them. That is very important to us. We need to reduce the programs that Canadians do not want.

In that regard I want to talk about one program specifically. One agency which is being affected here is the National Capital

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Commission. There are many others and probably some of my colleagues will speak about those. I want to talk a little about the National Capital Commission. I want to speak to this from the perspective of a person who lives some distance from Ottawa.

(1525)

As a matter of fact, until just three or four months before the election I had never been to Ottawa, being way out in the west and never having the financial means to take the huge trip out to the east. I would always have liked to but we were not able to do that within the confines of our family budget. Of course since the election, I have had the privilege of spending a lot of time in Ottawa.

One thing impressed me and that was the tonnes, the truckloads of money Canadians have poured into this region. I suppose there is nothing wrong with saying that this is Canada's national capital. Surely in this part of the country, in this city which houses our capital, we can do some special things to make it good, to make it attractive, to make it a tourist centre, to make it fun for citizens to visit and to see more than just the workings of government.

It is quite evident that after the dog and pony show of question period is over most citizens find this not that interesting. The galleries are mostly empty now and I admire those who are still here listening to this. They come to Ottawa and after question period they want to go and visit some other things.

We have museums, we have parks, we have all sorts of things. However this being the seat of government, by that token it attracts tourists here, other Canadians and indeed people from around the world. Would it not then be reasonable to ask the city of Ottawa to capitalize on that and as every other city in Canada needs to do, have it look after making other attractions in the city that will attract and help entertain the people who come here?

That happens in every city in Canada except this one. This city alone receives this huge input of government money, which translates into taxpayers' money from across the country, in order to provide these nice things. I am not speaking against what is being provided. I am saying that the money ought to be provided in a much more efficient way, managed by private enterprise primarily but also with some involvement by the city itself.

The National Capital Commission is not accountable. It is another one of those places where the taxpayers are being coerced into sending their money to Ottawa. As I said, we send it here in truckloads. At the same time, there are many areas of government where we taxpayers do not have any say on how the money is spent. We can each legitimately ask the question: What value is this expenditure to me as an individual living in a part of

the country away from Ottawa, or indeed what value is it in terms of the country itself?

It is unfortunate that the National Capital Commission has decided to hold all its meetings in camera. When suggested that those meetings should be made public it said: "No, this is the same as any other crown corporation. We are not required to and therefore we will not". I do not think that is acceptable. I know it is not acceptable.

People complain to me about the high level of taxation just about every day. Those people are very upset when their money goes into a black hole, a dark sinkhole somewhere and there is no accountability on how it is spent. We do not know how much is given to certain individuals. We do not know how contracts are let. We do not know whose friends are getting paid what.

Again, it is innuendo that could be so easily solved by just doing what the Liberals said they would do, that is, having open government: openness and accountability. If there is nothing to hide, why would you be afraid of having someone look at what is happening? If you have something to hide then you will hide it. If you simply hide it, then the conclusion on the part of many Canadians is that there must be something to hide.

Right now it is winter. People back in my riding who happen to be watching this are enjoying today, a plus one day, but right here right now we are feeling the brunt of winter. In Ottawa these days, we have a little thing called Winterlude, a wonderful cultural event. Last year it cost just under \$264,000. We are told that it is time to restrain ourselves, to reduce our spending and to look after the mounting debt. What is the response of this unaccountable capital commission with the Winterlude concert? The best information I have is that instead of spending \$264,000, as it did last year, it is spending \$383,000.

(1530)

I know \$383,000 is not much in terms of total government spending, but when a citizen is having trouble making ends meet and is being asked to pay \$800 or \$900 a month in taxes, seeing one-third of a million dollars being spent here, to him it is a huge amount of money. That lack of accountability is something we need to really address.

I believe we need to look very seriously at disbanding the National Capital Commission. The parts that pertain to the Canadian government could easily be transferred to public works and government services. Yes, we want to keep the grounds nice. We want to keep the buildings in repair. We need to occasionally undertake to build a monument or something like that. It could be done under the aegis of the minister, with accountability to the people via Parliament instead of just being done by an unaccountable, appointed group.

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Canadians universally will be upset when they hear me say that the National Capital Commission bought new office furniture for around \$2 million, selling their old stuff for \$50,000. I do not know how old and how decrepit it was. Maybe it really was down to the place where when it was sat on the chairs collapsed. That is possible but I doubt it. If that were the case I do not know how it received \$50,000 for the used stuff.

In these times of restraint it would be totally appropriate to say, okay, it would be nice to have \$2 million worth of new furniture, but perhaps in deference to the taxpayer we should not spend it. Perhaps we ought to be under budget instead of working so hard to spend every penny that is allocated in the budget.

The NCC now has a new building that occupies 11 floors. It is larger than most city halls. We have an organization just in this city, aside from the city hall organization, occupying 11 floors in a building with \$2 million worth of new furniture. I am upset with that. I represent all of the citizens in Elk Island and I believe most people across the country would agree when I say that is an obscenity which has to be stopped.

I know it is nice to have a beautiful family rendezvous centre on Sussex Drive for \$250,000, but when we cannot afford it that is when you say it is a lower level of priority.

I would like to point out to the members here and to all Canadian citizens that when I say we need to get the horse moving it is not just rhetoric. It is not just trying to make a point. There have been some accusations even today about the Reform Party trying to gain popularity by making the tax revolt thing. We did not cause it. We were talking to citizens who were telling us increasingly that the deficit must be brought under control.

What is the government's plan? I will round off the numbers so I do not have to read them all. The income of government is around \$120 billion per year. It spends \$160 billion; hence it needs to borrow \$40 billion. As a result of this bill and the savings that are promoted by it, which I cannot really figure out, when I add up the numbers in the document that we were given they come to \$5.9 million. I believe the minister said the savings would be \$15 million. The member for the Bloc said it was going to save \$1 million. I guess at this stage we do not have any solid accounting for how much it will save. However, if we take the safe number of \$15 million how big a dent does that make in the deficit? Instead of having to borrow \$40 billion we now have to borrow \$39,985,000,000. Big deal. It is almost insignificant.

(1535)

I was a math teacher in my previous life. I taught for 31 years. Let us look at this as if it were proportioned down to a family. Let us say that a family has an income of \$48,000. If it was patterned along the Canadian government that family would be spending \$64,000 a year. With a family income of \$48,000 it has

to borrow every year \$16,000 in order to keep going with its spending patterns which it is not willing to give up.

That family would have to reduce spending or get more income. If more income was not available it would have to reduce its spending by \$16,000 a year in order not to go further into debt.

It is illustrative to look at the Liberals' projection and their goals. We hear so often—and this is wonderful—the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance saying, “We will meet our goals”. The minister was very clear. That is great.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Epp: Go ahead and applaud. It is a wonderful goal.

Again, if you look at the goal in terms of the family, it would bring its borrowing down to \$10,000 per year from \$16,000. That is the goal. In other words, it is still going into debt \$10,000 per year.

What does this bill do to reduce the deficit? For this family, which is spending \$64,000 a year and borrowing \$16,000, it reduces its annual spending by \$6,000.

Yes, it is important. But I am saying let us get the horses moving. It is good to save \$6, but we need to save \$16,000. That is the proportion that this bill proposes to save in our budget. I am appealing to hon. members in the government who have the responsibility, who have the power to do something about it: Let us get with it. The longer we wait the harder it gets. While this is good, we are wasting a whole day talking about pennies when we should be talking about the billions that are threatening the well-being of all of our citizens and, indeed, this whole country.

I am very pleased the government is heading in this direction. But from all of the information and all of the input that I get, not only from residents in the Elk Island constituency but from right across the country who write to us in huge volumes, it is becoming very urgent that we reduce our deficit. Let us get on with it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): We will now proceed to the next stage of the debate where members will have up to a maximum of 20-minute interventions, subject to 10 minutes of questions or comments.

Mr. John English (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Outremont.

I would like to respond before I begin debate on this bill to the points raised by the hon. member for Elk Island. One of his specific remarks was when he talked about the agency review being conducted in secrecy. In fact, there will be a report on the process which will explain what the process was, how it was

carried out and what the results will be. That report will be appearing very shortly.

Second, he talked about his early days with his father on the farm and about a tractor and a horse. He suggested that in the case of the Liberal government we have the horses tugging at the tractor but it is not yet out of the mud. In fact, if you look at the details of what we have done—and this touches on some questions which were posed earlier today—I think the hon. member will agree that the tractor is out of the mud and is moving fairly briskly.

We have eliminated 589 governor in council positions, agencies close to the type we talked about. I accept the congratulations that he offered to the government for what we have achieved. In fact, we have made only 700 appointments to agencies, boards and commissions. Despite what the hon. member suggested, some of these boards and commissions such as the National Archives Advisory Board are essential to the operation of the government. It brings to government the advice of ordinary citizens of the type we hear of so often from members of the Reform Party, and rightly so in that respect.

(1540)

Even the *Globe and Mail*, when trying to find information on this particular matter, could identify only 80 of the 700 appointments we have made with the Liberal Party. To give members an idea of how the tractor is moving very quickly, in the period November 4, 1991 to February 3, 1993, the previous government, the Conservatives—and I recognize that the hon. member was not a part of that government—made 1,819 appointments. In summary, the Liberal Party has abolished 589 of these positions and has appointed only 700. The previous government in exactly the same number of days appointed almost four times as many as the number we did. That is not quite the right math, but it is close enough for my friend who was a mathematics teacher.

Having made these comments it is my pleasure to begin debate on Bill C-65. This bill, as the minister indicated earlier, amends the statutes that established 15 federal boards, agencies or commissions in order to reorganize the boards or reduce the number of members and to dissolve seven other federal organizations. The passage of the bill will eliminate and streamline the operations of these federal agencies and will improve their efficiency and their service to Canadians.

Why are we doing this? We are doing this because we know that the world is changing rapidly and government must as well. In order to remain a strong competitor in the marketplace, as a country we need to adapt to the new challenges we face in the global environment. To remain competitive we know that we must, as the private sector has, undergo an unprecedented period of change and restructuring. We recognize the inevitability of change and we are committed to bringing good and efficient

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government to Canadians. In managing this change we wish to do it in a fashion that is fair, careful and never casual.

Earlier the hon. member for Elk Island talked about the possibility of abolishing certain boards quickly. We have carried out a careful process that looks at what the boards do. I would suggest that if members look at the list of boards they will find many with whose functions they agree in their entirety. They will also find many boards that are carrying out functions that are essential to the operation of government.

The danger, as the member for Carleton—Charlotte said to me, to make an analogy to another animal, the cow, the Reform Party cow if you like, may give a good pail of milk but it will then kick the pail over. We do not want to do that. We want to look at the agencies that work and many of them are working very well.

The Public Service of Canada is an effective and efficient public service by any measure internationally and it has over the past provided Canadians with services of the highest quality. Where services are duplicated, and they are, they will be merged and streamlined. Where agencies and boards are obsolete they must be eliminated. In other words, the government must continue to serve our taxpayers effectively but it must do so in alignment with their needs and with less resources.

We promised Canadians in the red book that we would renew government and reduce its size and unnecessary cost. As part of the initiative, the finance minister announced in his budget last year that a review of all federal agencies would take place. That review has been conducted under the leadership of the Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal. The objective, as it was set out in that review, was to eliminate unnecessary or inactive organizations, streamline operations by examining the size of boards and the remuneration of members; ensure that the role of these bodies was geared to meet the challenges of today and the demands of the years ahead. Those were the criteria for the decisions made about these boards.

The first decisions were announced in July of last year by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. These announcements reflected the recommendations given to the minister by the individual ministers responsible for agencies. They included the Ministers of Canadian Heritage, Finance, Fisheries and Oceans, Health and National Defence as well as the Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

(1545)

This bill then is the first of two omnibus bills to implement through legislation the streamlining measures for agencies and boards announced since this government took office. It also allows for the streamlining of the operations of a number of agencies, boards and commissions by reducing the number of board members, as has been done with the boards of the Canada Council and Petro-Canada, folding one organization into another, as in the case of Emergency Preparedness Canada which was

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folded into the Department of National Defence, the kind of approach the member recommended earlier, or combining functions of organizations such as merging the Procurement Review Board of Canada with the Canadian International Trade Tribunal.

When these decisions were announced the *Ottawa Citizen* wrote an editorial congratulating the government: "Yuletide is a traditional season of political patronage appointments with a generous distribution of partisan favours at public expense, so it is especially happy news that 314 patronage positions have just been abolished by the Chrétien government".

It goes on to point out that not all these boards are bad and that patronage sometimes serves a good purpose: "Boards and commissions can do work beyond the competence of the public service sometimes and patronage in its place can allow a government to choose the people it wants to execute policies it was elected to advance. Jean Chrétien's ministers are right to scrutinize these governor in council positions, all 3,000 or them, one by one", which is what we are doing. "If patronage appointments are not doing something essential to the public interest or doing it better than public servants could, the positions should be eliminated".

That is the criterion we have employed.

In conclusion, the agency review was conducted in conjunction with a number of other reviews, including the program review which has examined federal programs and services as well as policy reviews.

This process of examination will not come to an end with the formal completion of the agency review but will, members have suggested earlier, continue as an integral part of providing Canadian taxpayers with value for their money.

We know the importance of meeting our commitment to provide Canadians with good government. Improving how our nation is governed remains a priority with this government.

The bill before us makes sensible changes in a reasonable way while ensuring national interest is served. It will result in administrative savings and increased efficiency and delivery of government. I would urge hon. members to ensure speedy passage of this legislation because it is the kind of bill that all members can support. The *Ottawa Citizen* said in December: "Marcel Massé is on the right side. He is on the side of fairness, flexibility and efficiency in government".

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Kitchener for his very well reasoned, prepared speech. It was well delivered.

I want to say something about this farm analogy which occurred to me the instant he said it. He indicated that he thought Reformers, after the pail was full of milk, would then kick over the pail—not so. We are more committed than anybody around here to very carefully carrying that pail because it is not our milk. It belongs to the taxpayers.

Also, the thought occurred to me that before they kneel down on the stool beside the cow, they are forgetting to check whether the pail has a bottom. Theirs does not. When putting \$120 billion a year into the government coffers as Canadian taxpayers are and there is \$160 billion coming out of the bottom, we know the hole at the bottom is larger than the input at the top. That is an item of great concern.

I want to ask the member to respond to a question having to do with the urgency of reducing the deficit. Does he acknowledge—I know he cannot speak for the other members of his party—that the leadership of that party is an item of great concern to thinking Canadians because of the rapidly growing debt? Even if they are on target they are going to be adding roughly \$80 billion to \$100 billion to the debt before this Parliament is finished. Even very modest interest rates of 5 per cent indicate an additional cost of \$5 billion per year. Just having the debt grow at this rate adds basically one-eighth to our present deficit without any additional programs being financed.

(1550)

What I would like to hear just one Liberal member say is it is time they attack this, attack it vigorously and quickly and very effectively to get government spending down.

Mr. English: Mr. Speaker, I am confident that the member when he sees the budget when it is produced probably later this month will see that this government is serious about the deficit. We have given every indication in public statements by the Prime Minister, in statements by the Minister of Finance who has engaged in a very long process of consultation, longer than any other consultation by previous finance ministers. He has done so with a commitment to fighting this deficit and of course by implication the debt.

In terms of the debate about various animals there is a difficulty with the Reform Party's approach to government and we can talk about *Animal Farm*. There is a slogan in that book: "Two legs good, four legs bad". What I find troubling, with respect, about the criticisms of agencies which I heard from the hon. member for Elk Island is that all the agencies were lumped together.

If we actually look at the list of agencies affected by this legislation we see that some of them are essential. As I said before the National Archives of Canada advisory board decides independently apart from the bureaucracy what documents must

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be kept. I am certain the hon. member would not want to entrust to the public service the decision on which documents generated by bureaucrats should be kept. Obviously it has to be private citizens with some knowledge of the subject.

