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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, May 30, 2000

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 30, 2000

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

• (1005)

[*English*]

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 23(2) of the Auditor General Act, the report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to the House of Commons for the year 2000.

[*Translation*]

This report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development.

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INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: Pursuant to section 39(1) of the Access to Information Act, I have the honour to lay upon the table a special report from the Information Commissioner on the meeting of deadlines.

[*English*]

This report is permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

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 two petitions.

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to table in the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, as well as the financial report.

The report relates to the meeting of the commission on co-operation and development held in Bamako, Mali, from February 21 to 23, 2000.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Henri, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament.

With leave of the House, I move that the second report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament, tabled earlier this day, be concurred in.

• (1010)

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations and I believe you would find

Routine Proceedings

unanimous consent for the adoption of the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice, on Tuesday, May 30, 2000, when Private Members' Business has been completed, the House shall continue to sit and Government Order, Government Business, Number 11 shall be deemed to have been duly moved and seconded, provided that, during consideration thereof, the Chair shall not receive any dilatory motions, quorum calls or requests for unanimous consent and, when no additional member rises to speak, the motion shall be deemed to have been withdrawn, the order discharged and the House shall adjourn to the next sitting day.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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PETITIONS**MARRIAGE**

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition signed by 43 of my constituents, which states that whereas marriage is and should remain the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others, the petitioners request that parliament take all necessary steps within the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada to preserve this definition of marriage in Canada, and they further ask that parliament withdraw Bill C-23 and affirm the opposite sex definition of marriage in legislation.

GRANDPARENTS RIGHTS

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition signed by many constituents from across the country, asking parliament to amend the Divorce Act to include the provision supported by Bill C-340, which is the right of the spouses' parents, that is, the grandparents, to have access to or custody of the children. In the present situation they have to go through all kinds of procedures to do that.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today on behalf of approximately 200 people in the riding of St. John's East. The petition states: "Whereas Canadians are horrified by pornography which depicts children and are astounded by legal determinations that possession of that kind of pornography is not criminal; and whereas it is the duty of parliament through the enactment and enforcement of the criminal code to protect the most vulnerable members of society from sexual abuse; therefore, your petitioners pray that parliament

take all measures necessary to ensure that possession of child pornography remains a serious criminal offence and that federal police forces be directed to give priority to enforcing this law for the protection of children".

ST. JOHN'S HARBOUR

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a second petition from approximately 100 people in the riding of St. John's East, which states: "We, the undersigned citizens of the province of Newfoundland, wish to draw the attention of the House to the polluted condition of St. John's harbour; and therefore your petitioners request that the House encourage the federal, provincial and relevant municipal governments to financially support the sewage treatment system required for the clean-up of St. John's harbour".

This issue I have brought to the attention of the House on at least four, five or perhaps seven different occasions. It is a very serious issue and I would ask parliament to consider it.

• (1015)

MARRIAGE

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of the constituents of New Brunswick Southwest.

The petitioners pray that parliament enact legislation, such as Bill C-225, so as to define in statute that a marriage can only be entered into between a single male and a single female. There are thousands of these and I am pleased to present them to the House.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT**

Mr. Raymond Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Henri, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move that the report I presented earlier concerning the Library of Parliament be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Supply

Mr. Raymond Lavigne: Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the Second Report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament, presented earlier today, be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

system and nobody understands what it is. The people in charge of Marine Atlantic are circumventing the process and nobody knows the thought processes, if there is any protection for consumers or if there is any accountability.

In this debate I will be focusing on some of the issues I have just listed. My very learned colleague from Brandon—Souris will be discussing rail and grain issues, which are in his area of expertise. The very distinguished member for St. John's East will be discussing the Marine Atlantic issue. I will also be focusing in on some airline issues.

• (1020)

This morning, for example, when I flew from Montreal to Ottawa, the plane was delayed for a little while. I called my office and said that I would be delayed and that I would be in Ottawa for my presentation this morning but that it would be close. When we were ready to get on the plane there was another delay. This has happened to consumers right across the country. I do not want to hone in on that because I know there are transitional issues, but delays for consumers now are completely unacceptable. There are consistent delays. I hope the new dominant airline can address these issues and bring them back to the former standards.

However, the problem is not Air Canada or the airline mergers. It is that there was very little government involvement in this merger issue. It was almost all private sector driven. The government should have been establishing plans years ago to predict the collapse of Canadian Airlines. It should have been prepared for it but it was not.

As things got worse and worse for Canadian Airlines, another private sector company, Onex, became involved and made a proposal. It looked like that was going to happen, then it did not happen. Then we had all kinds of other proposals and jiggery-pokery with American Airlines and many other partners in this whole issue. Again the private sector determined the aviation policy in this country, not the government. The government was behind the eight ball and it fell far short of the expectations of the Canadian people.

The first issue that I brought up was highways. This is probably the only country in the world that does not have a highway policy. Right now there is not one provincial transportation minister who can tell us what the federal government's policy is on highways. They have been making sounds about maybe some day establishing a policy, but right now there is no policy on highways. It is amazing that a country that is so dependent on highways like Canada, perhaps more than any other country in the world, has no highway policy. Years ago the provinces could make co-operative highway funding agreements with the federal government and now they have all expired except for a few. The remaining policies are now completely inconsistent.

To point out the inconsistency in my area over the next two years, the province of Newfoundland will get \$55 million this year

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC) moved:

That this House recognize the urgent need to address the serious transportation problems facing the Canadian people, and call upon the government to establish a comprehensive national transportation policy that demonstrates leadership on this issue and which provides solutions to the problems shared coast to coast by all Canadians.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on this issue. My interest in transportation goes back a long way, perhaps to the early 1990s and probably into 1996, because of a project I wanted developed in my riding but there was a lack of federal government policy on funding for our national highway system.

The province of Nova Scotia, faced with a dangerous highway, no money and unable to establish an agreement with the federal government, tried to come up with an unique and innovative way to build part of our Trans-Canada Highway. It is now known as the Cobequid Pass and it is a toll highway. It is the only toll highway on the Trans-Canada Highway system right now and it runs entirely through my riding. It certainly focused the issue of transportation for me.

It is not only highways where there is a lack of co-ordinated, consistent policy, where there is a policy of long range planning rather than just react, react. It applies to the rail system; the airline system, as we have just seen recently; the port policies; shipbuilding; and passenger rail service. Again, there is just reaction. There is no long range plan, no consistent approach and no thought put behind these issues.

The ferry system in Canada, especially Marine Atlantic, is now coming under fire and criticism because again, after years of having one system of supplying and managing the Atlantic ferry system through Marine Atlantic, all of a sudden there is a new

Supply

and \$50 million in funding next year from the federal government, for a total of \$105 million. That is on one side of Nova Scotia. On the other side of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick gets \$102 million over the next two years. Nova Scotia, in the middle, gets zero. I point out that this is completely inconsistent. I do not say either one of them is right but the point is that it is completely inconsistent.

The road builders, the governments, the shippers, the manufacturers and the industrial parks cannot make plans on how they will establish their facilities, where to build their buildings, where they will hire people and how they will ship their products to market without a co-ordinated, long range, long term policy. That policy has to tie in rail with highway, highway with air and all these have to be tied into municipal passenger systems too. None of that is being done. We are addressing the issues as they come up: bang, there is a highway program, we will build a toll highway; VIA Rail is broke, we will give it more money; Canadian Airlines is in trouble, we will let them merge or whatever. This country, which is so dependent on transportation, perhaps more than any other country in the world because we are so big and our populations are so focused in certain areas, needs a transportation policy.

We want to grow, compete and be in the global market but we cannot be without a transportation policy that ties them all together. That means the government must work with the provinces, the industry, the shippers and the transportation industry to come up with a co-ordinated policy that handles all these issues.

Instead, we have piecemeal deals where the government decides to privatize the airports. This has not happened yet, but I predict that some of the smaller airports in Canada, which are the lifelines and the hope for economic development in small communities like Saint John, New Brunswick for instance, will suddenly find themselves unable to survive and compete.

It is critical that the small airports be brought into an overall policy of the government. We must not just diversify, privatize, commercialize or divest all the airports in Canada. They have to be part of an overall plan.

• (1025)

The big airports will survive. They will do well and prosper. I see great things in the future for the major airports.

Mr. Speaker, I neglected to mention that I will be splitting my time with the very hon. member for Brandon—Souris. He is very anxious to get up and talk about wheat. He knows a lot about wheat and I know very little about wheat, but I do know something about transportation. I do know that there should be a policy that co-ordinates all these issues together.

What has happened is that instead of having a department of transportation, we now have a profit centre. When the government

came to power in 1993, the department virtually broke even or lost money. According to a Manitoba study, in the year 2002-03 the department will have a profit of \$3.9 billion, counting all the fuel taxes, all the taxes it brings in, the rents from the ports and the rents from the airports.

I do not know how members feel, but the Department of Transport should not be a profit centre. It should not be an avenue to make money on behalf of the government. It should provide the very best transportation and infrastructure possible for this country. It cannot be done on a wing and a prayer. It has to be long range. Highways, rail lines, and airports take decades to plan and decades to build. It cannot be done in the haphazard manner that is happening now.

I will just go back to the aviation merger which changed things so much in the last few months. The divestiture of the ports and the airports are not all bad but they are not part of an overall plan. They have to be part of an overall plan.

There is no plan for highway construction in the country. When I was first given the position of transport critic for the Progressive Conservative Party, I wrote every provincial minister of transport in Canada. I asked them what the number one issue was facing ministers of transport. Every single one said that it was highways and that they needed highway money.

This is a critical issue because there is now such a large transfer of goods and services to the highways from rail. It is more economical, more efficient and more practical to ship by truck. Trucks are getting bigger. The provinces are all asking for permission to have bigger trucks and bigger regulations, which will put more workload on the highways, causing more damage to the highways.

The provincial ministers of transport, absolutely together, say that they need a transportation policy for highways, one that they can plan on for 10 to 20 years and one which they can count on for certain amount of funding based on the gas and oil tax that is collected. It is only fair. Right now only 5%, 6% or less than that goes back into highways. If 15% of the gas and diesel oil tax went back into highways it would resolve most of the issues in the country. It is not a lot to ask.

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech on transportation today. I also arrived late from New Brunswick. I was caught at the Montreal airport with my colleague.

What does my hon. colleague think can be done to rectify the problem with transportation in Canada? When I talk about the problems with transportation, I am talking about VIA Rail and the airlines. Should there not be a national policy on transportation that includes every region of every province?

Supply

VIA Rail was taken away from Saint John, New Brunswick not too long ago under this government. Today that region is looking for new ideas on transportation.

What does my hon. colleague think can be done if the government has done everything it can to guarantee access by all Canadians?

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the government has done anywhere near enough to address the problem.

The problem is fundamental. We need a co-ordinated transportation system. We cannot make these decisions based on putting more money into small projects, or making a deal on certain provincial highways, or pouring more money into VIA Rail to help it survive but not making a change. There is no fundamental change. The minister should co-ordinate fundamental meetings with agendas to address all our transportation issues to try to co-ordinate all our modes of transport.

• (1030)

Some of the issues are being dealt with in the airline merger now with competition from companies like WestJet and all other charter airlines. My colleague just raised delays and such things a minute ago. I believe they will be addressed eventually, but still we do not have a co-ordinated approach.

When we go to other countries we can see where they have had long range planning. They have the rail lines co-ordinated with the ports, with the subway systems and with the highways systems. They have highways that go directly from the airports non-stop right into the centres of towns or industrial areas. The rail lines and the subways come directly to the airports.

We need a total co-ordinated transportation package in Canada, not piecemeal approaches to resolving the issues.

Ms. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for bringing this issue to the floor of the House again. Obviously it is a serious issue. There is no question that there is a lack of vision in the transportation policy within the country in all modes of this sector.

I want to comment on one of the points the hon. member made. We have privatization of the airports. Certainly some airports will make dollars but there are those that will not.

In the hon. member's view is it okay to privatize as long as the privatized company or authority will make money but not okay if the others will not? Is it one or the other, or should we be looking at a policy that is there for all of Canada where we all support each other?

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, the member's question is interesting. That is exactly the policy we used to have. The member for

Churchill has described a policy we used to have wherein the Department of Transport managed and operated all airports in Canada. The stronger ones which had more economic opportunities and were more viable supported the weaker ones.

This is not a matter of poor management on the part of small airports. They just do not have the volume of passengers going through the small airports to establish alternative sources of revenue.

An airport like Calgary, for instance, has established itself almost as a destination point. It is almost worth going to Calgary just to see the airport. Such a dynamic business community has been created within the airport because millions of passengers go through there every year.

A small airport like Saint John, as I mentioned earlier, does not have the traffic to support the alternative sources of revenue like the stores, the food shops, the rental car facilities, et cetera. The small airports have no ability to generate alternative revenue. They have just a fraction of the revenue of big airports from terminal fees and landing fees. They do not have a chance to compete. Even though their expenses may be lower, their opportunities for revenue are much lower than those of the big ones.

The Government of Canada has to go back and revenue this decision. I do not disagree with turning the airports over to the communities, but the government has to review the decision and find a way to make it equitable for the small airports through negotiations on rental deals, a supply of capital or operating expenses to maintain their operations. We cannot let our small airports decline, become unsafe and deteriorate.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, I will start by thanking my illustrious colleague from Cumberland—Colchester who without doubt is the best and certainly the most informed member of the transportation committee and a critic par excellence. Other members of the other opposition parties could take some lessons from the illustrious member for Cumberland—Colchester.

Let me indicate exactly where I was heading. I would feel much more confident in the national transportation policy and where the country would be heading in the future if my colleague from Cumberland—Colchester were sitting in the minister's seat. He could put into place at least some of his understanding with respect to national transportation and some of his vision with respect to where the country could and should go with those types of policies put into place.

Let me talk about the motion before us today. We had some difficulty as a party trying to figure out which of the ministries was the most mismanaged because there was a smorgasbord of mismanaged departments.

Supply

• (1035)

We could talk about health care, which was put on the agenda previously by the NDP. We could talk about mismanagement of HRDC, which has been in the House continuously. We could talk about agriculture, which this party put forward as a topic of debate in a supply motion. That department is totally mismanaged to the point where there is no vision as to where agriculture in the country will go. However we came upon national transportation. When we started looking at a national transportation policy we discovered very quickly that there was none and that the government was heading in an ad hoc direction.

Transportation breaks down into a number of areas. I will speak to one on which I have a bit of understanding. Obviously that is grain transportation. I will not talk at length about it because there are other deficiencies in other areas of transportation and the non-transportation policy of the government.

Let us first open debate with respect to the grain transportation. Back in September of last year Arthur Kroeger tabled a report on grain transportation. Grain transportation is not something that just fell out of the sky. We have been talking about grain transportation in western Canada since the first kernel of wheat was planted in the western prairies. The fact is that the government did away with the crow rate benefit back in 1995. Since that point in time there has been absolutely nothing in place to help serve the farmers of our great country, particularly those in western Canada.

The problem is that one-third of the total value now being achieved through commodities that are grown is going to transportation costs. Unfortunately farmers cannot survive on two-thirds of the commodity price, pay their costs or make any type of a profit so they can continue on in the business. This should have been dealt with a long time ago.

What will happen today, tomorrow, this week or early next week is that the Minister of Transport will be tabling a bill. That bill could have been tabled two months ago when we could have debated that piece of legislation logically, openly and transparently. We will have to push the bill through before we rise in three weeks so that the government can put forward the legislation and it is effective by August 1, the new crop year.

I will have opportunity to tell the country why it is that the government has failed in its responsibility to put forward possibly the best legislation for producers and farmers.

Let us talk about other transportation issues which the hon. member talked about in his dissertation. One of them is highways. The country was built, developed and started on transportation. Does anyone remember the last spike? Does anyone remember

bringing our country together from coast to coast with a transportation web, a rail web?

Our country still depends on transportation. The majority of what we produce is exported. It is either exported by sea, by land or by air. We depend on export commodities. We depend on international markets. Our transportation infrastructure is coming to the point now where it is deteriorating beyond that of a third world country.

Let us talk about those three areas. Let us talk about highways on which I have some knowledge. In a previous life I was a chartered member of an organization called the Highway No. 1 West Association. Our major land link, our number one highway, the Trans-Canada Highway, is absolutely deplorable. In areas of western Canada the number one highway is to the point now where truckers and people moving commodities and goods will no longer use it. They now go through the United States of America bypassing Canadian highways, come back up into Canada and deliver their goods. That is deplorable.

The government takes a gasoline excise tax every year in excess of \$4.4 billion. The same government puts back less than 4.4% of that into our great highway system throughout Canada. The responsibility falls on the shoulders of the provinces. The provinces have a road network. They have to deal with provincial roads and municipal roads. Now they have to deal with national roads.

As my hon. colleague from Cumberland—Colchester asked, why is it that we cannot work with the provincial governments? We tried to work with the provincial governments when we were in power and were getting to a point of putting together a national highways program.

