



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 135 • NUMBER 024 • 1st SESSION • 36th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, October 30, 1997

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

All parliamentary publications are available on the
“Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire” at the following address:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 30, 1997

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[English]

DRINKING WATER MATERIALS SAFETY ACT

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-14, an act respecting the safety and effectiveness of materials that come into contact with or are used to treat water destined for human consumption.

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

* * *

CANADA SHIPPING ACT

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-15, an act to amend the Canada Shipping Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (for Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-16, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Interpretation Act (powers to arrest and enter dwellings).

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

[Translation]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (for the Minister of Industry) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-17, an Act to amend the Telecommunications Act and the Teleglobe Canada Reorganizations and Divestiture Act.

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

* * *

CUSTOMS ACT

Hon. Andy Scott (for the Minister of National Revenue) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-18, an Act to amend the Customs Act and the Criminal Code.

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

* * *

[English]

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT

Mr. Cliff Breitreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-268, an act to amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act (deduction re other income).

• (1010)

He said: Mr. Speaker, this enactment provides for the retiring allowance paid to former senators and members of Parliament of the House of Commons or of the spouse or child of a former member to be reduced by the same amount as would be clawed back from OAS on the basis of other income received personally or on a household basis commencing with 1998.

The clawback from a member's pension would apply whether or not the member was receiving OAS. However the amount to be clawed back would be calculated on the same basis as an OAS clawback.

I look forward to debating this bill in the House.

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

Supply

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.) moved:

That this House call on the government to bring forward a motion, pursuant to Standing Order 68(4)(a), to instruct a legislative committee to prepare and bring in a bill to amend those sections of the Criminal Code which deal with impaired driving in order to (a) enhance deterrence; and (b) ensure that the penalties reflect the seriousness of the offence.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am of course pleased to lead off this debate today during which we will be discussing something that can rightly be considered a national tragedy and also can be considered an epidemic in our country. I am talking about the crime of impaired driving, the senseless act of impaired driving and the consequences and shattered lives that follow when people, after drinking, choose to get in their automobiles and drive.

Today I am going to talk about the senseless and tragic crime that impaired driving really is. There is a state of mind within governments that tends to regard impaired driving as simply another social ill. We have to stop thinking about impaired driving in these terms. It is a crime. It is a 100% preventable crime. If only the government would recognize it as such and take leadership to prevent it.

I am also going to talk about how impaired driving has in fact reached epidemic proportions and how it has not been addressed in the way that it deserves by government at the federal level. Although changes and progress are being made at the provincial level, there is still a long way to go in fighting this crime.

Through this motion we are going to call on the current federal government to take a real leadership role on the issue of impaired

driving by instructing a committee to bring in a bill recommending changes in the Criminal Code. This will first serve to enhance deterrence against people who drink and then drive and second will ensure that the penalties for impaired driving truly reflect the seriousness of this crime.

Let me start out by clearly showing to this House the level that impaired driving has reached in this country because nothing substantive has been done to address it.

• (1015)

Did you know that statistically four and a half Canadians are killed by impaired drivers every day, seven days a week? As we debate this today, statistically two Canadians will be killed by impaired drivers and hundreds will be injured. Over 1,700 are people killed by impaired drivers in Canada every year.

As a matter of fact, the chances of being killed by an impaired driver are over three times greater than being murdered. As well, every day over 300 Canadians are injured in alcohol related crashes. This works out to 13 Canadians being injured every hour or about one every five minutes. In the time of my speech more than four Canadians will be injured in an alcohol related car crash. Well over 100,000 Canadians are injured every year because people drink and then choose to drive.

The tragedy of impaired driving extends far beyond the direct impact on its victims. It extends to all society. Let me quote some direct costs to our health care.

According to 1992 data, alcohol related costs accounted for more than 40% of Canada's nearly \$19 billion annual substance abuse funding. This includes \$4.1 billion in lost productivity, \$1.3 billion in law enforcement costs and over \$1.3 billion in direct health care costs simply because of alcohol related incidents.

Our courts are already backed up yet they deal with more impaired driving cases than any other kind of cases they handle. There is an incredible backlog in our courts caused by impaired drivers. There does not need to be. People do not have to get in their cars after they drink. It is a choice they make to break the law.

Unless the government does something about it, those choices will continue to be made. People will continue to drive and be convicted of impaired driving. People will continue to injure innocent victims while in that state behind the wheel. People will continue to kill innocent victims while in that state behind the wheel. That does not have to happen. We have to address it starting today.

The impact on the families and friends of victims killed by drunk drivers never stops. These people have to live the rest of their lives knowing their loved ones have been senselessly killed by a drunk driver. While it may be a private choice among individuals to consume alcohol, once that person gets behind the steering wheel of a motor vehicle it now becomes a very public matter affecting all of us.

Supply

It becomes a very personal matter to the family and friends of the victims who have to relive the tragedy that results every day of their lives when their loved ones have been killed or injured by a drunk driver.

Impaired driving must cross every party line. There can be no partisanship when we are talking about the impact of impaired driving. I hope the members of the House recognize this today as we debate it.

Impaired driving is not a political issue but an issue of crime, the most severe of all crimes when it involves the loss of human life. Unfortunately, looking at the past records of previous governments, it is clear that while they have attempted to make some small changes to try and address the problem of impaired driving, the problem remains and whatever changes that have been made are not enough.

• (1020)

For example, the Tories introduced Criminal Code amendments in 1985 to include charges of impaired driving causing bodily harm and impaired driving causing death. But in the subsequent nine years of Tory rule the problem of impaired driving continued to escalate, so those changes were not enough. More needed to be done. But it was not done and the toll climbs still today.

Another one of the tragedies that the government has not addressed is how the new Criminal Code amendment on conditional sentencing applies to impaired driving. With conditional sentences if a person drinks and drives and kills someone and can afford a sharp lawyer, that person can walk out of the court without serving one single day for that deed, for the choice that was made to get behind the wheel after consuming alcohol and choosing to drive.

Let me give an example. Last month in Victoria, B.C., an impaired driver left a single mother a paraplegic. She will stay that way for the rest of her life. The impaired driver was given a conditional sentence because it was his first offence. This impaired driver may well have been driving impaired before. He just did not happen to get caught and did not happen to get into an accident.

However, the judge determined that because it was a first time offence that he would walk free with no penalty, just some community service. While it may have been a first time offence for the driver, the fact is that a young mother's life has been shattered by this incident. While the drunk driver who hit her gets a second chance, the woman will be paralysed for her entire life. She gets no second chance, and we should remember that and judges should remember that.

I want to talk now about three areas where past governments could have made some positive change to reduce impaired driving, but unfortunately they did not.

First, the Criminal Code set a two hour time limit on obtaining a blood or breath sample from an impaired driving suspect. This

short time span has resulted in thousands of legitimate impaired driving charges being dropped because breath samples or blood samples were taken only minutes after the two hour time period ran out. Imagine that. Because the time period was missed, a person cannot be found guilty whether that person was guilty or not. This is not only a stupid law, but greatly impedes the job of police officers in obtaining evidence that would make a charge stick.

We should be more concerned about the victims of crime than we are about the people who commit those crimes. I would think that that would be a logical conclusion. But the two hour time limit on breath and blood samples does not allow that.

A second area of impaired driving concerns some changes regarding the blood alcohol concentration level. Currently the Criminal Code sets that level at .08%, which means that the percentage of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood must exceed .08%. However, extensive research, and I can back this up, in the past 30 years has found out that this limit is too high. In fact, studies show that most drivers with BAC levels at .05% are impaired. These statistics come from scientific studies that have been conducted all over the world.

By lowering the BAC limit the government will be sending a clear message to the public that there is a zero tolerance policy toward people who choose to drive after they have been drinking. It has to do this. The government has an obligation to take leadership in this matter.

• (1025)

The third area in which changes can be made concerns the sentencing for drunk drivers. This is where that mindset of a social ill comes into play. The government does not have it yet and the judges do not have it yet.

Currently, the sentencing latitude for impaired driving causing death is anywhere from zero to fourteen years. Historically, the sentences have been in the zero to three and a half year range usually. That is a fact.

There have been some sentences in the six, seven, eight year range, but they make up less than 1% of the total sentences over the last 10 years. We are not really making some big leaps and bounds in that sentencing area. These slap on the wrist sentences are simply not acceptable.

As an example, and this is where it gets personal, in my hometown of Prince George, British Columbia, less than a block away from my house, a drunk driver killed three members of the Ciccone family in 1995. The impaired driver had had numerous impaired convictions prior to that, and had been in numerous accidents. The judge gave him a sentence of three and a half years for taking the lives of a father and two young children. Three and a half years for a person who, in a drunken state, in an instant, took three lives, after this person had a record of alcohol problems and

Supply

related charges. No one can agree that the sentence reflected the severity of the crime.

Currently the average sentences for impaired driving are equivalent to sentences for defamatory libel, possessing a forged passport or dealing in counterfeit money. How in earth can we begin to justify the sentences given out for those offences with the offence of impaired driving causing death? It is beyond comprehension.

I introduced Bill C-201 in the last Parliament. That bill would have set a seven-year minimum sentence and up to a maximum of 14 years for impaired driving causing death. The bill was voted down by the Liberal government, most of the Bloc members, along with the help of the NDP. Somehow they could justify these slap on the wrist sentences for drunk drivers who kill. I do not know how, but they do.

The huge majority of Canadians are in favour of those recommendations, but the Liberal government, the Bloc and the NDP said: "No. We cannot justify that. Slap them on the wrist and turn them loose."

A national organization with more than 2.5 million supporters, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, MADD Canada, has just released a survey on Canadians' attitudes toward impaired driving. What is more important, the philosophy of some Liberal government members who cannot comprehend the seriousness of this crime, or the attitude of some Bloc members, or the attitude of the NDP members? What is more important, their philosophy toward this or the profound feeling of the Canadian people? The people come first.

More than 85% of Canadians surveyed by MADD Canada would either strongly support or support changes to the Criminal Code which would include minimum sentences for drunk drivers. That did not matter when Bill C-201 was voted down by the Liberal government. I want to thank the backbench Liberals who had the courage to support that bill. I also want to thank the two Bloc members who had the courage to support that bill. The government could not support it.

Let me mention some other MADD Canada survey results. Nearly 95% of Canadians believe anyone involved in a crash resulting in death or serious injury should be obligated by law to provide a blood sample at the request of a police officer. 95% of Canadians believe that, but the former justice minister did not believe that. This shows the average Canadian wants the two hour time limit extended or eliminated. We should tell that to the former justice minister.

• (1030)

As well, three out of four Canadians support lowering the blood alcohol content level to .05%, as has been done in other countries with huge success. Of those surveyed, 93.4% feel that lowering the BAC to this amount will make our roads safer.

Considering the survey results we can clearly see how the government is in a position to take some real leadership today. Everything is there for the government to do it. It could introduce changes which have been recommended by MADD Canada and by the Reform Party. Today is the day we can take that first step.

We support lowering the BAC to .05%. We support tougher sentences for those convicted of impaired driving. We are in favour of establishing minimum sentences and longer driving prohibitions for those convicted of impaired driving offences where injury or death result.

Reform also supports that hard core drinkers charged with offences be obligated by law to undergo mandatory rehabilitation treatment. If there is a jail sentence involved, any consideration of parole should be absolutely dependent on the convicted person successfully being rehabilitated through treatment. That is not too much to ask when we are considering the safety of our families.

Clearly it is time to stop talking about the tragic consequences of impaired driving. Clearly it is time to take action. The government can do it today. It is time to put aside all partisanship in the House and unite in one common fight against the crime of impaired driving.

Is an NDP member laughing?

An hon. member: Yes.

Mr. Dick Harris: It is time for us, including NDP members who find this funny, to clearly demonstrate a zero tolerance policy toward drunk drivers. Yes, we can do this if we want.

It is time to recognize the devastation caused by drunk drivers and demand through legislation that it come to an end. Yes, we can do that. It is time for the killing to stop.

I ask all members of the House, including NDP members who find the subject quite amusing, to recognize their responsibility, join in the fight against impaired driving and support the motion today.

Mr. Hec Clouthier (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley. It is a very contentious issue. I wholeheartedly support what he has said this morning.

Besides being a member of Parliament, in one of my other lives I am also a professional harness horse driver. It is interesting to note that we cannot get on a sulky and race a horse if our blood level count is over .04. I disagree that it should be lowered to .05. It should be lowered to at least .04.

The rationale behind the horse racing community is that we have to be careful and have a great concern for the equine flesh. I have far more concern for humans and believe .04 should be the threshold.

The hon. member spoke about lawyers getting involved. There is such a thing as democracy. If a person is charged with impaired driving they can go to court. It is their democratic right. They can have a very sharp lawyer, a Philadelphia lawyer. How would the hon. member ameliorate the situation with respect to lawyers? Would he be agreeable to some kind of mandatory sentencing?

• (1035)

It is very difficult because we are getting into the area of human rights. I agree with the thrust. I am just wondering if there is a certain component in the hon. member's motion to deal with the aspect of the lawyers getting involved and getting someone off.

Mr. Dick Harris: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his support.

The .05 is a recommendation by MADD Canada. If the government will take the initiative, show leadership and instruct the committee to go forward with the hearings, the recommendation of .05, .03 or whatever could come forward. The rationale behind it would certainly be related to the committee and may show up in the report as .04 being the recommendation. I understand what he was saying, and I certainly agree with him.

To address the second question, the problem we have in the courts today is that there is a profound initiative to try to keep people out of jail. The courts are backed up. The prisons are full. The philosophy of provincial governments, under direction from the Minister of Justice, is not to put people in jail. Therefore we find that the judges are more open to hearing suggestions of lower sentences to qualify for the conditional sentencing provisions.

We find the judges more concerned with getting into the flow of what the attorney general of the province or what the justice minister of the country is thinking about keeping people out of jail. They seem to be more open to lenient sentences.

One way to fix it is to tighten up the latitude the judges have. They have a latitude now from 0 to 14 years. That is a huge range. We find people walking out of courts every day who have been charged with serious impaired driving offences, because the judges have simply said that they will be given two years less a day with no rationale. Immediately they qualify for conditional sentencing.

In a case in my area the judge erred in his decision. When the decision came down at 3.5 years I got on to the media saying the judge was out to lunch on his sentence. I stated all the reasons why.

We also encouraged the crown to appeal the sentence and the crown did so successfully. Lo and behold all arguments the crown put forward in the appeal were the things I had said were wrong with the sentence.

Supply

As a result the court of appeal added two more years to the sentence. The fact is judges have the option of choosing to accept whatever precedent the defence lawyers are putting forward. In a majority of the cases they are choosing the precedents on the low end of the scale. We have to tighten them up and we can do it through minimum sentencing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of examining a problem such as this one is to ensure that fewer people will be victims of accidents caused by impaired drivers.

A study of the statistics would, I think, show that the problem does not lie with the need to lower the allowable blood alcohol limit. How many accidents would be avoided if the level were dropped from 0.08 to 0.07, 0.06 or 0.05?

I think that, as a general rule, the people who cause most of the automobile accidents when driving impaired are those who are way above the limit. Whether we put it at 0.05 or 0.08, generally speaking, the drivers who are killing people while impaired are those with blood alcohol levels of 0.20, 0.30 or 0.35.

So making a change of a few tenths of a point is not going to solve the problem. I do not know what my Reform colleague is thinking, but is he contemplating changes in the penalties for impaired driving? This reminds me of the problem of children playing with matches.

• (1040)

Matches are not banned because they are dangerous, but they are kept out of the way of children, as is poison in the medicine chest. And the chest should be locked to keep children out.

Could the same reasoning not be applied to a person incapable of driving a car, who does not know whether or not he should drive because he is not sober? It might be possible to attach a boot to a car for one, two or three months, because the individual drove while under the influence, even though it was only at a blood alcohol level of .08 or .07.

This deals with the immediate cause. An individual who is not sober and cannot get his hands on a wheel will harm no one. You cannot allow such a person to decide whether he should use his car, as he is incapable of making a decision.

I would like to know whether the hon. member has given this any thought. I would like him to comment on whether we should change the approach and act on the cause of the accident instead of tightening legislation and creating more criminals without resolving the problem.

Too many people have lost their licence two, three, four or five times and have not been dissuaded from using their car when they have been drinking. So, perhaps the solution does not lie here. We could discourage them by using a Denver boot, for example. A man

Supply

with his car in the driveway wearing a Denver boot can get as drunk as he likes, but he will not be able to use the car because of the boot, or some other similar device. Some way has to be found to stop him using his car. I would like my colleague's comments on that.

[English]

Mr. Dick Harris: Mr. Speaker, with regard to my colleague's questions about lowering the blood alcohol content limit, he is not correct. Many countries including Norway, France, Denmark, other European countries and some states of the U.S., have lowered it to .05 and there has been a marked decrease in the instance of impaired driving. It does work.

What causes an accident or what causes someone to be convicted of impaired driving is when they make the choice to get in a car. If ever there was a case for deterrence it is impaired driving, stronger deterrence. As a matter of fact studies have shown that the number one reason people who do not drink or do not drive when they have been drinking is that they are afraid of getting stopped by the police and being found in that state. That is the number one reason.

In answer to the member's question, stronger deterrence overall should include first offence impaired driving, second offence licence suspensions, lifetime licence suspension and automobile confiscation. We have to send a message that it will not be tolerated, and the government can do it.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I had hoped to rise in the question and answer period. However I want to make it absolutely clear that the member is quite wrong in suggesting that anybody in the NDP takes this as funny.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry that there was not time to permit the hon. member to ask a question. I am sure he had a point to make. I dare say he will get an opportunity later in today's debate to make that point on debate, which is really what this point of order is. I am sure he will get that opportunity or someone in his party will.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might have the unanimous consent of the House for 60 seconds to say what I had in mind when I made the remark. The member accused my party of not taking this matter seriously. I think the record needs to be cleared up.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there agreement the hon. member speak for the minute at this point?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Bill Blaikie: I just want to make clear that I did—

Mr. Philip Mayfield: There is not unanimous consent.

• (1045)

The Deputy Speaker: There is no consent, I am sorry. Resuming debate.

[Translation]

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Ahuntsic, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating MADD on the excellent work they are doing to draw the Canadian public's attention to the problem of drunk driving.

I want to repeat what the Minister of Justice said recently when she met with representatives from MADD. She said that she was going to raise the issue in the near future, in December, at her meeting in Montreal with all provincial justice ministers.

[English]

Parliament has the constitutional legislative authority to create criminal laws. Despite the opposition member's assertion that this government has not shown a leadership role by making changes to the Criminal Code, most recently, in the spring of this year the last Parliament passed amendments to certain drinking and driving provisions of the Criminal Code which have been introduced by this government.

On several occasions we made amendments, changes which clarified that the driving prohibition penalty starts to run only upon an offender's release from imprisonment. In my opinion that is an important change.

Parliament has also clarified that the defence can only introduce evidence of the accused's actual blood alcohol concentration that is different from his or her breath test where the evidence shows a BAC reading at or below 80.

Parliament also, despite the member's assertion, extended the period for a police officer to apply for a warrant to obtain blood in certain accident situations from two hours to four hours. Get the facts right.

As we know, each province has the constitutional legislative authority for such matters as highway traffic, driver licensing and motor vehicle registration within the province. The provinces have legislated in these areas with regard to drinking and driving. Also in the provinces, the enforcement and prosecution of Criminal Code offences has been assigned to the attorney general of each province.

Therefore in my view there are important intergovernmental consultations that should take place in order to come to a full understanding of the drinking and driving problem. There are legislative ways to further the progress that has been made to date.

The Minister of Justice, as I said earlier, will be meeting her colleagues and will be bringing up her suggestions for amendments to the Criminal Code.

The statistics on drinking and driving in relation to driver fatalities and criminal charges suggest that there have been

important changes since the early 1980s regarding drinking and driving which, incidentally, has been almost overwhelmingly a male dominated crime apparently.

The recently released results of a public opinion survey commissioned by the organization Mothers Against Drunk Driving which occurred here in Ottawa this week confirmed that progress has been made in changing public attitudes about drinking and driving behaviour.

However, notwithstanding the progress on this problem, as many members of this House are well aware, the most tragic consequences of drinking and driving remain a virulent blight on Canadian society. I agree with assertions of the hon. member about this.

[*Translation*]

The Traffic Injury Research Foundation of Canada is responsible for recording data for Transport Canada on driver deaths as a result of traffic accidents. The data come from information provided by the police and coroners and, since 1987, the data base contains data provided by all provinces and territories.

The good news is that, since 1987, the percentage of drivers with blood alcohol levels exceeding 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood is steadily declining. In 1987, drivers with blood alcohol levels over 80 represented 43% of driver deaths as a result of traffic accidents. In 1995, this figure was 35%. But this is not really good news, and I want to be clear about this. We do not want to see the level stay at 80.

The tragedy of accidents resulting in the death of drivers with blood alcohol levels over 80 does not end there. Some of these drivers are also responsible for the death of their passengers or other people not even in the car with them. Some drivers with blood alcohol levels over 80 survive the accident, but their passengers or other people not in the car are killed. It is tragic.

When injuries are taken into account, the human suffering over the years reaches staggering proportions, and intelligent people naturally feel they have to do something.

• (1050)

But the important question is this: What should we do? The causes are complex and the solutions to this serious social problem are not simple. Drunk drivers come from all walks of life, so we cannot simply adopt stiffer penalties and expect that just by doing that people will stop drinking and driving.

We have to adopt a whole package of measures, a holistic approach. For example, fines or prison terms are enough to prevent most of us from drinking and driving, but they seem to have less effect on certain persons with an alcohol problem, even if the penalties are heavier. So we feel that forcing people to follow a treatment and other measures might be more effective.

Supply

[*English*]

The Traffic Injury Research Foundation has recently released a brochure discussing the drinking and driving problem. It notes that for a drinking driver the risk of accident increases exponentially with an increase in the BAC level. I think we will all agree on that.

Not surprisingly, drivers with a very high BAC level are disproportionately responsible for fatal road crashes where alcohol is involved.

TIRF lists a number of measures that could be taken to further reduce road crash fatalities. Most of these measures relate to provincial governments. TIRF notes that many provinces have begun to implement some of the measures TIRF endorses.

One idea is to have graduated penalties that are linked to blood alcohol blood concentrations. TIRF notes that some sentencing judges already appear to do this when they render sentences in these cases.

[*Translation*]

Adding several other elements might help to better understand the problem of drunk driving. According to the Department of Justice, the Department of Transport is preparing a report on a survey done by police officers in co-operation with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. It should help us identify initiatives to assist police officers investigating crimes related to drunk driving.

In August 1997, the Department of Transport commissioned another study from the Addictions Research Foundation; it will survey the literature on the effects of various blood-alcohol levels on the ability to drive and deal with the issue of using lower blood-alcohol levels in imposing administrative penalties, including suspension of the driver's licence, or in the case of criminal penalties in certain countries. This information will likely be very useful when the legislative options will be reviewed with the provinces.

It is important to note that the Department of Transport has been involved for several years with the provinces and other partners in non-criminal type initiatives implemented under the strategy to reduce impaired driving. There is no question that measures outside criminal law have a major impact on the problem. In fact, it is through the combined efforts of governments, public and private sector institutions, families and individuals that we have been able to make progress in this area. It is most likely that initiatives based on criminal law cannot in themselves ensure further progress.

[*English*]

I take offence to the opposition member's allegation that the members of this side of the House have not had the courage to recognize this great Canadian tragedy or that the government has done nothing, as was stated. We have and will take action. The minister has already reaffirmed the government's commitment to the representatives of MADD she met with last week. I am sure all

Supply

members of the House will continue to encourage the minister and the government to take action.

I will repeat what I said earlier. We have a commitment to take action.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to what the government member had to say by way of comment about the exchange so far between the person who introduced the motion and the government. It goes back to something I had hoped to say earlier.

• (1055)

I think if we are going to call for a non-partisan debate and a non-partisan solution to this, we have to be non-partisan in our rhetoric on this topic.

Earlier when I made a remark off the record about what the member who introduced the motion had to say, it was in view of the fact that he had made a very partisan speech implying that Liberals and New Democrats and others did not care about the tragedy of drunk driving and the enormous sorrow, injury and the enormous costs to Canadian society. Then at the end of the speech, he urged us all to be non-partisan. I found that to be funny, in the tragic sense of the word. If we want to be non-partisan about this, let us admit that even though we may disagree with each other, we all care deeply about the victims of drunk driving.

I also counsel the government and everyone else who speaks in the debate in this regard. We cannot get up and call for a non-partisan debate after we have just finished hammering the hell out of the other parties for allegedly not caring about something we all obviously care about but may disagree with each other about how to deal with it.

I am inclined to be very supportive of what the Reform Party member said, but I take objection to the argumentation and the rhetoric in his speech in which he suggested that somehow the rest of us do not care about this. That is patently false and patently partisan.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for her remarks.

I do have some difficulty with those remarks. I think there is a more general problem that we as Canadians have with the subject of drinking and driving. Candidly, there is an acceptance of it and that acceptance is what we pay the price for in the alarming and tragic statistics. When we consider that in the statistics I have for 1983 to 1991, over a million people were injured and nearly 18,000 killed in that eight year period. These are wartime statistics. If people used dangerous substances or have dangerous implements or weapons, we would find some way of discouraging it. But

culturally we have allowed drinking to become quite acceptable, even on the highways.

My point is that I disagree with the member that by using statistics and the idea that the government is doing something about it curbs the edge of concern that is so necessary that we must convey not only to our fellow parliamentarians, but to the Canadian population as a whole, that drinking on the road is not acceptable.

If someone wants to drink themselves to death, that is basically their business. But on the roads they are a threat not only to life but of injury, medical costs and the destruction of the peace and welfare of our society.

As leaders of our communities we must insist that this activity of drinking and then getting in a car is totally unacceptable.

I would like to see the speeches of the government members and those on this side reflect that unacceptability, rather than hauling out statistics to say we are doing everything we can about it. The fundamental problem is the attitude of Canadians.

Ms. Eleni Bakopanos: Mr. Speaker, I do not think there was anything in my remarks to indicate that the government finds statistics acceptable. Quite the contrary. I think my remarks were made in the sense that we cannot have only one approach to this grave problem, that there has to be a holistic approach. There is a problem of alcoholism in our society. I do not think any member in the House would accept the fact that anyone should drink and drive and kill someone. I do not think any member would agree with that. Quite the contrary.

• (1100)

What we are trying to do is make sure the process that we engage in has the agreement of the provinces because ultimately the provinces will be responsible for the administration of these changes to the Criminal Code. As I said in my speech, the minister is committed to taking action. She told MADD when she met with them last week that she will raise this matter.

The Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary but the time for questions and comments has expired.

Resuming debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the motion before us today, which was tabled by the Reform Party, calls on the government to bring forward a motion to instruct a legislative committee to prepare a bill to amend those sections of the Criminal Code which deal with impaired driving in order to enhance deterrence and ensure that the penalties reflect the seriousness of the offence.

The Bloc Québécois, like all Quebeckers, recognizes the seriousness of the issue raised in the motion put forward by my colleague from the Reform Party. Driving while under the influence is a terrible scourge which must be fought efficiently. However, we must be careful not to go for sensationalism.

The Bloc Québécois supports the Reform Party's motion. We are asking that the motion be referred to a legislative committee, which would conduct a more in-depth review of the issue and the offences relating to alcohol consumption and impaired driving.

The Bloc Québécois, which is always aware of the serious problems caused by this situation, feels such legislative review should be comprehensive and not limited to stiffer sentencing. We must not look only at the issue of sentencing, but at the whole picture.

A few questions should be raised at the committee level. First and foremost, we have to ask: Is stricter enforcement of the penalties provided for in the Criminal Code absolutely necessary to ensure better deterrence among the public? This is one question we must ask ourselves.

The second question is the following: Would improving the judicial process, which, let us not forget, is a provincial jurisdiction, not be a solution? We are talking about the administration of justice here. Again, it extends far beyond a simple matter of stiffer penalties.

Another question: Is drunk driving a high enough priority with the police? We know that top officials in the police consider cracking down on impaired driving a priority. But is it also a high priority for the police officer who has to deal with impaired driving on the street?

Police officers receive more calls than they can respond to. Is it a priority for the police officer in his or her car to fight drunk driving? As I said, for some of them, traffic law enforcement is a boring and somewhat cumbersome routine, when they would prefer to see some action. In that context, this is a valid question.

We must bear in mind in dealing with this issue that those involved in law enforcement, which, I repeat, is a provincial jurisdiction, should have a say. We should also find out how they feel the fight against impaired driving could be improved. I am not convinced that merely stiffening penalties is what the police want.

• (1105)

As well, the following question must be asked: What are the reasons fewer people have been charged with impaired driving since 1986? To give you some figures, in 1996, police reported 161,805 cases relating to driving offences under the Criminal Code, which represents a decrease of 6.9% compared to 1995. As

Supply

well, there were 78,894 impaired driving charges, a 6.2% drop from 1995.

What are the reasons for that decrease? One may well wonder, but an examination of the circumstances may offer some suggestions for solutions.

Since an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, we should ask ourselves another question: Are the programs for raising public awareness and education adequate? Is there not some better way to make people more aware of the dangers of driving while impaired? Are the advertising techniques being used the right ones? Should a better program be developed for schools, youth centres and so on? This must be looked into.

In conclusion, the Bloc is in favour of this motion because it will open up debate on the question, which is very important, and the debate must go far beyond the matter of penalties. The conclusions drawn must be based on more than just some high-profile cases. Parliamentarians have a duty to examine this matter coolly and calmly.

[*English*]

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his presentation today and for indicating that he will support this motion.

He asked if we could be doing more other than making penalties stronger. The fact is that we do quite a bit of educational work in schools and in the media. Some very effective advertising is being run on a constant basis. In particular as we approach the heaviest drinking season of the year, the ads will pick up considerably in an attempt to educate people to not drink and drive.

In spite of all we are doing now, the number of impaired drivers is still rising. The number of accidents and deaths is still rising.

What we are saying in the motion is that to complement what is being done in the education area, we have to consider the effect that stronger deterrents will have. As I stated earlier, if ever there was a case for deterrence, impaired driving is the case. Surveys have shown that the reason some people stop drinking and driving is because they fear being stopped by the police and being charged.

The reason some people continue to drink and drive is because they do not fear the charges. The charges are too light. They have no fear of having licence suspensions because they will drive anyway and a strong deterrent does not exist when they are picked up for driving under suspension.

Deterrence has a huge role to play. If we are going to examine the Criminal Code we must be prepared to examine the effect increased deterrence will have, as well as continuing on with the educational side of it and the treatment side of it.

Supply

I am a big advocate of mandatory treatment. When someone is imprisoned for a substance abuse problem whether it be alcohol or drugs, the judge must have the authority to impose mandatory treatment.

I hope I have answered my colleague's questions.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments.

He spoke of mandatory treatment. It is indeed one of the things we should perhaps be looking at. However, this is very much along the same lines as what I was saying, which is that we will have to look beyond the penalty. There is the issue of rehabilitation, but, as my colleague so relevantly pointed out, there is also the issue of education. He mentioned advertising, etc.

Some campaigns have certainly been effective, but is there no way to make them more so? This warrants consideration. Could prevention campaigns in schools and other institutions be made more effective? We could look at that too.

I imagine someone in a bar, having a drink. Is this person going to decide not to have a beer, because the fine has gone from \$300 to \$500? I do not know. As I said earlier to my colleague, it is worth having a look at. This is why we support this motion. Let us have a look at the problem, but in a broader context, beyond the matter of stricter penalties.

[*English*]

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I guess I can relate to this issue perhaps a little more than some of the others that are here, as my mother and father on their 50th wedding anniversary were hit by two young men who were drunk. My mother never walked alone again after that. She had 13 pins put in her side. My dad was hurt as well. So I can relate to what is happening.

As well, Mr. Speaker, you will see in the gallery today a senator who has also had two of her immediate family killed right here in Ottawa.

I want to say to the hon. member that we support this motion, but I want to say that there has to be an educational process. There also has to be a legislative change whereby those who sell liquor to young people recognize that it is a serious offence. We have to change the penalty for that.

We support the member and will work with him. I can relate to this probably more than anyone else, with the exception of the senator in the gallery.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Marceau: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that I sympathize with the member, who was closely affected by

someone who committed a crime by driving under the influence of alcohol. I sympathize with everyone who is a victim of such a crime. This is why we are saying a debate like this warrants very close examination.

[*English*]

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know I speak on behalf of my constituents when I stand here today to address the issue of drunk driving.

I would like to begin by commending the work of one of my constituents, Geraldine Dedrick, who is president of Mothers Against Drunk Driving for the Halifax region. Geraldine Dedrick herself faced the unimaginable tragedy of losing a son due to an accident related to drunk driving. I am honoured to stand here to support her efforts and those of countless others who are working today so that people tomorrow are spared this tragedy.