The Canadian cultural properties export review board looks at the value of properties that are exported in terms of their value as part of our national heritage. These are essential boards with activities that are best done by private citizens appointed to these boards.

In terms of appointments we can see that these boards are being reduced in size. We are eliminating positions where they are not necessary. It seems to me that anyone would agree a lot of these agencies are essential.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like, first of all, to thank the parliamentary secretary for sharing his time with me.

I should say from the start that I am very proud to be able to contribute to the efforts made by the minister in charge and the government in general.

Bill C-65, an act to reorganize and dissolve certain federal agencies, is a piece of legislation that fits into what we could call changing times. It is no secret that governments the world over are facing dramatic changes. Canada is embarking on a significant economic realignment. The same is happening in Europe and in many other areas of the world. Free trade zones which will define our future and create the jobs of tomorrow are being created everywhere.

When I talk of major realignment, I am thinking of the major changes that are taking place, changes that we must accept in Canada and to which we must adapt. To face these changes, we, the Canadian government, must essentially rethink the role of the state. Speaking of reforming and rethinking the government's role, you will remember that when the current government came to power in 1993, the Prime Minister declared in this House that we would be proceeding with four major reforms, which essentially aim to rethink government's role in order to better serve the interests of taxpayers as a whole. That is our role as the government, and that is our task as elected representatives.

Speaking of four reforms, I think I should take the time to list them. These four reforms are the cornerstones of the government's policy.

(1555)

There is the reform of Canada's economic structure, which will now lead the government to concentrate its efforts on small and medium size businesses, which, as we know, create 85 per cent of all jobs in the country.

There is also the reform of taxation. The parliamentary secretary stressed earlier that we will obviously have a clear idea of what the current government means by tax reform when

it tables its budget at the end of the month. Let us also talk about a major reform, a most comprehensive reform, on which a partial report was tabled yesterday: the reform of social programs. These programs make us the envy of many countries around the world and ensure that we Canadians have in common the values of co-operation, sharing and tolerance. And lastly, there is the fourth reform we are dealing with today, the reform of the government machine.

I am proud to support this bill because of its intrinsically very modern and dynamic vision of what the government should resemble in 1995. The objective of this bill is to reorganize 22 government agencies. Of these 22 agencies, 15 will be completely dissolved. As a result, firstly, approximately \$1.5 million will be saved annually. But given the vision of the present government, the machinery of government will be much more flexible, much lighter, closer to the population and, obviously, will be called upon to deliver much more appropriate service. This is our role in government, as parliamentarians, and I am proud because that is the desired objective of this bill.

You know that Bill C-65 represents a continuation of the government's policy of reforming the government machinery since the minister has already taken certain other steps in this regard and, in sum, there are presently 119 agencies in Canada which have been reorganized, some of which have of course been dissolved.

Reorganizing the machinery of government also involves new policies. People are looking for clear and straightforward policies, with government structures existing solely to serve the public. And when we speak of streamlining the machinery of government, which this bill addresses, we are meeting the needs of the people as a whole in this regard, too.

When the Conservatives were in power, from November 1991 to February 1993, they appointed a total of 1,819 of their friends to these quasi-governmental agencies; these 1,819 partisan appointments did not in any way serve the interests of the taxpayer. So there you have Liberal government policy, a policy issued by a government which regards itself as, and indeed is, very progressive.

This bill of ours is indeed a dynamic one. It shows the commitment of the government to tackling the real problems. It also shows that our government is a responsible government, and fiscally responsible as well. That is what the Canadian people as a whole expect.

Of course, on the subject of responsible government, I must admit that, if you compare what is being accomplished in this House to what the separatist government is doing in Quebec, the contrast is quite striking.

(1600)

While we, in Ottawa, are downsizing, trying to have a system that will serve the people better, the separatist government in Quebec wastes public money, as you know, on the famous commission on the future of Quebec, a regional commission that

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will cost at the very least between \$5 and \$6 million to the Quebec taxpayers. And this commission will deal with a biased bill in which only one option is considered, it being, of course, the separation of Quebec, the option advocated by the Parti Québécois as well as all the members of the Bloc Québécois in this place.

The problem with these people is that, basically, fundamentally, they are not there to serve the interests of the taxpayers and the people of Quebec, but the very narrow interests of a group of people with one political purpose in mind, namely the separation of Quebec.

I for one am convinced that the step we are taking with this bill, the policies put forward by this government, will show the people of Canada and Quebec that you can go a long way with a government who has vision, a government intent on building. In that context, I am convinced that, in the referendum, the people of Quebec will tell the separatists that they have had enough of this squandering of public funds and, from now on, that they want their political leaders to deal with real problems and help improve the standard of living in Quebec and build a better Quebec as part of what I might call the Canadian coalition, as part of the Canadian federation.

Coalitions, huge trade zones are the way of the future, and Quebec wants to be a part of this. The people of Quebec are very broad-minded. They will never stand for the narrow and obtuse view represented by separation, because it is not in their interests.

This being said, let me tell you again, Mr. Speaker, how proud I am to join in the minister's efforts in support of this bill which is basically aimed at the renewal of federal administration and government.

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised but when we know how the member who spoke before me is out of touch with Quebec reality, his vision of things should not come as a big surprise.

I wish to remind him that the government which, according to him, does not meet people's expectations was elected by 45 per cent of voters on September 12, 1994, that it was committed to holding a referendum on sovereignty and that even the Prime Minister wanted this referendum to be held as soon as possible.

Of course, when we look at the democratic process under way in Quebec from his perspective, no nation in the world is currently undergoing such a process in order to define itself, to say how it wants to prepare for the 21st century. Of course, that is not consistent with the centralizing vision of the government, which thinks that the truth can be found only in Ottawa, and we can see the results.

These results include the Axworthy reform, which required a five-week tour of Canada so that people could say time and again to the Liberal majority that a two-level UI system did not make sense. This required five weeks of consultations across Canada. I think that people throughout Quebec should have their say on how Quebec should define itself as a country. People are currently participating in all the different commissions.

People are flocking to say what kind of Quebec they want, to express their agreement with the bill tabled by the Quebec government, to say that Quebec belongs to them and that they have the right to define it as they see fit.

As for his opinion that coalitions are the way of the future, he should keep in mind that 28 new countries have joined the UN in the last 10 years and that, with free trade, it is no longer necessary to be a large political entity to reach major markets.

(1605)

Small countries can have access to large economic markets and do very well on international markets.

It is not true that countries must be very big to hold their own in the new global economy. This theory is not consistent with current reality.

If, instead of holding a forum on health care without inviting the provinces, instead of using their majority to set aside a proposal to hear provincial authorities during the Axworthy reform hearings, the Liberal government had decided to hold real consultations while respecting the structure and jurisdiction of each level of government, we would have ended up with a much more democratic process, as the Quebec government's current process will be.

Mr. Cauchon: Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that the remarks of my colleague from the Bloc Québécois do not surprise me either. He says that I am out of touch with reality. The members of the Bloc are welcome to look at my schedule to see who spent the most time in Quebec.

I can assure you that no member of the Bloc Québécois was more present in Quebec than I was during the past year.

My honourable colleague from the Bloc wants to teach me a thing or two about democracy. He should start by looking at the actions of the Parizeau government in Quebec to see how democracy can be distorted, to see the shameful things that are taking place in Quebec as we speak. A democracy in shackles, Mr. Speaker!

In order to present the whole picture, Mr. Johnson's party asked for permission to distribute information pamphlets using government facilities. It was refused. And they call this democracy, they who use their majority to go ahead with commissions, the sole purpose of which is to secure Quebec's separation, by

any means possible. They are afraid of finding out what Quebecers really think, and this is the reason for this tainted process.

What is taking place in Quebec is shameful, truly shameful. There is much we could say about what is going on there. Take Mr. Parizeau's trips abroad. I regularly have the opportunity to travel abroad as a French speaking Quebecer, as a member of Parliament, and I am proud to be from Quebec, when I find myself in another country, and to be able to negotiate with other countries as an equal. But when I see Mr. Parizeau seeking the blessing of other nations, seeking their views on whether or not to go the independence route, I am no longer proud. I feel almost like some poor colonial when I see their cap in hand behaviour on the international scene.

Quebec is greater than that. It is a great province, great on its own merits. It has made its mark within Canada and we will continue to build this wonderful country with Quebec's best interests at heart.

[English]

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I really hesitate to do this on a point of order, but Standing Order 11(2) clearly indicates this thing called relevance. I think we have strayed significantly from Bill C-65.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The member's time has lapsed and we will now resume debate.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AUTHORIZATION FOR COMMITTEE TO TRAVEL

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to interrupt this lively debate but I have a couple of consent motions I think the House will agree to at this point.

[Translation]

I move:

That the Standing Committee on Transport be authorized to travel to Montreal, Quebec City, Mont-Joli, Vancouver, Hamilton, Thunder Bay, St. John's, Charlottetown, Halifax and St. John, from February 6 to March 17, 1995, for the purpose of holding hearings in relation to the Committee's consideration of marine policy, and that the necessary staff do accompany the Committee.

(1610)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The House has heard the terms of the motion by the hon. parliamentary secretary. Is there unanimous consent?

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Mr. Silye: Mr. Speaker, I would like clarification of whether there is a limit to the amount of money allocated for this travel.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, the motion itself does not limit the amount. In accordance with normal practice the transport committee has sought and obtained the consent of the liaison committee through the subcommittee on budget. Naturally they applied for and received a budget allocation for this trip.

Mr. Silye: Mr. Speaker, I know we discussed it in a House leaders meeting, but I do not know why there is reluctance to mention the amount.

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, it is just not normal to review all those facts in the presentation of these motions. The motion is to authorize travel. There is an amount fixed for the travel in accordance with the decision of the subcommittee on budget, which was made yesterday.

(Motion agreed to.)

* * *

ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think you will also find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That items standing on the Order Paper under Government Business, Nos. 14, 15, 16 and 18 be withdrawn, and further that item No. 19 on today's Order Paper under Private Members' Business, a motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell be also withdrawn.

(Motion agreed to.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION ACT (FEDERAL AGENCIES)

The House resumed consideration of the motion, that Bill C-65, an act to reorganize and dissolve certain federal agencies be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-65, the purpose of which is to reorganize a number of federal agencies. I must say I was surprised to hear the minister refer to this bill as an example of renewed federalism, as an indication that the government is proceeding in a constructive manner and is adjusting to change.

Earlier, I was amazed to hear the hon. member for Outremont referring to Bill C-65 as though the changes that were taking place were truly impressive. He used any number of adjectives to drive the point home that this bill is a major change for the Liberal Party and a sign of the progressive and dynamic initiatives being taken by the government.

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Well, if we take a close look at this bill, if this is supposed to be renewed federalism, it is not moving very fast. As the hon. member for the Reform Party said earlier, it may be the right direction but progress is slow.

The hon. member for Outremont has the audacity to criticize Quebecers with regard to the proposed commission on the future of Quebec and to accuse us of not being democratic in our approach. He prefers the kind of back room democracy that assumes that voters, all these people who are listening, will believe anything.

To claim that Bill C-65 marks an impressive change is to assume that people do not know enough to tell the difference between a thunder clap and a fart.

(1615)

Because when all is said and done, what the government has produced with Bill C-65 is a mere fart, a fart they are trying to disguise as an impressive roll of thunder, a portent of fundamental changes to the government's apparatus. But under all the rhetoric it is just a fart, and one has to call it that because this lingering odour of—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I was not listening to the interpretation. I do not know how it was translated. However, I would like to ask all members to co-operate by using the most appropriate wording possible.

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, to use a more stylish expression, let us say that there is a significant gap between reality and what is being proposed. If we put things in perspective, we realize that the federal Liberal government is making fun of people, as did the hon. member for Outremont when he exaggerated with a little smile on his face.

Bill C-65 does provide for the reorganization of certain agencies and commissions. The number of members of some 15 boards is reduced from 12 to nine, while other agencies are dissolved. For example, the Canadian saltfish corporation is abolished, and it is not too soon. After all, it has been a long time since there was any saltfish to sell; yet, that corporation is still in existence. Such a measure is obviously appropriate, as are all the other changes proposed in Bill C-65. These changes obviously make a lot of sense.

I could mention other examples. In the past, there were such excesses that the least we can do is to make these cuts; in fact, we should go even farther. Indeed, this is the problem with this bill: the government barely cuts into the fat because, once again, there is the issue of patronage, of appointments made by the government to reward long time members and friends of the party, as well as those who helped get the Prime Minister elected. All in all, some 125 patronage positions, out of a total of close to 3,000, are being abolished. This is a small step in the right direction, and we are told that it will result in savings of

about one million dollars. This is said to be a very important saving for the government.

To put this in perspective, I would like to remind you that while eliminating a few patronage appointments will apparently lead to one million dollars in savings, the government has already taken a few billion dollars from the unemployed in Canada and is constantly finding all kinds of ways to attack the poor. For example, with regard to public housing, 110,000 Quebec households will soon see their rent increased by about 30 per cent. These 110,000 households who live in low cost or co-operative housing are among the poorest in our society. Their average income is about \$10,000 a year.

(1620)

The government drags its heels when it comes to making significant cuts in patronage appointments, and yet it does not hesitate to take \$500 more a year from the poor, who earn just \$10,000 a year, in order to recover \$26 million. This is only in Quebec, but it has already happened in other provinces. The government has already succeeded in increasing the rent in most provinces.

The government is giving the impression that it is cutting the fat, but it is really keeping the patronage system in place and making marginal cuts while increasing the burden that the poorest people in our society must bear.

So I am extremely disappointed when I see Liberal members rise in this House to say that Bill C-65 represents an important shift in the Liberal policy. People should understand that Bill C-65 brings only minor changes.

The elimination of 125 to 150 patronage appointments out of a total of nearly 3,000 is obviously a good thing; I cannot say that it is bad. The government is cutting some fat, but if it could eliminate half of these appointments, it would really show its willingness to reduce patronage, as it promised to do in the red book during the election campaign.

The current prime minister had indeed said that he would change the patronage appointment process and abolish or at least reduce such appointments. Now, with this decision, the government is reducing a number of patronage appointments, without however changing the whole system; the patronage appointment system remains the same. This is only the Liberal version of what went on these last eight or nine years under the Conservatives. The same type of patronage goes on, despite all the promises to get rid of it.

The director of Liberal appointments, Penny Collenette, the spouse of our Minister of National Defence, said in 1993, not long after the election of the Liberal Party, that the selection criteria for these appointments would rather be based on capacity, merit, integrity, honesty, and community service. In fact, Mrs. Collenette was only trying to reiterate to Canadians and convince them that things were about to change.

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But of course, her statement was refuted by Liberal Senator Rizzuto, a Quebec Liberal organizer, who promised in October 1993 to find jobs for every defeated Liberal candidate. And indeed, he did it. In fact, a list was published recently in the *Globe and Mail*, containing around a hundred political appointments to various boards, associations, and commissions.

(1625)

Under the title "It pays to be a Liberal", the *Globe and Mail* published a whole page giving a list of people for whom it really paid to be Liberals, people like Richard Croft, director, National Research Council, former Liberal fund-raiser and key leadership organizer for the present Prime Minister; Patrick Lavelle, chairman, Federal Business Development Bank, Ontario chairman of the present Prime Minister's leadership campaigns in 1984 and 1990; Jack Reid, Governor General of Saskatchewan, chairman of the present Prime Minister's leadership campaign; John Cordeau, director, Petro-Canada, Manitoba campaign chairman for the present Prime Minister; David McLain, chairman, CNRail, fund-raiser in the leadership campaign of the present Prime Minister. I could go on.