• (1040)

Unfortunately this government does not wish to deal with a national highways program. When I talked with the minister of transportation and highways in the province of Manitoba, he too came forward and said that the best thing we could do now is to have a long term national highways program.

What does that mean? That means stable funding over a period of years that will be distributed equally, honestly and fairly between all provinces to put in a national highways program.

Right now we have ad hoc programs that come forward from the government whenever there is an election. What a wonderful way to run our infrastructure, particularly our national highways program. Whenever there is an election the government will drib and drab a few dollars.

We have \$175 million now for rural roads in the grain transportation strategy the government put forward. We have an infrastructure program of \$100 million for this coming year for all of Canada. I believe that works out to \$3.5 million for the province of

Supply

Manitoba for its infrastructure program next budget year. Whoop-de-do, \$3.5 million will do three kilometres of highway. It is not a sufficient program.

Let us talk about air service. My hon. colleague certainly understands air service better than the government side does. There is no vision. There is no policy. There is no understanding which is necessary so that we can continue to compete internationally and nationally with our competitors. No strategy has been put forward on transportation.

Another issue is sea transportation. Being from Brandon—Souris, I can honestly say that I do not speak with a lot of experience on open sea transportation, but the hon. member for St. John's East will speak to it a little later because he understands marine transportation.

The issue we are talking about now is the ideology or psychology that has escaped the government. It is an ideology or psychology on what we have to put into place so Canadians can compete in the international market for years to come.

We have heard that the majority of our future will be with knowledge based industries. I do not dispute that, but there has to be a balance. Not only are our knowledge based industries very important for us so that we can sell that knowledge throughout the world, which, by the way, the government does not really have a grasp of. We can talk about the numbers of knowledge based industries personnel leaving the country in the brain drain. At least we recognize there is a real advantage. We also have to recognize that the country was built on manufacturing, processing and commodities that have to be transported.

In western Canada the major transportation requirements are for potash, grain and fertilizers. We need rail transportation that is of a proper standard. We need infrastructure that can be continued into the future. We have nothing put forward by the government which indicates that it is prepared to invest in that infrastructure.

I ask the Minister of Transport to put before the House a well thought out, long term strategy and plan for a national highways program for rural roads throughout the country, as a well as a rail transportation policy not only for passengers but also for commodities. There is nothing I can put my hands on that will show me where those issues will be within the next two, five or ten years. I find it deplorable that the government has no vision for transportation. I would like to move the following amendment:

That the motion be amended by inserting after the word "to" the word "immediately".

• (1045)

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair will ignore the splitting of the infinitive and rule the motion in order.

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be giving the government's view in a minute, but both the member for Cumberland—Colchester and the member for Brandon—Souris took us to task on a lack of vision with the airline policy. That party supported the government on Bill C-26 and I was very glad of that support.

I would like to ask my colleagues over there what was the alternative they wanted to what we actually did. Did they want the Government of Canada, the taxpayers of Canada, to bail out Canadian Airlines yet again? Did they want a bankruptcy of Canadian Airlines like some of their columnist friends in the national newspapers? Did they want 16,000 people put out on the street, including many in western Canada, Manitoba, the province of the hon. member for Brandon—Souris? I put that to them.

Would they have wanted an incredible disruption at Christmas where there was not capacity from Air Canada, U.S. carriers or our own charters? Thousands and thousands of people would have been stranded and in chaos at the airports. Is that the kind of chaotic policy response the Conservative Party follows?

We can see the chaos in their own party on an ongoing basis. It is okay for them to muck up their own party but do not ask us to muck up the airlines system just to emulate their own lack of cohesion.

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, if anybody mucked up the airline industry it was the government. I would suspect that anyone with an ounce of management ability would be a little bit proactive and would be able to see what was happening in the airline industry.

Why was the country put into that position? Why is it that customers of those airlines were made to have no choice on that December rush that the minister speaks about? Why was the government minister sitting back in his chair on his tush without putting something proactive in place instead of just simply reacting to a very, very serious circumstance?

Why were there plans not in place prior to Bill C-26? Why did the minister not have some discussions and put into place some of those solutions prior to the urgency with which it came forward? I still blame the government and will always blame the government and the minister for putting Canadians in that situation.

Ms. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is truly a treat to be here today to listen to the members on the government side of the House and members from the opposition party down at the far end argue over who has been the worst at managing Canada's transportation system. That should tell Canadians up front and absolutely positively that neither of those parties or any like them are going to do what is best for Canadians in regard to the transportation industry.

Supply

Both of those parties have fought time and time again to privatize our entire system solely on the basis of privatization being the best answer to transportation in Canada and it has failed. What they should do is look back at what was really best for transportation in Canada which was a policy that was there to meet the needs of Canadians, not just for companies to make a profit off the backs of Canadians.

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, I assume the member for Churchill is speaking in favour of the motion. What it says right now is what we would like to put forward to the Canadian people. It calls upon the government to establish a comprehensive national transportation policy that demonstrates that leadership she is speaking of on this issue and which will provide solutions to the problems shared coast to coast.

I suspect that the member is speaking in favour of the motion because we agree with her. We believe there has to be a long term, well thought out transportation policy.

By the way, that also includes the port of Churchill with respect to grain transportation. We as a party have always accepted Churchill as part of the grain transportation system. I know she would agree with us in saying that. I thank the NDP for supporting the motion.

• (1050)

Hon. David M. Collenette: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked where the government was in foreseeing the problems with the airline industry. Where was he last August when we invoked section 47 of the Canada Transportation Act for the first time because we foresaw the difficulties, we foresaw the bankruptcy of Canadian Airlines at Christmas?

We did it. We set in motion a private sector practice that brought forward three alternatives, one of which we now have in place today. That was foresight on the part of the government. That was good planning and it has made for good airline policy.

Mr. Rick Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, that was not good planning. It was a response to one corporation, Onex Corporation, which came forward with a suggestion as to how it could fix the airline situation. The government did not have any understanding as to what was happening until Onex made its proposal.

Why was it that the government was not looking for proposals from other corporations that could make the system work a lot better than what the Onex Corporation put forward?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are so many erroneous assertions and false assumptions being made that I am pleased to rise in this debate.

I listened with amazement to the criticisms from my colleagues opposite. I believe this motion has it all wrong. When the facts are looked at, and I hope to put those facts rather succinctly in the next few minutes, I think I will have demonstrated that we do have a transportation policy which addresses the needs of Canadians from coast to coast. The government has demonstrated strong leadership in the transportation sector. As a result, perhaps even the Conservatives could rethink their motion and work with all of us tonight to defeat it when it comes to a vote.

The fact is the many reforms the government has put in place in the transportation sector since 1993 have followed a pattern and a philosophy that work today.

First of all, as the hon. member knows, we came into power in 1993 with a \$41 billion annual deficit courtesy of the Mulroney Tories. We came here with no money having been spent on airports and infrastructure for nine years. While the Tories wantonly raised taxes to the highest levels in Canadian history, they never invested a nickel except some highway money in the transportation sector. We had to look at every single component.

We looked at airports. We had to get an investment of \$8 billion or \$9 billion into airports within a short period of time. How were we to do that? Transport Canada was taken out of the day to day management of the airports and local airport authorities were put in place. Those local airport authorities do not constitute privatization. We followed the Canadian model and the crown and the people of Canada still own the airports. They will be ours forever.

We have entered into 60 year management agreements with local airport authorities whose members come from the surrounding communities and understand their communities. I am speaking of people such as those the hon. member for Saint John knows who know all about the specific needs of her community. They are running the airport authority. They are coming forward with plans for new terminals and new infrastructure. This is working at the larger airports in the country. I grant that at smaller airports we have to keep an eye open especially given the airline restructuring. We have to keep an eye open to what has happened and we are monitoring the situation.

We are also looking at the larger airport authorities and reviewing all the leases. We want to see whether there are inequities. The Tories came into power and gave one deal to Vancouver, one deal to Calgary, one deal to Edmonton and another deal to Montreal. There was no consistency like all the other programs they put in place during those nine years. There was no consistency to the local airport authorities. We did some amending and we will be doing more.

When we came into power we brought in an airport policy which standardized the rules across the country. In this lease review we want to bring all of the airports under the ambit of the Canadian

airport authority so there is transparency, accountability and a proper management regime which all Canadians can be proud of. A bill will be brought in later this year to effect these particular changes.

• (1055)

That is one example of where we took the lead. We have put the financing of these airports to the users, financed through charges, new rents and new revenues that come from the airports. That is much better than what Transport Canada was doing.

Let us look at the railways. There is the Canadian National Railways, an amalgam of bankrupt railways. To the credit of the Tories they came up with a good idea. It was either the government of Arthur Meighen or R.B. Bennett, one of those two shortlived Tory governments back in the nether part of the last century. They put the railways together under Canadian National Railways and the government invested heavily over the years. That railway was fat. It was inefficient. It was improperly managed. As a result we privatized Canadian National Railways and it has been a success story.

There are aspects of the Canadian National privatization which I am uncomfortable with but we cannot cry over spilled milk. We have to look at the success. The fact is it is a company that has pared down its labour force, opened new markets, forged new alliances in the United States and is truly becoming a North American railway and an institution of which we can be proud.

It wants to go even further with a consolidation with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corporation. That is a subject of controversy. The U.S. service transportation board has said it wants time to think about it. It has put a moratorium on such discussions, although CN is appealing it in the U.S. courts. CN knows and hon. members know that I have asked the transport committee to look at that merger to see if it is in the best interests of Canada. The fact is this was a bold move that worked.

Air Canada was privatized by the Tories. That party loves privatization. Some people say that maybe we should have commercialized it and kept the ownership but they privatized it and got rid of the whole thing. Not only did they privatize Air Canada in 1988, the year before, they deregulated the domestic airline system. Part of the problem we have had with Canadian airlines over the last 10 years is that the Tories truly mucked up. They privatized a national carrier which was heavily invested in by the state. At the same time they deregulated and put Air Canada at an incredible advantage to all those other private companies that were then consolidating.

Remember in the 1970s and the 1980s Canadian Pacific, EPA, Transair and PWA were making money and even Québecair made money. What happened was the Tories came along and deregulated it. They would deregulate their uncles, brothers, everybody just out

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of ideology. And they privatized at the same time. This created an incredible problem for them and for us. Quite frankly, we should have moved to effect the private sector reorganization of the airline industry earlier in our mandate but we had so much on our plate we could not do it. We did it last year and I think it has worked extremely well. I will come back to that a little later.

We also commercialized the air navigation services. We were the first country to do so. Other countries around the world are emulating us. This has caused a great reorganization and investment in new capital equipment for air navigation. Now Canada has the best air navigation system certainly in North America if not the world.

The poor U.S. cannot cope. It has an explosion of flights and passengers. The air navigation services in the United States are creaking under the strain. Hopefully this will not cause a safety problem. In Canada we took a bold move. We have new systems and new equipment coming in. We will continue to have the safest and the best air navigation system in the world.

We commercialized ferry operations. We commercialized the St. Lawrence Seaway. We deregulated the trucking industry. Forget about the reorganization, we liberalized the air market and recently the charter market.

Charters almost have the ability to operate both as charters and scheduled carriers. There are no stopoff provisions and prepayments have been waived. The charter companies have responded. How have they responded? They responded by putting in new orders for equipment: Canada 3000, four A319s; Royal Air, another 757; Air Transat, a new A330; and so on. The charters are responding and filling the void that needs to be filled.

• (1100)

The CTA, the Canada Transportation Act, was brought in in 1996. It has had some success, but there have been some criticisms. Those criticisms can be examined in the debate that will follow in the next year.

However, there is no denying that under the Canada Transportation Act, of all of the railway lines that are up for abandonment, 80% are still being operated by short line railways, operating under provincial charters, responding to local needs, such as the Essex Terminal Railway in Windsor, which is operating on small trackage, Omnitrax to Churchill, and RailTex. These railways are there, they are making money, they are providing a service and they have allowed CN and CP to concentrate on their core activities.

The Canada Transportation Act is up for review as of July 1. Very shortly I will be appointing prominent individuals to conduct that review. That review will be very important. If the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester does not think we have a transportation policy, this review will give him and his party the chance to

Supply

say "Let's have a national transportation policy that we, the Tories, can live with", because the whole act will be up for review. It will take one year. We can look at every single aspect of the act.

If members from the west are not happy about the abandonment of track, we can look at that. With regard to urban Canada, I am meeting with my friend from Vancouver Quadra this afternoon about the Arbutus Corridor, a freight line that goes to downtown Vancouver which should be saved for a link to the airport. CP wants to sell it for \$100 million. Is it right that the railways have the latitude, unfettered, to get rid of these rail lines in urban corridors? That is a matter that we should be looking at in the CTA review.

Parallel to that the committee will be looking at the BN-CN merger to see whether it is in the best interest of public transportation policy.

Not only is there a transportation policy, not only has it worked, we now have a vehicle, the CTA review starting in July, where for the next year we will be able to embellish that policy and change it however hon. members would wish to improve the entire transportation system in the country.

All of the things we have done in the last seven years have contributed to the prosperity of Canada and have resulted in reduced transportation costs. In fact, if we had not brought in the reforms of the last seven years transportation costs would be \$8 billion higher today.

Because of the intense competition brought about by deregulation and all of the changes, most of the gains, which amount to \$8.1 billion, have been transferred to consumers and shippers in the form of lower prices. Because transportation is part of everything that we buy, import or export, these gains have contributed to making the Canadian economy more competitive and to improving the standard of living for all Canadians.

I am not supposed to talk about what goes on in cabinet, but we had a good briefing from my colleague, the Minister of Industry, about the various productivity in industrial sectors in the country. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, what the most productive sector was in the last seven years? It was transport. Do you know why it was transport? Because of the policies of this government. I am saying we got it right. We can refine some of our policies, we can deal with airport leases, and we can even look at the rents. We will do that because we are not dogmatic. We are flexible. We can build on all of these successes and improve the transportation policy.

I want to say a few words about my time in this portfolio. Let us look at the accomplishments: Bill C-9, the Canada Marine Act. Two of my predecessors worked on that bill. We were not able to get it through the Senate. We got that bill through the House with the co-operation of colleagues on either side and in the other place. That bill allowed the 18 biggest ports to be commercialized, which has been a success that is working well. Great ports like Vancouver,

Montreal and Halifax are doing even better because of those reforms that we brought in, as well as all of the smaller ports across the country.

● (1105)

Secondly, there was the airline rationalization. I gave my views the other week at third reading of Bill C-26, but somebody from outer space could only come to the conclusion that the government did not do the right thing. We have taken the largest airline in the country, the second largest airline in the country, 41,000 employees, 350 aircraft, serving hundreds of destinations, and have merged them in an almost seamless fashion across the country, without a nickel from the taxpayer by way of subsidy or bailout, with no job losses, with no communities disturbed. In fact, Charlo and Miramichi have had their air services restored. No one has lost their air service.

Air Canada can compete with the biggest and the best in the world. That will be good for overseas pricing because it will take on British Airways, Alitalia and Cathay Pacific. Before the merger we had 55% of the transborder routes between Air Canada and Canadian Airlines, and now it will grow even higher. We have beaten the Americans at their own game. That has been done by Canadian air carriers and we will improve their ability to compete even further with the Americans.

I will grant that we have a problem in domestic competition. As I have said in the House before, we will not open up the skies and let the Yanks come in with their huge fleets. United Airlines has 1,100 planes. It wants to merge with U.S. Air, which has 500 planes. Mr. Speaker, do you know what they could do? I know they are part of the Air Canada lines, but let us take American Airlines and let us take Delta Airlines. They would come in here like vacuum cleaners. They would not be interested in serving Churchill. My NDP friend from Churchill, our colleague from Yukon and my friend from Saskatchewan would not be served. Those airlines would not want those smaller communities. They would want to gobble up all the big bucks between Toronto and Vancouver or Montreal and Calgary.

It is like the old argument to privatize the post office. Remember all those people, those flat earth people, who said we should privatize the post office. We know what would happen if we privatized the post office. All of the FedExes, the Purolators and the UPSs would have their trucks whipping around between Toronto and Montreal on Highway 401, and they would be charging a premium. Who would give mail service to Iqaluit, to Amherst, Nova Scotia, to Medicine Hat, to Churchill or to any of those small communities? The good old muggins, the Government of Canada, the taxpayers would have to do that. We would have to subsidize it. We will not let the U.S. carriers in because I believe and this government believes that Canadian entrepreneurs can do the job.

I read all of the editorials and columns by all of the so-called experts. I do not want to debate with them on every point, but what

a pathetic lot. They say “We cannot compete. We let the Americans in. They are the only ones who can do it”. If that is where the Canadian journalistic elite is going today, this country is in sad shape. They have no faith in Canada and no faith in Canadian entrepreneurs. All they have to do is look at the charter airlines. Look at the WestJets. Look at the smaller carriers. Look at First Air, which is owned by aboriginal Canadians. These carriers make money. These are Canadian entrepreneurs and we will give them time to fill the slack and give us the competition. It is happening.

