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Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 10, 2000

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

1911 CENSUS RECORDS

The House resumed from March 2 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I rise on behalf of the people of Surrey Central to speak in support of Motion No. 160 presented by my colleague, the chief critic for national revenue, the Canadian Alliance member for Calgary Southeast. The motion states:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should take all necessary steps to release the 1911 census records once they have been deposited in the National Archives in 2003.

The purpose of the motion is to release post-1901 census data to the general public.

The motion has received a broad base of support from various members of the House, not just Canadian Alliance members. In addition, many MPs have received letters of concern from genealogists in their constituencies.

In Surrey Central I have received letters asking for the release of post-1901 census records. For example, Don Ellis of Surrey Central has been writing to me since I was elected. He points out that the Access to Information Act protects the census information

from being abused while it allows for the benefits of the release of this information.

Mr. Ellis stated in his letter:

Previous census records have been released, and they have been of invaluable assistance to those of us researching our ancestry. We have long awaited the release of the 1911 census, and of future records, to give us additional information.

Apparently, the Privacy Act is being given as the reason for withholding these records. This is ridiculous in view of the freedom of information act.

Another constituent wrote to me, who said:

I have recently been made aware that our government has placed a closure on all future census records and that the 1901 census will be the last one available for public research. I would like to voice my objection to this unfortunate decision.

As an amateur genealogist and the family historian I have made extensive use of census records both Canadian and British and cannot overstate the value of this source in establishing family relationships. They are one of genealogy's most valuable resources and should not be allowed to be permanently closed.

Since the United States has made available the 1920 census and is in the process of preparing the 1930 census for release I would like to know the rationale behind Statistics Canada's decision. I believe the former ninety year closure to be more than adequate to protect the privacy of any individual.

Another constituent, Robert Paulin, has been generous with his information and has encouraged the official opposition to take action to release these records that are almost a century old.

Strong families make strong communities. Stronger communities make stronger nations. The government refrains from doing anything and everything that makes families strong, whether it is the definition of marriage or not reducing taxes, which creates a tremendous burden on family members.

• (1110)

Many years ago only one member of the family worked. Now both parents work, but still they are saving less. All of these constraints are weakening the family institution.

The institution of the family is important and the government needs to do everything it can to strengthen it.

Some of the letters and representations I have received are from people in the business of researching family trees. There is a

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significant demand for these services. The withholding of the census data threatens these jobs and the firms conducting this research, and deprives the beneficiaries of important sentimental information.

In my own family, my wife's great grandfather died in Canada, but we are unable to learn of his whereabouts since the census information has not been released.

Census data is important information for historical research, especially for those researching family history. Without releasing the information contained in the 1911 census this research is seriously hampered.

Finally, it should be noted that the vast majority of those who participated in the census have passed on and, as such, the potential for breach of privacy is minimal.

Up to and including the 1901 census in Canada census records were transferred to the National Archives and were subsequently made available to the public 92 years after their collection. This was possible because clauses in the Privacy Act allowed for the subtraction of certain pieces of information and their release to the National Archives, subject to certain aspects of the Privacy Act.

In 1906 Sir Wilfrid Laurier, by order in council, legislated regulations that brought about an imposed secrecy on enumerators and other officers of the Census and Statistics Office. These regulations refer to chapter 68 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1906, an act respecting the census and statistics.

Within this ruling section 26 of the regulations stated that the compilation of census data could only be used for statistical purposes. By 1918 this regulation was codified, providing that no one could view the information without the express consent of the individual. Unfortunately, no time limit was given and, combined with a legal opinion of the justice department of 1985, it was interpreted that the information had to remain secret forever.

Some historians believe that the original 1906 and 1918 provisions had to do with a prevailing concern that the census data could be used for taxation purposes or military service. It is doubtful that the prevailing concern of the time was that historians would use the data some 100 years later.

In a most recent report, the privacy commissioner, Bruce Phillips, warned the industry minister that the release of census data could seriously hamper the accuracy of future census and renege on a previous commitment to secrecy. The industry minister has nonetheless asked Statistics Canada to undertake a study of options to amend the legislation in this regard by either retroactively changing the confidentiality provisions from 1911 onward or by amending the legislation for censuses taken from 2001 onward.

If Canada were to place its census data under lock and key forever it would sadly be far out of step with many other western

nations. For example, in the United States census data is released after 72 years and an individual can retrieve his or her own data at any time. In Australia census data is released after 100 years. In France census data is released after 100 years. In Denmark census data is released after 65 years, and in the United Kingdom efforts are being made to release data after 100 years. It is now two years later. We are still waiting for something to be done by the government.

• (1115)

In conclusion, the panel will report to the minister by the end of May 2000. Hopefully the motion we are debating today will spur the minister to take action.

By the way, I had written earlier to the industry minister. To be fair, his original response to me was on the government's line, that they could not release the information. I wrote back to him and the chief statistician responded, admitting that the minister directed him to develop options for changing the legislation.

It appeared that the minister was going to pay some attention to the matter in order to release this information, which was positive news until we realized that he had struck a panel to study the matter. We urge the government to release this important information so that we can strengthen the institution of family and thereby strengthen our nation.

Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Oak Ridges, Lib.): Madam Speaker, many historians, genealogists and researchers had expected that the 1911 census records would be publicly available in 2003, 92 years after the taking of the census. They were dismayed to find out that this was not to be the case.

Canada's censuses up to and including 1901 were taken on the acts of parliament which did not contain a specific confidentiality provision having the force of law. As a result census records up to and including the 1901 census have been transferred to the national archives and are now available for public access. However, starting with the 1906 census, access to individual census records is explicitly prohibited by law.

There seems to be a general perception that Statistics Canada has taken an arbitrary position on the matter and is simply refusing to release the 1911 census records. This is certainly not the case. In fact, the agency is respecting the legislation for which censuses have been taken since 1906. Starting in 1906, the legislation giving authority to collect census information contains statutory confidentiality provisions. These provisions are such that only the person named in the record may have access to his or her own information.

There is also a time limitation on this access. Even when the person is deceased, the provisions are still in effect. As a result, Statistics Canada cannot make public census records taken under

the authority of the 1906 and all subsequent statistics acts without breaching the Statistics Act.

Statistics Canada continues to hold all individual returns of census questionnaires collected between 1906 and 1991. These records are on microfilm and extracts are made available only to individual respondents who need to confirm birth dates for pension purposes, passports, et cetera.

I would like to make the point that information from the current census records can be released only when written consent of the person named in the record or the person's legal representative has been provided.

Also Statistics Canada has never considered the destruction of the 1906 and later census records. These records have been transferred to microfilm and the original paper questionnaires have been destroyed in accordance with approvals given by the National Archives of Canada.

We all agree that historians, genealogists and researchers have legitimate reasons for wanting access to historical census records. We also have to recognize and respect the right to privacy of individual Canadians and their ancestors. While there is undeniably great value attached to nominative historical census records, this is where an important principle of privacy protection comes into play.

The House is being asked to retroactively alter the conditions under which information was provided by Canadians. Is this right? The privacy commissioner strongly opposes a retroactive amendment to the Statistics Act which would allow the transfer of individually identifiable census records to the National Archives of Canada for archival and access purposes.

• (1120)

The commissioner is of the view that allowing third party access to census records for such purposes constitutes a use that is inconsistent with the guarantee of confidentiality that Statistics Canada gave to Canadians when collecting their personal information. He is also of the view that it constitutes a violation of fundamental privacy principles requiring that the personal information be used only for the purpose for which it was collected.

On the other hand, many historians and archivists view Canada's census as a national treasure that must be preserved. They argue that the census should be available after a reasonable period of time in order to conduct research which will shed light on the personal and community histories of Canadians.

Another argument often used to access Canadian census records is that census records in the United States and the United Kingdom are publicly accessible. I would like to remind my colleagues that this is an issue of different legislation and perhaps of culture when it comes to the taking of a census.

While there is undeniably great value attached to historical census records, there is also great value attached to the aggregate

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information that can be produced from current and future censuses. Much of this value is contained in various pieces of legislation. For example, population counts play a vital role in determining the amount and allocation of federal-provincial transfer payments for Canada health and social transfers, equalization and territorial formula financing. These payments were established at \$39 billion in 2000-01 and the census is required to allocate them.

Statistics Canada feels that the most important factor contributing to respondent co-operation is the unconditional guarantee given to respondents that the information they supply will be protected. Canada, for almost 100 years, has been able to unconditionally guarantee the confidentiality of the information supplied in the census.

Changes to the commitments made to respondents in the past could have a negative impact on the level of co-operation given to future censuses and surveys. A substantial decrease in such co-operation could jeopardize Statistics Canada's ability to carry out its national mandate of producing reliable and timely information.

The minister recognizes the importance of historical research but also must take into account the privacy concerns of Canadians. This is why he has created the expert panel on access to historical census records. This panel of eminent Canadians will look at the issues and provide an approach which would balance the need to protect personal privacy with the demands of genealogists and historians for access to historical census records.

The five member panel, which is chaired by Dr. Richard Van Loon, president of Carleton University, has been asked to make recommendations to the minister by May 31, 2000. The panel has been provided with all relevant documents and information on this matter. The panel is reviewing this information and is meeting with key stakeholders to seek their views.

In my view the House should wait for the expert panel on access to historical census records to make its recommendations before voting on this issue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise to address the motion raised by the member for Calgary Southeast with respect to the release of the post-1901 census records.

In recent months, a number of genealogists and historians have articulated their collective disappointment that the 1911 census records will not be available for review in the public domain in the year 2003. These individuals had previously expected the 1911 census records to be made available for research purposes in this

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particular year because census records have been, up to this point, accessible to the public after 92 years.

However, censuses administered after 1901 fall subject to the Statistics Act that explicitly prohibits the release of all census records. This prohibition does not allow anyone to access census records for any reason; the only exception is that an individual may access his or her own personal records—but that is the only current exception.

• (1125)

An individual may not access the census records of anyone else, not even those belonging to his or her immediate family members, nor even those records belonging to members of his ancestral family tree.

The dilemma here is quite clear. And yet, it is quite difficult to resolve. We have two competing interests that present a difficult case for the House. On the one hand, we have the reality of statutory integrity, upon which our nation is founded and, on the other, the practical idealism presented to us by historical curiosity.

Many have argued that the release of census records is crucial to furthering the knowledge Canadians hold of their past, of their communities, of their families, and of themselves.

Access to census records is what enables individuals, scholars, researchers, and historians alike to trace their respective histories and to answer questions about their past: from questions as simple as when exactly one's ancestry arrived in Canada, to questions as nationally significant as the face of the brave men who fought and defended Canada in the first World War. Answering these questions can indeed teach Canadians a lot about themselves and about their origins.

In fact, Canadian historians have called upon these records to answer these and countless other questions which offer great insights into our history as a people. As such, the availability of census returns up to 1901 has been a tremendous resource for researchers in search of information with respect to housing, health, income, and general social conditions of the day. But, again, researchers have been able to conduct their invaluable research based upon the laws in place before 1906 which authorized the release of these census records 92 years after they were taken.

For the first time, census data will not be available to Canadians come the year 2003, the year during which census data from 1911 would have been made available in the National Archives for public reference.

Now, however, those who argue that the census records should be released to the public argue that respect for statutory integrity and privacy is important. In 1906, when the change was made that all future censuses would be kept confidential and rendered forever

inaccessible, legislators made a commitment to Canadians. This commitment was that Canadians' responses to census questions would not be divulged to anyone.

The federal government currently requires Canadian residents to answer increasingly intrusive and intimate questions on its censuses. These questions included proddings into Canadians' marital status, physical characteristics, nationality, ethnic origin, wages earned, insurance held, educational attainment, and also proddings into respondents' infirmities and sicknesses.

Clearly, the government census is not an everyday survey or questionnaire—it is very involved and it can also make for quite a personal experience. In fact, census data are now collected every five years, instead of every ten, as they once were.

[English]

Most Canadians will readily answer these questions and willingly provide the federal government with the information it requests. Others will be more hesitant to divulge their personal information. Still, because the federal government requires Canadians to do so under fear of fine or imprisonment, everyone ends of answering all the questions.

Why? Why do they answer these intrusive questions? What puts their minds at ease in divulging this information? It is no more than the federal government's unqualified guarantee of confidentiality that allows Canadians to answer these very personal questions.

This guarantee is what convinced Canadians to divulge so much of themselves dating back to 1911, the guarantee offered by the federal government through the Statistics Act, and that remains the pledge the government has made to Canadians regarding their privacy. Would Canadians so willingly and accurately provide this information otherwise?

• (1130)

Here is our dilemma. The Laurier government promised that the information collected in the census after 1901 would remain confidential. The interesting part is no one is sure why this promise was made. Archival records indicate that the confidentiality provision was designed to reassure citizens that census enumerators would not pass along the information to tax collectors or military conscription personnel. Archival records or not, it remains unclear why these privacy provisions are in existence.

It is true that our world has changed dramatically since 1901. We have cultural values. While today we place the utmost importance on personal issues, back then according to the information, the reason for keeping census records forever confidential was the fear that information would be leaked to tax collectors and military

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personnel, not because they wanted to keep the information confidential for eternity. Canadians' concerns in 1906 were short term, to keep the information away from the taxman and from the military. We cannot be certain the goal was to keep information from historians.

It is of the utmost importance that we do not bar Canadians access to their history. In a relatively young country such as ours, we must do everything we can to promote and encourage our history and heritage. In so doing we perpetuate and strengthen Canadian sovereignty.

I appreciate the concern for statutory integrity and privacy interests. However, the releasing of census records after 92 years would not pose an infringement on statutory integrity nor be an invasion of privacy. After 92 years those who completed the census as adults are likely to be deceased, at which point the concern for privacy is less important.

Furthermore, Canadians today have been quite vocal in their support for releasing census records for research purposes. Given the overwhelming support for the release of records, we in the House cannot ignore the call of Canadians. This is an instance where the sensibilities of what Canadians feel is right and justifiable must be taken into account. If Canadians of today do not see the release of census records as an infringement on the privacy rights of Canadians of yesterday, then we as legislators have a duty to listen to their collective voice.

If Canadians today wish to retain access to census records 92 years after a census has been administered, then given the precedence set in the period leading up to 1911, we should accommodate them. In doing so we would be accommodating ourselves as well. Research into our history as a people and as a nation may only be furthered by allowing access to these invaluable records.

I offer my support for the motion brought forward by the member for Calgary Southeast.

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am happy to speak to Motion No. 160. I congratulate my colleague for bringing the motion forward.

A very interesting thing is happening in current society. In the field of genealogy today people are currently looking at the past.

I recently heard a lecture given by Steve Dotto. I believe he has a regular program on CBC where he talks about the Internet, computers and so on. He said that there has been a tremendous growth in the interest in genealogy in the country and one reason is that the Internet is such a good tool. He said if we want to learn all of the various activities, the best training device and lesson plan we could come up with particularly if we had a natural interest in the subject would be to pursue the genealogy of our own families. All the lessons we need in order to learn how to effectively use the Internet would come through that field of endeavour and study.

• (1135)

It is interesting that at the very time there is this burgeoning field in society current day families are looking more and more at their roots and their past. We are looking at our institutions with renewed enthusiasm. Whether it is the military, the RCMP, the church or other important institutions in society, there is a renewed interest in all of them. We see it on November 11 with the increasing turnout of people at Remembrance Day ceremonies.

At the very time when all this renewed interest is happening we have run into a brick wall potentially on the release of census data. This data is from the 1911 census. The 1901 census data was available in 1993. The major period of migration to Canada was between the start of the 20th century and the beginning of World War I in 1914. There are millions of Canadians whose first ancestors arrived in Canada during that period. We must take that into account.

There was an expectation on the part of virtually everyone that the data was going to be available in 2003. Some minds figured out that is not going to happen. It all changed because of a regulation in 1906. Although it is largely speculative, we know that they were not thinking about what the circumstances would be 90 or 100 years down the road. Logic dictates that the reason the release of census data collected was pre-empted at that time had to do with everyday concerns about conscription, what the military or the taxman might do with the data for people who completed the information.

That is the way the regulations read at the time. Looking back on it we know in current terms if we use the natural lifespan of people that a 90 or a 100 year release of census data addresses privacy concerns.

What do some other western democracies do with their census data? It is important to make a comparison. The U.S. releases its data after 72 years; Australia, 100; France, 100; Denmark, 65; and in the U.K. efforts are under way to release the information after 100 years. There has been some concern about retroactive alteration of confidentiality requirements and the whole subject of a privacy guarantee that was made when the data was collected.

I cannot think of a single way individuals will be negatively impacted by releasing data 90 or 100 years later. Therefore I cannot think of a single way this will negatively impact participation by the population at large in current census collection. It will put us in step with other western democracies.

The major point I am trying to make is that the motion is very worthy of our support to ensure that the 1911 census data is released in 2003. For the 1921 census and others in the future there is lots of time to come up with a very structured response to how the data will be released. In the meantime it is important to address the very specific issue on the 1911 census.

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• (1140)

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate. I was not planning to do so but I have been listening to the debate and my own private poll would indicate the people with whom I have spoken recognize there was a law passed in 1911 and that not many people today understand why the law came into effect. Now there is an expert panel which has been appointed by the industry minister to try to resolve this by the end of next month.

I intend to be very brief in my remarks. I concur with the motion that is before the House this morning. I would hope that the expert panel chaired by the president of Carleton University would pay attention to what has been said here in debate by the previous speakers on this topic and those who intend to take part in it.

If I may just interject a personal note, my uncle wrote a relatively readable book on the history of his mother's family. They emigrated to Canada from the area of Virginia around 1776 because they supported the king in the war of the colonies. My uncle's book traced the history since then. I am sure he did that based on many of the tables that were available to him through the archives and other areas. Now we are told that beginning with 1911 the records are not available because a law of which nobody seems to know the history says the records will be sealed in perpetuity.

Privacy Commissioner Bruce Phillips, a former well-known television newsman, seems to have sided solely with privacy that would protect people into the grave and beyond. For the life of me I cannot understand why after 92 or 100 years there would be a real problem. If there are people or families who are concerned about this it would be interesting to hear them speak out on the topic but we certainly are not aware of them to the very best of my knowledge.

Mr. Phillips the Privacy Commissioner has said "People who give information to the government under penalty of law and an unqualified promise of confidentiality are entitled to expect that that trust will be honoured". Nobody would disagree with that but the question must be asked for how long, for 92 or 100 years? At what point do these competing demands take effect and the interests of amateur historians, genealogists and researchers come to the fore?

The previous speaker mentioned the migration and immigration to western Canada that took part in the early years of this century. The prairies were filled out at that time and people want to know what happened in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba as well as the other provinces and territories.

I want to make it clear, and I am sure there will be differences of opinion in all caucuses on this, that this is a private member's motion on which it is everyone's right to vote. I will support the motion when we vote on it. At the same time I will be watching

with interest to see what the committee of experts decides when it reports to the industry minister on May 31. But for the life of me, I cannot figure out why we would not want to pass on information about our ancestors and allow it to be studied by those who are alive now as opposed to protecting those who have been deceased for some time.

• (1145)

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to rise in the House today to speak about this very important issue. I want to say at the outset that I have had a number of calls from constituents with respect to this matter.

It is a matter of great importance, not only from a genealogical point of view but also from an historic point of view. It is something that we on the government side have indicated we take seriously and want to take a very strong, fast and hard look at all the options with respect to where we should go on this all important matter.

I remind my colleagues in the House that the transfer of census records to the national archives for public access is a very complex issue. Although historians, genealogists and researchers have legitimate reasons for wanting access to historical census records, we have to balance that and at least weigh in the respect and the right to privacy for individual Canadians and their ancestors.

It is a balancing act and one on which we have to give careful thought in this very important and delicate matter. I want to point out that the minister and the government have gone on record as doing precisely that.

The motion before us, while perhaps of some interest to some people, is really premature based on the fact that our minister and our government have moved in this area. We are taking a look at exploring and reviewing the options. In so doing, it is important to note that the minister has created an expert panel of eminent Canadians to provide independent insight into this very important issue, where expert advice on legalities and privacy in archival matters are explored and the implications looked into in a meaningful way which will bring credibility to the process.

The five member panel is comprised of: Dr. Richard Van Loon, who is president of Carleton University with a long history, including with the federal government; Chad Gaffield, director at the institute for Canadian studies and professor of history at the University of Ottawa; the Honourable Gérard La Forest, a retired supreme court justice; the Honourable Lorna Marsden, president and vice-chancellor at York University and former president of my alma mater Wilfrid Laurier University; and John McCamus, president of Osgoode Hall Law School at York University in Toronto.

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The members of the panel were chosen with great care and are highly regarded Canadians who have a great deal of insight into these matters. They were appointed on the basis of individual merit for their expertise and their long term interest in historical research and privacy issues.

The minister has asked the panel to recommend by May 31 of this year an approach that balances the need to protect personal privacy with the demand of genealogists, historians and others who want access to historical census records.

Access to individual census records for all censuses starting with the 1906 census is explicitly prohibited by law while census records up to and including the 1901 census are publicly available through the National Archives. These records are in a public domain because the censuses up to and including the 1901 census were conducted under legislation that did not contain a specific confidentiality provision having the force of law. However, access to individual census records for all censuses starting the the 1906 census is explicitly prohibited by law.

Starting in 1906 and for all subsequent censuses thereafter, the legislation giving the authority to collect census information containing statutory confidentiality provisions was in place. These provisions are such that only the person named in the record may have access to his or her own information.

There is also no time limitation on this access. Even when the person is deceased, the provisions are still in effect. As a result, Statistics Canada, without breaching the Statistics Act, cannot, according to law, make public the census records taken under the authority of the 1906 and all subsequent Statistics Acts.

• (1150)

This has of course—and it is apparent as a result of the correspondence certainly that I get and other members of parliament—dismayed many genealogists and researchers who had expected that the 1911 census and the records would be publicly available in 2003, 92 years after the taking of that census. They argue, and some would say rightly so, that the census should be available after a reasonable period of time in order to conduct research that historians, genealogists and others like to do, which would shed light on the personal and community history of Canadians across the country. They would like to see a change in the Statistics Act which would confirm that census records would be available after 92 years.

There may be a perception that Statistics Canada has taken an arbitrary position in this matter and is circumventing regulations under the Privacy Act. That is certainly not the case. The agency is respecting the legislation under which censuses have been taken since 1906. It is after all the law.

As members of the House are aware, the Statistics Act, like any law, can be amended. While there is undeniably great value

attached to nominative historical census records, this is where an important principle of privacy protection comes into play. Is it right to alter retroactively the conditions under which information was collected by Canadians and provided by them? It is a question that we need to look at and grapple with.

The privacy commissioner, Mr. Bruce Phillips, says no. He strongly opposes a retroactive amendment to the Statistics Act which would alter and allow the transfer of individually identifiable census records collected during past censuses, 1906 to 1991 to be precise, to the National Archives of Canada for archival and access purposes.

While there is undeniably great value attached to historic census records, there is also great value attached to the aggregate information that can be produced from current and future censuses as well. That information is and will be used for a multiplicity of purposes, and as genealogists and historians know, that is very important.

Changes to the commitments made to respondents in the past could have a negative impact on the level of co-operation given to future censuses and surveys. A substantial decrease in such co-operation could seriously jeopardize Statistics Canada and its ability to carry out its national mandate of producing reliable, timely information on which many users depend. It is very accurate and it is known throughout the world as being a good model, which many countries copy.

Census information is used for a multiplicity of purposes, as I have noted. For example, population counts play a vital role in determining the amount and the allocation of federal-provincial transfer payments for the Canada health and social transfers, equalization and territorial formula financing. These payments were estimated at \$39 billion in the year 2000-01 and the census is required to allocate them.

The census also provides comprehensive information for analysis of the social and economic issues of concerns to all Canadians. These issues include education, training, language use, immigration, multiculturalism, income support, child and elder care, housing programs and many other issues, all of which are relied upon as a result of the information gathered.

Before I conclude I want to remind my colleagues that census information is a fundamental pillar of our democratic system. We have a great system. We need to promote it. We need to protect it. We need to ensure that it survives into the 21st century. That is our job, not only as parliamentarians but also as Canadians.

The data from the census is one that measures indicators that electors use to evaluate the performance of their government. This must never be taken lightly. I know that members in the House do not.

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• (1155)

With the minister having appointed the panel and the government having recommended that we proceed, it is my position that we should now go forward and hear what that panel of experts has to say. After that, we will be in a far better position to make subsequent decisions that affect Canadians.

I recommend that we let the process take its course. We should listen to those best suited to give us that good advice and proceed accordingly.

Mr. John Cannis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to participate in this debate.

I thank all my Liberal colleagues who have participated in the debate. I especially want to thank the hon. member for Waterloo—Wellington for not only acknowledging the effort of the member of the Canadian Alliance but for very clearly pointing out the efforts the government has undertaken with respect to this issue.

This is an important issue. Many Canadians have asked us about the census and we have an obligation to respond to their concerns. However, I, too, want to take this opportunity to re-emphasize to Canadians exactly what is happening.

With the greatest of respect to the hon. member for Calgary Southeast, I must say that as much as his motion makes a lot of sense, the government and the Minister of Industry have already taken the initiative, as was so eloquently pointed out by my Liberal colleague, to put a panel together to look at this most important issue.

I do compliment the effort by the hon. member for Calgary Southeast, but it is premature. We owe it to each and every Canadian to wait until the end of May when the panel will report back with its findings and tells us “This is what we have done. This is the information we have gathered. This is our opinion and this is our view”. I am confident that at that time, not only the Minister of Industry, who is the minister responsible for Statistics Canada, but all of us in the House will make that decision on which direction to go in.

The date the panel will report back is May 31, 2000. Canadians who want to maintain the protection of personal information and those who would like to examine personal information or communities, historically speaking, will have the opportunity at the appropriate time to participate.

My Liberal colleague talked about the members of the panel, who are prominent Canadians. I will take this opportunity to tell Canadians who they are so they can be assured that the people looking into this most important issue are indeed people who are

well recognized and well respected and have the expertise and the knowledge to face this most important issue.

The five member panel is chaired by Dr. Richard Van Loon, president of Carleton University. The other members are Chad Gaffield, director, institute of Canadian studies and professor of history, University of Ottawa; the Hon. Gérard La Forest, retired supreme court judge; the Hon. Lorna Marsden, president and vice-chancellor, York University; and John McCamus, professor of law, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University.

These prominent Canadians reflect how seriously the government is taking this issue. These individuals will do what is right. When they come to the government and the minister with their recommendations, I assure all the people who are interested in this important issue that we will take it as seriously as the hon. member for Calgary Southeast has in bringing forth this motion.

• (1200)

The panel has been provided with all relevant documents and information so that it can do a proper job. The panel is reviewing this information and is meeting with key stakeholders to seek their views. It will not only be these five members doing the work. They will be reaching out to various members in various communities right across Canada to make sure that the data is transparent and well received. The panel's recommendations will be the basis for serious review and immediate follow-up by the government.

Although historians, genealogists and researchers are upset that the 1906 and subsequent census records will not be accessible to the public and are asking that the legislation be amended, the privacy commissioner strongly opposes a retroactive amendment to the Statistics Canada Act which would provide access to individually identifiable census records collected in past censuses.

This is a complicated issue. I want to detail what historical census records are available to the public at the present time. All microfilm records of the 1901 and earlier censuses are currently available to the public and are under the control of the National Archives of Canada. I want the people of Canada to know that because there is a perception that everything is locked away and hidden and not available to Canadians. That is simply not the case.

People ask where historical census records are available. All microfilm records of censuses taken in 1901 and earlier are currently available to the public and are under the control of the National Archives. Provincial archives in many regional libraries have also acquired copies of the same records. Local libraries can request census microfilms through interlibrary exchange programs.

Why are the earlier census records available to the public and not later ones? Many Canadians have been asking this question and I would like to take a few moments to explain.

The earlier censuses were conducted under various census acts which did not contain the same type of confidentiality provisions that are a fundamental part of Statistics Canada legislation today. Consequently, it was not until the passing of the Privacy Act in 1983 that there was some legislative authority governing these 1901 and earlier records. Under the Privacy Act information under the control of the National Archives can be placed in the public domain in cases where the information was obtained through a census or survey 92 years ago.

This is an issue which the average Canadian often does not understand. Therefore, I feel it is appropriate to outline to Canadians exactly what this issue is about so that they can feel comfortable that this government, previous governments or future governments do not have a big brother image over them, collect information, lock it up and use it as they so choose. That is simply not the case. That is why I am taking this opportunity to put Canadians at ease as to what exactly happens with the information we gather.

The government has taken the bull by the horns. It has undertaken an initiative to move forward positively. In saying this, again, I compliment the member for Calgary Southeast because I know he cares. His heart is where it should be. He is attempting to ensure that each and every Canadian, organization and facility has access to this information.

The Minister of Industry and the government recognize the importance of historical records. We have also taken the opportunity to point out our concern. There are privacy concerns. By the end of May we will be in a position to respond properly.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1205)

[*English*]

MODERNIZATION OF BENEFITS AND OBLIGATIONS ACT

BILL C-23—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

Government Orders

That in relation to Bill C-23, an act to modernize the Statutes of Canada in relation to benefits and obligations, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage of the bill and one sitting day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill and, fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government business on the day allotted to the consideration of the report stage and on the day allotted for the third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): Call in the members.