That is an impressive list. Interestingly enough, the Ottawa newspaper *Le Droit* indicates that in the 25 most important patronage appointments by the Liberal Party, in that long list, only three go to Quebecers. That does not mean there were no patronage appointments in Quebec. There have been many. The list contains the names of Benoît Choquette, Auguste Choquette, Margo Brousseau, a defeated candidate in Louis-Hébert who was appointed director of the Quebec Port Corporation, and many more.

For the sake of its squeaky clean image, this Liberal government has established new procedures to select political nominees. Some people can be fooled into believing that justice will prevail, and that administrative procedures will secure the appointment of the most qualified candidate, even if he or she has no political affiliation.

A certain Mr. Hall quickly came back to reality, as did many others when they lost potential jobs to the hands of candidates who had chosen the political path and who obtained the positions without even going through an interview.

The Prime Minister, who knows the answers to all questions, says he cannot eliminate the 65 per cent portion of the population who has the good sense to support the Liberals. He will not punish people who vote the right way. According to him, nominations are made on the basis of skills and competence, and that cannot be determined unless he knows the person. What an unshakable logic! According to that way of thinking, no one in the world would ever get a job unless he or she personally knows the boss. Goodbye personnel manager, hello contacts.

How strange that this government can maintain its popularity in spite of its inaction and its outrageous patronage. Just think, more than 100 Liberals profited from political nominations. I even read some editorials that claim that the figure is closer to 400. What is the exact number? In any case, over a period of fifteen months, it represents more than one nomination a week. Why were Canadians and Quebecers so deeply shocked when the Tories practised patronage if they can now accept the Liberal nominations with such lack of concern?

Whatever the reason, this government is well aware of its failsafe popularity and uses it shamelessly to its advantage. Whereas Tories would place one friend in a position and everyone would shout murder, nowadays the Liberals make just as many nominations, if not more given the present pace, and all agree wholeheartedly that, after all, the candidate was the most competent one for the job. What hypocrisy on the part of the Liberals who, when on this side, denounced all Conservative patronage appointments and called them a form of political corruption, but now that they are in office, they ostentatiously play the same game, saying: See how good our judgment is, see how competent our candidate is. Is it not incredible how transparent we can be in politics?"

The prime minister should read his speeches anew. Here is what he said during the election: "I warn all my colleagues that they get into politics not to help themselves but to serve the Canadian people." They now realize that charity begins at home.

(1630)

The *Ottawa Citizen* recently contained the following:

[English]

"The Chrétien campaign promise was emphatic and unequivocal. The Liberals would end nine years of Conservative misrule and the squalid patronage that went with it. In the Liberal red book's own words, a Liberal government will review the appointment process to ensure that necessary appointments are made on the basis of competence. That was the promise and a good one it was. Only a restoration of integrity could dispel public cynicism and replenish the strength of the government itself. But as it turned out, the Liberals have taken up the patronage trade with a Tory like enthusiasm". That is from the *Ottawa Citizen*.

[Translation]

Also, there was a general outcry concerning the Liberal patronage appointment process. Here is what a well-known individual said: "When appointing faithful slaves to various positions, the Liberal government has its nose in the trough, is bringing the cause of federalism into disrepute and is giving the rest of the world the impression that the Canadian political system is based on stupidity".

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I will make no secret of the fact that these comments are from the leader of the Reform Party who is right for once. The government's shameless patronage appointment process undermines the integrity of the Canadian system and the image of federalism and reinforces the people's perception that the system is corrupt.

In fact, when a government is elected by making promises that it will not keep, when a government promises to reduce patronage but does not do it, and when it tries to reduce its debt on the back of the destitute, it is time that such a government be removed by the Quebec people. I think Quebecers now understand they will be better served by a sovereign government in Quebec.

Mrs. Pierrette Ringuette-Maltais (Madawaska—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened amusedly to the hon. member's remarks. He talked about loyal slaves and described political appointments as a shameful practice showing how corrupt the Canadian political system is.

I would like to know if he has a list of the political appointments made by the Parizeau government and a list of the Quebec senior government officials who have been dismissed when Parizeau was elected.

Just in the past four months, there has been a spectacular political appointment in Quebec that made the headlines: that of the president of Radio-Québec. Now the Bloc member comes and tells us that political appointments are used to reward loyal slaves and that the people of Quebec find it shameful.

I think that when the hon. member has the chance to get out of here and take a good, hard look at himself in the mirror, he will figure out whether his approach makes sense or not. He will see that we are a little bit all over the place today.

(1635)

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, I must inform my hon. colleague that it was the leader of the Reform Party who spoke of loyal slaves. And he was right, because he was referring to the appointment of the governor general and the appointment of certain Liberals to the upper House, the other place, the Senate, which is perhaps the highest patronage appointment of all in the federal system.

Bill C-65, in essence, may be showing only a small part of the big picture of patronage in the federal system. It does not tell the whole story about the huge amounts wasted on all those appointments that are made—nearly 3,000 patronage positions—not including all the squandering going on regarding the other place. Here we have 102 extremely well paid individuals who may or may not be doing much to further the cause or the well-being of ordinary people. It is the highest body of patronage and it is a part of the federal system.

At present, the federal system is so mismanaged and is plagued with so much patronage and squandering that we are stuck with this incredibly huge debt, a \$600 billion debt that is extremely difficult to reduce. Again, I think that the people of Quebec are getting the picture and I am sure that they are looking forward to the referendum to cast aside this system that no longer serves their interests.

Mrs. Pierrette Ringuette-Maltais (Madawaska—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indeed, I can see that the hon. member was unable to answer my questions on political patronage in the Parizeau government. Perhaps I could also point out to our colleague from the Bloc, when he talks about the other place, at a time when—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The hon. member for Charlevoix, on a point of order.

Mr. Asselin: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Québec-Est was engaged in a debate. The hon. member for Madawaska—Victoria rose during the period for questions and comments. The hon. member for Québec-Est should be the one who concludes the debate. This is turning into a debate between two members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. Obviously, if, during the ten minute period for questions and comments, other members had indicated an intention to ask questions to the hon. member for Québec-Est, who had the floor, I would have recognized them. I asked if there were any questions or comments. I looked around and the hon. member for Madawaska—Victoria was the only to rise. Consequently, she still has the floor.

Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for recognizing me. The Bloc member answered my question by alluding to the other place. However, I can tell him that it is his supporters, the separatist PQ party in Quebec, who formally opposed any change to the Senate during the last national referendum on the Constitution. Come on, be serious!

The hon. member should look at what goes on in his own party before commenting on what takes place within other parties.

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member still does not realize that we are not interested in changing the way the other place operates. We just want to get rid of it. We want to get rid of the other place because it is just a waste of money, like most patronage appointments in the federal system.

If the federal government, if the Liberal Party really wanted to improve the system to reduce the debt, it could have used this bill to reduce the number of agencies without reducing efficiency. It could have used it to really reduce the number of members of boards of directors and committees.

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(1640)

In fact, the government could have introduced all these measures in one fell swoop, if it had been so inclined. Not so. They are doing this piecemeal to give us the impression they are working very hard. There will be subsequent legislation to implement another 125 cuts in a matter of weeks or months. Just to give the impression that, my goodness, this government is really working, although the fact is they are not doing much to reduce patronage. Instead, they are doing everything they can to get money out of the pockets of the needy, those who have no resources at all, like the people in substandard housing and the unemployed. These people are being hit, but careful how you treat the friends of the party. Once again, I want to make it clear to the hon. member that as far as the other place is concerned, we do not want to change it. We just want to get rid of it.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to what the hon. member was saying, and I must say that the hon. member has a very short memory. As a professed separatist although he is a Franco-Ontarian, he probably remembers Denis de Belleval who was a well-known PQ minister but nevertheless accepted the offer of an order in council appointment from his good friend Brian—we all know who that is—to the board of directors of VIA Rail. I wonder whether the hon. member remembers those appointments.

Perhaps he also remembers, and I am sure the name will ring a bell, a woman in North Bay who had been appointed to the board of directors of CN Rail. When her appointment was announced, the *North Bay Nugget* interviewed her and asked:

[*English*]

“Madam, why do you think you were chosen as a member of the board of CN Rail?”. She answered: “I come from North Bay, a railroad town, and my grandfather was a well known railroader in the maritimes”. The individual’s name was Marie Marchand of North Bay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, as far as Mr. de Belleval is concerned, I cannot speak for him, since this was one of the appointments that were made under Mr. Mulroney’s Conservative government.

It all goes to show that following the example of the Conservatives is not necessarily the best way for the Liberals to improve things in this country, and in fact, if we look at what the government is doing now, the Prime Minister is about to go further than the former Conservative Prime Minister, Mr. Mulroney, ever did. That is the problem. Meanwhile, they are making all these cosmetic changes but people are not easily fooled. They realize that the Liberal government is doing exactly what the Conservative Party used to do.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Fraser Valley West—the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to address the matter of the second reading of an omnibus bill concerning the elimination and streamlining of federal agencies.

In July of last year the Minister for Public Service Renewal announced the decision to eliminate 21 agencies, boards and advisory bodies and 275 governor in council and ministerial appointments.

The bill before members today is part of that initiative to eliminate and streamline 15 agencies and 150 governor in council appointments.

The July announcement represents a partnership initiative among federal ministers involving the ministers of finance, fisheries and oceans, government services, health, industry, national defence, national revenue and public works.

As we headed into the last election the Liberal Party of Canada recognized that one simple question stood out in the minds of Canadians: What kind of a country do we want for ourselves and for our children?

(1645)

Among the qualities we identified, we recognize that we want a country whose governments are efficient, innovative and co-operative, not only with each other but with other sectors as well.

The red book states that as a government we have premised our agenda on an integrated and coherent approach to economic, social, environmental and foreign policy. As a government we want to explore innovative and creative solutions to old problems, looking at them from a new perspective. And as a government we know that it is necessary to tend to one’s own housekeeping.

We have therefore chosen a plan of action that will help us streamline government activities, make government less cumbersome and therefore develop better government and to adapt the structure of government to provide improved services to the public. To do this, we have to determine whether specific government programs, agencies, boards and advisory bodies actually deliver results over time.

The omnibus bill which is before the House for second reading today is an important and progressive part of that process. Our aim is to establish better, more efficient and more effective government. The passage of this bill will bring us closer to that goal.

Today’s climate is one of change. Canada as a nation, the federal department, the agencies and crown corporations for the

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Department of Canadian Heritage and the myriad components of government cannot escape this one inevitability, change. Three factors contribute to this atmosphere of change.

First, fiscal restraint is forcing us to rethink the way that governments do business. The reduction of the deficit is in the interest of all Canadians and constitutes a priority of our government.

Second, the global village of which Marshall McLuhan wrote so prophetically in 1962 has become a reality. In particular, the globalization of world markets creates a new context for business and trade, a context which is increasingly important to Canada which is becoming more and more dependent on exports. This context demands that the machinery of government be up to date, finely honed and highly effective, capable of responding to an international economic environment in which transactions take place instantaneously.

Finally, the relentless evolution of new technologies impels us to revisit the means by which we distribute products and services among the population. Canada, which has repeatedly overcome challenges of geography and climate, particularly today, is no stranger to revolutions in communications.

The red book has articulated our commitment to simplify public sector structures and streamline operations wherever possible to respond to today's changing environment. We also want to encourage creativity and innovation in meeting challenges, not as problems but as opportunities.

Toward these ends, my colleague the minister has undertaken this exercise which promises to bring efficiency gains. It is an exercise that will maximize the opportunity for the good governance of the work that agencies, boards and advisory boards do.

Our goal is clear: to modernize the machinery of state with a view to rendering government more efficient and more responsive to the needs of the citizens which it serves.

The Department of Canadian Heritage along with the agencies and crown corporations of the Canadian heritage portfolio participated in this renewal exercise. As a result it was a very collaborative, open process. There was a collegial tone to the consultations with full agreement achieved so that the boards could continue their work efficiently, effectively and with smaller numbers.

A November 26 article in the *Montreal Gazette* asked the following question: When governments are strapped for cash can they afford to support culture? I can assure this House that culture is one of our strongest allies in building a stronger and more unified nation.

As the red book states, culture is the very essence of national identity, the bedrock of national sovereignty and national pride. At a time when globalization and the information and communications revolutions are erasing national borders, Canada needs more than ever to commit itself to cultural development.

The government's intention has not been to weaken Canada's national cultural institutions but to streamline them and to make them more effective and efficient. I support the July initiative to eliminate and streamline agencies in an equitable fashion and support the continued development of culture in Canada.

(1650)

The government's initiative to eliminate and streamline agencies underscores the reality that better more effective government does not necessarily mean more government, or that this concept is incompatible with the need to work with less. We can work with less without affecting quality. Canadians have proved that throughout our history.

Our intention is clear: to modernize the machinery of government. That means reducing the parts to streamline our activities where applicable and thereby optimize the success of board appointments. This provides some assurance to Canadians by placing the onus on governments to make good appointments, appointments that are necessary and that are made on the basis of competence.

As a result in the area of Canadian heritage I support such measures as reducing the size of the Canada Council, as well as the boards of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the federal museums and the National Film Board to name a few. Together these reductions will account for 85 government in council positions and 10 ministerial appointments.

This process of streamlining will not adversely affect the development, support of, or dissemination of Canadian cultural expression. Culture is not simply an expression of the artistically inclined or spiritual abstract. Culture infuses every dimension of society. There is an inextricable connection between the cultural sector and its contribution to the economy.

I am among those who cannot imagine a society, a viable and vibrant society, without culture. Our challenge goes beyond that of mere economic stability. Our challenge is to protect the sector whose role and vocation is to give a sense of what it is to be Canadian, to be a witness to our collective consciousness. In fact, I am among those who believe that as a society it will be our culture that will affirm our position and strength in the community of nations in today's global village.

It is incumbent upon us therefore to go forward to maintain the gains that we have made as a nation. We must adapt to the new realities that confront and challenge us and move forward on a solid foundation of effective and responsive government.

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This is our most profound challenge. I believe that our government is helping to position Canada and Canadians not just to meet that challenge but to surpass it.

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

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Mrs. Brown (Calgary Southeast): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, am I not going to have an opportunity to speak this afternoon?

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I think there is a member who is seeking unanimous consent to revert to the bill that has now just been called for the vote.

Perhaps the House would agree to suspend for two or three minutes while party members negotiate this issue. Perhaps we could come back at exactly 5 p.m. with a recommendation.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. I wonder if the House would be disposed to give unanimous consent? In all truthfulness, I will also take those few moments to consult with the table officers further.

Is there unanimous consent to suspend the sitting for four or five minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 4.56 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 5 p.m.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent that the House not see the question as having been put some moments ago and we simply resume the debate on the bill that was before the House until the question was put.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I do thank all of my colleagues in the House for their indulgence. I am embarrassed and will continue.

I rise today to speak to Bill C-65, an omnibus bill designed to streamline or eliminate a number of federal agencies. This bill legislatively dissolves seven agencies that have outlived their purposes and purports to restructure the boards of 15 other agencies or commissions.

As per its normal course of action, the party in power has done nothing more than mount a finely orchestrated public relations campaign. It is highly rhetorical, evidencing little substance.

This bill fails to take into account the dismal fiscal realities we live in. It fails to address the issue of accountability, making

the activities of these boards and agencies open and accountable to the Canadian taxpayer. On this issue of our dismal fiscal reality we are now hearing what Canadians want and most certainly what they do not want.

People in this country are outraged that our government has been in an out of control spending mode for two decades. Our nation is like a Hollywood front, all glitter and glass purchased on borrowed money with nothing of substance holding it up.

It is a stunning picture of the reality of this House that Parliament has not directly acted to cut expenditures since the minority Parliament of 1972-74. Even in that situation where the government lacked a controlling majority, the House of Commons achieved only two small cuts amounting in total to \$20,000.

To give a sense of proportion, since the current procedure for committee review of estimates was initiated in 1969, Parliament has authorized about \$2 trillion worth of expenditures. This means Parliament has made cuts that represent only one-millionth of one per cent of total expenditures it had approved.