Ken Rowe from Halifax has six 737 aircraft, plus he has his feeders. He is starting on August 1 and he will take on Air Canada in Halifax. He will take them on in Toronto, in Montreal, in Ottawa and in Winnipeg. I say more power to him. He is from Nova Scotia, a great province with entrepreneurs. Why do we need Americans when we have people from Nova Scotia, western Canada and elsewhere to do these jobs?

Before I finish I want to say a little about VIA Rail. That is an accomplishment. All the cuts the Tories made cut the lifeblood out of the passenger rail system. For the first time a government said “No more. We are committed to passenger rail. We will give you the subsidy for 10 years. More than that, we will give you \$401 million for capital expenditures”. It has not been done before in Canada. This is a seminal mark in our history. The Government of Canada is committed to passenger rail.

• (1110)

The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester says we are just throwing good money after bad. He should tell that to his constituents because VIA Rail goes through his constituency. We just restored the tourist train up to Cape Breton and we want to do more. Is he going to tell the people of Nova Scotia that \$400 million should not be spent because it is throwing good money after bad? I dare him to say that to his constituents.

My last point, before I get totally wound up, is on grain transportation. This was a tough file. As a guy coming from Toronto, I had doubts sometimes about whether we could get a deal. We consulted stakeholders. We had two of the finest minds in the country, Mr. Estey and Mr. Kroeger, who came forward with reports. We spoke with everyone: the railways, the grain companies and the producers. Not all producers are happy about it. Some are opposed.

We studied this to death. We had tough arguments in our own caucus. I talked to opposition members. We got a compromise which starts us on the path to true commercialization in grain transportation.

I apologize for the fact that it comes so late. I will come back at 12 o'clock, after I go back to cabinet and get authorization for the bill, and introduce it. I cannot believe that anyone in the House would want to delay the grain bill and stop \$178 million from going into the pockets of Canadian producers.

Supply

Mr. Jean Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche, PC): Mr. Speaker, the minister says he does not speak out of cabinet and he has been briefed. I hope he was briefed by the HRDC minister throughout all of this mismanagement.

[*Translation*]

The minister was singing the government's praises earlier.

[*English*]

This is the same government that said it would scrap the GST in its red book. Remember that? This is the same government.

The minister stands today, looks Canadians in the eye and talks about Charlo Airport in New Brunswick. I am glad he knows about Charlo Airport. It was because of this government that this part of the country was cut off from the rest of the country with no air transportation.

Today I want to thank the Charlo Airport commission for the excellent work it did in restoring air service to Charlo.

What about rail service in New Brunswick? VIA Rail was there during the Tory government, but when the Liberal government came in it was taken out of Saint John and Edmundston, New Brunswick. These people as well were cut off from the rest of Canada.

I met with some students from McGill University and the University of New Brunswick. They said that the problem with Canada is that people do not know the country. They do not know what goes on in Quebec City. They do not know what goes on in western Canada. They do not know what goes on in Atlantic Canada. We have one part fighting with another part. They said it is too expensive to travel within Canada.

What has the government done? What does the government intend to do to restore VIA Rail service in New Brunswick, to Edmundston and to Saint John?

Hon. David M. Collenette: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my friend listened closely to my speech. The \$400 million is to provide new equipment, track improvements and signalling, not just in the Windsor-Quebec corridor, but right across the country.

In the business plan, which I happen to have on my desk, which I am reviewing, I am asking VIA management to take a look at every single line which was cut in the last 10 to 15 years to see if there is a business case to bring that service back over a certain period of time.

I assume the hon. member from Madawaska—Restigouche agrees with me, but he should talk to his buddy in front of him, his transportation critic, who was the only person in the country who

Supply

slammed the government for providing \$400 million to revitalize passenger rail. Where is the consistency? Where is the logic in the Conservative Party?

With respect to Charlo and Miramichi, that had nothing whatsoever to do with the merger. InterCanadian was a private company, not part of Canadian Airlines. It was badly managed. It was overextended. It tried to blame airline restructuring for its own follies.

• (1115)

I felt badly for those people in those two communities and those in the other two communities in Quebec and Newfoundland. Happily the service has been restored, which shows how there can be flexibility. The experience has always been, and that is why we improved the exit provisions in Bill C-26, that someone will come into a market and offer the service if the market is there. The market is there in northern New Brunswick and it should be used.

On the last point, the hon. member from Saint John was heckling me about Saint John, Moncton and Fredericton. I want to pose a question to her and maybe she will answer it. She has to understand that there are three airports, Moncton, Saint John and Fredericton, all within a two to three hours drive. I guess the market will have to make some choices as to which airport will actually be the main airport.

I come from greater Toronto. We have one airport that serves eight million people. Someone coming from Cobourg or Kingston to Pearson has a three hour drive on Highway 401 and then has to park at alarmingly expensive rates. The minister of state for Parks Canada is up in Muskoka. He has to drive another two and a half hours. We are used to that kind of sacrifice, and I hope the people in New Brunswick could make some accommodations during this very difficult transition.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport certainly is waxing eloquent in a high, wide and handsome fashion with the facts as far as I can see.

I have two short questions. The minister spoke about no one in the House delaying the bill with regard to the rail transportation of grain in western Canada in particular. When did the minister receive the recommendations of the Kroeger-Estey commission that he commissioned? Why did it take until the first of June to bring forward the changes to the rail transportation system?

When the minister received that report, with the tremendous amount of research and consultation that went into it, did he not implement the very recommendations of the Kroeger-Estey report including the backup from the five big grain companies? In order to help the minister a little, I will just point out that I know the reason that did not happen. The reason is that the Canadian Wheat

Board minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs told him that he could not implement that report.

Hon. David M. Collette: Mr. Speaker, we had the views of the experts, Mr. Estey and Mr. Kroeger. They were asked for technical opinions, their best work on what would make an efficient system.

We do not live in a perfectly technical world. We live in a world with real people who have real aspirations and we in this Chamber are all engaged in politics. Mr. Kroeger and Mr. Estey did not address the political issues. Someone had to, and it is us in the Chamber.

Granted, there was intense debate on this side of the House and trade-offs were made, but ultimately the package that came forward starts us on our way to a true competitive system and puts \$178 million in the hands of prairie farmers. I think it will herald even more reforms once the logic of those reforms is accepted.

On a procedural matter, I said I would come back in a little while once we get approval in cabinet for the bill to try to get consent for first reading of the grain bill. I should also say that I have been talking with my colleague responsible for the wheat board because we together and our bureaucrats have been working on the MOU with the wheat board. I would like to have that MOU in the hands of the opposition before debate starts on Monday. We will try to get that organized.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister mentioned airports and one large airport. I want him to know that I have the largest city in the province of New Brunswick. It is Saint John, New Brunswick, not Moncton. That is the largest city.

• (1120)

When our party was in government we had 4,000 men working at the shipyard. What has happened? No one is working at the shipyard. We had 325 people working at the sugar refinery. What has happened? The sugar refinery, which dates back to 1903, closes down today. We had VIA Rail and a brand new train station built. What has happened? Mr. Doug Young closed down the train station and took away VIA Rail.

It is time the government sat down to look at what this means to the economy. The minister should come to Saint John. For the first time in the history of Saint John, New Brunswick, he will find paper bags on windows in the business sector of our city. This has never happened before. We need this turned around. If we are to have one airport, it better be in Saint John, New Brunswick, the industrial and business centre for the province of New Brunswick.

Supply

Hon. David M. Collenette: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague from Saint John got me wrong. The government is not advocating the consolidation of the three airports in New Brunswick or the building of a superairport at Sussex.

What I am saying is that I would hope the people of New Brunswick would understand that, given the kind of commercial environment we live in, it will be the marketplace that will determine which of those three airports in effect gets the best options from the travelling public. It is not for us to say it is Moncton, Fredericton or Saint John. We have to give the local authorities there the ability to market their services and to go out and compete.

On the last point, the hon. member talked about the dearth in shipbuilding jobs in Saint John. I sympathize with her. I am a great advocate of the Canadian shipbuilding industry. The government is working on a new policy. The hon. member talked about all the jobs in shipbuilding from the frigate program. Guess who started the frigate program? It was the government of Pierre Trudeau in 1978. I was a proud member of that government. It carried Saint John through for 15 or almost 20 years. They built great ships. Let us try to build some more.

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time that transportation in the history of this great place has been a hot topic. It probably will not be the last time. It is probably the reason that the transport committee room is the largest and at one time was considered the most important committee as the country developed.

It is interesting to note the sparring between the Progressive Conservatives and the government. This is May 2000. We have to look at what we have now and we have to look to the future. Trying to score political points on the past does not solve any transportation problems across Canada.

I congratulate the member for Cumberland—Colchester who serves on the transport committee. He is indeed a good member. His colleague inferred that he was the best member of the transport committee. I have been on the committee for three years. All parties are represented. No one on that committee behaves in a manner superior to somebody else. I find that a great insult to a committee that has worked on issues very co-operatively over the last three years. We may disagree on philosophy at points, but we have turned out a lot of work for the House. I take exception. I know the hon. member from the PC Party is on that committee.

It goes without saying that we cannot talk about Canada without talking about transportation. I do not suppose we ever will. In the first class on Canada at university one of the statements heard is that the very existence of Canada is a sin against geography, and it still is.

• (1125)

There are members sitting to my right from Churchill and from Yukon. What is their big problem? Transportation. What is the big problem in the prairie provinces, particularly in my province? Oh, boy, it is transportation. Members from the maritimes today raised their unique problem. Transportation.

It has always been a Canadian problem. It will always be a Canadian problem because the existence of Canada came about in a contradiction to geography. We are here and we are proud of it, but in the year 2000 we are facing some very difficult times in transportation.

From time to time Canadians have overcome many of their transportation problems. Let us look at the history of our country and the promises made. British Columbia came into Confederation because of a promise. What was that promise? It was the promise of a railway.

It is not possible to provide transportation to the scattered areas of Canada without transportation being expensive. Let us make no mistake about that. I happen to come from a province that has 240,000 kilometres of roads and one million people. With the railways disappearing, we have a serious problem. Is this the first time we have ever had a serious transportation problem? No. Is the problem today as serious as it has ever been? The answer to that question is yes.

This motion is asking the Government of Canada to pull together with its counterparts in the provincial and municipal governments to develop a strategy so that we do look ahead into planning for the future. Some bad things have happened in the last two decades. Let us take a look at them.

The west has lost thousands of miles of railways. For the most part of the prairies we have basically lost VIA Rail service. It is gone from most areas. I can catch an Amtrak train at a point south in the United States with fewer miles to travel than if I drive to Saskatoon. We have those problems, but those problems will not be fixed without a politically unbiased move to bring the country together to take a look at what has happened. I want to mention just one or two points.

It is obvious that today's Minister of Transport of Canada does not carry the same clout in federal financing as his predecessors once did. I could not believe it when I looked at past budgets. At one time the transport file was the big spender. That is not so today.

In many provinces including my own at one time 100% of everything taken in by Saskatchewan in fuel tax was spent on roads. Some provinces spent 110% or more than what was taken in.

Supply

I believe the province of Manitoba was in that general area. To have that happen in Saskatchewan at the present time may not be possible.

Today our economy depends on a very good seamless transportation system. Earlier this morning I had the privilege of having breakfast with the Canadian Trucking Association. It desperately needs this policy to be in place. It desperately needs a sound transportation policy from the government in co-operation with the provinces and municipalities. We must interconnect all modes of transportation and we cannot do it on an ad hoc basis.

• (1130)

What must happen is that the federal government has to quit using fuel taxes as a cash cow. Therein lies the problem. Last year the federal government collected \$4.5 billion in fuel taxes, I repeat \$4.5 billion, and it has put back only \$150 million. That is a national disgrace.

No one on this side of the House and I am sure no one on the government side would even come up with the idea that 100% has to be put back. The Canadian Automobile Association has stood by a figure of 20%. If 20% of the fuel tax collected by the government were to go back to the provinces, we would be in good shape.

A study by the University of Manitoba Transport Institute shows that the government collects a disproportionate share of fuel tax from the prairie provinces. I know we all guard our own little areas, the maritimes and so on. I want to point out very clearly that in the fiscal year 1998-99, the federal government collected \$4.4 billion. The same year, according to the study by the University of Manitoba, the federal expenditures on road infrastructure were \$198 million, less than a nickel out of every dollar collected.

Whether we are in the maritimes, on the coast, in the north or in the prairie provinces we cannot maintain our transportation road network on a mere five cents on the dollar being returned. It cannot be done. I cannot even travel my constituency now and use all of the highways. I have to go on gravel country roads because the highways are unsafe to travel. We could blame it on heavy trucking, we could blame it on many things but it is simply a fact. If Saskatchewan were to get 60% of the money that has been allocated through the grain transportation bill and if I could somehow persuade that it would all go to my constituency, it would not bring Highway 13 up to standard, it would not bring all of Highway 18 up to standard, it would not bring Highway 47 up to standard and it would not bring Highway 8 up to standard.

We are at a point in our history where the money has to be refunded. If we do not move up the scale to 25%, there are parts of Canada, including Saskatchewan, which will have to take away what pavement is left and return the roads to gravel. That is a conclusion which most people could draw.

There is no national highway program. There was when the Trans-Canada Highway was built. Some 25,400 kilometres was identified in 1992, eight years ago, by a joint federal-provincial highway policy study. There has been no administrative framework for maintaining or upgrading that highway and no national program since that time, for eight years, in a country that is totally dependent on its highway network.

Again, in the United States when I cross the border into North Dakota and get gas I see on the bowser the federal input, the state input and how much taxes are being paid.

• (1135)

In the United States transportation equity act, \$26,174,381,000 in federal funding is going to be invested over the next five years. That is a tremendous amount of money. Almost 50% and in some cases 80% of what they collect goes back and we send 5% back. It just will not work. There are areas of Canada which just will not be able to do it. I believe if the House takes a look at our policy and the motion by the member, the need is very important.

Politics in fuel tax is a recent thing in our history. If we go back 25 years, a tax on fuel was used for that purpose. Now, in particular in this House and in some provinces the motor vehicle fuel tax is not being directed to roads. I suppose one could say politics is the art of the impossible and the federal government is severely addicted to tax revenue. That addiction is killing transportation in Canada. I wonder if the government would consider a proposal like that of the Canadian Automobile Association, that 20% of the funds be returned to the provinces.

My parents asked me to drive them to Ontario. Anyone who leaves my province and drives to Ontario, what route do they do? Those people who live in the southern part get on Highway 39 and get to U.S. 2 and come all the way through the United States. Why? Because of the roads and because of the cost factor. The trucks are doing it as well. It is because we have not had the ability or the common sense to put back into our transportation system the money that has been taken out. Is the money there? Absolutely.

When my colleagues and I on the transport committee discussed the airline bill, Bill C-26, I was amazed at the entrepreneurship out there to bring good air travel to Canada. I am amazed at the number of private entrepreneurs like WestJet and there are many more. As a result we are going to be well served in the future. I am not even questioning it.

However we should not expect a return in Canada to the VIA Rail service we once had. There is not enough money in the country to support that service as we have in the past. There is no passenger rail link anywhere in the world that does not have to be subsidized. When we in Canada have to subsidize up to 40% of what is called

the most lucrative runs in Canada, we can readily understand why Canadians cannot expect to have the passenger rail service they once had. Would I like to see it? Yes I would like to see it. Does it sound good? Yes it sounds good. But let us deal with reality.

Let us look at these problems in the light of what we are facing in the year 2000. Never mind the bickering of the past and the political points to be scored. Let us go forward here. My colleague's motion is a good one. It does not deal with ideology. It does not deal with privatization against crown ownership, knowledge, regulatory features and so on. It is a good motion. The motion simply says that we should on a non-political non-partisan basis get together and establish a framework whereby we can look at the various transportation issues facing Canada.

• (1140)

I support that motion simply because Canadians need it. Canadians look forward to having some concrete body in place. The provinces are looking for it. The municipalities are looking for it. The lead has to come from the government. I will brag a little and say we certainly have a good transport committee to deal with it and to feed that information out to our counterparts in the municipalities.

In conclusion, it is 2000. Let us go on. We cannot forget the past, but let us not let the past dictate what we are going to have in the future. We must look ahead and we must do it co-operatively. When it comes to transportation, Canadians really do not care too much about the political debate in the House. They want to see something concrete.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain. He has given us a very passionate and common sense view of this issue. That is what is sometimes absent from the debates. He hit the nail on the head when he said that this is a straightforward issue, one of practicalities and one of priorities. When it comes to an issue such as this one, much like health care, one of the fundamentals has to be that the funding must be there at such a level and standard that the objectives can be achieved.

The hon. member brings that same common sense approach to the committee, as does the member from Cumberland—Colchester, the mover of the motion. They call upon the government in a very straightforward and principled way to address the issue at the very least by restoring funding to a level that will allow the fundamental aspects of transportation to be achieved. Whether it be a national highways program, whether it be a return to some sort of fundamental approach to shipping, or shipbuilding, all of this has to be given at least a base level of support from the government in terms of resources.