• (1250)

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

(*Division No. 1265*)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Anderson
Axworthy
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bélanger
Bertrand
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Bryden
Byrne
Calder
Carroll
Cauchon
Clouthier
Collenette
Copps
DeVillers
Dion
Dromisky
Duhamel
Eggleton
Folco
Fry
Gallaway

Alcock
Augustine
Baker
Barnes
Bélair
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Bonwick
Brown
Bulte
Caccia
Caplan
Catterall
Chamberlain
Coderre
Comuzzi
Cullen
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Drouin
Easter
Finlay
Fontana
Gagliano
Godfrey

Government Orders

Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Grose	Guarnieri
Harb	Harvard
Hubbard	Ianno
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Knutson	Lastewka
Lavigne	Lee
Leung	Limoges
Longfield	MacAulay
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCormick	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McWhinney	Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Murray
Myers	Nault
Normand	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peterson	Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Pratt	Proud
Proulx	Provenzano
Redman	Reed
Richardson	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Scott (Fredericton)	Sekora
Sgro	Shepherd
St. Denis	Stewart (Brant)
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Torsney
Valeri	Vanclief
Volpe	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood—124

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Benoit	Bigras
Blaikie	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Brison
Cadman	Casson
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Cummins
Dalphond-Guiral	Davies
de Savoye	Desjarlais
Duceppe	Duncan
Elley	Epp
Gagnon	Gauthier
Goldring	Gouk
Grewal	Grey (Edmonton North)
Gruending	Hanger
Harris	Harvey
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Jaffer
Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)	Konrad
Laliberte	Loubier
Lowther	Lunn
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Marchand
Mark	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mayfield	Ménard
Meredith	Morrison
Muise	Obhrai
Penson	Price
Proctor	Ritz
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)	Solberg
Steckle	Stinson
Stoffer	Strahl
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Turp
Vellacott—65	

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I declare the motion agreed to.

REPORT STAGE

The House resumed from April 3 consideration of Bill C-23, an act to modernize the Statutes of Canada in relation to benefits and obligations, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I wish to inform the House that there has been a change in the voting pattern for the report stage of Bill C-23, the details of which are available at the table.

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to rise today to speak on behalf of my constituents against Bill C-23. We have just witnessed closure on the bill, another timely action by the government. I have actually lost track of how many times the government has invoked it. It is getting to be a habit. It is all the time.

Most of my constituents are upset with the content of the bill. I will be expressing the views of thousands of them as well as millions across Canada who have written in and sent in petitions on the issue. The view is that institutions which provide the historical, social, economic and legal foundations for the country deserve more respect and consideration than is being shown by this unaccountable government.

It is unaccountable because it has consistently sat back and allowed questionable court decisions to dictate how it responds to issues that concern Canadians. It has dragged its feet on young offenders legislation and wandered aimlessly in the legal wilderness while judges decided it was more important for pedophiles to have access that victimizes children than for those children to have a chance at a decent life free from exploitation.

This leads us to wonder what is worse: to watch the Liberals stumble over issues they do not want to deal with or to see them intervene in areas they have chosen as their pet projects.

• (1255)

Members on this side have expressed outrage over the irresponsible dispensation of taxpayer money to multimillion dollar corporations and other dubious projects that we have seen in the last month or so.

We are fully aware that there can be good public spending, that poor and vulnerable Canadians need a hand up at critical times in their lives, but what we have seen instead is a disproportionate amount of taxpayer dollars wasted on outdated concepts of what constitutes economic prosperity.

Government Orders

What we see in Bill C-23 is an ill conceived and badly written bill which attempts to address the concerns of one segment of Canadian society by trampling on the sensibilities of society in general. It is not just the so-called Christian right that is uncomfortable with the implications of the bill but well meaning Jewish and Muslim communities as well.

Average Canadians who express their beliefs about fairness and equality in various ways are also concerned with the long term impact of omnibus bills which purport to sweep away supposed inequalities in one fell swoop.

It is not just the scope that is worrisome here. It is the confusion and open-ended qualifications in Bill C-23 which should stop the government and any clear thinking person in their tracks.

Cabinet ministers are unclear about the meaning of conjugality as it is used in the legislation. The justice minister rejected the idea that public benefits should be based on dependency and insisted that conjugal referred to the sexual union of a couple. The Secretary of State for Multiculturalism disagreed and expressed the idea that there were some requirements to fulfil in order to be considered conjugal but not necessarily sexual.

They are asking Canadians to commit public money and the future direction of social policy based on undefined opinions about who might qualify and who might not. It is terribly irresponsible because it allows the Liberals to take the easy way out: write a big bill and let the courts settle it later. It sounds very familiar.

Most Canadians realize it was the actions of the courts that started all this in the first place and now we leave the future of Canadian families to them again. The biggest loose end is the absence of any definition of marriage, which our amendments will seek to rectify. This is an issue that is providing all sorts of amusement as various parties try to dance around the ultimate intentions of Bill C-23.

The Liberals started out by claiming the bill was just about addressing an equality issue raised in a court case. Supposedly *M v H* required the redefinition of spouse, and so the government scrambled to change hundreds of statutes to comply. That court decision was really about redefining the responsibilities of partners toward each other in relation to splitting up property, but never let it be said that those without a backbone cannot stand at attention when a judge makes a decision over there.

It was clear to everyone else that when hundreds of laws were rewritten to change what it meant to be a spouse the result would be the dilution of the sanctity of marriage, but the justice minister kept up that fiction for a while. Public pressure finally got to her. She announced last week that a definition of marriage would be posted in the front of Bill C-23, which I suppose undermines her assurances that Bill C-23 was not just about marriage. Unfortunately

putting it in the preamble gives very little weight to the amendment. Canadians will not be fooled by that.

That does not mean the confusion has gone away, especially not in this place. On April 3 the member for Burnaby—Douglas began his speech by suggesting that Bill C-23 had nothing to do with marriage. Then he spent 10 minutes complaining that the definition of marriage needed changing and he would not be satisfied until that happened.

He introduced the notion that restricting marriage to heterosexual relationships automatically rendered all other relationships as inferior, although I would suggest that he is taking this a little too personally and forgetting that there are millions of Canadians in a variety of relationships who do not go whining to the government for a pat on the back for every decision they make in their personal lives.

The member also raised the point that marriage, and the laws that have defined it, have changed over the years. He repeated the old myth that the rule of thumb used to refer to the right of a husband to beat his wife as long as his weapon of choice was no thicker than his thumb. Winnipeg historian Gerry Bowler points out that the rule of thumb is a reference from the lumber trade and wife beating has always been illegal in England and its colonies, including Canada.

Heated rhetoric aside, the point is taken that marriage and divorce have been examined and redefined over the years. That does not mean that there has been a continuous stream of blissful progress, far from it. Divorce laws were liberalized in the 1970s and the implications of this are coming home to roost now.

The rate of common law relationships has risen faster than the rate of traditional marriages in recent years. Lone parent families are becoming more numerous. It is rare that Canadians do not know other couples who are divorced if they themselves are not among those statistics.

It has been widely documented that the implications of all this include economic distress, personal breakdowns, increased stress on social programs and systems, and a rise in youth crime and anti-social behaviour.

• (1300)

I do not need to exaggerate. In fact I will say that many people successfully cope with everything thrown in their path. But that does not mean it is good public policy to create these stresses and then ask Canadian taxpayers to pay for them.

There is a good, better and best way to organize society, and we are here to make sure we do what is best. Not everybody will agree with the decisions, but sometimes it is right to say no.

Some people would argue that what we see happening in society is a lot of people making personal decisions and governments having no moral authority to dictate what those choices should be.

Government Orders

There is confusion over the obligations and entitlements of individuals and a deliberate blurring of the lines between what affects an individual and what applies to the group as a collective.

Governments are responsible for the general conduct of society and the preservation of its institutions. The best they can do is lay down the guidelines for what is desirable or beneficial behaviour for the greatest number and then make sure that all law-abiding citizens are free to make the best lives for themselves. Only when one citizen interferes in the rights of another, especially when the vulnerable are being victimized by the powerful, do governments have a duty to step in and use guidelines to restore order.

The guidelines cannot be whimsical and they cannot be remade every time another self-identified group rises to demand that society recognize its special circumstances. That is not tolerance or compassion. That is chaos and everybody in society suffers as a result.

This does not mean that open societies cannot make accommodations for legitimate demands, only that those demands have to be held up to public scrutiny and be openly debated by a broad representation of society. That is not what we are seeing with Bill C-23.

Otherwise intelligent individuals are reduced to name-calling and spurious references to try to get their points across. Others, who are the first to complain if their free speech or ability to express themselves is being trampled, are the first to shout down their opponents and insult their beliefs.

This is an omnibus bill that wants to affect 68 statutes covering 20 government departments, but it wants to do so with ill-defined concepts, no provisions for co-operation among those departments and no recognition that the bill is unsettling for millions of Canadians on all sides of this debate.

In a *Globe and Mail* article dated March 18, 2000, several gay men expressed reservations about having traditional forms of entitlements and obligations imposed upon them. Toronto writer R. M. Vaughan is quoted as saying:

I think this legislation codifies the larger battle in gay culture between conservative elements who want to mimic heterosexuals and think that is the path to freedom, and the traditionalists, now turned upside down as radicals, who don't want anything to do with straight norms.

The problem is that Bill C-23 introduces lawyers to the bedrooms of the nation and drives thousands of couples to define their relationship in terms of where they might fit on a bureaucratic scale of benefits. Rather than impose equality on a wider range of relationships, Bill C-23 would impose dozens more distinctions for individual Canadians, and their personal decisions would come under scrutiny and evaluation from faceless bureaucrats and over-paid lawyers. As I mentioned earlier, there is a blurring of the lines between what affects an individual and what applies to a group.

The Liberals have said that Bill C-23 is not about marriage, only about extending benefits. In 1996 the justice minister of the day said that Bill C-33, at that time, was not about extending benefits, just about putting sexual orientation into the charter. There are many quotes which could verify that.

The member for Burnaby—Douglas asked if marriage was so fragile that it could not stand to be pulled and stretched by the courts, and of course the Liberals, in this way. In response the member for Erie—Lincoln said that 20 years after benefits were extended to opposite sex common law couples people were still getting married in significant numbers.

There are over one million lone parent families, about 85% of them headed by women. In many cases people are making personal choices, although I am not sure that divorce is always a case of choice. I am sure that many people come to regret the choices they have made and we know that most of the children who do not have a choice in the matter are not always well served by these arrangements.

In answer to the members question, is marriage fragile? No, it is as solid as a rock.

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by saying that this is a very delicate matter. Bill C-23 is an issue of concern for Canadians on all sides of the political spectrum.

I have taken a number of calls and representations made by my constituents as to how they feel on both sides of this issue.

• (1305)

At the end of the day, in this great parliament and across this great country, it is a matter of fairness, tolerance and respect.

I object to the kinds of comments that have been made by members opposite with respect to this all important matter. I object to the myths, the falsehoods and the misinformation that people, especially members opposite, have found it necessary to use to stir up people, to try to pit people against people and group against group in Canada, which prides itself on being a tolerant, caring and compassionate society. It is important that we proceed with Bill C-23 in a manner consistent with the great values of Canada. I think that is precisely what we are doing.

I have listened to the comments of members opposite. I want to be very clear that what is at stake are both rights and obligations. The granting of same sex privileges will confer certain rights and there will be obligations which will flow from that. Let me also be clear that this bill, which has been studied at committee and is now before us once again in the House, deliberately maintains a clear legal distinction between married and common law relationships.

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We know that courts have ruled on this matter. We know that we in the House are obliged to follow through with legislation. We also know that equal treatment should be afforded in the law for all Canadians, whomever they may be and wherever they may live, common law opposite sex couples or common law same sex couples. It makes no difference. We are talking about fairness, compassion and equal treatment.

It remains for the government to choose how to achieve the goal of equal treatment, and so it is that Bill C-23 represents the government's choice to provide equal treatment while also responding to the concerns of many Canadians about the need to preserve the fundamental institution of marriage. This bill strikes a balance.

First, the bill uses clear language to maintain the term spouse for married couples and to introduce a new term, common law partner, for unmarried, committed relationships.

Second, under clause 1.1 it is now stated clearly that nothing in this bill would, in any way, shape or form, alter or affect marriage as we know it.

Another issue that has been raised is the question of whether individuals will have to go to court to find out if they qualify as a common law partner because of the use of the term conjugal. Quite frankly, this defies common sense.

Common law relationships are not new. The word conjugal has been used in federal law for some 40 years to describe common law opposite sex couples. There is absolutely no reason that there should suddenly be a problem in this area where there has not been one before. Let us put that to rest once and for all.

Common law partners, both opposite sex and same sex, will apply for benefits and be held responsible for obligations in the same way that already occurs for common law opposite sex couples.

The members across the floor raise a concern about those who might try to take advantage of the system, either by declaring a relationship that does not exist or by failing to declare one that does. They raise all kinds of outrageous scenarios, which is beneath them to do so.

This is not a new situation either in law or in the administration of federal law. Declaring a relationship that does not exist or failing to declare one that does would be fraud and would be dealt with under existing provisions that apply to married couples and common law opposite sex partners. Let us put that issue to rest as well.

Members opposite have also repeatedly claimed that there is no public support for this bill. On the contrary, this is simply not true. In a survey conducted in October 1998, 67% of Canadians agreed that same sex couples should have the same legal rights and

obligations as a man and a woman living together as a common law partnership or couple.

• (1310)

I, like a number of colleagues, have heard from many Canadians on both sides of this issue, as I said at the outset. Some are concerned about preserving marriage, for example, but just as many are concerned about the bill being fair, equitable, tolerant and compassionate. Equal treatment for all is what I have heard.

The bill will not result in increased taxes for Canadians or increased costs for employers because the bill responsibly ensures that both benefits and obligations will be extended at the same time. The Department of Finance estimates that the fiscal cost will be balanced by the fiscal obligations which will rightly ensue. This is not a cost issue for the government.

Similarly, I should note that over 200 private sector Canadian employers already extend benefits to same sex partners in their employ as a business decision.

I think it indicates that a business decision taken in this all important area makes sense, not only from a competitive point of view but also from a compassionate and human point of view. We in the government are doing the same by bringing forward Bill C-23.

I need not remind members that the Supreme Court of Canada made it clear last May in the ruling of *M. v H.* that restricting government benefits or obligations to common law opposite sex couples is simply not consistent with the charter. Canadians respect the charter. Canadians have a great love for the charter. Why is that? Because the charter defines us as a people.

I hear the member opposite laughing, and well he should laugh because it is not we on this side of the House who always want to denigrate one of the great institutions of Canada, the charter as we know it.

Not so long ago Mr. Stockwell Day was in Ontario. I forget how the chant went, but I think it went like this "Stockwell Day, go away, anti-choice and anti-gay; Stockwell Day, make my day, right wing bigot, go away".

Those are not my words; those are the words of Ontarians who see through the code words used by members opposite, who see through the bitterness, extremism and underlying hatred of various groups. Quite frankly, we reject that, as do all good thinking, caring, compassionate Canadians.

If the hon. member does not laugh at me again I will go back to what I was saying, which is that the great charter of ours guarantees equality for all Canadians, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation. Those guarantees exist for all, and they exist in a manner consistent with the fundamental underlying values of this great country.

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It is important that we proceed with Bill C-23 to ensure that people, no matter where they live in Canada, are given the kind of fundamental respect that Canadians of all stripes not only require, need and deserve, but want, because that is after all who we are. We are a nation of greatness built on the very foundation of tolerance and compassion, caring and acceptance for everyone.

Why is that? Because our forefathers and foremothers forged this land along with native Canadians consistent with the underlying belief that we treat each other as we would be treated. Why do we do that? Because it is the Canadian thing to do.

I urge all members of the House to do the right thing and vote for Bill C-23.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to take part in this debate, which has been at times a very heated and often divisive subject before the House. The legislation is the modernization of benefits and obligations act denoted in *Hansard* as Bill C-23. It was tabled in the House on February 11 this year.

• (1315)

It is focused on the human dynamics that exist in the country with respect to the rights and obligations that flow from human relationships and the recognition thereof in law. The bill has raised the ire on certain occasions and certainly caused a lot of members of parliament and a lot of Canadians to be inward looking. This is omnibus legislation which means it touches a great number of statutes, 68 in total, and extends benefits and obligations to same sex couples on the same basis as opposite sex common law couples.

The subject as I refer to it is sometimes outside the comfort level of many in this place and many around the country. Yet for most of us it becomes a question of fairness and equitable treatment with respect to benefits that accrue and benefits that would flow as a result of human relationships.

A distinction remains with respect to same sex couples. Many would view the differences as alive and well irrespective of the legislation passing through the House. In the eyes of many there is a clear distinction between same sex couples and opposite sex couples.

This legislation levels the playing field with respect to fiscal rights and obligations. As has been referred to by many other members in this place and many who have given commentary on the bill, it is a bill that respects the Supreme Court of Canada and which is consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Of course with our charter obligations comes the responsibility to respect the law. To do otherwise, to deny equal treatment under the law and before the law to same sex couples or partners would be

contrary to Canadian law as it exists and certainly contrary to our charter. The ruling made in May 1999 in the M and H case that was handed down by the Supreme Court of Canada made it clear that governments and agencies cannot limit benefits or obligations by discriminating against same sex common law relationships. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Human Rights Act speak of equal treatment and fiscal fairness under our law.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Canada approaches this bill as we approach many bills that have a moral underpinning, or legislation that forces members and rightly so to reflect upon their own conscience and the consultation that takes place within their constituencies and their ability to be objective and far sighted with respect to the position that is taken. For those reasons the right hon. Joe Clark, as it is incumbent upon him as leader to make decisions from time to time on such bills, has released members of this caucus to follow their conscience and the wishes of their constituents and to have a free vote. I would suggest that we are the only party in the House which is following that particular tact on this bill.

This legislation is about fairness and financial equity, not about infringing upon an individual's moral or personal beliefs. The legislation maintains a clear distinction between married and unmarried relationships as viewed through the eyes of Canadians.

The term spouse, which refers to married couples only, and the term common law partner are found in the bill and encompass people in common law relationships, both same sex and opposite sex. The definition of marriage, although it was intended not to be changed, is now included by virtue of amendments that were put forward at the committee stage and further amendments that will take place here in the Chamber today with respect to votes.

Although the Minister of Justice stated clearly throughout the weeks and months leading up to the tabling of the bill that the definition of marriage was not going to be included, at the last minute, at the eleventh hour, the parliamentary secretary tabled what was deemed to be a definition of what marriage is.

• (1320)

That definition is one that has been consistently accepted throughout the country for many years. It is one the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada fully embraces and supports.

This is not to say that the inclusion of this definition is wrong; it is the manner in which it was presented by the government. It was held back until consistent and persistent pressure from within the government caucus and around the country cried out for a further definition. Rather than omit it from the bill, the government decided to include it. We accept and support that move.

The legislation speaks to benefits and obligations. Same sex couples will have the same access as other Canadian couples to

Government Orders

social benefits and programs to which they have contributed. Criteria still have to be met and there are obligations attached.

The hon. member opposite spoke of the financial implications. The Minister of Finance, who I understand supports the bill, has indicated there will be offsetting savings by the implementation of the bill and that the actual cost will be virtually nil at the end of the day when one calculates those who will now be entitled versus those who may be disqualified from benefits by virtue of the acceptance and passage of this legislation.

Some bills that are currently before the country and which will be touched and changed include the GST and the HST tax credit legislation. It was very unpopular throughout the country and was rejected by Liberals in opposition but as members of the government, they have quickly embraced it and expanded it. The child tax benefit legislation will also be touched as will old age security, the Canada pension plan and the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act.

Those types of bills demonstrate quite clearly that this is about economic and fiscal fairness as opposed to any moral judgment or any attempt to tread on what I think most Canadians feel is very sacred ground, which is the spiritual and religious definition of couples in marriage and how people interact. This legislation is not meant to be judgmental in that way. Sadly much of the debate embarked on in this place has at times digressed into this type of moral judgment.

The legislation is consistent with the decision of the supreme court. Bill C-23 will correct certain discriminations and will help achieve equal treatment under the law as it pertains to fiscal obligations and benefits. To do otherwise would offend the principles of equity that are enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and our Canadian Human Rights Act.

On a strict legal principle with the emotion removed it is difficult if not impossible to justify not supporting this type of legislation. Many have expressed reservations and many continue to struggle with the issue of homosexuality. This bill is more about keeping all Canadians on an equal footing with respect to entitlement of benefits and obligations as they pertain to fiscal matters.

Several provinces have already moved in this direction. Many corporations and corporate entities have embraced this same approach. British Columbia, Quebec and Ontario have enacted very similar legislation to that which we see encompassed in Bill C-23. Many private sector businesses are taking the lead in correcting inequalities in the workplace through offering benefits to both spouses of same sex and opposite sex relationships.

Parliament has already passed Bill C-78 which extended survivor pension benefits to same sex partners of federal public service employees, as have Manitoba, Quebec, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Yukon, Nunavut

and the Northwest Territories. The direction has clearly been blazed.

It is fair to mention that Conservatives certainly can be compassionate, tolerant and open to modern thinking in this regard. Canadians should not be fooled into thinking that this is an abandonment of the family or principles of the traditional view. This is about fiscal and equitable treatment under the law with respect to how Canadians interact and what obligations and benefits would flow to them after having established a criteria and a relationship.

In my final submission, the term conjugal does not denote only sexual relations. Supreme court justices have made several commentaries and there are certainly instances of opposite sex couples who have remained together for many years and no longer embark on sexual relations. This is not the only criteria.

● (1325)

With that said, I look forward to further debate on this subject matter and the passage of this legislation through the House.

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I grew up in a secure and loving family where both my father and mother were present. It was not a perfect marriage but I knew that they loved me and each other. There was a commitment to stay together in spite of all the problems of married life. That made my growing up years very happy and memorable and it instilled values and morals in me which I have brought to my own marriage and family of eight children.

I know that not every family had that kind of good beginning but it seemed to be the norm in the Canadian society of the 1940s and 1950s. However, insidious pressures were being placed on family life. Post-war parents had seen thousands of shattered relationships. Some of them had lost spouses in the war and had to start all over again. Other relationships had been destroyed by adultery both overseas and at home, brought about by the separation of six terrible years of war. In the lives of these people there was a growing bitterness about love and marriage itself.

In the post-war years Canada enjoyed an economic boom. With that came an ever increasing higher standard of living which placed the temptation of getting and spending before us. Both government and Canadians in general went on a huge spending spree. The government response to pay for all of it was to raise taxes bringing us to this day where we are almost the highest taxed nation in the world.

This in itself was yet another economic pressure on Canadian family life. As inflation spiralled, many women who wanted to be stay at home mothers had to become breadwinners with their husbands simply to keep up. Both men and women were working longer and spending less time with each other and their families.

Government Orders

The commitment to develop strong relationships in family life was taking a back seat to other less worthy priorities. Some of my school chums' families started to disintegrate. Divorce became more frequent but still was not an epidemic. However, the pressure on the family was building.

By the mid-1960s we were in the midst of a sexual revolution. Some segments of our society hailed it as liberty, a freeing up from traditional values like chastity and fidelity which had provided, in my view, structure and safety for the Canadian family.

Many women were tired of the abuse they felt they suffered at the hands of a male dominated society. More of them were working, taking their places beside men and they wanted equality. Some of them wanted even more. They wanted vengeance and retribution. The feminist movement started a strident campaign to bring women into the 20th century. They burned their bras, demanded protection from unwanted pregnancy, spurned chastity and scorned the pro-life people.

A gradual blurring of the sexes occurred that gave young men growing up in many female dominated, single parent homes an identity crisis. This led to a rise in militant homosexuality, a coming out of the closet of gay men and women who also demanded equality. The things that had been considered improper went looking for a desperate legitimacy.

In 1968 then justice minister Pierre Trudeau mouthed his infamous words "the government has no business in the bedrooms of the nation". He and his cohorts passed omnibus justice legislation which legitimized behaviour which until then for centuries had been considered outside the realm of normal and good family and personal relationships. He legitimized homosexuality between consenting adults. He provided couples who were being split by disharmony and infidelity with an easier way out, no fault divorce.

At that point in Canadian history, I believe our government started its assault on traditional family and marriage. In my view, no government can make legitimate any behaviour that has for centuries by tradition, custom, faith and the social contract been seen as destructive to family life.

• (1330)

This brings me to the year 2000. After 32 years of disintegrating family life, rising divorce rates, the murder of millions of babies by abortion, the decline of authority and discipline in families, school and judicial institutions, to the latest attack on the family, the attack on the very foundation of family life in this nation, the institution of marriage itself.

May I suggest that the majority of Canadians, people of faith, whether they be Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu or Sikh, have a common belief that the institution of marriage, one man and one woman, was part of the Creator's divine plan for the orderly

conduct of life and the continuation of the human race. Those of us who believe in this are wondering why our government continues its assault on the family which started in 1968. Why is it so determined to allow in legislation the gradual diminishing of influence of the traditional family and marriage itself?

Bill C-23, unfortunately in my view, is the logical progression of trends started long ago, where now in the form of same sex benefits, government continues the blurring of the traditional family and marriage. It does that by suggesting strongly through this legislation that common law relationships of heterosexual or same sex couples are no different than that of marriage as the union of man and a woman to the exclusion of all others.

This sends a destructive message to all our children. This says that the marriage of man and woman for life is not important. It does not matter whether couples get married or not and it does not matter with whom one cohabits. What a terrible message to send to our children. How will the future of our country be influenced by this?

In moving in this direction, I suggest that this government has given in once again to the tyranny of the minority. Minority pressure groups in our society that demand legislative change to legitimize their position do not really question the morality of it. They are afraid to ask the important question: Is it really the right thing to do? They simply change the law in the name of equality. Having equal rights does not make those rights correct or moral. We cannot legislate equality any more than we can legislate morality. Those are attitudes of the heart and soul that the government has clearly forgotten about.

Now, the party that told us that government has no business in the bedrooms of the nation, continues to invade them. Ironic, is it not? We have a bill that gives benefits and obligations on the basis of conjugal relationships.

What are the youth of today saying? When I listen to them, I hear them wanting to return to a better day, to a day when family life and marriage had more security and more commitment. For instance, in a study done in 1971 young people between the ages of 18 to 34 were asked if they agreed that extramarital sex was okay and 34% of them said yes. In 1995, 18 to 34 year olds were asked the same question and only 11% said yes. Who are these 1995 young people? They are the children of the baby boomers whose lives were supposed to be made easier by free love, easy divorce and the legitimization of homosexuality.

They are the ones who suffered the results of the age of promiscuity, the lack of commitment, parents who were not there for them when they needed them and, quite frankly, they want a better life. They want to be better parents and more committed to their spouses, with more order and structure in their family lives and for their children.

Government Orders

Why does our government always have to be so many years behind the real feelings of the majority of people when it crafts and passes legislation? This is exactly what is happening with Bill C-23.

I look at our nation today and weep. I weep for the hurting children who do not really know their parents. I ache for the women who suffer post-abortion trauma and have deep regrets for their actions. My heart breaks for young people who have grown up in homes where the lack of structure, discipline and love has led to rebellion and bitterness.

• (1335)

The Reena Virk incident is a tragic result of the things that I have talked about today. I see a government oblivious to the whole thing, determined to march to the orders of a tyrannical minority which will cause us all to reap the results of the whirlwind in the years to come. I say shame on it for not having open eyes to see what is going on, open ears to hear the wishes of the majority of Canadians who are opposed to the bill and open minds to admit that it is.

If this bill passes without the amendments we have suggested, it will be a sad day for Canada and I, for one, would never want to be a part of that kind of country.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-23 has raised a lot of questions and a lot of issues. People want to get their views on the record. Through the course of the debate we have found people with different backgrounds appearing to take a common position on a bill for entirely different reasons.

For example, just a few moments ago an hon. colleague from the Conservative Party reaffirmed for everybody in the House who was listening that this bill was purely and exclusively about economic and fiscal inequalities that must be redressed. As many others have done, he pointed to the fact that legislation in the House was really behind the current conditions of the day in the marketplace. As an example, he pointed to the many decisions on the part of the private sector to equalize benefits notwithstanding sexual orientation.

That may be true but the bill does aim to ensure that the economic discrepancies and inequalities that appear to exist in relationships of economic dependency are immediately redressed. I underscore that this has been an issue of economic dependency. I think the state has a right to intervene in any partnership where economic dependency does have ramifications for the larger social good.

As was rightly pointed out by individuals in the House, tolerance, compassion and all those values that they ascribe to Canadian society and to each and every individual here, do come into play. However, as another colleague has accurately pointed out, one does

not legislate compassion, equality or justice. One legislates equality of treatment.

When there is, as this bill has indicated, a circumstance where economic dependency and a partnership is not recognized, then the state has the obligation to ensure that both the rights and the responsibilities of that partnership are upheld. The presumption, of course, is that these partnerships all have the social value for a collective good.