This is an important issue in the province of Nova Scotia. The current president of Mothers Against Drunk Driving is Susan MacAskill from Windsor in the Annapolis Valley of our province. I commend her on her work.

Every single day, people living in the riding of Halifax West face a very real and possibly fatal threat. Every day in my riding there are people concerned about someone they know drinking and driving. It is the same throughout the province of Nova Scotia and throughout the land.

Since the Criminal Code was amended to deal with persons who drink and drive, it has been estimated that 20,400 Canadians have died at the hands of those who choose to drink and drive. At the same time up to 1.5 million Canadians have been injured during the timespan over ten years since these laws were enacted. The death and casualty numbers read like those of war. The government has to tools at hand to reduce this carnage.

• (1115)

I and my colleagues of the New Democratic Party support the review and enactment of legislative measures to enhance deterrents and ensure that we use the tool of legislation to do what we can to put in place laws to reduce these accidents.

We are not talking about people who have sacrificed their lives for our country or for any higher ideal. We are talking about people who have had their lives or their good health ended because someone has chosen to drink too much, thus turning their vehicle into a terrible weapon out of control.

Even during this speech it is likely that a Canadian will lose his or her life due to drunk driving. An average of more than one Canadian every five minutes is injured due to drunk driving. An average of one Canadian is killed every six hours. This is simply obscene.

Supply

While clearly the loss of life and limb is paramount, let us not ignore the incredible toll this takes on our health care system and the ripple effect of other costs to the taxpayer. This is not only an issue of death and injury, it is an issue of responsibility in so many ways.

Clearly the responsibility lies at many levels. There is the level of the individual. I have chosen not to drink at all. I know several have made this choice. I know many other responsible social drinkers who would never climb into a vehicle with anywhere near the .08 alcohol level.

Then there are others who are social drinkers who occasionally make the wrong choice about drinking and driving. This wrong choice is estimated to be responsible for a death every single day in this country. Then there are the repeat offenders, many with serious drinking problems who cause much of the carnage.

Then there is the responsibility of the community. More and more communities are banding and working together to change the laws. It is largely due to their effort that the backward social philosophy of one for the road is increasingly becoming a thing of the past.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving and many other organizations have become very sophisticated and involved and have done much of our homework. This enables us, as legislators, to help address the problems. There are also many small business owners who serve alcohol who are undertaking initiatives in their businesses to curb irresponsible drinking and to reduce the incidents of drinking and driving. I commend their efforts.

It is foolish to think that the entire problem can be legislated away. It is no more than criminal not to make every change we can as Parliamentarians to address the loss of life and health through drunk driving accidents.

The government should have no fear of addressing this issue if it is concerned about the polls. Nine out of every ten Canadians believe this is a problem for the government to address. Almost three of every four Canadians support lowering the blood alcohol concentration level from .08 to .05. We could perhaps go lower, as has been suggested by the hon. member opposite.

We would not be breaking any new ground. Many countries are ahead of us. Australia, Belgium, Finland, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and France all have lowered their legal levels to .05. Some provincial governments have taken the lead on this issue. Newfoundland has implemented a 24 hour license suspension with a \$100 license reinstatement charge if a person's level is over .05.

I know there is concern among my constituents of Halifax West that there should be the capacity, under provincial legislation in Nova Scotia, to confiscate cars involved in these offences.

Let us explore in committee the possibility of automatically requesting from drivers breath and/or blood samples in a crash resulting in serious injury or death. Let us review the current two hour presumption limit to obtain a breath or blood sample. Let us review every aspect within our federal jurisdiction to do our part to reduce impaired driving.

Let us not be afraid to examine the criminal code to expand the reasonable or probable grounds for which law enforcement officers can investigate crash scenes that involve death or serious injury.

I know one of the big concerns in my riding of Halifax West is the extent to which we are able to determine the role alcohol plays in accidents causing death. Let us look at ways to ensure that we know if alcohol has played part in someone's death or injury due to a traffic accident.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving's statement of beliefs include the phrase: "While an individual's decision to consume alcohol is a private matter, driving after consuming alcohol or other drugs is a public matter".

• (1120)

I would now like to comment briefly on the impact that has been mentioned with respect to friends and families, the impact that one feels over the loss of a loved one.

We need not lose someone through drunk driving to realize the pain and suffering people go through when they lose a loved one. I lost a nephew, age 8, through a serious car accident. There was no alcohol involved but I still remember the pain of that accident. This young fellow knew I was doing karate and he asked me to break a board for him one day. He came up with all these big boards, 2x4s, and wanted me to break them. At that time I said I would do that for him a little later on. That later on never came because his life was cut short by a serious car accident. Add to that the pain and suffering one feels when the car accident is unnecessary because someone has chosen to drink and drive.

I would say in response to the comments by hon. member who introduced the bill that the NDP is not serious about this issue, we are serious about this issue. We do take these matters seriously. We do not find them funny. We know the importance of having this matter adequately dealt with. It is for this reason that we rise in support of his bill. Let us take action now to resolve this issue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech by my NDP colleague.

I was particularly struck by one thing he said. I do not want to stir up bad memories, but I think that, in this motion that we are

Supply

supporting as a party, there is a lot of talk about statistics and the dead. Since the member mentioned having lost an eight-year-old nephew, I would like to hear what he has to say about the victims other than those who are killed by drunk drivers. Not that this makes things any better, but I would like to hear his views.

If this motion is passed in the House and referred to a parliamentary committee, I would like the committee to hear from the less immediate victims, the families, who survive these accidents with major psychological trauma, and those who survive with physical injuries. I would therefore like to know whether the member thinks it important that the parliamentary committee hear from less immediate victims of accidents caused by drunk drivers.

Mr. Gordon Earle: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that my French is not good enough to reply to my colleague in that language. I will speak in English if I may.

[English]

I appreciate the question because it is a very serious question. We must remember that not only are the victims the ones who experience the loss but there are also victims on the other side, the families and friends of those who have caused the accident who suffer as well. They have great concerns about a friend or a loved one's having caused such carnage.

The best we can do in those situations is to try to band together and lend the support that we as human beings can give to each other, recognizing that it is too late after the incident happens to lament and say if we had only done this or that. We have to move forward from that situation and try to find strength from our fellow human beings and try to deal with the problem that exists. We should take every step we can to reduce this carnage by taking measures to deal with the issue that brought the tragic situation about.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a comment the hon. member for Halifax West may want to comment on or maybe not because it is not something that he touched on in his speech. I have done some thinking about this. I, too, and my family have been touched by this.

• (1125)

One of things we need to consider and which I do not hear often considered in debates like this is to go beyond all the things we are talking about here today, all of which are important, and ask if we cannot somehow rearrange our world so that people are less dependent on automobiles. We have designed entire cities and entire ways of life that raise temptation, and people are to be condemned for submitting to this temptation. We want to do everything we can to deter people from acting in certain ways.

On the other hand, one of the things we also need to consider is the way in which we have organized our entire society around the automobile and thereby enhanced the danger. That is one of the things that a comprehensive long term strategy might include. If we were able in the long term to reorganize our cities and perhaps even reorganize our laws with respect to how large drinking establishments have to be and where they have to be located, et cetera, we could in that way also seek to reduce the number of people on the highways in a state they should not be in.

Mr. Gordon Earle: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague because he has raised a very important issue. I think it is true that we have not only arranged our lives around the automobile but we have arranged the automobile so that we try to have more and more powerful automobiles, ones that go faster and ones that are attractive to young people. There was a very serious accident in the Halifax-Dartmouth area that claimed the lives of a couple of young people. The young person driving had this big sports car that almost got out of control because it was so powerful. It was a situation that caused a lot of tragedy to the people involved.

I think we have to refocus our lives, as my hon. colleague has mentioned, in a way that we can minimize those situations and put more focus on the true value of trying to live together and work together harmoniously.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is with some regret that I rise in this House to speak on this issue. As has been indicated by many members already, there are very few Canadians who are not touched in some way directly or indirectly by the issue of drunk driving. The laws that we as members of Parliament examine and the opportunity that we have in this House to affect and to address problems of a preventive nature is something that we have to take very seriously.

There have been many statistics quoted within this House, financial, economic, but the emotional impact I think is something that is very difficult to quantify. This very day we know as a result of a survey released last week by Mothers Against Drug Driving that between four and five people will die somewhere in Canada, and that more than 300 people will be injured as a result of alcohol related crashes, and again tomorrow and the day after. These are shocking statistics and ones that made an immediate impression on me and I am sure all Canadians when this was pointed out so poignantly at the press conference held by Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

A further statistic to quantify this number is that there were over 1,700 Canadians killed last year, and between the years 1983 and 1991, 1.1 million. Impaired drivers caused over half of Canada's fatalities in 1995, that number being 3,300. In fact, it is very clear that alcohol significantly increases the risk of a motor vehicle crash any time a person gets behind the wheel regardless of the level of

Supply

impairment. It certainly increases the severity of an accident when a person is impaired and operating a motor vehicle on the highway.

Canadians witness far too many tragedies in this country on a daily basis. This is one area where these tragedies can be prevented and can at least be lowered in terms of their numbers. It would be naive for me or any member of the House to suggest that this problem would ever be completely eradicated, unfortunately. However, it is certainly incumbent on members of the House, people in the law enforcement society and all Canadians to do everything in our power to address this most serious problem.

• (1130)

At the news conference which I mentioned earlier in my remarks, Mothers Against Drunk Driving indicated in its survey that 80% of Canadians support the toughening of the Criminal Code as it applies to this issue. Again, this is an issue that spans all partisan comment. It is clear, simply from the comments today in the House, that there is unanimous sentiment that we address this and do so quickly. I certainly hope that the government is sincere in its support of this issue. We will soon find out when the motion is put to a vote.

I want to indicate the support of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada for the motion that has been tabled. I have listened very carefully to the comments of my friends in the opposition as well as those of the government. It would appear that there is a unified front.

I want to refer again briefly to the results of the survey which indicated that 94% of Canadians believe that impaired driving is a problem that the government should address. Three of every four Canadians believe that the federal and provincial governments are not doing enough at the present time to address the problem.

In expressing that sentiment, Canadians have said that they have a very low tolerance for those who choose to drink and drive. With a clear majority of Canadians of that right mind, I would suggest that some of the proposals which have been put forward by Mothers Against Drunk Driving have to be embraced by the government. Since a clear majority of Canadians indicated that they support the lowering of the blood alcohol level as it applies to the Criminal Code, it is something the government should certainly take action on.

Eighty-four per cent of Canadians also support changes to the Criminal Code that would include a minimum jail sentence should a driver be convicted of an impaired driving offence that caused death. I would go further and include an offence that caused injury.

It is painfully clear that too many Canadians are losing their lives and too many Canadians are being seriously injured because

the laws in this country, as they exist, have little teeth and do not go far enough to act as a deterrent. However, it goes further than that.

More can be done, as has been demonstrated by Mothers Against Drunk Driving and other groups throughout the country that, without adequate resources, have gone forward and tried to educate the public. The younger generation will have the opportunity to see that these very frightening and staggering statistics are lowered. Attitudes are changing and that has to be encouraging to all present and to interest groups.

The impact of impaired driving touches us all in a very significant and real way. The time is here and now to do everything within our power to address the issue.

The Minister of Justice indicated that she is waiting for a report to be tabled from the transportation department, as well as for a meeting with provincial counterparts. I would reiterate that neither the Ministry of Transport nor the provincial counterparts have the ability to amend the Criminal Code.

It was 12 months ago that the Mothers Against Drunk Driving first met with the justice department. Since that time nothing has changed other than the fact that the statistics have increased and that more people have lost their lives or been seriously injured on Canadian highways. I indict the government. It bears responsibility for those numbers.

Suggestions have been made that by changing the Criminal Code and the justice system that an immediate impact would be felt. I concur with that. The suggestions that have been made will be given further discussion at the justice committee level.

• (1135)

With respect to the motion that has been tabled, keeping in mind my commentary on the fact that this is a non-partisan issue, I hope that the Reform Party and other members of the House would support any initiative that would see this issue addressed, whether it be at the committee level or a simultaneous attempt to bring legislation in through the Senate by either the government or the opposition party, the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. I would hope that the Reform Party in particular would support us in that effort.

There has been mention by my friend in the New Democratic Party that Canadian law is presently out of sync with progressive countries such as Australia, Belgium, France, Portugal, Finland and others. This is something that we have to keep in mind. We live in a global community and we must look to other countries to see how they address the problem. They have taken the initiative by lowering the blood alcohol concentration to less than 80 milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood.

Supply

Other specific references to changes that could be made include a review of the code with respect to reasonable and probable grounds that police officers must follow in the investigation of crash sites involving death and serious bodily harm. Police officers on a daily basis encounter this situation and are charged with the important task of responding and holding people accountable for their actions. Giving them the ability to deal with this in a more effective way with respect to the law's interpretation of reasonable and probable grounds I suggest would go further.

With respect to attitudes as they apply to impaired driving, perhaps a change to the language used in the Criminal Code designating it as vehicular homicide would help to emphasize the seriousness of a charge. Creating standards that would enact a victim's bill of rights would certainly help to include participation of victims at the trial level and would give them more support and more input into what was happening in the aftermath and the task of trying to deal with the problem and putting their lives back together.

This is why we support a fundamental standard for a victim's bill of rights that would include not only impaired driving matters but all matters. It is high time we recognized the needs of victims within our justice system and I would support initiatives in that area as well.

I know my time is limited. I put my support forward on the floor. Members should come together without partisan politics and create new legislation that will contribute to the saving of lives. Introducing this issue at various levels will hopefully do that. We owe it to the memories of those killed on the highways as well as the safety of all Canadians to ensure that when Mothers Against Drunk Driving come to Parliament Hill next year, Parliament will have taken meaningful action.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments. I thought some of his suggestions were on the mark, particularly in changing some of the language we use in talking about this serious offence.

He quoted some statistics. I have the same statistics in my pile of papers too. Many Canadians are in favour of the government doing something about this yet the sad part is the numbers are still rising.

In our role in providing leadership it is necessary in using the blunt instrument of legislation to demonstrate that this is not acceptable. It may be that this blunt instrument is a little difficult to understand by such gentle natured people as Canadians. Until families begin to talk about the seriousness of drinking and driving and encouraging their own members not to do that, it is going to be the government against somebody else. It is when Canadians themselves are involved in this fight that we will begin to win it.

I grew up in an era when a few drinks to get you home was a standard thing for many people. It resulted in three members of my

high school graduating class being full blown alcoholics by the time they graduated.

● (1140)

I am not getting into the whole drinking problem but this relates to the driving part of it. Once we become insensitive to the drinking, then the driving follows along.

I want to thank the member for his comments and to encourage other members to think of this as a holistic matter in which all of us are involved, not just the government passing a law.

This is probably the blunt instrument that may hold up the sign to say "We intend to take this seriously but we expect Canadians to understand and begin to take this internally into their own lives".

Mr. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I will just respond briefly and thank the hon. member for his comments.

Speaking of blunt instruments, I would suggest that whether it is a vehicle or legislation, the person who is driving the instrument and their mindset and level of impairment that will often affect the result.

I agree with the comment that there is a time and a place for all of us to put our efforts together and address this most serious problem. I would suggest that the time is here. It has been here for some time. I encourage all members to support this motion and work together at the committee level and throughout the country to see that we bring these numbers down and hopefully have a significant impact in the very near future.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have listened this morning to all members from all parties. We are about to hear again from a member of the Reform Party, but as the hon. member from the Progressive Conservative Party has stated, we must throw the politics away.

I am asking that there be something in the educational system to assist young people. They are responsible young people today. If they had those stats showing the negative impact of drinking and driving I am sure that they would work among themselves to change things around.

In today's society the word "cool" is a big thing. For young people in high school it is a cool thing to go to the pub. It is a cool thing to be drinking. No one seems to ask anyone any more "Are you 18 years of age? How old are you?" I have seen young people in the high schools in my own city with cases of beer and they are under age.

The penalty for selling liquor to underaged people has to be increased. But these young people have to be educated also. I say to our House leader and to all of those who are here, please let us do something for them as well and help them out.

They do not want to hurt people, like what happened to my parents, what happened to other people as well. They do not want to do that. Let us help them.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the motion. Surely this goes beyond politics. This is something that we all have to do something about.

We have been talking about how important it is for us to finally do something for generations. We have to make sure that action is taken. I am not here to criticize the government and say that it has not done anything over the years because there have been changes made. However, we are a long way from making sure that this problem is addressed.

My colleague from Cariboo—Chilcotin earlier said that there seems to be an acceptance of drinking and driving these days and sad to say that is probably quite true.

In fact, yesterday morning when I woke up here in Ottawa to early morning news on one of the stations, before, here is what the joke of the morning was. A bar emptied out and everyone came out to the parking lots. This guy staggered toward his car, tried half a dozen vehicles on his way over to his own vehicle. Of course the police car was sitting there watching all this. All the other cars left the parking lot at the bar.

The policeman went over to this fellow who was staggering around trying to get into his car. The police said to him “I’d like to give you a test right now. I’m pretty worried about you”. The guy laughed and said “No. I’m sober. I am the designated decoy tonight at the bar so everyone else could get home”.

• (1145)

This is not funny. These are the kinds of things that have been heard on radio programs within the last 48 hours. It is as if it is some kind of a big joke and all the other guys from the bar were allowed to drive home drunk.

That is absolutely unacceptable. Until there is a change and people do not think this kind of stuff is funny any more we will never accomplish anything. We can certainly set an example here in parliament, but when we hear that kind of stuff we wonder what is the use. We get discouraged, yet we need to be vigilant.

We are asking for changes to the Criminal Code that enhance deterrents and ensure that penalties reflect the seriousness of the offence. Surely we are all agreed in the House that this is a very serious offence. We must ensure something is done about it and we do not just ream off piles of statistics and say that we really are doing well. Frankly all of us should be ashamed. Maybe the problem is better than it was, but it is certainly not as good as it ought to be and should be very soon.

Supply

We need to realize that for the actions we commit there must be consequences. We teach that to our children when they are young. We teach in our classrooms that if one does something there will be consequences. It seems to me for drunk driving the consequences many times are just thrown out the window.

We need to realize that we are personally responsible for our behaviour and our actions. That is a basic tenet with which I believe all of us agree. As I said, we teach it. However when it comes to impaired driving we can be cute and get off in the courts or have someone who has a reputation as a hot-shot lawyer get the charges dropped. Do they think they are beating the system? I am not sure. To me it is pretty sad.

Many times drunk drivers have not had to live up to the principle of real life, the if-then causal effect: if I do something I had better be prepared to pay the price. I have seen all too many times when that simply does not happen.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving, People Against Impaired Driving and other excellent groups have done tremendous work. What is the admission to groups like these? It is sad to say but many of them have been victimized. What a way to get into a particular group. What a tragedy. The pain is still fresh for these people. They have experienced the loss of a loved one because of drunk driving. What a way to earn one’s way into a group. It is tragic.

We cannot kill people. The Criminal Code says we cannot go around killing people. Why is it that people are let off the hook or given a conditional sentence when they are behind the wheel of a car and in an impaired state? It seems like they have crossed a threshold which makes it okay. We cannot kill but there are times when we can kill with a car and the consequences are not quite so painful.

I speak from experience. Groups like Mothers Against Drunk Drivers and People Against Impaired Driving are very important. Years ago when I was small I lived in a home that was afflicted with alcoholism. I could have started a group when I was six, seven or eight called KADD, kids against drunk drivers. That was before many of these groups were organized.

I know how painful it is to live with alcoholism, how terrified you are when in bed at night and the phone rings and you are not sure what the phone call will be about.

My father has been sober for over 20 years. I rejoice in that. It is exciting to have somebody back who was in the clutches or grips of alcoholism. My heart goes out to people who are suffering with their loved ones. I am grateful for every day that my father is sober. He drives sober and I am pretty excited about that.

I remember going for car rides when I was a kid with somebody who was impaired. I tried to get out of it but what can you say when you are six or seven years old. You go for the car ride because that

Supply

is what kids are supposed to do. They are supposed to go with their parents when they are told.

I will never forget turning left in front of oncoming traffic and screaming "That was too close. Please don't do that". He would turn around and say "Is that close enough for you? Let's do it again" and go back to the very same corner.

It was insanity. Although my father was not exactly sure of what he was doing at the time because of the state he was in, it was criminal behaviour. We need to recognize it as such. People in that condition need to pay the consequences.

I talked earlier about late night phone calls. The one I remember most clearly was a call that came in the middle of the night. The police said to my mother "Your husband was out drinking. He was going across the Burrard Street Bridge and a young woman on her bicycle has been hit". I cannot remember exactly how old I was but we got that call when I was in grade 1 or grade 2. Thank God that somehow her bicycle got tangled in the railing of the bridge and she did not go over into False Creek. She lived, and I am grateful for that.

• (1150)

How many people do not live? One phone call in the middle of the night can change one's life forever. Obviously we have the most amount of sympathy for the victims but what about the kids of the drunk drivers? That affected my life forever.

I am 45 years old. I have never had a drink because somehow in my little six or seven year old mind I realized the potential for this was far too terrifying. I do not want to go on a rant about this. I know there is such a thing as responsible drinking, but I am here to talk about not just the economic costs of impaired driving but about the real human costs, the emotional costs referred to earlier, the incredible pain and the scars left with somebody forever. They do not just get over it, obviously.

Will lowering the blood alcohol content from .08 to .05 help? Sure, it will help, but is it not far better to say the deterrent possibility is far more important and maybe I better make the choice that I will not drive because I have had too much to drink? Why let ourselves get into the position where we have to go for a blood alcohol test? Is it not far wiser to make a difference in people's lives and say not to doing it?

We are encouraging young people to think ahead all the time. That is what we need to encourage them with more than anything else.

I believe in zero tolerance. If you want to call me intolerant, I guess you can, but the best and safest way to deal with drinking and driving is zero tolerance: if you blew over, if you did this, if you have been charged and if you have been convicted, we will not be tolerant.

Governments should say they believe in zero tolerance and will not let people beat the system. They should not let them try to get away with something or to brag to their friends at the bar or tell jokes on the radio station in the morning: "Ha, I beat that charge. Look at me".

What about the victims? What about the mothers? What about the daughters? What about the sisters and brothers and all the people whose lives are affected? There is a huge pool of people's hearts and lives that are affected by these kinds of tragedies.

Some say if you get caught once maybe that will scare you into behaving straight. I am sad to say the statistics do not agree. This speech is not about rhyming off statistics, but let me just give one. Ontario is not a whole lot different than any other province in the country. It is bigger but I am sure the percentages are the same. Some 65% of all driving suspensions were given to drivers who had been suspended at least once.

What does that say about a deterrent? What is happening in the country right now? It means sweet nothing. If I know I can beat the system once, hey, I have a chance to do it again. We need to make sure that people are literally scared straight.

I spent some time on a tour at the Edmonton maximum institution a couple of springs ago as a member of Parliament. I will never forget the sound of that gate going across and going thunk and locking behind me. If I had any criminal tendencies in me, just the sound of that gate shutting behind me would have scared me straight. If I were a teenager or someone involved in petty crime that would be deterrent enough for me. I did not want to be in there without the nice guy beside me who had the key to let me back out.

There should be a deterrent for young people, because they fall into the category of those most affected, and for those who are older and say they have beat it for 27 years and there is no chance they will get caught now. Let us make sure the deterrent is strong enough so that we will not see repeat offenders time and time again. Let us make sure that when we talk about zero tolerance we act on zero tolerance and that people really will be scared straight. I think that is what it takes.

When people realize the terror of the victims, the little kid lying in bed at home wondering when the phone will ring and who will be on the other end of it, it will scare the whole nation straight. We had better do something about it and really make a difference.

• (1155)

I appeal to government and all opposition party members not to just talk about it, send it off to some little committee and say we have in effect passed this item today. Let us do it, do it, do it: participation.

Supply

I am thrilled by what I think I am hearing from both sides of the House today. This might be the Parliament to really do something about saving lives.

Let us scare straight anybody who thinks about having another couple of drinks and trying to sneak home without getting caught by the police. It is our responsibility. We are obligated to do it.

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on her presentation. I support the intent and essence of this question. When the protection of human life is involved we have to do everything we can.

Let me just add my observations. When an issue like this one is present in society we have to recognize at all times it is not a simple problem. Failing to understand that could lead us to a wrong approach in the total management of the issue.

Earlier I heard the member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley say that changes in the past had happened. Yet we continue to see ongoing problems. I agree with him but to conclude we therefore only need changes to the Criminal Code aspect of the approach may be seriously flawed. It may blind our eyes to another approach which can be equally as effective, if not more.

I listened to the debate. The member told us about the tragic picture of victims. We all share the sentiments of that loss or tragedy.

I am raising a question in all sincerity. Maybe we should pursue a public education approach more aggressively. Painting a tragic picture of victims appeals to the hearts of those tempted not to drink, seeing the tragedy of the loss of human lives rather than Criminal Code amendments alone.

I raise this issue to say that we should not blind ourselves to an integrated approach. I am pleased the Minister of Justice and the government have assured us that the issue has already been raised with provincial counterparts. I would like the Reform Party to support the government on this initiative as I support the intent of the motion.

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say thanks. I appreciate the commitment from government that something will be done.

I do not think there was anything in my remarks or in anyone else's remarks from either side of the House that tossed it off as a simple problem. We understand the complexities of alcoholism. There is nothing simple about it. I do not believe there is anything simply about understanding the effects of impaired driving. I do not think anyone intimated that this morning.

It is certainly not simple, but to dismiss it as complex and say there are many things we have to work on is partly true. It is very complex, but we should not just have changes to the Criminal

Code. It is a heck of a first step. That is what we are asking for today.

When the member talks about public education I agree with it. As a high school teacher I saw some of the gory videos. They do a good job but only to a point. That falls under the category we already have here as deterrents.

Public education programs have been going on for years including the videos that young people see. People receive licence suspensions, have to go through rehab programs and watch the videos. They fall under what is already proposed here in terms of deterrents. We have dealt with that. There is no way we are trying to address it as a simple problem. There are all kinds of deterrents and that is just one of them.

We do not just want to make changes to the Criminal Code. This is all encompassing. When the committee has a chance to look at it some excellent changes will be made.

• (1200)

I stand in my place today saying that I agree that it certainly is not a simple problem. The public education system is just one part of deterrence.

Another thing which would be an excellent deterrent is to spend a night in jail if there is a problem and if somebody is charged or something like that. Boy, I tell you, if I were 16, 18 or 24 years old, and I can relate my experience as an MP and having gone into a prison and having worked with young people for years. I know its effect is very sobering in all senses of that word. Some of these deterrents might make someone say "I better think about this".

We cannot just slap something into the Criminal Code because, it is sad to say, many hot shot lawyers are able to work their way around the Criminal Code. It needs to be deeper than that so that many people do not get into this situation. That is what deterrents are all about. They are in our motion to make sure that people do not get themselves into the situation in the first place.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I lend my voice to the member opposite in congratulating her with respect to her passionate and very personal account of her experience as it relates to this issue.

She speaks of deterrents both general and specific I assume. I am interested to hear her comments as they relate to the concept of having an alternative when a person has gone through the due process and has been found guilty in a court of law.

With respect to sentencing, what if judges were to have discretion to impose an alternative to jail giving that person the opportunity to attend a treatment program? We all know that there are problem drinkers, that there are alcoholics who simply cannot get off the booze. Unfortunately there are also those in the system that have the attitude that they do not want to attend a treatment program. If that discretion were there, would the member be supportive of it? Similarly, would Reformers support an initiative

Supply

aimed at addressing the problem in the same way if it were introduced in the Senate of Canada?

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, before I get to the specifics of the question, I see a pretty frightening pattern. The PC members are always talking about things being initiated in the Senate. We have been talking with the government about initiating bills in the Senate. I am not sure if I see some sort of pattern developing here in that the PCs have a large representation in the Senate and they are going to start trying that process as well.

I am in favour of anybody who can do anything to help solve the problem. As the legitimately elected people in the House of Commons who have the mandate and authority to be here, it is wise that things go through this House. If senators want to agree with that, or if there is something particular they think they need to bring in, that is fine. But let us not politicize the Senate any more than it already is.

Speaking about sentencing, deterrents and alternatives, they already have it in the justice system and they do not seem to be working. Somebody says "Well, I will just do my three hours of watching these videos" and stuff like that. The point is to deter them before they are in there. We can look at all kinds of alternative sentencing, but do not let them get to that point. Once we start wiggling around within the justice system, the member knows all the things that can happen and all the alternatives that can happen.

His point is that we already have that and it simply is not working. It needs to go beyond that. Let us catch them when they are younger. Let us show them that they can be scared straight before they even start. It seems a whole lot wiser to me. I am sure everyone would agree that if we can catch them young, we can catch them well.

Mr. Hec Clouthier (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to commend the hon. member for Edmonton North for her very loquacious remarks. It is rather regrettable that the hon. member had to suffer the trauma when she was very young. I know of what she speaks. I do have a great deal of empathy for her.

• (1205)

I would like to ask the hon. member for Edmonton North to elucidate on zero tolerance. I know that it is very difficult because when lawyers get involved and if you do have the money so to speak you can beat the charges, but I would like her to elaborate on the zero tolerance issue please.

Miss Deborah Grey: Mr. Speaker, not just technically or legally but this Parliament because we are in charge of the Criminal Code must make sure that we send out the signal loudly and clearly that if someone blows over .08 as it is now, then that is the way it is. It is not a good thing nor is it suggestible to try and work through the

court system like that. We could talk about individual rights and everything else, but it seems pretty clear to me that if we break the law, we break the law.

That is about as zero tolerant as you could get. If you blow over whatever the limit is, and the member talked about changing it to .04 and I could certainly live with that, but once you go over whatever the law is, you break the law. If you break the law, you pay the consequences. We should not be tolerant over and above whatever the limit is that we set.

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Secretary of State (Parks), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to rise in debate today on what I believe is a very, very important subject for all of us in this House and of course for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

I would like to congratulate the member opposite for proposing this motion. Even in a very small way the fact that we will spend the day debating this hopefully being watched by several thousands of Canadians, perhaps if that will give somebody the opportunity to have a second thought about getting behind the wheel of a car tonight, then that in itself is important. Of course the whole subject is important.

I am the father of a 16 year old who is going through the process of learning how to drive. I am trying to convey the reality and the vulnerability of a young person, to convey the horror that too many of us have felt when our friends were hurt or killed in needless traffic accidents. Trying to convey that to our young people so that they understand that is indeed a challenge. As a father I know it is shared by parents right across the country to try to convey the importance of that.

Drinking and driving, the abuse of alcohol is a tragedy that too many times is visited upon Canadians and their families. I concur with the intent behind this motion. It is absolutely essential as a Parliament, as a society, and as individual Canadians, that we address this issue. We need to make progress.

I know it has been talked about already in this debate and some people have agreed with it and others have not put as much emphasis on it, but indeed the problem is complex. It involves many things. We need to understand why generally responsible people will sometimes be very irresponsible in their use of alcohol and the activities they choose to partake in, like driving after they have had too much to drink.

It is a complex problem and as a complex problem it is going to require complex solutions. There are going to be solutions that involve the things that are brought forward in this motion. It is going to involve items like changes to the Criminal Code. It is going to involve things like penalties. That is important. Deterrents indeed are important. But the problem, the situation and indeed

Supply

more important, the solutions go beyond just that, although that is important.

We need to deal with the whole idea of education, as I opened my speech talking about my own personal situation. We need to talk about the whole issue of education. We need to make sure that people understand, particularly our young people as they are beginning in life and are having to cope with new pressures and new responsibilities. They must understand exactly what the costs are and what the responsibilities are for them.

• (1210)

The whole issue of enforcement is important. It is not good enough simply to have the laws on the books. If there are no means to enforce those laws, then we will not have moved toward a solution.

There is also the issue of societal attitude. It is absolutely essential that we continue what I believe to be progress over the last generation in a change in societal attitude. It is no longer an acceptable social practice to drink an excessive amount of alcohol and get behind the wheel of a vehicle. That is simply not acceptable. When people have an opportunity to interact with each other, society should provide a negative sanction against that type of activity.

I recall that I was going to a reception one evening a short time ago and my nine year old daughter asked who the designated driver was going to be. That is a sign of how society is changing and how our school system is trying to get that type of education brought forward so that the upcoming generation will understand and will be responsible in their use of alcohol. That is a very, very important part of what we need to do as a society in order to address this very difficult problem.

It is also very critical as parliamentarians approach this subject, that we understand there is a broad range of individuals and groups in society that need to come together to work on this problem. Obviously, as parliamentarians we have a very specific role. We also need to work with our provincial counterparts who have the responsibility for prosecution and enforcement of the rules and regulations governing drinking and driving.