This issue is analogous to health care. The pivotal point in the history of the country when deterioration started, whether it be in health care or our national transportation system, was when the

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government changed in 1993. I do not want to come across as being too partisan, but I ask him to be honest. This is a question of truth and reconciliation. Is it not fair to say that when the government changed in 1993 and the funding was withdrawn, whether it be from health care, social transfers, or transportation, that was the point in our country's history when our transportation policy deteriorated, our roads deteriorated, and the shipbuilding policy started to come apart at the seams? Will the hon. member acknowledge that under a Conservative government things were better?

Mr. Roy Bailey: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly not the political move I would like to get in. I do not want to go back and have those mind-boggling deficits and debt because that does not serve any purpose.

I will say to the hon. member if we are going to have a highway program, we are not going to have it without co-operative funding. The funding must be known ahead of time. For example, if the Canada Health Act and health care across Canada is to be successful, it can only be successful with a promise of 50:50 sharing. Whatever reason the government can give for taking that away is exactly the same reason we are facing a health crisis today. It is exactly the same reason the highways, particularly in western Canada, are depreciating at a rate faster than ever before in our history.

• (1145)

The hon. member is quite right. I will not get into the political part of this issue, but the premise upon which he posed the question is quite correct.

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree that this is a parallel situation to medicare because this is an instance where the federal government has been asked to spend in an area that is 100% provincial responsibility.

When it comes to the percentage of fuel tax that the federal government is collecting, I remind the member opposite that the federal government under the constitution has an obligation to guarantee supply. Our percentage of the fuel tax goes toward guaranteeing the oil supply from Saudi Arabia, for having the Department of National Defence helicopters, the border customs controls and the trade infrastructure. We have to spend on those areas in order to guarantee supply.

I have a great deal of sympathy for our national highway program. The member is asking the federal government to invest in the national highway program, which is essentially a 100% responsibility of the provinces. Is it not a conflict, especially with his party, when he asks that the federal government cut back in taxes, cut back on the debt, and in the same breath he wants the federal government to spend in areas of provincial jurisdiction?

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Mr. Roy Bailey: Mr. Speaker, let me make one point clear. I never said that the government should cut back on taxes. It is how it uses the taxes after it gets them. That is the difference.

All I am saying is that if the government wants to keep the federal excise tax on fuel at its present level that is its responsibility. The reason that tax went on in the first place was for highways. There is no question about that. All we are asking for is a mere 25% to go back to highway structure across Canada.

To answer the second part of the member's question, the Canada Health Act was formulated and came into being on the assumption that Canadians would have a universal health system providing that 50% of the funding came from Ottawa. Now we find ourselves in the position where it is not coming from Ottawa. Health care across Canada is in a crisis and the crisis is growing. There is the answer. They cannot have it both ways.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the member for Souris—Moose Mountain. I probably agree with 80% or 85% of what he had to say.

I am very familiar with Saskatchewan. The member obviously has some firsthand knowledge as to the deplorable state of Saskatchewan highways and roads, particularly municipal roads. He is absolutely correct that 25% of the excise tax raised could go into a long term, well thought out infrastructure plan and program which would be accepted by tripartite municipal, provincial and federal funding.

However, the one point the member mentioned that perhaps he and I would disagree on was VIA Rail. I would like to extend it into public transportation and I would like to hear his views and thoughts. He said that a 40% subsidy is too much money to be putting into any type of transportation. He referred to VIA Rail, but there is other public transportation such as buses, LRTs in Alberta and subways in other major metropolitan areas.

Does the hon. member believe that any type of subsidization for public transportation is certainly not within the parameter of the federal government? Does he wish that public transportation did not exist?

Mr. Roy Bailey: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, there is not a passenger rail system anywhere in the world which does not receive some form of subsidization, even the great passenger rail service in Japan or in France. It does not make any sense to provide a service that would break the country and bring it to its knees.

• (1150)

Let us make it clear. If the most profitable route of passenger rail has to be subsidized by some 40%, what would it cost Canada to return VIA Rail service to all places? We would not have enough

money in the whole Department of Transport to keep it going. We have to use logic. I am not against subsidizing transportation, but there comes a point in the philosophy of things that we have to say no.

I do not know of any city in Canada that has a public transportation system which makes money. There may be some but they all receive some subsidy. If we have to spend billions and billions of dollars to provide a passenger rail train which people are not using then governments have to make a decision. They should be subsidized but within reason. That is where the federal, provincial and municipal governments come in.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to this motion tabled by my colleague from Cumberland—Colchester, who, like me, sits on the Standing Committee on Transport.

For the benefit of those watching, it might be relevant to reread the motion in order to properly establish the position of the Bloc Québécois regarding the vote that will be held on this motion.

The motion reads as follows:

That this House recognize the urgent need to address the serious transportation problems facing the Canadian people, and call upon the government to establish a comprehensive national transportation policy that demonstrates leadership on this issue and which provides solutions to the problems shared coast to coast by all Canadians.

I would point out right off that the Bloc Québécois members will vote against this motion, and I will explain why.

I will look at parts of the motion. It reads "That the House recognize the urgent need—". We agree that there is some urgency and that there is an urgent need "to address the serious transportation problems". Yes, there are serious transportation problems. It goes on "—facing the Canadian people, and call upon the government to establish a comprehensive national transportation policy—".

This is where the problem arises. It is primarily because nowhere in the motion is there mention of respect for provincial jurisdictions that the 44 members of the Bloc Québécois will oppose the motion.

I want my colleague from the Progressive Conservative Party to know that, had the motion contained reference to provincial jurisdictions, the situation would have been quite different. It is primarily for this reason that our party cannot support this motion.

Since they have been in power, the Liberals have shown a total and obvious lack of concern for transportation matters. The last

thing that we of the Bloc Québécois would ask of them is for them to set up national transportation policies in areas that are not under their jurisdiction.

Once again, we have differing visions of Canada. That is why I say this will never work. The Canada of today does not work, and it never will. We in Quebec no longer believe the attempts to revise the federal system, the fine promises the Canadian Alliance candidates are making about redesigning Canada and have a more decentralized country. We have been there, done that, and it will not work.

• (1155)

At present, in the House, we have two visions of Canada. On the one hand, we have the MPs from pro-centralist provinces or parties, those who envision a Canada in which the central government would set national policies and the provinces would be branch plants of this central power, no more and no less.

On the other, we in Quebec are calling for a state of Quebec that is capable of managing itself, taking its own decisions. I do not think that Quebec has to take a back seat to any province of Canada, still less to the central government, in the area of transport. Our lack of faith in the Liberal government makes it hard for us to vote in favour of this motion.

Because of the geography of Quebec and Canada, transportation infrastructures are especially important. The great distances and the difficult winter weather conditions have often isolated regions far from the major urban centres that are economic centres as well. Our metropolis, Montreal, whose economy is on the upswing, will be dynamic if the regions in Quebec are dynamic.

We have seen this happen with air transportation. The airports of Montreal, Dorval or Mirabel, will only develop effectively if passengers from the regions use these airports. If we were compiling statistics, I am not sure that the vast majority of passengers passing through Dorval airport are Montrealers necessarily.

Airports are primarily transit points, we must not forget. People pass through them to take another form of transportation or to get to another destination. A lot of people using the Montreal airports come from Quebec's regions as well, be it from the Saguenay Lac-Saint-Jean, Lower St. Lawrence, North Shore or Abitibi-Témiscamingue areas.

So, transportation is a factor in regional economic development. This fact has been all too often ignored by the Liberal government since 1993. Whether it is deregulation of airlines, bus companies or railways, divestiture by the federal government of ports and airports that are not cost-effective, icebreaking fees, the present cost of gas, or possible restructuring of the airline industry, the present Liberal government is systematically ignoring the vital importance of effective and accessible means of transportation to the development of regions, such as the North Shore or the Gaspé,

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which need to be linked more closely to large centres through effective means of transportation, not isolated.

Let us remember how the Bloc Québécois succeeded in getting the federal government to backtrack on its bill to deregulate bus transportation, Bill C-77. We know that the Liberal government wants to revive this bill in the fall. We are certain that our partners in the bus industry, the members of the Association des propriétaires d'autobus du Québec, will support us in our fight against deregulation of bus transportation.

• (1200)

We also know about the plans there were to cut back Via Rail services in the regions, the plans to franchise Via Rail. There is no guarantee that there will be franchisers fighting over the Montreal-Gaspé line.

The Bloc Québécois remains vigilant so that these regions, not just the Gaspé, but all outlying regions of Quebec, can have an effective transportation system.

We know that trucking is costly in time, because of distances, but also in money, because of the price of gas. As I have said, bus travel from one region to another would have ceased to exist if the Minister of Transport had been allowed to deregulate it as he intended to.

As well, for many months now, the devolution of regional airports by that same minister has been at a standstill, as he nibbles away at the envelopes designed to support those airports, which are not always cost-effective from a business point of view, but are cost-effective from the point of view of well-thought-out economic development.

As for the ports, the minister has decided to devolve unprofitable ports, once again based on a short-sighted approach. Is the role of a government to administer only cost-effective facilities and to refuse to support infrastructures that are a little less profitable but still an essential instrument of economic development?

Let us not forget that the people of Quebec, who pay \$32 billion in taxes every year, are not asking for handouts when they ask for services from the federal government. I trust that no one here in this House and no one in our audience thinks that the government is doing us a favour when it maintains ports, airports or transportation infrastructures such as VIA Rail. I trust no one sees this as a gift. Those are our tax dollars. We in Quebec pay \$32 billion in taxes annually.

Let us stop believing that the federal government, in its generosity, in its great goodness, is agreeing to maintain some facilities that are a little less cost-effective. It is quite simply just part of our tax money we are getting back.

Since 1993, the government's general transportation policy, whether land, sea or air transportation, has been one of withdrawal. Naturally, the most distant regions are the ones that suffer most.

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In the last throne speech, the government reminded us of our 19th century role as *coureurs des bois*. It seems that this Liberal government's policy for the 21st century is to revive this tradition in the regions by destroying all other means of transportation.

To remind hon. members of the background, let us recall how this abandonment of the transportation networks in the regions has taken shape since 1993. There was a policy of devolution of ports and airports, which left many a distant community with no transportation infrastructure, or with very little.

There is also the financial abandonment of rail passenger transportation, despite its essential nature for distant regions. We must not forget that the federal government has some responsibility under the Constitution in interprovincial transportation.

There are the icebreaking fees proposed by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, who wanted the ships using Quebec ports to pay 80% of the fees, although they use only 33% of the services. With a coalition of shipowners and the various users of the St. Lawrence—Great Lakes system, the Bloc Québécois succeeded in getting the Liberal government to back down, otherwise the ports of Quebec would have been at a competitive disadvantage compared to the ports of the maritime provinces.

I have already mentioned another example: the minister's desire to put an end to the principle of cross-subsidization in bus transportation.

• (1205)

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the Bloc Québécois will not be able to vote for this motion by the Progressive Conservative Party for, among other things, one very important reason: nothing in the motion confirms respect for provincial jurisdictions.

Since we do not trust the Liberal government, which has been so slipshod in a number of areas relating to transport, we cannot give it *carte blanche* to establish national transportation policies as it likes.

As my colleague from the Progressive Conservative Party will recall, the Minister of Finance was gloating in his latest budget speech in February over the \$95 billion in budget surpluses for the next five years.

Do you think we are going to let this government spend without control and run roughshod over provincial jurisdictions? No way. This is why agreeing with this motion would mean supporting the government's, especially the Liberal government's, desire to steamroller over provincial jurisdictions.

These are the reasons why we will oppose this motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the remarks made by the previous speaker from the Bloc. He said that he was not going to support the motion because there was nothing in it that dealt with the jurisdiction of the provinces over the feds. I just wondered if he would elaborate on his view of the subject.

Do we need a policy to correct some of the wide variety of problems, which he has outlined in his speech, on air, sea and land transportation from an economic development perspective, and on the problems with airports, including Montreal?

Aside from the fact that the motion does not acknowledge his concerns about the jurisdiction of the provinces, does he acknowledge that there are problems in our transportation situation?

Does he acknowledge that there is an inconsistent approach to transportation where some provinces may get a highway agreement and some provinces may not, where some may get money for the elimination of the Atlantic freight rate assistance program and some may not?

Does he agree that there are inconsistencies in the applications to privatize the airports, and that the way the government applies its policies are inconsistent and unco-ordinated from one transportation mode to another?

Does he agree that we need an overall policy that should be developed by all of the stakeholders, including the provinces and the provincial ministers of transport?

Would he agree, other than the fact that the motion does not address the provincial jurisdiction, that there are problems and an inconsistent, unco-ordinated system by the Department of Transport?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Guimond: Mr. Speaker, in fact, I share the member's views. There is a problem, and a much more consistent approach needs to be developed. Thought should also perhaps be given to intermodality.

I have no problem with that, but the motion we are debating today does not mention respect for provincial jurisdiction. It does not talk about a role for the provinces.

The member's explanation with respect to consulting the provinces is all very well, but there is nothing in the wording of the motion requiring respect for provincial jurisdiction. I will give him an example.

The Canada-Quebec municipalities infrastructure program should be in place by the end of the year. There were negotiations

and agreements with the provinces. The Bloc Québécois agreed with this program. We agreed that the municipalities should get two-thirds of grants for municipal projects such as water systems, sewage systems, asphaltting, the construction of recreation centres or community centres.

• (1210)

Bloc Québécois members agreed, provided that provincial jurisdiction was respected and that, in the case of Quebec, its department of municipal affairs had the last say in the selection of projects.

If the federal government came back with an infrastructure program that did not include this obligation to consult and that did not respect provincial jurisdiction, the Bloc Québécois would not be in agreement. The same is true for transportation infrastructures. A \$600 million envelope will apparently be set aside for the provinces for transportation infrastructures.

We will have no problem with that, as long as the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces is respected and the provinces are consulted and take part in the decisions, always bearing in mind their jurisdiction.

The key is there, and that is what I wish to say to my colleague. There is nothing in his motion about a consultation process and respect for exclusive jurisdictions, so that the provinces have the final say in their respective areas of responsibility.

That is why we are unable to support the motion as moved.

[*English*]

Ms. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the New Democratic Party to speak to the motion from the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester.

I will read the motion just so that everybody can hear it. My hon. colleague from the Bloc had some issue with the provinces not being acknowledged. Personally, I do not see anything in the motion that negates the provinces from being involved in this.

However, I think it is extremely important for the government side of the House to hear and think about the motion because the minister said that he could not support it. I am at a loss to understand why he cannot support it because if the government is not doing these things it has a serious problem.

This is what the motion states:

That this House recognize the urgent need to address the serious transportation problems facing the Canadian people, and call upon the government to establish a comprehensive national transportation policy that demonstrates leadership on this

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issue and which provides solutions to the problems shared coast to coast by all Canadians.

How on earth can the government not support that motion? If it is not doing that, what the heck is it doing there? If it is not doing that it should not be there.

If the members on the government side vote against this motion, everybody in Canada better be giving their heads a knock in the next election. If the government cannot address this issue and have a transportation policy in place, we have serious problems. It would be like the finance minister not having a plan for what we will do years down the road.

Before I go any further, and before I get too involved in the whole issue of transportation, I want to mention that I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from the Yukon.

Without question, my fellow New Democratic MPs and I will be voting yes to this motion. There is also no question that the Liberal government has completely dropped the ball when it comes to transportation, and we will see that clearly tonight for sure.

There is also no question that Canada needs the federal government to show leadership in dealing with national transportation issues. As the New Democratic transportation critic, I have been saying this for a long time, and I am glad to see that the Conservative Party has been listening.

I have to say that it seems very odd that this motion today is coming from the Conservative Party. After all, when that party was in power during the Mulroney years—and the transport minister mentioned this as well—it was just as bad in transportation policy as the Liberal government is today. In a lot of areas, the Liberal government has just continued with the policies put in place by the Mulroney Conservative government.

All of a sudden the Conservatives say that the government has to show leadership on national transportation policy. Where was the leadership when the Conservatives were in power?

Let us look for a moment at the Mulroney Conservative government's record. This is the party that deregulated the airline industry in Canada causing the crisis we have today. Of course the Liberal government continued the deregulation so it is just as much to blame. It can go ahead and blame it on the Tories, and go back and forth, but the bottom line is that it is just as much to blame.

As a result of deregulation, Air Canada drove its only competitor, Canadian Airlines, out of business and now we have a monopoly, making things very tough for Canadians to get around and to fly.

• (1215)

Where was the reform alliance? Where were its members through all these last six or seven years while all this was going on?

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They were there cheering the Tories and the Liberals on deregulation and privatization and not doing anything to force the government into going against the policy of privatizing. They were doing nothing to force the government to come up with a transportation policy that addressed the social needs of Canadians as well as just making a buck.