Bill C-23 recognizes that there is a discrimination of sorts. I say of sorts because I am trying to be very careful and cautious in the language I use. This is, after all, a charged environment. I am looking at the issue of all economic dependencies. Cases where these economic dependencies do not call into question a sexual relationship are excluded from this bill. For me that is an important and significant vacuum in this legislation. We should include all those who are not properly dealt with by legislation.

As members of parliament, once we see an injustice, once we perceive an inequality and once we engage our energies to ensure that we address that inequality, we have an obligation to not restrict that energy to just one component of that inequality.

I do not know if I am making myself clear, but if one recognizes the value of economic dependencies, then surely one should not restrict them on the basis of sexuality.

• (1340)

I am sure my children think of me as a prude, or a dinosaur, as a member on the other side would have said. I am not really. I am one of those children of the sixties. I recognize that there are responsibilities that we arrogate to ourselves the moment we make decisions. I truly believe that as individuals, if we make a decision we are responsible for it. We cannot ask somebody else to be responsible for our decisions unless of course those decisions have a larger impact. If people are willing to show me what the benefits are of some individual decisions, I am willing to accept them.

Colleagues on both sides of the House have argued that the bill should be exclusively fiscal and economic in its approach, and that what the Government of Canada rightly is doing is catching up to society and giving to many relationships the legitimacy that convention has already accorded them and that private sectors have already ascribed by virtue of some decisions that have emanated from the courts.

However, there is one other element that people have raised. My colleague from the Conservative Party a few moments ago said that some people were still struggling with homosexuality. No, I do not think anybody is. There are overtones of religious bias. There is bias in everything.

Government Orders

Despite being one of those people from the free wheeling sixties, I too had an upbringing. I am proud to say that my upbringing was religious, although I am not as practising as I used to be, but it was religious in the sense that it said every single man and woman, every single creature on this earth is worthy of the dignity that is accorded all humans.

If people would say to me that I was being a little bit religious on this issue, I would say that they are darned right. I hope I am living up to the credo that I espoused when I was a younger man. What dignity is at stake? What compassion need I accord to someone that my background has not already obligated me to offer? What discrimination is so glaring that it needs my immediate and total attention? I would willingly give it.

People have pointed out the economic and fiscal discrepancies where two unrelated people, it does not matter what gender they are, have agreed in their partnership that they would sustain each other. We as a state or as representatives of the state say that is a good and healthy relationship and we will give it what is due. However, let us do that for every single relationship. Let us not restrict it by sexuality. If we do, we then call into question precisely the issues that some of my colleagues have raised, and that is, by so restricting this decision and by indicating that we can only deal with this element of inequality do we then not call into question the larger issues, the issue of matrimony, the issue of heterosexual relationships, the issue, as my colleague from the Alliance Party indicated, of family? From there we can extrapolate all the ills that we will.

I do not think we are in a position where we need to challenge ourselves about sustaining something that is rock solid. Like many members in the House, I am also blessed with a little bit of skepticism. I thought this was a bill, purely and exclusively, about redressing fiscal and economic inequalities and economic dependencies. However, I then heard other members in the House, as is the end or objective of debate, and advocates outside the House complain that the Minister of Justice changed the bill by including an amendment wherein she defined marriage. Their response was that the bill was not about economic dependency. They said that the bill was about recognizing this particular sexual activity on the same par as another.

● (1345)

My tolerance and my willingness to address the issue were awakened. My constituents were also equally compassionate and equally committed to establishing a country and a society of which everyone could be proud. They are now asking which it is. Is the bill one that recognizes this type of marriage on the same basis as the other by giving a definition or not giving a definition or by giving the same benefits that accrue to this one? What are the social benefits of any type of union?

If it is true that the state has no business in the bedroom of the nation, what then should be the criteria for economic dependency?

What should be the test of unions that are for the common weal and not for individual benefit?

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Wanuskewin, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I have a number of concerns about the bill. My colleagues have very ably raised a number of them over the course of their speeches. I will focus on just a few ideas.

My main concern with the bill is that it threatens the very institution of marriage. People can dismiss that and brush it off, but I think down the road we will rue the day that this legislation was brought forward. It takes us further down a slippery slope that leads to the devaluing of the important institution of marriage.

In 1996 the Liberals passed Bill C-33, the bill that added sexual orientation to the Canadian Human Rights Act. The stated goal of that bill was to protect homosexuals from discrimination in the workplace and in housing.

At that time a number of Liberals, and we will cite some of them today, assured the Canadian public that the amendment to the act would not lead to the extension of benefits to partners of homosexuals. We were told then that it was only stopping discrimination, that it was only a workplace and housing issue. In the House on May 7, 1996, the Liberal member for Wentworth—Burlington defended Bill C-33 and the justice minister of the day with these words:

—many Canadians feared that Bill C-33 would lead to court interpretation such that gay couples could claim marriage and family benefits as a matter of right, that the legal privileges the state confers on conjugal couples of the opposite sex would be equally guaranteed by right to couples of the same sex. The justice minister has explicitly said this is not the intention of Bill C-33. He said it is workplace legislation and nothing more. He has assured us it has nothing to do with the definition of family, of same sex benefits or of same sex couples.

Those words were from the Liberal member for Wentworth—Burlington. They ring pretty hollow today. To add to that, on May 8, 1996, the justice minister of the day, the member for Etobicoke Centre who is now the health minister, confirmed this deception when he said:

—the Supreme Court of Canada decided the case of Egan and Nesbit. It decided that notwithstanding that sexual orientation is a ground within section 15 of the charter on which discrimination is prohibited, the benefits do not automatically follow.

The Liberal justice minister at that time in his own words explicitly claimed that even if sexual orientation were added to the Canadian Human Rights Act the courts would not use that to extend benefits to gay partnerships.

We can fast forward to today where we find that all those promises were empty. They all ring very hollow, very deceptive in fact, as subsequent events have shown. That slippery slope has operated quite well.

Government Orders

There has been a series of court decisions rendered in which various kinds of benefits previously restricted to heterosexual couples have now been extended to gay partners. The most recent decisions have included the Rosenberg decision in June 1998 in which the Ontario Court of Appeal changed the Income Tax Act to extend pension benefits to gay partners. In May 1999 the supreme court declared in its *M. v H.* ruling that gay partners were subject to the alimony provisions of the Ontario family law act.

What happened in these court cases is exactly what the Liberals said would not happen. They are obviously not very good at prediction and beyond that they knew exactly where this would lead.

We see a pattern in which the initiatives of the Liberal party on same sex matters turn into merely a Trojan horse. I make some exceptions for folk on that side of the House who understand and see the problems with the legislation. At first they say the legislation they are passing in 1996 will not lead to legal challenges designed to extend benefits to gay couples. Then when the legal challenges come forward and are successful they turn around and say they had better change the laws to reflect the recent court decisions. That is what they are doing with the introduction of Bill C-23.

• (1350)

I heard a member say just recently that the Liberal cabinet is trying to catch up with the recent court decisions. The truth is that it is merely finishing what it set in motion. It is all very disingenuous. That is why we need to wake up and realize that the bill is a definite plan and it takes us further down that slippery slope. It sets the stage for a direct attack on the heterosexual definition of marriage at a date coming very soon. Stay tuned. We will see it before long in our supreme court.

If the legislation is passed it will lead in a very significant way, looking back historically, to a very major devaluation of marriage. Some ask why this would be bad since we are in a modern era and maybe there are other ways to deal with it. I would say that marriage, which the bill threatens, is a unique institution that has historically served us very well. It deserves to be guarded, not only protected but affirmed.

The institution of marriage has brought great benefits to society. It is in the vast majority of marriages that children are brought into the world, providing our country with its future citizens, workers, leaders, mothers and fathers. Marriage, as we know and as is shown time and again in academic study after academic study, provides the most stable, enduring context. Our Statistics Canada studies demonstrate this point. Marriage provides the most enduring context for the development of individuals during the formative years of childhood.

It has been proven that families in which the parents are married are statistically the most stable families. In this way marital

relationships contribute to the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family and of society.

Why does marriage bring these benefits? When a man and a woman enter into a marriage relationship it is almost always with the express purpose of making a lifelong commitment that will form the basis of family life and the environment in which children will be reared.

Marriages do break down, regrettably, sadly and tragically, but the fact that marriage relationships are much more stable than common law relationships makes one point very clear. Very few people enter into a marriage relationship flippantly. Most have carefully thought about the commitment they are making and the sincere and solemn vows to which they are committing. They realize they are participating in something much larger than themselves, something that most Canadians from various religious backgrounds believe is designed by God.

I simply point out that people are serious when they get married. This seriousness and depth of commitment to marriage are what benefit children who are born and raised in families. This is of great benefit to society.

Because of the way in which the institution of marriage benefits society we need to guard it, protect it and promote it. The institution of marriage as the union of one man and one woman must be preserved, protected and promoted in both the private and the public realms. It would be foolish to undermine the uniqueness of the marriage relationship. Any society that does so risks losing the benefits that have come to that society from marriage and from the high regard in which it has always been held.

Some people are not thinking about the health of the larger society when they are willing to sacrifice the societal benefits which come from marriage in order to engage in some major societal experimentation. We are in a laboratory, it appears, and some major social experimenting is going on that will create some real harm and damage down the road. Such people regard marriage as little more than a form of self-expression. It is much more than that. It is the glue that holds society together and lays the groundwork for the society of tomorrow.

The institution of marriage is not something to be toyed with. Were we to abandon the uniqueness of marriage, I am convinced we would pay a heavy price for that social experimentation. We would be killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

To tinker with the institution of marriage sends the wrong message to our young people. Surveys have shown that young people are actually more optimistic about relationships and starting a family some day than many of their parents. That optimism is good and needs to be encouraged.

Were the institution of marriage to be changed, we would be sending the wrong message to common law couples who have

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children and who are contemplating making a lifelong commitment to each other in marriage. Obviously many couples who are married today were formerly living together in common law relationships. At some point they decided to commit themselves to each other in a greater way, in marriage. This is something to be welcomed and encouraged. The children in such relationships benefit and society in turn benefits.

• (1355)

Therefore marriage in Canada as currently defined as the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others accords with the Reform Party, the Canadian Alliance policy that marriage is the union between a man and a woman as recognized by the state.

Though the bill before us can be criticized from various angles, I believe that one of the most serious criticisms is the way in which it takes us further down that slippery slope toward the devaluation of marriage.

This is typical of the way the Liberal cabinet and some candidates handle social policy matters. Liberals appear to be anti-family with respect to the national day care program. The Canadian Alliance offers dollars and choice for parents. The Liberal cabinet has tax discrimination against one income families. We offer a 17% solution of fairness and equity, a \$10,000 per person exemption and \$20,000 per family.

The Liberal cabinet is unwilling to uphold laws against child pornography. We would use the notwithstanding clause to protect kids. The Liberals have unfair child access laws after divorce. We propose shared parenting family law to fix that. I could go on from there.

In closing, we have a cabinet with a track record of undermining the family by way of legislative initiatives. I do not believe that the majority will forget that attack on the family. As members of the Canadian Alliance Party, as I wrap up, we will fight for families. We expect that Canadians will join us in that significant battle as well.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I am a bit concerned about the arguments I have been hearing from time to time from our friends across the aisle. Government members seem to be always presenting arguments that concentrate on their attempts to refute the arguments presented by my colleagues.

In other words what we have are negative arguments in opposition to the opposition. What I am waiting to hear are arguments explaining the civil and social purposes of the bill. What are its objectives? How can it possibly benefit society?

It is not good enough for the government to argue that the bill will do no harm. Although that premise in itself is questionable I do

see some potential for harm there, but there must be, if this is to be reasonable legislation, a premise that it will somehow benefit the country. What is the advantage of devaluing the unique position of marriage with respect to social benefits? What is the government trying to prove?

Our society has lived for hundreds of generations without this type of recognition for homosexual relationships. These relationships have been essentially prescribed—

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but it is almost 2 o'clock. I wanted to make sure that I left you with a good chunk of time. You still have a bit over eight minutes in your speech. You will have the floor when we come back to Government Orders.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this week communities across Canada are celebrating National Volunteer Week.

What does it mean to volunteer? The dictionary describes it as spontaneously taking on a task, but rather than define the term being a volunteer really defines the person.

Canada has repeatedly been selected by the United Nations as the number one place in the world to live. This is in large part due to the friendly, voluntary spirit of Canadians.

• (1400)

We are beginning a new millennium. Everyone is in a hurry to get things done, with less free time to give.

Congratulations to the many individual volunteers and social groups who have made their communities a better place to live. On this, the first volunteer week of the 21st century, let us all make an extra effort to donate some of our precious free time this year and let us teach our children about the spirit of volunteerism, Canada's greatest natural resource.

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CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY

Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is Canadian Cancer Society's campaign month. An estimated 129,000 cases of cancer occur each and every year in Canada. Each year 63,000 people die from the disease. Each week 2,000 people

are diagnosed with cancer, 1,200 of whom die in the course of the disease.

This hits very close to my home and family because next month marks the fifth anniversary of my father's death. His passing was a terribly difficult time for my family, and we miss him terribly.

The Canadian Cancer Society campaigns throughout the month of April so that it can fund programs such as patient services, public education, and CCS's cancer information service. The money we donate goes to upkeep these valuable services and to promote groundbreaking research to improve the quality of life of people experiencing cancer, and to move toward the complete eradication of this devastating disease.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you and my colleagues on both sides of the House to come together and to donate time and money to help increase awareness in this month.

* * *

CANADIAN MILITIA

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Armed Forces have been through difficult times. They have done fine work with restricted resources. Now that they have additional funds I hope they will not forget the army reserve, the militia.

A vibrant militia is a vital part of modern armed forces. The militia is a key part of the Armed Forces for training and recruitment, for national and international emergencies, and for many types of peacekeeping missions. The reserve provides a presence for the Armed Forces in communities across the nation.

I urge DND to foster and expand militia units in communities such as Peterborough and all across Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, National Volunteer Week 2000, offers us an opportunity to publicly thank the millions of Canadians who contribute their time and talents to serve their fellow citizens.

This year's theme, "Volunteering: a time-honoured tradition" is well-chosen, for Canada has a long history of volunteerism. Over the years, volunteers have focused incredible energy for the health of their communities. All aspects of Canadian society have been profoundly affected by the cumulative efforts of ordinary citizens all over this country, which have had a considerable impact on its growth and development.

Volunteers have made a huge contribution to shaping this country in the past, and will continue to play a lead role in shaping

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our future. Their devotion and commitment truly pay a tribute to Canadians' values and identity.

I am sure all members of this House will join me in thanking the millions of volunteers active in all regions of the country.

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GASOLINE PRICING

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I intend to introduce a bill this week concerning the posting of gas prices by retailers, which would not include the federal and provincial taxes.

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[English]

VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today the stark, majestic, white spires waft by gentle breeze on tranquil Vimy Ridge belie the terror of old. While the sky rained shells and brave men died, 100,000 Canadians moved forth in a hell of inhumanity, testing their mettle and mortality of soul. They were advancing on unconquerable Vimy. On this same ridge, tens of thousands had died before in vain British and French assaults.

The goal was now Canada's turn. Canada's finest young men won the contest that day, a victory for all the world to see. The greatest victory of World War I, Vimy Ridge, would enter Canadian history on April 12th, 1917.

Many would say that Canada took birth that day, born into the world of nations with respect, born by the blood of our young and born through their determination and skill. Their spirit lives on to this day.

* * *

SUMMERHILL STREET SCHOOL

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to offer congratulations to four very special students in my riding. Crystal Cardwell, Jessica Furzer, Anne Sophie Groulx and Kristina Pigeon are grade four students at Summerhill Street School in Oromocto. These girls are the best in the world.

● (1405)

These students have done all New Brunswickers proud by winning the International Lunch Box Derby in New York City. The derby involves building cars out of fruit and vegetables and launching them down a ramp to see which one travels the greatest distance.

The Oromocto team won and even set a new world record of 20 metres in the process, beating teams from the United States and Great Britain.

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For their ingenuity, teamwork and creativity, as well as their international crown, I proudly salute Crystal, Jessica, Anne Sophie and Kristina on a job well done.

* * *

[Translation]

VOLUNTEERS

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the context of volunteer week in Quebec, I would like to pay tribute to three million men and women in Quebec, who of their own volition agree to give of their best to provide a touch of humanity in the daily lives of tens of thousands of individuals.

Is there any more true gift that we can offer than our time? These people will point out that giving means receiving, because meeting someone else face to face brings us face to face with ourselves. This is a way to exercise one's citizenship to the fullest.

Words cannot express the gratitude and respect we feel for these men and women, who say that their happiness is conditional on the happiness of others.

Thanks to each of you, who, through your generosity, provide warm support to society. Thanks to you from the bottom of our hearts.

* * *

[English]

CANADIAN WOMEN'S HOCKEY

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the gold medal was on the line. The American team was leading 2-0 after two periods. The tension was high in the Hershey Centre in Mississauga last night as Team Canada took the ice for the third period. They were down but not out.

In the Women's World Hockey Championships, Team Canada made it 2-1 and then 2-all and then, in dramatic fashion in overtime, they lifted the roof and won their sixth consecutive world championship.

Congratulations to the entire team under coach Melody Davidson, to Fran Rider, executive director of the Ontario Women's Hockey Association, who hosted the tournament, and to Mayor Hazel McCallion, honorary chair of women's hockey in Canada and an inspiration to the players.

This was Canada's 30th consecutive win in the world championships. True Canadian grit, determination and character came out in these proud Canadian athletes; a true tribute to Canadian hockey and a great victory for Canadian women's hockey.

WORLD CURLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in Glasgow, Scotland on the weekend Canada demonstrated once again that it is a dominant force in the sport of curling.

On Saturday, skip Kelley Law and her team from the Richmond Winter Club swept their way to victory against Switzerland for the women's world curling championship. But Canada's winning ways did not end there.

On Sunday curling fans around the world watched as skip Greg McAulay and his team from New Westminster, B.C. defeated Sweden by a score of 9-4 to claim the men's world curling championship as well.

As a proud representative of the people of British Columbia, I would be remiss if I did not also mention that the men's world junior curling championship was won two weeks ago by Kelowna's Brad Kuhn.

My congratulations go out to all of these fine men and women who continue to demonstrate that B.C. does indeed stand not only for best Canadians, but best curlers.

* * *

NATIONAL WILDLIFE WEEK

Mr. Joe Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to remind all hon. members that today marks the first day of National Wildlife Week. This week-long celebration of our wildlife heritage was established by an act of parliament in 1947.

The Canadian Wildlife Federation sponsors National Wildlife Week in co-operation with the Canadian Wildlife Service and federal, provincial, territorial and municipal wildlife agencies, as well as non-profit organizations.

This year's theme is "Migration: An Incredible Journey". It reminds us that migratory species need adequate food, water, shelter and space to survive and complete their trips between breeding and wintering grounds.

I hope that all Canadians will take some time during this week to reflect on the importance of wildlife conservation in this country.

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NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in honour of national poetry month I would like to read an excerpt from "A Thousand Crosses in Oppenheimer Park" by Bud Osborn.

when eagles circle oppenheimer park
who see them
feel awe
feel joy
feel hope

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soar in our hearts
 the eagles are symbols
 for the courage in our spirits
 for the fierce and piercing vision for justice in our souls
 the eagles bestow a blessing on our lives
 but with these thousand crosses
 planted in oppenheimer park today
 who really see them
 feel sorrow
 feel loss
 feel rage
 our hearts shed bitter tears
 these thousand crosses are symbols
 of the social apartheid in our culture
 the segregation of those who deserve to live
 and those who are abandoned to die
 these thousand crosses represent
 the overdose deaths of drug addicts
 these thousand crosses silently announce
 a social curse on the lives of the poorest of the poor
 on the downtown eastside
 these thousand crosses announce an assault on our community
 these thousand crosses announce a deprivation of possibility
 for those of us who mourn here
 the mothers and fathers—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

* * *

• (1410)

[Translation]

ARMED FORCES DAY

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the 2000 calendar of the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine is quite revealing. It notes all sorts of celebrations and all the national days, including of course, Canada day, July 1. There is one single exception, Quebecers' national day. We discover, instead, hang on to your hats, that June 24 is armed forces day.

St. Jean Baptiste day is mentioned, but the hon. member certainly knows that this holiday is shared by all French Canadians, whereas Quebecers' national day is the day of all citizens of Quebec whatever their origin. The member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine has made June 24 an ethnic holiday, which is not the case in Quebec.

The fact that the member neglected to note that June 24 is Quebec's national day, the national day of all Quebecers, surprises no one in Quebec, because at the heart of Liberal Party action is the denial of the people of Quebec.

Once again Quebecers—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra.

* * *

[English]

WORLD CURLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two rinks from British Columbia have taken gold in both the men's and women's World Curling Championships in Glasgow, Scotland.

The men's squad from New Westminster's Royal City Curling Club, made up of Jody Sveistrup, Bryan Miki, Brent Pierce and skip Greg McAulay, needed just nine ends to defeat Team Sweden 9-4. The women's squad from the Richmond Winter Club, made up of Julie Skinner, Georgina Wheatcroft, Diane Nelson and skip Kelley Law, won gold in a nail-biter against the Swiss team, 7-6.

[Translation]

And that is not all. Thanks to an overtime goal by Nancy Drolet, Canada won the world women's hockey championship beating out the American team.

Congratulations to three remarkable teams.

* * *

[English]

ATLANTIC FISHERIES

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Mr. Speaker, when the federal government announced in 1995 that it would be withdrawing from the ownership and operation of regional and local ports, we were all quite leery of the ramifications such a decision would have on local stakeholders.

The transfer of these wharves to private for profit interests has left our fishing industry at the mercy of these companies, which are in a position to substantially increase berthing fees, knowing full well that many fishermen have few options but to tie their vessels at their locations.

In Atlantic Canada some berthing fees have more than doubled since private companies took over. For instance, last year a boat owner at the Digby wharf paid \$1,056 in berthing fees. This year the owner is being charged \$2,336 for the same service.

The minister might suggest that they move to another wharf; however, let me remind him that a number of wharves in Atlantic Canada were seriously damaged in a January 21 storm and his government has thus far failed to provide any meaningful emergency assistance to help repair them.

The new national marine policy was supposed to ensure affordable, effective and safe marine transportation services. I think the fishing industry would—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore.

* * *

SACKVILLE RIVER'S ASSOCIATION

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week is a famous week in Canada as we celebrate two great weeks: National Volunteerism Week and Canadian Environmental week.

One of the groups I would like to honour is the Sackville River's Association of Nova Scotia. These great volunteers lost a member

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the other day to illness; however, the member and the association combined volunteerism with environmentalism to protect Atlantic salmon in the Sackville River and throughout Nova Scotia.

These men and women, along with their children, do yeomen's work every weekend and every week night, whenever they can, trying to clean up the river to preserve and protect fish for future generations, as well as promoting environmental activism within the fishing communities throughout Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada.

I congratulate those involved with the Sackville River's Association, as well as all volunteers across this country.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

• (1415)

[English]

OPTION CANADA

Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the heritage minister has an interesting sense of accountability. The heritage department fast tracked nearly \$5 million worth of grants to Option Canada even though the organization had existed only a few weeks. It had no track in handling public funds. When heritage auditors found out that the money went missing the government responded by acknowledging that the money went missing and then closed the case. End of story.

How many millions need to be lost before the heritage minister displays even the slightest hint of respect for taxpayers' dollars?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact the department, following questions that were raised two years ago on this issue, delivered over 100 pages of documents which were relevant to the actual audit and the follow-up.

Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to get the documents. Maybe it would have been good if taxpayers had got the cash back.

The grant was about boosting the no side of the referendum, as some people say, but that is not what Option Canada was about. The operations manager said, "Not a penny from the grant was spent on the no side's campaign during the referendum". Of course that begs the question, what did the money go for? Who knows what the grant was for? Nobody knows where that money went.

For 100 pages of documents, the minister could talk about it but I would like to know why did she not track down the cash?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over a period of six months there were dozens of questions on this issue in the House by the members of the Bloc. I am happy that the Reform Party has finally discovered the questions that were asked.

Two years ago there was a very fulsome reply given not only in the House of Commons but also in over 100 pages of documents that were delivered two years ago that I guess the Reform Party/Canadian Alliance discovered this week.

Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the 100 pages of documents have not cleared up the crisis. The money is still missing and the minister knows it.

Canadians deserve an answer and to know where in the world the money is. Option Canada officials are still refusing to open their books and the minister is refusing to demand an answer from them on accountability. They refuse to answer how the money was spent.

It is \$5 million worth of taxpayers' money that has vanished without a trace. Regardless of 100 pages of documents, the answer has still not come forward. Is it that the minister does not care about getting to the bottom of this or does she not know where the money went and she does not want Canadians to find out where it went?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the documents included exactly where the expenditures went.

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MILLENNIUM BUREAU OF CANADA

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, HRDC, EDC, regional development, the millennium bureau and now Option Canada spent billions of taxpayers' dollars and the Liberals see them all as one big vote-buying slush fund. But it is not just that the Liberals are spending billions of taxpayers' dollars to buy votes, they ignore their own rules in doing so.

With the millennium bureau less than 1% of the grants have been audited. Why does parliament pass laws and regulations to monitor the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars and yet the Liberal government just ignores them?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, some 1,100 projects have been approved for funding but only some 400 projects have been the subject of signed contribution agreements.

Until there are signed contribution agreements, no money is paid out. Even where there are signed agreements, the money is paid out

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in instalments pursuant to statements of worth according to the terms of the agreements.

I do not know any system where audits are carried out on projects before they even begin and before they are completed. I do not know how we can monitor projects when they are just getting under way.

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, no matter how much the government tries to spin the mismanagement of public dollars, there is one fact that it cannot avoid. Every dollar that the government spends on one of its vote-buying slush fund projects is a dollar that cannot be spent on health care or education.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister explain to Canadians why the Liberal government feels it is more important to put money into these vote-buying slush funds than into health care and education for Canadian citizens?

• (1420)

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have put some \$14 billion into health care, in the last two budgets. That is far in excess of the amount put into the Canadian millennium partnership fund.

Furthermore, my hon. friend in her comments is insulting groups like the Trans Canada Trail Foundation which is being supported by Canadians from coast to coast to coast, two-thirds of the funding for which comes from the private sector and other community organizations. If she wants to insult Canadians as being subject to vote buying, I do not think the rest of Canadians would agree with her. She should get up and express an apology—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

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[Translation]

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the matter of the Department of Human Resources Development, day after day we try to obtain relevant and precise information from the government on its management of public funds, and we get nowhere, which is not the way it should be.

How can the Minister of Justice, who is responsible for the Access to Information Act, justify the government's attempt to shirk its obligations and to systematically refuse to release information it has, a situation that contravenes its own legislation?

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Justice I provide advice to all departments in relation to access to information. We will continue to do so.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a good thing that they are being advised to follow the recommendations, because of the 57 requests we have made, some 40 are past due, and complaints are currently being prepared.

For example, with respect to the Department of Human Resources Development, the government has flooded us with 10,000 pages of documentation, but is denying us the relevant few pages in the Placeteco matter, which would explain how \$1.2 million disappeared.

When will the minister understand that what is important is not the number of pages, but the relevance of the documents that must be released? This is her responsibility as the Minister of Justice.

[English]

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the past 10 weeks alone the department of human resources has received 541 requests under the Access to Information Act. In the previous full 12 months we only received 531 requests, so they are coming in at a rate four times the norm and we are doing our best to get the information out as quickly as we can.

In addition we have released 10,000 pages that the member has already alluded to, 3,000 pages of material to the standing committee. Altogether 75,000 pages of information have been released.

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[Translation]

OPTION CANADA

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, government transparency is at stake here.

We know that Option Canada is directly connected to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. This organization has managed to make \$4.8 million disappear and is still refusing to act on our access to information requests. In one case we have been waiting for 195 days and in the other 225.

How can the minister of clarity, who is responsible for this group, justify such unacceptable behaviour? Is it on grounds of national security, or for the security of friends of the Liberal party?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): What is interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that Option Canada is subject to the Access to Information Act, unlike Option Québec.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): I am going to have to ask the minister what Option Québec is, Mr. Speaker.

An hon. member: It is a book by René Lévesque.

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Mr. Michel Gauthier: What kind of an answer is that anyway?

The government has systematically refused to respond to requests by the opposition, even the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, he who passes himself off as the minister of clarity, whether in connection with Option Canada or his own department, when we ask him to provide us with the opinions he has received in response to the supreme court judgment. We are told that confirmation cannot be given as to whether there is indeed such a thing or not, but if there were such a thing, we would not be given it.

How can the minister responsible for the Privy Council behave in such a way?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, what is bizarre is that Option Canada is subject to the Access to Information Act, while Option Québec was not, since it was connected to the office of the Premier of Quebec.

* * *

• (1425)

[English]

HEALTH CARE

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

First the health minister ignored Alberta's privatization plans. Then he told parliament that Bill 11 should be withdrawn. Next, prompted by the Prime Minister, he said that Bill 11 should be passed. Now he has written to Alberta urging that Bill 11 be changed.