I oppose this bill, however I have to acknowledge the miserable attempt to legislatively eliminate seven already defunct federal organizations. I understand more agencies will be dissolved and I look forward to seeing those changes implemented.

What truly concerns me about this bill is the lack of commitment by the government to really effect change in those boards that remain functioning. Its downsizing efforts are encouraging, but I believe any comprehensive review of these boards must include a review of how appointments to those boards and agencies are made, and a complete review of their budgets and spending.

According to the government's own figures this bill will eliminate a mere 150 GIC appointments and save a paltry \$1 million.

(1705)

Surely this bill could have aspired to embrace more significant change. This whole exercise becomes a waste of time when other appointments are springing up as these are disappearing. A case in point is the new tourism commission with a new budget of \$50 million and no agenda. It is brand new and has no agenda.

Rather than merely changing the title of chairman to chairperson of each board, I believe the minister for public service renewal should have included clauses in this bill to make these boards and agencies open, accountable and responsible.

Criteria should be developed and implemented to prevent the patronage process from taking over future GIC appointments. To demonstrate the changes necessary, let us briefly look at the current state of the councils and agencies affected by this bill.

The Canada Council had a \$100 million dollar budget last year. Do we know if this money was well spent? Is the council being held accountable? We have no idea regarding the ef-

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fectiveness of the council. It was not part of the government's review, but it should have been.

It is even more interesting that the current chairman of the council appointed in May 1994 is Donna Scott, a former provincial Liberal candidate in Ontario. Is she the best candidate for the job? I do not know. We do not know.

As Susan Delacourt of the *Globe and Mail* recently discovered, it seems the Liberals have a two-tiered process for appointments. There is one for qualified candidates and one for faithful Liberals.

Patronage is not only limited to the Canada Council. Several other agencies in this bill have been affected. Let us look at the National Capital Commission.

The NCC's decisions are mired in secrecy and there seems to be universal demand that it be more open. Yet the current Minister of Canadian Heritage has no plans to enforce significant change at the NCC. He is reported to have said, and one wonders where his brain was when he said this: "On accountability for the NCC it is a bit more tricky because it is not an elected body". It is spending my tax dollars and those of the other members.

It should be noted that one of the NCC's members is Pierre Isabelle, the son of a former Liberal MP from Hull. The list continues. Andrew Ogarcenko, the director of the National Arts Centre is a well known Winnipeg Liberal supporter.

The Cultural Property Export Review Board appointed a new chairman in November 1994. Mr. Ian Christie Clark was the special adviser to a Liberal Secretary of State who founded the CPERB. He was also its founding chairperson in the late 1970s. He lost that position under the Tories, but like a proverbial yo-yo, Mr. Clark has returned to the post he created for himself.

The National Film Board is in dire need of change. Michael Spencer, a respected National Film Board executive from 1946 to 1967 and the founding boss of what is now Telefilm Canada has advocated chopping the NFB's annual \$80 million budget in half. To date this government's response to the ongoing problem at the NFB has been to decrease the number of NFB board members by two. Those are earth shattering reforms indeed.

How can the government hope to effect real change in the public service without addressing these concerns? In this era of fiscal restraint, the Canadian taxpayer has to be assured the advisory boards and councils are being held accountable for the money they spend.

They need ironclad guarantees that these organizations will not be subject to patronage appointments but are staffed with the most qualified people available. Unfortunately, Bill C-65 does not provide the Canadian taxpayer with these guarantees.

(1710)

Liberal loyalty in this country is rewarded with jobs, jobs, jobs, and all of them are patronage based appointments. Stay tuned, Canada, because even now the turnover in our legal community, which is another patronage based organization, is beginning to rattle through the provinces. Liberal linked lawyers and not Conservatives are now being chosen to act as agents for federal cases in provincial courts.

Legal agents, as I understand it, are the law firms that receive work, parcelled out by the government, and mostly handle drug prosecutions. In 1993-94 about 600 firms were legal agents and billed Ottawa for nearly \$45 million. The system has been a traditional form of patronage.

Legal patronage has not been a flawless process for our Prime Minister's government. The Progressive Conservative appointees who have been tossed out are now suing prominent Liberals and making the issue public.

Some Liberals resent that party loyalists have not been appointed faster. That is scandalous.

Historically, new governments lost no time dropping hundreds of agents and replacing them with party loyalists. Our justice minister, to his credit, has tried to proceed more slowly. He wants to overhaul the system by replacing the number of agents and introducing guidelines. Wanting to is very different from acting, and we are waiting.

Some Liberals feel our justice minister made them lose face by failing to provide patronage plums fast enough to supporters. They believe competent candidates should not be discarded because they are Liberals. At the same time, talk of reform has set high expectations so replacing any Conservative lawyers would make the government look hypocritical.

This is the cynical and corrupt face of patronage, no matter where it exists at any level of government today. I hear hon. members of this House smacking one another on the side of the head because they have this patronage in the Liberal government. Then we have Mr. Parizeau's government involved and they smack them up a little. What we are looking at is a corrupt system and that has to change.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, in my closing comments, where is the accountability to the Canadian people? Where is our responsibility as elected representatives to the Canadian people? Where is the consistency of members of Parliament so we truly represent one another and ensure that these councils, boards, agencies and commissions are truly open to the Canadian people?

So much for the Liberal red book promises of a fair system.

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Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too want to make a few comments on this bill. I have spent some time in opposition myself, both here in this Chamber and in the Newfoundland House of Assembly, and I see that the members of the opposition have recognized this bill for what it is, in part, and that is an opportunity for the opposition to have some fun with a number of issues.

Mr. Cummins: It is serious business.

Mr. Simmons: I will talk about the serious business of this bill, but first, why should my hon. friend from Delta deny me some of the fun?

I notice my hon. friend from Cariboo—Chilcotin trotted out his tractor anecdote once again today. I missed part of it so I do not know what colour the tractor was today. Was it green or blue like the last time? I say to him that some time he should tell us about the cow that having given the full pail of milk, good wholesome milk, was manoeuvred into kicking over the pail. I am not suggesting of course that my friend from Cariboo—Chilcotin or his colleagues are a bunch of cows. They are not that at all. Some could accuse them of being the people trying to manoeuvre the productive cow into wasting something that has been produced.

(1715)

I digress. I say to my friend from Lotbinière that I notice that patronage is getting a fairly full workout here this afternoon, and so it should. Patronage has always been with us and always will be, and so it should.

Mr. Speaker, I say through you to my friend from Calgary North, hear it in context. I said patronage has always been with us, always will be, and so it should. Before she gets too disbelieving I invite her to hear it in context. I was about to say that members of this Chamber practise patronage in your families on a regular basis, in your church and your community organizations. You regularly reach out to those people you know or can trust. That is not to imply that all the people you do not know you cannot trust. It is just that you do not know whether you can trust them because you have not yet met them.

What is so surprising if in that church group, community group, that municipal council or whatever the group may be, you reach out to somebody whose credentials you know, whose people skills you know when you want a job done. I repeat, that is not to suggest that all the people you do not know in this world are not to be trusted.

It is no accident that if a Liberal government is in power a number of the appointments will be people who are known Liberals. It would be no accident that if a Reform government were in power some of the appointments would be Reform appointments. The law of averages alone takes care of that. If we had to exclude all the people who either voted Liberal or were

active in the Liberal cause over the years, we would virtually exclude the entire population of Canada.

Is anybody suggesting that the label itself ought to be a disincentive? There is more to it than that. Let me construct an example for members. If I am an employer and have an opening and there are two applicants for a particular position, both of whom have equal credentials, equal qualifications, equal experience and I know one and I do not know the other, I am going to hire the one I know. The principle stands that the devil you know is better than the devil you do not know, to put it in the vernacular. More generically, the person you know is better than the person you do not know. By definition if you do not know the second person there may be something about that second person, which despite the paper qualifications, despite the experience, has something less to commend him or her to the job. In its purest form that is patronage.

I believe what my friends are talking about is something different altogether. They may not have the courage to put the term on it. I think what they are talking about is corrupt patronage.

I return to my example. I the employer have two people in front of me applying for a position. The person I know does not know a row of beans about the job. The second person, whom I do not know, has good credentials, commends himself or herself to the job in every way, comes through well in the interview. Despite all that I hire the person I know. That is the beginning of corrupt patronage. That is the tail wagging the dog. That is the employer in the example using something other than his head. That example itself may not be corrupt but it is certainly stupid to rush out and hire the person because you know him rather than the person who can do the job. However, that is the beginning of corrupt patronage.

(1720)

Governments over the years, Tory governments, have practised some corrupt patronage and Liberals have practised corrupt patronage but that does not make it right. I submit that we cannot go back and undo the elections of many years past with the people who sat in Liberal cabinets or Liberal governments or headed Liberal governments and Tory governments over the years. I mention those two parties because they are the only two strains we have had at the federal level. I could go to the provincial level and talk about governments of other stripes, including Social Credit and NDP. We all know the range of governments we have had in Canada heading provincial and federal administrations. There was the Union Nationale in the province of Quebec and other governments. We cannot go back and rerun those elections.

Therefore I submit that the only credentials we can examine now are the credentials of the present administration which is the administration which will be accountable in the next election. Before we are all tarred with the same brush, hear some of

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the facts. Has this government appointed Liberals? Yes, it has and I can give this House a good list of them. Has it appointed people of other stripes? Yes, and I can give this House a good list of those as well. However, that ought not to be the governing criterion as to what the person's party label was.

I will return to my example again. If that minister is selecting a person for a board only on the basis of his label or on the basis of who he knows versus who he does not know rather than on the basis of the competence of that person to do that job, that is where it becomes corrupt patronage. I do not agree with that and I will give notice that when I see it and as I see it I will do my bit to blow the whistle.

However, do not ask me to subscribe to a dictum that says all persons of the same party label as the party in power are hereby disqualified for appointment however qualified. That makes no sense. Nobody in this House in their right mind would subscribe to that kind of dictum. It would be unfair. As much to the point it would be counterproductive because we would be robbing ourselves of the opportunity to appoint some competent people.

Let us look at something off the record. This is not particularly an attack on the Tories. There are no Tories left around here to attack. I want to draw a couple of recent examples and it just so happens that the last government that was in power in this country federally was the Tory government. Let us have a look at comparable periods.

The big bad Liberals, I will pick two equivalent periods, from November 4, 1994 to February 3, 1995 in the one case and an earlier set of years in another case. In the first case, the present case, the big bad patronage infested Liberals over a 15-month period from November 4, 1993 until February 3, 1995 have made 700 appointments. The *Globe and Mail* with a research team looking into this for days and weeks, we saw the article last weekend, managed to identify that fewer than 80 of those appointed had Liberal connections. That is only 80 out of 700. I have to talk to the Prime Minister. That is discrimination. The balance ought to be a bit more than that.

(1725)

I say to my friend from Delta when he was a card carrying Liberal he would not have stood for that kind of unfairness.

Let us look at the period November 4, 1991 until February 3, 1993. These are not conveniently chosen dates. They are the last dates I could choose within the mandate of the last government that would parallel the 15-month period we are talking about and that is why I chose that period. In that 15-month period the Conservatives made 1,819 appointments, about two and a half times as many as had been made in this period.

One of the realities of being in government is that there are agencies, there are boards that need to have personnel appointed to them. We cannot ignore that. This government under the minister responsible did undertake a review. As a result we have made a lot fewer appointments but some of them have to be made.

The very people who stand in this House and decry appointments have themselves been patronage appointments in past times. I will not follow in the footsteps of someone else who spoke earlier and name names. I do not believe that is fair in terms of making the case. It is half fair in the sense that the individuals whose names I have there are now members of this Chamber and would have an opportunity to respond. However, others were mentioned today who have never sat in this Chamber and more to the point do not sit here presently and have no recourse and cannot protect themselves.

I submit to my friends who were dragging out names today that we can make the point that somebody may be the grandson or the son or whatever relation. I did not have any say who my grandparents were. I did not have much say who my parents were. Should it disqualify me because my dad was a humble carpenter, because my mother came from a family of shipbuilders and worked as a domestic before her marriage? Does that disqualify me? Should I carry those labels and somebody should decide that I have to be pegged here because my mother was a domestic and my father was a carpenter? How far do we carry this thing in order to make some point about patronage?

I guess my last sermonette could have been entitled "people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones" because some of them sitting in this Chamber right now had patronage appointments from the former Tory administration.

There is one other issue that I would like to talk about. I am not referring to the gentlemen from Charlevoix, Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, Elk Island, Red Deer, Fraser Valley East, Calgary North, Port Moody—Coquitlam or Delta, nor to the members for St. Boniface, Parry Sound—Muskoka, Kitchener, London West and Oxford, not to mention the members for Niagara Falls and Stormont—Dundas. Are there other offers—or the member for Louis—Hébert. Just to pull together what I have said on that issue, if there is something wrong with the patronage system, it is the system that is wrong.

(1730)

There is no need to make scapegoats of individuals to make one's point about what needs to be done with the system. That is the only point I am making. I give notice. I have in front of me the names of present members of this House but unless I eliminate everybody and by extrapolation name the person, I cannot go any further.

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In fairness to the people who asked me the question, they did not need to ask the question. They would know full well if they had been appointed. If they had been appointed they would not be so loud in their protests that I inject a disclaimer on their behalf.

If the member for Delta did not exist, we would have to create him. He is such a delight. The members of the Reform Party might have some say in that matter. There is one other item that I want to go on to.

This bill is umbrella legislation. In many respects, it is what we used to call comma legislation. It is not of any particular consequence but it tidies up some things. It needs to be done. I am not dismissing its importance but it is probably not going to create a lot of jobs. Indeed it is cutting out quite a few, for example ACOA.

I see I have my two minute signal so I had better say this very quickly. I want to spend most of my time on ACOA, an instrument of regional development very dear to my heart because I have seen the good it has done in my own riding.

I can talk to members about an agriculture operation in Bay St. George where 35 or 40 people are full time employees thanks to some initiative from that agency. I can talk to members about the salmon operation in Bay d'Espoir which employs 80 people full time where we fly salmon on a daily basis to San Francisco and Toronto and so on. It is a good producing industry that has been going on now for 10 years.

I could talk to members about people who sit in Milltown, 35 of them, and do computer inputting for companies in Germany, England and Australia on contract as a result of a little SEED money they got five or six years ago from ACOA.

I see as I look around that the transition to the new economy, the high tech part of it but agriculture in our case in Newfoundland, the transition to a new set of endeavours in Newfoundland is fully aided by that kind of agency. I sought to speak in this debate particularly to give support to it. I would be glad to invite any member of the House to go with me to my riding so I could show members some of those success stories that are the result of ACOA money.

The member has had an invitation that he has not yet taken me up on. The invitation still stands. I see my time is up.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have just one very quick comment. Perhaps the member for Burin—St. George's will respond to it. Of all the agencies mentioned in Bill C-65, almost all of them have a little clause that reads something like this.

It says that on the day when this bill is proclaimed all people who are on the commission prior to that will cease to be on the commission. That unfortunately raises the sinister question,

why would we have to eliminate all present members of the present board? Is it because the present government wants to be able to appoint new people, displacing the patronage appointments of the past?

(1735)

We will be watching all of those agencies very closely and noting the people who are dropped. We know they will all be dropped if this legislation is passed; we expect with a majority of Liberals it will be. Then we will be watching very carefully to see who is put back on to the boards even though it is in reduced numbers.

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, I say to my friend for Elk Island, he should be very watchful. That is what makes good government, when we have people in the opposition and in the government benches who monitor those situations.

To the first part of his question, although it is a question better answered by the minister responsible, I would fully assume that if one is going to alter the mandate of an organization, one might want to start afresh. People who were put there, given the former mandate, may or may not be qualified or as qualified to pursue the new mandate. That is just an answer off the top of my head.