The Mulroney Conservatives were also the ones who made the deepest cuts to VIA Rail. Of course the Liberal government continued that policy too which has caused a lot of problems for communities in my riding of Churchill and many others across the country.

When we look closely we see that the Liberal government did not change much of anything when it replaced the Mulroney Conservative government in 1993. It reminds me of a fable Tommy Douglas used to tell, the story of Mouseland. Many New Democrats and people with any kind of social conscience in Canada have heard the story of Mouseland, but I would urge those who have not to take the time to watch it on video or read it. It is fairly easy for people to understand if they are willing to take the time to view it.

The mice in Mouseland always elected cats to parliament. There was one party of white cats and one party of black cats, and we all know who those are, the Tories and the Liberals. But no matter which party the mice elected, the government always made laws that benefited cats instead of mice.

For anybody out there who has not figured it out, all of those ordinary Canadians out there, the everyday people putting in their 8, 10, 16 hours of work every day toiling to make a dollar, and all those people out there fighting to improve things for all Canadians are the mice that are not being represented by those parties and not having policies come forth that benefit all Canadians. What the mice needed to do was elect a government of mice instead of cats. It seems pretty obvious does it not?

The point Tommy Douglas was making is as true today as it was 40 years ago. There really is not much difference between the Liberal government and the Mulroney Conservative government. The Liberals are red, the Conservatives are blue, but they are both cats. That is why no one should be surprised when the Liberal government gets elected and continues Conservative policies.

While we are talking about cats, we now have the green cats, the reform alliance. I mention reform alliance because although the party has changed its name, people still see the Reform Party. The Canadian Alliance tries to get them to not think of reform because a lot of Canadians now realize that what the Reform Party did was to continue to support those policies. Those members will try to fool a few Canadians as to who they are voting for in the next election, but Canadians are a whole lot smarter than that. They will know, and we will make sure they know, that the reform alliance party is still the party that supports Conservative and Liberal policies that do not benefit all Canadians.

The man who set most of the Liberal government's transport policies was none other than Doug Young. Doug Young was a minister in the Liberal government until he lost his seat in the 1997 election. For a lot of that time he was the transport minister.

One of the first things he did as transport minister was to eliminate the Crow rate subsidy for western farmers. There was no question the Mulroney government would have eliminated the Crow subsidy. It would have taken a period of time to eliminate it, but the bottom line is that it would have eliminated it. This was the single biggest blow to the western farmers. It is one of the biggest reasons for the crisis facing so many farm families on the prairies today.

It is pretty obvious that if we do one thing downward, we see the crisis that develops as a result of it. What did members of the Reform Party say when Doug Young and the Liberals got rid of the Crow rate? They supported it. The Reform Party out there fighting for farmers in Canada supported the elimination of the Crow rate. Meanwhile other countries were still receiving subsidies. The party which says it supports the west sided with the Liberal government, the big banks and the rail companies against farm families.

Whatever happened to Doug Young? We all know what happened to Doug Young. He is with the reform alliance. What is extremely interesting is that Doug Young, the former transport minister who set all these policies the Liberal government is following is now with the reform alliance. And the Liberal government continues with the policies he set as transport minister. Is there any difference? Not a bit; Canadian Alliance, Conservative or Liberal, there is no difference. As Tommy Douglas would have said, a cat is a cat whether it is red, blue or green.

• (1220)

I want to talk about the New Democratic Party's transport policy. The most important thing is that our transport policy benefits ordinary Canadians, not corporate special interests. Canadians pay millions each year in fuel taxes and only a tiny fraction of that money goes back into transportation. The roads and highways in many parts of the country are in terrible shape because of federal neglect. This hurts our economy because most trade in goods is conducted by road and it makes the roads less safe for Canadians to drive on. For the amount Canadians pay in fuel taxes, they deserve quality roads.

It also goes beyond that. We heard my hon. colleague from the Bloc talk about it. The people of Quebec have given up hope on the federal government because they have seen that unless there is a federal government which supports all communities and all the provinces, we cannot survive. They have given up hope on Canada. The rest of us have not. We are not going to give up hope. We are going to fight. We are going to keep the federal government honest and make it put some dollars back into all of Canada.

I am going to conclude my remarks by reiterating that the New Democratic Party believes the federal government has a vital role to play in transportation. Federal investment in transport is important for the economy as well as the safety of Canadian travellers. Transportation is vital to linking the communities in our country from coast to coast to coast. It has been falling apart under the Liberal government. Train stations are closing, airlines are shutting down, communities are being cut off and highways are crumbling. The federal government has to make a commitment to ensure that our country has a safe, effective and efficient national transportation system and it has to do it now.

If the government does not agree it has a part in that, it will vote against this motion tonight. But if it truly is a government that is out there to ensure we have a national transportation policy, I cannot see how it could possibly not support this motion.

Hon. David M. Collette: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if I could have the indulgence of hon. members to get unanimous consent so that we could briefly revert to introduction of bills to permit the introduction and first reading of a bill entitled an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act.

You may remember, Mr. Speaker, that I tabled a draft bill yesterday afternoon at three o'clock. This is the so-called famous grain bill. If we could have first reading right now, we could proceed expeditiously to debate this matter later in the week.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to revert to introduction of government bills at this time?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member from the NDP for her support even though we have fundamentally different perspectives on how this should work out and how it should be handled. I do take exception to her statement that the Conservative policy is much the same as the Liberal policy.

I would like to refer her to a study done by the University of Manitoba Transport Institute. It is from a very distinguished province with a very distinguished university. I am sure she will agree with me on that. It reports that when the Liberals came into power there was zero revenue surplus in the Department of Transport. Considering all the revenue in and all the expenses out, it pretty much broke even according to the Manitoba study. It projects that by next year the Department of Transport will have a surplus of \$3.9 billion based on revenue from gas taxes, fuel oil taxes and all the other sources of revenue and its expenses. That is

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\$3.9 billion that has been taken out of the transportation system since the Liberals came to power.

Does the hon. member think that the \$3.9 billion would have had an impact on the roads in Manitoba, perhaps the viability of the airports and the possibility of a mass transit system in the country?

Ms. Bev Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any question that more dollars should be going from the federal government to the provinces on transportation throughout Canada. That is all the provinces. There is no question those dollars need to go there. Taking dollars from the fuel taxes is what Canadians are indicating they want to see happen.

• (1225)

It is a lot easier for government to go out, spend dollars and have support for spending those dollars if Canadians can see the direct relationship of fuel tax dollars going into roads, infrastructure and also the environment. There is no question that people think that dollars coming in from fuel taxes should be going into the environment as well.

We have seen the Liberal government create one slush fund after another with taxpayer dollars. It is not providing the services such as health care and education. It is not putting enough dollars into the environment and transportation. It is creating its own little slush fund. I do not know about other Canadians, but quite frankly I expect to see a lot of those slush fund dollars pop up in Liberal ridings prior to the next election. The bottom line is, that is not how government should operate. We should not have to wait until prior to an election to see some of our taxpayer dollars benefiting all Canadians. Those services should be provided all the time. That is what we want to see the government do.

Forget about the slush funds, a slush fund for the HRDC minister, another for the justice minister and another for the transport minister. There is nothing for the speakers, but there are slush funds here, there and everywhere. The government is going to get everybody inside prior to an election and then it is just going to give them a good one after the election.

Hon. David M. Collette: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I was on my way over to see the member for Cumberland—Colchester when my friend from Churchill finished her speech. I did not have the opportunity to ask him and his party for consent to revert to introduction of bills, which I had asked of the other parties earlier and to which they agreed. We are not trying to put anything on anybody. We are just trying to get the bill read for the first time right now so that we can start debating it. All members have the bill. It was tabled yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to seek unanimous consent to revert to the introduction of bills.

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The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

Ms. Louise Hardy (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it fortunate that we are having this debate on transportation for a few reasons.

A short time ago I listened to the Minister of Transport say before the merger of the two major airlines that we faced a duopoly which was not very good, that it was a terrible situation to have a duopoly and that somehow having a monopoly was going to be a better situation. I have a couple of current examples since the merger has taken place to show quite clearly that it is not a benefit to Canadians.

The first is a letter I received from a constituent. I have to explain that in the Yukon and all of the north we depend on air travel more than any other mode, beside the one road out of the Yukon which is the Alaska Highway. The Yukon has the Frostbite Music Festival, the Sourdough Rendezvous Festival, the Arctic Winter Games and various conventions. The storytelling festival is coming up, as well as the Dawson City Music Festival.

A very able travel agent managed to negotiate a special rate to assist cultural groups to bring people north. Otherwise one positively could not afford any of this to happen. I will quote from her letter.

Since the merger took place, Air Canada has done the following. Individuals who had purchased regular fare tickets and had asked to change their flight dates by a few days were told that their tickets could only be changed if they paid full fare rates, \$1,500, as opposed to the \$100 to \$200 fee that Canadian Air used to charge for such a transaction.

People who have electronic bookings, tickets, now can't get them changed to hard copy regular tickets.

Canadian Air used to have zone fares for arts groups which allowed tickets to be purchased at less than regular fare rates. Zone fares have now been cancelled.

That is the end of cheap fares to the Yukon. She mentioned that it is almost impossible now to get a booking on air mile points out of the north and that there are rumours that the requirements will go up to 25,000 points. It used to be considered a short haul of 15,000 points out of the north.

I have another example. As a member of parliament, I travel extensively. I was heading home from Ottawa last week. We were told that our regularly scheduled flight No. 3139, which was supposed to be direct from Ottawa, leaving at 6.30, would be delayed. It did not have enough gas so we would be stopping in Winnipeg to refuel. When we got to Winnipeg we were informed

that the pilots had already exceeded the time they were allowed to work but out of consideration for their passengers they would continue on the flight all the way to Vancouver.

• (1230)

There is no way they would not have known these pilots would be exceeding their allowed working time before they had even left the airport in Ottawa. The fact is we could not get off the plane in Winnipeg. There was no choice of airline to take.

I would like assurances from our Minister of Transport that this is not the regular practice and that this is not what travellers will face. We are talking about the safety of Canadian citizens in the air as well as the pilots. What kind of choice did the pilots have? Obviously there were none. They were expected to carry on with the flight. The fact that we were given the impression the pilots had agreed to do it at the last moment was completely unacceptable.

Canada does not have a national highway policy. The motion today is a chance for us to highlight that point. It is also a chance to highlight what we are looking for in transportation policy overall.

It has to be linked to a rational energy policy. It has to be linked to our use of fossil fuels. It has to be linked to our environment and the effect of fuels on our environment and on the ozone layer. Canada is a northern climate and is more susceptible to the ravages of environmental degradation from the use of fossil fuels. We should take all those issues into consideration when it comes to transportation.

Another point I wanted to raise is that as a representative of a northern riding I want to stress that the north depends on air travel. Yukon has one road. There is one road into the Northwest Territories. We have to fly into Nunavut. The rest of transportation depends on either water in the summer or airlines in the winter. It makes living extremely expensive.

I mentioned the effects on cultural travel, but the effects on medical travel can be considered a crisis in some situations. In case anybody does not know the cost of a ticket out of Yukon, it is \$1,500 just to Vancouver. If one needs to get anywhere eastward one is looking at \$4,000 for a regular ticket to Ottawa. There are no bargains for people who have family crises outside Yukon. They have to pay \$4,000. The flights are absolutely, incredibly packed and oversold. If one has an emergency one is lucky to even get out.

Very few people can come up with \$4,000 for one person to get out of Yukon if he or she has to go to a funeral, attend a family member during a medical emergency, or accompany a family member who has been Medivaced to either Vancouver or Edmonton. Those are the usual places. They cannot afford to do it. I do not think that is fair. I do not think that is what we should be accepting.

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I would like to raise one last point. The last part of the motion indicates that the government needs to demonstrate leadership on this issue and provide solutions to the problems shared from coast to coast. We have a third coast. I would like the Conservative Party to think about that today and for the rest of its tenure. Canada goes from coast to coast to coast. We have an Arctic coastline as well.

Part of being a northerner is being forgotten about. It is like a huge piece of our country somehow does not exist. Often I will get maps from different people which completely cut off all three territories. I do not think a political party that claims to represent the complete country should neglect the north and not recognize the third coastline which belongs to this country.

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the two NDP members and the specific examples they gave regarding the kinds of problems in our transportation network.

We must keep in mind that we are talking about a network that is composed of thousands of components. One of the most crucial components besides the federal government is the provincial governments.

• (1235)

I would like to hear from the NDP representatives the definition of co-operation to which they keep referring, the co-operation of the federal government with the provincial government. How in their policy would they be able to get provincial input into their so-called co-operative model and liaison with provincial governments if the provincial governments have only one track or one goal in mind, would like to have everything their way and no other way is acceptable to them?

Ms. Louise Hardy: Mr. Speaker, I did not raise co-operation though I think it is critical. The northern highways I have been on are in incredible shape. The last time I drove out I took the B.C. highway. I swore I would never take the Stewart-Cassiar again. It was beat to pieces by the great big trucks travelling on it. It had not been maintained. I drove for hours and hours and hours, 10 hours in some cases, and there is no gas station. I do not think that is acceptable and I have decided that I will not drive on it again.

As far as co-operation goes, we have one road and one airline out of the north. Who are we supposed to be co-operating with? We do not have a choice. Transportation is very limited. The provinces and territories should co-operate federally so that we can have a cohesive transportation network which makes it possible for Canadians to get where they need to go and to be able to afford it. It is a three day drive from Whitehorse to Vancouver or a three day drive from Whitehorse to Edmonton. The distances are immense. The cost of gas is immense. People still have to eat and sleep and need places to go. Yes, we do need to co-operate.

When it comes to safety, I gave an example of flying from Ottawa to Vancouver where for me the issue was safety. I do not want to fly with pilots who have overworked. I know what I feel like when I am tired. I do not want to be in a bus when someone is tired and driving. I certainly do not want to be in an airplane when somebody is flying who should not be flying and has exceeded his or her hours of work.

I do not see safety as something that can be compromised or about which we can say we will have some sort of voluntary safety standards. Safety has to be clear cut. We have to expect a standard of safety. Now that we have a monopoly does not mean we should not expect a level of safety that will keep us all getting from one airport to the next.

Ms. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport in his questions to you.

The Deputy Speaker: They were not to me. They were to her.

Ms. Bev Desjarlais: I thought I had to go through you, Mr. Speaker. I know there was an implication from the parliamentary secretary that the reason the government could not accomplish anything is that it cannot seem to get the provinces onside. My question to you is that I am—

The Deputy Speaker: The question is for the member for Yukon.

Ms. Bev Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, this is almost becoming like a trick way to get my question out. Fair enough.

The implication is that the government cannot get the provinces onside. Is the member willing to accept the defeatist attitude by the government that we should give up if we cannot get the provinces to agree with everything? Should we just not bother with anything and say to heck with a national transportation policy?

If the government is doing that, as far as I am concerned it is doing exactly what the Bloc is saying with respect to Quebec. It has given up on the federal government. It will not work so it wants out of here. Is that what she thinks the parliamentary secretary is saying as well, that they will just give up on the provinces?

Ms. Louise Hardy: Mr. Speaker, I hope that is not what the parliamentary secretary was saying because it just leads into the whole sense that parliament is irrelevant and why are we bothering to be here if we have no role.

We do have a role. We cannot compromise when it comes to safety and issues of national importance. We have to expect, demand and put in place the laws we need to make sure we have what we need and that parliament is worth something.

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• (1240)

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Saint John. I would like to say a few words in the transportation debate. Coming from an island province, transportation is very important to us and is always uppermost in our minds.

Canada is a physically huge country. From the very beginning of its history as a nation, transportation issues have been very prominent on the national stage. At first it was the building of our Transcontinental Railroad. Then came the highways and the airports. It seems we are always talking about transportation in the House of Commons. Well we should be, because it is very important to every province in Canada.

When Newfoundland joined Confederation back in 1949, our transportation link to the mainland was written into our terms of union, which are part of the Constitution of Canada. It meant that we had a constitutional guarantee of passenger and rail ferry service between the island and the mainland of Canada.

In the 1980s, with the railway still losing money and the service being taken over more and more by trucks in the province of Newfoundland, the federal government and the province of Newfoundland signed a deal to give up the railway in exchange for about \$1 billion. Those \$1 billion were used to upgrade the Trans-Canada Highway, to rebuild it.

However we still have a constitutional guarantee of a car-ferry link to the mainland. That link is often in the news, as we are all very much aware. When I say our current ferry service is often in the news, it is not often good news. It is generally bad news with continual complaints of poor scheduling, poor accommodations, long lineups and whatnot.

It is a very costly service for the people of Newfoundland. Let me give an indication of how costly it is. A family of four, travelling in a car from North Sydney to Port aux Basques pays \$62 for the car, \$20 for each of the two adults and \$10 for children under 13, for a total of \$122 not including the cost of food and other incidentals.