Notwithstanding the health minister's acrobatics, and in view of his newfound concern for queue jumping, can the minister tell the House how many investigations are under way in Alberta and how many patients are affected?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was Ralph Klein himself who invited a comparison between Bill 11 and legislation in other provinces governing private for profit facilities.

A comparison demonstrated that in Ontario and Saskatchewan for example, those statutes prohibited the sale of so-called enhanced services in private for profit facilities. In response to the premier's invitation we wrote and pointed that out. We quoted the sections and suggested that he amend his statute, among other things, to do what other provinces have done and forbid such practices.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would have thought he would not need Premier Klein to invite comparisons. Those things could have been seen in the newspaper or on television for that matter.

Canadians no longer trust the minister to protect the Canada Health Act. They want answers and we want answers. I will ask the

minister again, how many investigations are under way in Alberta today and how many Albertan patients are affected?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that Canadians know whom to trust when it comes to health care in this country and it certainly is not the New Democratic Party. The New Democratic Party happens to believe that pouring more money into the system is going to solve all the problems.

We understand that governments have to work together to introduce the kinds of changes and improvements that are needed to make medicare sustainable in the future. With our partners in the provinces, that is exactly what we intend to do.

* * *

LOBBYISTS

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, Hugh Riopelle, a lobbyist and golfing pal of the Prime Minister, has admitted publicly that he lobbied various cabinet ministers on behalf of Pierre Bourque, Sr., a man who owes him money, to help broker a deal for the Louis St. Laurent building in Hull. As of today, Mr. Riopelle has still not registered Bourque as a client under the Lobbyists Registration Act as required by law.

Will the ethics counsellor or the minister call in the RCMP to investigate this cosy deal, or should Canadians accept the fact that friends of the Prime Minister continue to receive special treatment?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I explained on Friday, the ethics counsellor does look into the issue of whether somebody has been properly registered. Where there is justification, he will then give the appropriate information to the authorities to investigate further.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, there is a pattern developing here with regard to friends of the Prime Minister. René Fugère acts as a lobbyist and does not register himself. Mr. Riopelle acts as a lobbyist and does not register his clients. Ordinary Canadians who are not friends of the Prime Minister are compelled to register under the Lobbyists Registration Act or face fines or possibly jail.

Why the double standard? Why are friends of the Prime Minister somehow considered to be above the law?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a ridiculous question. The fact is that if there is an obligation to register, then of course he will have to do so. It is as simple as that. Apparently the member is in possession of information that he

Oral Questions

has not disclosed to me or perhaps he has disclosed it to the ethics counsellor which makes it an open and shut case for him. If he has such information, he should disclose it. In the meantime, justice will take its appropriate course.

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BIOTEC CANADA

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister that looks after lobbyists.

It was reported today that Industry Canada is paying dues to Biotec Canada. This a lobby group that works to influence government policy on biotechnology. The government can always find new ways to spend taxpayers' money. Now we find that Industry Canada is paying a group to lobby guess who, Industry Canada.

Why is the minister allowing this to happen and when did he become a registered lobbyist?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do not pay Biotec Canada to lobby anybody.

• (1430)

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, that is simply not the case. It pays member dues to that organization.

We are not talking about a normal relationship between a lobby group and a government department. We are talking about Industry Canada belonging to this lobby group and paying its membership dues, \$6,500 the year before last and \$1,000 last year.

Why is the government allowing this to continue?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a national technology association. There are many such associations. Industry Canada obtains useful information by being a member of the association. It derives information that is used for a variety of practical purposes. There is nothing unusual or untoward about that. The member should do his research and he would understand it.

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[Translation]

OPTION CANADA

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs seems surprised to be asked about Option Canada. But Option Canada came under Operation Unity, which reported to PCO, and therefore to him.

I therefore ask him the following question: if the \$4.8 million did not go to the no committee, what became of it?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer is the same one I gave two years ago.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am going to try to enlighten the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

How could they sit by, no questions asked, while \$4.8 million disappeared into the mist surrounding such well-known Liberals as Rémi Bujold and Claude Dauphin?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer is exactly the same as it was two years ago.

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[English]

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, what is 78? That is the number of our access requests to HRDC that are past due. The law requires HRDC to provide information within 30 days of a request. The human resources department has breached the Access to Information Act 78 times with our requests alone.

Does the minister think she is above the law, or is there something she wants to hide?

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already alluded today to the 75,000 pages of information that has been released to a number of requests that have never been asked for before. We are doing our best to keep up.

I would suggest to my colleagues on the other side of the House that even the media is getting sick of the fact that the business of the House is taking a back seat to theatre. It says here that social and foreign policy issues await debate while the Alliance chases scandal, while the Alliance engages in more theatre.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we work for the people of Canada not for the media. I suggest the minister might want to do that too.

Many of our requests are simple requests for internal audits, documents that could be pulled out of a file and sent to us in minutes.

HRDC audits made public so far have shown a department in shocking disarray. We can see why the minister would like to hide further damaging information from the public but the law requires her to release these audits. Why is she refusing to comply?

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no refusal to comply.

Oral Questions

If the party opposite actually does work for the people of Canada instead of the media, why is it the only time it stuck to the same subject for more than two days in a row is the day it first landed itself on the front page?

* * *

• (1435)

[*Translation*]

OPTION CANADA

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the Human Resources Development Canada affair, a grant of \$1.2 million disappeared into the pockets of friends of the Liberal party.

Here, in the case of interest to us here, \$4.8 million have disappeared, and the President of Treasury Board is trying to sweep the whole thing under the rug.

How can the clarity minister refuse to be accountable and to tell us, as President of the Privy Council and thus responsible for Operation Unity and Option Canada, who profited from this money?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to remind the hon. member that the House was provided with over 100 pages of information two years ago, including the 1997 audit.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the auditor says that the minister did not provide sufficient information the last time, two years ago. She is telling us a lot of nonsense.

The minister of clarity, the President of Privy Council, is saying nothing, although primary responsibility for Option Canada and for Operation Unity is his.

There is only one thing we want to know. Where is the taxpayers' money? Who has pocketed the \$4.8 million?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member takes time to read the hundred-plus pages that were provided to the House, he will see that everything has been checked out.

* * *

[*English*]

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Wanuskewin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the human resources minister is responsible for 78 breaches of the Access to Information Act. In case members over there were not paying attention, the fact that the word "act" is tagged on there means that it is a law. The minister, therefore, has an obligation to abide by it. I guess obligations do not mean much to a minister who broke the trust of taxpayers by bungling a billion of their tax dollars.

What is so damning about those documents that makes the minister so afraid of releasing them?

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we were afraid of releasing documents we would not have released 75,000 pages worth. That is nonsense.

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Wanuskewin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is really quite simple. Under Canadian law the minister is required to release that information within 30 days. A lot of these are just simply audits. Just put them on a copier and release them to us.

In that, the minister has failed 78 times with our party alone. What is the minister trying to hide?

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really glad to have the admission from the Alliance Party members that in the last few weeks they have put in 78 access to information requests. Perhaps they are the ones clogging up the system so that average Canadians who do want information cannot get it because of the backup in the system.

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[*Translation*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Daniel Turp (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of Canada has just stated in his visit to Palestine that the Palestinians were doing well to hold on to the option of a unilateral declaration of independence in order to put pressure on Israel in the current round of negotiations.

Could the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs explain the bases for the Prime Minister's new position? What are we to understand from his remarks?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister clearly stated that there must be negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians in order to determine the future of the occupied territories.

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[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

The Ontario government is apparently dragging its feet in renewing the Canada-Ontario Great Lakes agreement which expired in March, thus putting in danger the health of millions of Canadians.

Can the Minister of the Environment indicate to the House whether steps are being taken to bring the Ontario government to its senses and discharge its responsibility?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wrote to the Ontario government minister responsi-

Oral Questions

ble asking for a renewal of the agreement before it expired. At that time we invited Ontario to enter into a new Canada-Ontario agreement on the Great Lakes.

It is my hope that the premier of Ontario will allow his minister and his government to step up to the plate and join with us in continuing with the protection of the Great Lakes. Until that happens we will continue to co-operate wherever we can with—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Southeast.

* * *

● (1440)

NATIONAL REVENUE

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on Friday the government said it could not release documents to the RCMP about the Montreal animation company CINAR because of confidentiality laws. However, according to a spokesman for the revenue minister, the Customs and Revenue Agency has the discretionary power to waive this restriction.

I have a very simple question for the revenue minister. Will he allow the RCMP to obtain access to the CINAR documents?

[Translation]

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first simply say that I cannot comment on a specific case, namely the case just mentioned or on any other case.

Second, there is a basic principle, which is a cornerstone of the legislation on taxation, and that is confidentiality.

Third, I am told at the agency that we have co-operated in the past, that we are currently co-operating and that we will continue to co-operate with the RCMP for all sorts of investigations.

Fourth, the matter of confidentiality is not a discretionary one, it is fundamental.

[English]

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the revenue minister's spokesman, Michel Cl  roux, says that there are exceptions in a few cases that allow them to communicate or release information. This contradicts what the minister has just said. He said that he was co-operating with the RCMP, but then he said that there are confidentiality restrictions.

What is it? Why will he not co-operate with the RCMP and allow it to have access to these files so we can get to the bottom of this?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe the member does not understand what I just said. I said that one of the cornerstones of the Income Tax Act is confidentiality. I have to respect that. It is not a question of discretionary power.

I have been told by the department that we have collaborated with the RCMP in the past. We are doing it and we will keep doing it. It is not a question of discretion. It is a question of confidentiality and, as the minister, I will protect that cornerstone of our legislation.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Dennis Gruending (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government has been promising for years to reduce our polluting emission of greenhouse gases but all we have seen so far is foot dragging and delay.

Last week industrial nations met in Japan to get on with setting a specific date for ratifying the 1997 Kyoto protocol but Canada and the United States torpedoed the talks.

When will the government finally ratify the Kyoto accord? By what percentage will the environment minister commit to reducing our emission of harmful greenhouse gases?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the member has just said, the meeting in Japan over the last few days was very successful. It is true that there are difficulties with respect to ratification related to American constitutional differences between the senate and the administration, of which the member should be aware. However, we fully intend to put in place our plans to implement the Kyoto agreement. We will be working with the provinces in order to get that in place as soon as possible.

The important thing is not ratification. The important thing is making sure we have plans in place to reduce greenhouse gases.

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada needs consistency on issues such as the Kyoto protocol, on persistent organic pollutants, on biodiversity and on endangered species.

In 1994 the Hon. John Fraser was appointed as Canada's ambassador for the environment and to follow up on all the promises that were made by the United Nations at the Rio summit in 1992.

The Prime Minister has left this crucial post empty since 1998. When will the government and the Prime Minister announce the replacement for Canada's ambassador for the environment?

Oral Questions

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that there is action on a wide front on many environmental issues. It is certainly correct, as he pointed out, that the Hon. John Fraser, the former speaker of the House, did switch from being the ambassador for the environment to taking on responsibilities for the Pacific Salmon Commission. If necessary, and as appropriate, we will appoint a successor.

At the present time, the work that John Fraser carried out is being carried out by Canadian ambassadors in every country of the world.

* * *

• (1445)

[Translation]

ETHICS COUNSELLOR

Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's friends are looking shadier and shadier.

All of them seem to be under investigation at some point. There is René Fugère lobbying without proper registration, and Mr. Riopelle lobbying without registering his clients.

My question is for the minister responsible for the ethics commissioner. What measures does he intend to take to ensure that the government heads off events or investigations, instead of reacting to them?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the law is clear. There is nothing to wonder about.

But first, I think it is necessary to have facts. Second, there must be an investigation and, third, there must be a ruling that the law was broken.

Although there has been no ruling, the member has concluded that something was not right. This is simply not the case. The ethics commissioner may now examine the facts.

Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC): Mr. Speaker, since the ethics commissioner is on the case, I think it would be much simpler to give him a little help.

So perhaps the Prime Minister should make a list of his friends and hand it over to the ethics commissioner for his immediate perusal, thus putting a stop to questions here in the House.

Will the minister responsible for the ethics commissioner uphold the law and ask all members of cabinet and the government not to have any dealings with individuals now under investigation in order to ensure that the government maintains its credibility, which is a bit shaky right now?

[English]

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I take it that the Progressive Conservative Party believes in a presumption of guilt.

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IMMIGRATION

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Last week she tabled the new Immigration Act. Many Canadians are very concerned that the new act no longer includes parents in the family class. Could the minister clarify the matter for us?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify for the member and for anyone who is concerned that in the regulations the definition of family class will include both parents and grandparents.

Further, it is our intention to see the family class expanded. I would also point out that in the existing Immigration Act the definition of family class is included in the regulations. Let me assure everyone that parents and grandparents will continue to be included in the family class.

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THE SENATE

Mr. Eric Lowther (Calgary Centre, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister and his government mismanages the tax dollars of Albertans, he also ignores their democratic choices.

In 1998 Bert Brown won Alberta's Senate election with more votes than all the Liberal candidates combined. The fact is that the Prime Minister only appoints those who will play along with his song and dance, so to speak.

Alberta's first elected senator was appointed 10 years ago. Why has the Prime Minister broken another election promise and given Albertans the Trudeau salute one more time?

Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, why did the Reform Party vote against the Charlottetown accord? If it had voted for it, we would have had an elected Senate a long time ago. In the meantime the Prime Minister is following the existing constitution.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the friends of the Prime Minister are not the only ones lobbying. So is the Prime Minister's chief of staff. He is lobbying the Minister of

Public Works to get the government to pay a higher price for a building owned by Pierre Bourque, whose son ran for the Liberals in Rosemont in 1993.

Is it a common practice for the government to have Jean Pelletier, the Prime Minister's chief of staff, pressuring a minister to give an advantage, using public funds, to a friend of the Liberal Party who has already been convicted of tax fraud?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is normal in day-to-day government operations for the Prime Minister's chief of staff to talk to ministers about this matter.

I can, however, assure the hon. member that there was no pressure on the part of the Prime Minister's chief of staff. We made an offer to purchase this building at the value of the 1991 lease negotiated by a Progressive Conservative government.

* * *

• (1450)

[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today the moderator of the United Church is blasting the mindless ideology of a market driven society that abandons the poor. Tomorrow Toronto housing activists are holding yet another vigil to witness the tragedy of 19 deaths from homelessness this winter.

I would like to ask the minister responsible for housing why his government forfeited social housing and abandoned this most basic human right. Is it because the marketplace is the higher calling this government is beholden to?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada continues to invest almost \$2 billion a year in social housing. Since 1995 we have been putting more than half a billion dollars into the RRAP to rehabilitate vacant buildings so the homeless could use them.

The member knows that we announced at the beginning of December a program to address homeless people. She should know very well because in her riding the RRAP is doing a very good job of creating units for the homeless to have a roof.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC): Mr. Speaker, the auditor general releases his report tomorrow and is expected to address the problems that citizenship and immigration is experiencing with visas.

Oral Questions

The new immigration bill introduces a new much needed global case management system intended to update and secure the department's tracking system. This initiative will be very expensive and the costs will not be covered in the increased budget funding. Could the minister tell the House how much this system will cost and when it could be in place?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be pleased to comment on the auditor's report once it has been tabled. However, I can comment on the global case management system which will bring together a number of different computer systems that function within the Department of Citizenship and Immigration at the present time.

It is anticipated that the total cost of the system when fully implemented will be about \$200 million, but I am pleased to inform the member and all members of the House that the funds for development have been provided in the recent budget. It is anticipated and I am confident that the resources will be available to assure implementation of this very important measure to ensure integrity within the—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Northeast.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the defence minister a question in reference to the commitment of troops by the Prime Minister to the buffer zone between Israel and Lebanon.

The Israeli officials warned Canadian officials about Hezbollah terrorist attacks on any UN peacekeepers that may fill that zone. How many Canadian troops will be committed and how long will they be committed for?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a proud tradition of assisting and establishing peace and security in the Middle East, in the Sinai, in the Golden Heights and many other areas.

If we are called upon, as the Prime Minister has indicated, we will give it very careful consideration. We will certainly look at the risk assessment. We do not know at this point in time how many troops because there is no UN mission. We have not been asked at this point in time. Certainly, given our tradition, we will look at it very carefully as the Prime Minister has indicated.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for some months now the Bloc Québécois has been calling for the mandatory labelling of GMOs, and the government has refused to do so.

Today we have learned that the European Economic Community will be requiring all products with over 1% GMO content to be labelled in future.

My question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Can the government, which has shown nothing but inertia in this matter, tell us what the repercussions of the European decision will be on agro-food exports from Quebec and from Canada?

[English]

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have told the House numerous times lately that the Consumers' Association of Canada, the Canadian Standards Council and a number of other organizations are working on a set of criteria.

The hon. member refers to legislation in the European Union. She should follow that up as well. By not taking the approach that we are taking in Canada the European Union is not able to enforce its legislation because it does not have a set of criteria that is meaningful, credible and enforceable at this stage.

* * *

• (1455)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs sidestepped the key recommendation in John Harker's report on the civil war in Sudan that would have placed oil profits from Talisman in trust. Instead the minister chose to refer it to the United Nations.

Last week, in spite of Canada's lofty perch as chair of the security council, the UN refused to discuss Sudan or Canada dropped its plans to have it discussed.

Why did Canada drop the idea of taking this matter to the security council, and what is the government doing about the unchecked oil revenues that continue to fuel the ongoing civil war in the Sudan?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member should know, establishing the agenda of the security council depends upon the full agreement of all members of the council.

That was not received. Certain members of council did not want the matter discussed, which I think just points out the urgency of continuing to develop a broader international consensus than exists now.

We cannot take action against one country unless there is agreement. It is certainly my intention when I am at the United Nations Human Rights Commission this week to speak on behalf of Canada and the issue of Sudan will be raised.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. David Price (Compton—Stanstead, PC): Mr. Speaker, could the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration tell the House what she plans to do about the visa problem while we are waiting for the new global management system?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I assure the member that steps have already been undertaken by the department to ensure that safety and security in all visa posts abroad are a priority. We have increased training for visa officers and staff in all missions abroad because we want to ensure integrity in our programs.

I point out to the member that almost \$49 million were made available in the recent budget with additional resources being made available as a result of the new legislation. The combination of the two give me confidence that we will be able to address the issues that face us around the world in ensuring—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

OPTION CANADA

Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today the heritage minister talked about 100 pages of documents that came forward, but frankly those pages might just as well be blank because they have not given the information that Canadians want.

She has dodged in the House time and time again, two years ago as well as today, one very simple question that she needs to answer. What happened to the \$5 million she gave to Option Canada? Where is the money?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, included in the over 100 pages of documents that were given out two years ago on a grant that was issued almost five years ago were responses from the auditor general.

I am sure the member will be very happy to read the characterization of the work of the auditor general.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the hundreds of pages of documents that the minister says she tabled, I would respectfully remind her that the auditor general wrote her as follows on April 20, 1998:

We note, however, that while this additional information is useful, it does not make it possible to determine with sufficient accuracy the nature of the activities that took place and the results achieved.

Two days later, the auditor general added that it could be considered misappropriation of funds.

Does the minister not think that she has a moral duty to tell the public what she did with its money?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was the one who gave the letter to the member opposite, obviously because we wanted to ensure that the audit was complete. I think that the auditor general was very respectful with respect to the clean-up that we did.

* * *

[English]

FISHERIES

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while it is springtime in Atlantic Canada and the temperatures are starting to rise, unfortunately they are also starting to rise in the fishing villages in all of Atlantic Canada between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people.

My question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Exactly what is he and his government doing at this time, prior to the May 1 opening, to calm the tensions that are happening right now in non-aboriginal and aboriginal fishing communities throughout the maritime region?

Hon. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate the hon. member because he put out a press release calming matters. This is the type of co-operation we need.

● (1500)

I want to also tell the House that as of today we have signed up eight interim agreements. We have eight agreements in principle. We are halfway there. We are continuing the hard work. I think the co-operation of the hon. member has shown that is the way we can move forward and make sure we bring communities together and resolve this issue.

* * *

GUN REGISTRY

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Routine Proceedings

Given that her department has just received the allotment of money for the coming year and given that there are a number of very important policing matters and justice matters before the country, is her department prepared to continue to pour hundreds of millions of dollars into a registry system that is overbureaucratic and proven not to work with respect to the prevention of crime within the country?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about a registry system that does not work. Let me share with the House that since December 1, 1998 over 3,600 potentially dangerous gun sales were sent for further investigation, 690 licence applications have been refused, and 832 licences have been revoked. We are at work making Canada safe for all Canadians.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDUSTRY

Ms. Susan Whelan (Essex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present in both official languages the third report of the Standing Committee on Industry on the subject matter of Bill C-229, an act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (letter that cannot be transmitted by post).

The committee would like to acknowledge the work of the member for Kitchener Centre on this issue and to thank the witnesses for participating in our discussions.

* * *

● (1505)

PETITIONS

MARRIAGE

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to table a petition from my constituents who pray that parliament withdraw Bill C-23, affirm the opposite sex definition of marriage in

Routine Proceedings

legislation and ensure that marriage is recognized as a unique institution.

CHILD POVERTY

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present today on behalf of my constituents. One petition deals with an action to end child poverty.

MAMMOGRAPHY

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, another petition deals with the development of legislation to develop mandatory mammography standards.

IMMIGRATION

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two further petitions would like to see the entire repeal of the right of landing fee for all immigrants.

MARRIAGE

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the final petition deals with the confirmation of the opposite sex definition of marriage.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions today.

One petition contains 60 signatures from concerned farmers in my constituency, including people from St. Albert, Morinville, Busby, Alcomdale, Rivière Qui Barre, Calahoo, Stony Plain and Spruce Grove.

The petitioners call on parliament to recognize that the family farm is one of the cornerstones of Canadian society and that the federal government must act immediately to protect the interests of Canadian farmers both at home and abroad by campaigning against foreign subsidies to agriculture.

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the other petition contains 50 signatures from residents in St. Albert, Morinville and Edmonton. They call upon parliament to use the year 2000 budget to introduce a multi-year plan to improve the well-being of Canada's children and to fulfil the 1989 resolution of the House to end child poverty by the year 2000.

MARRIAGE

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition from over 100 of my constituents, which include members of the Pine Ridge Bible Chapel and also the Emmanuel Pentecostal Church of Port Perry. They call on parliament that Bill C-23 affirm the opposite sex definition of marriage in legislation and ensure that marriage is recognized as a unique institution. They request the withdrawal of Bill C-23.

HEPATITIS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 it is my privilege and honour to bring in thousands of names from Newfoundland to Victoria supporting Bill C-232 and it happens to be my own bill on Hepatitis Awareness Month. I personally wish to thank Mr. Joey Haché of Ottawa for supporting us and getting these signatures forward in order to get that bill passed very quickly.

CANADA POST

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, today I am tabling several petitions.

The first two petitions are with regard to the mail route couriers. Many of the people in my riding of Okanagan—Shuswap depend upon these couriers to deliver and pick up their mail. Some would like the right to form a union and bargain collectively. It is my pleasure to table these petitions today.

MARRIAGE

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is also a pleasure to table several petitions from residents of my riding of Okanagan—Shuswap who express their serious opposition to Bill C-23. They are justly concerned that the government is not doing enough to protect the institution of marriage, define it as a union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

I join them in asking the government not to base any benefits or legislation on people's private sexual activity.

* * *

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 72 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 72—**Mr. Leon E. Benoit**

With regard to the money given by the department of Indian affairs to the Treaty Six Tribal Council for employment programs for the last three years: (a) what was the total amount given each year and (b) what is the specific breakdown of how this money has been spent?

Hon. Robert D. Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): In so far as the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is concerned the response is as follows.

There are two tribal councils in the treaty six area of Alberta. They are the Yellowhead Tribal Council west of Edmonton and the Tribal Chiefs' Association, also known as the Tribal Chiefs' Ventures Incorporated, located in the St. Paul area. A third first nation organization within the treaty six area comprising all treaty six first nations in Alberta is the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations. The confederacy is not a tribal council.

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has not provided employment program funding to the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations or to the tribal councils during the past three years.

[Translation]

Mr. Derek Lee: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MODERNIZATION OF BENEFITS AND OBLIGATIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-23, an act to modernize the Statutes of Canada in relation to benefits and obligations, as reported (with amendments) from the committee; and of the motions in Group No. 1.

• (1510)

Mr. Lee Morrison (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, prior to question period I was making the point that the effects of Bill C-23 are not necessarily benign, although members opposite would lead us to believe that they are. I would like to point out that for hundreds of generations and in almost every society I am aware of there have been social proscriptions against homosexual unions.

Now we are more civilized. We do not attempt, as Mr. Trudeau would say, to interfere in the bedrooms of the nation. That is fair enough. But we should remember that all through history, heterosexual unions have been recognized as having a social purpose. They have never been considered to be purely recreational or even sentimental arrangements.

Government Orders

Marriage is the foundation on which civil society rests. Society extends certain benefits to strengthen and support the institution. To extend those same benefits to homosexual couples for no good reason inferentially diminishes the institution.

I frankly do not care how homosexuals choose to organize their lives, but to treat their unions as de facto marriages is downright silly. That is not just my personal opinion. In June 1994 the present government House leader wrote in a letter to a constituent, "I do not believe that homosexuals should be treated as families. My wife and I do not claim we are homosexuals. Why should homosexuals pretend that they form a family?" What happened? In six years there seems to have been a slight change of opinion over there, at least on the part of the House leader.

In 1996 when we were debating Bill C-33, we were repetitiously informed that the bill was not a Trojan horse, that it was purely a matter of protecting homosexuals in the workplace and in securing accommodation, that there was absolutely no future intent of bringing in same sex benefits.

Here we are four years later and where is that promise of the Liberals now? I guess what we have is just another indication that a Liberal's word does not count for much, because this is what they told us. They told it to us over and over and over again. Now times have changed and four years have passed. What is next? How many more years will it be before this government or another one with the same stripes decides that it wants again to do some social engineering and starts to redefine the entire institution of marriage.

This is incremental. This is the Liberal way. The Liberals have been doing it not only in the field of marriage and family, but in several other areas as well. The camel's nose goes into the tent and little by little he edges his way in and knocks the tent down.

This has got to stop. There is no sound basis, no social reason, no fiscal reason and no political reason for changing the status quo with respect to benefits. Why the government has decided to take this leap I have no idea. I am sure that Mr. Trudeau is appalled but he is no longer here. I am appalled. A lot of people are appalled.

It is not a question of moralizing. It is a question of common sense.

• (1515)

Not too many years ago, if anyone had suggested that homosexual couples living together under the same roof should be awarded the same social benefits as married people, they would have been laughed out of town. It would have been considered hilarious. Yet here we are. Is this progress? I doubt it.

I do wish that the government would reconsider and take another look at this hasty legislation. A lot of amendments are coming up that, although they will not fix it, could certainly improve it.

Government Orders

I challenge the government in the interest of common sense, if nothing else, to give very serious consideration to some of the amendments my party has laid on the table. It should look at the bill again, remember what country we live in, and think about the people in Canada who are by and large terribly offended by the legislation.

I have received more correspondence, more phone calls and more e-mails about the bill than I have ever in my seven years in parliament received about any other legislation. This tells me something and it should tell the government something.

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to a fair bit of the debate on this issue, especially at report stage last week and again this week. I feel there are some things I need to say which in a sense respond to comments that have come largely from the other side of the House.

This should not be necessary and this should not be relevant, but I feel I need to establish my credentials to speak on family matters. The fact is that I have been married to the same man for 37 years. I have borne and raised three children and spent a good part of that time as a full time, stay at home mother. I now have grandchildren. I now also have a somewhat older mother who needs a fair bit of family care. We are all a family.

According to some people in the Chamber, I am no longer a family because my husband and I can no longer have children. Therefore we should not be entitled to any benefits because we do not fit that old criterion of the family unit being there to raise children. We have been there and done that.

Families in Canada come in many different shapes and sizes these days. Families can be people looking after elderly parents. They can be brothers and sisters living together. They can be members of a family looking after other members of the family who are not able to care for themselves. Families are not necessarily mothers and fathers. One-third of marriages end in divorce, which is a pretty sad figure until we consider that the other two-thirds end in death.

The fact is that people establishing committed, loving relationships of long term duration is to the benefit of society at large. That is what the bill is about. The bill is about recognizing that not every family is the same.

We have a very clear law on marriage which has been recognized in common law for a century and a half. It is now also included in the preamble to this legislation, but also for nearly half a century we have recognized other kinds of relationships outside marriage.

We have recognized common law relationships for a long time now for the purposes of establishing the obligations and the benefits of those relationships. We have not considered them the same as marriage in the legal sense, but we have nonetheless

recognized that these are generally committed, long term relationships that have many of the same qualities as a legal marriage.

• (1520)

What has bothered me in this debate is the way we have been speaking about fellow human beings. It has bothered me a great deal that we have talked about hundreds of thousands of our fellow Canadians as if they are somehow inferior human beings. I can put it no other way.