It is not uncommon when winding up and redefining an organization to replenish its membership. The litmus test is the one he put his finger on. The litmus test is whether any hanky-panky—he did not say this, but I will say it for him—goes on. If there are 10 people on the board with four Liberals and six Tories or whatever, they will all be shoved aside. If when the board comes back the next day the four Liberals remain and the six Tories have all been replaced for no better reason than they had different labels when it comes to parties, then that is hanky-panky. I would be there with him when he raises the point.

Mr. John English (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member on his excellent speech and his very shrewd and wise comments about patronage. I wonder whether he realizes that many of the positions we have abolished were vacant. The government had the opportunity to fill them but chose not to do so.

I wonder if the hon. member would care to comment on the contrast with patronage practices of the past. He has been a member for a considerable period of time. Could he make a comment on that fact?

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, to my friend from Kitchener on his first point, I tried to get the figure, but I did not get it in time. There are many hundreds of vacancies on government boards now because we wanted to do the review before we began appointing people to agencies that we either no longer need in

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terms of the government's policy thrust, or did not need in such numbers.

For example, the ACOA board is going to be reduced from 18 members to 7. There were vacancies on that board, but it would have been foolhardy for the minister responsible, my friend from Cape Breton—East Richmond, to rush in and appoint those people, knowing full well it was the government's intention to reduce the size of the board.

As far as the second part of his question is concerned I say to my friend from Kitchener that I think I alluded to that in my speech when I said that both Liberal and Conservative governments over the past have been guilty of what I described—what I defined first but then described in the context—as corrupt patronage, where you appoint people of a particular party label for that reason alone, not because of their competence to do the job.

A party label ought not to be the reason for the appointment, but it should not exclude one from receiving such an appointment. That was my point. A fair amount of it has gone on in the past. What is more to the point is that since the government took office I believe it has been fairly diligent. It has had 150 backbenchers keeping an eye on it, as well as the opposition. It has been fairly diligent on this matter. I do not honestly believe that one can make much of a case that there has been an orgy of patronage under this administration.

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to congratulate my colleague for his very interesting remarks and ask him to share his experience with us on this point.

All too often in my view we have heard—as he said in his remarks—names put forward that because there is some sort of party connection, that person should somehow be disqualified. Does the member in his experience feel that when a person levels that sort of a charge, there should be an onus on that person to show the individual appointed is in fact unqualified for the position? To do otherwise is just to smear people who may have this or that political affiliation, if that is the sole reason. It is my view that the onus should be on the accuser to put the case when they make the accusation.

(1740)

I wonder if the member would share his experience and his point of view on that idea.

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, I do not get my jollies by smearing people and I do not think that sets me above anybody in the Chamber. I do not think anybody in the Chamber really gets their jollies out of it. Sometimes we fall into the trap of doing it. I have fallen into that trap over the years myself, but that does not make it right.

Just now when I singled out an example of an earlier speaker in this debate—not only one speaker, two or three speakers—I did not name names. That would have defeated the point I was making that one smear does not justify a second smear because the thing just grows.

It seems to me, and I think I said it in my speech, that if people have concerns about the system and document those concerns—I recognize that some arithmetic has to be done—then those people have this label or those people do not have those qualifications. I submit that can be done without naming names and make the same point.

I would submit that the law of averages says that of all the people appointed, I dare say some of the 700 I mentioned just now cannot do their jobs. Of the 295 members of Parliament, probably some of them cannot do their job either. The law of averages takes care of those. Nobody is going to suggest that every one of the 700 appointments is absolutely brilliant. Some of them were, I would guess, clumsy, stunned appointments.

But that is different than saying that somebody is sitting here full time asking: “How can we warp the system so that only incompetent Liberals get all the jobs and nobody else will get any”? Well, if that is the thesis, prove it but do not smear people along the way.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to enter into this debate. I have just a couple of comments on the previous speaker's comments on patronage.

First I refer to the picture he has of the cow. I remember from history class another famous cartoon of a cow. Perhaps some other time he would like to comment on it. It is a picture of a cow kind of straddling the Canadian map. It is foraging on the east coast, being milked dry in Ottawa and its rear end is pointed toward the west. That is a famous cartoon. It is kind of humorous but sometimes I think there is an element of truth in it too.

On the definition of patronage, what causes concern for many of us on this side of the House is that the Liberals campaigned so hard against it. The red book comments on patronage. The definition of a patron includes someone who is a former owner of a slave. I guess depending on how you think their commitment is to the party that appointed them, a patronage appointment has a negative side to it.

I rise today to speak to this latest legislative initiative of the government, Bill C-65, which gives legal force to an announcement made by the the Minister of Public Service Renewal on the day that he announced the downsizing of a number of federal government boards eliminating 150 patronage positions. I assume he thinks that is a good thing. I certainly do. He even announced the abolition of seven councils and advisory boards.

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Like so many other Liberal initiatives this legislation is a half-hearted attempt to placate voters rather than a fundamental change in the way government works. There is much talk about what is wrong with the system and the systemic change that is required. He is very accurate. I do not see that this legislation changes any system at all.

The Liberal government does not move quickly and decisively to resolve the problems that the electorate is angry about. It moves cautiously and slowly, inching far behind the will of the people.

(1745)

On this side of the House we often wonder why. Why does the government drag its feet? It drags its feet because the government is elected, operated and sustained by a coterie of political friends. The way Liberal politics has always operated in this country is to weld together an extraordinary network of friends, often through the dispensation of favours.

The cabinet puts hundreds of old Liberals horses out to pasture. Three hundred and fifty government boards, councils and commissions liberally water these Liberal pack ponies until the next election comes along. Every four years a very long list of names builds up, very personal and private promises are made and if the government delivers it can be assured of continued support.

I want the House to know that the people who support the Reform Party now and in the future do so because they want good government, not because they have any chance of political patronage plums.

Even during the last election when Reform had relatively little chance of actually forming a government, they worked their hearts out. That is because Reformers believe that there is a different way to govern in Canada, that there is something called merit that overrides patronage concerns, that there is such a thing as pure political motivation where people get together and become politically motivated because they love their country rather than their salaries.

I am not saying that Liberals or even Liberal appointees do not love the country. I am saying that their love for Canada and their love of service to its people are sullied, are mixed, are mingled with the motivation of private gain in the minds of some Liberal appointees. When the collective will of the government, operated by thousands of Liberal friends in key posts, is expressed we are not surprised to find that any change from the status quo is slow and tortuous.

Over a period of many years, even in a time of financial crisis such as we are experiencing today, real change is agonisingly slow, even when the public demands it. The movement of the government is hindered by the collective will of people who are gaining handsomely from the old way of doing politics.

The old ways are passing. We are entering a new political time in Canada. Reformers foresee a government that is elected through the public demonstration of its value, its ability to act and react with speed and firmness to meet the real needs of the country, not the perceived needs of friends, of special interest groups, elite politicians and a few radical intellectuals.

The Reform Party of Canada was elected. It has support across the country because Canadians are sick of the old ways governments operate. In the last few weeks I have attended meeting after meeting in my constituency. I have talked with hundreds of constituents and they are very angry in my riding. They are fed up. They are sick to death of the old ways and the old spending, the old taxation and the old ways in which their will is reinterpreted by the government.

The Liberal government seems to have some kind of a hearing problem. When the people say no tax increases, the government hears them say readjust the tax system. That is just another way of saying there will be tax increases. When the people shout at the government that they are sick of patronage, the government hears them whisper they want to reduce patronage a little.

The government is hard of hearing. It does not understand what the people want. Canadians want a different way, a systemic change if you will, of appointing people to our boards, our commissions and our advisory bodies. The people do not want a little less of the same old thing, they want real change.

The Liberals cannot seem to hear what the people are actually saying. When the people say that they want a smaller, less intrusive government, the government repeats it in a different way. The government says "We understand. You want us to eliminate a few advisory boards that did very little in the first place. You want us to get rid of a few commissions that do not sit anyway". No, that is not what the people are saying.

The people are saying loud and clear—I hear it every day in my office—that they want to get rid of government agencies that look busy, agencies that are doing too many things right now. They want to get government out of their lives. They want to reduce the number of things that government does.

That is the difference between the Reform agenda and the Liberal agenda. In every way the Liberal government attempts to preserve the aging status quo.

(1750)

The Liberals want window dressing. Reformers are window cleaners. The Liberals want theatre. The Reform Party of Canada wants real life. The Liberals want to throw today's hot potatoes into the laps of the next generation and let it pay for it. Reformers want to solve the difficult problems created by this generation in this generation.

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That is why I oppose this legislation. Although it eliminates a few useless boards and commissions, it does not bite into the functions of government or into the systemic change that the hon. member across the way was mentioning earlier. Although it downsizes a few boards and eliminates a little patronage, it leaves the patronage system entirely intact. If it is left intact it must roll again.

Even this morning when I sat on the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons the last item on the agenda was order in council appointments. There were not many of them, just four, but nobody knows who these people are. There is no way one can stop these appointments. Even the other Liberal members on the committee did not know what it was about. They asked if this was a rubber stamp and the word came back from the clerk that yes, it was a rubber stamp. That is why, as I mentioned earlier, if there is no systemic change I will oppose this legislation.

Allow me to read the following. Some of it has been read before but I think it should be read into the record again. It is a list of patronage appointments being carried by the *Globe and Mail*. It is ironic that the list was compiled by a senator who used to work in Prime Minister Mulroney's office and today enjoys the rich patronage fruits of the old Conservative regime.

If the listener can get over the nauseating hypocrisy of this particular pot calling the kettle black, I will get on with the business of reading a short part of this list. Just to get your blood boiling listen to a few appointments that the Liberals have made. Don Johnston, former Liberal Party president to the OECD. It cost \$100,000 just to win enough favour to get him. Richard Kroft, director of the CNR. Jack Wiebe, the Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan. Nova Scotia Liberal fundraiser Robert Pace has somehow become a director of Canadian National and his partner in Nova Scotia, Mervyn Russell, is now chair of Halifax Port Corporation.

Robert Wright, a negotiator for the Pearson Development Consortium, did a really good job. I think he pretty nearly has the government into court now for a few hundred million dollars. Anyway, he was the Prime Minister's chief fundraiser for his leadership campaign and his services now cost us \$1,000 per day. The whole Pearson deal was a Tory patronage boondoggle in the first place and the Liberals won the election partly by denouncing Tory patronage. I guess it is only fitting that one be appointed to investigate it.

I am sure all Canadians are happy that the Prime Minister's friend is benefiting from the old Tory patronage scheme in the same sort of a Liberal way I guess.

I will resume my list. Jean Cordeau, chief aboriginal organizer for the Prime Minister, is now director of Petro-Canada. That

obviously tied together. David Maclean, a fundraiser for the Prime Minister's leadership campaign, is now chairman of CN Rail. Gary McCauley, a former Liberal MP, is now on the Immigration and Refugee Board, one of my favourites. He makes about \$85,000 a year. Congratulations, Gary. Former Liberal candidate Bill Code somehow found his way to the NAFTA disputes panel. Yves Caron, a former Liberal MP, is now commissioner of the Canadian pension commission.

Michael McDonald, the financial agent for the minister of public works, is now a director at Enterprise Cape Breton. The minister of goodies is still at it. Andrew Ogarcenko, a well known Liberal from Winnipeg—not to me—is now the director of the National Arts Centre. He is the director of the National Arts Centre which is a great job. Perhaps that is why in Question Period today the Minister of Canadian Heritage mentioned that the Liberal Party is doing an excellent job of promoting culture in Canada. Of course a Liberal would be able to do that at the arts centre.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health had a very good campaign manager in the last election and he has received his award. Ron Longstaffe is now chair of the Vancouver Port Corporation.

Inderjit Bal was a member of the Immigration and Refugee Board for a while. He received his reward after organizing delegates for the Prime Minister and, who else, the Minister for Citizenship and Immigration. Unfortunately, Mr. Bal had to resign after it was found that he had entered Canada illegally himself. Otherwise, he was very well qualified in all Liberal aspects.

(1755)

Richard Campbell is another campaign manager, this one for the Secretary of State for Veterans. He is now director of Marine Atlantic. We also have a judge or two. Judge Thomas Lofchik was with the Ontario Court of Appeal, a prominent Liberal organizer in Hamilton. I am sure that his appointment and his political involvements are just a coincidence. We have another judge, Federal Court Trial Judge Jean Richard. What was his connection? He was a partner of the Prime Minister in his old law firm. How about James Langston, former Liberal fund raiser and organizer, now on the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench.

The taxpayers will be happy to see that the totally pure system of justice is being used in this way. I could go on and on and on.

We have directors at the Bank of Canada, a host of appointees to powerful quasi-judicial panels and boards of large corporations. Patronage, I am sad to say, has even reached as high as the highest appointment in the land, that of the Governor General of Canada. He will be installed tomorrow, God bless him. On this side of the House we wish him well.

All of this is to say that we need a different, more objective way of doing appointments. We need to find a way to select the best, the brightest, the people who will help Canada to get ahead in the world. To cut out the motivation of money would do a lot of good for public bodies in this country or for political favours cut out that motivation as well. We might have fewer people helping out in political campaigns but the ones who do so might be motivated with a higher and more noble purpose, the ambition of the public interest unsullied by the hope of personal gain.

Big government is also a problem. For instance, we should not be reducing the board of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. The board should disappear altogether along with the political machine that funds it.

The board of the Canada Council should not be made smaller. It should be wiped off the face of the earth, along with its funding of radical and violent groups like Buddies in Bad Times Theatre in Toronto, an organization which wrote a play suggesting that an editorialist who penned a negative column about its pseudo-masochistic seminars should be raped. That is good stuff. We have to keep it around. The Canada Council funds this group to the tune of \$60,000 a year. I believe that any council with that kind of discretion is a danger to the public interest.

There are other boards, institutions and activities which government should no longer be involved in. This noble bill even goes so far as to create a new board called the Canadian cultural properties export review board with up 12 new members on it, 4 of whom have to have been art collectors or antique dealers. I can hardly believe it. Even when the government is downsizing, it is upsizing.

Patronage and big government are problems, big problems, and these are just two of the reasons why I cannot support this bill.

There are one or two things that it does eliminate which I wish the government would have left in. For example, there is now no minister required to table an annual report on emergency preparedness. I guess Canada will never have an emergency. Again, it is a small thing but why eliminate that board and keep these other ones in place?

Another one that comes to mind, again an accountability thing, a small thing, is the National Library of Canada, an important federal institution. The archivist now is allowed to destroy material without checking with anyone whether the material should or should not be saved. I would suggest in this day and age of political revisionists I seem to run into from time to time that there should be a check and balance on the powers of the national archivist. It is a small thing, an accountability thing, but I think that accountability should have been left in place.

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Finally, I believe sunset clauses should be included on each of the boards so that legislation would not be required every time we wish to wind down the operation of a government body. On the less important agencies we could include a clause that would require the minister to close the operations of the board at a certain definable point. Perhaps a timeframe would be suitable of five years for most boards. After five years the board would automatically dissolve unless the government renewed it through legislation.

Requiring legislation to renew mandates would make it harder for these boards to be perpetuated long after their useful life is gone. It would require the government to justify their continued existence in the House of Commons and in the public. Of course it would reduce the Liberal pastureland, so to speak. It could do the taxpayer good and would make the government generally more efficient.

We cannot support this legislation. This legislation is not worthy of support. Let us see some changes in the process, some real changes in the way we do government. As soon as the government quits its showpiece legislation and comes up with something concrete I will be applauding it, not from the front row but from the fourth row. The Reform Party of Canada will indeed support concrete solid measures.

* * *

IMMIGRATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act, and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act, be read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 6 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 45, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the motion at third reading stage on Bill C-44, an act to amend the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act, and to make a consequential amendment to the Customs Act.