As I mentioned, we need to work with the education system to make sure it is working in getting the point across. We need to work with organizations like MADD and other groups that have worked very diligently to raise the awareness and profile of the issue. We need to work with groups in our individual constituencies that have specific roles, such as the boating and snowmobile clubs. These are areas where similar tragedies take place because of drinking and driving. Together we need to move toward solutions.

Members have mentioned that we as a government as well as society have implemented steps in this regard. It was in the 1920s

when operating a vehicle while impaired became a criminal offence. Since that time there have been changes in the Criminal Code which have enhanced the prohibition of this activity and which have enhanced the penalties.

I heard the Minister of Justice in a reply to a question the other day make a very clear commitment to the House that she will continue to work along those lines. We as parliamentarians have a role to play in that. We need to work with the Department of Justice and others and move toward improving solutions.

Speaking as the representative for Parry Sound—Muskoka, my riding faces a problem similar to many areas, although it has its own particular and unique nature. There are approximately 80,000 residents in that area and in the summer it attracts roughly 60,000 seasonal residents, people who choose to have summer homes there. On a long weekend in the summer there could be an extra 100,000 or 150,000 visitors to the area. The whole issue of responsible recreation is critical and important in an area such as Parry Sound—Muskoka.

• (1215)

I mentioned a minute ago the whole issue of boating safety. It is surprising sometimes that an individual driving the 400 km to come to my area would never for a moment think of having a drink when they got behind the wheel of their car and drove up the highway but then would think nothing of having that drink and operating a boat. That is why I say societal attitudes and societal changes are so important. It has to be as inappropriate to get behind the wheel of a motorized boat as it is to get behind the wheel of a car. That is something where education plays an important role. I am pleased to note that within my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka there is a wide coalition of individuals and groups working on the whole issue of boating safety, and obviously a big component of that is to not operate a boat.

Two years ago in this House on a Friday morning with the consent of all the parties, the Reform Party, the justice critic whom I had an opportunity to work with, and the Bloc and its justice critic, we passed amendments to the Contraventions Act in one day. Although it does not deal directly with the issue of impaired boating, it dealt with the whole issue of regulations and increased enforcement on our waterways to protect boating safety. That is a small example of things that we have been able to do in this House and something that has a very direct impact on Parry Sound—Muskoka and of course other ridings that have large amounts of water. I was pleased to be able to have a role in seeing that take place. It was something that my predecessor, Stan Darling, who had sat in this House for 21 years, had worked on before.

Also on the issue of recreation in an area like mine in the winter we have the whole issue of snowmobiling. Again we have a motorized vehicle that requires people to be operating them safely and obviously sober. The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs

Supply

has worked diligently with snowmobile owners and snowmobile clubs over the last several years to educate their membership as well as to make it clear that as a society we do not accept operating a snowmobile while impaired. It actually introduced a program called sled smart where it works with the clubs and with individuals to ensure this does not happen.

In a rural area like mine I must give credit to the Ontario Provincial Police and the detachments in my riding and the officers of those detachments who work diligently on the issue of education and enforcement to ensure that the tragedies we all too often hear about are reduced. I do commend those officers, the work they do within the schools and the work they do in terms of enforcement. I know they, who all too often are the first ones on the scenes of those tragedies, are trying to do all they can to reduce this problem.

Of course in my role as the Secretary of State for Parks, we have a role in the park system to ensure there is not an abuse of alcohol. Our park wardens work diligently oftentimes with local enforcement agencies to ensure that there is responsible consumption of alcohol. There are times during the year when we feel it necessary to put bans on alcohol consumption within our parks. I am committed in my role as Secretary of State for Parks to ensure that we continue that diligence, that we continue to work toward preventing the inappropriate use of alcohol.

This is a critical issue for all of us in this House. In summarizing, I again thank the member opposite for bringing this motion forward because I think it is important to have this debate.

• (1220)

I want to leave the House with one thought. Although the contents of the motion are good and describe part of what we need to do in terms of the solution, let us not lose sight of the other part of it. Let us not lose sight of what the boating community is doing and needs to do in terms of prevention. Let us not lose sight of what the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs is doing. Let us not lose sight of what the Ontario Provincial Police are doing. Let us not lose sight of the actions that we need to take at Parks Canada to make sure this abuse is not allowed. Let us make sure that we deal with the totality of the problem. That is not to suggest that any part is less important than the next, but we must deal with the overall issue.

I feel strongly about this and I am sure my colleagues feel strongly about this. I look forward to arriving at a solution and making progress on this important issue.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. secretary of state for his remarks and for bringing into the discussion the issues of boating and snowmobiling. I can relate very well to those issues. I was out in the middle of Howe Sound on a 35-foot sailboat when a high powered motor boat

played chicken with us to see how close he could come to the side of our boat before he had to steer away. There is a good deal of threat in that. I am pleased that the secretary of state has widened the issue.

There was an element of his speech that I would like to draw to the attention of the House, the statement that Canadians find it unacceptable to drink and drive. A lot of Canadians do, but far too many do not.

I do not want to depend too much on statistics, but my hon. colleague from Edmonton pointed out that over 65% of those who have been charged with impaired driving are repeat offenders. It seems to me that there are not enough Canadians who understand how serious it is to get behind the wheel of a car or a boat after having consumed alcohol.

I would like to test the secretary of state. Is putting yourself in the position where you can threaten, injure or kill another person acceptable under any circumstance? That draws it out a bit more starkly. If he agrees with me that it is not acceptable under any circumstance, what lengths would he go to to prevent that by putting something into legislation for the Canadian people?

Would it be appropriate, for example, if someone committed a crime, homicide, and used their vehicle to commit the crime, to confiscate it? If the vehicle was used in the commission of a crime, would that be acceptable?

Would it be reasonable to say to someone who has been accused of drunk driving that they will never drive again? They have taken the privilege of driving and made it their right. That is not acceptable. Therefore they will not have that privilege any longer. Would that be within the scope of possibility to prevent the mayhem that is taking place?

Hon. Andy Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his questions.

On the first point, quite frankly, if there is one person who thinks it is acceptable to get behind the wheel and drive while impaired, that is one person too many.

Our objective as a society and as parliamentarians is to ensure that we move as closely as possible to it not being acceptable to any Canadian.

• (1225)

I am a realist. I do not know if we can ever reach that zero number. If there is one person who thinks it is acceptable, that is one person too many.

Whether it is acceptable that somebody places at risk somebody else through their inappropriate action, in this case we are talking about getting behind the wheel of a boat or a car or driving a snowmobile impaired, of course it is not.

Supply

We have to deal with two components of that issue. We are trying to do two things. One, as a society we are saying to that individual that it is inappropriate and as a society we are going to apply a sanction against them for doing that. We need to do that. I think society at large wants to make that point.

We are also trying to make sure the person does not do it in the first place or that the next person does not do it in the first place.

When I talked about the need to have a broad based solution that contains various components, that is what I am saying. As a society we have to make clear what we consider to be a penalty in the Criminal Code and say that is not acceptable. That is not good enough. It is important but we have to do more than that. We have to take measures so that the next person or the person after that does not get behind the wheel or does not get into a boat. We must do both things. That is the objective.

I thank the hon. member for his question and the opportunity to make those points.

Mr. Philip Mayfield: Mr. Speaker, I agree that whatever can be done to prevent this from ever beginning is all good and right. If this were part of the ingredients of one's mother's milk, I would be in favour of it, that we grew up with the attitude in our communities that people just do not drive after they have been drinking. I think that would be wonderful. I am in favour of that. I am in favour of the education. I am in favour of family attitudes and fostering everything that will do this.

I want to push the member again to the questions I asked. For those who insist on breaking the law and putting themselves in a position where others can be killed or injured, would he be in favour of confiscating the vehicle after the first offence? Would he be in favour of saying to that person they have violated their privilege and will not drive again, these are the rules we have?

Hon. Andy Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I do not disagree with what the member is saying. I have often said in the House that one of the important things we need to do as a society is ensure people understand there are consequences for messing up. If you get behind the wheel of a vehicle or some other motorised apparatus and you operate it in an impaired state, you should realize quite clearly that you are going to pay a price for doing that. Society is going to provide a negative sanction, a penalty to you.

I hope we have the opportunity over the next few months to discuss the most appropriate way to do that and the most appropriate penalty. We need to analyse that and look at it carefully. Should it be the same in every instance? Is every instance the same? Perhaps it is. Perhaps there should be some discretion. I remain with an open mind to look at exactly what that should be.

I unequivocally agree with the member. If somebody knowingly places somebody at risk by operating a vehicle or some other motorised apparatus in an impaired state, I think most members would agree society is justified in applying a sanction.

The hon. member has outlined various options that need to be looked at. We have some on the books now and an examination of what can be added is appropriate, something I hope we undertake.

• (1230)

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, before I get into my speech I wish to inform the Chair that I will be splitting my time with the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

I am privileged to stand here in support of the motion of the member for Prince George—Bulkeley Valley.

As I studied politics and took an interest in politics in Canada and around the world, I realized one thing. People who are elected to govern or sit in opposition have one primary responsibility that overrides all else. It is for the safety and well-being of its law-abiding citizens.

That is what we are trying to do today. We are trying to form a motion that can proceed and pass in this House in order to protect the legal, law-abiding citizens in our country.

We all know, from the things that have been said so far, that tragic things are happening to individuals and to families right across Canada because of criminals who drink and drive. I call them criminals because I want everybody to recognize one thing, that making the decision to drink and drive, whether it is a boat, a car or an airplane, is like picking up a weapon. It is a life threatening act which could kill or maim the driver, the passengers, other drivers and their passengers. It can ruin the lives of their families and friends who must deal with the tragedy. It can possibly affect many innocent bystanders.

I am going to get a little personal on this issue. I was not going to. Normally I like to speak to everybody involved on anything that is personal. I have not had time to speak to my wife because I was not going to bring personal happenings into this today, but I think I must.

When I was 23 years of age, my wife then was 18, I was on the way to the wedding of my future brother-in-law. My job was to pick up the flowers to take to the wedding. Another brother-in-law of mine was in the car too. On the way a vehicle turned into our path. I was the driver of our vehicle. John, my brother-in-law, was the passenger.

At the time of impact I remember seeing a small child come through the window of the vehicle that hit us. I will always remember seeing the impact of that child on the hood of my car. That is the last thing I remembered for a long time. I was in the

Supply

hospital for nine months. My pancreas was ripped and my liver was ripped off and my career was changed forever.

My wife Cis spent many months, because of under-insurance of the other driver involved, picking strawberries and fruit in order to be on the coast—because we were from the interior—to stay with me through all of this.

● (1235)

I never got a chance to really talk to the other driver. Alcohol was involved. The other driver had been drinking but not enough to be charged with impaired driving. The child involved was his grandson. That child lived but was in a coma for 19 or 21 days. The child was left a paraplegic.

Did this accident have to happen? No. When the driver, the grandfather, was asked about this, he said he could give no reason for turning into our vehicle at that time. It was a straight highway. He did not know why he turned into it. I have often wondered about that. He had been drinking at a function and he had left there to drive home with his grandson. I wondered then as I wonder now if different laws had been in place whether that child would be better off than he is today. It is quite possible. Would that grandfather have to go through the pain that he probably goes through every day now when he looks at his grandson?

One has to take all of that into consideration. My heart goes out to the families of these tragedies. Last year, just outside of Vernon where I am from, three young women from Okanagan—Shuswap decided to drive home after an evening's entertainment in Kelowna, a neighbouring community. They had gone only a few miles before they turned into the path of a logging truck. All of them were killed. Now their families, friends and loved ones have to deal with that. It is almost impossible to deal with that type of tragedy. This is all because we have a system in the country which allows judges to interpret our laws when it comes to impaired driving.

This happens in my constituency and I know it happens in other constituencies. It happens every day. As the hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley stated when he spoke to the motion, 4.5 Canadians are killed every day due to impaired driving and many thousands a year are left as paraplegics or have to suffer other consequences.

It was just last week that the Mothers Against Drunk Driving visited the Hill. Its members wanted the public to become aware of a random poll which they asked the Canadian people at large. It is interesting to find out, in answer to the question: Should a driver be convicted of impaired driving causing death, would you strongly support or strongly oppose a minimum jail sentence?, that 47.9% answered they would strongly support minimum a jail sentence for impaired driving causing death, and another 37.6% answered they would support it. This adds up to a total of 85.5% who would either support or strongly support a minimum sentence.

This should send a message to us here. These are the people who pay our wages. These people put their trust in us to make the laws

that will protect them. That is our job and our obligation. I believe that if we in the House work together, we can live up to that trust.

● (1240)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his comments. I know the member well and he is a sincere and hard working member of Parliament.

This opposition motion asks that a committee look at the issue of impaired driving. It asks for two things, enhanced deterrence, and to ensure that the penalties reflect the seriousness of the offence. I do not believe that there are very many people in the House who do not believe that the deterrent elements should be appropriate, given the seriousness of the issue. And I certainly do not think that members in the House would disagree that the penalties should reflect that seriousness.

Since the member raised the issue, I want to deal with the consequences. We know that something like 45% of automobile collisions and injuries are because of the misuse of alcohol. We also know that 65% of snowmobile collisions and injuries are caused by the misuse of alcohol.

When a drunk driver kills a pedestrian, that pedestrian did not die because of alcohol, he or she died because of trauma. Statistics in Canada probably understate the seriousness.

I thank the member for the comments he made. I think he should elaborate a little bit on the fact that the consequences are not simply to the person who misused the alcohol and the victim who may be involved, but it affects all of us because we all know someone who has been touched by a preventable tragedy caused by the misuse of alcohol.

Perhaps the member would like to comment on this and the ripple effect of pain and suffering and loss, tangible and intangible that all Canadians feel.

Mr. Darrel Stinson: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

There is hardly anyone today who has not been affected in one form or another by the misuse of alcohol.

The survivors and some victims have to live with this forever. I can speak on that from a personal point of view. I do not think a week or even two days or nights go by that the memory of that child does not flash into my mind. I can never get rid of it. I have to live with that.

My wife lives with the fact that her career changed at that time also. She chose to give up a well paying job and career advancements in order to be by my side in the Haney hospital. While it affected us to a great extent, I cannot imagine what that child's grandparents had to live with for the rest of their lives. My brother-in-law John was another victim of that accident. He

sustained head injuries in the accident that he still suffers with today.

An accident does not just affect the people who are involved, there are lot more victims that we hear nothing about. We pay far too little attention to them when we make some of the decisions in this place.

• (1245)

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak in support of the motion before the House. In my opinion the motion is long overdue. Canadians have been looking for this for a long time. It certainly deserves the support of members on both sides of the House.

My good friend from Prince George—Bulkley Valley brought this motion to the floor of the House in the spring of this year when the election came along and intervened. I respectfully ask that we as members of the House of Commons dispense with all our partisan beliefs in this regard and pass the motion.

The subject before us transcends all the political differences we might have and should unite us in a common cause. The motion is not reflective of any particular political party or party ideology. It is an effort that seeks only to protect Canadians. Nothing more and certainly nothing less is being asked for.

We have all heard the horror stories associated with drinking and driving. Some members have already shared their stories with us. The yearly carnage which is altogether senseless and tragic must come to an end.

I happened to make a decision a number of years ago to abstain from alcohol. Part of my reasoning was that I did not want to be responsible for passing along something to my children which perhaps I could handle but which they could not. I certainly did not want to get into the situation where I was responsible for taking the life of another person while drinking and driving.

Abstinence is still the best preventive. However we have freedom of choice in the use of this legalized drug. People will continue to choose to drink. Unfortunately some will choose to drink and drive.

I do not delude myself into believing that the passage of the motion will stop people from dying in these kinds of accidents. However it will go a long way toward giving the family and friends of victims some semblance of closure and the notion that justice was served.

The greatest value of this initiative may be in its deterrent value to new drivers. Indeed they are the ones who need to be educated at an early age on the perils of driving while impaired. Those who unfortunately are repeat offenders would only likely be stopped by some kind of punitive sanction such as a stiffer sentence.

Supply

Organizations such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Ontario Students Against Impaired Driving tell us that the status quo in sentencing can no longer be tolerated.

There have been far too many tragedies. We have buried too many loved ones. As the father of eight children, every time they go out in a vehicle at night I pray to God they will come home safely. It is not because I am worried they will be drinking and driving. It is the other person who is out there that I am worried about.

In 1967 my wife's sister, at 21 years of age and newly married, was driving down a road in Victoria, British Columbia, with her husband. A drunk driver went through a stop sign and broad sided their car. She was thrown out on to the pavement, hit her head and had severe brain damage. She went into a coma for three months. She lost the use of one of her legs and one of her arms. Miraculously she has regained a large measure of the use of those limbs, but today she still lives with the consequences of that accident. Her marriage dissolved. She limps. She has constant pain. That driver got off with a \$500 fine and a slap on the wrist in 1967. That is not acceptable, not at all.

• (1250)

It has been said before by the survivors of these kinds of accidents, and it deserves to be said again, that victims should not be paying the penalty for impaired driving.

Here is some information that shows how much of a problem driving while impaired has become. In 1992 an Ottawa *Sun* editorial pointed out that over 13,000 people that year were killed or injured because someone drove while impaired.

In 1994, 1,414 were killed as a result of impaired driving. This is roughly three times the number of people murdered in Canada every year, but one could argue that this is essentially the same thing. Does it matter whether one holds a gun to the head of someone and shoots it or whether one is out there driving a car while drinking?

I ask my colleagues to think about that number, 1,414. If this Chamber were made four times larger it would not hold all those people. In 1993, 565 of the 1,315 people who died on Ontario roads were involved in alcohol related accidents.

I also want to share some additional information with colleagues as it relates to the cost of drinking while driving, while intoxicated. By cost I refer to the price in lives and suffering as well as monetary. Some 4.5 Canadians are being killed by impaired drivers each day. That is one every six hours according to studies by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation of Canada. It also found that impaired drivers caused over half of Canada's 3,300 road fatalities in 1995. This means the chances of being killed by an impaired driver are three times greater in Canada than being killed as a result of homicide.

Supply

Fatalities are not the only sad statistic. In 1993 a Transport Canada study revealed that over 300 Canadians each day are being injured as a result of an alcohol related crash. In addition, these injuries and fatalities effect not only the victims but society as a whole.

In 1989 Transport Canada found that the minimum losses to society total \$390,000 per fatal crash. That figure represents the loss in terms of income, property damage and related cost to health care.

We must bring justice to the families of victims and stiffen the sentencing of offenders. Members in the Chamber need not take my word that Canadians find the situation intolerable. In the recently released paper prepared by MADD and alluded to by my colleague, we have all the reasons Canadians believe the penalties should be stiffer. Canadians have spoken and we as parliamentarians who represent them need to act.

I close on that note. Again I urge members to put aside partisan politics and vote in support of the motion for the good of the country.

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me thank all members who have spoken today in favour of the motion. In the last parliament a similar motion was brought forward. I was very honoured to have seconded it.

We have heard some very moving personal tragedies today. I am sure every one of us have some to share. A resident in my riding, a Mr. MacRae who worked in the greater Ottawa area, was unfortunately hit on one of the major highways. It was a head on collision with another driver who was intoxicated. His life was suddenly taken away. He left a young wife and a young child whose futures were taken away from them.

The member just gave one example of an incident. I believe it was a \$500 fine and a slap on the hand. That is ridiculous.

• (1255)

We have a problem. We could bring forward all the laws we want, and I think we should, but an area of enforcement has to unfold. This is where we sometimes lose the game. Most recently we heard of the Stuckless case in the greater Toronto area. Thirty or forty young kids were abused during their early lives. The gentleman was literally given a slap on the hand.

Was it because the law was not there? The law is there. There are rules but the enforcement side is an area we somehow have to address as well.

Does the member have any ideas that could be brought forward to enforce these laws, to make sure the penalties are enforced and to send a message saying that the laws are there? We could change the law, implement the law and bring forward motions, but unless

they are enforced the tragedies a previous speaker referred to will go on and on. They are slaps on the hand.

We have to send a signal to the judges out there. They have a job to do. They have a responsibility. Unless judges are told in black in white that they must enforce the law as stated, we could bring in all kinds of the changes and nothing will happen.

Does the hon. member have any suggestions on how to enforce the rules and the laws we are trying to bring forward?

Mr. Reed Elley: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and comments. In a great sense he has answered his own question. I agree with him wholeheartedly that we have a system of justice. The laws are in place. The judges are there but unfortunately they very often do not enforce the law.

Canadians have to scream for this to happen. It will take public opinion and pressure by parliamentarians and others to make it to happen.

The laws are there. They are not being enforced. We cannot have these slaps on the wrist any more. It sends a signal to every young person that it is okay to drink and drive. It is not acceptable.

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speaker opposite. This is a very serious and important problem as it affects Canadians.

As former chairman of Waterloo Regional Police we took very seriously the whole issue of drunk driving and the results that would occur for people in that position. We ensured we had good programs in place, for example RIDE and other methods to ensure enforcement was there.

Does the hon. member believe additional enforcement on the part of police services across Canada would be useful to help ameliorate this devastating problem?

Mr. Reed Elley: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

There is no doubt in my mind that we have to get behind our police forces. I talked to RCMP officers in my riding. There are disheartened not only by the problems we have with the enforcement of drunk driving laws but by the manpower problem. There is a problem with the justice system and judges letting people off after the police have worked hard to try to bring people to justice.

It is a very serious problem. I would wholeheartedly support the hon. member's statements. We have to support our police.

Ms. Elinor Caplan (Thornhill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe the debate we are having today is an important one because I do not think there is anyone in the country, certainly no one in the riding of Thornhill that I know, who would condone anyone driving when drunk. I do not think they would condone them driving an

automobile. I do not think they would condone them driving any motorized vehicle.

When we drive we have an obligation to ensure that we have knowledge of the vehicle, are trained and our judgment is unimpaired. We know that these vehicles can kill.

• (1300)

I want to begin my remarks by congratulating the Mothers Against Drunk Driving, MADD, as its members are referred to, for the wonderful work they have done in raising public consciousness over the years on this important issue. I also want to congratulate all the members of the House in all parties who have stated very clearly that this is a non-partisan issue.

As we address this issue of driving while drunk, it is important to note that across the country it is not just the Criminal Code which is responsible for the deterrence and the punishment for those who drive while drunk. Every province has a responsibility. The provinces have the responsibility for enforcement of the Criminal Code. The provinces also have responsibility for the highways within their jurisdictions.

As a member of the Ontario legislature for 12 years I am aware of the progress that the province of Ontario has made. I am also very aware on a personal level of the tragedies that have occurred.

I sat in the legislature on the day that it was announced that the tragic loss of the son of the now Treasurer of Ontario was as a result of an alcohol related accident. While I may have had my differences with the hon. member, I want the House to know, that I and every member of that legislature felt and empathized not only with the tragic loss but with the senselessness and its preventability.

More recently we were aware of the news that the son of a cabinet minister in Ontario had been charged with driving while impaired. The thought that went through my mind was when will we ever learn.

I come to this House not only as a parliamentarian with significant experience in the legislature in the province of Ontario after serving on municipal council for six and a half years, and I am a mother of four children. The youngest is now 25. I remember how I felt when each of them got a driver's licence. I remember discussing with each and every one of them the responsibility they had when they got behind the wheel of a car. I remember discussing with them the responsibility they had when they saw a friend of theirs who should not be getting behind the wheel of a car.

I remember discussing with them the support they would receive from their family and from their friends, but particularly from my husband and I, if they took a taxi home and left the car if they had had a drink.

Supply

For those who say that these tragedies can be prevented and we should be doing something about it, I agree. I think that the deterrents in the Criminal Code and the penalties and the enforcement of the Criminal Code are only one part of the solution.

Certainly education and treatment for those with alcohol problems are all part. The raising of consciousness of this issue over the last many years has resulted in significant progress being made. Certainly progress is being made in public consciousness and awareness.

I was very disappointed when the courts struck down the Ontario law brought in by a Conservative government that said that if you failed or you refused to take a breathalyser test that you would have your licence revoked for 90 days. I thought it was a good law and a good deterrent. I am pleased that the government is appealing that decision. It is my hope that law will be found to be constitutional.

• (1305)

We have to find ways to keep the public informed of the importance that legislators, parliamentarians and the public who are interested in public safety, hold this important issue.

I also want to say how very proud I am of the responsiveness of the Liberal government. There has been a firm and clear commitment from the Minister of Justice to raise this issue with her counterparts, the attorneys general. We know that the solicitors general are also very interested in the whole issue of drunk driving. I am proud to be part of a government with ministers who have made that commitment.

The importance of that commitment speaks to the nature of this country. It is not just an issue for the federal Criminal Code. It is an issue that requires a national strategy, a national interest and certainly discussions and action by all of the provinces across Canada.

In the short time that I have been here, I have learned the importance of working with the provinces and getting the support of the provinces for federal initiatives. I also believe this is in the national interest since this is a federation, but I also believe it is in the interest of the issue.

I want to go on record today as saying that I do not believe that a consensus is unanimity. We do not require unanimity in order to take action. I believe we can move the yardstick further if we can achieve a consensus among the provincial partners that have responsibility for enforcement of the Criminal Code. We know that enforcement takes resources. If they do not dedicate the resources we do not get the kind of enforcement that we need. Therefore, it is a partnership.

Supply

We also know the public policy which is in the provincial jurisdiction. I only mentioned Ontario but I know other provinces have also taken initiatives. We know how important it is for the provinces to be able to share that information and for us to be able to target our resources at what is going to be the most effective way of achieving our goal which is the reduction of impaired driving incidents, accidents and loss of life.

If that is the goal we all share then it is important to make sure that we have the research, the data, the information which will allow us to frame our policies in the most effective way.

It is important to note that the Traffic Injury Research Foundation, TIRF as it is called, is a facility database for Transport Canada. That data is very important if we are going to not only evaluate our programs but also to see the progress that we are making in achieving our goal. The Traffic Injury Research Foundation collects data from across this country and that data is very important.

Similarly, and I speak again from my perspective of Ontario, we know the work of the Addiction Research Foundation. It is a world leader in policy development, research, prevention strategies and, yes, treatment. That is an important part of this issue as well.

• (1310)

It is important that a matter such as this brings all of those together. The most appropriate lead is with the Minister of Justice. She has expressed interest and made a commitment in the House and to MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

I also believe there is a role for the parliamentary committee on justice to play. Standing committees can help frame policies which will impact and help to achieve our goal of a safer society. I hope we will have an opportunity over the coming years to discuss these kinds of issues in a non-partisan way.

One thing I have learned is that while we may all agree on the objectives and the goal, because of our philosophical or ideological differences, our approach to resolving these issues and achieving the goals often differ. During the debates it is important for everyone to remember that we share the same goal, that of a safer society, of preventing accidents caused by impaired drivers. We must be responsive to those who say this is a complex issue.

I recently said to someone that we do not have to say that an issue is controversial. If it is not controversial, it is not an issue. If the solutions were simple, we would not be debating them here, they would have been resolved. The reason we are having this debate is because the issue is controversial and the solutions are not simple and the public policy implications are complex.

I specifically mentioned the legislation in Ontario that was struck down by the courts. It was well-intentioned legislation. The

provincial government was warned that when it was brought in that there would be court challenges. The court challenge was successful and the legislation was struck down.

I believe that as legislators we must not grandstand on these issues. We must not say that the solutions are simple. These issues are so important to the kind of society we build that they must be addressed often in this kind of forum. We must look for a solution, listen to the experts, collect the data from across the country, look internationally to see what others are doing, look at what works and what does not.

No one wants to see tax increases and everyone wants value for their tax dollars. We must target our resources to those things that will work cost effectively.

In the debate today I want my message to be very clear. On behalf of the people of Thornhill who I have the privilege of representing in the House, I believe they would like to see a comprehensive strategy, one that includes enhanced education, prevention, treatment options and strengthening of the Criminal Code in a way that will achieve the goal of reducing drunk driving in all motorized vehicles.

I appreciate the opportunity of speaking in a non-partisan way for my constituents in the riding of Thornhill on an issue of importance to all of us. I believe this is an issue that every member in the House and every person in the country cares deeply about. There have been too many needless tragedies. I wish the solutions were simple. But I know that every member of the House, each in our own way, will further the cause by participating in today's debate.

• (1315)

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with very much of what was said by the hon. member across the way. Debates like this bother me because they hit home personally.

For several years in the last session I worked with my colleagues, friends and people across the country on a national victims bill of rights. We brought this victims bill of rights to the House, and the justice minister at that time agreed with the bill. Millions of people across the country were optimistic that we would finally see a national victims bill of rights. That bill went to committee and died there and nothing has come of it.

My concern is very much the same as what we are hearing from parties here, two parties in particular who had the opportunity over decades to do something about drunk driving. Today on the Reform Party's presentation we are very likely to get unanimous agreement on such a motion. How confident does the hon. member feel about implementing something in this House when the track record of past governments is zero?

Supply

Ms. Elinor Caplan: Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the member that in fact the track record is not zero. If we are going to have a helpful thoughtful debate on important issues like this one, it is important to state the facts clearly.

We know there were amendments to the Criminal Code placed by this government and passed by this government last spring in the previous Parliament. We also know that over the course of the last Parliament there were numerous justice issues brought forward by this government that were simply not supported by the Reform Party across the way. I would like to point out the ones they did not support.

Talk is cheap. When we are talking about a non-partisan issue such as this one, and we want to have support from all sides of the House, I say to my colleague from the Reform Party, who would stand and talk about zero, that he should get his facts straight. I would ask him, if I can during my response, why it is when it came to important initiatives to strengthen the Young Offenders Act the Reform Party voted no. Why is it when it came to gun control which was supported across the country, the Reform Party said no? Why is it when it came to strengthening the judicial review of parole ineligibility, again the Reform Party said no?

I am proud to stand in my place today in support of an initiative which the justice minister and the solicitor general of this Liberal government have said is a priority for this government. I believe with goodwill from all sides of the House we can make progress, but with an attitude like that and when you stand in the House and do not give accurate information to the people watching—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The Chair reminds hon. members to please address each other through the Chair.

Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, the debate today on the issue of drunk driving is extraordinarily important. I congratulate MADD for its important work nationally. In my own constituency there are very few families who have not been affected in some way by a drunk driver. The risk to individuals and to society is great if we let it continue to grow unabated.

The penalty for someone arrested for drunk driving is significantly more lenient than the penalty for someone who while behind the wheel of a car kills somebody, yet the actions leading up to either of those two conclusions are identical. The only difference is that one person was lucky enough to be arrested before he killed somebody. That the two actions are identical represents one of the greatest arguments for stricter sentencing, for tougher laws and for stronger enforcement of those laws.

• (1320)

Earlier I had made a few notes to commend my fellow parliamentarians on the non-partisan nature of this debate, but I suppose

that is no longer valid. However, I was enjoying the debate immensely up to that point, so I would ask that we return to the non-partisan spirit of debate on this very important issue.

Ms. Elinor Caplan: Mr. Speaker, the issues which the member opposite raised about the variations within the Criminal Code are exactly the types of issues that should be addressed not only during debate and discussions perhaps before a legislative committee, but also by the justice minister and her colleagues across this country because it is the provinces which enforce the Criminal Code.

I support a non-partisan debate in this legislature. I said that during my remarks. However when provoked, if you tease the bear, I growl. I hope hon. members opposite do not take offence when I respond in kind.

This is an issue of importance to members of all parties. I too wish we could debate this issue in a non-partisan manner. Unfortunately my colleague opposite made that impossible.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, apology accepted. It is too important an issue to start playing petty partisan politics, regardless of the fact of whether someone feels they have been provoked. Certainly I could respond to the long list the member just rattled through and say that I was provoked. However that would detract from the spirit of this debate today, which is to address one of the most serious criminal actions in our country which is killing thousands and thousands of Canadians and unfortunately all too often they are very young Canadians.

What specifically is the hon. member prepared to do to ensure that we bring the issue of drunk driving to its proper conclusion? What concrete action is she prepared to take? That is what my hon. colleague from Langley—Abbotsford was getting at. It is fine to support a motion, but what concrete steps will the government take and which this particular member will support?

Ms. Elinor Caplan: Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member opposite, I am willing to take the Minister of Justice at her word on the commitment which she has just made to Mothers Against Drunk Driving, that she will raise this issue when she meets with her counterparts across Canada. I am not only prepared to take her at her word, but I am willing to give her the opportunity to bring forward a report to the House. At that time there would be an appropriate opportunity for us to consider this matter in an appropriate forum such as the justice committee. That is what I said during my remarks.

I would also point out that we may not all agree on the solutions, because they are complex. However, I believe we all agree on the goal. I will make my commitment in this House to do what I can to achieve the goal of reducing drunk driving and to make changes as

Supply

necessary to public policy to achieve that goal. I consider that to be a priority on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Thornhill.

Mr. Randy White: Mr. Speaker, I would not want the House to misunderstand where I come from. It is not to degrade debate in this House to ask very legitimate questions. The question is serious. How do we as members of this House get the government to move on issues such as this one and on issues such as the victims bill of rights, on victims of other crimes as well as drunk driving?