Homosexuality is a fact of life for many Canadians. It is not a choice of lifestyle. It is a fact of life. It seems to me that the comments I have heard on this topic have forgotten completely the people we are talking about are somebody's sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, cousins or next door neighbours. For most of our history these people have had to live in secret, hiding who they are and feeling a sense of shame about who they are because of the societal attitudes I have heard expressed in the Chamber. It is hardly an attitude of inclusiveness toward our fellow Canadians.

It is this attitude which leads young people who realize in their teens that they are not heterosexual to have a whole layer of difficulty added on to growing and developing into adults, not because of who they are and what they are but because of the attitudes of society.

None of us can expect to be whole human beings if we are hit every day, as our society does, with the kinds of messages I have been hearing in the House, the message that what we are is shameful, to be hidden and despised.

I will say it again. These people are somebody's sons, daughters, fathers and mothers. In my view if what we are doing with the legislation, as we did with common law marriage nearly a half century ago, is encouraging and recognizing long term committed relationships I believe that is to the benefit of all society. I do not see how anyone could argue that this takes away from the institution of marriage. I do not see how anyone could argue that this weakens the moral fibre of society.

I must say I have been somewhat mystified by the total preoccupation with sex on the other side of the House. The bill says nothing about sex. It talks about committed, long term relationships. I am married. Whether or not I am married in law has absolutely nothing to do with whether my husband and I have sex, nor whether two people having sex has anything to do with their being recognized as a legitimate, long term relationship for the purposes of the bill.

I heard talk about the importance of having both parents as if somehow recognizing same sex relationships for the purposes of benefits and obligations would ensure that every child has two parents. As I said earlier, one-third of all marriages ends in divorce. The fact is that we as a society have to deal with that. We have to deal with the fact that communities and society are responsible for

children as much as the two parents who happen to have borne them.

• (1525)

Today I only want to say that to the extent people live with dignity, they live full and complete lives and our whole society benefits. What we have done until now is to relegate same sex relationships to the back alleys of society and in many cases the back alleys of our cities. That is not healthy for the people involved and it is not healthy for Canadian society.

I recognize that the bill offends the sense or morality of some people but it does not deal with sin. It does not deal with our sense of morality. It deals with legal benefits and legal obligations. I am quite entitled to feel how I want about what activities I think people might be engaged in, in their homes. They are quite entitled to feel however they want about mine. The legislation has nothing to do with that. It makes no moral judgments. It simply says how people are to be treated in society and what obligations they have to each other.

I belong to a religious tradition that has in its background something called the Inquisition where for a long time people thought they could coerce others into sharing their beliefs. It was a period of some shame and for which the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church has recently apologized.

I will not sit here in the Chamber and make decisions as if everybody in Canadian society has to share my beliefs and conform to my particular moral standards. I do not think any of us has the right to do that. It harms society when we do that and it ultimately harms ourselves when we judge some people in our community and society to be less worthy and inferior.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to engage in the debate on Bill C-23 on behalf of the constituents of St. Albert who I feel are largely opposed to the content of the bill.

I was listening to the previous speaker say that it is not for any one of us to judge how anybody else in the country should live. I agree with that statement, but we are finding that the Liberal government will now impose upon Canadians or confer upon a certain category of Canadians benefits that they never had before.

Much of this conferring of benefits is very much in contradiction to the opinions of a large segment of society and a very large segment of the society in my constituency. From my perspective I certainly endorse the government's position that there should be no discrimination. We should not discriminate and deny people where they want to live, where their employment is, the types of careers they want to follow and that type of thing.

However, it is a step beyond when we recognize these types of unions and put them on the same level as marriage, saying that it

Government Orders

does not matter what kind of relationship it is if it is a relationship that is ongoing. It is very unfortunate that the government has put in there the word conjugal. If the government is prepared to recognize any kind of a relationship then the morality of the nation has been debased.

Going back to the dawn of history and even before, society has organized its way in solid, committed unions between men and women. That is the way in which every society in the world has organized itself. There must be something in it.

• (1530)

I used the word committed. Unfortunately, marriages break down far too often, in this country and all around the world. However, a society of human beings should recognize that marriage, the union for the purpose of the procreation of children and for the raising of the next generation is a fundamental part of any society; not just our society, but any society. That union which provides the home to raise children, the next generation, deserves the support and the sanction of any government, including this government.

Children need our assistance. We hear often about abused, neglected and malnourished children, children who have problems. Therefore, we need to nurture that environment. That has been the focus of marriage and government support for marriage down through the ages. I do not believe that obligation has changed in any way.

In the last 20 or 30 years we have gone from recognizing that our intolerance toward other relationships should not be continued to the point where we not only insist that we shall not discriminate against, we now confer benefits upon other unions as if they were the same as marriage.

The other thing I take great exception to is the way the government is doing this. It has introduced Bill C-23, which is an omnibus bill that will amend quite a number of statutes. Each statute will be amended to indicate that where there is a conjugal relationship the benefits shall be conferred, but it says absolutely nothing about marriage.

The Minister of Justice introduced an amendment to the bill which, in essence, is a preamble to the bill that recognizes marriage as the union of men and women to the exclusion of all others. However, it is only in the preamble of the bill. She has not asked that every statute be changed. Therefore, when there are legal actions pertaining to the statutes that are being changed and the courts look at these statutes they will see entrenched in law conjugal relationships exceeding one year but nothing about marriage.

The Canadian Alliance has asked that marriage be inserted into every statute that is being changed to recognize conjugal relationships. The Minister of Justice said no. The Liberal government said no. Does this mean that conjugal relationships of any kind are now

Government Orders

superior to marriage? The government is prepared to entrench conjugal relationships in law but refuses to put marriage in law. We have to ask that question. Is marriage now second class to any kind of conjugal relationship?

We have to ask that question too in the context of, for example, the Income Tax Act. For the last 30 or 40 years it has included in it what is now called the marriage penalty. Two people who live together have greater tax advantages than a husband and wife who live together where one parent stays at home to be with the family.

The supreme court tells us that it is eliminating discrimination. When asked to adjudicate on acts of parliament and legislation, it has struck down acts when they contravene the charter of rights and freedoms. In doing so, we now have marriage penalties in law. We now have acts of parliament that recognize conjugal relationships of any kind, but which refuse to recognize marriage. Therefore, I have to ask the questions: Where is our society going? What comes next?

• (1535)

While the States is the forerunner of many things, unfortunately it is also the forerunner of things which we do not always think too highly of. The whole challenge to the charter of rights and freedoms and to the legislation that has been in existence in this country is based on the fact that some people say they are discriminated against and denied benefits based on their sexual orientation. The courts have agreed. Here we are today recognizing these liaisons in legislation while we refuse to recognize marriage in the same legislation.

Without being trite or facetious, this article from the U.S. magazine went on to refer to liaisons including more than two people and how these individuals are now starting to ask about their rights. They want to know if they are entitled to benefits as well. The courts would then be asked to deliberate as to whether there was discrimination against liaisons including more than two people. Perhaps the answer would be yes. Where would it stop?

Had we not had the marriage penalty for the last 30 or 40 years, if we had raised our children in a nurturing environment of respect, the way that society has evolved over the last 5,000 to 10,000 years, perhaps we would not be debating this problem in the House today which says that we have to recognize conjugal relationships at the expense of marriage. Marriage is now second class.

I have heard from many people in my constituency of St. Albert who are opposed to this legislation. I would like to record my opposition to this legislation and I would hope that the government would listen to the people and reject this legislation.

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this debate is in some respects a strange debate. One has the impression of two different communities, two solitudes, and perhaps a good deal of the confusion stems from the fact that people have not read the bill. I would not discourage them from

reading the bill. It is not a piece of poetry. It is a rather prosaic bill. It is a legislative response, as is the obligation of parliament under our system of government. With our modified, quasi separation of powers, we have a response by parliament to a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in *M. v H.* It is a response to that decision, no more and no less.

If we read the bill looking for excitement, it will not be found. It puts together 68 existing federal statutes that are affected by the court decision. It corrects—and that is a legal word—those pieces of law by appropriate amendments in response to the supreme court decision, no more and no less. It is a compendium of 68 laws. It is not a bill on marriage. Anybody who read the bill would find that out.

The title gives it away immediately, the modernization of benefits and obligations act. It is not a bill on marriage. It is not an amendment to section 15 of the charter of rights on which the original decision in *M. v H.* in the Supreme Court of Canada was based. Obviously, to amend section 15 we would have to have the concurrence of the federal parliament and all 10 provincial legislatures. It is essentially a carpentering job. Someone very carefully put together what is a very dull bill with limited objectives.

• (1540)

In my earlier address to the House on this bill I explained that it is limited to its special mandate, a legislative response as is our constitutional obligation as parliament to the judicial ruling, that it does not alter the legal definition of marriage in any way, one way or another.

In that sense I regard the government amendment—in a legal sense—as being unnecessary. It is inserted, though, as lawyers often do, in the phrase *ex abundante cautela*—for greater certainty. But it does not change the definition of marriage. It does not add to the fact. The bill itself does not do that.

Any steps in the redefinition of marriage, if one were to attempt that, would require a comprehensive piece of legislation which would spell out concrete rights and obligations, conditions of a status and how one enters into it. It would be another law on another occasion. It would be something reached after a prior, necessary community consensus had been built, with some degree of interparty discussion. That is for the future if someone wishes to proceed that way.

What is interesting in terms of this debate, and the constructive and useful thing which has emerged from it, is the opportunity to ask parliament to take note of the changes in society, the general recognition that relationships can exist on bases where both parties recognize them but which have no necessary connection with a sexual relationship.

We speak of bona fide dependency relationships. This is an idea whose time, historically, has come. I am encouraged in that by the

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large amount of correspondence, messages, communications and personal meetings I have had in response to remarks which I and others have made on this particular situation.

What are dependency relationships? They are relationships of children and parents. We find many situations in our society where children support an aged parent, or siblings, brothers and sisters, or two sisters and two brothers support each other.

We find many situations of persons not in a familial relationship who share a life together without any sexual relationship. If it is a demonstrated, bona fide relationship, should the law not be prepared to recognize that in our society?

It does require a bit of work, and the minister promised to study this. I said "With all deliberate speed", in the phrase of the United States supreme court, "can we not get some reasonably quick action?" I understand that will be done.

There will be tradeoffs involved which have to be understood and represented in a legal form, that is to say, a bona fide relationship with legal consequences cannot be unilaterally terminated except for cause. There would be a limitation on the power unilaterally to renege, amend or terminate; proof of registration or something else to establish the beginning of a relationship and the irrevocability of its termination.

It is not exactly tabula rasa. My colleague, the excellent member for Parkdale—High Park, who has given a good deal of thought to these problems, reminded me of the law school cases which I learned in my second month in law school, Murray and Alderson. In the 19th century, courts were being asked to recognize such relationships and give financial consequences to them, where dependency was proven and where in fact both parties recognized them adequately. This could be put in the legal form of a statute. It exists in a more rudimentary form through the common law.

When I speak of non-revocability, it would seem to me that parties could not terminate unilaterally, although there may be special circumstances. For example, a child supporting an aged parent might choose to get married. It does not terminate the obligation to the parent. One may look to some sort of comparative adjustment of the obligations.

I cite this simply to say that there are problems, but they are not difficult problems. There are no essential legal barriers that wise legislation could not take care of.

• (1545)

There will be claims of the survivors' in dependency relationships to estates, to immovables, but once again these are issues that can be addressed. The legal remedies for them, the legal formula to take care of them, can be established without an undue amount of work required. There are sufficient precedents in the common law to provide just that sort of base for legislative action.

The constructive thing that has come out of this debate has been a heightened community awareness that the time perhaps has come to give legal recognition and apply legal consequences to dependency relationships voluntarily entered into and established on a bona fide basis. That is the interesting challenge.

This is a modest bill, a prosaic bill that simply changes 68 federal laws in response to a supreme court decision. It is our constitutional obligation, as a co-ordinate organ of government, to respond in that fashion. It does not venture into the definition of a new code of marriage. That, if it is to be attempted, would be a subject for another time, another debate and another law if and when the sufficient consensus is built in support of it.

Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it would be best to begin my speech today by taking stock of exactly where we are in Canada. I represent a riding in Saskatchewan that is currently enduring an agriculture crisis of a magnitude similar to what was experienced during the Great Depression. Saskatchewan has generations of farmers who own farms that have been in their families for generations and they face the prospect of losing their farms. The income crisis facing Saskatchewan farmers is that bleak.

For years the Canadian Alliance has laid out proposals, lists and solutions before the government of where it could immediately act to address the problems in our grain transportation system and our grain marketing system and the problems we face on the international market because of unfair trade practices of foreign nations and so on. This week we will be releasing a summary of 65 town hall meetings we held all winter long in farm communities across the prairies bringing forward solutions, most of them proposed by the farmers themselves, but the Liberal government refuses to look at that or address it in any way, shape or form.

This country is currently experiencing one of the greatest scandals in the history of our nation, which is the misappropriation and mismanagement of funds through the human resources development department. It is incompetent and deceitful and Canadians deserve better.

Our health care system is in tatters. Waiting lists are growing every day and, in many cases, people are forced to leave our country and seek health care elsewhere.

We are the highest taxed country of all industrialized nations in the world. Under this Liberal government taxes have been increased 69 times at last count over the last seven years placing families under a tremendous burden. It is such an unreasonable level of taxation that most of our well educated professionals are leaving the country. They are being forced out of their own homes to go elsewhere to earn a living because of the great disparity in taxes, the great differential between filing a tax return in Houston or in Calgary.

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Our justice system completely defies logic. We cater to criminals and the victims have no rights. It is a disturbing situation that needs all kinds of repairs, from the prison system to the Young Offenders Act to this conditional sentencing that is going on, all of this judicial activism.

On Friday the Prime Minister appointed a member from Saskatchewan to the Senate. As far as I am concerned, this was a slap in the face to the residents of Saskatchewan because I know most Saskatchewan residents would like to elect our senators so we can have meaningful representation.

• (1550)

Where is Senate reform? What about parliamentary reform? Everyone knows how this place runs. There are no free votes. The government never resorts to the use of referendums. It is a dictatorship.

What are we doing here today? Despite all the problems facing our nation, the government has brought forward a bill to extend benefits depending on whether or not one is having gay sex. Is that the depth to which the government has to sink? What about all the urgent matters facing our nation? No, it is preoccupied with extending benefits to people who have homosexual sex.

Let us go back to June 1999. The Canadian Alliance at that time put forward a motion that read "marriage is and should remain the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others and parliament will take all necessary steps within the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada to preserve this definition of marriage in Canada". That motion passed but it was not a bill and had no statutory effect. What we see now, despite the expressed will of parliament last June, is a bill that will not preserve the definition of marriage but will destroy it. I submit that Bill C-23 is an insult to every member of parliament who voted last June to preserve the definition of marriage.

The government knows full well that the vast majority of Canadians are upset about this bill. They do not agree to extending the benefits that accrue to married couples to homosexual couples. I know from my own experience in my constituency and from talking to my colleagues that there has been a large public outcry. My constituency office has been deluged with phone calls, faxes, letters and e-mails demanding that the government abort this ill-thought out legislation.

In response to this public outcry, the minister put forward an amendment at the beginning of the bill that defines marriage but that has no legal effect. It is meaningless. Any judge looking at any of the acts modified by Bill C-23—and I believe there are 68 of them—will not see that interpretative clause defining marriage. Legal experts have clearly stated that in order to have the effect of retaining the current definition of marriage, the definition of spouse and marriage should be placed in each of the affected statutes modified by Bill C-23.

That is exactly what the Canadian Alliance has done. We have put forth amendments, which will be voted on tonight, that define spouse as either a man or a woman who has entered into a marriage and that define marriage as the lawful union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. That is what the legal experts say will be required to retain the current definition of marriage and that is what Canadian Alliance members are proposing, but that is not how the Liberal government will vote. I believe the reason for that is that their ultimate goal is to destroy the institution of marriage or at least make gay couples the equivalent of what currently are married couples, in other words, gay marriages.

On March 20 of this year delegates to a Liberal convention voted on a resolution to legalize same sex marriages. Although that resolution was defeated, it had a very close margin of 468 to 365. The New Democratic Party already has the policy that it wants same sex marriages.

In addition to urging all members of the House to support the Canadian Alliance amendments, which would replace the definition in each of the affected statutes, I recently submitted a private member's bill, Bill C-460, which was an act to amend the Marriage Act and to include and place the specific definition of marriage in that act.

• (1555)

Unfortunately, because of the undemocratic nature of this institution, that bill will probably never see the light of day. If it ever does, I would certainly hope that all members of the House would see their way clear to support it. I know that will not happen because, as I said, the NDP officially has a policy contrary to that.

At the beginning of my speech I mentioned the urgent matters facing this nation, one of which is taxation. I will briefly outline for the benefit of the House solution 17, which is the Canadian Alliance's proposal for tax reform.

When we form government, we will implement a single rate of taxation of 17%, combined with a spousal and personal deduction of \$10,000 plus a \$3,000 deduction per child. The net effect of that is that two million low income Canadians who currently pay some tax will pay no tax at all.

I will wrap up by saying that in addition to supporting fair family taxation, the Canadian Alliance would also address issues that the Liberals have been unwilling to tackle, such as child pornography, criminal justice reform, child custody and access issues and many other issues that affect families because we are a pro-family party as opposed to the anti-family policies of the Liberal government.

Let it be known that MPs who vote against the Canadian Alliance amendments in tonight's vote will be voting against the definition of marriage in federal law.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question.

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Some hon. members: Question?

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 1 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 5. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 5 stands deferred.

The next question is on Motion No. 7. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 7 stands deferred.

The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21 to 24, 27, 28, 31 to 33, 35, 37 to 39, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 56, 58, 60, 61, 63, 64, 66 to 68, 70, 71, 73 to 76, 78, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86 to 90, 94 to 96, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104, 105, 107 to 110, 135, 137, 138, 140, 142, 143, 146 to 149, 153 to 158, 160, 161, 163, 164, 166 to 169, 171 and 172.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on Motion No. 113. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 113 stands deferred.

• (1600)

The next question is on Motion No. 144. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 144 stands deferred.

I will now put the motions in Group No. 2 to the House.

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Lowther (Calgary Centre, Canadian Alliance) moved:

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Motion No. 117

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 193.

Motion No. 118

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 194.

Motion No. 119

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 195.

Motion No. 120

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 196.

Motion No. 121

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 197.

Motion No. 122

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 198.

Motion No. 123

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 199.

Motion No. 124

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 200.

Motion No. 125

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 201.

Motion No. 126

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 202.

Motion No. 127

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 203.

Motion No. 128

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 204.

Motion No. 129

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 205.

Motion No. 130

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 206.

Motion No. 131

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 207.

Motion No. 132

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 208.

Motion No. 133

That Bill C-23 be amended by deleting Clause 209.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present to the House the 10 top reasons Bill C-23 should be withdrawn.

The tenth reason is that the government has ignored the Egan decision of the Supreme Court which ruled that the government is not constitutionally required to extend publicly funded old age security benefits to same sex couples. The Egan decision dealt with the question of federal spousal benefits which are linked to the public purse. Clauses 192 to 209 of Bill C-23 amend the Old Age Security Act so it seems the Liberals are directly contradicting the court's decision in Egan. The Liberals are using muddy logic again and they are subjectively adhering to court decisions; some they choose and some they do not choose.

The ninth reason is that according to recent reports the Prime Minister has decreed that Liberal members will not be able to represent constituents with their voices on Bill C-23. He has insisted that this vote will be a whip vote and require that each member of the Liberal caucus votes for the bill. It has long been the position of the Canadian Alliance that the first responsibility of members of parliament is to represent the will of their constituents. Without this basic principle at work, democracy is an illusion and Canadians are in fact electing a four to five year dictatorship.

In spite of this edict from the Prime Minister, 14 Liberals had the courage to vote against the bill at second reading. Some others who had less courage hid behind the curtains and chose not to vote. If a whip vote on the bill will not work for the Prime Minister, he should see the writing on the wall and withdraw Bill C-23.

The eighth reason to rethink the bill and withdraw it is the fact that the Naskapi nation of Quebec points out that Bill C-23 overrides its treaty rights. The Cree Naskapi, whose treaty agreement is referred to in the bill, came before the committee to share its concerns about the imposition of common law, same sex partners in its cultural definition of family and what it would do to treaty rights and obligations. Members of the Cree Naskapi made a strong case that the approach the government should take was to come and talk with them and negotiate first. Let them inform the people and then perhaps have a referendum on the issue. I think the Cree Naskapi are right and I think a whole bunch of other Canadians would appreciate the same respect from the federal government on the issue.

● (1605)

The seventh reason to withdraw the bill is the public's reaction to it. In spite of very little media attention and that the Liberal government is trying to sneak it through under the cover of other issues, the public outpouring of concern against the bill from coast to coast has been nothing short of miraculous.

Members of parliament from all parties admit to getting large volumes of faxes, e-mails, phone calls and letters concerning Bill C-23. Most say they have received more on this issue than any other issue this session. Without exception the very great majority of citizens are calling for Bill C-23 to be withdrawn. The justice minister knows this. We cannot even get through on her fax line. The petitions against Bill C-23 are coming in like rain every day in the House. We hear them one after another.

The sixth reason to withdraw the bill is that there must be something wrong with it if when after only four hours into debate at second reading the Liberal government moved closure to stop debate in the House. At report stage and third reading it has moved closure again after one day of debate. This is an omnibus bill. It affects almost every statute, 68 in all. It will impact on 20 different departments. The bill extends all public benefits to people who were not eligible before. It has sweeping implications for our social structures.

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Why will the Liberals not allow debate? Why do we have closure again, for the 67th time by the Liberal government? Is it afraid more people will find out what it is up to with the bill and hold them accountable for it come the next election? If that is not what it is, why is it being rushed through? If that is why it is pushing Bill C-23 through it is another good reason to withdraw it.

The fifth reason to withdraw the bill is the treatment it got in committee after second reading. The sweeping omnibus bill which affects 68 statutes in total got a short three and a half days to hear from witnesses in committee. Many individuals and groups with important perspectives were not allowed to present to the justice committee examining the bill. No provincial voices were heard. No travel was allowed in order to get broader public input. Witness lists were shortened.

My motion to televise the proceedings and to get broader public input were voted down by the Liberal dominated committee. The majority of witnesses that appeared before the committee were heavily weighted in favour of Bill C-23. In short, the committee process was abused to give the false impression of fair public consultation.

I know the Chair is getting excited as we get close to number one, but the fourth reason Bill C-23 should be withdrawn is that the Income Tax Act which contains a definition of family has been totally changed. It has been changed from the commonly understood definition to a new definition that will include any two people of the same sex who share accommodation for a year and have what they think is a conjugal relationship.

It is true that the section of the Income Tax Act which defines family was primarily intended for application of tax policies toward Hutterite colonies, but we can be sure that the Hutterites were not consulted to see if they felt there was any need to accommodate same sex relationships as a family. Very likely they would strongly object to that inclusion. Bill C-23 is an unwarranted redefinition of family and that is another reason it should be withdrawn.

The third reason to withdraw the bill is that prior to the bill there was a definition in law which stated what it took to be considered related to another person. This definition stated that family relations were those related by blood, marriage or adoption. This definition is also generally consistent with the Canadian Alliance policy. Bill C-23 strikes down that definition of family and redefines it to include any two people of the same sex who live together for a year in a conjugal relationship or a sexual relationship.

The intent to redefine long held understandings of what it takes to be related to someone in order to give public benefits to two men or two women who have a sexual relationship is at the very least unnecessary. This is the third reason.

• (1610)

The second reason to withdraw Bill C-23 is that even though it proposes to extend all the benefits and obligations that were previously reserved for marriage, it is impossible from the bill to be sure who those others are that qualify. To qualify for public marriage benefits the bill proposed that two men who live together for a year in a conjugal relationship would be included, but nowhere in the bill is the term conjugal relationship defined. Yet it is the primary qualifying criterion.

The dictionary says that a conjugal relationship is one that has sexual activity as in marriage, but when asked if sexual activity is a requirement for these benefits the government says no, maybe and probably. Sometimes it says yes. It tells us that the courts know what is a conjugal relationship. This is the second reason to withdraw Bill C-23, because it refuses to define who qualifies and drives people into the courtroom instead.

The first reason is that although the justice minister tells us repeatedly the bill has nothing to do with marriage, it in fact gives every benefit and obligation in federal public policy to same sex relationships that were previously reserved for marriage, with the exception that if one is married one must go through a divorce to formally discontinue the relationship.

The terms marriage and spouse are taken out of several of the statutes affected by Bill C-23. Bill C-23 sets the perfect legal stage for a court ruling to force same sex marriage on Canadians, and they know it. They voiced their concerns and forced the justice minister to put forward an amendment to define marriage, but she did it in such a way that expert legal opinion said the amendment would have no legal effect. Only the Canadian Alliance amendments clearly set down the definitions of marriage and spouse in every statute.

If the Liberals vote against defining marriage in an effective way in legislation, that would be the number one reason why Bill C-23 should be withdrawn.

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise again in the House for a second time to speak in support of Bill C-23. I had the honour and privilege of being one of the first MPs to rise in the House to strongly support the legislation after the Minister of Justice introduced it.

Before I speak to some of the amendments, some of the letters and the inaccurate facts that have been passed out even today as I am sitting here listening to my colleagues from the Canadian Alliance speak, I want to address a couple of things that the last two speakers have said.

The member for Saskatoon—Humboldt talked about the public being opposed to the legislation. The member for Calgary Centre

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talked about the lack of witnesses in hearings into this matter. While I was sitting here listening I found that quite incredulous. Do they not speak to members of the Canadian Alliance Party in Ontario? Have they not spoken to Mr. Long, who I understand will be seeking the leadership of the Canadian Alliance Party? Are Canadian Alliance Party members who live in Ontario not considered to be members by the Canadian Alliance Party or by the public?

Let us look at what happened on October 25, 1999, in the Ontario legislature. The Ontario government is headed by Mr. Harris. I believe Mr. Long, who hopes to be the leader of this great new party, was well known to Mr. Harris. On October 25, 1999, Queen's Park introduced bill 5.

What did that bill do? It amended 67 provincial statutes to provide benefits to same gender relationships. Unlike the hearings we have had, unlike the debate that is going on today and has been going on, do hon. members know that bill 5 passed in five days without debate and without a recorded vote? It is amazing, is it not, that bill was endorsed by all three parties in Ontario?

• (1615)

My riding is in the province of Ontario. I can confidently say that when I speak today and vote in favour of the bill I will be doing so because I represent my constituents and the will of the majority of the constituents in my riding.

There has been a lot of talk about marriage and the definition of marriage. Quite frankly I am personally of the opinion that it was not necessary to put the definition of marriage in this legislation because this legislation has nothing to do with marriage. Notwithstanding that, I will support the amendment proposed by the Minister of Justice.

For all of the talk about losing the sanctity of marriage and that the government is forcing this through and it is happening very quickly, I should remind members opposite that in its haste the Ontario government failed to take into account widespread public concern around the issue of marriage. Yet the federal government and the justice minister have felt it important to include the definition of marriage in this legislation.

Let us look at what the bill is about. The purpose of the bill is straightforward. As I said on February 15, the bill amends legislation in order to recognize the principle of equal treatment for all common law relationships.

The member for Calgary Centre talked about how this bill was going to extend the same benefits that married couples are receiving. That is not true at all. Right now benefits are being extended to common law spouses and those benefits will be extended to same sex couples.

The bill looks at both obligations and rights. The important thing to remember is that the legislation is about fairness, tolerance and non-discrimination.

My colleague the deputy whip spoke about the fact that in a changing society the family unit is changing. She talked about her children. I have been married for 22 years and I also have three children. We have discussed this legislation with my children. My children do not understand what the big ado is all about. If there is one legacy I can leave to my children when I leave Parliament Hill it is the legacy of fairness, non-discrimination and being taught that it is not fair to discriminate any longer. Intolerance is not acceptable in Canada or in our Canadian values.

Members have also talked about the whole concept of widening the legislation to include brothers and sisters and dependency. One of the things I have not heard talked about here at all is the equitable principle in law known as quantum meruit. This equitable principle often arises in estate situations when a deceased person has failed to provide adequate compensation in his or her will or may have died intestate or may have left a legacy in a will but has not sufficiently compensated a person who provided either services or work for the deceased person during his or her lifetime. This happens often in relationships between brothers and sisters or parents and their children. It is very important when we talk about the concept of widening the whole area of dependency that we do not ignore the equitable principle known as quantum meruit.

Let us look at the definition of the principle of quantum meruit as defined in Black's Law Dictionary. According to Black's quantum meruit is an equitable doctrine based on the concept that no one who benefits by the labour and materials of another should be unjustly enriched thereby. Under those circumstances the law implies the promise to pay a reasonable amount for the labour and materials furnished even absent a specific contract therefor.

There are four essential elements of recovery under quantum meruit. First is that valuable services were rendered or materials furnished. Second is that it was done for the person sought to be charged. Third is which services and materials were accepted by that person sought to be charged were used and enjoyed by them. Fourth is that under such circumstances a reasonably notified person sought to be charged, that plaintiff in performing such services was expected to be paid by that person sought to be charged. The principle of quantum meruit applies whether there is an expressed contract or an implied contract.