Call in the members.

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

(Division No. 157)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Allmand	Anderson
Arseneault	Assad
Assadourian	Augustine
Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	Baker
Barnes	Beaumier
Bellemare	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bhaduria
Blondin-Andrew	Bodnar
Bonin	Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)	Brushett
Bryden	Bélair
Caccia	Calder
Campbell	Catterall
Chamberlain	Chan
Clancy	Cohen

Government Orders

Collenette	Collins	Dumas	Duncan
Comuzzi	Cowling	Epp	Forseth
Crawford	Culbert	Frazer	Gagnon (Québec)
DeVillers	Dhaliwal	Gilmour	Gouk
Discepola	Dromisky	Grey (Beaver River)	Guimond
Duhamel	Dupuy	Hanger	Hanrahan
Easter	Eggleton	Harper (Calgary West)	Harris
English	Fewchuk	Hart	Hayes
Finestone	Finlay	Hermanson	Hill (Macleod)
Flis	Fontana	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoepfner
Gagliano	Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Jacob	Jennings
Galloway	Gerrard	Johnston	Kerpan
Godfrey	Goodale	Lalonde	Lantry
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)	Langlois	Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
Grose	Guarnieri	Lebel	Lefebvre
Harb	Harvard	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Manning
Hickey	Hopkins	Marchand	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Hubbard	Ianno	Mayfield	McClelland (Edmonton Southwest)
Iftody	Irwin	McLaughlin	Meredith
Jackson	Jordan	Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Keyes	Kirkby	Ménard	Nunez
Knutson	Kraft Sloan	Paré	Penson
Lastewka	Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)	Picard (Drummond)	Pomerleau
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee	Ramsay	Riis
Lincoln	Loney	Ringma	Robinson
MacAulay	MacDonald	Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
MacLaren	MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)	Silye	Solberg
Malhi	Maloney	Solomon	Speaker
Manley	Marchi	Stinson	Strahl
Marleau	Massé	Taylor	Tremblay (Rosemont)
McCormick	McGuire	White (Fraser Valley West)	Williams—84
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)	McWhinney		
Mifflin	Milliken		
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna		
Mitchell	Murphy		
Murray	Nault		
Nunziata	O'Brien		
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan		
Parrish	Patry		
Payne	Peric		
Peters	Peterson		
Phinney	Pickard (Essex—Kent)		
Pillitteri	Proud		
Reed	Regan		
Richardson	Rideout		
Ringuette—Maltais	Robichaud		
Rock	Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)		
Serré	Shepherd		
Simmons	Skoke		
Speller	St. Denis		
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)		
Stewart (Northumberland)	Szabo		
Telegdi	Terrana		
Thalheimer	Torsney		
Ur	Valeri		
Vanclief	Verran		
Volpe	Walker		
Wappel	Wells		
Whelan	Wood		
Young	Zed—152		

PAIRED MEMBERS

Members

Bernier (Gaspé)	Bouchard
Canuel	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Dingwall	McTeague

(1830)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed.)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. We have approximately 20 minutes left on Government Orders, so we will continue with the debate on Bill C-65.

Those of you who have other commitments will please leave the Chamber so we may continue with the business of Bill C-65.

* * *

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Althouse	Asselin
Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	Bellehumeur
Benoit	Bergeron
Blaikie	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Brien
Brown (Calgary Southeast)	Bélisle
Chatters	Crête
Cummins	Daviault
de Jong	de Savoye
Deshaies	Duceppe

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION ACT (FEDERAL AGENCIES)

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-65, an act to reorganize and dissolve certain federal agencies, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to stand in the House today to address this particular bill. Before I begin I need to make a few comments with respect to the previous speaker, a colleague from the Reform Party who did

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not stay around to handle questions. He was probably frightened to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. I know sometimes it is difficult when a debate is split, in this case by a vote. I think we all realize the commitments each and every one of us has to fulfil at times.

We should not reflect on the absence of any member from the Chamber at any time. I think it is a good practice and one we should maintain.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I do want to add something else that has nothing to do with presence or absence. Mr. Speaker, have you ever envisioned that when Reformers speak a halo suddenly starts to appear around their heads? They come across as pure, white fallen snow. It is quite incredible. I am delighted to be a Liberal, because I am an ordinary human being who has strengths and weaknesses, unlike them.

Today gross exaggerations that I want to address were made by a member of the Reform Party, but they have not fooled anyone, and certainly not Canadians. Reform Party polls in the whole of Canada are lower than the Bloc's in the whole of Canada, and it is trying to tear the country apart.

Stay tuned. One of these days one of those Reformers will trip and the halo will fall down and crack. We will find out that the freshly fallen white snow is rather darkened and blemished. We will shortly see whether or not Reformers sin.

I want to get to this important piece of legislation.

[*Translation*]

It deals with the reorganization and dissolution of certain federal agencies.

What we are talking about today is a bill aimed at renewing government and restoring confidence in it. That is what this bill is about. It is a new type of government. A less cumbersome one. A government aimed at increased efficiency. A government that is responsive to the needs of Canadians throughout the country.

(1835)

A government concerned with increasing government efficiency.

[*English*]

I want to quote this because it appears to be the only safe way to not be misquoted by certain members of this House. The red book says, "The most important asset of government is the confidence it enjoys of the citizens to whom it is accountable". That has been extremely important to this government.

We know that Canadians are tired of large government. They have entrusted this particular party with the task of ensuring the careful management of public funds. They want honesty and

integrity restored to their federal institutions. That is exactly what is happening in spite of the Reform rhetoric.

Some of my colleagues on the other side have a lot of difficulty listening to the truth. They jump and fidget and writhe whenever the truth is spoken.

Mr. Abbott: I will let you know if we hear some.

Mr. Duhamel: In fact some of them have to rise from their seats because they cannot stand the heat. They are probably hungry too.

Mr. Speaker, you may recall that during the last budget the Minister of Finance announced that we would have a full-scale review to examine the size and relevance of existing agencies, boards, commissions and advisory bodies in order to achieve cost savings and ensure that if they were no longer needed or no longer played a useful role they would be taken out. That is what this bill is all about as well. The government has moved simultaneously on three fronts, which will lead to a leaner, more cost effective and efficient government.

Bill C-65 will bring into force decisions taken last July to reduce the numbers, and streamline or reduce the size of operations of certain agencies, boards and commissions where there is an interest to do so, when they are no longer as relevant or as important to Canadians, and where we can perhaps do without them.

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, that on July 8, 1994 the minister responsible for this particular initiative issued an interim report on the progress to date with the co-operation of his cabinet colleagues. He was able to report that decisions had been taken affecting 41 agencies and 9 different portfolios. Some people will scoff at that, but I assure you it is a major initiative and has been a successful one.

The legislation before the House today will place into law those decisions requiring legislative action, as necessary.

[*Translation*]

What I wanted to stress more is that we are abolishing and streamlining 22 government agencies. We are eliminating 150 positions filled by governor in council appointments. This is a lot; it is concrete, a success for this government. In concrete terms it means an annual saving of \$1.5 million for taxpayers. This is only the first round of measures.

I am going to give you a few examples of how thorough planning pays big dividends. This is planning that the minister initiated with his colleagues. He then began a long process of consultation which ended in success, as in the case of Petro-Canada with a reduction of its board of directors from the current 15 to three. This is a major reduction.

I will give a few other examples quickly: the Canadian Saltfish Corporation, created 25 years ago, will lose 24

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positions; the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency will now have seven board members instead of 18. Another major reduction. Seven positions will disappear with the abolition of the board of trustees of the Queen Elizabeth II Canadian research fund, which manages funds intended for research on children's diseases.

(1840)

But the interesting point is that this agency will no longer exist to manage the funds, yet research will be carried on and will from now on be performed by the Canadian Medical Research Council. That is good planning.

I can give the House another example of amalgamation of this type, namely the elimination of Emergency Preparedness Canada as a separate body. The protection it provided will not disappear, will always be necessary and Canada will continue to be well served in this regard, but this role will be taken on by National Defence and that makes sense. There is another example.

We tried to establish whether certain roles were still relevant, still served their purpose or had become superfluous. If they were found no longer to be relevant, had become superfluous, we eliminated them.

In cases in which it proved necessary to retain an agency, we attempted to determine whether its role could be carried out with fewer people, at a lower cost and perhaps more effectively.

[English]

Over a dozen organizations will have the number of their board members reduced resulting in significant savings. A few of those included in this group are, for example, the Canada Council, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Arts Centre and the boards of four of Canada's national museums.

Bill C-65 will give effect to the government's objective of identifying sensible and practical actions to eliminate overlap and duplication, and simplify government wherever possible.

As I have already mentioned, the review of agencies, boards and commissions is but one aspect of our government's overall approach to streamlining, restructuring and reorganizing government. The program review and the work in improving the efficiency of the federation are two additional initiatives which attempt to reach similar objectives.

For example, the government has signed action plans that deal with specific sectoral issues where overlap and duplication can be reduced or eliminated within specific timeframes. That has been done, if my memory serves me correctly, with nine provincial governments and two of the territories. That is important progress.

The program review is the other very significant initiative that will give the government a new look. It will result in a substantially different government, which focuses on core roles

and responsibilities. It is very important to focus on what can be done and what we can afford to do.

There will be more announcements made with respect to those initiatives very shortly.

[Translation]

I would also like to mention, and I believe this is a point we should emphasize, the status quo does not exist, federalism is evolving. It is a system, not because of its ability to evolve but rather because of its ability to change and respond to changing needs and always be aware of the needs of its population.

Our ability to embark upon the measures which I have just mentioned is a function of a body, a system which is flexible, adaptable and able to respond to the needs of our society and our country.

By the same token, federalism is a form of government characterized by its adaptability. Our entire history illustrates the extreme flexibility of our system of government.

[English]

This point needs to be accentuated time and time again. Some people like to pretend government and its institutions have not changed, but this is blatantly false. Government continues to change. Those who will not admit it have not taken the time to look at it, study it, and really get into government to understand the profound changes that are occurring.

Perhaps more than anything else, Canadians want their government to be more responsive. They want governments to listen to the people.

(1845)

I understand that all MPs want to suggest they hold the truth, that they listen to their constituents and that they should be listened to. I believe that collectively somewhere lies the truth. I have never believed that there is necessarily one answer to one problem, particularly in today's society. I have never believed that one member or one party holds all of the truths. I wish all of us could think about that.

[Translation]

By the end of this program review, we will, as government, have dissolved many other agencies, boards and commissions; eliminated more than 600 positions and effected savings of over \$6 million a year for the taxpayers. In my book, this is an enormous success.

To sum up, there are three points I would like to stress. First, we have just reduced duplication and overlap in government. Positive progress has been reported but, more importantly, work will continue in that area.

In addition, agreements were signed with the provinces and territories to ensure that every level of government can deliver the services it is responsible for. What we want to do, above all, it to ensure the efficiency of government operations, so that

goods and services are delivered as efficiently and economically as possible.

This work must and will continue because it is through such initiatives, bringing about improvements on a daily basis, that we will eventually have a better government in Canada. We already have a very efficient government, but there is still room for improvement. No organization can claim that it could not be better.

I can see one of my colleagues from the Reform Party smiling. I think that, in all honesty, he should answer the following question. When I mentioned that the government we have is already a good one, but that it is trying to be better, it made him laugh. I have challenge for this person, a person who I am unfortunately not at liberty of naming, although I would love to and am tempted to do so, but I will not. He belongs to a political party. Does he think that everything is perfect with his party? Does he think that it cannot be improved in any way? Does he think that his political party has all the answers?

I would like to hear what he may have to respond honestly to these questions I have just put to him.

These are my comments for the moment.

[English]

As I have indicated, the government should be lauded for these initiatives. They will bring about a more effective, leaner government but not a meaner one. It is one that will attempt to respond to Canadians' needs, in fact one that will continue to respond to Canadians' needs and one that recognizes that we need to continue to improve in order to get even better than we are.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Before recognizing the member for Fraser Valley West, I just want to make the House aware that at 6.50 p.m. we will move to Private Members' Business. With the two minutes remaining I will split the time evenly between the question and the answer. The hon. member for Fraser Valley West.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I guess that means I cannot speak to this today. That is too bad.

I have a question for the hon. member who just spoke. First of all the assumption that this Liberal government already is an efficient government is not only suspect, it is a ridiculous comment. I do not think many Canadians would agree with that. If it is so efficient I would like the member to tell us why all of these charades are going across the country trying to get input into major changes. We just saw the human resources failure to prove that.

Since the member has said there has been good planning here and the government has cut the number of board members, I would like him to tell us how many boards are actually going to

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be reduced. Never mind the board members, there are only a few. Tell us how many boards are going to be reduced.

(1850)

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, the gentleman says there is an assumption that we are a good government. What I said was that we were doing a reasonable job, in fact a very good job in certain sectors and we are going to get better. The polls would confirm that. Check our polls against Reform's which are lower than those of the Bloc Quebecois and it is trying to tear this country apart.

With respect to travelling around the country and calling it a charade, let the record show that the Reform Party said consultation was a charade. What a shocking statement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 6.50 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT

Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's, Lib.) moved that Bill C-282, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (medical expenses—disabled senior citizens) be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that is very dear to my heart. I know so many disabled seniors who are in a terrible financial bind because of the cost of dealing with their disability, the medication, the equipment and so on.

At the same time, I cannot claim to be the first person to raise this issue in the House. Indeed a committee of the House, the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons made recommendations to the House in March 1993. One of the recommendations was the very one that is in effect embodied in this bill, that the taxes that people with disabilities pay should be reduced by measures that offset their disability related costs. That is the spirit of this bill as members will see as I proceed.

The proposed amendment to the Income Tax Act is designed to give tax assistance to disabled seniors with out of pocket medical expenses.

The medical expenses tax is a non-refundable tax credit as members know, meaning that eligible medical expenses are added to other personal amounts. They are multiplied by 17 per cent, the result being deducted from federal income tax otherwise payable.

In less jargon let me put it this way. At present, expenditures on eligible goods and services required for medical reasons in excess of the lesser of 3 per cent of net income or \$1,614 may be used in calculating the medical expenses tax credit. To say it yet

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differently, you have to have \$1,614 of medical expenses before you can have a tax benefit.

That is not particularly a problem if you are hale and hearty and earn \$50,000 or \$100,000 a year. However if for example you are a disabled woman of 70 years of age living alone on an income of \$12,000 then \$1,614 represents essentially one-eighth of your income. Fully 12 or 13 per cent of that woman's income is being spent to buy her required medications. This bill is intended to address that issue.

The amendment I am proposing here would remove the minimum threshold for tax filers age 65 and over and eligible to claim the disability credit. They would be able to claim all medical expenses from the first dollar, provided of course they are in the category of being disabled and senior.

I submit that the proposal is very justified by the disproportionate burden borne by disabled seniors with respect to medical expenses. For example in 1991 the average deductible medical expense for all taxpayers was \$1,580. For disabled seniors it was \$2,716.

Disabled seniors thus pay considerably more in medical expenses than the average person, while enjoying an income markedly lower than average. They are therefore prime candidates for tax relief with respect to medical expenses.

(1855)

This is a time of cost consciousness and of deficit reduction. One question we should put on the table quickly is, how much would this proposal cost? The answer applied in 1991 terms is that across the country it would cost \$2.7 million to implement this provision in the bill. Let us say in round figures, in today's terms, \$3 million.

Who would it benefit? At the moment about 170,000 seniors who are disabled and poor. The statistics on disabled seniors are mind boggling. They are absolutely horrendous and they cry out for a bit of justice here. Let me show you what I mean.

Of people in this country aged 65 years and over, 46 per cent or 1,222,000 have some form of disability. Over 81 per cent of disabled seniors have a mobility or agility disability. Approximately 20,540 individuals or 8 per cent of the disabled seniors in households who require mobility aids do not have them. There are approximately 82,000 who require hearing devices and another 23,000 who require visual aids who do not have them.