• (1325)

Members in this House should clearly understand that questions have to be asked because I do not think the confidence is there that these things proceed as they should. I want the hon. member to understand that.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I say at the outset that I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Langley—Abbotsford.

At the start of my presentation, I want to draw attention to the fact that in this debate we want to clearly understand that many thousands of victims are killed every year. I think the number is up to 1,700 victims of drunk driving or of accidents involving alcohol. I noted in my brief remarks a few minutes ago that all too often it is the young.

We are rapidly approaching one of the worst possible times of the year for drunk driving. As the incidents of drunk driving go up, unfortunately so do the fatalities and the injuries around Christmas-time. Another time of the year is at graduation time with our young people.

Last year a poem appeared in the *Alaska Highway News* in my hometown. I want to read a couple of excerpts from it because it quite pointedly cuts to the real problem.

I went to a party, Mom, I remembered what you said.
You told me not to drink, Mom, so I drank soda instead.
I really felt proud inside, Mom, the way you said I would.
I didn't drink and drive, Mom, even though the others said I should.

I started to drive away, Mom, but as I pulled out into the road,
the other car didn't see me, Mom, and hit me like a load.
As I lay there on the pavement, Mom, I hear the policeman say,
the other guy is drunk, Mom, and now I'm the one who will pay.

Why do people drink, Mom? It can ruin your whole life.
I'm feeling sharp pains now. Pains just like a knife.
The guy who hit me is walking, Mom, and I don't think it's fair.
I'm lying here dying and all he can do is stare.

Someone should have told him, Mom, not to drink and drive.
If only they had told him, Mom, I would still be alive.

My breath is getting shorter, Mom, I'm becoming very scared.
Please don't cry for me, Mom. When I needed you, you were always there.
I have one last question, Mom, before I say goodbye.
I didn't drink and drive, so why am I the one to die?

That really sums up the issue here. It is the innocent who are being killed by drunk drivers time and time again. I do not think this government or previous governments have even begun to

adequately address this issue. It is critical that the House act on this motion.

Impaired drivers have been literally getting away with murder, with little or no consequence for their deadly habits. We have all heard the statistics echoed time and time again during the debate today. Too many families are suffering because the lives of loved ones were cut short by drunk drivers. Too many convicted impaired drivers get behind the wheel again and again, never changing their drinking and driving behaviour. For some, even killing a child does not stop them.

Scott Wilson was only 15 when he was killed by a drunk driver in 1985. The driver, Owen Bradshaw, hit a hay wagon loaded with a minor hockey team, their friends and families. Bradshaw fled the scene as Scott lay dying and 18 other people lay injured by his criminal act.

This was not the first time he had been caught drinking and driving, it was the third. He had two previous impaired convictions. He only received a \$175 fine for his first conviction and spent 30 days in jail for the second. For killing Scott, he was sentenced to two years imprisonment plus one year for fleeing the scene of the accident, but he only served one-third of the three year sentence before being paroled in December 1987.

You would think his conscience would not let him continue to drive and drink, but he was convicted of drunk driving again in 1991. On his fourth offence he received a six month jail term and was prohibited from driving for three years. Did he change? No. On his birthday last year Bradshaw backed a van into a police cruiser that had pulled in behind him. When it went to trial the crown recommended locking him up for three years but the judge gave him only nine months and recommended that he be granted immediate temporary passes so he could continue to work during the day. His ex-wife had told the court how important his child support payments were to put food on the table for their children. He should have thought about his family before he picked up the beer. He should have thought about Scott's family when he picked up the keys. He has been convicted of drunk driving five times. How many times has he driven while impaired? I would doubt that even he knows.

• (1330)

Bradshaw is just one of many drunk drivers with multiple impaired offences still on the road today. They do not change even after fines and prison terms. Many continue to drive with their licences suspended, still drinking and still driving, hoping the police will not catch them.

Bradshaw, unfortunately, is just one but not even the worst example. Sadly there are countless others. One man killed five girls in Winnipeg on his 51st offence.

There are at least two types of impaired drivers, the ones who get charged once and never drink and drive again, and the ones who

get charged but continue to drink and drive with extremely high blood alcohol levels. It is the second type in particular that our laws must focus on, the hardcore drinkers. They will drink and drive until they injure or kill themselves or someone else. Yet they refuse to change.

According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving, 12% of hardcore drunk drivers killed around 1,300 Canadians last year alone. For these people we must consider an alternative that will save lives.

Other people here today have talked about the need for stiffer penalties, and I certainly concur with them. However, I would like to focus on another deterrent for drunk driving, something that has been proven effective in both the United States and Alberta where it has been available since 1990. On Monday last I introduced Bill C-266, a bill that would empower judges to sentence impaired drivers to ignition interlock programs. I believe it is one part of a deterrence package that this House should seriously consider.

For members who have not heard of it, an ignition interlock is an electronic device with a breath alcohol analyser, a micro-computer and an internal memory that interconnects with the ignition and other control systems of a vehicle. It measures the blood alcohol level of the driver and prevents the vehicle from starting if the alcohol level exceeds a certain level. In other words, it only lets the operator drive if he or she is sober.

It has been proven that current methods of sanction and rehabilitation do not work for most hardcore drinking drivers. However, the interlock is an immediate and effective deterrent against drunk driving for the participants in the program. People in the program have a licence that only allows them to operate vehicles with an ignition interlock. Every 30 to 60 days the internal memory of the interlock is read and recorded. The report details every driving event, the results of all tests and any attempts to circumvent the system. Where other members of the family must have access to the vehicle they too can be taught how to use the device.

There are currently programs in Alberta, in 30 U.S. jurisdictions and Quebec will start a program on December 1.

Michael Weinerath, currently teaching at the University of Winnipeg, evaluated the results of the ignition interlock program in Alberta. He concluded that the ignition interlock cases were 4.4 times less likely to record a new serious driving violation and 3.9 times less likely to be involved in an injury collision. Clearly the interlock system teaches impaired drivers to modify their own behaviour much more effectively than jail or other treatment programs. Not only does the interlock keep impaired drivers off the road when they have been drinking but, more important, it teaches them to keep themselves off the road when they have been drinking.

Supply

Where a person requires their vehicle for work and a judge thinks a suspension would be an undue hardship, the ignition interlock provides the public with an added measure of safety.

The police cannot be everywhere but the interlock can be there every day and every night, all the time. In most jurisdictions the interlock is installed for a set period of time but I believe there is a better alternative. We could make the program mandatory until such time as the drunk driver changes his or her behaviour. Some people modify their behaviour within a couple of months, but others never learn. Those are the ones we need to stop.

• (1335)

People convicted of impaired driving, particularly those who have killed or injured someone, should not be able to start their cars let alone drive if they have been drinking, and the interlock stops them. If they cannot start their car, they will not be on the road killing people. And if they are caught driving a vehicle without the device, then lock them up.

We do not give a lethal weapon to a known sociopath who has been convicted of murder. So why do we let impaired drivers who have shown no regard for human life continue to drink and drive? I say let us consider the ignition interlock as part of an overall deterrence package. We owe it to Scott Wilson and the hundreds of other Canadians who are killed by drunk drivers every year.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to dedicate this speech to Sheena, who was taken away from us some years ago by a drunk driver. The drunk driver had his licence suspended for that deed.

I start by congratulating MADD Canada. It is a Canadian organization of volunteers, people committed to trying to rectify a situation in this country that has grown to be very unacceptable. This is an organization in which many of the people have experienced the very problems and situations that have been raised here today.

The mission of MADD Canada is to stop impaired driving and support victims of this violent crime. What more honourable mission could there be?

One has to just do a reality check and talk about some of the statistics related to drunk driving. I know they have been mentioned here before, but I want to make yet another point on this, that 4.5 Canadians are being killed by impaired drivers every 24 hours, every day of the week. Over 300 people a day are being injured in Canada as the result of an alcohol related crash, more than one Canadian every five minutes. Impaired drivers killed 17,630 Canadians and injured 1.1 million from 1983 to 1991.

If those were by the hands of criminals with guns, if they were rapes or other types of malicious actions, laws would have been put in place long ago in this country to prevent them. One wonders

Supply

why, after all these years of building up to this, we are at this time today in 1997 asking the House of Commons yet again to take action.

A bit before my speech I raised my concern and I want to talk about it again. We in the House must insist on action from government, from all members from all parties. But it is the government which is responsible for implementation. We in this country cannot wait, beg, hope, appease that something, somewhere, somehow will be done. If not now, then when? And if not here in the House of Commons, then where?

• (1340)

Not only has the situation of drunk driving affected our family deeply, but I have been involved in a number of cases in my riding of victims of drunk driving, even before I was a member of Parliament.

I recall a drunk driver who had a history of drunk driving charges. He was out on yet another binge, on a Sunday, when he drove through a chain-link fence at one of our school yards. I was the secretary-treasurer at the time. He killed several young people and severely injured others.

I recall being in the courtroom when his defence lawyer tried time and time again to get me to admit that it was a problem with the fence. It was the fence, he said, that was not strong enough to keep the drunk driver out.

He did not win that case. He served a very short time in jail. He is out, probably driving drunk again.

I wondered at the time why we were looking at the fence as the problem. Why would we sue a school district or any other entity for the actions of an irresponsible individual? Perhaps way back then I made my mind up to get involved in politics to change that shameless attitude.

I am happy to see that members of the House support this motion. It well explains how bad the situation is in Canada.

I am working with a friend right now who lost his step-son. He will be driving across the country in the spring, raising the awareness of the public about drunk drivers.

I would like to read from a letter which he recently sent to me. This individual's step-son was killed by a hit and run driver who was suspected of being drunk. We now know he was actually drunk. He says in his letter that court proceedings are in absolute shambles. There is no mention of cause of appearance. The charge appeared for two minutes. He was allowed to leave the courtroom free. Basically the parents were told nothing about it. This was just another one of those days in court.

He had previous convictions for impaired driving, going back to 1984. On six occasions his licence was suspended. My friend asks this question "Why is a person such as this allowed to drive again,

and resulting in eventually killing somebody, my step-son? The law has to be changed. The law as it stands at the moment condones drinking and driving by the fact that a coward like this killed my son". That is how these people feel. I know what those people are going through.

It is necessary once again to read into the record where Reform stands on this matter. There should be no doubt about what we believe in.

Reform supports strengthening the Criminal Code and other federal acts to respond to the serious issue of impaired driving. Our aim is to enhance deterrence and more suitably punish those who choose to drink and drive. A Reform government would lower the current blood alcohol content level from .08 to .05. We would extend or eliminate the two hour sampling time limit. We would toughen sentences for those convicted of impaired driving, higher fines, jail times and licence suspensions. We would establish minimum sentences and longer driving prohibitions for those convicted of impaired driving offences causing death or injury. We would ensure that parole is dependent on the successful completion of an educational or rehabilitative program. We would encourage the provinces to introduce random breath tests for deterrence. We would encourage the provinces to seize and sell the vehicles of those convicted of impaired driving while under suspension, with the proceeds going to an anti-drinking and driving fund.

• (1345)

I suspect things like this have been said in the House for many years. I know my colleagues mean what they say. We have worked on this issue. We have worked with groups across the country. It is necessary to emphasize in the House that it is time to act. It is not the time to sit back and tell a committee to take the issue, wallow around with it, hope it goes away and make some minor tinkering changes. We are long past that time.

I encourage my colleagues to put whatever pressure is necessary on those who make decisions in this esteemed place to get on with the job of changing the ability of drunk drivers to kill.

MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, is looking for a victims bill of rights. I have some experience with that, having approached it not from the drunk driving angle but from the view of other victims of crime. It suitably fits in both places.

Unfortunately I have run out of time. In conclusion I would say that we must influence this place and get the job done this time.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the member's comments.

The motion before us today concerns the specific area of drinking and driving and asking the government to put forward a motion to have a committee draft a bill to deal with deterrents and penalties to reflect the seriousness of the offence. Every member

of this place should and I hope will support the motion. It transcends partisan politics.

Since the member is the House leader of the Reform Party I would ask him for his words of wisdom. I am having difficulty making it happen but I think it is important.

If the issue unfolds the way it should and the justice committee deals with deterrents and penalties, it will undoubtedly seek the input of expertise from across Canada. It is undoubtedly the case that there will be input with regard to the broader question of alcohol misuse in Canada. This will possibly bring out relevant and vital recommendations that should also be dealt with.

Would the member on behalf of the Reform Party support or move an amendment to its motion to the effect that any other important recommendations, observations, et cetera, that should come from the committee would be referred to the appropriate standing committee for detailed review? In that way we would not lose the momentum started by the motion.

Mr. Randy White: Mr. Speaker, I have no problem referring any motion from the House to the committees for action.

Very shortly in the House there will be an amendment to the motion, which has been agreed to by all parties, to have some action on a bill by a certain deadline.

To answer the question the best I can, it is incumbent upon all of us in the House to make sure it is a consolidated, comprehensive bill that is not watered down, and that it is brought back to the House early in the spring or later this winter.

In that way all of us can be proud of the actions we take, notwithstanding any opposition from any individuals in cabinet or any other place.

• (1350)

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a short question for my colleague. I listened to his remarks very closely. I never want to refer to it as the justice system because it is viewed across the land as injustice, which seems to be inherent in our legal system today. He was driving at the fact that in today's judicial system there is a lack of holding people responsible and accountable for their actions.

Could he elaborate a little more on where he was going with that reference to drunk driving and to all people who commit horrendous crimes when we do not yet have a victims bill of rights in place in the country to address the victims of crimes?

Mr. Randy White: Mr. Speaker, indeed I refer to what was once a justice system as a legal industry. I believe that wholeheartedly today.

Supply

The way to hold the criminal and the legal system responsible is by implementing rights for victims. We have to stop putting the rights of criminals before the rights of victims. Once we get into that frame of mind and on that track we will be much better off as a country.

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it has been an interesting morning. I am also one of the hon. members on this side of the House who is supporting the motion very strongly.

It is time for an all-party decision and to get the House to agree on something. I do not think that will only enhance the bill. It will also improve the stature of the House of Commons throughout the country.

I have been involved in a number of legal cases in the last while. I have been astounded by the issues judges do not have to address or look at. If they make a mistake they cannot be held accountable. Maybe that is one of the reasons for the problems in our justice system.

We used to look at judges as being almost infallible and as making decisions that people could support. When we look at a lot of the judgments being made, we wonder whether criminals dictate or influence the courts. Do they have more rights before the courts than victims? That is what it seems to me.

Some drunk driving charges are almost unbelievable. Neighbours in my area through no fault of their own, and not due to alcohol, lost a daughter and two grandchildren in an accident about 15 years to 20 years ago. The suffering the family is going through today is unbelievable. We as a House sometimes cannot look at situations jointly or transparently to see the suffering in communities.

I will not make my speech too long today because other member want to participate. I wish the House could support the hon. member's motion so that we are addressing it from the point of view that it is affecting families.

• (1355)

I will be splitting my time with another member, so do not let me go beyond the 10 minutes, Mr. Speaker.

Often we look at tragedies as something that only happens to other people. In the speeches today I have heard of incidents involving families or MPs that I never imagined or had known before. They have probably affected every member of the House in some way, even if we do not know it or see it visibly. When I look back at the emotional stress caused in families that lose a mother or a father, I am hurt to think of the neighbours I deal with on a daily basis whenever I am home.

These accidents, these drunk driving incidents or episodes, could have been easily avoided. In the case I am talking about the issue

S. O. 31

was that probably the father who was impaired had some problems at home not because of drinking but because of emotions and finances he could not handle.

Often we are not aware that families or certain people suffer before they turn to the bottle, as we say. When that happens they become disillusioned and try more or less to drown their problems by taking off in a vehicle to go to see somebody or to go to the next bar. That has bad effects.

It is very sad we only realize the hurt of the tragedy after the fact. We should somehow measure the incidents or the beneficial effect prevention would have on the emotional strains faced by families and on the financial side at times. Often when the drinking problem becomes prevalent in a home mismanagement occurs. Usually it culminates in some kind of an accident, whether it is drunk driving or something else.

It has been a privilege to say a few words on the issue before the House. As I have done before, I urge the House to be non-partisan, to look at the motion and support it, and to make the country a better place to live.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being 2 o'clock, we shall now proceed to statements by members. The hon. member for Mississauga South.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

EMERGENCY PERSONNEL

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week the International Association of Firefighters convened its sixth annual conference in Ottawa. As in the past a vital part of its visit was to meet with parliamentarians to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Of particular note was a request that consideration be given to establishing a registered charitable trust fund for the benefit of families of police officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty.

Canadians are well aware of the risk public safety officers face on a daily basis as they serve our emergency needs. When one of them loses their life in the line of duty, we all mourn that loss.

The establishment of a registered charitable trust fund could provide a tangible opportunity for all Canadians to honour courageous service and to assist their loved ones in their time of need.

I therefore encourage all hon. members to give due consideration to such an initiative in support of Canada's police officers and

firefighters, our everyday heroes on the front lines from sea to sea to sea.

* * *

● (1400)

FIREARMS

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this Liberal government has decided to take yet another pot-shot at law-abiding gun owners in Canada.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has publicly stated his desire for an international treaty to register, control and restrict the use of small arms.

Once again the Liberal government is way off target. Rather than cracking down on the use of firearms to commit crimes, and rather than strengthening enforcement measures along our borders to stop the illegal flow of handguns, the minister would prefer to continue to harass ordinary law-abiding Canadians, even going so far as to deny them use of their own private property.

The word is that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is upset because he did not win the Nobel Prize for the landmine treaty. He should not worry because he is a shoo-in for the booby prize for trampling on the rights of law-abiding Canadians. It is a disgrace.

* * *

CHILD LABOUR

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week in Oslo at the International Organization of Labour Conference, Canada joins with 39 countries, children's right activists, labour representatives and leaders of multilateral agencies who have come together to draft an agenda for action on what steps the international community can take to protect children world-wide from harmful and exploitive forms of child labour.

Canada's goals are clear. We are committed to full respect for children's rights, improving children's health through clean water and sound nutrition, improving the quality of, and access to, basic education, especially for young girls. And we are committed to providing protection for children against abuse, exploitation and violence.

Our CIDA funding approach to child labour targets preventive measures by focusing on schooling, child care and strengthening the role of women in society.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF QUEBEC REFERENDUM

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, two years ago today a referendum on sovereignty was held in Quebec.

An unprecedented 93% of Quebecers voted in the referendum without any incident being reported. Quebec serves as an example of democracy to the whole world.

While it was almost a tie between the yes and the no sides, we in Quebec have respected the will of the 50.6% of our fellow citizens who chose to give the Canadian federal system one last chance.

Canada's response to this final request for change from the people of Quebec was Plan B, threats and blackmail, and the ludicrous and meaningless recognition of Quebec's unique character in the Calgary declaration.

After such a display of cynicism and contempt, rest assured that next time will be the right time. Quebecers will get their own country and they will do so democratically, peacefully and with respect for the various components of Quebec society.

* * *

[English]

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is an important day in our parliamentary history. The Canadian Association for Parliamentarians on Population and Development is launched on this day.

This association will give parliamentarians in Canada the unique opportunity to raise the national awareness of population and development issues and to influence and shape policy decisions consistent with commitments made at international conferences and in Canadian foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you, officials and parliamentarians from the U.K., Bolivia, Asia, and all the NGOs who have participated and assisted to make this effort come alive.

* * *

TAMARA OKEYNAN

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today in my constituency of Wetaskiwin baby Tamara Okeynan will be laid to rest in the ancestral burial grounds of the Hobbema Indian Reserve.

With Tamara's birth imminent, her parents who do not own a car or a telephone, attempted to walk the five kilometres to get a ride to the hospital. There would be no hospital delivery for baby Tamara. Time ran out for mother and daughter and the baby was delivered not in sterile surroundings but on the shoulder of the gravel road. Throughout the two-hour ordeal the plight of Tamara's mom and dad were ignored by passing motorists.

We pride ourselves on being a caring nation, on the cutting edge of technology. Yet despite her parent's valiant efforts a young life

slipped away before she had a chance to experience the things we all take for granted.

I would like to offer my sympathy and that of all members of this House to Tamara's parents, Paul and Lorna, and their families who have been denied an opportunity to know this infant.

* * *

• (1405)

BROCKVILLE ROWING CLUB

Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past summer five young women from the Brockville Rowing Club took on the world and won at the prestigious women's Henly Regatta in England. In the gallery today is the junior women's coxed four crew of Jocelyn Swift, Caroline Vavro, Danielle Ker, Tami McBratney the coxswain Crystal Bois D'Enghien, along with their coach Mr. Chris Marshall.

This championship crew not only carried on the proud and successful tradition of the Brockville Rowing Club, but also brought honour to the city of Brockville, the riding of Leeds-Grenville and to the sport of rowing in Canada.

These young women can serve as an excellent example of team work to all youth. It is an honour to congratulate these fine young athletes and wish them well in future competitions, as well as any other challenges they choose to take on.

* * *

[Translation]

RENÉ LÉVESQUE

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on November 1, 1987, René Lévesque passed away, leaving behind not only the love of an entire people but also a great void.

With his plan for government takeover of the hydro sector, he gave French Canadians, who had little hope for a future, reason to hold their heads up high. "We can do it", he said repeatedly as a Liberal and federalist minister at the time.

He turned the independence movement into a popular political party, the Parti Québécois, which he led to victory in 1976 and, while in office, gave Quebec some of its most forceful legislation, including legislation on public financing of political parties and on agricultural zoning, Bill 101 and legislation on occupational health and safety.

He suffered the pain of losing the referendum in 1980, but had the nobility of soul to respect the democratic choice made by Quebecers, convinced that they would eventually get their own country.

To paraphrase Félix Leclerc, he will be, for us and forever, on the short list of liberators of people.

S. O. 31

BLOC QUEBECOIS

Mr. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there were questions this week by the Bloc that I find rather disturbing.

I am referring of course to the questions concerning Mr. Deslauriers and the unfounded allegations of his relations with a biker gang.

I congratulate the solicitor general for the integrity, the wisdom and the caution he showed in answering the questions. Canadians are in good hands with him.

I also congratulate the Bloc member for Chambly, who has shown that he has deep convictions and that he is a man of principle. He did not get caught up in the unfortunate tactics of his leader, who tried once again to do anything he could to get noticed. I agree with the member for Chambly who said, and I quote "I am saddened that at times reputations are destroyed by questions we need not ask and by doubts we need not have".

I congratulate him for his courage. He saves the face of his party today and I invite the leader of the Bloc to consult the hon. member for Chambly more often.

* * *

[English]

REFORM PARTY OF CANADA

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, ten years ago a small group of Canadians concerned for the future of their country assembled, debated, voted and formed a new political party, the Reform Party of Canada. Less than a year later it gained 275,000 votes and went on to great success the following year with the election of its first MP from Beaver River and Stan Waters, Canada's first elected senator.

Like a prairie grass fire, the Reform message spread as Canadians sought better government. Leading the fight for government to live within its means, for a plan to unify the country, for a strong justice system, for more accountable politicians, the party gained over 2.5 million votes and 52 seats in the 1993 election. Now serving as Her Majesty's loyal opposition, dedicated to building a new and better Canada, Reformers look to the future with pride, confidence and determination. Today we salute the hard work and commitment of hundreds of thousands of—

[Translation]

FONOROLA

Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, Fonorola from Montreal invested \$100 million in optical fibre equipment to proceed with its 12,000 kilometre telecommunications network project.

With this investment, 150 new jobs will be created at Fonorola in Montreal. This type of investment is the result of the confidence shown by our industries in Canadian society. I hope that this has a snowball effect and convinces other companies to take an active part in the economic recovery.

I am pleased to acknowledge the important contribution by the chairman of Fonorola, Jan Peeters, who lives in Bolton-Est in my beautiful riding of Brome—Missisquoi. I would like to congratulate him for his dynamism and for his great efforts to implement by 1998 a system that will link the whole of Canada from sea to sea.

He is a fine example of the people we have in Brome—Missisquoi.

* * *

• (1410)

[English]

PAY EQUITY

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, equal pay for equal work sounds obvious. It is not, at least not to this government, which continues to deny and defy its own law.

Today in Halifax women from my riding have joined women from across the country to insist that government put its words about equality into action. Women in the public service have long been due under human rights and pay equity legislation back pay to ensure that the work they have done when of equal value to work done by men is of equal pay. The government should have done this before deciding to dole out \$12.1 million in bonuses to senior civil servants.

Rosemary Brown wrote in 1973: "Until all of us have made it, none of us have made it".

Until the government settles this debt, it continues to deny equality to all Canadian women. Now is the time, today, maintenant, aujourd'hui. Justice delayed is justice denied.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

SENATOR JEAN-ROBERT GAUTHIER

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks 25th years of life in Parliament for the Hon. Jean-Robert Gauthier.

Elected to Parliament for the first time on October 30, 1972 as the member for Ottawa—Vanier, Jean-Robert Gauthier was re-elected six consecutive times, before being appointed to the Upper House in 1994.

A champion of Franco-Ontarians and of the French language, Mr. Gauthier has left his mark on a community which has nothing but respect for him.

It is to mark his contribution that, yesterday, the Fondation franco-ontarienne created the Fonds Jean-Robert Gauthier, which will award scholarships to Franco-Ontarian students who have demonstrated a commitment to excellence in French.

I take this opportunity to congratulate a man for whom I have a great deal of admiration, the Hon. Jean-Robert Gauthier, Senator.

* * *

[English]

SENIORS

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Mr. Speaker, this Liberal government has stripped our seniors of their dignity. This Liberal government thinks it is okay to decrease benefits for OAS, GIS and CPP. This Liberal government, cheered on by their pals in the Reform Party, thinks it is okay to cut transfer payments to the provinces that result in hospital closures and downsizing.

Over the past four years seniors have witnessed unprecedented funding cuts while the cost of living continues to rise. In addition to this, seniors in Nova Scotia are now faced with the blended sales tax, which significantly increases the cost of every day necessities such as home heating fuel, electricity, phone service and gas.

On June 2, Nova Scotians told the Liberal government that it was not okay to treat our seniors with such contempt. It is time for the Liberals to stop their cutback contest with the Reform Party and start recognizing the plight of a rapidly growing group of Canadian society.

On behalf of the seniors of West Nova, please stop the cuts.

* * *

MIRAMICHI

Mr. Charles Hubbard (Miramichi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the 1994 budget announced that base Chatham was to be closed. This was a loss to the Miramichi community of 1,000 jobs, and more than \$50 million in annual government spending. It came at a time

when the Miramichi was facing an unemployment rate of 25% and the community was seriously affected by other federal cutbacks.

I am glad to report today that the Miramichi has refused to bow down to this loss. Community leaders, the province of New Brunswick and our former premier, Frank McKenna, have worked hard to overcome the difficulties that have besieged us.

Today, Skypark Miramichi, the former base Chatham, is the home of more than a dozen struggling new industries. This past summer, the married quarters have been converted into a retirement living complex. People are coming from all across Canada to enjoy the recreational aspects of the Miramichi and the many amenities that our community has to offer.

The people of Miramichi will strive to overcome the misfortunes of the past few years and will press on to achieve an even greater economy for our area.

* * *

DRUNK DRIVERS

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, each day in Canada tragedies are caused by drunk drivers. According to the Mothers Against Drunk Driving more than four Canadians per day are being killed by alcohol-related crashes.

While an individual's decision to consume alcohol is a private matter, driving after taking alcohol or other drugs is a public matter. Nobody is safe from the harm drunk drivers can cause families and friends. We saw that last August when the world witnessed the tragic results of a car crash in Paris that claimed the life of Diana, Princess of Wales.

● (1415)

Finally, I would like to ask my fellow parliamentarians to make this issue an immediate priority.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week the Liberals said that their greenhouse gas emission plan would "incur costs". In today's *Globe and Mail* government officials say that those costs could in fact eat up any budget surplus that there may be.

How is the prime minister going to pay for Kyoto, raise taxes or raid the surplus?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a position that keeps in mind every element of the

Oral Questions

proposition. There is no way that we will have a policy that does not deal with the problem of the environment which is threatening the world.

Every country has been invited to make a contribution and Canada believes that it has to make a contribution, and we will do it in a responsible way. I am sure that Canada can grow and at the same time protect the environment.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the prime minister says we need to make a contribution, and we do. However, the countdown to Kyoto is on. There are only 32 days before the conference starts and Canada is the only country in the G-7 that has not released a position yet. Maybe the reasons the Liberals will not make the plan public is that then we will find out exactly how much Kyoto will cost.

I ask the prime minister again will the jump at the pump be 10 cents, 20 cents or 30 cents a litre?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the researchers of the member for Edmonton North are very well known to be very incompetent. I want to say again that it is typical of the Reform Party that it just wants to dress up a straw man to shoot at, or perhaps a straw woman, who knows?

We are saying that we will be responsible because we have to make our contribution to the protection of the world environment and at the same time make sure that Canada will grow, as Canada has grown since the Liberals came to power.

Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, he can talk about Reform research all he likes, but those numbers came from the Conference Board of Canada.

Canadians are sick and tired of these non-answers. We are 32 days away from this conference and Canadians do not know what is going on. It is shame that the price of cabinet solidarity has to affect the price of gas.

I ask the prime minister one more time, do not run and hide, do not dodge or weave from the question, just answer it. How much cash will Kyoto cost?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all the countries of the world are going to Kyoto. Everybody realizes that they have to make a contribution. Everybody in the world realizes that there is a serious problem except the Reform Party of Canada.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we know the prime minister is prepared to sock it to consumers for his diplomatic friends, but where is the finance minister in all of this? He seems to be laying pretty low. But he is the one with his hand on the tax lever. Is he going to pull it, or is the environment minister running finance now?

My question is just how high is the minister going to drive up taxes?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government has worked reasonably well as a team. We have managed to balance the books in four years. A little magazine called *The Economist* this week stated that Canada is doing the best job in public finances of all the countries of the G-7.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Liberals go absolutely ballistic when gas prices go up and down a couple of cents around every Labour Day weekend. But, boy, when the finance minister or the environment minister or whoever is running finance these days wants to raise the price by 30 cents a litre forever, they blame it on Rio, or I guess on Kyoto now.

Why will the finance minister or the prime minister not put all the speculation to an end? Why does he not just rule out tax increases right now? Rule them out.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is again an invention of the Reform Party. Its members cannot find anything concrete, so they have to use their poor imaginations to talk about price increases on gasoline. The people of Canada know how non-serious these people are. They are just trying to invent problems. We have enough to solve the real problems and we are solving them so well that they have to invent problems to attack the government.

* * *

• (1420)

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Most countries have made their positions known on the objectives for greenhouse gas emission reduction to be presented at the Kyoto conference to be held in a few weeks.

Since the Canadian position is not yet known, my question is: When does the Canadian government intend to make a final decision on the position it will be presenting in Kyoto?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, definitely before the Kyoto conference.

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the Canadian position must be supported by the provinces, they being the ones primarily responsible for this matter, what strategy does the federal government intend to implement in order to obtain a consensus on the position to be defended in Kyoto and on its subsequent implementation?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is what my ministers are involved in at the present time. They have met with the ministers responsible and we are holding discussions with the provinces. We are holding discussions with the energy sector. We are holding discussions with the industrial sector,

Oral Questions

which also wants to make a contribution, and with the environmental protectionists.

Our position will, we hope, be acceptable to all Canadians.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

We know that not all provinces produce the same amount of greenhouse gases. For example, Alberta, which has 9% of Canada's population, is responsible for 27% of the greenhouse gases produced in Canada.

What strategy does the federal government intend to adopt in order to convince the most recalcitrant provinces to participate in the collective effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are speaking with all of the provinces that have problems. In Canada, the problems are not always exactly the same from one province to another.

I believe that both the Government of Alberta and the people of Alberta want to make their contribution, because responsible people are aware of the importance of addressing this problem, which poses a threat to so many people throughout the world.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, to avoid a repetition of what happened in Rio, how will the federal government make sure this time that all of the provinces will formally comply with the objectives set at Kyoto, when we know that only Quebec and British Columbia followed up on what was agreed to in Rio?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat disappointed to hear the hon. member telling me that the Canadian government did not do a good job in Rio, because the minister representing the Canadian government at that time was, if I am not mistaken, a certain Lucien Bouchard.

* * *

[English]

MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INVESTMENT

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the prime minister.

Canadian NGO representatives, just returned from the OECD meetings in Paris, confirm that the draft text of the multilateral agreement on investment is all but a done deal.

This government tells Canadians that our health care, social programs, environmental and labour standards and our culture will

be protected, but behind closed doors in Paris Canada's negotiators have completely failed to fight for such protection.

Can the prime minister confirm that this is why no progress on these essential protections has been made?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clearly inaccurate to say it is a done deal.

How can she say they are secret negotiations when last week the OECD invited over 40 international organizations, including the Council of Canadians?

Some people would have us remove ourselves from the world: no trade, no investment, no rules and ultimately no jobs.