• (1620)

During my years as a practising lawyer about one-third of my practice was spent in estate law and often this principle came up. For example, a nephew looked after his aunt and drove her from place to place. The aunt had promised him a piece of land. She died intestate. There was nothing left. While the statute on frauds came

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into play and we could not obtain specific performance for the land, the nephew was compensated for the services that he performed.

When we talk about dependency, let us look at the equitable doctrine of quantum meruit. When we do so is it something that we as the federal government would impose in our legislation or is it a matter of property and civil rights which therefore becomes a provincial matter? Again it is a constitutional question.

We can say let us include dependency, that it is not fair when a person lives with and looks after his or her sister and does not receive anything on the sister's death. However, a remedy at law already exists to compensate a person for the services that have been rendered provided that one could reasonably expect to be paid for those services.

I would like to take the last couple of minutes to rule out some of the common myths which have come forward by a concentrated, well driven lobby group of a number of people because the letters we have been receiving in my office are all the same.

On the matter of secrecy, the House has held debates and the committee has held hearings. By the time the legislation passes, it will have had at least five months before the House and the ability to talk about it.

I would submit that the member for Calgary Centre was incorrect when he said that Bill C-23 will grant common law partnerships all the rights and benefits that married unions now have. Bill C-23 will extend to same sex partners the same benefits and obligations that common law opposite sex partners have.

In conclusion, our proposed bill affirms parliament's primary responsibility for social policy. It provides a responsible, balanced and legally sound framework within which to address recent court decisions and to ensure that same sex couples receive fair and equal treatment under the law.

I will vote today on behalf of my constituents and on behalf of my family, my husband and my three children, in favour of this legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank our colleague for her excellent speech, which indicates considerable open-mindedness. I greatly appreciated her reference to the conversation with her children. This is the kind of thing that needs to be discussed very openly.

Before going into the amendments proposed by the Canadian Alliance in detail, I would like to point out that it is the 41st birthday of our colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot. I am sure I can speak for us all in wishing him a happy birthday.

What we are being offered today, in discussing Bill C-23 and the amendments proposed by the Canadian Alliance is, of course, the opportunity to discuss a fundamental value.

A little later today, at 6.30 p.m., members will be standing up to vote. I know that in a parliament, and this is true for all those who believe in democracy, it is normal to accept a diversity of views. People are not obliged in any way to think the same way on everything. That is something I have long accepted, in fact ever since my first day in caucus.

With all due respect for the diversity of points of view to be expressed, however, I would like to argue that the bill we have before us is, first and foremost, one that concerns democracy.

• (1625)

Why does it concern democracy? Democracy has been the subject of discussions for 300 years. I believe that there is one inherent value, something that is rather intimately related to it. It is the conviction that all individuals are equal in the eyes of the law. This is what we are taught in law and in political science.

When we are involved on the local level with various community councils, on the boards of various institutions, we constantly hear that if there is one supreme authority, the state or the supreme court, it is because everyone must be treated equally, everyone must enjoy equality of treatment. This is so true that it is even part of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, in section 15, as well as of the Quebec charter of human rights.

What is it that we are being asked today to do as legislators? First, we are being asked to acknowledge that there are common law relationships. In our society there are people who, for the past 20 or 25 years, have felt the need to enter into relations of solidarity, relationships—I will come back to this—that are conjugal but not marriage.

This is a significant fact in Quebec, because the province in Canada with the highest rate of cohabitation is Quebec. The courts pointed out that common law relationships in which individuals deliberately and wittingly choose to enjoy mutual benefit without marrying must be treated equally.

This is why I have a hard time following my colleagues in the Canadian Alliance, because the bill before us does not concern marriage, but rather the antithesis of marriage. It concerns those who have chosen to live in a common law relationship.

In fact, I would not like there to be a debate on marriage anywhere but in parliament. I do not think that it is up to the courts to tell us what form we want marriage to take. I totally agree with those who say that debate on these matters is the prerogative of members of parliament. The day we debate it, I will be the first to rise and say there is no reason to limit the institution of marriage as

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such to heterosexuals, that it is discriminatory to exclude people of the homosexual persuasion from the institution of marriage.

However, the time for that has not yet come. The bill before us concerns the equal treatment of all people and the recognition of common law couples, whether homosexual or heterosexual.

It is most interesting that lawmakers—and here I will end my digression on marriage—did not feel the need to define marriage. The courts therefore gave a common law definition and the Minister of Justice, through the parliamentary secretary, presented the committee with a conventional definition of marriage, i.e. of a man and a woman.

I do not think it is necessary to further expound on the merits of the strategy. For the purposes of the debate, let us be clear that all those who will be voting this evening at report stage and tomorrow at third reading need to know that the conventional definition of marriage is not being challenged and is not under threat. This is a given that we must keep in mind.

I hasten to add that contrary to what some have suggested, adoption is very obviously not what this bill is all about. Constitutionally, adoption is excluded from this debate because it is a provincial jurisdiction and comes under the civil code of the Province of Quebec.

Members on this side know what an important day May 20, 1997 was. May 20 is a lucky day in the history of the sovereignist movement because it marks the day a few years ago when a referendum was held, with the results we know. These results will keep getting better, as each of us also knows.

• (1630)

On May 20, 1999 the supreme court handed down an extremely important and almost unanimous decision. Those at all familiar with the supreme court are only too aware that an 8:1 ruling is a serious ruling, one which made law and which was the culmination of a trend in rulings toward equal treatment.

The supreme court was faced with the following case. Two lesbians who had lived together for a number of years, and had built up a business together, separated. This is the case known as *M v H*.

One of the two applied for support under section 22 of the Ontario family law act. Initially, this case was heard by Ontario's divisional court and then its appeal court. The supreme court allowed the appeal and authorized the parties to appear before it.

This is why we have an obligation to pass this bill. Even if the debate has to be among parliamentarians, nevertheless when the supreme court brings down a decision it makes law and obliges the legislator to bring its legislation into line accordingly.

For the first time, the supreme court has said that homosexual couples are to be treated on an equal footing with other couples. It has also said that homosexual couples must be recognized in the eyes of the legislator as forming common law couples with the same recognition, the same obligations and the same privileges.

Some MPs find this a concern, and ask if we should not go further in recognizing what the concept of a couple implies.

I would remind hon. members that, given the jurisprudence referred to in *M v H*, this is a conjugal relationship. Among the characteristics of a conjugal relationship are: living under the same roof, a personal and sexual relationship, exchange of services, social activities, financial support and being seen by society as a couple.

In closing, I wish to state that there is no reason whatsoever why, as legislators, we cannot acknowledge that persons of homosexual orientation who are in a conjugal relationship cannot be considered a couple. This is what the bill is inviting us to do, and I hope that there will be many of us here in this House open to individual equality who will support Bill C-23 at the report and third reading stages.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: 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 Mississauga South, Health Care.

Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in debate on this bill at report stage. I regret the use of time allocation, closure and all of the usual heavy-handed, undemocratic tactics employed by the government, as this has been my first opportunity to attempt to articulate the overwhelming consensus of my constituents on this matter.

I believe it would be accurate to say that I have received more unsolicited constituent feedback on this issue than on any other issue in my time in this place. I find it very disturbing that the government has become so inured to using the hammer of the closure motion that members like myself have effectively been unable to substantially address this bill and our constituents' concerns.

• (1635)

The treatment of this bill by the government, the House leader and the cabinet reflects, more than perhaps anything else I have experienced in this place, the growing arrogance and abuse of parliamentary power by the government, which I honestly find disturbing.

I would like to say on behalf of my constituents that hundreds of working people have written to me, faxed me and e-mailed me, as

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their representative, opposing Bill C-23. Notwithstanding what members opposite say, these people are not bigots. They are not advocates of discrimination and intolerance. They are normal working Canadians. I know that members opposite have heard from like-minded constituents.

Perhaps the member for Parkdale—High Park regards as intolerant the members of her constituency who oppose the effective diminishment of the legal recognition of marriage. I do not. I think that her constituents and mine, who have serious heartfelt and conscientious objections to this legislation, are tolerant Canadians. They ought to be heard. If there is anyone intolerant, it is those who stand in this place to castigate Canadians who sincerely believe that there ought to be in law a preferential option given to marriage as the cradle of the family and the family as the cradle of human life.

I would like to register my serious dismay with the kind of inflammatory rhetoric employed by some members of the government and other opposition parties in characterizing as intolerant those Canadians who, in good conscience, object to this incredibly significant piece of legislation.

Why do Canadians raise those objections? They actually believe that the institution of marriage is central to any civilized and healthy society. I find it utterly remarkable that in the year 2000 members have to stand in parliament to articulate the reasons for which marriage ought to be given a preferential option in law. It truly is remarkable. It is a very basic natural fact that children are born and raised in the context of heterosexual relationships. Is that an intolerant statement? No, it is a statement of natural fact.

It may be that non-heterosexual couples would like to have that capacity, but nature has not so graced them. Every civilization throughout history has recognized that the procreative capacity, what the philosophers would call a radical capacity to procreate, is something that is of great importance and ought to be protected and promoted.

We can go back to the beginning of political philosophy and read Plato's musings about taking children from families, putting them in government run day care camps and trying to create the perfect human being. The effort to remove children from the cradle of the family has been the nightmarish vision of utopians throughout history. Civilized societies, societies which understand there is a basic ontological nature of the human person which dictates that children of human beings are best raised in a stable two-parent heterosexual family, know that special privileges, special legal protections and special legal obligations must be accorded to those who enter the very solemn legal and contractual obligation of marriage.

What Bill C-23 seeks to do is to take that very solemn legal privilege and obligation and turn it on its head, essentially saying that any two people who have the desire to live together in a

conjugal relationship will, for all intents and purposes, be given precisely the same advantages, rights and privileges as married heterosexual couples without the attendant responsibilities. In fact, the Minister of Justice even admitted at committee that the only place where marriage is really an operative term in federal legislation, which would not apply to the same sex beneficiaries contemplated in Bill C-23, is in the Divorce Act.

• (1640)

What we are doing is taking these unique legal privileges, this preferential option for the family, and giving that to anyone, regardless of their capacity or lack thereof to procreate children and raise the next generation. In so doing, we are diminishing the distinctive legal, cultural and social value of the marital relationship, but we continue, and quite appropriately, to impose legal obligations on married couples through the Divorce Act, obligations which do not adhere to the same sex couples who will receive these marital benefits under the bill. It seems to me that this is a radical piece of legislation which undermines an institution central to any civilized society.

The Minister of Justice, under the enormous pressure of public opinion, even from her own caucus, decided that something had to be done to cloak this bill in the appearance of being somehow defensive of the institution of marriage, because, after all, due to the diligent work of my colleague from Calgary Centre, the House passed a motion on June 8 of last year declaring that the government should take "all necessary steps" to preserve the definition of marriage as "the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others". That shocking, intolerant, discriminatory motion passed by a vote of 216 to 55, with the entire federal cabinet voting in favour.

The Minister of Justice was required by political pressure, by all those millions of intolerant, bigoted Canadians that we keep hearing about from some members of the government, to do something to protect the institution of marriage. Therefore, she had her officials in the Department of Justice, which we all know is a haven of defence of the natural family, insert in the preamble to the bill some meaningless, rhetorical reference to the definition of marriage.

At committee it has been absolutely evident that the preambular definition of marriage included in this enormous, sweeping omnibus bill has effectively no meaning in law. It will not be used as a reference by the courts. It will not apply as a definition in the various statutes amended by this bill. It is a meaningless, token gesture that the Minister of Justice is giving to some of her backbenchers, who can then go back to their constituents and disingenuously claim that they stood in the House and voted for the traditional definition of marriage.

I put those members who intend to use that Trojan horse on notice that we will not allow them to mislead their constituents

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should they intend to do so at the next election. We will remind their constituents who stood in the House, took the responsibility and defended with their vote the basic institution of civil society, marriage, that little platoon of society to which Edmund Burke referred, upon which our culture depends.

I implore my colleagues opposite, do not let this be a whipped vote. Do not let it be a partisan vote. Let it be a vote of representation of our constituents, a vote that speaks for the value of marriage and family in our society. Do not be cowed by the voices of intolerance. Vote for the amendments to define marriage as the union between a man and a woman.

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, normally I am happy to enter a debate, but I think this is a difficult one.

One of the things with which I have had difficulty as a member of parliament is the issue of morality and the fact that from time to time we are called on as representatives to attempt to prejudge, understand and reconcile the different moralities that exist within the general polity.

I say this not only to those in my own riding, but also to some in other ridings which possibly have an even higher threshold of concern about this legislation.

• (1645)

The member who spoke previously talked about the hundreds of letters he is receiving. I too have received some and petitions as well.

Because of my own concern about this issue and having to in a sense prejudge morality, I can well remember the last parliament when we had a debate over the human rights amendments and it was a somewhat similar debate. I commissioned an official poll in my riding. Even though I received hundreds of letters opposed to the human rights amendments, I discovered that the vast majority of my riding was in favour of them. I fear we are doing the same thing here. As a matter of fact, I have had less response on this legislation than I did on the original human rights amendments.

I stand in my place today to support the legislation. Why do we support the legislation? Behind some of the arguments today is the issue between collective and individual rights. We have defined our country as a nation in the world which respects individual rights. One of the things we can be proud of as a nation as we go forth in the 21st century is that we support, respect and try to enrich individual rights.

This issue comes down to a question of discrimination. Do we in fact believe that certain groups in our society are being discriminated against simply because of some of the relationships they choose to enter into? My background is as an accountant so I focus on the Income Tax Act. It tells me that with these amendments a

same sex couple in a dependency relationship will be able to claim the other one as a full dependant. I ask myself, if that was not the case, are they discriminated against? The answer is yes, they are discriminated against and are treated differently.

Some of those in the opposition and others who oppose the legislation would tell me they believe that is appropriate. In other words, there is some kind of appropriateness to some forms of discrimination. Once we start making exceptions to the rules of a body of rights in a country, we are going down a very slippery slope in which there are only rights for certain people and rights for others. That gets me back to my original discussion of collective and individual rights.

What is really bothering some people behind this legislation is the ability to impose their morality on society generally. In other words, things seem to be changing. This is the way things were. One of the members spoke about her family. I have been married well over 30 years and have a grown family myself similar to what she was saying. I discussed this matter with them and they thought this whole issue was a bit of nonsense and that we were a bunch of old fogeys in the way we visualize society because society has fundamentally changed in front of us. I know my mother would be giving me heck for my opinion on this legislation but I think people's attitudes and views change over time.

For those people in my riding who believe very strongly about this legislation and think it is bad legislation, I can only simply say that I have tried to reconcile their views with what I believe to be the majority of the people in my riding. I have come to the conclusion that we still believe in a fundamental principle and that is that the majority rules. In spite of what some of the members in the opposition would have us believe, I believe that the majority of Canadians in fact support this legislation.

Getting back to the definition of marriage, this legislation does not really deal with the institution of marriage. It is the provincial jurisdictions that deal with the institution of marriage.

• (1650)

Having said that, we have provided a definition within the preamble. I believe that many in the community who would oppose this legislation are happy that at least there has been some recognition of what we believe to be a marriage as being the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

Getting back to the issue of discrimination, one of the things that bothered me about the legislation, because we are extending benefits and rights to a larger group of people than possibly now enjoy them, is that the question invariably comes up as to the form of discrimination. Are there other people in our society who are being discriminated against?

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I talked about the dependency relationship under the Income Tax Act. Many people similarly brought up the issue of a daughter who is supporting her sick mother and should she also not have the right to claim her as a dependant. Fundamentally I think we all agree that is true. We agree that we should be extending this definition. It once again goes back to the theme of my speech. We must not provide for any discrimination in our system. In fact we must find ways to do away with as much discrimination as we can.

We can talk as much as we want about this utopian society, but the reality is we are curtailed somewhat by affordability. That does not mean the government is not concerned about that issue. I am very heartened to discover that the Minister of Justice and others have commissioned a study to look into the ability to expand this definition to include other people who may well be discriminated against. That is appropriate, but obviously to go down that road today to include a broader definition of discrimination would be very costly.

When I explain that to those in my constituency who are concerned about that, I explain to them that under our current laws a broader definition of discrimination would be prohibitively costly. The impact on private pension plans and others would be that some benefits now being received by some people in my constituency would actually go down to provide for this enhanced vision.

I suspect that in a future parliament, parliamentarians will be discussing expanding the definition to allow other forms of deductibility of obligations and rights. There is no question that as we go down the road our society is aging. I am very concerned about families who are trying to support themselves and possibly invalid members of the family and need some help from our taxation system.

I do not believe it is appropriate to continue to be silent on those issues. We will continue to debate them. As we prosper in the future, the definition of dependency relationships will increase to include those people but as of today we are going with this one measure.

It has taken us a long time to have a charter of rights and freedoms. As a government it has taken us a number of years to even invoke it, which is where we are being led to today. The courts are saying that we have not been living up to the terms of the charter and it is time that we did. That is fair and justified. To say otherwise means that what we really want to do is to amend the charter of rights and freedoms and take away individual rights and liberties, a famous hallmark of this country.

In conclusion, I am very supportive of this legislation. I certainly respect the views of others who are opposed to it.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the special indulgence of the House. I was in my

office working with the television on the parliamentary channel in the background. When debate on the Group No. 1 motions collapsed, I just did not make it all the way from the Confederation building to here in time.

● (1655)

Since we are talking about tolerating and forgiving each other's little minor foibles today, I wonder whether I could ask for unanimous consent that Motions Nos. 14 and 91 which are on the notice paper in my name also be deemed moved and seconded and thus included in Group No. 2, pursuant to the Speaker's ruling. I ask for unanimous consent for that.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent that the hon. member be permitted to move these motions?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Speaker, I regret that because I think my amendments would have certainly added value to what we are talking about in today's debate.

It is interesting that we have this conflict in the discussion of whether or not the term of marriage is being discussed here. First the Minister of Justice adamantly denied it. She said this bill had nothing to do with marriage, and subsequent to that she put forward an amendment that in fact did talk about marriage. Furthermore almost every one of the changes that is being proposed by Bill C-23 in the 68 different statutes has to do with a marriage relationship, a family.

There is one amendment I really wish could be on the Order Paper to actually have members vote on because I think it would be consistent with previous decisions made in the House. We should not be using the back door with this bill to redefine marriage and family in all of these different statutes. I urge members to think seriously about that.

I do not want to chastise my fellow parliamentarians for denying me consent. I will gladly concede that in a foot race I would lose to almost everyone here. That is part of my excuse for not getting here in 2.8 milliseconds all the way from the Confederation Building when the debate collapsed.

I simply say that we ought not to be doing things that cannot take the heat of debate. We should not be doing things that cannot bear the support of the public.

The member who spoke previously said that in a poll he had conducted the majority of the people were in favour of this bill. Of course we do not have questions and comments at this point but I would like to ask him exactly what question he asked.

Being a mathematician and being involved somewhat in statistical work I know this much about polling, that the way one words

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the question can almost certainly determine the outcome. If one were to say should we discriminate against people who like each other, probably 99% of Canadians would say no they do not think we should discriminate against people who like each other. But the question should we support and promote a redefinition of marriage and of family, and look at the ramifications of that is not being asked. That is not being done here in terms of the feedback we are getting.

When people stop and actually see what is happening in this bill universally they have serious questions about it and so should we. I urge all members to think very carefully. The words that we keep hearing are, let us not discriminate against anyone, let us treat everyone equally and fairly. One can hardly argue with those concepts. However we should ask the question, if we pass this bill and make all of those changes in the 68 different acts, who then are we discriminating against? It is a very important question. The inclusion of the term "conjugal relationship" throws open huge questions.

I submit that in passing the bill we will actually be broadening the group of people against which we are discriminating. This is a very intolerant bill in the sense that it grants benefits only to those who, whether heterosexual or homosexual, are in a conjugal relationship. That means that everyone who is not in that group is being discriminated against.

• (1700)

How will it be determined? It has already been mentioned several times in the House today by several of my colleagues that two of the ministers on the front bench are in disagreement over this. One of the ministers says "Yes, this involves a sexual relationship". The other one says "No, it does not". If it does not, what exactly is the definition of a couple who will qualify for these benefits? How do we determine who will be eligible? The definition simply is not there and there is confusion.

I venture to guess that if we were to ask 300 members of the House, excluding the Speaker, we would probably get, as we would with 300 economists, 300 different answers. Parliament is in error if we pass a law asking future courts and judges to rule without giving them a clear definition of what we are talking about.

One couple may say "Yes, we are in a conjugal relationship. We have sex in one form or another two times a week". They would qualify. Another couple might say "We never have sex. We do not engage in sexual activity". Would they qualify if they had lived together for five, eight or twenty years but had never engaged in sexual activity? Does that really, in the dictionary definition, indicate that is a conjugal relationship?

Furthermore, I think we discriminate against those who would be truthful. When it comes to receiving grants, benefits and things, there are invariably some people who are willing to be a little less

than honest about it. The purpose of our laws and courts is to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and, in essence, people are forced to be honest. If we have several different couples in different relationships and some of them say "No, we are really not in a conjugal relationship but we could get some benefits if we said we were" and if they do not have a morality that prevents them from being untruthful, they would simply declare "Yes, we are in a conjugal relationship" and they would be eligible.

Parliament has done absolutely no study to my satisfaction that has shown any indication of the cost of this, because it is totally unknown. Starting out with a definition of a conjugal relationship being eligible for benefits where that definition is missing means we might have two people in Canada or we might have two million who will come forward to claim these benefits and rights that they have.

There is another huge conundrum here. We are putting homosexual people into the same classification as heterosexual common law couples. We know there are certain laws that cover common law relationships. If I am not mistaken, if a man and woman have been living together in a common law relationship for three years they are deemed to be basically equivalent to married and if they split up there is a division of assets and things like that.

What happens if we have one of these couples in this so-called conjugal relationship where after three, four or five years they break up and then one of them says "I would like to have half of the assets" and they go to court to try to solve this? The one who has the assets may say "No, we were never in a conjugal relationship", while the one who wants the assets may say "Yes, we were". How will the courts ever unravel that one? It is a conundrum. Why we, as parliamentarians, would have such an ill-advised piece of legislation, in which we ask the courts to rule on things that basically have no definition, is a mystery to me?

• (1705)

I urge members to vote in favour of my amendments which are not on the table. Maybe the members have reconsidered and would like to have my amendments at least in the debate. They can vote against them if they wish. I ask for unanimous consent once more.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent that the hon. member's motions be put to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say clearly and unequivocally at the beginning of my remarks that I fully support Bill C-23. I say that not only as a citizen and as a parliamentarian, but also as a father of five children, a grandfather of four and as a man who has been married a long time. I was first married in 1960. I think I know a bit

about marriage and I might even know something about the institution of marriage. I can say unequivocally that I do not feel threatened by Bill C-23. I do not think for a moment that the institution of marriage is threatened by this bill.

When I listened to the anti-diluvium reformers across the way, I find it difficult to understand what I suppose they would construe as their reasoning. Somehow they believe that if we give homosexual couples in a common law relationship the same benefits and the same obligations as society has already given to opposite sex couples in common law relationships, that somehow threatens the institution of marriage. Madam Speaker, if you could square that circle for me, I would appreciate it.

If I enjoy a privilege or a right and if that is extended to someone else living in a committed common law relationship, regardless of whether they are opposite sex or same sex, how that threatens me, my marriage or the institution of marriage is beyond me. I guess it might be called reform party reasoning, flawed as it is.

Let me say one more thing about illiterate reform theology. Homosexuality does not spread like the flu. It is not a communicable disease. It does not spread around like that. The reformers should not worry, if Bill C-23 passes, which it will, that all kinds of red blooded, heterosexual Canadians will be changing their sexual practices tomorrow or dropping their heterosexual orientation. They will continue being heterosexuals as I am sure homosexuals will continue being homosexuals. I want to assure the illiterates across the way that it does not spread like the flu.

I want to mention a few other things because I think they are relevant to the debate. It is very relevant to cite a poll that was conducted by Angus Reid in October 1998 because it provides a very good indication of the thinking of Canadians with regard to some of the issues under discussion.

According to that survey, 84% of Canadians agreed that gay and lesbian individuals should be protected from discrimination. That very same poll showed that 67% agreed that same sex couples should have the same legal rights and obligations—reformers never mention the word obligation—as a man and a woman living together as a common law couple.

• (1710)

I am not at all surprised by these polling results. They are merely further evidence that fairness and equity are strongly held beliefs among Canadians and that these beliefs can exist alongside our deeply rooted respect for the institution of matrimony as the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others.

I believe to my core that there is no contradiction at all between wanting to be fair to same sex couples and supporting marriage. Moreover, if we ask ourselves why Canadians exhibit this sense of

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fairness with respect to equal treatment for same sex couples, the answer is obvious, at least it is to me.

I suspect that most Canadians, indeed most members of the House, know people in unmarried relationships of the opposite sex and of the same sex. They are among our friends and relatives and often the partnerships are long term and committed ones.

On a personal level, in our own lives and experiences, when we think about our friends and family members who are in same sex relationships we want to see that these people are treated with fairness and dignity.

When we can actually put faces on the abstract notion of same sex partners, we can begin to see the daily realities involved and to realize the human side of this issue. This is the reason why the majority of Canadians support equal treatment under the law for same sex couples.

The provinces have announced their intention to review their laws. It is why the federal government and most provinces and territories have now extended benefits to their own employees who are in same sex relationships. Beyond the public service, the three provinces of Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia have taken measures to extend benefits and obligations to same sex couples.

Over 200 private sector employers have already extended work-related benefits, such as dental care and pension rights, to the same sex partners of their employees, as have many municipalities, hospitals and community and social service institutions right across the country.

I am fully aware that some will disagree with the arguments that I have made. They will say that it is the courts who have decided on equality for same sex couples. Let me say that the courts have merely been responding to laws, including the charter of rights and freedoms, that have been written and passed by us, by Canadians' democratically elected representatives.

The bill before us is yet one more of these initiatives by a democratically elected government. It would bring federal legislation into conformity with the charter. Its wording and definitions have been examined to ensure charter consistency. Bill C-23 will ensure that our laws do not unfairly discriminate between common law opposite sex and same sex relationships.

I do not think I have to remind parliamentarians that there was a time in Canada when women were not considered persons before the law. In fact, there was a time when Canadian women were not allowed to vote and there was a big fight then. The social Conservatives of that period were against extending the franchise to women. I suspect it is the same group of people with the same mentality who are opposed to fairness and equality for gays and lesbians today. There was also a time when aboriginal people could not vote.

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One of the positive benefits of the bill before us is that it removes from our federal laws the few remaining distinctions among children based on references to illegitimacy.

We will continue this fight to bring greater equality and fairness to more and more Canadians. This kind of fight has been going on for decades and in fact centuries.

• (1715)

Bill C-23 is about equality in benefits and obligations. First let us examine the benefits provided in the legislation. This aspect has been the focus for some members opposite who have described benefits for same sex couples in hysterical and even vulgar terms.

What benefits are included in the bill? The fact is that most of the statutes in the bill dealing with benefits relate to pensions. We believe that hard working Canadians should be able to provide for and indeed be encouraged to provide for their common law partners, whether opposite sex or same sex.

The bill has been debated for a good long time. Yes, we have had time allocation, but there is a point where we have to bring the debate to an end. It has been debated in other legislatures. It has been debated in homes. I think people have made up their minds. An overwhelming majority of Canadians are in favour of Bill C-23 and I urge its adoption.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, things are looking up a bit in this place. I could see it coming. In 1993 the Liberals had about a quarter of the section over here in addition to that whole side. In 1997 that was reduced significantly. There are a lot less Liberals. As long as their mentality and their way of thinking continue down that path, I cannot wait until the next election because they will be toast.

Canadian people are tired of the social engineering that is taking place in the House of Commons, the constant social engineering that has been in place since 1993 when the good old Liberals came back into power, something that has been the history of their party.

It always leads to their downfall. It only takes time. People finally wise up and realize the social engineering that has continued through their years of governance will never end until we get the right people in government who truly believe in democracy, who truly believe in the democratic voice of the common people throughout the land: the taxpayer, the guy and the gal who pack their lunches, work hard every day and pay taxes.

One of these days the country will wake up and be quite pleased because the people of the land will be the ones who will make a decision about what kind of society they want to live in instead of the governing body of this place.

The Liberals do not respect free votes or expect members of their caucus to represent their ridings because that is what they must do. They do not allow that. Is that democracy? The whip cracks and that is the way it will be. However one day society as a whole will have a voice in making a decision as to what kind of society we want to live in.

As for me, I choose the collective voice of the people over what that should be. I do not choose the voice of the government because it does not believe in the consultation process. Even though the Liberals talk it, they do not believe in it. They do not believe in the petition process.

My desk is full of responses to petitions. We let them collect and then we take them back to our offices, but the responses are simple. The petition is laid out on the table. The government takes it and it responds. Through all the gobbledegook that is in the long description of what took place in petition it is simply saying one sentence. It should reduce the response to one page, save taxpayers some money and save paper. The sentence should be simply: "Sorry, folks. We are the government. We know best".