If the family were travelling by way of Argentia to the mainland of Canada it would cost \$124 for the car, \$55 for each adult and \$27.50 for each child, for a total of \$289 to travel that small, narrow body of water between Nova Scotia and the province of Newfoundland. That is cost prohibitive.

It is no wonder that three-quarters of American tourists who head into the maritimes never make it to the province of Newfoundland. The Atlantic Ocean is there. The ferry lineup is there. The cost is there. All these factors serve to deter tourists from coming to the province of Newfoundland.

We in Newfoundland have always made the point that our ferry link with the mainland is part of our Trans-Canada Highway. Therefore, why should it cost a traveller more to travel by ferry than it does to drive a similar distance on the Trans-Canada Highway? There is no reason in God's earthly world why that should happen. Instead the rates keep going up and the service seems to be continually getting worse.

• (1245)

Not long ago I raised in the House of Commons the possibility of freezing these rates for an indefinite period of time. The minister was not very receptive to that idea. The government did freeze the rates for this season only, mainly because of the St. John's West byelection. In order to strengthen our growing tourism industry I feel there is a case to be made now for an extended freeze.

I would prefer that the rates be reduced to reflect the cost of equivalent highway travel. Given the reaction last week when I raised this issue with the minister in the House, I do not think he would agree with that. In any case, there is a case to be made for it. Prince Edward Island has a fixed link. Therefore, I cannot see why the people of Newfoundland and Labrador should not have a fixed rate.

Another matter which comes up continually in Newfoundland with respect to the ferry service is the labour relations issue. The workers on the ferry are unionized and have the right to strike. Year after year we are threatened with a strike at the height of the tourism season, about this time each year, just as that very important season is about to begin. That takes its toll on tourists, who do not want to run the risk of being stranded on Newfoundland because of a labour dispute. Sometimes the possibility of a strike is almost as detrimental as the strike itself.

The solution here—and I want to offer the minister a solution instead of a complaint—is to have the ferry service declared an essential service, with workers being given the right to some kind of binding arbitration mechanism. That way both the workers and the travelling public would be protected. However, to date no federal government has come up with a satisfactory answer to that problem.

The majority of the board of directors of the ferry service should be from the province of Newfoundland. Unless it has been changed recently, I do not think the majority of the board of directors is from Newfoundland. After all, the only reason the ferry system exists is to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and people who want to visit the province. The reason the majority of the board of directors should be from Newfoundland is because if we inundate Marine Atlantic's corporate culture with Newfoundlanders we can make service to the Island of Newfoundland its reason for being, instead of a sorrowful duty that it is compelled to perform under the constitution of Canada.

The federal government and Marine Atlantic make the people of Newfoundland feel that they are doing us a favour by providing the service. That attitude seems to permeate the entire operation. That attitude has to change if the service is to be improved.

The importance of improving the ferry service has been made even more important, given the fact that the airline industry has become a monopoly. Air Canada has a virtual monopoly in the outlying areas of the country, making it even more difficult for the travelling public. It is hard to get a flight. Flights are overbooked and flights are cancelled. The service, generally, is not what it used to be. Competition is the best cure. Competition is very important for people who live on an island.

• (1250)

The problem, again, is that Newfoundland is an island province with a very small population. Under these circumstances it is difficult to get a break. Fighting those circumstances was one of the reasons I was sent here to the Parliament of Canada with six other MPs.

I am very disappointed with the Liberal members from Newfoundland. They do not seem to be doing the job of raising the important issues that need to be raised, like Marine Atlantic, like harbour clean-up, like the health issue which is plaguing our province, like Voisey's Bay and Churchill Falls and so many more issues that are vital to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a bit surprised and shocked by the comments which the member for St. John's East has presented to this House regarding the ferry service. He knows very well that this government has gone full speed ahead, has increased capacity and has leased a larger vessel. We will have a brand new vessel crossing the strait next year. We are dealing with the huge problem of capacity. Millions of dollars have already been devoted to that service.

I want to go back to the comment the member made pertaining to the freezing of the rates, and even the lowering of the rates.

The rates are determined by a multitude of factors, which are cost factors, such as the depreciation of the vessel, labour costs, fringe benefits, maintenance and landing fees. I could go on and on. Collectively, those result in what we call a fee per customer.

What the member is recommending is that this whole host of costs be frozen. I would ask the member if he and his party are recommending cost controls, cost freezes and the freezing of all prices in his province.

Mr. Norman Doyle: No, Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that there should be cost controls on everything in the province, if that is what he is asking. I am not saying, either, that some significant

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improvements have not been made to the ferry service in Newfoundland.

What I am saying, however, is that there has to be some recognition of the fact that we are an island province. There has to be some recognition of the fact that the distance between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland should have a rate charged which is equivalent to what it would cost to travel the same distance on the Trans-Canada Highway. I do not think that is an unreasonable request.

Yes, I am very much aware that there are heavy costs associated with running the ferry service between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. No one can deny that. However, the point has been made continuously to the federal government over the last 15 or 20 years that people should pay an equivalent cost to that which people pay when travelling on the Trans-Canada Highway.

I quoted to him a moment ago the rate if we were travelling from Port-aux-Basques to Argentia. The fee is \$124 for the car, \$55 for each of the adults and \$27.50 for each child, for a total of \$289. That is cost-prohibitive. Is it any wonder that people travelling from the United States to Atlantic Canada will very often stop in Nova Scotia? They will not take the time to go across to Newfoundland because it is cost-prohibitive.

We are asking the federal government to recognize that and to say that the costs will be the equivalent rate that travellers would pay on the Trans-Canada Highway for that distance. That is not an unreasonable request.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I just wondered if the hon. member for St. John's East could help us. It is my understanding that Marine Atlantic had a board of directors that spent about a year travelling around the world looking for alternative craft, alternative ferries, to provide better service.

• (1255)

It is not only money that discourages tourists from travelling to Newfoundland; it is also the service.

This week a lady asked me how to contact Marine Atlantic. She wanted to make a reservation. She was unable to make a reservation for her family to travel to Newfoundland this summer. We are trying to help her. If she and her family are not able to go to Newfoundland, that will mean lost tourism dollars.

Could the hon. member enlighten us as to how Marine Atlantic goes about purchasing new ferries? These are substantial investments of \$40 million to \$70 million. There was a recent deal on one new ferry, plus a short term fast ferry for the summer. Could the hon. member elaborate on the process?

Mr. Norman Doyle: Mr. Speaker, arrangements were made for the purchase of a new ferry. We have been receiving quite a number

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of complaints from brokers who were supposed to be given an opportunity to bid on the purchase of the ferries. Some of the brokers have been telling us that the system that is currently being used by Marine Atlantic for the purchase of these ferries is not a good system, that it leaves a lot to be desired and that it does not seem to be a transparent system. We have received quite a number of complaints about that.

The making of reservations on the ferry continues to be a nightmare for people who want to travel to the province of Newfoundland.

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from St. John's East, Newfoundland for sharing his time with me.

This morning we heard the hon. Minister of Transport state that I was not going to lose my airport in Saint John. I want him to know that I have a few questions and I wish he were in the House. I would like to know why the minister has made a deal whereby I have to pay \$800 and only get a muffin when I fly to Ottawa. If I was to fly out of Moncton, I would pay \$300 and I would get a full course meal. I have not figured this one out yet. I will speak to the Minister of Transport to see if he can get me a little more than a muffin.

If the government wants the economy to boom, there is a need for all modes of transportation. If the government wants the economy in the maritime provinces and Newfoundland to boom, give us all our modes of transportation, which we had before the Liberal government came into power. We had all modes of transportation. We had VIA Rail. A brand new train station was built. Then, Mr. Young, who was the minister of transport, came to Saint John and closed the brand new train station that was built just six months before the 1993 election.

We have the most modern shipyard there is in Canada. When it comes to the shipbuilding industry, let me say that we would like to have built a ferry for Newfoundland. Why was the government going all around the world looking for a ferry? We could build a ferry. My understanding was that there was some sort of agreement that if the government needed ferries they would be built in Canada.

On October 8, 1999, Frank McKenna, the previous premier of the province of New Brunswick, openly criticized the federal government's lack of vision for Atlantic Canada. He is quoted as saying that the Liberal record is terrible and that the government exhibits total ignorance when it comes to shipbuilding. This is from Frank McKenna, who the government just asked to run as a Liberal in the next election. I have to say that he knew what it was doing was wrong for Atlantic Canada.

My understanding is that a report was presented by the members of the Atlantic Liberal caucus which states that the Atlantic

Canadian economy is hitting an all time low and that part of the solution to the problem is to bring the shipbuilding industry back up to its potential and proven strength by adopting a new national shipbuilding policy. This is the Liberal's Atlantic caucus making this statement.

• (1300)

However, the Minister of Industry, with whom I have spoken, has told me that I also have to deal with the Minister of Transport. I want to know what we can do about shipbuilding. As everyone knows, we need ships if we are going out on the water. We are not going to swim across the Bay of Fundy, that is for sure.

We have been asking for a national shipbuilding policy. All we have been asking for is to make us equal with all the other countries around the world. The contents of a shipbuilding policy would be the provision of an improved export financing and loan guarantee program, similar to the title 11 program in the United States.

Here we are with the Jones act. What do we do? The U.S. is allowed to bid on ship repairs throughout Canada. It can also bid on shipbuilding contracts if the ships are needed in Canada. Can we do that down in the United States? No we cannot. It is now time for the government to take the stand it must take to correct this.

There is the exclusion of new construction ships built in Canadian shipyards from the present Revenue Canada leasing regulations, and also a provisional refundable tax credit to Canadian shipowners or shipbuilders who contract to build a ship or contract for conversion with change of mission, mid-life refit or major refit in a Canadian shipyard.

We could put our shipyards to work in Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and right out to B.C., right across the country. I am talking about 25,000 people. They have to get the parts and the equipment and it is all produced right here in our own country. Why are we not doing this? Why has the government not done this?

There was an Ernst & Young report that was done in 1993 for the government on the future of shipbuilding in Canada. On page 119 of that report it stated that if the government did nothing to help the industry become more competitive, then an estimated 5,000 jobs would be lost just in the shipyards.

Right now 4,000 jobs have been lost in Saint John, New Brunswick. They came up from Louisiana, U.S.A. and interviewed our people. They said that they were the best shipbuilders they had ever interviewed and they offered them jobs down in the U.S. Why would we train and put our people to work building the best ships in the world and then turn around and see them going to the United States or to other parts of the world building ships because we have not done anything?

Earlier today I mentioned that I had never seen Canada's first incorporated city by royal charter, which is mine and which had its

215th anniversary two weeks ago, like this. Our city was booming in 1993. The young people who went to Bishop's University used VIA Rail. When the last VIA Rail passenger service came into my city I went down to meet with the passengers and there were tears in their eyes. They said "Mrs. Wayne, we have to do something".

We tried. I have to say that if we want to put the people to work, where the men and women can feed their families, if we want to give them dignity, educate them and look after them, we must make sure they can go to work each day and have money in their pockets to do that. The only way this can be done, the only way jobs will be created and the only way industry will move is to provide all modes of transportation. We need to get the politics out of this.

I talked earlier about what has been happening to us back home. I look at our sugar industry. Do members know that our sugar refinery was upgraded by the previous government? What did this government do with Canada's oldest sugar refinery when it came to power? It went to the United States and worked out a deal for it to ship in by truck, by ship and everything, over 100,000 tonnes into Canada and we lowered our quota to 8,000. This put the truckers out of work, the shippers out of work and even the airplanes, everything.

• (1305)

There has not been a good vision for the future. I am really concerned about what will happen to us in the maritime provinces. The Ernst & Young report definitely stated that there was a need for a shipbuilding policy. Of the 68 shipbuilding nations on the planet today, 67 of them have a national shipbuilding policy. We are the only country that does shipbuilding that does not have one.

The issue of IMF money supporting Asian shipyards is cause for concern. The bottom line is that tax dollars from our own shipyard workers are potentially being used to put them out of work by unfairly subsidizing the competition through the IMF.

I want our people to have their dignity. I want our people to be treated fairly. I want the House of Commons to have a better understanding of the Atlantic region, for there has not and it has hurt the people dramatically. I will continue to fight for our people until we get all modes of transportation back where they should be.

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, there is no stronger defender of the province of New Brunswick than the member who just spoke.

The member mentioned the shipyard in our home province of New Brunswick, specifically the Saint John shipyard. About 10 years ago the Government of Canada awarded the largest contract ever, I believe, to the private sector to build our frigates. It accomplished a couple of things. Not only did it put our shipbuilders to work—and the member commented on the expertise and the

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level of proficiency in those shipyards—but it also strengthened our military, something that the present government has not done very much about.

The point I want to make and the question I have for the member is on a national shipbuilding policy. The member mentioned in her speech that there are now 4,000 workers less in the port city of Saint John because of the lack of a shipbuilding policy. In fact, I think we are the only industrialized country in the western world without a national shipbuilding policy. The United States has one, although we never want to admit it and neither does it, but it does have one in terms of tax incentives and whatnot. It is the same for the European countries.

When the province of New Brunswick went out to secure a new ferry for the Grand Manan run in my riding of New Brunswick Southwest I believe that the shipyard that was awarded that contract was from the Netherlands. Again, that is another country that has a shipbuilding policy.

The situation we now have in New Brunswick and the rest of Canada is that when provinces, communities or the private sector go out to secure a vessel they are often underbid by those other countries, those jurisdictions that do have a policy that supports their shipbuilders.

What reason does the government give her as to why we do not have a shipbuilding policy to help those people who need help, and in fact helping Canada and the provinces along the way by doing that?

Mrs. Elsie Wayne: Mr. Speaker, I have risen 28 times in the House of Commons with regard to shipbuilding and I have received the same reply each time from the Minister of Industry. The reply is "We have a national shipbuilding policy".

The national shipbuilding policy that we have dates back to the early 1980s when all the countries in the OECD entered into an agreement. However, we are the only country adhering to that agreement.

When we talk about what is required, there are only three or four things that are required in order to make us competitive. We must become competitive. It is estimated that for every shipyard worker's job there are at least two others created in the support industry. It is not just us, it is the industries out there as well.

• (1310)

I had an opportunity to speak to the Canadian Construction Association in Ottawa a couple of weeks ago. At the present time the Canadian Construction Association pays out \$31 billion in wages. Of the \$31 billion, \$16 billion in taxes goes back to Ottawa so we can create more jobs in other industries.

We must have a national shipbuilding policy. When we do, we will see what will happen to the people in the maritime provinces.

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It tugs at my heart when I hear people say that they are sitting there with their hands out. No, they are not sitting there with their hands out. We have been exporting grains from central and western Canada to other countries for centuries. We want to keep our people. We want them and their families to stay, and we can do that if we get a national shipbuilding policy.

Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I actually wanted to rise to ask a question of the hon. member for Saint John. However, I am sure she is listening carefully and will ponder what I will ask and then get back to me later.

As members know, the member for Saint John is a very passionate person who always defends what she thinks is appropriate, and I quite respect that.

At the recent policy convention that the Progressive Conservative Party held, it seems to me that it wanted to spend \$23 billion a year in debt reduction and another \$100 billion in tax relief over the next number of years. This would total in excess of \$200 billion. This was all before even a cent was allocated for infrastructure in this all important transport area.

The member spoke a minute ago about the early 1980s, which was the time of Mr. Mulroney and high deficits. She knows this better than I, but the hon. member's former colleague, Mr. Crosby, one of those great Mulroneyites, even questioned the wisdom of that. I thought that would be a good question to ask the member for Saint John, but I am sure she will get back to me at another time.

It is a great honour to speak to this particular issue. It is very important in terms of what we on the government side are doing in this area. I am pleased to speak on the many initiatives that are under way that respond directly to the motion that has been raised by the Progressive Conservative Party, misguided as that motion may be.

Transport Canada's top priority is safety. We all know that and we support it because that is a key objective. Our objective in that fashion has always been to ensure high standards for safe transportation systems. Because of these, Canadians can count on one of the safest transportation systems in the world. It is not every country that can say that, so I think we should be grateful for the kinds of benefits that are in place as a result of these initiatives.

The safety and the security of Canada's transportation system continues to lead the federal government's initiatives. This commitment is reflected in all the activities of Transport Canada. I would argue and the people of Waterloo—Wellington, the area that I represent would argue that indeed is a good objective.

The department's focus is on developing practical safety programs, effective regulations and on ensuring that these regulations and standards are followed, in particular, it regulates and co-ordinates safety related matters in several areas. I want to take a

moment to outline what they are: Aeronautics at airports, air and marine navigation, marine shipping facilities, commercial shipping, new motor vehicle standards, railways, bridges and canals connecting provinces with each other or with the United States of America.

Responsibility for transportation safety in Canada involves many stakeholders, including the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments as well as industry and non-governmental organizations.

Transport Canada works closely with all stakeholders to ensure high standards in transportation safety, but especially with the Transportation Safety Board and the provincial governments to maintain nationwide system safety. Co-operation with foreign government agencies and organizations on several international safety initiatives is also being carried out. That is important in bilateral and multilateral ways.