Another statistic: Women with disabilities are four times more likely to be widowed than men. It is 56 per cent compared to 13 per cent. Another thing: Approximately 45 per cent of disabled males compared with approximately 72 per cent of disabled females report incomes under \$10,000 a year. Nearly half the disabled senior males and three-quarters of the females

had incomes under \$10,000. That is the target group we would seek to help here.

Unfortunately this is not a votable item but that is the luck of the draw. I do not quibble with that. It is part of our procedure, but I do wish it had been votable. I know that all members of this Chamber would dearly love to have the opportunity to be identified with this particular measure. There is however another way. The government could introduce the measure as government policy.

I can tell the House that I spoke several weeks ago with the Minister of Finance on this issue. At that time he was quite favourably disposed to the suggestion which we discussed in some detail. I intend to pursue it with him and I invite other members of the House to do so as well.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to you privately earlier, while I am entitled to 20 minutes as the lead speaker in this debate, I prefer to split my time with my colleague for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception. That will enable more members to speak to this particular issue during the hour we have assigned for this debate.

In conclusion, I say to all members that this issue of allowing disabled senior citizens to claim the first dollar of expenditure for tax credit purposes is an issue of compassion. It certainly is that, an issue of compassion. I do not think I need to elaborate for any members in this Chamber on what I mean. We can ease some of the pain for those people who are hurting on that particular issue.

Finally, it is also a dignity issue. These people have the double whammy of poverty and disability. In many cases the poverty is the result of dealing with the disability. Therefore in the name of dignity, in the name of compassion and some fairness I would appeal to all members of the House and the government to get behind this issue.

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise enthusiastically to support my hon. colleague from Burin—St. George's on this proposed piece of legislation. I think it is an excellent initiative and I support the proposal he has made without hesitation.

I do not think there is a member of Parliament in this Chamber who at some time or another early in the game has not heard from a disabled senior citizen who has not been able to find the financial means to survive like other members of our society.

(1900)

Speaking of seniors in general, we have a large number of seniors in Canada and it is continuing to grow. In 1971, 8 per cent of our population consisted of senior citizens. In 1991 the census figures showed 12 per cent of Canadians were senior citizens.

The growth is very rapid. The latest figures I have seen show that by the year 2036 we expect to have somewhere in the vicinity of 25 per cent of Canadians as senior citizens. This I believe gives even more impetus to the suggestion the hon. member has made.

To recap, I will use some of the figures that may be slightly different from his, however the point is still the same. The purpose of the bill essentially is to make it more fair for disabled seniors, quite a few in Canada. Specifically, it removes the requirement for seniors to have to pay, to have to reach a threshold or to have spent a total of \$1,614 or 3 per cent of their income, whichever is the lesser—it is usually the lesser based on the 3 per cent—before they can deduct the 17 per cent of their medical expenses; in other words, to get some return for an expense on necessity.

Why would we make this proposal? Yes, it is out of compassion and it is out of dignity. However, there are some figures that support the reason we should be proposing and supporting this. First, disabled seniors make less and pay more for medical expenses. The figures quoted by my hon. colleague are accurate. The average income tax return in 1991, the year for which the figures are solid, was \$25,639. That was the average income for those people who filed taxes. The average income for a disabled senior was \$23,069. That is 10 per cent less than the average income filed.

The average expense for medical deduction was \$1,580, whereas the average expense for a disabled senior was almost twice that amount, \$2,716. There is one reason we should seek compassion and consideration for disabled seniors.

The second reason is that not only is their income lower, the income is based on the average, but the median income, the income that is the most recurring, not necessarily the average, the one that is basically what most of the disabled seniors earn or make, is closer to a low income level.

I agree with the figures suggested by my hon. colleague. The last time I checked the figures of the 21,000 disabled seniors in the province of Newfoundland whom I represent, 18 per cent are from low income families.

We have a group of people who deserve compassion, dignity and to be given some more hope than the average person who is not disabled or senior who can perhaps more afford to absorb the expense.

I am very conscious that I am part of a government in which the hon. Minister of Finance is trying to scrape the barrel to find every cent he can. I think every member in this House is conscious of that no matter where we stand on the issue of the budget and how it is executed.

The fact of the matter remains that for the number of disabled seniors this would help, we are looking at a sum of less than \$3

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million. Three million dollars is a lot of money to you, Mr. Speaker, and it is a lot of money to me. What is it in the overall expenditure of things considering the target and the group of people we are looking at?

Consider that we give in the vicinity of \$5 billion to business and it says it does not really need it and does not use it well.

(1905)

There are a lot of loopholes that have been discussed in this House tonight, yesterday and before the Christmas recess. It is the subject of many recurring media reports.

Against that backdrop \$2.7 million is not a great deal of money.

I have talked about the seniors we have. I also have to remind members that of the seniors in our country, 46 per cent have some kind of a disability. Of that percentage of 46, 84 per cent live in households. In other words, they do not live in institutions where medical care, wheelchairs, hearing aids and visual aids are available to them.

Specifically, of those who live in households, 20,000—plus or 8 per cent need mobility assistance and cannot get it. Thirty-one per cent need hearing assistance and cannot get it. Ten per cent need visual assistance and cannot get it. Why?—it is not because it is not available, it is because they cannot afford it.

I would suggest if this private member's bill were passed it would certainly ease the burden on that group of Canadians which is least able to afford the expense to basically enjoy the necessities of life.

There is another statistic that I did not recall from my hon. colleague. I was also told that of the expenses that seniors who are disabled spend out of pocket, 20 per cent is for prescription drugs and non-prescription drugs. That is one-fifth of their out of pocket expenditure. That also gives some indication of the magnitude and the importance of this particular bill.

I am like most other members in this House. I have 72 seniors groups in my riding. I have visited practically all of them. I have never visited one from which I have not come away inspired; inspired by the leadership they provide their community in helping themselves, in providing activities and staying very much alive.

I also find they are a great inspiration to the younger members of the community, showing them how to live by providing examples of life as it can be lived and, perhaps more than anything, showing all the communities I represent and which other members of this House represent the whole idea of picking themselves up by their boot straps and moving together in co-operation so that the synergism of the groups and the individuals in the groups amounts to more than the sum of the separate individual members. In my riding the largest group has

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about 80 members and the smaller groups in some of the smaller communities sometimes have ten members, sometimes less.

My point is yes, dignity; yes, compassion, but also hope. This measure would indicate to the seniors that kind of compassion that Canadians from all sides of this House have for them and for their well-being.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to support Bill C-282 proposed by my colleague from Burin—St-Georges.

The main purpose of Bill C-282 is to amend the Income Tax Act in order to exempt taxpayers aged 65 and over who qualify for the disability credit from the provision that only expenses exceeding the lesser of 3 per cent of net income or \$1,614 are included in the calculation of the allowable amount.

In other words, this amendment will allow handicapped people over 65 to deduct from their income the cost of drugs and other medical expenses. This amendment changes the definition of formula symbol "C" in subsection 118.2(1) of the Income Tax Act.

The main effect of this bill will be to alleviate the disproportionate burden that medical expenses represent for handicapped seniors.

(1910)

We all know that our old people spend a larger proportion of their income on health care than other taxpayers.

Some parts of subsection 118.2(1) of the Income Tax Act in its present form give us food for thought. For instance, we know that the medical expense credit and the disability credit are designed to alleviate the tax burden of eligible people. Subsection 118.2(1) contradicts this principle by taxing eligible people for up to 3 per cent of their income spent on health care.

Subsection 118.2(1) clearly violates the tax principles currently recognized in the Income Tax Act, thus requiring handicapped people to spend more.

According to a report by the National Advisory Council on Aging, seniors are twice as likely as the Canadian population as a whole to suffer from various diseases and health problems such as arthritis, high blood pressure, heart problems and respiratory disorders. They are also the most affected by physical and mental disabilities.

Again, according to the National Advisory Council on Aging, 44 per cent of men and 47 per cent of women in that age group suffer from various health problems. Seniors should get all the attention they deserve.

When the last budget was tabled in February 1994, the Bloc Québécois denounced the fact that the tax credits available to our seniors were cut by \$500 million. The Bloc Québécois has always asked this government to restore equity. So the \$2.7

million that this bill will give back to handicapped seniors is very little compensation.

I might add that just as the federal government was cutting tax credits for seniors, we learned that the largest proportion of seniors living in poverty was found in Quebec.

Bill C-282 is aimed at restoring a tax loophole. True, Canada is facing a major financial crisis and must put its fiscal house in order. This is why it is appropriate, just a few weeks before the next budget is tabled, to mention once again that the Bloc Québécois asked for a thorough review of the tax system, so as to eliminate the loopholes used by high income earners and major corporations.

The Bloc also proposed efficient measures to reduce the deficit and control government finances without targeting the poor. These proposals, ten of them, were listed in the Bloc Québécois's minority report on the pre-budget consultations, which was tabled in December.

As the Official Opposition critic on health, it goes without saying that I look at poverty with the issue of health in mind. Poverty affects 4.2 million people in Quebec and in Canada. There are 1.2 million children who live in poverty. A large majority of single mothers, women who are single parents, and seniors live in poverty.

The link between poverty and health was clearly established in several studies. Low income people, such as seniors, are more frequently ill, use more medication and require greater medical attention. Poverty among the elderly has increased tremendously over the last several years.

According to a study conducted by Santé Québec, almost all of the 25 most common health problems in Quebec are more prevalent among low income people than among those who are better off.

To better control the general state of health of Quebecers and Canadians, and thereby control health costs, we must first work relentlessly to solve the issue of poverty. By refusing to acknowledge the link between poverty and health problems, the federal government compromises the efficiency of our health system, thereby jeopardizing the health of a large number of Quebecers and Canadians who live below the poverty level.

(1915)

If we look past the numbers and the statistics, we see real people, people who are suffering, people who are sick and are hungry, people who are waiting for the government to assume its responsibilities and to propose long-term solutions.

In conclusion, I would like to say that it has been proven without a doubt that the health of Quebecers and Canadians is closely linked to the endemic poverty that has swept across the country during the last recessions. Since it is well-known that this state of poverty, which affects too large a segment of the population that we represent, has a big impact on the cost of the

public health care system, we feel that we must urgently attack the problem at its root, which is poverty.

We should also remember that the men and women who are now seniors, only yesterday, blazed the trail and built with their own hands, their efforts and their lives, the Quebec and the Canada we live in today. Thanks to them, our society offers us a certain quality of life and certain values, because all through their lives, they worked to implant and strengthen them.

Today, these builders are taking a well-deserved rest. They have passed the torch on to us, and it is important, even our duty, to ensure that they be treated with respect during this period of rest to which they are entitled. Bill C-282 faithfully provides this respect. I have explained to you why I approve of Bill C-282.

[English]

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my comments on Bill C-282, I would like to preface my remarks by putting this in its proper context.

It was interesting when the member for St. Boniface was making comments in regular House business, he was saying that Reform members think they have haloes. No, we do not think we have haloes, not at all.

We do look at some of the actions of the government. We do look at some of the things it is doing, particularly when we look at the plight of seniors in our nation and how they will be potentially impacted positively, I might say, by Bill C-282. All of these things have to be put into context.

I draw to the attention of the House the Ottawa *Citizen* of yesterday which states: "Treasury Board president had met bitter caucus resistance to serious pension reforms", that is from the Liberals, "in December. He said he could only promise the government will fulfil vows made during the 1993 election campaign".

The issue in Bill C-282 is particularly near and dear to the people. They see the Liberals incapable of coming to a consensus on something very simple and straightforward. Return MPs' pensions to normal industry standards. What is complex about that? I do not find anything complex about it. I realize I should not imply or impugn values, so I would not use the word hypocrisy in that context.

I am also interested in some of the actions of the government. The Calgary *Sun* on the weekend noted that in the past year Ottawa has announced a \$50 million anti-smoking campaign while at the same time giving away \$400 million of taxes because it was unwilling to enforce the laws of the land as they stood. It established a new \$30 million anti-racism committee

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and will spend \$1 million to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Canadian flag.

I have had the good fortune of being able to travel offshore as a tourist from time to time. I am very proud of the Canadian flag, wear it on my apparel, have it on my suitcase. It stands for the great nation that we are. But to be putting out \$1 million at this time for a 30th anniversary when we are talking about the enactment of Bill C-282 being a potential cost of \$3 million to the treasury, the numbers just do not add up.

(1920)

While I do not see in any way the concept of Reform members feeling that they have haloes, on the other side of the coin I can see why Canadians might say to themselves: "I do not understand a party where there are such willy-nilly things all over the place that just do not seem to make any sense".

Before I begin my comments on this bill I would also like to say that I really applaud and salute the member for Burin—St. George's for his initiative on this. His intent is very laudable.

I rise today to speak to Bill C-282, an act to amend the Income Tax Act on medical expenses for disabled senior citizens. As has already been recited, the purpose of this bill is to lower the threshold for deductibles of seniors for the medical expenses tax credit. It lowers the threshold by altering the formula for determining the medical tax credit for disabled seniors by means of rewording item (c) of subsection 118.2(1) of the Income Tax Act.

Under the current law the first \$1,614 dollars, or 3 per cent of net income, is required to be spent before it can be taken into account for income tax purposes. The bill would make it possible for all eligible medical expenses from the very first dollar to, in effect, be income deductible for senior citizens.

The reason for targeting disabled seniors for redress is because their higher medical expenses and lower incomes leave them with a disproportionately high relative cost from the limited deductibility. It is estimated that the average deductible medical expense for disabled seniors is twice as high as that for all other tax filers.

The proposed amendment to the Income Tax Act could result in a potential revenue loss of approximately \$3 million. Certainly not a huge amount in light of the numbers we were just talking about; a \$400 million giveaway for taxes on cigarettes no longer collected. Actually I understand from other sources that it will be \$800 million and \$50 million for an anti-smoking campaign to counteract that. It seems to me we are getting close to a billion dollars when we add on the \$30 million plus the \$1 million I was talking about. Therefore, \$3 million certainly is not a huge amount.

On the face of it, the bill seems fair and equitable. By altering part of a formula for the purpose of allowing disabled seniors

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more deductions for medical expenses is part of horizontal equity. In my judgement the current rumours very rampant around the country that the government is going to be taxing medical and dental benefits would all be part of this whole thing.

I see the bill as an attempt to square a circle, the circle being the targeting of disadvantaged seniors inadvertently targeted by an aberration in the Income Tax Act. Therefore, the bill itself is not disturbing. As a matter of fact, I would probably as revenue critic for my party recommend that we seriously consider supporting it if it was votable.

What is disturbing is discovered by attempting to determine the effects of the bill. The bill amends subsection 118.2(1) of the Income Tax Act. In that subsection is a formula for the medical expense credit. Let us look at just this little snapshot of some of the complications in the Income Tax Act.

I have to read this. The formula is $a(b) - c - d$ where a is the appropriate percentage for the year; b is the total medical expenses of the individual; c is presently the lesser of \$1,614 and 3 per cent of the individual's income for the year; d concerns the income of dependants and spouses as claimed by the person filing for the medical expense tax credit. Part c of the formula is altered by this bill by adding (a) an amount under section 118.3. Section 118.3 deals with a tax credit for mental or physical impairment and (b) an amount under subsection 118(2), in which case C is equal to zero.

(1925)

That is really terrific. Therefore we have before us in this simple one-page bill which touches the medical expense credit, the tax credit for medical or physical impairment and the age credit, a bit of an idea why Canada's Income Tax Act is over 2,000 pages long. One can see how it got to be that big. That is a matter of philosophy. Let me describe the philosophy that leads to an ever-growing act and a constantly increasing tax burden on Canadians.

There is perceived a need or deficiency encountered by certain individuals such as, for example, mental or physical impairment. I really admire the work of the member from Newfoundland but he believes that the government is to be used as an instrument of action that enacts or changes legislation to address this need.