That may be her position but it is certainly not the position of this government because Canadians deserve and want much more.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is precisely because trade and investment are so important that we need to get these rules right, and we need to get them right for Canada.

Last week in this House the trade minister assured us that he supports binding commitments on labour and environmental standards. Today we have learned that the current MAI draft contains no such safeguards.

• (1425)

Will the prime minister assure Canadians that this government will refuse to sign any multilateral agreement on investments that does not contain binding labour and environmental standards?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair to say that Canada has among the highest labour and environmental standards in the international community.

Certainly we will not sell short either the environment or labour. Clearly the MAI also will not undermine any laws or regulations we currently have on the books that govern both environment and labour.

The member wants us to abdicate or walk away from the talks but that is not going to advance either the interest of the environment or labour. The interest is to stand and to fight for your interest and principles rather than running away.

Again, that is their position, not ours.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, I will take the opportunity to correct the prime minister who said that Mr. Bouchard was the minister of the environment in Rio. It was myself. I regret to report that neither Mr. Bouchard nor myself would view that as a compliment.

Oral Questions

There must be a lot of smog in the cabinet room these days because there is a lot of confusion on the government's position. I would like to help those members out today and ask whether or not, as they go to Kyoto, they will have a position that will encourage a tradable permit system as was recommended by the Commission for Environmental Co-operation put together by NAFTA, of which the Minister of the Environment happens to be a member.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): I understand that the file was prepared by Mr. Bouchard and he gave it to the hon. member to take there. I am sorry to link the two of you but I have no choice.

On the question that the hon. member put, yes it is one of the things that we want to do to make sure that we have credit for what we do. Very often our actions help others deal with problems and we are trying to get credit so that when we are helping somebody else Canadians will get the credit as with the fact that Alberta is selling natural gas to the Americans in order to—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, the smog has obviously not evaporated because the prime minister did not understand my question.

My question is whether or not this government is going to propose a tradable permit system between Canada, the United States and Mexico, as was recommended by the group on the environment between the three countries.

Second, will the government also propose a system that will allow us to take credit for efforts in other countries?

Finally, will there be regional variations in our position to allow Alberta to have a fair shake?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I said that we believe in getting credit for what we do with others. That does not imply only doing it with Mexico and the United States. We would like to extend it to other countries.

In terms of within industry or within regions of Canada, it is another possibility that we are looking at.

* * *

TOBACCO LEGISLATION

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the health minister is weakening the tobacco bill. First it is race cars, next it will be tennis, then jazz festivals and then equestrian events.

The minister knows full well that the path he is on is the wrong path. Why has he chosen to grovel and snivel at the feet of the big tobacco companies instead of being the Minister of Health?

Hon. Allan Rock (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the new writers for the Reform Party not only engage in fiction writing but very colourful fiction writing at that.

The hon. member was in his place last year when this government introduced and then adopted the toughest anti-tobacco legislation in the western world. That legislation is going to be linked with significant efforts and substantial sums of money over the next five years in a co-ordinated effort across this country to reduce the consumption of tobacco and persuade young people not to start smoking. That is our objective.

• (1430)

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): In fact, Mr. Speaker, the rhetoric did sound pretty tough.

I have a quote from the previous Minister of Health. It states: "Whatever the ostensible intent of the tobacco companies, their rich, promotional campaigns reach our youth". Then they sent a sneaky letter to the race car teams just before the election. To do what? To give them an exemption.

The health minister in his heart of hearts knows this is wrong. Why did he not just simply say, no chance?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Because, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that keeps and respects its commitments. That was a commitment we made and we are going to keep it.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

We can certainly understand that Canada's position on greenhouse gas emissions must have provincial support, but we are concerned at not knowing the federal government's position.

Would the Minister of the Environment assure us that the federal government's position on greenhouse gas emissions is not likely to mimic that of the United States, which falls far short, in view of the stakes?

[English]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, responsibilities for meeting Canada's targets and timelines will be that of all the players and partners involved in this issue. The federal government will have to take its responsibilities. Its partners, business, industry, municipalities, individual citizens, in fact many of them are already taking these responsibilities.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the consequences of the greenhouse effect seem particularly serious,

obvious and rapid for the St. Lawrence, is it the minister's intention to use this example to convince participating countries in Kyoto, including the United States, of the need for quick action?

[English]

Hon. Christine Stewart (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, scientists suggest that there can be very difficult implications for many sectors in our economy. Our natural resources of forestry, water, fisheries, agriculture and many sectors could be impacted by the effects of climate change.

Our government will work hard to make sure that Canadians understand these issues and that we respond accordingly to the crisis.

* * *

AIRBUS

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the solicitor general said in the scrum that they could not stop Staff Sergeant Fiegenwald from leaving the RCMP. This is false. The RCMP Act contradicts that statement.

I ask the government why should Canadians not believe that this is simply a continuation of the Airbus cover-up?

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reason Canadians should realize it is not is because the entire exercise was handled according to the RCMP Act without any political interference at all, as it should be.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, obviously the solicitor general does not know anything about the RCMP Act or the authority of the commissioner.

Staff Sergeant Fiegenwald was forced out. The government now says that the case is closed. Who is the government going to hold accountable for botching the government's case against Brian Mulroney?

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can only refer the member to the staff sergeant's own press release which stated that he accepted a job that he was very happy to take.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

According to the human resources manual of the Department of Foreign Affairs, no employee of the department may grant interviews or deliver speeches on controversial matters, without prior approval.

Oral Questions

Who in the government gave Ambassador Jacques Roy authority to tour Quebec with the Council on Canadian Unity promoting national unity?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a general practice that we are able to invite our ambassadors abroad to come to Canada to explain all the initiatives, all the work and all the accomplishments of Canada to demonstrate what an extremely valuable country we have and what kind of contribution we can make to the world.

● (1435)

[Translation]

Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how does the government explain the fact that, despite the provision in this manual that neutrality in the public service is primordial and all employees have a direct interest in maintaining it, Jacques Roy is directly involved in the political fight in Canada and Quebec?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but answer this question, because not so very long ago agents general of the Quebec government who refused to swear an oath to the cause were asked to leave their position.

The Parti Quebecois and the Bloc Quebecois can teach us nothing we do not already know.

* * *

[English]

CHINA

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, torture and the jailing of political dissidents are still occurring in the shadows of Tiananmen Square. Yesterday the President of the United States bluntly made it very clear to President Jiang Zemin that they were absolutely appalled with the human rights abuses in China.

What message and when is the Prime Minister going to bluntly say to the regime in China that Canadians are appalled by the human rights abuses which are occurring now?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may be aware that we have negotiated a direct agreement with the Chinese government to deal specifically on human rights abuses. Under that agreement we have had two major sessions of dialogue with the Chinese wherein we have raised human rights abuses. In fact in the dialogue that took place two weeks ago, we gave him a specific list of all the political dissidents and asked that they give them a release.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, that is very nice but I wonder if that action involves not

Oral Questions

signing the UN declaration that condemned China for human rights abuses. This is the first time this country has not done that.

Once again I ask the Prime Minister what concrete measures is he going to give to the President of China to illustrate to the Canadian people that we as Canadians are appalled and disgusted by the human rights abuses that are occurring there now?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that the most effective way of achieving changes on human rights is to build the capacity within the government itself and within the country itself.

As a result under the agreement we signed we are helping reform the legal system to bring in a legal aid program to train judges. We have under the agreement the opportunity to go to Tibet and deal directly with the question of religious discrimination. Further, China has just signed the UN covenant on economic and social rights, which is one of our priorities which is to get the Chinese to sign into the agreement on the UN covenant on rights.

In a matter of four or five months I think we have been able to achieve some—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Drummond.

* * *

[Translation]

TOBACCO LEGISLATION

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Health announced that he was going to table amendments to his anti-tobacco legislation, so that the Grand Prix could be televised in Canada.

Can the minister tell us clearly whether or not he intends to take the necessary action to support other sports and cultural events?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is at least the fifth time I have stated the government's position on this issue.

As I said yesterday and last week, we intend to respect the undertaking we gave a few months ago. We are impatiently awaiting the Government of Quebec's new tobacco legislation.

* * *

[English]

MEDICAL RESEARCH

Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

I have a thick file in my office from concerned medical researchers in this country who are worried that we are falling gravely behind the other G-7 countries in the funding for medical research.

What can the Minister of Health say to these people so we do not lose them to south of the border where there are dollars for medical research?

• (1440)

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to maintaining the world class medical research we enjoy in Canada. The Medical Research Council is acknowledged throughout the world as establishing a standard of excellence envied by other countries and this government has acted in recent years to preserve that standard of excellence.

Let me mention two items. First of all we have rendered permanent and we have established stable funding for a network of centres of excellence across the country for medical research. Second, through the Foundation for Innovation we are creating the infrastructure for research in the future.

We will do more. We will ensure that we maintain—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Yellowhead.

* * *

AIRPORTS

Mr. Cliff Breitzkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in July the federal court ruled that the Jasper and Banff airstrips should remain open. In spite of this court order, Parks Canada officials ticketed pilots for landing their planes on these airstrips.

Will the Secretary of State for Parks Canada explain to this House why his officials deliberately broke the law?

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Secretary of State (Parks), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously Parks Canada did not break the law. What the court indicated was that those airports could not be decommissioned. They are not being decommissioned. The item is before the courts. Simply speaking, they cannot be used until a decision is made. That is what we have put in place and that is what we are going to ensure takes place.

Mr. Cliff Breitzkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there is a court injunction. In my books, if you break that injunction, you are breaking the law.

Since the Minister of Canadian Heritage shut down these airports there have been at least a half-dozen emergency landings. Should the casualties start to roll in, will the heritage minister take full responsibility and cough up or will she cop out?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact is people can land anywhere in an emergency.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of trade.

Oral Questions

In his answer to my leader earlier it appears that the minister was prepared to answer a question that we did not ask. If he has now had time to think about the question we actually asked him, perhaps he could answer it.

Can the minister tell us whether or not Canada is going to insist at the MAI table on a binding and enforceable set of core labour and environmental standards? Is that the position of the government or is it not?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, what I said to his leader earlier was that Canada and this government enjoy standards in both labour and environment that are the highest in the world. Second, Canadian negotiators are delighted to push both files to have an integral part in the MAI.

Finally, that is what the MAI is all about. We do not want in the developing world to have those standards so low that that is where the investment goes. The point is to regulate high standards and good regulations so it is a level playing field for both the—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, telling us that it is to be an integral part does not tell us whether it is to be binding and whether it is to be enforceable.

The minister calls attention to the danger that developing countries might have lower standards and thereby have an unfair competitive advantage. That is precisely why there needs to be a core set of enforceable labour and environmental standards. That is why we want the government to take that view. We want to know, is the government taking that view?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope he also lobbies the other socialist governments and the labour government in Great Britain as well in terms of advocating that these 29 countries ensure high standards on both labour and environment.

I mention to the member as well that negotiations are obviously ongoing. They will really get going in earnest between January and April. We will be pushing as strongly as we possibly can.

* * *

● (1445)

FISHERIES

Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question relates to the absurd use of regulations by the Government of Canada that deliberately and knowingly create unemployment in Newfoundland and in all of Atlantic Canada.

The clawback on earnings in excess of—

The Speaker: I know the hon. member is zealous in his question. We have used the word deliberately twice today and I wonder if we could shy away from using that word. I will let the member continue.

Mr. Charlie Power: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker.

There are regulations in the Government of Canada that have created unemployment in Atlantic Canada and particularly in Newfoundland. The clawback on earnings in excess of \$26,000 from fishermen at a rate of 100% puts fishermen in the situation where they simply must stop fishing. The end result of course is lay-offs in the fish processing industry.

My question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Will he change these absurd regulations as requested by the Government of Newfoundland and the Newfoundland fishermen's union so that those Newfoundlanders who can work will be able to do so?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we looked into the situation of the Newfoundland fishermen as part of the overall reform to unemployment. That was a very major reform. We looked into every aspect of the reform that was brought forward. On the first anniversary of the implementation of the reform there will be a full report that will look into all aspects of it.

We are very proud of the reform we have done. We think it is more adaptable to our country's labour market.

Mr. Charlie Power (St. John's West, PC): Mr. Speaker, the minister simply refuses or is unwilling or unable to deal with this problem.

When skippers stop putting their boats out fishermen stop fishing and plant workers get laid off. The domino effect creates more unemployment in an already economically depressed area of Canada.

My question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Will he, on behalf of the fishing industry people of Newfoundland and Labrador, do whatever is necessary to make sure that these stupid and ridiculous regulations are changed?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have answered the hon. gentleman very well. A lot of elements are part of the reform. This is a very good job overall that we as a government had the courage to do. The 25 year old regime was not serving Canadians well at all.

I am saying that indeed all aspects of the reform are being very closely monitored by the government.

* * *

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Oral Questions

Disabled Canadians continue to face unique hurdles in their efforts to penetrate the workforce and contribute to Canada's growth with sustained employment.

What action is the government taking to give disabled Canadians better opportunities to contribute their talents to Canadian industry?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for a very good question.

Our government is very committed to meeting the needs of Canadians with disabilities and to helping them get back into the labour force because that is what they want.

As a matter of fact we are moving on all fronts. I would like to draw her attention in particular to an agreement that the Government of Canada and the provinces have reached on new employability assistance for persons with disabilities to replace the old VRDP.

We have added \$70 million per year in measures to recognize the extra costs of disability and an opportunities fund of \$30 million for disabled persons who want to work.

* * *

FISHERIES

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I bet I know what American congressmen call our Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. They call him "Our man in Canada".

Washington has shown no interest in reducing its salmon catch on the west coast and our minister has shown no more backbone than a jellyfish.

• (1450)

My question is simple. Why is the minister continuing to ignore Canadian fishermen? Why does he jump every time the Americans say boo?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member were interested in British Columbia fishermen, he would recognize the object of the government is to get the best deal we can for them.

It is not to stand in the House and posture and make remarks which may appeal to people back home but in the end damage the case we have to put forward to get a deal between Canada and the United States so that the interests of our fishermen are properly respected.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for the Prime Minister of Canada.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether or not important jobs in the public service, such as that of penitentiary warden, are covered by a code of conduct?

[English]

Hon. Andy Scott (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we have put the issue to rest.

It has been pretty well established that the Bloc party was wandering down the road. I would warn the hon. member that when he gets lost down that road the leader has a tendency to fire the driver.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has been a major disappointment for Canadians to have the Minister of Health cave in to the tobacco industry. He says he had no choice but he did. He has a choice to be the minister of tobacco or the Minister of Health.

We wonder today why he chose to be the minister of tobacco. Specifically, would he at least agree to hold off on his amendments exempting race cars until December 4 when the European Union votes to ban tobacco advertising?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is reacting as though this is some sort of surprise. The position of the government has been obvious for many months.

First we introduced the hardest hitting anti-tobacco legislation in the western world. We put it before the House and the House adopted it. Then we made it clear in relation to the international auto sport in Montreal that we were to provide an exemption for sponsorship. That is the position of the government.

Let us move on to implement the Tobacco Act and implement the anti-smoking strategy we have in mind to make sure young people do not start.

* * *

PORTS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Under Bill C-9 every port and harbour in Canada is relegated to one of three kinds of categories except one, the port of Hamilton. Hamilton is the only port in Canada that does not have to follow the rules.

In the transport committee the other day transport officials said that the decision was entirely political and had nothing to do with Bill C-9.

Will the minister tell the House and every port in Canada that must follow the rules what political pressure was applied and who in the world could have applied the pressure?

Oral Questions

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows Bill C-9 is now before committee.

If he is worrying about political pressure, he might want to apply some political pressure of his own and raise this matter in committee where it should be raised.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

This week in Ottawa the NATO secretary general said that the international community should not abandon Bosnia now nor in June when the NATO led stabilization forces mandate is set to expire.

Could the Minister of National Defence tell the House what the government's intention is with respect to continued Canadian contribution to that region?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian forces in Bosnia have made a major contribution to bringing about stability and peace in that region.

There is a lot that has been accomplished by them and the allies but there is a great deal more to do. Later this fall the Minister of Foreign Affairs and I will bring the issue before cabinet to discuss the matter of our forces going beyond the period of January to the end of the SFOR mission at the end of June. Beyond that we will be having further discussions with our allies.

• (1455)

I am glad two committees of this Parliament will be going to Bosnia to see first hand what is happening.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week I provided the agriculture minister with a U.S. leaked document that showed western farmers lost at least \$1 to \$1.50 on their feed wheat when Alberta pool and the CWB dumped it into the U.S. market at half price.

Could the minister explain to western Canadian farmers why the same grade of wheat sold in the same timeframe and into the same market was worth \$1 to \$1.50 a bushel more when farmers exported it than when Alberta pool or the CWB—

The Speaker: The hon. minister of agriculture.

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week the hon. gentlemen provided a rather complex pile of papers which I have referred to my officials for analysis.

We have completed a preliminary review of the Canadian Wheat Board matter to which the hon. gentleman has just referred. On the basis of that preliminary analysis there would not appear to be any foundation to the allegations he is making.

I will, however, complete my review and if I discover anything to the contrary I will report to him.

* * *

[*Translation*]

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The federal government is increasing the number of programs for young people. In so doing, it is overlapping by over \$120 million the Government of Quebec's youth programs. Overlap and waste are back with a vengeance.

If the minister is so concerned about the needs of young people, why does he not negotiate the transfer to Quebec of job programs, in line with the clear consensus of Quebecers, so that young people can benefit from programs tailored to their needs?

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it regrettable that the member views this more as a jurisdictional issue. Our interest is young people. I think that what the member should be interested in is seeing that young people can enter the job market more easily.

We have already transferred all responsibility for manpower training and active measures to the Government of Quebec. This represents \$500 million annually that the Quebec government can use for job programs.

The member should also know that we are now holding talks with the government and Mrs. Harel's department to discuss the elimination of unnecessary overlap and duplication with respect to youth programs.

* * *

[*English*]

TRADE

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of trade. In an attempt this afternoon to completely deflect from the question we were putting to the government on whether it would or would not support binding protection for labour and environment in the MAI, he suggested we conscript the social democratic countries in our fight in this regard.

Let me make it clear from the minutes of negotiations that the U.K. is leading, together with France and other European social democratic countries, in that fight.

Points of Order

Will the minister answer the question? Is Canada prepared to support binding protection—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of International Trade.

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the negotiations started in 1995. The member is very fond of holding up the minutes of a particular meeting.

The other day she was saying that we should follow the American leadership on labour. I can tell her that the Americans have not been putting forward a binding alternative.

We have made very clear it is in the interest of Canada not to walk away from the table but to stay there to influence the debate and ensure that investment can create jobs in this country and across the globe. We will continue to fight for the highest standards and not rising to debate—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Fundy—Royal.

* * *

ENVIRONMENT

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Mr. Speaker, the province of Alberta has clearly stated it will not support any target the federal government sets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. This clearly indicates that all provinces are not on side despite the minister's claims of open dialogue. Obviously open dialogue does not mean full partnership.

How does the lack of support from the provinces affect her strategy, hoping there is one, to implement Canada's Kyoto targets? Will the prime minister commit today to having any position derived from Kyoto subject to the approval of the House to provide Canadians with at least some consultation?

• (1500)

Hon. Christine Stewart (Northumberland, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last month the federal government has had over 100 meetings with a wide variety of partners on the issue of climate change. We have been negotiating and discussing this very serious issue constantly.

In setting our targets and timetables and the measures that are required to achieve them, we will continue this process of dialogue with all of the partners who will be implicated. Together we can achieve our objectives.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of Members of Parliament and Senators

from Bolivia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland attending the Canadian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: We will have our usual Thursday question from the Reform House leader.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the House leader of that other socialist government.

I would like to find out the nature of the government's business for the remainder of this week and the following week.

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government House leader had to excuse himself for a moment. I am sure we will be able to get back to this question momentarily if members will just give us a few minutes.

The Speaker: That question will be answered in just a moment.

I have a point of order from the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER**QUESTION PERIOD**

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order relating to a question posed by the member for St. John's West where the Speaker, in your discretion, sat him down for using the word "deliberately".

I can understand the use of that word in the context of a nefarious purpose where there was an accusation that a person was deliberately misleading or deliberately misinforming, but I think the record will show in the context of the question it was deliberately causing unemployment and for that reason—

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member. In the course of question period when everything is pretty fast, as we can see now, usually when we come to the word "deliberate" I sort of pick up on it. I will be happy to look at the blues.

You will know that although I interrupted the member, when we did go back he had his full 35 seconds. I know that all hon. members will give the Speaker the discretion to make these judgment calls. Sometimes I miss them. If this was one of them, I am sorry, but these things happen.

• (1505)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the government House leader the nature of the business for the remainder of this week and the business for next week, and also those issues that are going through the Senate which should be in this House and not that House.

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. House leader of the official opposition for his question.

I wish to announce to the House that tomorrow we will consider, and I hope complete, second reading of Bill C-16, which is the bill responding to the supreme court regarding the warrants of arrest. Starting Monday, we plan to resume where we left off on Bill C-3. Following this, we will proceed with Bill C-12, the RCMP superannuation bill, Bill C-7, the Saguenay Park legislation, Bill C-17, regarding Teleglobe, Bill C-14, respecting drinking water safety, and Bill C-15, the Canada Shipping Act amendments.

I also wish to indicate that we will discuss through the usual channels the scheduling of the motion to join with the Senate in a special joint committee on child custody and related matters. This is an issue that was raised both in this House and in the other place.

Next Thursday shall be an allotted day. I expect that the business that I have just announced will probably carry us until Thursday of next week, and hopefully we could conclude next Friday by doing the final reading of Bill C-3 if the committee has concluded its work on that bill, which I hope it will.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—IMPAIRED DRIVING

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: When the House broke for question period, the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar had the floor. I believe he has four minutes or so remaining in his remarks.

Mr. Jake E. Hooppner (Portage—Lisgar, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it has been an interesting day so far, not just the debate, but also question period.

As I was sitting and thinking of what I was going to say in these four minutes, I thought I would give an example of how sad some of these drunk driving cases are.

Supply

My brother, who is a little younger than I, lives on Highway No. 3. He had his in-laws visit him during the middle of the day one summer to look at the crops. They left at about five o'clock in the afternoon and as they were going down Highway No. 3, his mother-in-law saw a cardboard box lying in the ditch. She said "Hey, let's stop and pick up that box. It's junk. Let's clean it up."

Her husband parked on the gravel shoulder of Highway No. 3. She was in the middle of the ditch when a drunk driver came along. He saw the car sitting on the shoulder of the road and drove on the other side of the car, into the ditch, and killed this woman instantly. She was in the middle of the ditch, not on the road. This happened half a mile from my brother's place.

Every time I go by it, I know what it does to me. How often have I stopped on the road somewhere to pick up something or to go through the ditch and look at the grain. That tragedy will never be erased from my mind. That family is going to suffer for the rest of those people's lives. The grandmother's life was snuffed out. The grandkids were in their early teens or just below. I know it affects my sister-in-law because it happened half a mile from their home. She cannot miss going by that place.

That is one example from hundreds that have happened in this country. It should not have happened.

• (1510)

That accident could have been avoided. It was not night time, it was not dark, it was during broad daylight. But a man was so intoxicated that he did not know the difference between the highway and the ditch. He was not injured, he just instantly killed a mother and a grandmother. I hope people listen to that example and try and imagine the sadness and the effect it had on that whole family.

I hope the debate continues in the friendly way we have seen it develop and that we really do talk about the issue and address it.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment my colleague for his outstanding and eloquent speech.

Drunk driving is an enormous problem, as my colleagues have mentioned, and successive governments have failed in bringing forward legislation to adequately address it. As we have heard before today, more than three people die every day and over 300 are injured every day because of drunk drivers.

I know that drunk driving is a problem in his province as it is in mine. I know that he has seen in his riding, as we all have, people who have died or have been injured by drunk drivers. I would like my hon. friend to give the House his opinions and his views on what the government can do to try to turn the tide in this extremely important social problem.

Supply

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner: I thank my hon. colleague for the question. It is a very hard question to answer. When I moved into the area where I farmed for 35 years, alcoholism was a real problem. It is not just drunk driving.

The education in our schools, in our homes and probably by government programs all point out how serious is the issue of being drunk, whether in a car or on a snowmobile or on a farm implement. A number of accidents have occurred in our community. They did not just happen on the road.

I remember one of my neighbours who had been drinking quite heavily during the day was having problems with his baler. Luckily the good Lord prevented him from being killed. He stuck his head into the bale chamber when the tractor was running to see what was the problem. That is how serious this issue is when your senses are not 100% clear and you do not really know what you are doing.

We have to start really hammering this home to young families. Children have to be educated to know that they have to be responsible for their actions, whether it is being drunk, whether it is being disobedient to law enforcement officers. Education is worth its weight in gold if it can be more or less implemented in all our homes and schools.

We can never imagine what kind of savings this country would have emotionally and financially if we did not have the drunk driving instances, whether on the road or on the farms or on the sports field. We have seen a number of serious accidents in boats where boaters should not have been physically behind the wheel.

I thank my hon. colleague for his question. I hope that adds a bit to the debate.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this has turned out to be an emotional day as we debate these issues and bring to our conscience the sadness and tragedy caused to so many individuals and their families.

One of the difficulties as we look at this, and it is perhaps even more emotional than we are able to discuss here right now, is that so many people do drink at one level or another. One of the difficulties I see in looking at the serious consequences of this is that those people who do have drink, and who do drive home, and have done this for a long time and have never had any difficulty with it, may be saying "There but for the grace of God go I", when they see one of these accidents.

• (1515)

When we look at the consequences of what happens, when we look at what is needed to prevent these accidents and those consequences, it is very difficult to accept responsibility for what so many of us do on a day by day basis.

I ask the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar if he does not see the need for toughening up the penalties in our judicial system so there is a line drawn in the sand so we can all understand the basis that this is built upon. If you cross the line, you pay the penalty. That may be a sledgehammer but it is at least the beginning of dealing with a serious problem.

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for that quick question.

I do not know if he remembers the good old days when discipline was exercised at home and also in the schools. We knew after being disciplined by the teacher that it would be worse at home. Maybe that was a little harsh.

If the fines and the sentence are not deterrents, what is? Why do we have fines at all? We must have fixed discipline, fixed sentences for these accidents. I cannot call them crimes but I guess they are crimes to humanity. When that happens, I think people will start listening and obeying the law.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, officially this is my maiden speech.

I thank the people in my riding of Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for giving me another opportunity to represent them in this House. For all of us it is an enormous responsibility and an enormous honour to finally be in this arena where we can fight to make our country a better place. I know all of us here are grateful for this. I am extraordinarily grateful to the people of Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for giving me that opportunity.

I also thank my colleague from Prince George—Bulkley Valley who has done a yeoman's job for years, in the last Parliament and now in this one, in fighting for this issue. It is perhaps one of the greatest social issues which extends across boundaries from coast to coast. It affects health. It affects welfare. It affects human beings in so many different areas. In fact it has been somewhat of a silent horror in our midst for many years. My colleague from Prince George—Bulkley Valley has stood out there, and not alone as we have been backing him, as the point person in fighting for this issue.

Drunk driving is a problem and social ill that costs us over \$7 billion per year. As I mentioned in the question to my colleague, it kills over four people every day and injures over 300 people every single day. It has a social cost that goes way beyond that because it affects the family.

I would like to recite a personal situation. When I was working in the emergency department of a hospital in the the riding of my colleague for Prince George—Bulkley Valley, a code blue was called which is a major trauma. An individual was brought in with massive head injuries. He was dying. We could not save this young man.

Shortly thereafter the driver of the car was brought in, absolutely drunk. This individual refused treatment, refused to communicate

with us, refused to have a blood alcohol sample taken. At the crash site this individual was trying to drag his nearly deceased friend into the driver's side so the deceased would be the culprit and he would be free.

The difficulties for the police in trying to prosecute this individual were massive. For example they had to observe the blood being taken. It had to be done in a certain fashion. It had to be done within two hours of the accident. If any of those are broken, in the words of a defence attorney who said to me "I am smart. I can get any of these guys off on a technicality". What kind of message does this send? What kind of judicial system do we have in this country that allows somebody to murder their friend, because that is what it is when you drive a car and you are drunk, and then allows them to get off on a technicality? That hole has to be repaired.

• (1520)

And it is not just one hole, there are many. The justice system we have today has numerous little loopholes that enable people who are guilty of committing murder through drunk driving to get off. This has to change.

My colleagues in the Reform Party have put forth many constructive suggestions to the government. I will name a few. I ask the hon. justice minister to listen to them and adopt these suggestions.

One, when blood is extracted that it can be done in greater than two hours, four hours for example.

Two, that the blood alcohol level be dropped to 55 milligrams per decilitre instead of the 80 milligrams per decilitre which it is today, in terms of defining somebody who is impaired.

Three, that when there is a situation where somebody is involved in a serious traffic accident, a blood sample can be taken automatically.

Four, that if somebody refuses to have a blood sample taken, they will be levelled with a criminal charge of refusal to submit. If someone is innocent they should not have a problem with this. The only reason they would want to refuse was if they were guilty, is it not?

Five, we have to remove the barriers to police officers and enable them to do their job.

Drunk driving is a little window of insight into the difficulties the police have in performing their duties. For example, if an individual is caught driving while drunk, it takes about six hours of the police officer's time to engage in the paperwork in order to prosecute them. Six hours off the beat. Six hours of not being able to find and prosecute criminals. Six hours of time that could be better spent doing something productive and keeping our streets safe. That has to change. The paperwork police officers are mired in today prevents them from doing their jobs and keeping our streets safe.

Supply

Six, we have to have a victims bill of rights.

Our house leader put forward a private members bill, a victims bill of rights which the government refused to adopt. This bill of rights is rooted in fairness and sensitivity to the victims. For too long the justice department has taken into consideration the rights of the criminal and in many cases has ignored the rights of the victim. That is going to change. It must change.

We have put forth in two successive Parliaments constructive suggestions, two victims bill of rights that would protect victims during court proceedings. Many suggestions are very constructive.

For example, victims must be kept informed of all proceedings. Victims must have the right to be heard at every stage of the judicial system. Victims must be informed of when and what charges are going to be laid. Victims must have the right to be protected from intimidation. Victims must be able to have time off in order to attend court and that they do not have to bear an economic penalty during the course of their ordeal. There must be no plea bargaining or charges dropped unless the victim is aware of it. Victims must be made aware of the support services available to them.

This is not complex. This is rooted in fairness. Again it is the innocent victims who have been violated through no fault of their own. The least we can do as a caring, sensitive society is afford them the same consideration as we afford the criminals.

• (1525)

My colleague from Lisgar mentioned the aspect of education. Too often we ignore that. We have to address the children early on and the earlier the better. If the education system is involved not only on the issue of alcohol, but also drugs and other aspects of drunk driving and criminal activity, that will have an impact. There are some remarkably effective programs which have been created not only in this country but also in the United States.

Drunk driving is a social ill. People make mistakes. However we must have the legislative framework to enable us to do what we can to ensure that this massive social problem decreases. We cannot ignore the problem any longer.

In the last Parliament very little time was spent on this problem, yet it walks across the social spectrum. It waltzes across many different ministries. It is something which we must be concerned about.

One need not look any further than the victims. It is not only the person who is injured in a car accident who pays the price. Their families, friends and loved ones pay a price too.

I hope that we in this House can take it upon ourselves to support the very fine motion presented by the hon. member for Prince George—Bulkley Valley. I am sure there will be unanimous support for it.

Supply

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed the debate today because it has been a very different debate for this place. It has been very emotional. A lot of personal stories have come out.

We are seeing consensus building not only in the country, where I think there has been consensus for quite some time, but also in the House of Commons among all parties that this issue needs to be dealt with. I hope that a committee will be struck as a result of this Reform motion which will bring forward strong legislation to deal with this huge problem.

The hon. member outlined the social costs, both financial and personal, of these tragedies to the country.

I would like to relate a story to the House. The first tragedy that I remember was as a very young boy. I might have been about five years old. We had to go back to my Dad's hometown of Minnedosa for a funeral. Actually there were two funerals.

Two of my cousins had graduated from the high school in Minnedosa and were heading to Brandon for the evening. Minnedosa is not a big place so they got together with the high school in Brandon for their celebration. There were five people in the car. The road is as straight as an arrow from Minnedosa to Brandon but unfortunately a drunk driver swerved over and hit their car head on. Two of my cousins were killed as well as others in the car. In the small town of Minnedosa it was a real tragedy.

As is so often the case, the drunk driver walked away from the car. Five kids were killed, but the drunk driver for some reason was not killed. I do not know if it is because these drivers are so drunk or what, but very often they are the only ones who walk away from the scene.

The community was in shock. My aunt, uncle and the extended family were in shock. I always wondered if my aunt, who recently passed away, ever recovered.