There were 2.5 million signatures tabled in the House of Commons by Priscilla de Villiers the first year I got here. It did not even sink in that 2.5 million people were asking for some very serious changes to the justice system. From the time of those tablings to today millions of more signatures have been tabled asking that something be done with young offenders, with the parole system and with the prison system to help protect society more.

• (1720)

They are tired of looking over their shoulders. They want to look to the future. Why should they be afraid of being in a school yard? They want to walk down the streets in city of Toronto or in the city of Calgary without fear. They kept tabling petitions, and what do they get from the Minister of Justice after all that time? Bill C-23.

That will not make a lot of petitioners happy. What a wonderful listening government: millions and millions of signatures mean nothing, but a little court decision regarding a situation will make the law. The government will listen more and more as the supreme court and other courts come out with rulings so it can make some more wise decisions based on the courts.

Never mind society. It wants to base it on the courts. The people of Canada are tired of the courts deciding what kind of society they want to live in. They are certainly tired of this place deciding what kind of society they should live in. They truly want a voice.

The Liberals should up the good work because after the next election they will be toast. They are not listening to the people of the land. They will have a voice. There will be a day that they take control of this place, take it back from the arrogance and the

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obnoxious methods being used to run their lives in a social engineering fashion. I can hardly wait for that day. I sure hope I live long enough to see it. I promise that day will happen.

The Liberals continually shut down debate in this place. Closure has been used 69 times now or 169 times. It does not matter. They just do it.

An hon. member: It is called a gag law.

Mr. Myron Thompson: It is called a gag law. It is called for heaven's sake, let us not get any more information about it. They think they are doing the right thing. They would not dare want the people to find out the real truth. It is really sad.

We are supposed to look at everything optimistically. I am looking at this whole affair very optimistically because it will mean they will be gone. Praise the Lord, they will be gone and we will get some people in here who know what in the world they have to do to rule a good country.

Those people over there like a lot of humour. They laugh at a lot of things. That is good. It is that kind of obnoxious attitude that will help make them history. It will not be a very pleasant history. It will not go down in the history books as being anything wonderful. In my riding—

Mr. John Harvard: Is your name Bull Connor? Where are your dogs?

Mr. Lee Morrison: Over there.

Mr. Myron Thompson: If the fellow wants to say something he should go to his seat.

Mr. Randy White: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. My colleague deserves the same respect as anybody else when speaking. I do not expect to see the Liberal on the other side standing and heckling like he is. Would you ask these people to be respectful enough to listen to him.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I ask all hon. members to listen to what our colleagues have to say. I am serious. Let us keep it down a little.

Mr. Myron Thompson: Madam Speaker, it really does not bother me. It just shows their true colours. Let them carry on.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ghislain Lebel: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When you call upon all members to pay attention to what my colleague from the Canadian Alliance is saying, this bothers me somewhat because I was quietly paying close attention. The one stirring things up is the hon. member across the way, who has been doing so for some time. The Chair should intervene.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Thibeault): I believe we are getting into debate here. The hon. member for Wild Rose.

• (1725)

[*English*]

Mr. Myron Thompson: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from the Bloc. As I said, they should carry on. It shows their true colours. People will not accept this as being brilliant but that is okay because, as I said, another election and they will be toast.

The time has come when the government needs to decide whether it will truly allow the people of the land to help make some decisions with regard to what kind of society we have. It is time to do that.

Do the Liberals believe for one moment that the people of the land are happy the decision in British Columbia regarding child pornography is still sitting before the supreme court all this time? They were saying not to worry, not to worry. That is not the kind of government people want. It was probably the most obnoxious decision in the face of society that has happened in this land for ages, that child pornography should be allowed to that extent.

What they want from people in this place including me is a little action to starting representing what the people of Canada want for a society. When will the Liberals start doing it? Liberal governments will never do it. I ask folks out there to get ride of them.

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not know how I get so lucky to follow the hon. member for Wild Rose. It just must be my day. Actually the member puts forward very valid points and some interesting questions, most of which have to do with Bill C-23, human rights, equal rights, the way we see differences in society and the way we see differences among people.

I was intrigued and entertained by the comments just made about what kind of society we want. That member and his party have stood in this place for the three years I have been here and continually gone on about what kind of society they want. They want a society where the views of Charlton Heston are more important than the views of the average citizen. They say that. They want a society that does not have any laws to deal with gun control and that believes in the American constitution which says one has a right to bear arms and a right to defend oneself with those arms.

That is not Canadian society by any stretch of the imagination, but it is certainly their society and their vision. They believe in a society that would discriminate against individuals because of their sexual preference. Let us deal with that just for a second.

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Mr. Myron Thompson: Hector wants to do that speech in his riding.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: I did not heckle the member. It was not me. It was somebody else. He should settle down. The hon. member said he would like to live long enough to see change. I do not know if he is going to see change, but I would like him to live too. He should take it easy, lower the temperature, take a Valium.

Let us talk about Bill C-23. I do not care if the courts make the decision or if parliament is making it, but fundamentally the issue is whether we are prepared as Canadians to have a society in which we will say to people who are gay that they cannot have access to the dental plans of their partners in their places of employment, that they cannot share in some form of survivor benefits having lived in a relationship with someone for a number of years, or that because they are gay they are not entitled to those basic rights in the workplace.

I had some concerns about the word conjugal in the bill. That word was defined for me by members of the Mississauga Gospel Temple. By their name alone we can tell they are Christians and their belief in the Bible is very strong. They are very good people. Reverend Horton in a letter pointed out to me that the word conjugal in the dictionary refers specifically to the act of sexual intercourse between a man and a woman in a married state.

• (1730)

I said “Just a minute. If we are using the word conjugal, how can we say that this bill does not in some way reference marriage? I think it does”.

I went to the minister, as had others, and said that we needed to address it. For us simply to continue to say that this is not about marriage in some way, or that it could not be interpreted in some way by a lawyer somewhere down the road, is unrealistic.

Mr. Darrel Stinson: We will see how you vote on the amendments.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: I will be voting in favour of the bill, let me tell the member that.

The minister responded by putting in the bill the definition of marriage, which to me was acceptable. I have shared that information with my constituents at the Mississauga Gospel Temple and to everyone else who has written with concerns.

What I found interesting was that the definition, which clearly is the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, has caused some concern in the gay community. They have called and said that somehow we have gutted the bill.

I have a message regarding that. If they are saying that and they are partners in gay or lesbian relationships, then what they are really telling me is that they want, perhaps through a hidden

agenda, to move toward gay and lesbian marriages being defined in the same way as heterosexual marriages. I do not support that.

I have said that before. Members opposite want to bring up some comments I made in the provincial legislature as an MPP. I am quite prepared to defend them because that bill did not clearly define marriage as the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others.

While I may be prepared to draw my line in the sand which says that marriage is the union of a man a woman to the exclusion of all others, I have introduced a private member's bill which would amend the Marriage Act and amend the Interpretation Act to lay that out clearly.

I am not doing that to be mean-spirited to the gay and lesbian community. I believe they are entitled to the rights outlined in Bill C-23 and to the obligations outlined in Bill C-23.

I have said this before. I do not consider it to be homophobic. I just understand, have been raised to believe, and my constituents in the majority believe, that marriage by definition is between a man and a woman. That is based very much on procreation, on children and on families. I understand that to be the case.

Having said that, if two same sex people get together in a union, draw up a contract, do whatever they want and live their lives loving one another, I can assure you that does not jeopardize my marriage of 31 years. I am the only one who does that, and I do that on a regular basis, as my wife would say.

The fact that two women love one another, are in a relationship and live together has no impact on my relationship with my wife, nor should it for anyone. The reality is that we take the issue and decide what kind of society we want.

Let me use an example. Suppose there were two people working on the assembly line at General Motors. One of them was heterosexual with a wife at home. The other was gay with a partner at home. Are we prepared as a society to say that the heterosexual person should receive full access to General Motors' company benefits, pension survivor benefits and dental plan for his partner at home, but that the person making the same dollar, working the same hours and taking the same risks should not have access to those same benefits? Is that the kind of society we want? I do not think so.

The Canadian people understand the differences between the former Reform Party, or the C-C-R-A-P, or the UA, or the CA, or whatever it is, and the government. I think it is wonderful that it is having a leadership debate. We will hear the vision for Canada and the world according to Stockwell Day and according to the present leader of that party. I cannot wait to hear the debate. We will hear “praise the Lord” all across this great land. They will be standing and saying that if people come to their bosom they will make those

people more free and more democratic. It is nonsense. They can stomp it and thump it any which way, but the vision in which Canadians believe is not one of the extreme right. It is not one of the extreme religious right. It is the belief that we all have the ability and the freedom to worship in whatever form we want or not to worship in whatever form we want.

• (1735)

Nobody can tell Canadians that they must believe in certain philosophies. That is absolute nonsense. The Canadian people are saying that we will not discriminate. It is as simple as that.

Where do we want to go? Do we want to take away a woman's right to choose what to do with her body? I think they do. I think that is part of their philosophy. That is not the vision of this party. Frankly, that is not the vision of the majority of Canadians.

Do we want to have boot camps? I know they believe in that. They believe in the fist. They believe that a block of wood on the rear end of a kid will cure him. That is their vision. That is not our vision and that is not the vision of most Canadians.

Fundamentally, they believe in discriminating for whatever reasons they choose. That is not our vision and that is not the vision of the vast majority of Canadians.

Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, it is funny to hear the word extreme in this place. I think I just heard a speech on that.

I remind the government of some of the fatal errors that I think once again it is creating with Bill C-23. One of those fatal errors is the omnibus nature of the bill. The bill touches some 68 pieces of legislation. In doing so it will affect some longstanding and important pieces of legislation in the country, such as the Pension Benefits Standards Act, the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, the Canada Pension Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Bank Act, the Income Tax Act and so on.

We hear a lot of rhetoric from members on the other side, but I have seen these omnibus bills go through the House before and we in the opposition are obligated to point out some of the problems.

One of the problems with an omnibus bill is that it ends up being left to the courts to resolve. Therein will be the problem with this bill. I want to be on record as stating that, because a lot of relatively innocent Canadians looking for some fairness in our society will end up giving more and more money to lawyers and going bankrupt themselves just by getting caught up in the web of the legal industry. That is bad.

There are some pretty experienced ministers on the other side and I do not understand why they would go along with this sort of thing.

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There was a fair bit of talk about homosexuality. That is not only what this bill is about. This bill is about leaving people out. It is about leaving people like my mother out if she chooses to live with her sister. It is about leaving elderly gentlemen out.

An hon. member: Like me.

Mr. Randy White: Like my colleague from Swift Current.

It is about exclusion, not necessarily inclusion. Members opposite have to remember that. This is not about homosexuality. It is about an omnibus bill that excludes some people. These people, by virtue of exclusion, will be required at some point to go into the courtrooms once again and pay the enormous fees that lawyers charge to prove their case for equality. That is sad. This could all be headed off by the government saying today "Let's clarify this. Let's include people. Let's make this fair". But it is not going to do that. In fact, it is leaving such a bill up to terminology like "conjugal relationship".

• (1740)

I mentioned in the House several weeks ago that I had sat down with four young fellows in another riding. I happen to know them. We went through some of the issues involved in Bill C-23. I asked them if they would be involved in these benefits. They said, sure, they were all in conjugal relationships, and they were laughing and giggling and bumping each other. I asked what a conjugal relationship was to them, and they laughed and said "us guys" and that sort of thing.

I knew all four of them and I knew they were not homosexual. They said that I could call them anything I wanted, but if they could take advantage through this bill of the Income Tax Act, the Pension Act, the Insolvency Act and the Bank Act they would do it. Why? Because whatever a conjugal relationship is, it cannot be proven that one is in such a relationship.

I do not know how many times people on this side of the House have to say "Clean up your act", but these are loose ends, and serious loose ends. It appears to me that the government is simply going down the road trying to collect votes from a certain group in our society such that it is willing to change all of these pieces of legislation.

That is power gone to its worst, in my opinion. This majority government is in its second successive term and the government seems to feel that it might get a third successive majority government. Whether that happens we will see. However, the government thinks it can bring in such omnibus bills which affect our whole society and get away with it.

When the Liberals leave office another government will be left trying to figure out the mess. It will acquiesce. It is such a mess and

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it will be left to the courts. As one who spends a great deal of time following court cases, I know that leaving these things to the courts is a sad mistake.

One only has to look at the child pornography issue which has been left to the courts. Can you believe it? Time and time again we look at the mess of drugs in our society. That issue has been left to the courts. People who have peddled hard core drugs are walking away from the courts just because it is money and not common sense to common people.

I do not know what motivates a government to do such a thing, but I do know that because it is a majority government it will get its way, unless somebody on the other side has the courage to take it away. We will see what happens a little later when the voting starts.

The other thing a majority government such as this has failed to do is to go out into the country and ask people what they think. A member just a few minutes ago said the "majority of Canadians". That is very interesting because nobody from the government was in my riding and there are about 160,000 people who live in it. Are we excluded from this group called a "majority of Canadians"? Who did the government talk to? Lobby groups? Liberal associations? If I asked my colleagues, I do not think any of them would say that the Liberals were in their ridings asking questions about this bill.

When a member across the way says that the majority of Canadians believes in this, that is hogwash. It is not accurate. At least he cannot prove it is accurate. He certainly has not talked to the people in my riding nor in many other ridings in the country.

• (1745)

The bill is called the modernization of benefits and obligations act. I think, because we are trying to include one certain group within our society, to call it a modernization is a misnomer. I would tend to call it a specialization act because it is an act that is directed at special groups, subsets of our society. If this were truly a modernization act, it would include not exclude a lot of other people.

The more I come to the House of Commons, the more I see legislation like this, the more I watch a majority government stand up, one, two, three, as they will tonight, and the more this is thrust upon us, as it has certainly been thrust upon my riding, the more disappointed I am in the process of government itself.

This is a statement from the Liberal Government of Canada saying "You will take this modernization of benefits bill and you will like it because there is not a damn thing you can do about it. We have a majority".

In the final analysis I guess the only thing we can do when such bad business takes place in the House of Commons is to remember

it at the time of an election and get a government in that considers all people not just some, and one that modernizes and does not specialize.

I am against this bill for the reasons I have stated. I am extremely disappointed in a government that feels the majority of Canadians buy into it as well.

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this report stage debate. I must say that if I were to believe everything that was being said about this bill, I would probably want to vote against it myself.

I heard reports today that it has something to do with adoption. It has nothing to do with adoption. Only the provinces can legislate with respect to adoption. Why would anyone in the House want to suggest to their constituents that it has something to do with adoption?

I have also heard today that this has something to do with the division of assets. Why would the House have anything to do with division of assets? That is clearly a provincial matter under our constitution. We could not legislate with respect to division of assets even if we wanted to. However, members opposite in the House today have spoken about division of assets. What a lot of nonsense.

The rhetorical question has been asked by one of the members opposite: What kind of society will we have? Just having listened to a number of speeches here this afternoon, if we follow the logic opposite, what we would have is the wrath of the majority against the minority. If we follow their line of reasoning, not only would the majority rise up against the minority but the majority could in fact rise up against aboriginal treaties, which are also part of our constitution. However, I dare say I could easily find a majority of Canadians who would prefer to eliminate treaties from being part of our constitution.

Let us look at where this law came from. This law came into effect because of a decision by the supreme court which said that this was the right, fair and equitable thing to do, notwithstanding it deals with a minority and notwithstanding the fact that it will not cost anyone any money for all the studies.

I have some questions for the members opposite who have spoken so vociferously, and might I say also viciously, against the minority covered by this bill. They may want to question their cousin, Mr. Long, one of Premier Harris' two chief advisors, who declared today that he will be running for the leadership of the Canadian Alliance. When he appears at their leadership convention they may want to ask him why somebody who purports to lead the Canadian Alliance would recommend that the Ontario government enact bill 5. Let us look at Bill 5. It amends 67 provincial statutes

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extending benefits under provincial law. Incidentally, Bill C-23 amends 68 statutes.

• (1750)

Let us also ask why they are suggesting to people that we are sneaking this through parliament, that we are rushing this through parliament. Let us ask Mr. Tom Long at the Canadian Alliance why the Ontario government passed it in three days. Not only did it pass into law in three days, Ontario proclaimed it in three days. Why or how could they purport to ascribe to a party where one of the would-be leaders has been part of this? It took three days in Ontario but five months before parliament and we are accused of sneaking it through. What a lot of nonsense.

Let us look at the whole idea of debate. At Queen's Park there were six speakers over three days. There was no vote. It passed on consent. No one will ever know at Queen's Park where Mr. Long resides, who opposed it or who voted in favour of it because all three, including their philosophical cousin, Mr. Harris of the Progressive Conservative Party in Ontario, put it through. According to the Toronto *Star* on October 27, 1999, Mr. Harris let it be known that anyone opposed to the bill should be absent from the House when it passed on consent.

What kind of society will we have? Will we have an exclusive or inclusive society. What I am hearing today is that we will exclude certain people who we, the majority, define as being different. We will have a society where the majority rises up and says to the minority "Sorry, we do not like you. You are different. We will not in any way deal with you. We will not recognize you and we will not give you benefits".

It is about intolerance. We will tell people things that are patently not true. We will tell those people that the government is rushing this through parliament, but the record shows that it has taken five months here and only three days at Queen's Park. We will say that we never know who voted on it. Every vote here is recorded. What did we see at Queen's Park? We do not know who was for bill 5 or who was against it.

I need to ask again what kind of society they want. Do they want a society where the majority will dictate? Will we have polls for everything? Will we have some sort of grassroots—which is their term—discernment of what the majority wants? If they want to go on that basis they could eliminate Indian and aboriginal treaties in this country. They could eliminate all sorts of things in this country because the majority is either being told a pack of nonsense or the majority does not like the minority who appear to be different.

Aboriginal people appear to be different from many of us in this place. They have a different colour. I acknowledge that. However, the reality is that we have entered into constitutional agreements.

That is not to say that they have special rights to the exclusion of all others. We have recognized that this is the right thing to do.

Let me go to something even more primitive or more fundamental. Let us look at Prince Edward Island which has four members of parliament. That was a constitutional guarantee. I guarantee I could find a majority in this country who would want to wipe out that constitutional privilege. Are they in some way enjoying more privileges than the rest of us in perhaps Ontario or, dare I say, Alberta? Prince Edward Island has a constitutional guarantee of four senators. There are only six senators for the province of Alberta. Is that to say that it has a privilege that Alberta does not have? That is absolutely correct. Why does the majority not rise up and eliminate that right? This is a situation where it is the right thing to do. Sometimes we have to do the right thing in this place.

• (1755)

This is not about having a society that turns its back on the majority. We would have people telling us that the majority wants to exclude certain people. If we followed the line of logic from the members opposite, what other minority groups in this country do we not like? I could undoubtedly find many other people who have been stereotyped as ones who should not receive benefits.

In the House a while back an amendment was made to the Canadian Human Rights Act, Bill C-33. Members opposite gave the same sort of rhetoric with regard to that bill. They indicated that we were attacking marriage. They said, if I heard them correctly, that this was a slippery slope.

I want the member for Wild Rose to ask one of the would-be leaders of the Canadian Alliance why Queen's Park sneaked bill 5 through in three days. It amended 67 provincial statutes. Members on the other side cannot have it both ways. Why do they not ask the member from Queen's Park, who supported it, the member of their cousin party, the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, who issues licences to ministers to perform marriages? It is not this government. It is the provincial government. If one were to follow their line of logic, who is attacking marriage?

Let me back up and look at the real attack on marriage, which occurred in 1974 and 1986 when laws were passed across Canada which stated that if people lived together it was the same as marriage. That was a provincial law and that, I would suggest to the House, was an attack on marriage. Being fair to people because they happen to live together and file their taxes together does not make them somehow different. If those members opposite ever became a majority, I would live in fear of the majority rising up against people they believe to be different.

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have listened carefully to the debate throughout the day and I agree with

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some of the previous speakers who talked about this as being a difficult and moral issue.

I do not for a minute believe some of the material that has been coming from the members to my left because I submit that the bill is not about special rights for anyone. It is fundamentally about fairness and equal rights. It is a recognition that homosexual individuals pay into benefit plans and, until very recently, have been denied the benefits that should flow from those plans.

A good deal of discussion on Bill C-23, the modernization of benefits and obligations act, has indicated that somehow this is a judge-made law. It is important to recognize that the charter of rights and freedoms, which was introduced in 1982 and came into full force and in 1985, was achieved by the prime minister and nine of the ten premiers in April, 18 years ago this month. It was later ratified by the House of Commons and all the legislatures, with the exception of the province of Quebec.

Section 15(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states:

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

• (1800)

As I say, that law was passed by parliamentarians in the provinces and in the House of Commons. Under our laws it is interpreted by the courts, which is fair. I think most citizens would find it reasonable that somebody has to interpret it and it is the courts and eventually the Supreme Court of Canada. Again it says that one cannot discriminate on the basis of sex, along with a number of other categories.

As was pointed out by the member for Hochelaga—Maison-neuve, in the case of M and H there was a court decision. The supreme court ruled eight to one that there should be a division of assets. In my opinion Bill C-23 will ensure compliance with supreme court rulings like that in M and H which call for an end to discrimination based on sexual orientation. The court has ruled simply that where benefits and obligations are extended to common law heterosexual couples, these same benefits and obligations must be extended to Canadians involved in long term same sex relationships.

I was intrigued with a book that I picked up for the first time last night. *Justice, Not Just Us* is written by Gerald Vanderzande who is described on the jacket of the book as follows: "What he has to say is always moving and compelling. His words transcend the boundaries between denominations and faith communities. In urging us to do God's work here and now he demonstrates the true potential of contemporary religion. If only its practitioners learned to act in unison".

Gerald Vanderzande has something to say on this issue and I would like to refer to it briefly. He writes for an organization called Citizens for Public Justice. He said:

Let us now consider Citizens for Public Justice's position on legal-equality rights for gays and lesbians. The government encounters a variety of human relationships in our society, including heterosexual marriages and other social relationships—. When a government does not recognize, in law or public policy, the reality of other, non-marital relationships in our society, then, whether we like it or not, the courts are forced to reinterpret the meaning and scope of marriage within the existing legislation. That means that other relationships, even though they are non-heterosexual and non-marital, must be defined—

He goes on to say in this interesting document:

—all people are treated fairly when it comes to the recognition of certain civil rights and freedoms and the provision of certain services and programs—. How can we, without discriminating against certain people—recognize the constitutional and other rights of people who live in other "permanent" relationships?

He goes on to talk about what has happened in the far distant past. We have had some references to that as well. Mr. Vanderzande said:

Let me remind you that, as I understand it, in the Old Testament Scriptures, most marriages were "common law". There was not what we now call a civil ceremony ensuring that people had made a formal vow. There was not a public declaration of mutual commitment before a civil authority. In fact, in the Scriptures, the father (the patriarch) of the family often decided who was to marry whom. In a culture that has moved on under a variety of influences, the government now faces new social realities. Government is not there to decide what is theologically correct. It is there to decide what is publicly just.

He concludes in this portion of his book:

If we agree that religion (faith) is at the heart of life, and if we agree that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms rightly protects everyone's basic beliefs and every institution's religious or ideological convictions, and that the government should not interfere with a citizen's basic beliefs and an institution's freedom of expression, then can we not with respect to various human relationships provide equal protection in terms of public policy for those who live in a non-marital, non-heterosexual relationship?

• (1805)

In this important debate the words that Gerald Vanderzande has included in his book *Justice, Not Just Us* are very significant.

I appreciate that because of time allocation, with which we disagree as well, time is running out. I did want to comment before I take my seat that I disagree fundamentally with my colleagues to the left and members on the Liberal benches opposite who talk about polls and that this is important because they have received hundreds of thousands of petitions stating that 68% of the people that were polled by Angus Reid are in favour of this. On something as fundamental as this we have to be seen to be doing what is right and not what is necessarily politically popular or unpopular.

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An hon. member: It is discrimination.

Mr. Dick Proctor: If people are being discriminated against, then that is grounds for correction. That is what this debate fundamentally comes down to. It does not matter what the public opinion polls say. It does not matter what the petitions say. I am saying through you, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member that the fundamental matter should be what we are doing to protect the rights of minorities. That is the point that needs to be made.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-23 has been used as a proxy for a much broader discussion around the area of sexual orientation. It is useful to have the discussion, but I think it is also useful to put it into context.

In much of the discussion today many members have talked about intolerance, saying that if one is opposed to the bill then one must be intolerant. I do not believe that would be a very fair characterization of the position of members who try to argue for something rather than against something. There is a difference.

Discrimination is not exclusively a negative concept. There are positive or affirmative discriminations within our society. In fact policy by its very nature is discriminatory because we do not treat everybody the same.

We discriminate in favour of seniors so that when they reach age 65 they can qualify for old age security. That is discrimination on the basis of age. We discriminate in favour of the disabled. We understand there are people in our society who have needs that as our value system dictates, we want to provide the assistance they will need to care for them and their family members. We discriminate in favour of aboriginals. We have special programs to assist aboriginals.

We could talk a lot about the needs of various groups within our society. All of these discriminatory practices within policy in fact reflect the values and the consensus of the views of Canadians. It is a value system. Although talking about values in our society seems to be politically incorrect these days, the fact remains that we do have a value system and we do have standards and guidelines that ensure when we make policy in this place and around the country that we are dealing with the lives of Canadians in all walks of life.

Back in the 35th Parliament Bill C-33 came forward. Bill C-33 included sexual orientation as a prohibited ground for discrimination in the human rights code. The then commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, Mr. Max Yalden, made public statements that if one were to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground for discrimination that it was logical. Of course members know that discussion had to do with issues such as discrimination vis-à-vis employment, housing and access to services. Those were the negative discriminations with which I

believe all Canadians would agree. I think all Canadians agree that people should not be discriminated against with regard to housing, employment and access to services regardless of their value system.

In Bill C-23 we are no longer just talking about the negative discriminations. Now we are talking about the affirmative discriminations. One group does not get the same as another group and there are these linkages. Now the pendulum is swinging. We have taken care of the negative discriminations. Now we are saying that we are that good and that equal that now we have to do this.

● (1810)

The supreme court dealt with it. There was a series of cases. There was Egan and Nesbit with regard to pension entitlements. The court said yes, it is discrimination but the value system of Canadians was that it would be permitted discrimination. I think that was the language the court used.

There is now M and H, a case that came through the supreme court. It said we have to recognize that people have other relationships. M and H had to do with whether one same sex partner had to pay support payments to the partner whom they broke up with. All of a sudden this whole thing started to creep from negative discrimination through equity and fairness and then "I want a piece of the pie too". That is how the pendulum has swung.

I understand why there is so much discussion here. The die was set early in the 35th parliament as to the direction we were going. Max Yalden said if we put sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination, this is the logical extension of that move. Parliament made that step.

I am not so sure that it is the supreme court which is telling parliament what to do. I think the decisions of parliamentarians over the years in dealing with items that came to parliamentarians have been acted upon by the courts because parliament did not do its job.

I do not believe parliament did its job with regard to this issue. We should have consulted with our constituents. We should have raised legislation. We should have dealt with this if we felt strongly enough but we did not as a parliament. The courts did it as a result of that ruling.

Bill C-23 responds to the court decision. I believe it responds accurately to the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada.

When people talk about intolerance, it is not a fair label. It is something from a broader discussion that people have been talking about that we find difficult to discuss and talk openly about.

Canadians should appreciate that about 3% of the population of Canada are homosexual persons. It is quite a small number. Based

Government Orders

on the numbers from the corporations that provide benefits and so on and what justice officials told me earlier today, about 1.6% of same sex couples actually will ever qualify for benefits under the bill. The reason is that relationships must last for at least one year for them to qualify for any benefits.

That is why, as members have said quite often in the debate, there is very little cost associated with it. There are two reasons. One is that there are so very few couples that will ever qualify for this. The other is that many of our benefits, like the GST credit, are going to be based on partner income rather than individual income and in fact same sex partners in a relationship will last longer.

This bill actually is ultimately about marriage because we are going to deal with it eventually. Canadians will know that society exists and sustains itself because of the family. It is a very difficult issue for a lot of members to deal with. I believe in the traditional family. I believe that couples who raise families, who raise healthy, well adjusted children are to be put on a pedestal.

Many of the members here who are arguing against Bill C-23 are actually arguing in favour of the family. Should we not discriminate in favour of the family? Should we not hold that traditional family on a pedestal and say that it is doing exactly what is necessary for our society to continue to thrive and to grow? Should we not discriminate in favour of that family and give it more benefits?

We do have discrimination in our policy now. I gave many examples. Can we not continue to discriminate in favour of the traditional family with children? I believe we can. Canadians ought to tell parliamentarians that they believe in the family, that they believe marriage as is in this bill, which is the lawful union of a man and woman to the exclusion of all others and it reflects the value system of Canadians.

• (1815)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6.15 p.m., it is my duty, pursuant to the order made earlier today, to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on Motion No. 117. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 117 stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 118 to 133.

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of the bill. Call in the members.

• (1835)

And the bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: The first question is on Motion No. 1.