• (1315)

As I said earlier, the Canadian transportation system is considered one of the safest in the world. Transportation occurrence statistics published by the Transportation Safety Board for the marine, aviation and rail modes show long term downward trends in accidents, accident rates and fatalities. Similarly, Canada's road safety record has continued to improve steadily over the last decades. That is important because Canadians want that and Canadians expect their systems in place to ensure that.

In 1999 accidents in aviation, marine and rail were down 8%, 16% and 6% respectively, below the previous five years average. Fatalities in aviation were 20% lower, in marine 17% lower, and in rail 6% lower. The aviation sector showed the fewest accidents involving Canadian registered aircraft in the last 25 years. Likewise road collisions also represented the lowest number during this period as well.

Transport Canada has a vision to have the safest transportation system in the world, a vision shared by all of us I would hope, with long term outcomes of protecting life, health and the environment, as well as property and maintaining public confidence in the safety and security of our transportation system. The department continues to strive for this through education, safety awareness, the establishment of effective policies and rules, continuous monitoring of the transportation system, as well as the enforcement of the laws governing transportation safety.

It is recognized that transportation safety is a shared responsibility between the federal and the provincial governments as well as industry stakeholders. And let us not forget of course the travelling public who are all important in this equation.

The government is moving toward a greater emphasis on performance based regulations where demonstrating the achieve-

ment of results is key. People want that kind of accountability. Mr. Speaker, you want it, I want it, parliamentarians want it, and all Canadians want it.

Greater emphasis is placed on industry to demonstrate that its practices are safe, that safe practices are reinforced, and safety information is systematically shared among the partners in a meaningful way.

Greater use is being made of the full range of compliance tools available to promote the use of safe practices and to reduce risk. This does not imply that the department's resolve to interfere where necessary is lessened; rather its intention is to rely less on traditional policing and prescriptive approaches.

On another front I want to point out because it is important that the department is pursuing broad strategies to respond to its business environment. For example, it is continuing to build a new safety culture in transportation circles by collaborating with industry and other interested parties in the development of systems and programs to encourage the adoption and reinforcement of safe practices.

Alternatives to regulation are encouraged. Where regulations are required, the focus is on regulatory efforts, on the safety objective to be achieved, rather than on the process by which it is to be achieved. That is an important point to note because it speaks volumes in terms of the department's direction.

In this technological world government organizations need to bring together data that is held in a number of disparate ways and areas. Organizations that put safety as a priority need to be available to selectively access and share that data with partners and stakeholders so that we can serve Canadians more effectively and efficiently. That is important for all of us.

For these reasons Transport Canada undertook to establish a safety data management framework to promote sharing constant access and integrity of safety data. For the same reasons internationally and nationally, Transport Canada is also playing a strong role in modernizing information management systems and focusing on collecting data and safety information that contributes to the measurement of results. The analysis of the resulting policies will also contribute significantly to the safety culture.

● (1320)

Along with partners, Transport Canada is developing common measures of safety performance and broadening systematic and constructive consultation feedback. As I said earlier, safety is not a responsibility of Canada and of Transport Canada alone, we all share collectively in that responsibility. In recognizing this the department is fostering constructive relationships with stakeholders by developing or participating in joint safety promotion and safety awareness programs, continuing to participate in forums and

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exchange programs, identifying and responding to stakeholder concerns, recognizing and rewarding stakeholders' contributions to transportation safety.

One of the best ways to establish constructive and beneficial relationships with industry, other government identities, transport operators, user associations and the public is to work with and consult extensively with them on important safety programs. Together we are developing new methods of intervening to promote safety and to better serve the public as a result.

Transport Canada intends to enhance its contribution to Canadian transportation safety by looking ahead and ensuring that what we do is linked to clear objectives and outcomes for instance by adopting a more systematic approach to risk management. That will include engaging the public and other stakeholders in an ongoing dialogue about what constitutes an acceptable level of risk, improving data collection, data quality, data sharing and enhancing analytical tools to measure results, identify hazards, identify trends and finally, by assessing the level of risk in adapting its safety programs and resources to respond appropriately to any emerging safety issues.

With the right information and analysis the department can do a better job of identifying safety trends, tracking safety deficiencies and targeting its resources to where they can be most effective.

On the regulatory side I want to take a few moments to talk about tools, practices and techniques that are being improved by identifying alternative policy instruments and compliance tools to promote and reinforce safe practices ensuring that transport policies, rules and standards are accessible and written in plain language and by increasing the use of explanatory material, guides, training and support of departmental policies, regulations and standards. This is done by clearly defining measurable objectives and evaluating policies, regulations and standards against them and by linking the use of policy instruments with safety objectives, those very objectives I spoke about at the outset.

The department is also involved in intervening on the international scene by contributing to the development of international standards and other initiatives that can lead to cost savings for the department and for all Canadians. We should be proud of that in terms of celebrating the good work and vision that Transport Canada has in this very important area.

The department is also participating in national and international transportation safety forums and by using all available opportunities to develop, improve and promote Canadian safety technology and practices. These are complementary aspects of our safe transportation system but they represent important assets for Transport Canada to maintain our high safety standards. What a great goal that is not only for parliamentarians but for all Canadians wherever they live in this great country of ours.

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By doing this Transport Canada is also opening doors to international markets for safety, environmental practices and technologies for Canadian industries. What an enormous benefit that is to our economic cycle and our businesses as well.

The department at the same occasion takes advantage of the international recognition its safety and security professionals have earned to promote best practices and expertise. Transport Canada is working closely with stakeholders to market Canadian safety transportation and practices internationally.

I have taken some time to present the overall strategies in place to maximize impact on transportation safety. Transport Canada has completed or has under way several initiatives consistent with the strategic directives I have just provided.

• (1325)

To name a few, the department has revised the Railway Safety Act and is in the process of modernizing the Canada Shipping Act. Clear language regulations have been developed in dangerous goods and regulations on safety for railway management systems and they have been recently published in the *Canada Gazette* part I.

There presently exists well structured consultation mechanisms such as the Canadian Aviation Regulatory Advisory Council, the Canadian Marine Advisory Committee and the Railway Safety Consultative Committee. These are important to note because they underscore the commitment of the government in this all important area.

Several awareness and educational initiatives are under way such as Direction 2006 in rail and Vision 2001 in road with strong participation from industry and the provinces as well. The department has also developed modal strategic plans such as Flight 2005 in civil aviation and The Way Ahead in marine. These are visionary moves that underscore the commitment of the government in this all important area of transportation.

The department and my speech underscore the established specific strategic objectives that determine Transport Canada's long term vision as well as strategic direction with respect to the safety and the security of the transportation system in Canada. It sets out a vision for proactive measures to maintain our world class safety system, something we should applaud and celebrate knowing that around the world Canada is known as having one of the finest, if not the finest and safest system that exists.

With all the safety initiatives under way, Canadians can have the assurance that we are constantly striving to improve an already very good system and an already very good transportation safety record that we have acquired over the years. We should be proud of that as I know most Canadians are.

In response to the matter raised by the opposition, I can simply state without a doubt that the federal government continues to

exercise the leadership Canadians expect in this all important area. I can reinforce and say that not only do the folks in Waterloo—Wellington, my constituents, but most Canadians wherever they live in this great and wonderful country of ours understand that and are proud of the kind of safety initiatives we have put into place.

Canadians are proud of what we have done over time. They have faith and assurance in the government's ability to carry forward into the future, not only with vision and insight, but with the kind of notions in place that underscore our commitment to doing the right thing when it comes to transportation in Canada. We know it is what Canadians want, need, expect and deserve.

Canadians know that we on the government side will continue to provide good government essential to Canadians from coast to coast. I can assure the House that the government will continue to do that in a manner consistent with the values of Canadians. Why do we do that? We do it because it is the right thing to do and it is the right thing Canadians want us to do in this very important area.

Mr. Mark Muise (West Nova, PC): Mr. Speaker, I come from Nova Scotia, specifically the riding of West Nova. A couple of issues stand out clearly when we talk about transportation, but specifically Highway 101 which has seen some 50 fatalities since 1993. It is a fairly dangerous stretch of road and a couple of concerns come to mind. First, further twinning is required from Halifax toward Yarmouth as much as possible. Second, there is a stretch of highway between Digby and Weymouth in my riding that is not completed and it basically is still the number one highway. This creates a lot of difficulty when it comes to safety, tourism and other issues.

A government that collects over \$4 billion in fuel tax every year and returns just a mere 4% of that to the provinces concerns me greatly.

The other issue is that in the estimates for Nova Scotia in 1999-2000, under a Liberal government I might add, a \$1.8 million fund was set out for highways. In 2000-01 under a PC government the amount to be transferred is zero.

• (1330)

I have a question for my colleague across the way. What will the federal government, along with the provinces, do to ensure that we have safe highways and that there is a proper amount of funding from the federal government for highways?

Another issue I forgot to mention in my comments is that it is not just the twinning or the completion of the Highway 101. It is also the condition of those roads. They have been left to deteriorate to the point where it is almost dangerous to drive on some highways.

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Mr. Lynn Myers: Mr. Speaker, there are places across Canada where we continue to do the kind of work necessary to ensure that roads are consistent with what local residents and constituents want. As a government we will continue to do so.

The member is right and I thank him for it. We will work very hard with our provincial and territorial counterparts, as we have done in the past, to ensure that the roads will be fixed in a manner consistent with local needs. It is important that we work with our provincial partners as well as with our territorial ones to do precisely that.

The member spoke about fuel taxes and moving money around for highways. I find those kinds of comments quite disturbing in the sense that there is disingenuous, if I might use that term. It was not so very long ago, during the last election to be precise, that Progressive Conservative Party members talked about Transport Canada's budget being cut by \$35 million.

They said one thing before and now they are saying something again today. They are masters of the flip-flop as usual. Once again they are sucking and blowing when they should come straight to the heart of the matter and say the right thing.

We on the government side say the right thing. We are consistent in terms of what is needed. We are consistent with the wishes of our constituents. We work very hard. Instead of flipping around as the PCs do, the Minister of Transport and his provincial and territorial counterparts worked very hard to ensure they were consistent in what they do and to ensure that the transportation infrastructure is what Canadians want, need and quite frankly deserve.

We will continue to provide that without the disingenuous nature of the Progressive Conservatives and in a manner consistent with what Canadians want.

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it takes a great deal of courage to stand and make a speech like the one of my hon. colleague opposite.

I ask the member to bring forward information on any country in Canada or in Europe that returns to its provinces a mere four cents on the dollar of the excise tax. I can say right now that no country in the world contributes 4% of what is taxed out of motorists and truckers. I would be ashamed to say that the government is marching forward with a vision. That is stealing.

Mr. Lynn Myers: Mr. Speaker, I remind the member opposite that there is no country in Canada. We are a country.

When the reformed alliance members were called Reformers, those extremists opposite, they brought out that party's now infamous policy blue book which said that the Reform Party supported removing all measures that insulated businesses, industries, financial institutions, professions and trade unions from

domestic and foreign competition. They would strip away every support necessary for transportation and its infrastructure. They would support the stripping away of every kind of subsidy that exists for this all-important area. They would strip away everything that they could to defend the regions of our great country.

• (1335)

Why would they do that? Why, pray tell, would they do that? The reason they would do it is that they are a bunch of flat taxers, 17% flat taxers. All they want to do is strip away good government. They want to strip away effective and safe government. They want to strip away the very things that Canadians depend on. These extremists are outrageous.

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. On numerous occasions the Speaker has ruled as to the name to be used for the party on this side. It is the Canadian Alliance. This member has frequently today used different terminology. I wonder whether you would call him to account and ask him to be respectful of the ruling of the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair was being very attentive to what the hon. member for Waterloo—Wellington was saying. My recollection of the words was when hon. members opposite were called Reform. He then quoted from a document that apparently had been a Reform document. I sensed he did it for that reason.

I do not believe that he was referring to hon. members in the official opposition currently as Reform members. He said the alliance members when they were Reformers. I believe those are the words he used.

If the hon. member for Elk Island reviews the blues and comes back to the Chair with some other error, the Chair will only be more than happy to look at the matter and enforce the consistent rulings of the Chair on this important point.

Mr. Lynn Myers: Mr. Speaker, I will conclude by saying that the very same policy document of those reformed alliance people went on to say that the Reform Party opposes the use of infrastructure funds for projects which could be better managed by the private sector. Shame on them. Imagine saying that then and today supporting the motion.

Talk about the masters of flip-flop. Talk about people saying one thing when it is convenient and saying quite another when they want to get their point across in another part of the country. They are good at that. They are good at saying one thing in the east and another thing in the west. They are good at saying something in the north and quite the opposite in the south. That is who those people are. It is unfortunate.

I was listening to the member for South Surrey—White Rock—Langley. What did she say? She went so far as to say that when it comes to transportation their party wants a central plan for a

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national continental strategy. Imagine. Imagine them saying that. These people are extremists in the extreme, if that is possible. Imagine what they are saying.

We have to think about where they are going. They are doing the kinds of things that would strip away the very foundation of what it means to be Canadian. They would strip away the very values of our great country.

We on this side of the House, the government, will not allow that nonsense to be brought forward by way of their agenda. We will stand firm, knowing that we have the safest and most secure transport system in the world, bar none. We will continue on that track because that is what Canadians want. They do not want the politics of grievance as those people do.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member has used the word extremists in regard to me and other opposition members on this side of the House. He used it in such a derogatory sense that my privileges and my reputation in the House of Commons have been denigrated by the member. As an example of extremism, I think he is providing a good example of Liberal extremism, to the point of being ridiculous.

The Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. member has made a good point in debate perhaps but not on a point of order.

Mr. Lynn Myers: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite gives me the opportunity to point out once again the very thin skin of those opposition members. They are very thin skinned. It is interesting in debate to watch them try, and try is the operative word, to dish it out. When it comes to taking it they cannot seem to take it very well. They cannot have it both ways.

• (1340)

My point is that we on the government side continue to provide safety and security for our transportation system. We will provide the resources necessary to have infrastructure in place.

I ask all members to vote accordingly when it comes to this motion. It really is out of place and not in order in that sense. We will continue to work very effectively on behalf of all Canadians, unlike those people opposite who seem to want to rip Canada apart province by province.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased on behalf of the Canadian Alliance to bring this debate back to the intent of parliament to have honest interaction between the parties debating the issue as opposed to the type of extremism being experienced by the House due to the Liberal speakers on this issue.

The Progressive Conservative Party has brought forward its supply day motion with regard to transportation issues in Canada. I have to agree this is an important issue that we should be debating.

The reason for that is that the federal government and the provincial governments across the country have not been able to manage their moneys to the point of being able to keep our basic infrastructure, primarily roads and rail, in a condition that our economy can continue to flourish. As a result we find that we are approaching a crisis situation with regard to roads across the country, not only in western Canada.

As I go through my speech I think we will find that what is giving rise to this crisis is not the lack of money. As a result of the taxation of the Liberal government this place is awash in money. It is the problem of how the Liberal government is spending the tax dollars it is taking from Canadians.

Transportation is the fabric and the economic lifeblood of the country. It is of such importance that it should not be let to slide as the government has done through its heavy taxation and not returning taxation dollars to the provinces with regard to road programs, which has caused us to lose a certain level of competitiveness. One good example of that lack of competitiveness is in our international grain trade where some of our major customers like Japan and the Asia-Pacific rim countries have found that we cannot deliver our grain to port on a basis that would give them confidence that we are suppliers that can be totally trusted.

The reason I bring that forward is that it has to do with rail transportation. The government on this very day has the opportunity to fix our rail transportation by bringing in a commercial competitive contract based system of rail transportation. However, what we find is a continuation of the very highly regulated, top down, government driven transportation system which all parties have found to be inefficient, unaccountable and incapable of supplying our customers with the amount of grain they need at the time they need it.

The government bears a lot of the fault for our transportation system being in the state it is and our now having to debate it in the House to try to give the government suggestions as to what can be done.

Besides exports, interprovincial transportation is of vital importance. We consume and sell many product between provinces. We only have to drive from Manitoba to northwest Ontario to see a road that is virtually incapable of carrying with any efficiency the amount of goods that move between Manitoba and Ontario and east to west.

• (1345)

It is obvious that this national highway, which the federal government has responsibility for, has not been upgraded over the course of time.

In my riding of Selkirk—Interlake we have export companies such as Gerdau Steel. Many of our agriculture products have to be exported both by rail and by road to different countries. We also export fresh pork products by air to places such as Russia and Asia.

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If road, rail and air transportation are not kept in good shape our economy will continue to suffer because of a lack of direction in spending by the federal government.

People ask: "The government is spending. The Canadian Alliance is advocating more spending on roads. Where would the money come from?" That is one of my favourite questions. With the amount of money that comes into the federal government, there is plenty enough for health care, roads, rail transportation and whatever else is needed with respect to transportation.