I can still remember it. I was five years old. I can remember all the draped coffins at the front of the church. There was such profound sadness. I was very young so I did not really understand it all, except I knew that everyone I knew and cared about was shaken to the core.

• (1530)

That was one of the instances in my life that somewhere along the line I decided as an adult that I would abstain from alcohol. I realize it is a personal choice and I do not say it has to be the choice of a lot of people. Part of it was I wanted to send a message to those people I cared about. The deaths, the broken homes and the social cost of irresponsible drinking especially is just not something I want to participate in. I made the decision a long time ago. I drank

an awful lot of Coca-Colas while others around me were doing otherwise, but it has never hurt me. It was triggered really at five years of age when that first tragedy in my life happened.

Perhaps if there is a minute left the hon. member may want to tell it again, because I think these personal stories are a powerful testimony of why change is required. Perhaps he would like to relate other stories from his life as a physician where he has had to deal with this horrible social crime.

Mr. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend, our whip, for his heartfelt intervention. None of us could have said it more eloquently, I am sure.

Working in the emergency department I have seen a lot of people die. I will have to say this. Of all the people I have seen killed none are perhaps more tragic than those individuals, particularly the young people who have died in a car accident as a result of drunk driving. I remember when I was an intern I was working in the emergency department just before Christmas. One of my colleagues, a fellow emergency room physician, was there. He went home. He was moving to Victoria and he was bringing his family. He was driving to the airport and a drunk driver crossed over the line and killed him. They brought him into the emergency department half an hour later while I was still on shift, and he was almost dead. He did die. You never forget something like that.

I think it is wise for us to remember that on a cold night, on any night, one-fifth of the people who are in their cars driving have been drinking and one out of every 25 is drunk.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to divide my time with the member for Wentworth—Burlington on today's opposition motion about impaired driving. It is true that this problem has caused, and will cause, much sadness in our families. This motion is very important for all Canadians.

According to the statistics, there were over 37,000 cases of impaired driving in Canada in 1995; over 60 resulted in death and over 500 resulted in injury. These are the sad facts.

In the case of Quebec, we know that the Société d'assurance automobile du Québec is going to crack down on motorists. As of December 1, it will be bringing in the toughest measures yet. It is known that fear of the police and of reprisals has the most calming effect on motorists. That is why even tougher measures will be introduced as of this date for those driving while impaired. Drivers who take the wheel while their licence is suspended are also being targeted by the Government of Quebec.

Obviously, everyone wants the slaughter to cease. The finger is always being pointed at young drivers and, effective July 1, 1997,

young Quebec drivers with probationary licences cannot drink any alcohol and drive, or their licences will be revoked.

As of December 1, the highway safety code will carry much tougher penalties. Those arrested for the first time for impaired driving will have their licence taken away immediately by the police, and revoked for one year. Repeat offenders will be given longer suspensions, from 24 to 36 months, and their vehicle will be confiscated when they are arrested. They will also be required to go for addiction treatment.

First time offenders will be required to attend the Alcofrein program. Previously, only those ordered to do so by a judge had to attend a three hour information session offered by the Department of Public Safety at minimal cost. The facilitators for Alcofrein make errant drivers aware of their actions and focus their efforts on destroying the myths surrounding alcohol:

• (1535)

I have recently become aware of an article by Isabelle Mathieu that appeared in *Le Soleil* on September 13, 1997. The headline says "Wake up before disaster strikes" and I would like to read a few excerpts:

Imagine just for one second that your last, slightly alcohol-tinged evening with the love of your life ended up in a ditch, with her dead. For the past two years, that is the horrible scene that plays out in the head of Francis Laroché.

This young man from Beauport, now aged 22, has not forgotten the tragedy, let alone accepted it. He has, nevertheless, agreed to talk about it for the shock value to all drivers who are still continuing to tempt fate.

On October 2, 1995, at 3:15 in the morning, Francis, his 18-year-old girlfriend and three other friends were coming back from partying at a bar in Sainte-Foy. Francis was driving, he had consumed three beers over the course of the evening and felt that he was in full possession of his faculties.

"Before we started out, I said to my girlfriend "Look, I'll blow into the breathalyser and if I'm over 0.08, I'll hand my keys over to you, no problem" recalls Francis. But the bar's breathalyser was out of order that night.

While the five friends were on the Autoroute de la Capitale near Pierre-Bertrand Boulevard, the vehicle in front of them changed lanes abruptly. Francis lost control—

His girlfriend's life ended. And his nightmare began.

Francis' girlfriend of a year was killed and his three friends were injured. He ended up with a cut on his head, and when he took the police breathalyser test, his level was 0.1130 over the 0.08 limit.

He did not, however, experience any difficulty whatsoever in performing the physical tests such as walking a straight line. Later, the Crown could not, therefore, prove that the accident was directly linked to drinking. In May 1996, Francis Laroché pleaded guilty to the charge of impaired driving. He got off with a \$500 fine and a year's suspension. His description of this: "The fine and the rest of it are really secondary compared to the much worse punishment of causing the death of my girlfriend".

There are stories like this every day.

Supply

The legal proceedings weighed very heavily on the young man, whose record had been clean before the accident. "When I was in the cell at the courthouse, I did not believe it. I could not believe I was there", he recalls. "When I walked in the street, people looked at me. I felt everybody knew. I felt judged, even by someone who had been drinking and driving for 20 years".

Can this be prevented? Since the beginning of June, alcohol has robbed over a dozen people of their lives on Quebec highways. In 1996, 412 people were killed, while 1,656 were seriously wounded and 6,250 received minor injuries. The Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec has paid out \$200 million in compensation.

"Delinquent drivers are a minority, but they do so much damage that we hear only about them", points out Yvon Lapointe, head of the road safety department of CAA-Québec—

Statistics indicate that the number of young people driving while impaired is decreasing more rapidly than is the case for adults. Conclusion: prevention is really working with young people—

In imposing zero tolerance for impaired driving, the government is betting that, after three years of total abstinence when driving as part of the sentence, young drivers will have learned how to control their own consumption—

There is frequent reference to young people. And in the Quebec government's bill:

—young people are presented as irresponsible, incapable of learning caution. The message must be repeated loud and clear: it is only a small minority of young people who drive dangerously and risk causing accidents. In their case, something drastic must be done, I agree. But not in the case of the 97.4 per cent of young drivers who have not been involved in injury-causing accidents, whose only crime is being born after 1972.

• (1540)

We all have a driver's licence. The renewal form asks clearly: "Do you wear glasses?" It also asks if we suffer from any illnesses. But I want to go further. This motion introduced by the Reform Party member is important.

Perhaps there would be agreement on 0.03, 0.05, but I still say the Government of Canada should require zero tolerance for several years after a second offence, as is the case for young people in Quebec.

Drivers of snowmobiles, tractors, motorcycles and boats should not be left out. The police should also be allowed to do their job. When examining the driver's licence of someone they have stopped, they could see the code on it, as they now do for glasses. There would be a code for those with zero tolerance. This would perhaps be a way to reduce the number of accidents.

We will not go that far. In September, and there are accidents every week, in the municipality of Val d'Or in my riding, we lost a young leader, a man by the name of Jean Godbout, who was knocked down by someone over the age of 40 driving in the downtown area. This was a married man with two young children. His mother had already lost one son in the Balmoral mine accident in Abitibi.

Supply

This brings sorrow to all families. I understand, and we all understand, that you have just lost the people on whom you counted the most, those close to you. The hardest part about these accidents is saying goodbye to a friend. On behalf of all families, I say that there must be an end to this slaughter in Canada.

Following discussions, and with the consent of all parties in the House, I move:

That the motion be amended:

(a) by deleting the words "a legislative committee" and substituting therefor the words: "the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights"; and

(b) by changing the period at the end to a semi-colon and adding the following: "and that the said Committee, when so instructed, submit its report to the House no later than May 15, 1998."

This amendment is a clear indication of the commitment of all members in the House.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the amendment.

• (1545)

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to follow the member for Abitibi in the debate. I certainly agree with his motion. As well, I find myself largely in support of the original motion as proposed by the Reform Party.

I enter the debate cautiously because I am not a great fan of prevention arguments when it comes to crime. I do find, however, that the motion proposed by the Reform Party is moderate and quite reasonable in its approach to the problem.

I come to the crime of drunk driving from a different experience than the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca who told how as a physician he saw the broken bodies of people who were killed by drunk drivers.

In my earlier days in a former life I was a reporter. I not only saw people who were injured and dying in hospitals but I saw the larger consequences beyond the hospitals. That included not just the families of victims. It also included the families of persons who committed the crimes. That made me realize that when dealing with the problem of applying and creating laws we have to remember to look at it as broadly as possible. The human condition is very broad and each one of us sometimes only sees a part of it.

There is a problem with increasing penalties for drunk driving. I certainly agree we should have penalties that serve as deterrents, but I have a problem when we want to create penalties that basically reflect our outrage at the crime. Then penalties become the vengeance of the state rather than penalties of either deterrence or rehabilitation.

I use an example from my own life in earlier years as a young journalist. The drunk driver, a father of young children, had tried very hard over the years to control his habit and had been largely successful. One afternoon coming home from picking up his children from a soccer game he had been to the pub, had drank, was over the limit, was involved in an accident and one of his children was killed.

What happens then? As a young reporter I saw the tragedy of a dead child. There is nothing more heart rending than to see a child that has been killed in an accident. I do not know why it is that we can tolerate seeing dead adults, but as a reporter I could never steel my heart to a dead child.

Later I followed it up and found that the wife and children of that drunk driver were absolutely devastated, not just because of the tragedy but because of the expected loss of the bread winner of the family. They know that he tried very hard to control his weakness, and despite all his efforts it led to this tragedy.

That brings me to the idea that when we look at justice we must always remember that justice must have compassion. I would not want to see the House pass any law that does not give the judge and the courts some discretion in looking at an entire situation, not just at the victim, in this case a child, but at the family of the accused when it is very clear that whatever sentence is coming down is not a question of deterrence. The individual did not want to do it in the first place and nothing would have compelled him to do it other than a psychological weakness.

On the other hand is rehabilitation. There is no doubt we certainly must have penalties but we have to apply the law with compassion.

• (1550)

There is a lot of valid criticism, but I think the weakness is when judges pass sentences that we know are inadequate for the crime, where there are no mitigating circumstances such as I have just described, when looking from the outside we see judges pass a sentence that is far too light for the circumstances of the crime, be it drunk driving, murder or sexual assault.

We just had a very recent incident in Toronto where a judge passed sentence on the most horrendous sexual assault case and most of us feel the sentence was far too light.

The problem is not just looking at the law and considering whether we should revise the penalties, which is what this motion proposes. Because it is moderate I cannot oppose that in principle. We also have to look at the question of who our judges are and how our judges come to be.

We are experiencing in society some serious reservations about the way we appoint judges, the way judges become judges. Our whole court system is predicated on the principle that the judge

Supply

should be a person of great experience in life, of great integrity and of great professional experience.

It is widely felt across the country that perhaps the judges from the supreme court right down to the provincial court are not all they should be. That may be because of our current method of appointing judges. In many instances judges are political appointees.

I do not want to get into a debate about patronage. In some ways I think patronage is a very good thing, but when it comes to judges I have a great deal of reservation about judges being appointed by any aspect of the political process.

I suggest to my colleagues that if we want better quality judges so we can have better decisions in cases, be it drunk driving or be it supreme court decisions, we must set up a new regime for appointing judges.

Perhaps we need to look at a mechanism of independent appointment coming from perhaps the governor general, where the governor general examines the credentials of potential applicants and ultimately decides who should sit on the bench. Perhaps that would elevate the quality of judges so decisions made in crimes like drunk driving, murder or assault may combine common sense, deterrence, rehabilitation and compassion where necessary; not foolish compassion, not politically correct compassion, but compassion when it is appropriate and right.

I would not want to see our courts and laws become the laws of vengeance. Our courts and laws are there to make society better, to help individual citizens with genuine problems and to protect society where necessary. They are there to help not only the victims but the accused.

This may not be a popular position to take, but there you go, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend was quite right. This is not a popular position to take.

I am sure he need not look to the House because he knows where most MPs stand on that question. I suggest he look outside the House, out there to real people land where people are seeing travesties of justice being committed every day in our courts across the country by appointed judges who tend to reflect the philosophy of the government of the day, whether it be federal or provincial. That is where we are going wrong.

The former minister of justice of this government clearly said in this House, as recorded in *Hansard*, that the priority of the justice system shall be the rehabilitation and reintegration into society of people convicted of crimes.

• (1555)

I find that philosophy to be absolutely in contrast to what my party and I believe. It is also in profound conflict with what the Canadian people think. The philosophy of the former Minister of Justice is being reflected by judges day after day after day. Not only that, but current sentencing is reflecting the desire of provincial and federal governments to cut costs in the prison systems to the detriment of Canadians by not putting people who break the law in jail but rather turning them out so they do not have to pay the costs of keeping them.

There is a fundamental wrong here. When a person commits a crime there must be consequences. Life is all about choices. We make some choices that are good and we carry on with our lives. Some people make choices that are very bad and they must pay the consequences of that.

I tend to think—and we may get to this in the justice committee some time during this Parliament—that if there is a way to ensure that judges sitting on the bench have only one goal in mind and that is to ensure true justice is given in their decisions I hope we find it. I hope the hon. member will contribute to the process of reaching that goal.

What we have now does not work. I do not believe the appointing of judges is the right way to go. It does not reflect the will of the Canadian people. I do not buy for a moment that the Canadian people simply want vengeance or revenge, but they do want justice.

Mr. John Bryden: Mr. Speaker, in reply to the member opposite, yes, they do want justice, but I think justice is always understood as having an element of compassion in it.

My concern about a debate on victims rights and so on is that it steers into the whole idea of vengeance. When a crime is committed one can actually set a fixed penalty that is absolute. We have to give discretion to judges. We have to give judges the opportunity to be compassionate.

I will leap to the defence of the former justice minister because I think he tried very hard to choose judges who were very well qualified. I had discussions along this line with him.

In criticizing the system I want to make it very clear that I was not criticizing the government or the former justice minister. I was pointing out that there are judges on the bench appointed by previous governments who have certainly not performed in an adequate fashion.

The system is flawed. The former justice minister would agree that a better way has to be found than relying on the political arm of government to choose judges. I hope that is the kind of debate we would have.

Supply

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this motion moved by the official opposition, a motion which, all in all, needs a very serious analysis, given its implications for a society like Canada, and Quebec as well.

To situate the debate properly, the purpose of this motion is to require the government to bring forward a motion, pursuant to a Standing Order, to strike a legislative committee. We have seen the government bring in an amendment to this, in order to have the words “legislative committee” replaced by “the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights”. This, I believe, is an amendment that makes sense, since the committee already exists. Since the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights is there precisely in order to study motions of this sort, it is obvious to me that this amendment needs to be made. We in the Bloc Québécois approve of this amendment.

• (1600)

In addition, in order to limit the time period allowed the committee to consider the question, the government is making an amendment giving the committee until May 15, 1998 to submit its report to the House.

At first glance, the government appears to be paying careful attention to the motion tabled by the opposition in this House today for us to study this topical issue carefully.

Why are we now concerned with this issue, among others? Last week, a lobby group—and I use the word “lobby” not in its negative sense, quite the contrary, some lobbies in Canada do good work—known as MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, came to the House to meet members of Parliament. They submitted a report, which, in short, is very well done. However, as with any lobby, we must examine their report with a critical eye, but in a constructive manner.

When a lobby group of this sort submits a public survey, the results must be considered and statements in the report have to be acknowledged, but we must look at it with a critical eye. We must find out how and why the questions were asked, who paid for the survey, and so on.

What catches my attention about this survey is that it points out the same things already confirmed by the police, by groups who have studied the situation, among others, in the report about the national scourge of drinking and driving. I can immediately tell this lobby group and all those listening that the Bloc Québécois also considers drinking and driving to be a scourge both for Canada and for Quebec. As legislators and elected officials, we must give very serious thought to this issue.

The main figures pointed out in this document, and it is important to recall them so that we have a fairly good idea of the situation, are that 94.3% of those surveyed think that driving while impaired is a problem that the government must eliminate. I am not surprised that the percentage is so high, given the seriousness of the problem, as I said earlier.

In addition, 74.7% of those surveyed think that the provincial and federal governments are not doing enough to reduce impaired driving. This may or may not be true, but one thing is certain—it depends on the question asked, I was not surveyed, you know it is sometimes easy to get people to say things over the phone, if the questions asked lead the person answering in one direction rather than other—there is no doubt that this is a high percentage of people who think that governments are not doing enough.

The committee that will be created, if the motion is passed by the House, will, I think, have to take a very serious look at this finding. Are the federal and provincial governments, which are responsible for the administration of justice, making a serious effort to stamp out impaired driving, or are they not? This is the question we will have to answer.

I will know more when we examine the issue, but it is interesting that 94.4% feel that Criminal Code amendments must be implemented and anyone involved in an accident causing death or serious injury obliged to provide a blood sample when requested to do so by the officer, as required by law.

Of those surveyed, 73% support a reduction in the level of alcohol from 80 milligrams per 100 millilitres to 50 milligrams per 100 millilitres, a reduction of 30 milligrams. This is sizeable. It seems, however, that over two-thirds of the population support this measure.

• (1605)

Another important point, one I am also anxious to be able to verify, is that 85% of those surveyed are in favour of amending the Criminal Code to stiffen the minimum prison sentence for any person who has caused death or bodily harm. In other words, a person who has an accident in which another person sustains physical injury or death would automatically receive a minimum sentence.

At the moment, we know that the Criminal Code stipulates a prison sentence, but it is a maximum of five years and judges are given some discretion. I will come back to the judges a little later.

There is one element which raises a big question mark for me, because I have read some of the survey questions and am a bit puzzled by them. It may be true, but it would need to be checked in committee. It is said that 90.2% of respondents support adoption of a declaration of victims' rights. What I would like to know is, what percentage of those surveyed knew what a declaration of victims' rights was, and what it included.

One thing is certain, the public is currently questioning the extremely important issue of drunk driving. Every week we read newspaper reports about accidents resulting in injuries and deaths. One need only check with the automobile associations in Quebec, Ontario or the other provinces, to see that the statistics are damning.

Does the reality really dictate that the legislator must be pushed into changing the legislative provisions on impaired driving? Perhaps. Or perhaps it is something other than the legislation that needs changing. The committee that will be struck can cast some light on this and report to the House.

One of the questions I have asked myself, particularly when I meet with the people from MADD, is what goes on in other countries, how do other countries deal with impaired driving. The maximum blood alcohol level allowed in the legislation when I was practicing law was .08. That is what it still is today. But I really wondered about the proposal to reduce it to .05. I learned, however, when I looked into it, when I examined more closely the information submitted to us today, that .05 was the level already in Australia, Belgium, Finland, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, even France. So, this is perhaps not as extreme as it appears. Perhaps it is not such an exaggeration to consider a lower blood alcohol level in Canada and in Quebec, if that is what people want.

I have in fact noted a difference in the application of the rule of 80 mg per 100 ml in the blood, in Quebec and in other Canadian provinces.

However, nothing is ever all black or all white. Those who have followed the issue of drinking and driving, lawyers primarily, those involved in enforcing the law, know that, since 1985, a series of amendments have been made to the Criminal Code in an effort to solve the problem, to further discourage people, to focus on the target group, those most affected by drinking and driving. Since 1985, an attempt has been made to dissuade them in all sorts of ways, including through stiffer penalties and simplification of the job of the police.

• (1610)

Recently, it became possible to obtain a blood sample under certain circumstances, guidelines were given, the goal being to help police officers gather evidence to build cases and to discourage the public from drinking and driving. All this has taken place since 1985.

In the 35th Parliament, I remember the government members opposite presenting amendments to increase the maximum sentence in the case of people who had had an accident while impaired and who had injured or killed somebody in that accident.

The result is that today we must also take into consideration the provisions of the Criminal Code, and I think it useful to point these out so as to give people an overview of the situation. As it now stands, section 255 of the Criminal Code provides for the following sentences:

Supply

(1) Every one who commits an offence under section 253 or 254—driving while impaired—is guilty of an indictable offence or an offence punishable on summary conviction—

In legal jargon, a “summary offence” is less serious than an “indictable offence”. When someone is charged by way of indictment, the offence is much more serious, the person must be represented by a lawyer, and so forth, while someone tried by summary conviction is not required to be present at the hearing. It is a less serious offence.

It therefore reads:

—is liable,

(a) whether the offence is prosecuted by indictment or punishable on summary conviction, to the following minimum punishment, namely,

(i) for a first offence, to a fine of not less than three hundred dollars,

(ii) for a second offence, to imprisonment for not less than fourteen days, and

(iii) for each subsequent offence, to imprisonment for not less than ninety days.

A progression can be seen that no longer exists since these rules were passed. These are amendments made by the legislator over the years in the wake of certain rulings, certain developments in this issue, in order to increase the sentence and try to discourage the public.

(b) where the offence is prosecuted by indictment—

in other words, if it is even more serious,

—to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.

(c) where the offence is punishable on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months.

It is already clear that it is less serious when a summary conviction is involved.

(2) Every one who commits an offence under paragraph 253 (a) and thereby causes bodily harm to any other person is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years.

(3) Every one who commits an offence under paragraph 253 (a) and thereby causes the death of any other person is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years.

As you can see, the sentence is increased if it is a repeat offence, if the damage is greater, if the other party's injuries are more serious, or if someone dies as a result of an accident caused by an impaired driver.

What is being called for, and what we would like to see in the Criminal Code, I think, is a minimum. In other words, an impaired driver who has an accident gets, for example, a minimum of one year or two years in prison.

I see this as dangerous, though perhaps it is necessary, and I am not saying that it is not. Personally, I am telling you today that it may be dangerous because all discretion is being taken away from the court. We are taking away any way, any manner in which a properly informed judge, a judge who hears the evidence, a judge who sees the accused, a judge who is familiar with all the facts of the accident, could assess the case, as he could not do so if a

Supply

minimum is set. Perhaps we will have to come to that, but only a very wise man could know the answer to that question today.

The opposition's motion, if passed by the House, will enable us to check whether setting a minimum for such an offence is really the right thing to do. That is one example. There may be other things that need examination. I heard one of my colleagues on the government side talking about the appointment of judges just now. Yes, there is that aspect, perhaps, but there may be something else, perhaps in terms of heightening the judges' awareness.

• (1615)

These days, I hear all sorts of things about remarks judges have made following a decision, remarks that have not always been so nice. I am not noising around the fact that I am in the same league, because I am not too proud of the remarks these people may have made.

Perhaps enhanced awareness is needed. Stiffer penalties in the Criminal Code are not necessarily the solution. All of this can be studied in committee. We can look at what exactly should be considered.

That said, we in the Bloc Québécois have three points to make with respect to this motion. First, we acknowledge the importance of the problem raised by the motion presented by the official opposition. The motion deserves our support and very serious consideration in committee.

Second, the Bloc Québécois supports the motion as amended by the government, which asks to present a motion to set up a standing committee to discuss the measures provided in the Criminal Code in order to correct and improve where possible the provisions pertaining to offences involving the consumption of alcohol and impaired driving.

Third, the Bloc Québécois aware of the problem created by drunk driving considers that legislative study will concern the matter as a whole and not just the establishment of harsher penalties. We say "What's worth doing is worth doing right". We will do it with assurance, and anyone looking at it afterward will have no cause for complaint. This is what I want to bring to the committee. If a committee is going to look at this, we must look not only at increasing the penalty, but at the whole issue from A to Z.

I would, however, caution this House, because we will be dealing with the administration of justice, which is not a federal matter but a provincial matter. We must be very careful in our review of these provisions to do a thorough, serious and detailed analysis in the area of federal jurisdiction. We will not stick our big mitts in the administration of justice. It is none of our business. The Bloc will

be there to dot the *i*'s and cross the *t*'s, should the government decided to go a bit further.

I will conclude by saying that, in committee, I will have a series of questions to put to the people who will come to present their briefs, make comments on such violations and the changes that need to be made to the Criminal Code. I think we should also hear from police officers. We should seek their opinion on this question and on what they would like to see in terms of legislation, to get a feel for what their priorities are.

Finally, because I can see you signalling that I am running out of time, we indeed support this motion, as amended by the government. We support it because it will allow an informed debate on this question. We will then report to this House to enact the most useful legislation possible, legislation that may stop this scourge, which is—again, we agree on the terminology—a very terrible national scourge.

[English]

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague of the Bloc. I do not often have occasion to congratulate my Bloc colleague on an excellent speech. This issue is so important that it must cross party lines. We must all try very carefully to avoid trying to make political capital out of it.

As my colleague said, it is a case that goes beyond simply increased penalties. It is not a matter of increased penalties. It is a matter of finding a solution that is more equitable for victims, for everyone who is involved in the tragedy of drunk driving. If it is a matter of changing the mechanism by which we appoint judges, so be it.

• (1620)

I take it from the remarks of my hon. colleague opposite that he agrees with me that in matters of justice, justice must be tempered with compassion. We can only have compassion in the courts if we give discretion to judges and we can only give discretion to judges if we have good judges.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, to hear the hon. member paying me compliments like that, I would be tempted to believe there is something fishy going on here.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: He is being generous.

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: He is being generous. Perhaps he is generous and more practical than you, Madam.

But seriously, having sat on the justice committee with the hon. member who just made these remarks, I know that, on a number of occasions, in the interest of advancing certain issues, we have all

set aside our political affiliations and petty partisan concerns. We have done so with various issues, and I am prepared to do so again today on this issue, which deserves the full attention of this House.

Before answering his last question, a word about the appointment of judges, which he mentioned. Indeed, we in the Bloc Québécois believe that the appointment of all judges should be carried out in a much more enlightened, much more transparent fashion, as we requested when a justice of the Supreme Court of Canada was appointed, recently. Our call was not heard, and I hope the hon. member will pursue the matter on the government side so that we can eventually have legislation governing the appointment of judges to ensure it is carried out in a much more transparent fashion. And this extends beyond the office of the Prime Minister, who, with a stroke of the pen, decides who will be a justice of the supreme court or superior court. These are, after all, very important positions.

I believe they will eventually come around and share our views, as they have done regarding many other issues. After all, when it comes to certain issues, the Bloc and the province of Quebec seem to be 15, 20 or 30 years ahead of the government members sitting across from us.

The last question has to do with the compassion—I guess it is the right word—that judges can show when no minimum sentence is set. The word “assessment” could also be used. If we set a minimum sentence in a legislative provision—and I agree that such a minimum should be set in some laws—we remove any possibility for the judge to assess the facts before him.

I would not want to sit on the bench and to hear witnesses, including victims, describe a situation. Sometimes, the victims are not completely innocent. As I said earlier, things are not always black or white. I can imagine a judge saying: “Sir, I must sentence you to two years in jail, because the act requires me to do so. In the old days, I might have given you just six months, with a possibility of treatment in some institution, because you have a serious alcohol problem and because you have children”. This is another aspect which should not be overlooked.

Sometimes, five, six or seven children may depend on the individual. Is society better served by sending that person to jail and forcing the children to go on welfare? Is this the ultimate purpose of these changes? If so, I want no part of it.

The issue has to be reviewed very carefully if we want the judges to have a good understanding of the situation but also if we want to send a clear message to the population saying that no, it is not acceptable to drink and drive.

Yes, I am with you all the way on this; yes, you will find me by your side to further this issue, but I believe we must proceed

Supply

carefully and analyze the situation in detail so that we will have the best legislation possible to fight against this scourge.

I am not sure that by having a minimum penalty of one, two, or three years, this will help achieve our objective, because I have never seen any study nor has any study ever been tabled showing that there is a direct link between increasing the penalty and seeing a decrease in repeat offences, or in the number of drunk driving cases, of thefts or anything else.

I think I am still part of the generation that is really committed to rehabilitation, prevention and education.

• (1625)

[English]

Mr. Gordon Earle (Halifax West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the comments made by my hon. colleague from the Bloc Québécois. It is very important that we not allow the focus of this motion to be deterred by looking at the broader issue of justices and the appointment of judges.

While the hon. member on the opposite side has raised some valid concerns, that justice must be tempered with mercy, the examples that he cited earlier are among the minority of the tragic cases that we see resulting from drunk driving. I believe it is appropriate that the House agree on this motion and refer it for proper study to a committee so that those issues can be dealt with.

We should not get lost in the debate. By moving it to another level and talking about the appointment of judges is a different issue. It is important to keep the focus on what this motion is designed to deal with on behalf of the people who suffer the tragic results of drunk driving.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: Mr. Speaker, I believe that we should not steer away from the motion we are examining. But at this stage, everything is possible. If we really want to consider seriously this issue, we must absolutely not exclude anything.

Are the judges the ones who need education? Is it the procedure by which judges are appointed that can solve the problem? Is it stiffer penalties? Is it education? Is it allowing provincial legislation to deal more adequately with such or such an area? Personally, at this stage, I exclude nothing.

It will be up to the committee to carry out its work in a very independent and professional manner, and the Committee on Justice and Human Rights has shown on several occasions that it can do just that. When all the parties worked together and set politics aside, we have done wonders. I think we will be able once

Supply

again to go over this issue very effectively and to table a very relevant report in this House.

But in reply to the member, yes, we must maintain a clear objective, which is to deal with the Criminal Code, if anything in it has to be dealt with, to achieve the ultimate objective which is to put an end to the problem of impaired driving. If we have to deal with the judges, we will do that. If we have to deal with something else, we will do that also. The committee will report to you, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure you will agree with us.

[English]

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise you and the House that I will be sharing my time with the member for Mississauga South.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this motion. I do not think one of us in this House has not been touched by the tragedy of someone close to us being killed by a drunk driver.

Just to contemplate and hear about a dear friend, somebody who is working in the community, who is helping other people, who is a source of inspiration to her entire family and to everyone who knows her, suddenly vanishing from the face of this earth because a drunk driver came out of a side road and on to a main road and smashed right into her car. None of us has lived without experiencing receiving that kind of news and the senselessness of it, the helplessness of it, and the determination that we have to do something about it is our first reaction.

I want to congratulate MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Its members have done an absolutely phenomenal job in this past week of meeting with members of Parliament, of informing us, of putting together what they believe needs to be done to diminish this scourge on our population, to diminish the number of people of all ages who fall victim to drunk driving.

• (1630)

They have done a tremendous job of educating the public. They have done a tremendous job of surveying public opinion and making it clear to members of Parliament that Canadians from coast to coast want serious to action be taken on this soon.

This is an issue that I have some history with. When I was president of the Ontario Association of Municipalities I had the privilege of working with the attorney general at the time, the hon. Roy McMurtry. We set up a program for municipalities across Ontario to develop community action programs on drinking and driving. I set up a program in the city of Ottawa.

Things have changed a lot since the early eighties. Attitudes have changed a lot. At that time my children were in their teens or their very early twenties. It was very encouraging for me to see young people coming to a party at my home, bringing their sleeping bags, just in case they had something to drink and did not

want to drive home or just in case their friends felt they should not drive home.

I remember living through a period of time with a friend who was a drinking alcoholic. This friend was coming to visit us regularly. We were trying to provide him with support. I suddenly realized that every night he visited us he was driving down my street, endangering my children and other children. At one point I said to my husband "Ron, you drive him home. You disable his car and do not let him drive again". I told him that I would not ever again have him coming to my home, endangering someone else's life.

His distributor cap sat on the top of our refrigerator for a long time. I am pleased to say that for the last 20 years he has not had a drink.

I tell that story because one of the lessons I learned when I was involved with the drinking and driving task force in this region was that what we are dealing with is the problem of alcoholism. Fifty per cent of first time driving offences are committed by alcoholics. The end result of their history is often tragedy. Lives are lost.

I believe it is important for us to deal with the front end. The first time someone is apprehended, the first time they are convicted, that is when we have to take serious action. We have to recognize that half the people we are dealing with in those first convictions are alcoholics. If we do not deal with alcoholism, there will be a second and third conviction and a tragedy.

To demonstrate how important this point is, by the time someone is convicted a second time of drinking and driving we know there is a 90% chance they are an alcoholic. Ninety per cent of second offenders are alcoholics. Therefore losing a licence or spending time in jail is not enough to ensure that person will not get behind of the wheel drunk again.

We have to deal with alcoholism. We have to deal with it seriously. We have to ensure that person, convicted the first time, does not drive again until the alcoholism is dealt with. That is a very important and crucial step in preventing these tragedies.

That does not mean that we do not have to look at the other end and at what we do when a tragedy occurs and take much stronger action. We do, but we will always be dealing with the situation after the fact, after the tragedy, after the death, unless we deal with the first offence.

We must deal with the problem before that offence. That comes with the kind of responsibility which my children and their friends started taking for each other.