• (1840)

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 1266)

YEAS

Members

Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bellehumeur	Bulte
Dalphon-D-Guiral	Davies
Duceppe	Folco
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Graham
Harvey	Jennings
Kraft Sloan	Lill
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough	Ménard
Muisé	Nystrom
Price	Proctor
St-Jacques	Turp—26

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Adams	Alcock
Anders	Anderson
Augustine	Axworthy
Bailey	Baker
Bakopanos	Bélair
Bellemare	Benoit
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Blondin-Andrew	Bonwick

Boudria
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brown
Byrne
Cadman
Caplan
Casson
Cauchon
Chatters
Coderre
Comuzzi
Cullen
DeVillers
Dion
Doyle
Drouin
Duhamel
Easter
Elley
Finlay
Gagliano
Galloway
Gilmour
Goldring
Gouk
Grewal
Grose
Hanger
Harris
Harvard
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoeppner
Ianno
Jaffer
Jordan
Karygiannis
Keys
Knutson
Lastewka
Leung
Longfield
Lowther
MacAulay
Malhi
Manley
Mark
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
McNally
McWhinney
Miffin
Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell
Murray
Nault
Nunziata
O'Reilly
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Penson
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Proud
Ramsay
Reed
Ritz
Rock
Sauvageau
Scott (Fredericton)
Sekora
Shepherd
St-Julien
Stewart (Brant)
Stinson
Szabo
Thibeault
Torsney
Valeri
Vellacott
Wappel
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Williams

Bradshaw
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bryden
Caccia
Calder
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Clouthier
Collenette
Copp
Cummins
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Dromisky
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Duncan
Eggleton
Epp
Fontana
Gagnon
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Edmonton North)
Guarnieri
Harb
Hart
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Hubbard
Jackson
Johnston
Karetak-Lindell
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Konrad
Lee
Limoges
Loubier
Lunn
Mahoney
Maloney
Marchand
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Mayfield
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague
Meredith
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna
Morrison
Myers
Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Obhrai
Pankiw
Patry
Peric
Phinney
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Richardson
Robillard
Saada
Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)
Sgro
St. Denis
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Strahl
Telegdi
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Ur
Vanclief
Volpe
Whelan
Willfert
Wood—186

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PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

[*Translation*]

After the taking of the vote:

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to indicate that I voted in favour. I just thought we were voting a second time.

[*English*]

Mr. Lawrence D. O'Brien: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to have my vote recorded as no on the vote just taken.

• (1845)

Ms. Carolyn Parrish: Mr. Speaker, I would like to be recorded as an abstention on the last vote.

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 3.

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe you would find consent to apply the results of the vote just taken to the motion now before the House.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The House divided on Motion No. 3, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 1267*)

YEAS

Members

Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bellehumeur	Bulte
Dalphon-DuGail	Davies
Duceppe	Folco
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Graham
Harvey	Jennings
Kraft Sloan	Lill
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough	Ménard
Muise	Nystrom
Price	Proctor
St-Jacques	Turp—26

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Adams
Anders
Augustine
Bailey
Bakopanos
Bellemare
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brown
Byrne
Cadman
Caplan
Casson
Cauchon
Chatters
Coderre
Comuzzi
Cullen
DeVillers
Dion
Doyle
Drouin
Duhamel
Easter
Elley
Finlay
Gagliano
Galloway
Gilmour
Goldring
Gouk
Grewal
Grose
Hanger
Harris
Harvard
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner
Ianno
Jaffer
Jordan
Karygiannis
Keyes
Knutson
Lastewka
Leung
Longfield
Lowther
MacAulay
Malhi
Manley
Mark
Matthews
McCormick
McKay (Scarborough East)
McNally
McWhinney
Mifflin
Mills (Red Deer)
Mitchell
Murray
Nault
Nunziata
O'Reilly
Pagtakhan
Paradis
Penson
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Proud
Ramsay
Reed
Ritz
Rock
Sauvageau
Scott (Fredericton)
Sekora
Shepherd
St-Julien

Ablonczy
Alcock
Anderson
Axworthy
Baker
Bélair
Benoit
Bertrand
Bigras
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bryden
Caccia
Calder
Carroll
Catterall
Chamberlain
Clouthier
Collenette
Copp
Cummins
Dhaliwal
Discepolo
Dromisky
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Duncan
Eggleton
Epp
Fontana
Gagnon
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Edmonton North)
Guarnieri
Harb
Hart
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Hubbard
Jackson
Johnston
Karetak-Lindell
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Konrad
Lee
Limoges
Loubier
Lunn
Mahoney
Maloney
Marchand
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Mayfield
McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague
Meredith
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna
Morrison
Myers
Normand
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Obhrá
Pankiw
Patry
Peric
Phinney
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Richardson
Robillard
Saada
Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)
Sgro
St. Denis
Steckle

Stewart (Brant)
Stinson
Szabo
Thibeault
Torsney
Valeri
Vellacott
Wappel
White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Williams

Stewart (Northumberland)
Strahl
Telegdi
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Ur
Vanclief
Volpe
Whelan
Wilfert
Wood—186

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 3 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 4. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

• (1850)

(The House divided on Motion No. 4, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 1268)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Anders
Bailey
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Calder
Chatters
Doyle
Elley
Gilmour
Gouk
Grey (Edmonton North)
Harris
Harvey
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner

Ablonczy
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Benoit
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Cadman
Casson
Cummins
Duncan
Epp
Goldring
Grewal
Hanger
Hart
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Jaffer

Government Orders

Johnston
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Lowther
 MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
 Mayfield
 McTeague
 Mills (Red Deer)
 Muiise
 Obhrai
 Penson
 Price
 Ritz
 Scott (Skeena)
 Steckle
 Strahl
 Vellacott
 White (Langley—Abbotsford)

Karygiannis
 Konrad
 Lunn
 Mark
 McNally
 Meredith
 Morrison
 Nunziata
 Pankiw
 Peric
 Ramsay
 Schmidt
 St-Jacques
 Stinson
 Thompson (Wild Rose)
 Wappel
 Williams—66

Robillard
 Saada
 Scott (Fredericton)
 Sgro
 St. Denis
 Stewart (Brant)
 Szabo
 Thibeault
 Turp
 Valeri
 Volpe
 Wilfert

Rock
 Sauvageau
 Sekora
 Shepherd
 St-Julien
 Stewart (Northumberland)
 Telegdi
 Torsney
 Ur
 Vanclief
 Whelan
 Wood—150

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

NAYS

Members

Adams
 Anderson
 Axworthy
 Baker
 Barnes
 Bélair
 Bellehumeur
 Bertrand
 Bigras
 Bonwick
 Bradshaw
 Brown
 Bulte
 Caccia
 Carroll
 Cauchon
 Clouthier
 Collette
 Copps
 Dalphond-Guiral
 de Savoye
 Dhaliwal
 Discepola
 Drouin
 Duhamel
 Eggleton
 Folco
 Fry
 Gagnon
 Gauthier
 Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
 Graham
 Grose
 Harb
 Hubbard
 Jackson
 Jordan
 Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
 Kraft Sloan
 Lastewka
 Leung
 Limoges
 Loubier
 Mahoney
 Maloney
 Marchand
 Martin (LaSalle—Énard)
 Matthews
 McDonough
 McLellan (Edmonton West)
 Ménard
 Milliken
 Minna
 Murray
 Nault
 Nystrom
 Pagtakhan
 Parrish
 Peterson
 Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
 Proctor
 Proulx
 Reed

Alcock
 Augustine
 Bachand (Saint-Jean)
 Bakopanos
 Beaumier
 Bélanger
 Bellemare
 Bevilacqua
 Blondin-Andrew
 Boudria
 Brison
 Bryden
 Byrne
 Caplan
 Catterall
 Chamberlain
 Coderre
 Comuzzi
 Cullen
 Davies
 De Villers
 Dion
 Dromisky
 Duceppe
 Easter
 Finlay
 Fontana
 Gagliano
 Gallaway
 Godfrey
 Goodale
 Gray (Windsor West)
 Guarnieri
 Harvard
 Ianno
 Jennings
 Keyes
 Knutson
 Laliberte
 Lee
 Lill
 Longfield
 MacAulay
 Malhi
 Manley
 Marleau
 Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
 McCormick
 McKay (Scarborough East)
 McWhinney
 Mifflin
 Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
 Mitchell
 Myers
 Normand
 O'Brien (Labrador)
 Paradis
 Patry
 Phinney
 Pratt
 Proud
 Redman
 Richardson

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 4 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 5.

• (1900)

(The House divided on Motion No. 5, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 1269*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
 Anders
 Bailey
 Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Breikreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
 Calder
 Chamberlain
 Comuzzi
 Discepola
 Duncan
 Epp
 Goldring
 Grewal
 Guarnieri
 Harris
 Harvey
 Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
 Hoepfner
 Jaffer
 Karetak-Lindell
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Longfield
 Lunn
 Mark
 McCormick
 McKay (Scarborough East)
 McTeague
 Mills (Red Deer)
 Muiise
 O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
 Obhrai
 Penson
 Price
 Ritz
 Scott (Skeena)
 Steckle
 Strahl
 Thompson (Wild Rose)
 Vellacott
 Wappel
 Wilfert
 Wood—83

Ablonczy
 Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
 Benoit
 Breikreuz (Yellowhead)
 Cadman
 Casson
 Chatters
 Cummins
 Doyle
 Elley
 Gilmour
 Gouk
 Grey (Edmonton North)
 Hanger
 Hart
 Hill (MacLeod)
 Hilstrom
 Hubbard
 Johnston
 Karygiannis
 Konrad
 Lowther
 MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
 Mayfield
 McGuire
 McNally
 Meredith
 Morrison
 Nunziata
 O'Reilly
 Pankiw
 Peric
 Ramsay
 Schmidt
 St-Jacques
 Stinson
 Szabo
 Ur
 Volpe
 White (Langley—Abbotsford)
 Williams

NAYS

Members

Adams
 Anderson

Alcock
 Augustine

Government Orders

Axworthy	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélaire	Bélangier
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bertrand	Bigras
Blondin-Andrew	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brisson	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Caccia
Caplan	Carroll
Catterall	Cauchon
Clouthier	Coderre
Collenette	Copps
Cullen	Dalphond-Guiral
Davies	de Savoye
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Dromisky
Drouin	Duceppe
Duhamel	Easter
Eggleton	Finlay
Folco	Fontana
Fry	Gagliano
Gagnon	Galloway
Gauthier	Godfrey
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Goodale
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Grose	Harb
Harvard	Jennings
Jordan	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Laliberte
Lastewka	Lee
Leung	Lill
Limoges	Loubier
MacAulay	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marchand
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	McDonough
McLellan (Edmonton West)	Ménard
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Murray
Myers	Nault
Normand	Nystrom
O'Brien (Labrador)	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Peterson
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt	Proctor
Proud	Proulx
Redman	Reed
Richardson	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Sauvageau	Scott (Fredericton)
Sgro	Shepherd
St. Denis	St-Julien
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Telegdi	Thibeault
Torsney	Turp
Valeri	Vanclief
Whelan—131	

138, 140, 142, 143, 146 to 149, 153 to 158, 160, 161, 163, 164, 166 to 169, 171 and 172.

• (1910)

(The House divided on Motion No. 7, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 1270)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bailey	Benoit
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Cadman
Calder	Casson
Chatters	Cummins
Doyle	Duncan
Elley	Epp
Gilmour	Goldring
Gouk	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Hanger
Harris	Hart
Harvey	Hill (MacLeod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hoepfner	Hubbard
Jaffer	Johnston
Karygiannis	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Konrad	Lowther
Lunn	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mark	Mayfield
McNally	McTeague
Meredith	Mills (Red Deer)
Morrison	Muise
Nunziata	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Obhrai
Pankiw	Penson
Peric	Price
Ramsay	Ritz
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
St-Jacques	Steckle
Stinson	Strahl
Szabo	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Vellacott	Wappel
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	Williams—70

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson	Augustine
Axworthy	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélaire	Bélangier
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Bigras	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brisson
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Caplan
Carroll	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Clouthier	Coderre
Collenette	Comuzzi
Copps	Cullen
Dalphond-Guiral	Davies
de Savoye	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 5 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 7. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21 to 24, 27, 28, 31 to 33, 35, 37 to 39, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 56, 58, 60, 61, 63, 64, 66 to 68, 70, 71, 73 to 76, 78, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86 to 90, 94 to 96, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104, 105, 107 to 110, 135, 137,

Government Orders

(Division No. 1271)

Discepola	Dromisky
Drouin	Duceppe
Duhamel	Easter
Eggleton	Finlay
Folco	Fontana
Fry	Gagliano
Gagnon	Gallaway
Gauthier	Godfrey
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Goodale
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Grose	Guarnieri
Harb	Harvard
Ianno	Jennings
Jordan	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Laliberte
Lastewka	Lee
Leung	Lill
Limoges	Longfield
Loubier	MacAulay
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marchand	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Énard)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Matthews	McCormick
McDonough	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McWhinney	Ménard
Mifflin	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna	Mitchell
Murray	Myers
Nault	Normand
Nystrom	O'Brien (Labrador)
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peterson	Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pratt
Proctor	Proud
Proulx	Redman
Reed	Richardson
Robillard	Rock
Saada	Sauvageau
Scott (Fredericton)	Sekora
Sgro	Shepherd
St. Denis	St-Julien
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Telegdi	Thibeault
Torsney	Turp
Valeri	Vanclief
Volpe	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood—144

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 7 lost. I therefore declare Motions Nos. 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21 to 24, 27, 28, 31 to 33, 35, 37 to 39, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 56, 58, 60, 61, 63, 64, 66 to 68, 70, 71, 73 to 76, 78, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86 to 90, 94 to 96, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104, 105, 107 to 110, 135, 137, 138, 140, 142, 143, 146 to 149, 153 to 158, 160, 161, 163, 164, 166 to 169, 171 and 172 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 113.

• (1915)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 113, which was negated on the following division:)

Abbott
Anders
Benoit
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Cadman
Chatters
Doyle
Elley
Gilmour
Gouk
Grey (Edmonton North)
Harris
Hill (Macleod)
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lowther
Mark
McNally
Mills (Red Deer)
Nunziata
Pankiw
Ramsay
Schmidt
Stinson
Thompson (Wild Rose)
White (Langley—Abbotsford)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Bailey
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Casson
Cummins
Duncan
Epp
Goldring
Grewal
Hanger
Hart
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner
Johnston
Konrad
Lunn
Mayfield
Meredith
Morrison
Obhrai
Penson
Ritz
Scott (Skeena)
Strahl
Vellacott
Williams—54

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson	Augustine
Axworthy	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Bigras	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brisson
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Calder
Caplan	Carroll
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Clouthier
Coderre	Collenette
Comuzzi	Copps
Cullen	Dalphond-Guiral
Davies	de Savoye
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Dromisky	Drouin
Duceppe	Duhamel
Easter	Eggleton
Finlay	Folco
Fontana	Fry
Gagliano	Gagnon
Gallaway	Gauthier
Godfrey	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvard	Harvey
Hubbard	Ianno
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Knutson

Government Orders

Kraft Sloan	Laliberte
Lastewka	Lee
Leung	Lill
Limoges	Longfield
Loubier	MacAulay
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marchand
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Matthews
McDonough	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McWhinney	Ménard
Mifflin	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna	Mitchell
Murray	Myers
Nault	Normand
Nystrom	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peric	Peterson
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt	Price
Proctor	Proud
Proulx	Redman
Reed	Richardson
Robillard	Rock
Saada	Sauvageau
Scott (Fredericton)	Sekora
Sgro	Shepherd
St. Denis	St-Jacques
St-Julien	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Torsney
Turp	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Volpe	Wappel
Whelan	Willfert
Wood—159	

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 113 lost. The next question is on Motion No. 115. The vote on this motion will also apply to Motion No. 116.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

• (1925)

[English]

(The House divided on Motion No. 115, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 1272)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bailey	Benoit
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	Cadman
Calder	Casson
Chatters	Cummins
Doyle	Duncan
Elley	Epp
Gilmour	Goldring
Gouk	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Hanger
Harris	Hart
Harvey	Hill (MacLeod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hoepfner	Jaffer
Johnston	Karygiannis
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Konrad
Lowther	Lunn
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Mark
Mayfield	McNally
McTeague	Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Muise	Nunziata
Obhrai	Pankiw
Penson	Peric
Price	Ramsay
Ritz	Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)	St-Jacques
Steckle	Stinson
Strahl	Thompson (Wild Rose)
Vellacott	Wappel
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	Williams—66

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson	Augustine
Axworthy	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Baker	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélangier	Bellehumeur
Bellemare	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Blondin-Andrew	Bonwick
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brisson	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Caccia
Caplan	Carroll
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Clouthier	Coderre
Collenette	Comuzzi
Copps	Cullen
Dalphond-Guiral	Davies
de Savoye	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepola	Dromisky
Drouin	Duceppe
Duhamel	Easter
Eggleton	Finlay

Government Orders

Folco
Fry
Gagnon
Gauthier
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Graham
Grose
Harb
Ianno
Jennings
Keyes
Knutson
Laliberte
Lee
Lill
Longfield
MacAulay
Malhi
Manley
Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough
McWhinney
Mifflin
Minna
Murray
Nault
Nystrom
Pagtakhan
Parrish
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Proctor
Proulx
Reed
Robillard
Saada
Scott (Fredericton)
Sgro
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Thibeault
Turp
Valeri
Volpe
Wilfert

Fontana
Gagliano
Galloway
Godfrey
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harvard
Jackson
Jordan
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Kraft Sloan
Lastewka
Leung
Limoges
Loubier
Mahoney
Maloney
Marchand
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCormick
McLellan (Edmonton West)
Ménard
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Myers
Normand
O'Brien (Labrador)
Paradis
Patry
Phinney
Pratt
Proud
Redman
Richardson
Rock
Sauvageau
Sekora
Shepherd
St-Julien
Stewart (Northumberland)
Telegdi
Torsney
Ur
Vanclief
Whelan
Wood—144

Doyle
Elley
Gilmour
Gouk
Grey (Edmonton North)
Harris
Harvey
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hoepfner
Johnston
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lowther
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mayfield
McTeague
Mills (Red Deer)
Muisse
Obhrai
Penson
Price
Ritz
Scott (Skeena)
Steckle
Strahl
Vellacott
White (Langley—Abbotsford)

Duncan
Epp
Goldring
Grewal
Hanger
Hart
Hill (MacLeod)
Hilstrom
Jaffer
Karygiannis
Konrad
Lunn
Mark
McNally
Meredith
Morrison
Nunziata
Pankiw
Peric
Ramsay
Schmidt
St-Jacques
Stinson
Thompson (Wild Rose)
Wappel
Williams—66

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 115 lost and I therefore Motion No. 116 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 144.

● (1930)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 144, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 1273*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Anders
Bailey
Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Calder
Chatters

Ablonczy
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Benoit
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Cadman
Casson
Cummins

NAYS

Members

Adams
Anderson
Axworthy
Baker
Barnes
Belanger
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Brisson
Bryden
Byrne
Caplan
Catterall
Chamberlain
Coderre
Comuzzi
Cullen
Davies
DeVillers
Dion
Dromisky
Duceppe
Easter
Finlay
Fontana
Gagliano
Galloway
Godfrey
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Harvard
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Kraft Sloan
Lastewka
Leung
Limoges
Loubier
Mahoney
Maloney
Marchand
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews
McLellan (Edmonton West)
Ménard
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)

Alcock
Augustine
Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bellehumeur
Bertrand
Bigras
Bonwick
Bradshaw
Brown
Bulte
Caccia
Carroll
Cauchon
Clouthier
Collenette
Coppes
Dalphond-Guiral
de Savoye
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Drouin
Duhamel
Eggleton
Folco
Fry
Gagnon
Gauthier
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Graham
Grose
Harb
Jackson
Jordan
Keyes
Knutson
Laliberte
Lee
Lill
Longfield
MacAulay
Malhi
Manley
Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McDonough
McWhinney
Mifflin
Minna

Government Orders

Mitchell	Murray
Myers	Nault
Normand	Nystrom
O'Brien (Labrador)	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Peterson
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt	Proctor
Proud	Proulx
Redman	Reed
Richardson	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Sauvageau	Scott (Fredericton)
Sekora	Sgro
Shepherd	St. Denis
St-Julien	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibeault
Torsney	Turp
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Volpe
Whelan	Wilfert
Wood—147	

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 144 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 117. The vote on this motion will also apply to Motions Nos. 118 to 133.

● (1935)

(The House divided on Motion No. 117, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 1274)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Bailey
Benoit	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Cadman	Casson
Chatters	Cummins
Doyle	Duncan
Elley	Epp
Gilmour	Goldring
Gouk	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Hanger
Harris	Hart
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hoepfner
Jaffer	Johnston
Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)	Konrad
Lowther	Lunn
Mark	Mayfield
McNally	Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Nunziata	Ohrai
Pankiw	Penson
Ramsay	Ritz
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
Stinson	Strahl
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Vellacott
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	Williams—54

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson	Augustine
Axworthy	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Bigras	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brison
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Calder
Caplan	Carroll
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Clouthier
Coderre	Collenette
Comuzzi	Copps
Cullen	Dalphon-D-Guiral
Davies	de Savoye
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Dromisky	Drouin
Duceppe	Duhamel
Easter	Eggleton
Finlay	Folco
Fontana	Fry
Gagliano	Gagnon
Galloway	Gauthier
Godfrey	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvard	Harvey
Hubbard	Jackson
Jennings	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Laliberte	Lastewka
Lee	Leung
Lill	Limoges
Longfield	Loubier
MacAulay	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Manley
Marchand	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Matthews	McCormick
McDonough	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague	McWhinney
Ménard	Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Muise
Murray	Myers
Nault	Normand
Nystrom	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peric	Peterson
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pratt	Price
Proctor	Proud
Proulx	Redman
Reed	Richardson
Robillard	Rock
Saada	Sauvageau
Scott (Fredericton)	Sekora
Sgro	Shepherd
St. Denis	St-Jacques
St-Julien	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Torsney
Turp	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Volpe	Wappel
Whelan	Wilfert
Wood—163	

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 117 lost. I therefore declare Motions Nos. 118 to 133 lost.

Mr. André Harvey: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Before proceeding to the motion for concurrence at report stage, I want to make sure that when the government whip asked for the results of the vote on Motions Nos. 1 to 3 to be applied, Progressive Conservative members who voted in favour were recorded as having voted against Motion No. 3 and Motion No. 1.

• (1940)

The Deputy Speaker: I can confirm that the members of the Progressive Conservative Party voted in favour of Motion No. 1 and want to continue to vote in favour of Motion No. 3.

I believe the decision of the House was to apply the vote on Motion No. 1 to Motion No. 3. The members of the Progressive Conservative Party voted yea for these two motions. Is that right?

Mr. André Harvey: Mr. Speaker, because it was a free vote, we had not provided our voting reports earlier. Application of the vote was sought but I want to make sure that the members who voted yea were considered to have voted nay on Motion No. 3 and Motion No. 1. In other words, for the two votes it is nay.

The Deputy Speaker: What the hon. member has requested is not quite clear to the Speaker. Some members of his party voted in favour, some opposed Motion No. 1.

The question put by the chief government whip was to apply, I believe, the vote of all members on Motion No. 1 to Motion No. 3. This was unanimously agreed to by the House. Do you want to change that?

Mr. André Harvey: Mr. Speaker, exactly. Vote No. 1 was applied, but we are also making a correction to the vote on Motion No. 1 by voting no. If it is applied to Motion No. 3, therefore, it is no in both cases.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Unless there is unanimous consent of the House to change the vote, I think the matter is done. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: There is no consent. The vote is recorded as is and it is done.

Government Orders

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

• (1950)

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

(Division No. 1275)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson	Augustine
Axworthy	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Baker
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Bigras	Blondin-Andrew
Bonwick	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brisson
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Caplan
Carroll	Catterall
Cauchon	Chamberlain
Clouthier	Coderre
Collenette	Copps
Cullen	Daiphond-Guiral
Davies	de Savoye
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Dromisky	Drouin
Duceppe	Duhamel
Easter	Eggleton
Finlay	Folco
Fontana	Fry
Gagliano	Gagnon
Galloway	Gauthier
Godfrey	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Harb
Harvard	Harvey
Ianno	Jackson
Jennings	Jordan
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Laliberte	Lastewka

Adjournment Debate

Lee	Leung
Lill	Limoges
Loubier	MacAulay
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marchand
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Matthews
McCormick	McDonough
McLellan (Edmonton West)	McWhinney
Ménard	Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Muise
Murray	Myers
Nault	Normand
Nystrom	O'Brien (Labrador)
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peterson	Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pratt
Price	Proctor
Proud	Proulx
Redman	Reed
Richardson	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Sauvageau	Scott (Fredericton)
Sekora	Sgro
Shepherd	St. Denis
St-Jacques	St-Julien
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Torsney
Turp	Valeri
Vanclief	Whelan
Wilfert	Wood—148

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS*[English]*

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently I had the opportunity to pose a question to the Minister of Health with regard to the CHST funding by the federal government.

At the time the debate was about whether or not the transfer was as the provinces had provided the information or in fact as the federal government had presented the information. The House will know that the provinces were suggesting the transfers under CHST were 11 cents to 13 cents in cash, whereas the Minister of Health advised the House very clearly that it was some 33 cents.

I thought it would be useful to try to clarify why there would be this difference. As hon. members know, there continues to be ads on the television which demonstrate a pile of pills representing the provincial government's share of health care funding and a smaller pile for the federal funding. Canadians probably want to know a little bit more about why there is this discrepancy.

It has to do with the change of the rules way back in 1977 when the federal government transferred the ability to tax income to the provincial governments. At the same time as transferring the taxation authority to the provincial governments, the federal government reduced its tax rates so that the net impact on the taxpayer in fact was nil. It was an interesting period of time. If I am not mistaken at that time the transfer of points was 13.5% on personal income tax and 1% on corporate taxation.

As it turns out, Canadians would probably be interested to know that in terms of the value of the cash portion of transfers of CHST funding, which includes health and the tax points or the authorization to collect income tax given to the provinces, that in 2000-01 the provinces will receive a total of some \$30.8 billion in the Canadian health and social transfer amount. Of that, \$15.3 billion will be tax transfers and \$15.5 billion will be transfers in cash. Canadians will have to make up their own minds about whether or not they believe there is some value in tax points.

● (1955)

Before we went to the whole situation of tax points there used to be three separate bins, including a bin for established programs funding as well as post-secondary education. Even then, back in 1977, there was a tax component as well as a cash component. As the value of taxation, as the revenues or the economy of the

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Bailey
Benoit	Bernier (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Cadman	Calder
Casson	Chatters
Comuzzi	Cummins
Doyle	Duncan
Elley	Epp
Gilmour	Goldring
Gouk	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Hanger
Harris	Hart
Hill (Macleod)	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hoeppner
Hubbard	Jaffer
Johnston	Karygiannis
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Konrad
Longfield	Lowther
Lunn	Mark
Mayfield	McNally
McTeague	Meredith
Mills (Red Deer)	Morrison
Nunziata	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Obhrai
Pankiw	Penson
Peric	Ramsay
Ritz	Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)	Steckle
Stinson	Strahl
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Ur
Vellacott	Volpe
Wappel	White (Langley—Abbotsford)
Williams —67	

PAIRED MEMBERS

*Nil/aucun

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Adjournment Debate

provinces grew, tax on the growing economy would increase and generate greater dollars of revenue for them, and therefore the cash went down.

The only way that the federal government can enforce the provisions of the Canada Health Act is to have a real cash component so that it can be withheld in the event that a province would decide, as Alberta has, to introduce legislation which would, I believe, violate the Canada Health Act.

I raise the question today and ask the parliamentary secretary if he understands that those are the details and that the real truth is that the federal government contributes, in the form of transfers to the provinces, regardless of what form they take, 33 cents of every health care dollar.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am standing in this evening for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, as my colleague was unable to be with us this evening.

[*English*]

On February 28, budget day, the Government of Canada announced a \$2.5 billion increase to the Canada health and social transfer for provinces and territories to be used over four years for health and post-secondary education. Let us not forget that this \$2.5 billion increase follows the largest single investment in this government's history made through the previous budget, an \$11.5 billion increase in funding over five years specifically for health.

In 2000-01 the CHST will reach a new high of close to \$31 billion. Of this amount \$15.3 billion will be in the form of tax transfers and \$15.5 billion in the form of cash transfers. The bottom line is that the federal government spends in excess of 31 cents of every public health care dollar spent by governments in Canada. That is clearly more than 7 cents or 13 cents, as some provinces and the opposition claim.

Let us review the facts. It is projected that governments will spend—not individuals, but governments—\$64 billion on public health care this fiscal year. Federal direct funding combined with CHST health spending means that about \$20 billion out of next year's projected \$64 billion in public health care spending, or 31 cents on the dollar, will be financed by the Government of Canada.

In fact if we factor in the \$9.5 billion that the federal government will transfer to the less prosperous provinces and territories to invest in health care and other priorities, total federal transfers in 2000-01 will reach \$40.6 billion.

All told, Government of Canada spending clearly exceeds 31 cents on the dollar. Let me emphasize, as the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have said, that if more money is needed to ensure accessible and sustainable high quality health care for the 21st century, the Government of Canada will be there.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.58 p.m.)

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