I certainly accept that this was done with the best of intentions by well-meaning individuals, as was the case with this bill. What happens when the government acts to address the needs of only one group of people? Other groups and individuals seek to address their problems through government action. That is how we ended up with age credits, medical expense credits, GST credits, charitable donation credits, political donation credits. The list goes on endlessly.

The Income Tax Act quickly changes from being straightforward legislation which sets rates of taxation and strictly defines taxable income into an amalgamation of credits, write-offs, grants seeking to redress or placate every group in Canadian society. This is the snowball effect where the small snowball starts at the top of the hill and picks up speed on the way down the hill.

What the Liberals fail to ignore or to understand is that the fiscal crisis we are currently in is not a result of a few years of unbalanced books. It is a result of a conscious decision in the 1960s and the 1970s of the government to involve itself in the lives of its citizens to an unprecedented degree. The involvement of the government into the lives of citizens, once begun, is very hard to slow down, to stop and even harder to reverse. What we see in this band-aid legislative proposal is that a band-aid would not stop the *Titanic* from sinking.

It further complicates an overwhelmingly loaded, confusing and complex collection system. Combined with the Liberal's blind homage to the outdated concept of big brother knows best, Canadians lack real hope of reform.

As I mentioned, if this was a votable bill, I would be recommending to my caucus that we support it for all the good reasons that will be expounded. But the real reason in my judgment for this bill to even have to be in place is the complexity of the Income Tax Act that the government refuses to do anything about.

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to spend a few moments tonight addressing the House on the benefits of Bill C-282 and to congratulate my hon. colleague from Burin—St. George's for his initiative and work since 1993 on this valuable legislation.

No doubt every member's riding, the same as mine in Cumberland—Colchester, is comprised of large numbers of senior citizens, many of whom are disabled. Most members, including myself, have parents whom this bill would potentially affect. In fact, it is the disabled parents and grandparents of this nation to which this bill is addressed and not just a change in the Income Tax Act. It is a statement of principle, namely Liberal principles, of how the government views and treats our rich resource of knowledge and wisdom, our human resource, our seniors, particularly our disabled seniors.

These are men and women who have worked hard all their lives and have jumped one of the last hurdles toward retirement only to find themselves struck with the financial burden along the way having become disabled and not able to enjoy the fruits of their life.

(1930)

Unfortunately, though, we helplessly watch as they grow older, the ravages of time and disease claiming their strength and vitality. They often require extra support from the medical community which in many cases was neither expected nor

accounted for. This can easily drain their retirement savings, if they have any, and as a result many seniors end up being the responsibility of the other spouse or some overworked social worker.

For many seniors as they go beyond the 65 year mark their medical expenses in ratio to their income rises far beyond their ability to maintain anything human in lifestyle.

It is inevitable that all people will eventually need some form of medical attention as they grow older. However, when the cost of this required attention becomes so burdensome that their overall financial freedom and quality of life are reduced, the so-called golden years become bitter tears.

Added to this indignity, the Income Tax Act in its present form drops an extra load on them by not allowing adequate concession to deduct their medical expenses.

As has been stated by my hon. colleagues, the allowable limit on the medical exemption tax credit is the lesser of either 3 per cent of net income or \$1,614. This means that the cash outlay for seniors up to this amount is taxed as part of their incomes.

This should not be. We should be giving every consideration to retired Canadians, especially those who have had the misfortune of falling prey to a disability.

Technology kept in its rightful place is a wonderful thing. It has allowed individuals to progress from caster boards to modern electric wheelchairs. Microelectronics now allow hearing impaired individuals to do away with listening horns and progress to highly advanced optometry. All of these aids cost money. One of the beneficiaries of this great technology is the disabled senior but as it presently stands many cannot afford these technology products.

A Statistics Canada survey on senior's health and limitations says that 8 per cent of disabled seniors who require mobility aids do not have them, 31 per cent who require hearing aids do not have them, 10 per cent of those requiring visual devices do not have them. The reason is financial cost.

The income of many disabled seniors is low. Sixty per cent of seniors with disabilities have an average income of less than \$10,000. Many simply do not have the money for medical prescriptions or appliances for their needs.

We must remember that these people are the ones who built this country with their ingenuity and labour, who fought our wars and who endured hardships in the darkest times. They are parents, school teachers, doctors and neighbours.

Private Members' Business

Jimmy Carter, former President of the United States, defined the quality of a nation: "A strong nation, like a strong person, can afford to be gentle, firm, thoughtful and restrained".

There have been many comments from Canadians in recent years over the faceless and heartless form of government. We have been accepting of the norm and we are tolerant. I do not wish to see this Liberal government remembered as a faceless or heartless government. We must move back toward the gentler, thoughtful and restrained days of the Government of Canada they have known before these present years. Our firmness will not be lost. We are a strong a nation. We can afford to show our elderly consideration.

What this bill is about is the cost of taxation that is too high to a particular sector of society which has a low ability to pay. This is inequitable. It is also very unfair. What this bill is about is putting fairness in the Income Tax Act for our disabled seniors. What this amendment does is allow all medical expenses to be deductible for disabled seniors.

Recently I received a letter from a couple in my riding who are in the position of many disabled seniors across this country. They wrote to me and I telephoned them to get permission to read a little of their letter:

Dear Mrs. Brushett,

I am writing on behalf of my husband and myself to express our concern for the government's proposed changes to social programs such as old age assistance. Our concern is for people like ourselves who are trying to live on fixed incomes, pay our usual living expenses, buy prescription drugs, walkers, wheelchairs and special devices, some of which we pay taxes on when purchased.

While we realize something must be done about the deficit, the answer is not with people who don't have much of a chance of helping themselves.

When we talked to Mr. and Mrs. Tower of Amherst, Nova Scotia, they said "We are getting by. We are able to make do. We do not have much left but we are able to make do".

(1935)

This bill would allow eligible medical expenses from the first dollar to be effectively income tax deductible. This bill would help people like the Towers of Amherst, Nova Scotia.

We have the opportunity as a government to exhibit strength of character and to make adjustments for those in this country who need it most. We cannot let this issue die only to be brought forward again in the future by those who may not see particularly as clearly as we do today.

Finally, I wish to re-emphasize that Bill C-282 is going to effect the people who need it most. It will not be a set of statistical data sitting on a storage shelf collecting dust. It will not help the research notes of political science students. It will

Private Members' Business

help living, breathing human beings who need help most in our communities today.

In the spirit of the words once spoken by the Right Hon. W.E. Gladstone I would affirm: "Show me the manner in which a nation cares for its elderly and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender sympathies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land and their loyalties to high ideals".

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if adopted, Bill C-282 would amend the Income Tax Act to remove, for taxpayers aged 65 and over and eligible to claim the disability credit, the requirement that only expenditures on goods and services required for medical reasons in excess of the lesser of 3 per cent of net income or \$1614 may be used in calculating the medical expenses tax credit.

We in the Bloc Québécois support this proposal, since all medical expenses would be fully deductible from the income of disabled seniors. This change in the system would be made by changing the definition of formula symbol "C" in subsection 118.2(1) of the Income Tax Act.

Disabled seniors have substantial medical expenses that are often higher than those of other tax filers. The 1993 national advisory council on seniors sketched the following picture of the health of seniors in Canada: About 80 per cent of seniors aged 65 and over said they were suffering from one or several chronic conditions, while only 20 per cent said their activities were restricted to the point where they required assistance in getting on with their daily lives—this according to statistics compiled in 1991.

It is clear that limited deductibility represents an enormous expense for disabled seniors, considering their many medical expenses and low incomes. These people pay taxes on amounts that may represent up to 3 per cent of their income, which is not in accordance with currently recognized tax principles.

The proposed amendment would only provide tax relief in terms of expenses actually incurred. It would not change the provisions on production of receipts, which are already included in the Income Tax Act. The 1993 national advisory council on seniors also described the health problems of seniors, saying that seniors aged 65 and over were twice as likely as the rest of the population to report respiratory problems, arthritis and hypertension, and three times as likely to report cardiovascular problems.

Among seniors, the percentage of mentally or physically disabled in 1987 was 47 per cent for women and 44 per cent for men. These ratios, together with the rate of multiple disabilities, tend to increase with age. During the 1991 tax year, the latest

year for which data are available, 153,490 tax filers aged 65 and over claimed the disability credit.

(1940)

Of this number, 91,050 had taxable income. This is the group for which the proposed amendment could represent an additional cost to the federal tax system. Of the 153,490 filers, 18,380 claimed medical expenses greater than the deduction limit.

Basically, if the amendment were passed, all these taxpayers could see their medical expense credit increase by three per cent of their net income, that is to say by the amount they used to have to subtract on their return.

On the other hand, this amendment affects a larger group: taxpayers with medical expenses lower than the deduction limit, often under \$200, who would also be claiming the medical expense tax credit.

The approximate figure of 91,050 disabled senior citizens with a taxable income is indicative of the potential number of claimants. If you subtract those who are already claiming the medical expense credit, the total number of persons affected is 80,000.

Combined tax expenditures in terms of basic federal income tax on both groups, the old and new medical expense credit claimants, for 1991 are about \$2.6 million, without the federal surtax which, if it were added on, would bring the grand total to about \$2.7 million. This amendment to the Income Tax Act is needed to improve the quality of life for handicapped seniors.

A Canadian Press article published in the January 26 edition of *Le Droit* quotes a just released study by the national advisory council on aging as saying that Quebec seniors are the poorest in Canada and that Quebec holds the dubious record of the highest poverty rate among people aged 65 and over in Canada. According to the council, despite some improvement in their economic situation, many seniors, especially those living alone, live in poverty. The council also found that women aged 65 and over have less money than their male counterparts, a gap which increases after 75.

Old age security is still the main source of income for seniors, especially women. People aged 65 and over get over 50 per cent of their income from government programs.

The study shows that in 1992, the percentage of people making less than \$15,000 increased with age, especially among women.

A Canadian Press article published in the January 21, 1995 edition of *Le Droit* stated that middle-class workers would not be able to spend their old age in comfort and that, according to the Canadian institute of actuaries, taxing RRSPs would have disastrous consequences. The institute feels that this measure would lower the savings rate in Canada and increase public

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expenditures in the long term, when the baby boom generation reaches retirement age.

In the future, the challenge for individuals and decision makers will be to balance the various sources of retirement income, so as to ensure that private and public retirement funds, along with personal savings, will be such that the largest possible number of Canadians and Quebecers can enjoy an adequate standard of living in their retirement years.

It is essential for the government to realize that it must not cut into social programs and thus reduce the quality of life of our seniors. Rather, it must cut into the family trusts of rich Canadian families, since assets held in these trusts are not subject to capital gains tax for several years.

(1945)

These trusts allow rich families to protect part of their family assets from generation to generation. Family trusts, which were introduced in 1972 by the Trudeau government, required a deemed disposal of assets in trust after 21 years, that is in 1993 for trusts set up before 1973.

The Bloc Quebecois has nothing against family trusts; however, it does object to their use as tax loopholes. For example, the Bloc is against the deferral, to the next generation, of the tax payable on capital gains. We also ask the government to release the figures on the value of assets held in family trusts and on the loss of tax revenue resulting from the deferral of the tax payable on capital gains.

The Income Tax Act should also be amended to prevent Canadian companies with subsidiaries abroad from using the fiscal losses of these subsidiaries to reduce their taxable income in Canada.

Bill C-282 is an act to amend the Income Tax Act so as to eliminate, for taxpayers aged 65 and over who are eligible to the credit for disability, the applicable reserve. This bill is acceptable, since disabled senior citizens are often among the poorest people in our society.

As spokesperson for Canadian associations and organizations representing seniors, I once again pledge to ensure that this social program review does not become a mere exercise to cut into programs which protect the poor, and particularly the elderly.

I have always been firmly opposed to letting the federal government reduce the deficit at the expense of our seniors, who have worked all their life and who deserve a decent standard of living.

We support this measure because all the medical costs would be deductible from the income of disabled seniors, and we feel that this amendment is essential.

[English]

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to be able to reply to Bill C-282, moved by the member for Burin—St. George's, a most beautiful peace of the rock.

I commend the hon. member for his initiative. I only wish it were a votable item. I find there are a growing number of seniors moving into my riding of Victoria—Haliburton. As the population in my area grows, this bill will be a great asset to the people in my riding. In other words, all eligible medical expenses will effectively be income deductible for disabled seniors.

Elimination of the burden borne by disabled seniors with respect to medical expenses is indeed something to be commended. Disabled adults over the age of 65 have the highest medical expenses of any group in our society.

This bill, moved by the hon. member for Burin—St. George's will provide relief for over 170,000 seniors who qualify because of low income, and the number of those in that age bracket is growing every year.

The bill targets a very deserving group in our society and is designed to address the need for fairness in the Income Tax Act. Three million dollars will be available for 170,000 poor, disabled, deserving people who are seniors. Who could question this motivation? Fifty-six per cent of the group are women.

I commend the member. I promise to bring my concerns and the concerns of other members to the minister, and work for disabled seniors not only in Victoria—Haliburton but in all of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

Pursuant to Standing Order 96, the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to once again pose a question I posed to the minister responsible for ACOA. I posed this question on December 8 and I do not believe I received a satisfactory answer. Therefore, I would like to raise it again.

When I do get the answer this time I would rather not go into the rhetoric of regional development grants. I would like to get

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an answer to the question. With all due respect I am trying to determine whether or not this Liberal government can assess what is productive in regional development grants.

I want to read the question I raised: Does this minister know the difference between a grant and a loan that is not repaid at taxpayers' expense? The reason I asked this was that when the minister was in Atlantic Canada he suggested that ACOA was no longer going to give grants, it was going to be dealing in repayable loans.

In 1992-93 ACOA wrote off \$50 million in loans. I guess what this government has to understand is that a loan that is written off is no different from a grant because the individual is really not accountable for the loans.

If ACOA is now exclusively involved in the loan business, the question I posed to the minister was relevant to the FBDB which is actually the arm that provides venture capital to business on loans.

I would like to pose the question again in a simpler way. If the government is taking grants away from ACOA and ACOA is now one of the institutions responsible for venture capital or repayable loans, why not close down ACOA and let the FBDB take its place? That would save some money on the operations of ACOA and still would provide venture capital to Atlantic Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The hon. parliamentary secretary. I would also like to mention that she is the member for Halifax.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, and I am a proud maritimer who did not go down the road.

It gives me great joy to respond to the hon. member for Fraser Valley West and to remind him that on December 7, 1994 the minister for ACOA delivered an address which charted a new course for regional development in Atlantic Canada. That was

the outlining of the Team Atlantic approach to private sector job creation and an end to grants to business.

He said that within a couple of months ACOA would be releasing the policy and hey, guess what? February 7, two months to the day later, ACOA released the new policy this afternoon to make direct assistance to business repayable. I do not know when members opposite will learn that when this minister says he is doing something he does it.

This new direction for ACOA will make 100 per cent of direct assistance to business under the action program fully repayable on a fixed timetable. This new policy was established in consultation with provincial governments and business which support complete repayability.

ACOA will continue to make unsecured risk capital available for small and medium sized enterprises, SMEs. We have heard the concerns of SMEs which stated that access to capital is the key to success. This patient capital allows business to become successful before repayment is required.

I was glad to hear that the leader of the Reform Party supports the government's direction in this matter as he stated on the CTV news in December 1994 that it was a step in the right direction. However, it is unfortunate that the member continues to spuriously attack the only agency of government devoted exclusively to the needs of Atlantic Canadian business. This must reflect some underlying attitude.

I say we should stand and congratulate the minister for the constructive solutions he is offering to the problems confronting the region. We know what the problems are. We know that ACOA, not FBDB, is the answer to those problems and we are going to get on with the job.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.54 p.m.)

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