We must ensure that we do not pass this off as something light, unimportant and socially acceptable. We must each take the responsibility of confronting a friend, however difficult that may be, to say "I am sorry, but I will not let you get in your car. I will not drive with you if you insist on getting in your car". That is the kind of responsibility we all have to take. That is why the last

discussion was very interesting. It is not something that can be solved simply by tougher laws. We all want to prevent these tragedies, not just to punish after they happen. We hope we never have to punish. That is why it takes a combination of effort at this level, through the Criminal Code, at the provincial level, effort in our own communities and our own families.

• (1635)

I do not think there is one of us who does not know someone in our family or a friend or someone we work with who is an alcoholic. Every time we turn our backs on that and do not take the responsibility of confronting that alcoholism we contribute to the tragedies we are talking about today. We also have to take responsibility.

We also have to get over a hurdle. Training judges is a part of it. We used to say we have to educate young people, that if we educate young people the problem will go away. Young people learn their drinking habits somewhere. Young people learn their driving habits somewhere. Educating young people to solve a problem we have created is a nice way of getting out of our responsibility.

One place that I think we have to change attitudes, and I am not sure the courts have caught up with public opinion on this yet, is maybe a person is not responsible for a decision made while drinking but is responsible for the decision to drink. In my view, if that decision is made then automatically the decision is made to take responsibility for everything that person does after that first drink is taken.

Whether it is a case such as we saw in the courts where drunkenness was an excuse for raping a 78-year old woman, or whether it is a case of saying "I was too drunk to know what I was doing when I got into my car and drove", I am sorry, but that is no longer acceptable. You take that responsibility when you take that drink.

It is a personal responsibility for all of us. Yes, it is changes in the laws and a combined effort of all levels of government, continuing and increasing our actions on substance and alcohol abuse throughout society, which is the source of most of these tragedies.

I never thought I would say this, but I am grateful to the Reform Party for bringing forward the motion today. I am anxious to see it get into committee where at least the federal responsibility can be dealt with and we can also initiate some major activity with the provinces, communities and people across the country to diminish this tragedy. I do not think we can ever put an end to it.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the intervention she made and the spirit with which she approached this subject. This has been a very emotional day for all of us who have been paying attention to this.

Supply

We have heard words such as vengeance, which is not acceptable here. I am inclined to agree with that. The Bible says "Vengeance is mine, says the Lord". So I do not think we need to worry about that.

• (1640)

However, we somehow or other have to draw a line. I believe that in many respects drinking and driving is still acceptable to far too many Canadians. What I am interested in knowing is how can we draw the line in such a bold fashion so that people realize that drinking and driving is not acceptable.

I am aware of a family that lost a young man because his friend was driving drunk. The young man who was driving drunk got thrown in jail for manslaughter. There were two sad families as a result of this. That may be the way has to be.

What I would like to explore with the hon. member is maybe the line in the sand should be that if you drive while drunk you lose the privilege to drive forever. If you drive when drunk and kill someone, you have committed a crime like murder. One of the things you lose is your vehicle, which was the weapon used. Would the hon. member agree with that as drawing a line in the sand? People may then understand that drinking is not acceptable.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I guess the theme of my speech was that the line in sand has to be drawn much sooner and much earlier in the process which eventually leads somebody to kill on the highway.

Somebody knew that the young person the hon. member was talking about was drinking and driving and did not do anything about it. What we have suggested is that the whole issue be referred to a committee.

A tremendous amount of research has been done to look at the views of the experts as well as people who have been victims, people who have been involved in this and people in the justice system to find the most effective way.

The member and I both want the same thing, what is going to work most effectively. I hope he will forgive me if I do not jump to conclusions about what I hope will be the excellent results of the review by the justice committee on this issue and a very good package of recommendations to us.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Ottawa West—Nepean raised some personal experiences and I think we all have them. Every member who has risen in the House today has related some tragedy.

I know she talked about things improving, although I sometimes wonder. In my riding I had a family that had a very tragic experience. It involved a woman by the name of Joanne Perrotta. Both her brother and father were severe alcoholics. Her brother after a heavy night of drinking went out and ran into a transport truck in 1989 and was killed. Then Joanne, who was a non-drinker,

Supply

was working late one night. On her way home she was broadsided by a drunk driver and was killed.

The next year her father was driving drunk, as he had done several times, ran over a motorcycle driver and killed him. This tragedy kept going on and on in that family.

I know there is a public education aspect that is very important. I wonder if the member would agree that a tough deterrent for those people who are hardcore is actually a good method of trying to solve this problem.

Ms. Marlene Catterall: Mr. Speaker, the member has precisely made my point.

What we have to deal with is that alcoholism is the root cause of most of these tragedies. We have to deal with that. Somebody who is an alcoholic is not going to be deterred at that moment by knowing that he may spend three or six months in jail or lose his license. This just is not going to happen.

We have to deal with the alcoholism. That person should not be allowed to drive until they have been sober for a period of time where one can say this person is a recovering alcoholic. The point also is that there are probably several hundreds of people who knew those drivers, who knew that they regularly drove drunk and did nothing about it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Waterloo—Wellington, Agriculture.

• (1645)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on this motion which has to do with a much broader issue and which I know all members are very sensitive to. Indeed the issue of alcohol and its impacts and pervasiveness on our society is one of the most serious issues that a Parliament could face.

The motion before the House basically asks parliamentarians to request a House committee to review the issues related to deterrence and propriety of penalties with regard to impaired driving.

The issue of drunk driving has been with us for so long. We have heard the statistics over and over again, to the extent that I believe the public and parliamentarians have become desensitized to the seriousness of the problem.

I would like to share with the House and all hon. members some of the statistics to do with the misuse of alcohol. Over 19,000 deaths per year; 45% of all motor vehicle collisions; 30% of fires; 30% of suicides; 60% of homicides; 50% of family violence; 65%

of snowmobile collisions; one in six family breakdowns; 30% of drownings; 5% of birth defects; 65% of child abuse; 40% of falls causing injury; 50% of hospital emergencies. There is over \$15 billion of additional health care, social programs, criminal justice and lost productivity costs that all Canadians must pay for. All of these items are directly or indirectly caused by the misuse of alcohol.

I want to pay tribute to Mothers Against Drunk Driving. This organization has had a long history of advocacy with regard to alcohol. One of the founders of MADD, Mr. John Bates, has been a very dear friend and supporter of mine in alcohol related issues. They were here recently on the Hill. They have done an excellent job. I believe they are singularly responsible for this issue finally getting the attention in the House that it deserves. I congratulate them and thank them for doing a job very well on behalf of all Canadians.

This is not a simple issue. One thing is clear and everyone should understand that it is impossible to conceive how anyone could vote against this motion before the House today. Canadians should always expect their parliamentarians to determine and review to make sure that the very best job has been done with regard to deterrence against behaviour such as drunk driving. Canadians should also expect that the penalties associated with criminal offences are updated and appropriately put in place. That is what they expect of us. This motion does nothing more than simply ask parliamentarians to ask the justice committee to do that review and as appropriate to come back to this House with a bill to make any appropriate changes.

I certainly will be supporting this motion. I believe it transcends politics and the partisanship of politics. I believe and I hope that all parliamentarians will support unanimously this motion so that we can commence the process on dealing with a broader range of alcohol related problems in Canada.

• (1650)

I went through a list of direct or indirect consequences of alcohol misuse. I want to comment a little further on some others. In statistics I received from the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse in its 1995 report, there are some 19,000 deaths per year.

One of the things I found astounding was an incident where a person who was impaired while driving a motor vehicle killed an innocent pedestrian. The pedestrian's loss of life was attributed to trauma, not to alcohol. When I see statistics dealing with alcohol, we have to ask questions about the dimensions: Are there direct and indirects included these numbers? I believe the numbers are far worse than anybody is prepared to publish.

Think of things like family violence. About a year ago there was a special conference on Parliament Hill co-sponsored by Health Canada, the equivalent agency in the United States and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. The cost of

spousal abuse and domestic violence in Canada was estimated to be \$2.1 billion. Imagine the opportunity and the dimensions here and what we could do if we could get a handle on it.

I believe domestic violence is in much the same boat as drinking and driving in that we have become desensitized. This is 100% preventable. It is totally irresponsible and totally against the family and Canadian values that we hold so dear, yet we do not do anything about it. We tolerate it for who knows what reason, but it must stop. We can do better. We must do better.

One in six family breakdowns are due to alcohol misuse. Has anyone ever considered how pervasive the impacts of family breakdowns are? After the Vanier Institute said that the divorce rate was up to 50%, Statistics Canada said no, it is really only at 33%.

One of the things they all forgot about was the fact that over a million relationships in Canada are common law and totally escape the statistical analysis. Seventy-five per cent of common law relationships break down within the first five years. Of all those relationships, 60% of them involve children. The real victims of family breakdown are the children. Yet if we look at the statistics, one in six of those are directly due to alcohol.

Birth defects. Fetal alcohol syndrome accounts for about 5% of the birth defects. It costs Canada about \$1.2 billion a year to deal with the additional health care, special needs and social costs associated with fetal alcohol syndrome.

If Canadians want a tax break, we could easily fund a tax break by dealing with some of these problems. We cannot have it both ways. We cannot be irresponsible in our actions and be spending billions of dollars for our carelessness and our irresponsibility and at the same time expect that we can do other things as well.

We have ways of ensuring that good things happen in Canada but we have to find new ways. We have to set a new urgency for all Canadians that we will not be desensitized any more.

In addition to addressing the issue specifically raised in the motion, there were two other items. One is health warning labels on the containers of alcoholic beverages. Alcoholic beverages are the only consumer product in Canada that can hurt you if misused but which do not warn the consumer of that fact. Pills warn you not to drink when you take the pills, but the drink does not warn you not to take pills when you drink. It makes no sense. We have a bill before the House. Hopefully, we will get support.

• (1655)

The last item is Drink Smart Canada. I want to simply read into the record Drink Smart Canada's message: If you are with a friend,

Supply

family member or acquaintance who is drinking and becoming at risk of hurting themselves and others, you should intervene in an appropriate fashion to make sure that they do not become just another tragic statistic.

We all have a role to play here. I am proud to support this motion and I thank hon. members for bringing it forward to the House.

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Mr. Speaker, drinking and driving is a very serious problem. It is a problem that causes a lot of hardship for families. It causes financial hardships. It causes hardships for our society.

I would like to relate a story that was related to me and which I think puts this issue very much in perspective. I was told that a young man left home one evening and he had been drinking. He was in an accident and two people were killed. After he came out of the coma, the people had to tell him that the two people who had been killed that terrible evening were his parents. When I was told this, it really gave me shivers and I sensed what this problem was really all about.

I do support Mothers Against Drunk Driving and I support this motion. I thank the member for putting it forth.

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during question period today the health minister in reply to a question from the opposition said that Canada has one of the toughest anti-tobacco laws in the world. He also mentioned that this government, Health Canada, was planning on spending \$100 million on tobacco control in the next few years.

Tobacco never killed people on the highway. Tobacco never broke up families. Tobacco never led to beatings. Yet the government, and governments traditionally, not just the current Liberal government but the government before it, Health Canada, has a whole division and countless employees focused on tobacco.

I wonder if the member for Mississauga South would give his feelings with respect to why Health Canada does not invest at least an equivalent amount of money on alcohol control. Why do we not have a tough alcohol law?

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for the Minister of Health or Health Canada, but I do believe that the member raises a good point. It is up to all parliamentarians to define the priorities for our government to consider. This motion has raised this issue to the level where it will get the attention.

What we need to do is to demonstrate that we are no longer desensitized to the problem and that we are prepared to advance this as a starting point with regard to impaired driving, and also with regard to the broader range of impacts associated with the

Supply

misuse of alcohol because of its pervasiveness and the severe impact it has on all Canadians.

Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there is an attitude among Canadians that drinking is okay. Most people do not get caught and when something like this happens, well it is too bad it happened to them. It is always thee and thee but never me.

We in the Reform Party have a fairly hard line about consequences for drinking and driving. I would like to have some of my Liberal colleagues come out and say what they think it would take to stop people from drinking and driving, to change the attitude.

We can give all the education courses in the world, but if somebody wants to drink, he is going to do it. How are we going to deter that person? I have suggested taking their licence away for life if they drink. What about taking their vehicle away so they cannot have a vehicle?

No one really wants to have the courage to say this is what needs to be done. The committee needs something on record from this debate about some of the alternatives to what is happening now to prevent those people from getting behind the wheel and driving when they are drunk.

• (1700)

Mr. Paul Szabo: Mr. Speaker, I understand the frustration of the member. We all do, because we have provincial jurisdictions that are responsible for the application of the laws. But I believe this is the kind of work that the motion is asking the committee to do, to explore these things. I think he is quite right.

However, I would ask all members to be open to preventive measures as opposed to dealing in a reactive fashion after the problem has occurred. We cannot say enough about the value of public education. We cannot say enough about advocacy groups like MADD. There is a good group out in B.C., the Alcohol-Drug Education Service, Mr. Art Steinmann and his group. They are excellent. They have been working tirelessly in the background.

We need to work with them and support them to make sure that all Canadians express their views and give us the support we need to make sure that we have done our job to the extent that we can influence deterrence, penalties as well as public education.

Ms. Louise Hardy (Yukon, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this motion. In many ways I am very moved to be speaking on it today.

Intoxication should not be an excuse for anything. It should not be an excuse for sexual assault, for death or for murder. We should not be accepting any level of blood alcohol content as an excuse.

I do not think anyone should be allowed to drink and drive. Therefore, my hard line is that we do not have any level that anyone can say there is room for error. You cannot drink and then drive.

As long as we say drinking is all right, we will be facing the tragedy that has happened over the last 30 to 40 years. When people drink their decision making is impaired. It is impaired as to whether they decide to drive. It is impaired as to whether they decide to have another drink or another 10 drinks and then drive. They should not have any discretion in that area.

In deterrence, if we are going to look at preventive measures, then we have to have it at all levels.

The Yukon had a Youth Empowerment and Success Program that was cut, I learned today, by the federal government. This dealt with the very area in Yukon where there is a large percentage of drinking and driving: the youth. Pulling out this strategy to prevent drinking and driving or other drinking related abuses is now not available.

National statistics show males between the ages of 25 and 35 are the drivers behind the wheels of those vehicles. Therefore, we should not allow advertising that glamorizes the drinking lifestyle, that everybody is happy as long as they have a bottle of beer beside them.

When it comes to our judicial system I think our judges should have discretion. I would like to say "Yes, let us just take away their vehicles and that will solve the problem", except that the rest of the family may depend on that vehicle and someone's employment may depend on that vehicle. Therefore, we are causing others to suffer who should not suffer because of an individual's decision to drink and drive.

Our judicial system should have a process for appointing judges. If we want discretion we need to know whose discretion and how they got into those positions of trust.

When it comes to enforcement, we have to know that the RCMP are not letting their friends go when they stop them for drinking and driving. We have to know that the RCMP are well enough staffed so that at the peak hours when people drink and drive, between 6 p.m. and 3 a.m., they are there to stop them.

My city of Whitehorse has two RCMP on duty through the night. That is not adequate to deal with drinking and driving, among the other responsibilities that they have to take on. If we are serious about deterrence, we need to be prepared to give the resources to the RCMP so that they can deal with drinking and driving.

When I grew up in the Yukon, as a teenager it was still legal to drink in public. It was legal to drink and drive. That was just over 20 years ago. Public attitude has changed dramatically since that time. You can no longer drink in public and you can no longer drink

Supply

and drive. But the attitude still is prevalent, as it is elsewhere in Canada, that it is all right to drive and to drink.

• (1705)

I commend my colleague across the floor for describing what it took for her to make a stand and not let her friend drink and drive. By doing that in our daily lives we will make changes.

I also believe once someone has transgressed, once they have driven drunk more than once, we do not need to give leniency any further. At that point we should take away the vehicle or there should be a substantial fine and there should not be available legal loopholes to avoid the guilt of what someone has done.

I will finish with my own story on this issue. In Yukon in the early seventies it was a different atmosphere. I was in a boat with my father who had been drinking. The boat tipped. After I watched my father drown, I swam to shore. That left my mother, who had a part-time job, to raise eight children. Drinking and driving is not a statistic for me. I thought after many years you come to grips with trauma of that nature. It is not easy and it does stay with us.

I am honoured to have the opportunity to speak on this debate. It is our chance to make a statement to our fellow Canadians that this matter will be taken seriously and we will not allow drinking and driving. If you are going to drink and operate any motorized vehicle, you are responsible for your actions. We will hold you responsible but we will also show compassion. I believe that is why we are here.

For those reasons, I support this motion.

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it was with interest that I listened to the discussion and to the gentleman on the opposite side when he gave us details of what alcohol cost Canadians each year. It would seem to me that if we threw the stuff away we would get our deficit in order in a short period of time.

I do not doubt the authenticity of the statistics at all. I believe they are true.

What bothers me more than anything else in listening to the debate are the words “we must use compassion”. I am a compassionate person but I have had experiences in my life of picking up dead children at the scene of an accident, of going to homes of teenagers who have been killed. It is very difficult to move toward compassion when you see the person who caused the crime, who caused the death, go to the courts and within no time at all be out on the street with a minimum fine and a minimum restriction.

What bothers me is listening to a teenager who has been given an alcohol charge saying “I wonder who the judge will be. I would sure like to get that one because he is not as hard”. It reminds me of

the cowboys lining up to draw a horse. They want to get an easy horse because an easy horse is easier to ride.

We must be more conscious of what we are dealing with here. The people who brought this to our attention came as a lobby group. They did not come asking the government for money, as most lobby groups do. They did not come asking for anything but that we take an honest look at this national disgrace. They called it a national tragedy. It is a disgrace and Canadians can no longer allow it to go on.

When you ask people what they think of our courts, our courts are going down this way every day because of the decisions being handed out. On my way driving in to the House of Commons I heard a report about a man who had been bludgeoned to death. The police picked up the perpetrator’s trail, followed the blood trail to a house and arrested him. However, it has been thrown out of court because the proper procedure for the search was not followed. That sort of decision is an example of the decisions which are ripping the guts out of Canadians. The decisions brought down in alcohol related incidents are doing exactly the same thing.

• (1710)

Abraham Lincoln said that alcohol has many defenders, but nobody has ever come up with a defence.

When this motion goes to committee we must listen to what our constituents are saying. Do not worry about the legal part of it, first of all we should listen to what our constituents are saying. They will support the resolution which is before us with an overwhelming majority and with a great deal of enthusiasm.

It is fine to say that an accident happened and that it really was not the driver’s fault because he was not in control of himself. He was in control of himself when he started to drink. When he started to drink he was cognizant of the fact that he could cause harm to himself and other people. I do not think for one moment that Canadians are going to continue to listen to our courts using that as an excuse, permitting those who perpetrate a crime to walk away free.

I was driving in Saskatchewan the other day when the news reported that two young ladies had been shot in a service station at night. I used to work in that area. Then the names were reported and it shocked me. The one person involved with that double murder is now walking the streets of Saskatchewan. The people of that town are livid because of the decision of the court.

The court is saying that people were not really responsible. They must have been responsible when they started drinking. They must be responsible for the deeds which they have done.

I hope when we go to committee we do not let bleeding hearts take over and not honour the commitment of this motion. I hope we

Private Members' Business

do not put anything in the way of the Canadian public receiving justice when it comes to this very serious topic.

I know very well from my experience that we need a victims' bill of rights. Everybody seems to have rights nowadays. What about victims' rights? Why are we so afraid of victims' rights? Why are we so afraid of the mother who has lost a three-year-old child? Does she not have any rights?

We know more than four people are killed needlessly every day. Let us suppose that one MP is killed every day for the next 300 days. Just think about it. Are we more important than our constituents? Not one bit.

I know this much. If four of us were killed in a traffic accident, if we were clobbered by a drunk driver, and the next week if four more of us were killed, we would be very quick in this House to come up with something which is a lot stronger and a lot more punishing than what the MADD organization is proposing.

We should not place ourselves above our constituents. Sometimes I think we do. My constituents are important to me. I know what they are thinking about this. Every newspaper in my constituency carried my article in support of MADD. I received very good reports from that article.

• (1715)

They want something more than what we have at present. If we come out of committee with no changes and with nothing more than what we have at the present time we have failed abysmally. We have to show the Canadian public now that we in the House are serious. We are the highest court in the land. We make the decisions and the judiciary carry them out.

I am not saying we should not allow a judge leniency. I am saying that we have to make the message clear to the Canadian people. The message we are giving right now is not a very good one. Let give all the emphasis possible as legislators and bring some credit back to the House. We will gain respect quickly if the motion goes forward and we do something more than what I fear may happen.

I will be supporting the motion and I wish it all the best in the final result.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): It being 5.15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I declare the amendment carried.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The next question is on the main motion, as amended.

[*English*]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Hon. Pierre S. Pettigrew (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.) moved:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 68(4)(a), the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights be instructed to prepare and bring in a bill to amend those sections of the Criminal Code which deal with impaired driving in order to (a) enhance deterrence; and (b) ensure that the penalties reflect the seriousness of the offence.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Does the hon. minister have unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Carried.

(Motion agreed to)

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Does the House agree to say that it is 5.30 p.m., so that we may continue with the business of the House immediately?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): It being 5.20 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*]

NEWFOUNDLAND UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, a special committee should be established to study the severe unemployment problem in Newfoundland and Labrador.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is now with a great sense of pleasure that I arise today to present my private member's motion that the House establish a committee to study the chronic unemployment problem in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The unemployment rate in Newfoundland is one of the most glaring failures of Canadian Confederation. I am under no

Private Members' Business

illusions today that by simply introducing this resolution we will solve the unemployment problem in Newfoundland and Labrador, but I have to start somewhere. I promised the good people of St. John's east, many of whom are unemployed, that I would bring their concerns to the floor of the House of Commons.

Every poll that has ever been done in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador indicates the one pressing problem that has always been on the top of the agenda is unemployment. As we talk about the unemployment problem in Newfoundland and Labrador today the Canadian economy is rebounding, but in Newfoundland the situation seems to be worse than ever.

Right now in Newfoundland we are losing people at the rate of approximately 7,500 per year. That may not seem to be all that serious in the Canadian context, but when we consider a small province like Newfoundland and Labrador with a population of only a half million people losing 7,500 people per year is very serious indeed. It has a devastating effect upon the collective well-being of the people.

Only a few weeks ago I had a meeting on a little island off the coast in my riding. It is not too far from St. John's. It is a small place called Bell Island. It used to be a great mining town from the late 1800s up to 1966 when I believe the mining operation closed down.

Until recently it had a population of about 10,000 or 12,000 people. Now the population has gone down to about 3,500 people. I had a meeting with the mayor of that island, Gary Gosine, who indicated that he could drive around his town almost on a daily basis and point to houses that are empty because people are leaving to go elsewhere. They do not have any jobs there and the population of that little area has gone down from 5,200 or 5,300 people down to 3,500 people in a very short period of time.

We are losing people at the rate of 7,500 per year. For a population of a half million that is devastating.

The Newfoundland unemployment problem has been studied many times. When I served in the Newfoundland House of Assembly we set up a royal commission to look at the problem. There were no obvious or quick solutions at that time. Our economy is largely a resource based economy. We depend upon fish, minerals and paper products. It is a resource based and export based economy.

• (1725)

The new global economy is a knowledge based economy. While we do have somewhat of a high tech industry in Newfoundland it is a very small one. In spite of that we are to a small extent in the business of exporting some of our engineering skills in the marine area and in the offshore oil and gas sector. The growth we are

experiencing in these sectors is not enough to even remotely offset the bleeding that is occurring in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Two areas of our economy that have been hit very hard over the last number of years is the fishery and the public sector. The northern cod fishery is in a very bad way. About 30,000 fishermen and plant workers are on TAGS in Newfoundland, the Atlantic groundfish strategy as it is known. Most TAGS money has been used directly by people to keep bread on the table.

As the auditor general pointed out only recently in his report, the millions of dollars spent on training through TAGS was really a waste of time, a waste of energy and worst of all a waste of money. Most people were in a holding pattern. They were waiting for cod to come and therefore were not all that interested in moving on.

Many fisher people, especially the older generation of fishermen, got involved in the fishery back 25, 30 or 35 years ago. They had limited formal education. When TAGS came out they found themselves in the position of probably having to get a high school education before they could move on to the various technical schools they were expected to become involved in and enrolled in.

I have always said it is bureaucratic insanity to expect people with limited education who have been on fishing boats for 25 or 30 years to suddenly upgrade to a high school education, get into a technical institute and sit down in front of a computer. For what purpose? I do not know. A lot of the money spent on various training programs, we have to agree with the auditor general, fishermen and other people, was a waste of money.

A lot of these people have been waiting for the fishery to rebound but it has not rebounded. The reality today is that the federal TAGS program is about expire. The vast majority of the people on TAGS are at a loss what to do next. They have hung on but it seems now that they will be hung out to dry.

Politicians in the House have shouted across the floor that TAGS was a mistake and should have ended sooner than later. I agree the TAGS could have been a much better program. It could have encouraged people to leave the industry through licence buyout and early retirement programs. Training money should have been directed to people who were either young enough or enthusiastic enough to want to go ahead with a career change. It could have encouraged people to leave the industry.

Most of all I keep saying the federal government could have been brutally honest with people and not given them an indication that their future prospects in the fishery were good. Instead, we are faced with thousands and thousands of people whose incomes will soon be cut off, who have not returned to the fishery, who have not retrained for this new economy that we are into, who cannot afford to move away to find work and whose immediate prospects happen to be welfare.

Private Members' Business

• (1730)

I get hundreds of people coming through my constituency office in St. John's on a weekly basis. My mind goes back to the Prime Minister at his town hall meeting where he was talking to an unemployed woman looking for a job. The Prime Minister, in a cavalier way, said "Well, maybe you can move on to another part of our country". At the same time, while the Prime Minister was making that kind of a submission to that woman, he had terminated the mobility assistance program. These people, already facing unemployment, are now also faced with having to stay where they are because they do not have the money to move on.

The public sector plays a very important role in the Newfoundland economy, a much bigger role than it should play probably. Federal transfers for equalization in health and education make up about half of our provincial budgets. We do have our share of equalization payments. The unemployment insurance system provides income to large numbers of seasonal workers.

When the federal government decided a while ago to get its fiscal house in order, it was devastating for the Newfoundland economy because the federal transfers to the provincial government went down hill drastically and, of course, the provincial government started to make its cuts to make up for the federal government's transfers going down.

The provincial government then passed the cuts on to the various municipalities as well who in turn made all kinds of cuts which again had a devastating effect on the economy. The lay-offs at all levels of the public sector not only reduced the services, they also flooded the job market with some of the best and most well-educated people we had. That is why the Liberal Party is doing so poorly in Atlantic Canada. It has not really got into showing the people of Atlantic Canada that it cares about the unemployment problems that we have.

We cannot impose the kinds of dynamics of a central Canadian economy or a western Canadian economy on the people in the Atlantic region because it makes no sense at all.

We can talk about the problem all day but what are we going to do about it? I want to make a few suggestions, although I stand the chance of running afoul of some of the more right wing attitudes that are displayed in the House every now and then. First, the TAGS program cannot be cut off cold turkey. That cannot be done without a transitional program. Thirty thousand people cannot be thrown on to the streets with nothing to do and nowhere to go.

We need licence buy-outs. We need training programs that will address the real jobs that are out there. We need a generous retirement program. If these initiatives happen to go beyond what might be considered to be normal, well so be it. Just as Quebec is a distinct society in its own way, then Newfoundland, when it comes to the kinds of economic circumstances that we have to live with, is

distinct as well. The alternative is to do nothing and to run the risk of an awful lot of social unrest.

Newfoundland, like the other provinces, needs a better deal in the equalization program. We need a better deal in Confederation, in particular in equalization. It keeps us from starving but it also keeps us permanently poor as well.

• (1735)

Much has been said about the Voisey's Bay nickel mine in Newfoundland. I have a great deal of confidence that it will be a great mining industry when it is fully developed. It is worth billions of dollars.

We must never forget, however, that every dollar Newfoundland gets in taxes and royalties is subtracted dollar for dollar from our equalization entitlements. To be one dollar better off, we must first raise a billion dollars a year in extra revenues just to overcome the loss of the equalization.

In the case of Hibernia, we had a special management deal whereby we would only lose 70¢ in equalization dollars. This is a good start. We need a better formula than that if we are ever going to catch up and go out on our own. The formula needs to be extended to all major resource developments. On paper we have a lot of resources in Newfoundland and Labrador. Under the current arrangement, we will never break free and close the poverty gap.

I realize I am running out of time. Maybe later on I will have a chance to say a few more words. I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words on this.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the motion we are debating asks the government to spend resources to study the employment problem in Newfoundland and Labrador. I want to read it again so the people who are watching understand what the motion is intended to do.

That, in the opinion of this House, a special committee should be established to study the severe unemployment problem in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I would like to assure the member that the government is aware of this very serious issue and recognizes the need for long term structural solutions. I do not think that anybody on this side of the House would contest the fact that we need to pay serious attention to regional disparity.

Historically my party has been the one to most seriously address many of the regional problems that the member would have us examine.

Earlier studies led us to employment insurance reform, the first major reform in 25 years. We knew that we had to have more in the way of active support for work. We knew that we needed to invest in people who have invested in themselves. We knew that helping Canadians back to work was the only solution to problems of

Atlantic Canada and that is what the employment insurance reform sets out to do.

While I am in favour of understanding a problem before leaping into it, there is a time for study and a time for action. The government believes the time for action is now. We are doing it in a partnership with the provincial government.

Over the last 10 years many studies, both comprehensive and specific, have examined the unemployment situation in Newfoundland and Labrador. One example, and the member mentioned it, a royal commission of the Government of Newfoundland, known as the House Commission, looked at the problem in the late 1980s. This led to a comprehensive analysis of the province's economic position and became the basis of the province's strategic economic plan. That plan is still being put into practice.

Today I want to talk about some of the things we have done to make the problem better. From everything I have seen the people in the member's riding are probably more interested in our solutions than our ability to talk more about their problems. Rather than revisit the whole issue again we want to better use our resources to help the people of Newfoundland and Labrador get back to work. That is why in 1997-98 the government will invest \$89 million in active employment measures for Newfoundland and Labrador.

• (1740)

Here we are talking about targeted earning supplements, targeted wage subsidies, job creation partnerships, self-employment assistance and skills, loans and grants. But we have also learned that it is more important than ever for us to work even more closely with the provinces.

Thanks to the labour market development agreement we signed with the province, both levels of government will co-manage the programs that will get Newfoundlanders working again. The agreement means made in Newfoundland solutions that are tailored to the particular circumstances that characterize the Newfoundland economy. This kind of partnership recognizes that each side has something to offer and that no solution is really possible unless both levels of government work together.

One of the components of employment insurance reform is working especially well. We have heard a little bit of it in the House, but I want to mention it. The program that we launched, called the transitional jobs fund, of some \$300 million in July 1996, is now starting to have an effect in Newfoundland and Labrador. That fund works with the private sector and with the provincial and municipal governments, as well as with community groups.

Like the labour market development agreement, the fund works because it is based on partnership. As of October 14, that transi-

tional jobs fund had provided \$26 million to 70 projects in Newfoundland and Labrador. That money leveraged another \$85 million.

The question that is always asked in this place is, did all that money create jobs? You bet it did. So far, the transitional jobs fund has created some 2,016 new jobs in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Let us take just one example so we can put it in people terms when we talk about the 2,016 people who have found new employment because of the transitional jobs fund. Let us start by talking about the Millennium Diagnostic Services. We have helped create 46 permanent full time jobs there. Some of those people probably live in the member's riding. Millennium is setting up a private sector blood testing facility. This facility will provide services to the Canadian Blood Bank Corporation and has big export plans. Even more jobs will probably be created in the future.

We are not talking about make work either. We are talking about medical personnel, lab technicians and support personnel, exactly the sort of people that Newfoundland needs in a high tech world. Those are well paying jobs.

I could go on because there are a number of different issues we could put together, but I do not want to spend a lot of time on the success stories. I want to talk about where we need to go in the future.

The other successful program is the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. As of 1996, the agency reported that it had created or saved 82,000 full time long term jobs. The premise of the member's motion suggests that the government of Canada does not know which way to turn, but the evidence says otherwise.

The 46 people in St. John's who got the new jobs, or what is going on with the other 2,016, or the 82,000 that we have saved, tell this House that the problem is no longer just finding data, the problem is finding jobs. We are not interested in waiting any more. We have the information we need and we will only conduct new studies on specific issues as they arise.

For example, Mr. Eugene Harrigan, the associate head of human resources development's Ontario region, will lead a review of the impact of the end of the Atlantic groundfish strategy on program clients, their communities and provincial finances. This will help the government and our partners to develop forward looking solutions.

We have programs that are working and we have results. Things are happening. Now that we are working more closely than ever with the province, even better things will start to happen.

Private Members' Business

• (1745)

In the short time that I have, I have given the House concrete examples of how real people at real companies are being put back to work. I want to thank those people in the programs who are trying to help depressed areas like Newfoundland and Labrador. I want to emphasize that we are on the right track. People have to be patient and give those programs an opportunity to work.

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have been in the House a short while and I have heard the term study I do not know how many times.

I would like to read the motion of the hon. member for St. John's East which we are debating today:

That, in the opinion of this House, a special committee should be established to study the severe unemployment problem in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Well there is a new idea. They are talking about studying the problem again. Let us look at the history of studies.

First of all we have a regular standing committee which looks into the issues of the fisheries. The Government of Newfoundland has just completed an analysis of the TAGS program and the problems in Newfoundland. We have the government across the way which says that studies are not the way to go but indeed it has hired Eugene Harrigan to go ahead and study TAGS when the auditor general has already put out a study on TAGS. Those are four studies I count so far.

We do not hear the Tories apologizing for NCARP, the northern cod adjustment and recovery program. They do not apologize for that at all. Indeed they had a little bit of a tag team going. They had John Crosbie and they had curly, their current leader, doing a tag team on it. Curly was the environment minister and he ignored the scientific studies that came out indicating that the fish stocks were depleting and did not do anything about it. John Crosbie knew at the time—

Mr. Mark Muise: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think that certain respect has to be shown to people who are being addressed in the House. I believe that would only be fair and I would ask you to rule on that.

The Deputy Speaker: I assume that the hon. member for Calgary West in his remarks is referring to the hon. member for Sherbrooke. If so, I think he would want to refer to him as the hon. member for Sherbrooke rather than by some other nomenclature.

Mr. Rob Anders: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the leader of the fifth party was in a tag team with John Crosbie to hide the fiasco that was the Atlantic fisheries when there was overfishing. The

Tories were more than willing to pull the wool over their own eyes and over the eyes of Atlantic Canadians.

Mr. Crosbie at the time knew that if the fishing continued, there indeed would be overfishing in the Atlantic fisheries, but he knew it would cost him his seat. It would cost him votes in Atlantic Canada so they let it happen.

The leader of the fifth party—and some call him curly—went ahead and ignored that. They worked in tandem.

Then the Department of Fisheries and Oceans made recommendations which were ignored. That is another study.

Add it all up. There has been study after study after study. Indeed I will say that both the Tory and Liberal governments know how to do studies, of that I am convinced. I have no problem saying that. However, I believe that the people of Atlantic Canada are getting tired of studies. They have been studied to death. They have had all the studies they need to have. They are looking for a few solutions.

Let us look at what some of the retiring politicians of Atlantic Canada have had to say with regard to a solution for the problem, rather than studying it again.

Let us look at the issue of taxes. Atlantic Canada, including Newfoundland where the Tory member is from, has taxes above and beyond that of the rest of the provinces in this country. One has to wonder whether or not the taxes are so high because they go to pay for the highest salary for a premier in this country. That is right. Brian Tobin draws in \$150,000 a year. He is the highest paid premier in the country and the people in Newfoundland pay the highest taxes in the country. One has to wonder whether there is a correlation, especially when they are paying him a pension of \$3.4 million as he sits as the premier of Newfoundland. Maybe that is where some of the taxes are going.

• (1750)

Let us look at what Frank McKenna, a good Liberal, had to say about this. On his retirement from politics he said to cut taxes. The federal government has been squandering money in Atlantic Canada for years. Why not save the money that it is squandering in terms of all these different types of programs because they do not seem to be lowering the unemployment rate. It has not worked over the last two decades. Why not give Atlantic Canadians lower taxes? That might actually create growth and stimulate jobs.

As a matter of fact there is another study that can be tossed onto the other ones that the Tories would like to initiate. This is one by University of Moncton Professors Donald Savoie and Maurice Beaudin who were looking at the Atlantic Canada Opportunities

Private Members' Business

Agency. They concluded that unemployment insurance had killed the entrepreneurial spirit in Atlantic Canada.

Once again I am afraid that I have to point to the previous Tory record on this. It was under their government that people could work for 10 weeks and collect 42 weeks of benefits in Newfoundland. To have that as a government policy and assume it is not going to kill the entrepreneurial drive is foolish. However it was the Tory policy that wiped out the entrepreneurial spirit.

Then we also saw what happened with the Liberals across the way and the Atlantic groundfish strategy. They assumed that by subsidizing people to continue fishing or to take them away from fishing when there were too many fishers with the technology that was in the marketplace at the time, that it would somehow solve the problem. Well no it did not solve the problem of overfishing because a lot of those people still have not had their licenses retired. Now we are back to square one. It is tweedledum and tweedledee. The Tory or Liberal solution, there is none.

We can also look at what the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has said about the region. Peter O'Brien, the Atlantic Canada director, along with the premier of New Brunswick, Frank McKenna—

[Translation]

Mr. Mark Muise: Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege.

I think the hon. member should stop blaming the past and help us find constructive ways for the people of Newfoundland. That is the point I wanted to make, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, but I do not believe this is a question of privilege or a point of order. It is a point of debate.

[English]

Mr. Rob Anders: Mr. Speaker, that is so like the Tories to have caused the problem, to have started the fire and when they start to feel the heat of it what do they do? They say that it is a point of privilege and not a matter of debate. Well the world's smallest violin gets played for them.

The premier of New Brunswick, Frank McKenna said the federal government should stop giving grants to Atlantic Canadian businesses and use the savings to stimulate businesses in the region with lower tax rates. Sounds pretty logical to me. If I were operating a business in Atlantic Canada and I was taxed at the highest tax rates in the country, I would certainly consider moving if I could, because what is the point of keeping a business in an area where I would be taxed to death.

Both of those parties are complicit, indeed they are. Let us look at some of the taxes that these two wonderful governments, the Tory government and the Liberal government, have brought to the people of Atlantic Canada. Right now the federal government and its finance minister are more than happy to brag about the overpayment of taxes in terms of employment insurance. Right now there is a surplus of about \$15 billion that they have sucked out of the Canadian economy and they brag that the budget has been balanced. It has been done on the backs of those people who are not getting work because of the high employment insurance tax.

Once again the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has called for a 25% cut in the EI premiums because it would create more jobs. Even Department of Finance studies indicate that high payroll taxes cut and restrict the number of jobs. But no, we do not hear those solutions coming from the Tories. Instead they try to say that the hon. member should be quiet and not mention their past blemished record. They did not have solutions then and they do not have solutions now. All they can propose is a study. Unfortunately a study is not going to cut it.

• (1755)

Then we look at something else that is coming down the pipe and it is payroll taxes once again, the Canada pension plan. The government is going to suck out \$11 billion and it is proud to do it with a 9.9% roughly 10% tax. It thinks that somehow that is going to create jobs in Atlantic Canada. Surprise, surprise. Once again it is a failed government program that is not going to create jobs in Atlantic Canada. More taxes do not create jobs.

At the end of the day when we look through all of this, what do we have here? We have Tories who with their ministers in their previous government ignored environmental studies. We have people who kept taxes high. We have people who sucked off multimillion dollar pensions.

Then we look across the way hoping for another solution and we look to the Liberals. There we have the harmonized sales tax. They thought that by raising value added taxes it would be a benefit. They kept EI premiums high by taking out \$15 billion more than they should have and they thought that would do good. Then they raised the Canada pension plan and they are going to be taking \$11 billion out on that.

We have these two parties both proposing studies and raising taxes when they were in power. The Tories want a special study, a special committee to look at it and the Liberals have hired Eugene Harrigan to look after the problem that they created with the Atlantic groundfish strategy. Once again both of them are proposing more, new and expensive studies, both of them are raising and keeping taxes high and they expect that somehow the problem is going to be looked after.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, congratulations for properly identifying my riding, which comprises four regional county municipalities.

I am happy to rise to speak to the motion of the member for St. John's East, which provides:

That, in the opinion of this House, a special committee should be established to study the severe unemployment problem in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I think we can see what the hon. member is trying to do, which is to draw the attention of the House to the unemployment problems in his region. This is fully justified.

When we take a closer look, we might ask ourselves whether the unemployment problem in Canada is not much greater than that. When we look at eastern Quebec—particularly the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé, which are of concern to me—all of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and not only issues of areas but of categories, such as young people or older workers aged 50 or 55, who are affected by technological change in business, we realize it is perhaps not a special committee on employment that we need in Canada, but a national priority on the part of the Canadian government.

We heard over and over again about the need to reduce the deficit for four years, and everyone agreed that this was true. Now, the number one problem in Canada is unemployment. We have this situation where there are no jobs for unemployed workers, either because they do not meet job requirements or because there are simply too few jobs to go around because, in our society, productivity gains often end up in the pockets of the very wealthy and seldom in the hands of people who could use this money to create employment.

I am inclined to say that the good will displayed by the hon. member needs to be spread around. The unemployment situation in Canada is not the result of natural law. It must be remembered that, in the late 19th century, the Atlantic region was an autonomous region.

Is it the result of power struggles then? I think so. Just think of how Canada was built. Twenty-five or 30 years ago, there was a very clear understanding in Canada. Ontario was to be developed to be the home of the manufacturing industry and related jobs. As for the people in the maritimes and Quebec, who supplied the natural resources, since they could not be given jobs year round for lack of an appropriate regional diversification policy, they were given transfer payments. This worked pretty well until the tap was turned off.

Things are topsy turvy in this country. Instead of diversifying economic activities in the regions that depended on natural resources and then imposing stricter standards, if necessary, it was

decided to impose stricter standards and not to diversify the regional economy.

• (1800)

This led to the results that we know. We are on the verge of a social disaster. There are people in our ridings who do not have the proper training for the available jobs, who are looking for work, and who are unhappy. They can no longer work enough weeks to qualify for employment insurance benefits to last until their next job. They have to go through the spring gap, a period of 10 or 15 weeks without any income.

What can we do to correct this situation? First, there must be a clear and specific political commitment on the part of the federal government to the effect that it will indeed make the fight against unemployment a priority.

Recommendations are being made in that regard. Let us not forget that two weeks ago the human resources development committee of this House passed a resolution to say to the finance committee and the Minister of Finance that employment and employment insurance must be given priority in the next budget. A majority of opposition members prevailed, so that the human resources development committee will have to convey this message to the finance committee. This step must lead to concrete measures.

Unfortunately, the proposal before us today is not a votable item. I would like to see many more motions on which members could vote. We could have amended it, based on the human resources committee's recommendation, and arranged to have Parliament require the federal government's priority for the coming year, when it concocts its budget, to be the reduction of unemployment.

If that choice were made, if that were put on the table, it would automatically result in the need to develop policies to diversify our regional economies. It would mean that, since priority was being given to employment throughout Canada, there would be a way of seeing that forestry workers who no longer had work in the forests could find jobs in wood processing. We should have programs to help companies develop these new products that can be sold on the American and European markets, and elsewhere.

This means that, in the dairy sector, we could place greater emphasis on exporting our milk, creating new products and developing specialty niches. It means that, in the tourism sector, we could overhaul the program the federal government has just created.

It has just created a \$500 million fund to help major tourist centres compete better internationally. This is very interesting where centres already exist, such as at Mont-Tremblant.

As a member representing a region where the tourism industry is still growing, where there are not necessarily any existing infrastructures, I can tell you that what we need are more flexible programs that will meet these regions' needs.

Private Members' Business

If the federal government gave priority to jobs, a motion like this one today would not be necessary because that is what would be required on a government-wide basis. This would mean that when the government's procurement policies are developed, there would be an assessment to ensure that the impacts are desirable, sufficient and in keeping with the taxes paid by each region of Canada.

Tomorrow morning, if we did a profile on that, if we went around the national capital, around Ontario, we would see that they are not doing too badly when it comes to having their share of these programs. If you come in our area, try to have one of your small or medium size firms register with the computerized bidding system and see if it will succeed in obtaining a contract from the Department of National Defence. It is quite an experience because, often, there are already many contracts, many people who have been tendering for two, three, ten, twenty or thirty years. It is the person who will get the contract who ends up drafting the call for tenders. It is much easier, in such cases, to get the contract.

It is actions such as these, in all areas, that the government should be promoting. For that to happen, there must be a commitment from the Prime Minister, from the government, saying that yes, our priority will be the fight against unemployment; yes, in ten years, we will assess Quebeckers, Canadians, and we will see where we are at that time.

We must evaluate how we are utilizing our human resources as quickly as possible during this mandate. Are we making full use of the potential our young people have to offer? Are we making full use of the potential of people in their thirties who can only rely on one contract at a time? This is another aspect of the unemployment issue. We must also look at how other types of income can be provided to people who do not now have sufficient annual income from their jobs.

Two weeks ago, we learned that the number of self-employed workers was increasing dramatically in Quebec and in Canada. More and more people are creating their own jobs, they do not have an employer, and they are not eligible for employment insurance.

• (1805)

Why can we not innovate and allow these people to become eligible? In this way, they would have a chance to continue working in these areas, to develop their entrepreneurial skills and also to benefit a little from a social security net that would protect them from a lack of jobs or a lack of contracts.

This motion was tabled in a good faith and deals with a problem found in the regions that the member mentions. But this is also a problem that exists throughout Canada.

I would like to add that people from western Canada should refrain from passing judgment on how people from eastern Canada or elsewhere did things. What we are doing today could be done to

look at all kinds of ways. The grain transportation subsidies, which existed for some years in the west, could be looked at for instance. I do not think they should judge. What needs to be looked at instead is how to ensure that each government, as long as we are still part of the system, has a proper mastery of its tools, how we could have a government machine that responds more quickly to requests.

I will conclude with this point. As long as the federal government brings in such things as the youth strategy, which parallels similar programs already in place in a province, and forces young entrepreneurs to go knocking on two separate doors for a solution to their problems, we are not on the right track. The right track, and this is perfectly clear, requires areas of jurisdiction to be clear, economic markets to be wide open, and we must show confidence in the potential of the people in our regions.

Ottawa is not where the solutions to unemployment lie, they are in each of the regions of Quebec and of Canada. People must be able to lay these solutions out on the table and have them heard, they must be made a priority, and we must be assessed according to the way we respond to that priority. This is the challenge we are giving to the present government.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking today in support of Motion No. 177, which states:

That, in the opinion of this House, a special committee should be established to study the severe unemployment problem in Newfoundland and Labrador.

At the same time, I would add New Brunswick, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and, going even further afield, British Columbia, on the Pacific coast, with all its fisheries problems.

Before I proceed with my speech, I would like to make a few comments to my colleague in the Reform Party. He spoke about Frank McKenna and said we should listen to what Frank McKenna has said.

[English]

I will say this in his language to make sure he will not have to get the translation. For the 10 years Frank McKenna was in power in New Brunswick I never once heard him say that he did not need any programs. However, on the same week that he took his resignation he said he did not need those programs and now we have to break the tax. Maybe this was because he wanted the support of the Reform Party out west if he were ever to become the prime minister of the country. I can tell the House he never said that when he was in power.

When we talk about the reduction of taxes to health and how much the government is spending, the Reform Party is in the wrong place. If Reformers want to save money for the country, they should follow what their leader did before the election when he said he would not move into Stornoway or use a limousine. Now they are using taxpayers' money to live at Stornoway. As if

Private Members' Business

Stornoway was not good enough, it needed over \$100,000 for repairs.

[*Translation*]

Clearly, unemployment rates in Newfoundland and Labrador have reached critical levels, despite the government's promises to invest in manpower training and economic restructuring.

Like the Conservatives before them, the Liberals cut social services and deregulated industry. The result? The rich get richer, but the ordinary folks continue to suffer.

[*English*]

The Liberals were elected on a promise of hope. Instead they embraced the idea that we could no longer afford the things we value as Canadians. Unemployment and the economic insecurity that goes with it are facts of life that we have to accept.

[*Translation*]

Accepting the insecurity that goes along with unemployment is out of the question. Never will the NDP support the Liberal view, which ignores human suffering. Never will the NDP say that nothing more can be done for the workers in this country.

• (1810)

Recently, in his first speech in the Atlantic region since the election that saw the number of Liberal seats there drop from 31 to 11, the Prime Minister had the nerve to say that cuts were going to be inevitable and that people in the Atlantic provinces were going to thank him. For what?

I doubt that the thousands of unemployed are ready to thank the Prime Minister for the cuts that have plunged them into terrible poverty.

In his speech, the Prime Minister also admitted that the Atlantic provinces had suffered the most from federal cuts. He said that, because we depended more on the federal government than other regions in the country, we had naturally, yes naturally, been at a disadvantage.

When is this government going to wake up and realize that entire communities are suffering because of the Liberals' failure to act? The problems in Newfoundland are problems that can also be found in my region of New Brunswick. People want to work but cannot find employment because the region's economy has not recovered from the fisheries crisis.

The TAGS program was supposed to eliminate this problem and make it possible to reinvest in manpower, to support communities financially, in order to diversify the economy and alleviate suffer-

ing. But, as with everything the Liberals have undertaken, it was just a knee-jerk reaction lacking long term vision.

This program was so badly managed that cheques were distributed to people who had been dead for some time. If a private company had been run like this, it would have gone belly up in no time.

Now the government comes to us and says "Sorry folks, but we have run out of money, and we have to close down the program". Can a government give this kind of answer when these people have paid taxes for years and devoted their energy to the economic development of their community, particularly when the crisis they find themselves in is again due to the government's mismanagement?

Well, enough is enough. People do not just want to survive. All they are asking is to be able to work and earn a decent living.

[*English*]

The TAGS program did nothing to build on Atlantic Canada's strengths; on the fishermen's tenacity, determination and expertise; on the fishing culture and heritage; or on the community's determination to survive.

[*Translation*]

As elected representatives, we must offer constructive criticism of these types of government programs. We have a duty to tell the Prime Minister it is not enough to help his friends the bankers; he must also think about ordinary people.

What people from the Atlantic region need is a proactive approach that takes into account the structural problems of regional economies. This is why it is so important to establish a parliamentary committee to look at the unemployment crisis. It is the first step toward a proactive approach that will identify the region's fundamental problems, thus making us aware of the communities' real concerns, instead of applying a band-aid solution.

People in Newfoundland also need short term projects to fill the void left by the expiry of TAGS. They need an early retirement program for older workers who will probably not have an opportunity to re-enter the labour market. This is also true for people in New Brunswick, in the Gaspé Peninsula and in Nova Scotia.

The NDP believes we must tackle the serious issue of unemployment right now. It is possible to set up long term job creation policies that will ensure decent salaries for families. We believe a full employment policy must be the government's top priority.

As we know, job creation remains Canadians' first concern. There must be a more balanced approach than the ones proposed by the Liberals, the Conservatives and the Reformers. These are irresponsible approaches, as they never take into account the impact of the policy on small Atlantic communities.

They always come up with proposals that serve Toronto bankers at the expense of fishers in Harbour Grace.

There is another way of acknowledging the suffering of people, which is to offer solutions to alleviate it. Newfoundland is not an isolated case. We must face the real problems that ail the Atlantic region. This government must have the courage to put forward proactive measures for the short and the long term.

The people of Newfoundland deserve to have a courageous government that is listening to them. Is this government able to fulfil their needs and meet their expectations?

• (1815)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Mr. Speaker, I support a study of the problem in the EI program as my colleague from St. John's East has suggested, but I propose that it be for all of Atlantic Canada.

Many people in my riding of West Nova are employed in the resource sector which means seasonal jobs. The negative changes to the EI program have caused a serious and devastating impact on our local economy. If payroll taxes were reduced, specifically EI premiums, it would permit business to create jobs and therefore reduce the dependency on the EI program. That would be very positive for our area.

The Deputy Speaker: I should advise the House that if the hon. member for St. John's East speaks now, he will close the debate.

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, I thank all hon. members for their submissions in this debate.

I reiterate that the unemployment problem in Newfoundland is devastating. The official unemployment rate in Newfoundland is higher than anywhere else in Canada. For a number of years it has had a 20% or 21% official unemployment rate. However, the fact of the matter is that an awful lot of communities in Newfoundland and Labrador have unemployment rates of 60%, 70% and 75%. A number of communities are shutting down all along the coast of Newfoundland, which is causing a lot of social unrest among people. This is an issue that has been with us and on the agenda for many years. It just does not go away.

I appreciate the submission of the government member. I am well aware that half the provincial budget of Newfoundland and Labrador comes from federal transfer payment. We are well aware of it and very grateful for it. I have heard much of the rhetoric before, but with respect we need creative solutions to this devastating problem. We have to look at the problem in its own right.

Private Members' Business

The hon. member for Calgary West stood a few minutes ago in this place and talked about this problem as if it were some kind of joke. If the member for Calgary West thinks it is a joke, if he thinks that a 20% unemployment problem in Newfoundland is a joke, he had better think again because it is no joke. The member is a joke but this is no joke.

The member for Calgary West has nothing to add to the debate. He had the nerve to stand in his place today and say to the people of Newfoundland that maybe they should move or that maybe the people of Atlantic Canada should go away.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary West on a question of privilege.

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, nowhere in my speech did I ever mention that the people in Atlantic Canada should move.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I am afraid that is not a question of privilege. The hon. member for St. John's East.

Mr. Norman Doyle: Mr. Speaker, the member for Calgary West might think this is a joke, but it is no joke. I can tell him that.

He said a moment ago in his speech that the smallest violin plays for Atlantic Canada. What a terrible remark to make to the people who are moving away from Newfoundland in droves every year. Some 7,500 people per year are moving out of Newfoundland. All we hear from the member for Calgary West of the Reform Party is that the smallest violin plays for Atlantic Canada. What a shameful remark. The hon. member has a red face now, but I think when he gets back to his office and he gets a call from his leader he will have a much redder face. What a terrible remark for somebody to make.

• (1820)

If the leader of the Reform Party had looked after it himself instead of costing the taxpayers of Canada millions of dollars, there might have been something we could have donated to the unemployed people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We hear jokes from the Reform Party about the unemployment problem in Atlantic Canada, but we do not hear any creative solutions.

As I said a moment ago, one creative solution, and I know I do not have a lot of time to talk about it, is to change the equalization formula for Newfoundland so that we can take advantage of some of our resource based industries. We are waiting for Voisey's Bay to be developed. That industry is worth billions and billions of dollars. We have to realize that we will have to give away one dollar in equalization payments for every dollar we raise in taxes and royalties.

Adjournment Debate

In summing up, if we had a fairer equalization formula applied to Newfoundland as it applies to its resource based industries, we would be a whole lot better off.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the item is dropped from the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Waterloo—Wellington is a mix of urban, rural and suburban areas. Approximately 30% of the wealth of my riding is generated as a result of agriculture and agribusiness. Needless to say, farming is very important to the economic well-being of Waterloo—Wellington.

Farmers throughout Canada are very concerned about our supply management system and what might happen to it. Over the years farmers have come to rely upon the supply management system to ensure the viability of the family farm.

It is a system which has brought stability to agriculture throughout Canada and it is a system which has ensured a reasonable rate of return for farmers as a result.

There are always those who would strip away the supply management system, so it is important for the federal government to take a lead role in protecting the interests of farmers by protecting the supply management system wherever and whenever possible.

This protection often is reactive. For example, the government will have to defend our system before a tribunal as a result of the American challenge. Government also needs to be proactive. Therefore the next meeting of the World Trade Organization will be crucial in this matter.

Would the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food outline exactly what steps the government will be taking at this meeting to maintain a viable and strong supply management system?

Mr. John Harvard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question of the hon. member for Waterloo—Wellington. I am well aware of his support of his constituents who count on a strong supply management system.

When the government took office in 1993 the negotiations of the Uruguay round were just coming to a conclusion. The issue of how to protect supply managed industries was front and centre in those negotiations. We moved quickly and decisively to achieve very substantial tariff protection for those industries, protection that has allowed supply management to continue operating effectively in Canada.

We defended our rights to impose those tariffs when the U.S. challenged us under NAFTA. We were successful in that case because we all worked together, federal and provincial governments and industry.

We are seeking the same kind of collaboration as we prepare for the next round of WTO agriculture negotiations. We are working closely with all stakeholders to identify Canada's agrifood trade interests. We will defend those interests in the Canadian position when the negotiations begin in 1999.

• (1825)

Our strength is in a clear and united position representing the interests of all parts of the Canadian agrifood system. In collaboration with industry and the provinces, that is exactly the kind of position we propose to develop in time for the 1999 WTO negotiations.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 6.25 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, October 30, 1997

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Drinking Water Materials Safety Act

Bill C-14. Introduction and first reading	1323
Mr. Rock	1323
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	1323

Canada Shipping Act

Bill C-15. Introduction and first reading	1323
Mr. Collenette	1323
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	1323

Criminal Code

Bill C-16. Introduction and first reading	1323
Mr. Gagliano	1323
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	1323

Telecommunications Act

Bills C-17. Motions for introduction and first reading	1323
Mr. Gagliano	1323
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)	1323

Customs Act

Bills C-18. Motions for introduction and first reading	1323
Mr. Scott (Fredericton)	1323
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)	1323

Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act

Bill C-268. Introduction and first reading	1323
Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yellowhead)	1323
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	1323

Questions on The Order Paper

Mr. Adams	1324
-----------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Supply

Allotted Day—Impaired Driving

Mr. Harris	1324
Motion	1324
Mr. Harris	1326
Mr. Clouthier	1326
Mr. Harris	1327
Mr. Laurin	1327
Mr. Harris	1328
Mr. Blaikie	1328
Mr. Mayfield	1328
Mrs. Bakopanos	1328
Mr. Blaikie	1330
Mr. Mayfield	1330
Mrs. Bakopanos	1330
Mr. Marceau	1330
Mr. Harris	1331
Mr. Marceau	1332
Mrs. Wayne	1332
Mr. Marceau	1332

Mr. Earle	1332
Mr. Guimond	1333
Mr. Earle	1334
Mr. Blaikie	1334
Mr. Earle	1334
Mr. MacKay	1334
Mr. Mayfield	1336
Mr. MacKay	1336
Mrs. Wayne	1336
Miss Grey	1337
Mr. Pagtakhan	1339
Miss Grey	1339
Mr. MacKay	1339
Miss Grey	1340
Mr. Clouthier	1340
Miss Grey	1340
Mr. Mitchell	1340
Mr. Mayfield	1342
Mr. Mitchell	1342
Mr. Mayfield	1343
Mr. Mitchell	1343
Mr. Stinson	1343
Mr. Szabo	1344
Mr. Stinson	1344
Mr. Elley	1345
Mr. Cannis	1346
Mr. Elley	1346
Mr. Myers	1346
Mr. Elley	1346
Ms. Caplan	1346
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford)	1348
Ms. Caplan	1349
Mr. Brison	1349
Ms. Caplan	1349
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	1349
Ms. Caplan	1349
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford)	1350
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	1350
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford)	1351
Mr. Szabo	1352
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford)	1353
Mr. Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	1353
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford)	1353
Mr. Hoepfner	1353

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Emergency Personnel

Mr. Szabo	1354
-----------------	------

Firearms

Mr. Pankiw	1354
------------------	------

Child Labour

Ms. Bulte	1354
-----------------	------

Second Anniversary of Quebec Referendum

Mr. Bergeron	1354
--------------------	------

Population and Development

Ms. Augustine	1355
---------------------	------

Tamara Okeynan	
Mr. Johnston	1355
Brockville Rowing Club	
Mr. Jordan	1355
René Lévesque	
Mrs. Lalonde	1355
Bloc Québécois	
Mr. Coderre	1356
Reform Party of Canada	
Mrs. Ablonczy	1356
Fonorola	
Mr. Paradis	1356
Pay Equity	
Mr. Earle	1356
Senator Jean–Robert Gauthier	
Mr. Bélanger	1357
Seniors	
Mr. Muise	1357
Miramichi	
Mr. Hubbard	1357
Drunk Drivers	
Mr. Malhi	1357

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

The Environment	
Miss Grey	1357
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	1357
Miss Grey	1358
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	1358
Miss Grey	1358
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	1358
Taxation	
Mr. Solberg	1358
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	1358
Mr. Solberg	1358
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	1358
The Environment	
Mr. Bigras	1358
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	1358
Mr. Bigras	1358
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	1358
Mrs. Gagnon	1359
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	1359
Mrs. Gagnon	1359
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	1359
Multilateral Agreement on Investment	
Ms. McDonough	1359
Mr. Marchi	1359
Ms. McDonough	1359
Mr. Marchi	1359
The Environment	
Mr. Charest	1359
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	1360
Mr. Charest	1360
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	1360

Tobacco Legislation	
Mr. Hill (Macleod)	1360
Mr. Rock	1360
Mr. Hill (Macleod)	1360
Mr. Rock	1360
The Environment	
Ms. Alarie	1360
Mrs. Stewart (Northumberland)	1360
Ms. Alarie	1360
Mrs. Stewart (Northumberland)	1361
Airbus	
Mr. Ramsay	1361
Mr. Scott (Fredericton)	1361
Mr. Ramsay	1361
Mr. Scott (Fredericton)	1361
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Turp	1361
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	1361
Mr. Turp	1361
Mr. Chrétien (Saint–Maurice)	1361
China	
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	1361
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	1361
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	1361
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	1362
Tobacco Legislation	
Mrs. Picard	1362
Mr. Rock	1362
Medical Research	
Ms. Bennett	1362
Mr. Rock	1362
Airports	
Mr. Breitreuz (Yellowhead)	1362
Mr. Mitchell	1362
Mr. Breitreuz (Yellowhead)	1362
Ms. Copps	1362
Trade	
Mr. Blaikie	1362
Mr. Marchi	1363
Mr. Blaikie	1363
Mr. Marchi	1363
Fisheries	
Mr. Power	1363
Mr. Pettigrew	1363
Mr. Power	1363
Mr. Pettigrew	1363
Human Resources Development	
Ms. Guarnieri	1363
Mr. Pettigrew	1364
Fisheries	
Mr. Duncan	1364
Mr. Anderson	1364
Public Service	
Mr. Marceau	1364
Mr. Scott (Fredericton)	1364
Health	
Ms. Wasylcyia–Leis	1364
Mr. Rock	1364

Ports	
Mr. Casey	1364
Mr. Collenette	1365
National Defence	
Mr. Bertrand	1365
Mr. Eggleton	1365
Agriculture	
Mr. Hoepfner	1365
Mr. Goodale	1365
Youth Programs	
Mr. Tremblay	1365
Mr. Pettigrew	1365
Trade	
Ms. McDonough	1365
Mr. Marchi	1366
Environment	
Mr. Herron	1366
Mrs. Stewart (Northumberland)	1366
Presence in Gallery	
The Speaker	1366
Business of the House	
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford)	1366
Mr. Kilger	1366
Points of Order	
Question Period	
Mr. MacKay	1366
Business of the House	
Mr. White (Langley—Abbotsford)	1367
Mr. Boudria	1367

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Supply	
Allotted Day—Impaired Driving	
Motion	1367
Mr. Hoepfner	1367
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	1367
Mr. Hoepfner	1368
Mr. Mayfield	1368
Mr. Hoepfner	1368
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	1368
Mr. Strahl	1370
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	1370
Mr. Saint-Julien	1370
Amendment	1372
Mr. Bryden	1372

Mr. Harris	1373
Mr. Bryden	1373
Mr. Bellehumeur	1374
Mr. Bryden	1376
Mr. Bellehumeur	1376
Ms. Folco	1376
Mr. Bellehumeur	1376
Mr. Earle	1377
Mr. Bellehumeur	1377
Ms. Catterall	1378
Mr. Mayfield	1379
Ms. Catterall	1379
Mr. Penson	1379
Ms. Catterall	1380
Mr. Szabo	1380
Mr. Muise	1381
Mr. Bryden	1381
Mr. Szabo	1381
Mr. Mayfield	1382
Mr. Szabo	1382
Ms. Hardy	1382
Mr. Bailey	1383
(Amendment agreed to)	1384
(Motion agreed to)	1384
Mr. Pettigrew	1384
Motion	1384
(Motion agreed to)	1384

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Newfoundland Unemployment	
Mr. Doyle	1384
Motion	1384
Mr. Nault	1386
Mr. Anders	1388
Mr. Muise	1388
Mr. Anders	1388
Mr. Muise	1389
Mr. Anders	1389
Mr. Crête	1390
Mr. Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	1391
Mr. Muise	1393
Mr. Doyle	1393
Mr. Anders	1393
Mr. Doyle	1393

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Agriculture	
Mr. Myers	1394
Mr. Harvard	1394

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation/Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

03159442

Ottawa

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:

Canadian Government Publishing,

45 Sacré-Coeur Boulevard,

Hull, Québec, Canada, K1A 0S9

En cas de non-livraison,

retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à:

Les Éditions du gouvernement du Canada,

45 boulevard Sacré-Coeur,

Hull, Québec, Canada, K1A 0S9

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

Also available on the Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire at the following address:

Aussi disponible sur le réseau électronique «Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire» à l'adresse suivante :

<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Additional copies may be obtained from Canadian Government Publishing, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0S9

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.

On peut obtenir la version française de cette publication en écrivant à :

Les Éditions du gouvernement du Canada, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0S9