The reason there are not sufficient moneys, aside from the patronage appointments and waste and abuse that we see in HRDC, is the spending. I would like to give some examples. I will not belabour the point because these things are disgusting for people to hear. In Manitoba \$15,000 was spent to hang dead rabbits in trees as an art exhibit. Our local humane society did not even see fit to condemn this artist or the fact that federal money was being used for the exhibit. That can only be classified as waste. In Paris, foreign affairs was setting up what could only be called a call girl situation in the embassy. People from France could go into the embassy and engage a woman dressed as a prostitute. Once again, federal tax money was spent. I could go on and on with these disgusting examples of government waste, of money that could have gone into our transportation system.

The importance of rail transportation to the economy is important for those of us who are here today. However, as members of the Parliament of Canada, we are supposed to be doing everything with reasonable prudence and forethought for the benefit of our children, our grandchildren and their children. That is not happening because of the high taxation policy of the government, which is being abused. Instead of the money being left in municipal and provincial coffers to be used for roads, it is taken away and used for a lot of useless things.

I would like to give a couple of facts. Federal gas tax increased over 500% between 1985 and 1995, from approximately 1.5 cents to 10 cents per litre. The argument for fuel taxes was that the money would be used to keep our infrastructure and roads up to snuff.

Ottawa spends only 5% of its \$5 billion in gas tax revenues on highway renewal. I assume that I can use the word deceptive. The people of Canada have been deceived into believing that if they pay their fuel taxes they will be able to drive on roads that are safe and an efficient mode of transportation.

• (1350)

These billions of dollars flowing to Ottawa, sent by Canadians to be used for our roads, are not being used for our roads, but are going into general revenues.

Ottawa increased the federal gas tax from 8.5 cents to 10 cents per litre in 1995 as a deficit reduction measure. The deficit is gone,

but the tax remains, to my knowledge. Once again I ask, is this deception? Is it mismanagement? What is the reason for this? Maybe we will hear it from the government.

The government is also taxing taxes. That is a most vile situation. The GST is charged on the full pump price, gas taxes included. It is a tax on a tax. It looks to me like the government has no intention of spending the fuel tax on roads and in fact is just using it as a tax grab.

Gas prices in Canada are a big issue in all parts of the country. According to facts which were compiled, without provincial and federal taxes our gasoline prices would actually be cheaper in Canada than in the United States.

The problem we are facing has a solution. It is a problem that has been made primarily by the actions of the federal government, which has been in power for two terms, so it cannot say "We would fix it if we had time". It has had since 1993 to come up with a national road program, to increase funding, to cut waste and to use that money for road and rail transportation.

In essence, all the money for roads and other modes of transportation comes from the public purse. Some people would argue that if we put a toll on a road, that is not a tax. However, I would point out that tolls on roads are a tax the same as any other user fee. Roads are for the use of everyone and when we impose a toll we are in essence imposing a tax.

I once wrote a letter to the revenue minister asking him why fuel taxes could not be dedicated to road construction and repair. He wrote back, clearly stating that the government does not believe in dedicated taxes; that is, identifying a clear problem or issue for spending every year. There should be road spending every year throughout the life of this country. The government refuses to acknowledge that it has a responsibility for the infrastructure of the country, including transportation and, in particular, roads. Until we get the government to admit there is an ongoing need for funding for roads we will be up against the same crisis year after year.

It has been mentioned that Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta will receive some \$175 million as offset compensation for the lack of rail transportation which is due to the abandonment of branch lines by the railways. Farmers are incurring greater costs to haul their grain to the main terminals.

Once again, that money is inadequate. The \$175 million will be spread over five years and over three provinces. I do not know how much good that will do in repairing some of the roads. It certainly will not build new ones.

• (1355)

The Speaker: The hon. member still has about six minutes remaining for his speech. It would probably be better to take the full six minutes after question period.

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Hon. David M. Collenette: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for interrupting my colleague from the Canadian Alliance at this stage. I am glad he will have the opportunity to finish his remarks after 3 o'clock.

There have been discussions among members of the parties about seeking unanimous consent to revert to the introduction of bills so that we may have first reading of the grain transportation bill. I understand there is agreement among all parties to allow this at this time.

We are doing this to facilitate an early debate at second reading this week so that we can get the bill to committee. This bill must be passed by both houses before the summer recess in order for the savings to farmers to come into effect August 1, the beginning of the crop year.

The Speaker: Does the hon. minister have permission to put the motions?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

CANADA TRANSPORTATION ACT

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-34, an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

BRAD BOWDEN

Mr. Murray Calder (Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of the outstanding athletic accomplishments of Brad Bowden, a high school champion in my riding who has the golden touch in sports.

Even at his young age, Brad is no longer a stranger to winning gold medals. In March, he and his Team Canada teammates struck gold when they won the Ice Sledge Hockey World Championship in Salt Lake City, Utah. Brad managed this incredible accomplish-

ment while continuing his studies as a student at Westside Secondary School in Orangeville.

Recently, Brad helped to lead another team to gold winning victory. He was named the most valuable player when his Variety Village team won the Canadian Wheelchair Basketball Association's junior championship in Toronto. They also won gold in 1995 and 1996.

The year 2000 is shining brightly on Brad Bowden. I join with other proud members of our community in congratulating him on his great accomplishments in sports.

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CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, one of the cruel anomalies of our criminal justice system must surely be the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, which allows for statutory release and automatically paroles all inmates after serving two-thirds of their sentences.

A justice subcommittee studying this mockery of the sentencing system came close to recommending an end to the statutory release. That was before the Liberal MPs on the committee changed their minds after a short visit to the whip's office decided to give credence to the corrections commissioner that statutory parole was a great thing.

There is a litany of abuse of the statutory release, but none as glaring as Kelly James Bedard. In 1994 he was arrested for murder, having slashed the throat of his victim. His rampage came three months after being released from prison, having served the necessary two-thirds of his sentence for aggravated assault.

Today Kelly is on the street despite a parole board assessment that Kelly was at high risk for violent offences. I hope the Liberals are happy with themselves.

* * *

BLYTH FESTIVAL THEATRE

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, hark, what talent through yonder benches breaks.

Each year for the past 26 seasons the Blyth Festival Theatre has been delighting audiences with its world-renowned performances chronicling all the aspects of our national experience.

• (1400)

With this, I am pleased to inform the House that joining with the ranks of Shakespeare is one of our very own. I congratulate the

hon. member for Dartmouth as this year her play, *Corker*, will be showcased at the festival. This satirical comedy pokes fun at our society and underscores the surprises that life often produces.

On behalf of the festival and the citizens of Blyth, I invite all members of the House to review the brochures I have provided to their offices and to then take the time to join me at the festival sometime this summer.

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CULTURELINK

Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on May 24 I had the pleasure of attending the ribbon cutting ceremony and open house for Culturelink which recently relocated into my riding.

Founded in 1989, Culturelink is a non-profit community based organization that facilitates the settlement of newcomers to Toronto. It offers a wide variety of programs which promote self-sufficiency, positive interaction and understanding between the host and newcomer communities, and the overall well-being of all its participants.

Culturelink programs include the host program, English conversation circle and job search workshops. These workshops also include employment counselling, resumé clinics, TOEFL classes and youth programs.

Culturelink has been made possible through partnerships among the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Ontario government, the city of Toronto, the Counselling Foundation of Canada, the United Way of Greater Toronto and the Trillium Foundation.

I would like to welcome Culturelink to Parkdale—High Park. I wish it continued success in its new location.

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in this era of globalization, our communities must make a place for themselves in the vast world market. Municipal politicians and those responsible for economic development are aware that they must be equipped to deal with the new challenges all of us are faced with.

We can help our small and medium businesses to become major players on the international scene by keeping them informed, and by providing them with needed support. For this reason, I organized the first International Day this past February, and I am doing it again now for the ridings in central Quebec.

This day offers an opportunity to discuss international trade, the contracting process, CIDA and Team Canada. It is a day for

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acquiring information on matters of an international nature, which may prove useful for municipal politicians and those responsible for economic development.

I congratulate my fellow MPs, particularly the hon. member for Beauce and the hon. member for Bellechasse—Etchemins—Montmagny—L'Islet. The dynamism of those attending today reflects the vitality of our communities.

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[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Robert Mundell, Columbia University's Nobel prize winning economist, for recognizing and encouraging efficiency.

Mr. Mundell just received an honorary degree from Queen's University at its spring 2000 convocation. His endorsement of Estonian and Hong Kong tax systems is fitting. Single rate income taxes result in less complexity and greater productivity. That is why Alberta is adopting a 10.5% single rate tax.

The Canadian Alliance has adopted a 17% across the board federal income tax rate. Further, personal exemptions of \$10,000 and ending tax discrimination against married people would remove thousands from the tax rolls altogether.

Congratulations to Robert Mundell and single tax rate advocates everywhere. May even Liberals one day learn to embrace less government and less tax. Vote Canadian Alliance for a 17% single rate tax. Praise Robert Mundell, a son of freedom and single rate taxes.

* * *

RIMOUSKI OCEANIC HOCKEY TEAM

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Rimouski Oceanic of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League on winning the Memorial Cup played in Halifax last week. To win the Memorial Cup, emblematic of the best junior team in Canada, ranks as the achievement in junior hockey.

I am particularly proud of the Oceanic team members, not just because they won and were a great example of team play, skill and dedication, but also because the most valuable player of the tournament and one of his teammates both come from Prince Edward Island.

Brad Richards from Murray Harbour and Thatcher Bell from Gurnsey Cove played outstanding hockey and represented their league, their hometowns and province with enormous class and enthusiasm. Congratulations and good luck in their futures to Brad and Thatcher. Also to the Barrie Colts captain Sheldon Keefe who also hails from P.E.I., best of luck in his future.

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Also, Maurice “The Rocket” Richard, my first hockey hero, rest in peace. You were a great man and a first class Canadian.

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GRAIN TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, a growing number of motorists and truck drivers in Saskatchewan for safety reasons are choosing the municipal roads for travel instead of the provincial highways.

The provincial highways, handling the increased amount of grain transportation, are deteriorating very rapidly.

• (1405)

Within the proposed grain bill the \$175 million to support grain transportation over the next five years simply breaks down to \$35 million for the three prairie provinces. Saskatchewan would probably get 60% of that amount, or \$21 million a year. If that entire amount were to be spent within my constituency, it would not even bring Highway 13 up to the standards for modern trucking demands.

* * *

[Translation]

BUFFET DES NATIONS IN SHERBROOKE

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday, May 27, I visited 40 countries and tasted the typical foods of many of them, all in the space of a few hours.

I managed this lightning world tour by joining some 800 other guests at the 29th Buffet des nations, organized in Sherbrooke by the Service d'Aide aux néo-Canadiens.

The purpose of this great annual event, unique in Quebec and in Canada, is to raise funds to organize activities to help new immigrants integrate. In Sherbrooke alone we had some 3,740 new immigrants in 1996, 370 more than the figure in the 1991 census. Immigration is, I feel, a source of great wealth for my riding.

In closing, I wish to congratulate the President of the Service d'aide, Nicole Robitaille, and her 300 or so volunteers who worked so hard to ensure the success of this great international festival of gastronomy.

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[English]

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR AWARD

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, May 25, at the Mississauga Board of Trade's 2000 Outstanding Business Awards, Ms. Kate Bird, president of Career Essentials Inc., received the young entrepreneur of the year award.

Career Essentials, with outlets in nine Ontario cities, provides a variety of assessment, training, tutoring and job search services through the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, primarily to assist injured workers with reintegration into the workplace. It also offers a certificate course entitled, “Teaching English as a Second Language”, as well as one on one student tutoring, training options for the corporate market and a variety of career services to people searching for employment.

This is not the first award for Ms. Bird. She has previously received the young entrepreneur of the year award and the business startup award, both from the Scarborough Chamber of Commerce.

Congratulations to Kate Bird. Way to go.

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CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the CBC announced that local TV news will be cut by two-thirds. Shame on the Liberal members who cut \$400 million from the CBC and then feign outrage when the cuts are actually implemented. Do they not read their own budgets before they vote?

Shame on the Prime Minister for making the CBC slice up successful shows like *24 Hours*, *Here and Now*, *1st Edition* and *Compass*. His approach is the wisdom of Solomon gone horribly wrong.

The most cynical part of this whole affair is that the Liberals will promise yet again to support the CBC when they go to the people in the next election, and then will break that promise one more time, this time killing regional programs forever.

I call on the government to recommit to the dream of public broadcasting which truly reflects regions to regions, and take the CBC off life supports now.

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[Translation]

QUEBEC'S WEEK OF THE DISABLED

Mrs. Maud Debien (Laval East, BQ): Mr. Speaker, more than a million people have to overcome impediments to their involvement in society everyday.

Yesterday, May 29, in Laval and elsewhere in Quebec, we kicked off Quebec's week of the disabled.

Between June 1 and 7, through discussions, artistic and sporting activities, people with disabilities will have their say. By listening to what they have to say, we will perhaps understand that a disability is not necessarily a handicap. The real handicap is not being able to study, work, enjoy oneself, travel or communicate with others.

By working together to help people with disabilities integrate into society by implementing progressive measures to ensure their right to education, to work and to enjoy recreation, we will all come out ahead, and our society will be more humane, because it will be more just.

I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to all those volunteers who work to improve the living conditions of persons with disabilities—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

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[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week was designated Aboriginal Awareness Week across the federal public service.

I am pleased to inform the House and Canadians that across the national capital region there were many celebrations of aboriginal arts and culture. Aboriginal performers entertained and led demonstrations in traditional arts and crafts. Ceremonial songs and colourful workshops gave everyone an opportunity to experience the aboriginal lifestyle, from sampling traditional foods to participating in cultural workshops and listening to special guest speakers. These kinds of opportunities are very important for they recognize the contributions of aboriginal people to our country.

• (1410)

Next month all Canadians will have the opportunity to share in the celebration of National Aboriginal Day on June 21. I encourage all citizens to take advantage of that opportunity.

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CRAB FISHERY

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, last week we heard from the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans that the crab quota for eastern Nova Scotia was being increased to three times the quota allocated last year, approximately a 6,000 tonne increase.

This is being done even though fishers have opposed such large increases in the quota and scientists acknowledge that there have been wild fluctuations in the snow crab population over the past 20 years. The minister is increasing the quota in the face of opposition simply to score some pre-election points. He is jeopardizing the long term sustainability of the crab fishery in order to make a good news announcement from a government with nothing but bad news announcements.

At what cost? When fishers applaud conservation efforts and smaller crab quotas, why is the minister providing a 240% increase in crab fishing area 23 and a 212% increase in crab fishing area

24? Obviously the election campaign for the government has already begun.

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HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE

Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform members of the House and all Canadians that May has been proclaimed Huntington's Disease Awareness Month.

It is estimated that this disease affects one in every thousand Canadians. The Huntington Society is dedicated to finding a cure for Huntington's Disease.

I ask members to join me in wishing the Huntington Society of Canada a very successful Huntington's Disease Awareness Month.

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HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, when 18,000 Canadians requested copies of their own files, the government shut down the database. Did the human resources minister have a conscience attack and realize that her massive files violated individual privacy rights, or was she afraid of how people would react when they found out how closely their government watches them?

Two weeks ago the minister denied there was a problem. Then she lurched into damage control with the all too familiar refrain, "Don't worry, trust me". Canadians do not trust her. They were horrified to learn that the minister who cannot keep track of grant applications and bungled a billion dollars on job creation programs had their most personal information.

The Liberals' campaign team saw their re-election dreams going up in smoke. Shovelgate deeply wounded them and big brother was sure to bury them. With her image consultant coaching from the sidelines, the minister made a U-turn and became Ms. Privacy Protector.

Once again big sister is asking Canadians to trust her. Canadians are asking, "Why should we?"

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Louise Hardy (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, recently parliamentarians attended an ecological summit and yesterday a forum on aboriginal health.

The summit included a presentation by Dr. Schindler from the University of Alberta who said that considering the importance of water to all life, it is strange that freshwater has been Canada's most mistreated and ignored natural resource. Canadian citizens are paying the price for governments not protecting our water supply and the environment.

Oral Questions

The quality of drinking water is a major issue in Ontario. For the north the concentrations of PCBs and other pollutants in fish, caribou and birds are high enough to require human consumption of traditional aboriginal food to be restricted. The government is fully aware that in the north we have PCB levels five times higher than anywhere else.

It is time that the Liberal government changed its cavalier attitude toward the environment and enforced environmental laws and regulations. We demand action and remedies on the cumulative effects of organic pollutants. The government is responsible for the price that northerners are paying due to these pollutants.

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NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Loyola Hearn, member for the electoral district of St. John's West.

* * *

• (1415)

[Translation]

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. Loyola Hearn, member for the electoral district of St. John's West, introduced by Mr. Peter MacKay and Mr. Norman Doyle.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, more than 18,000 Canadians have written to the human resources department asking for copies of their files from the big brother database. According to the Privacy Act, the minister has 30 days to respond to that and comply.

Yesterday the minister suggested that Canadians who have asked for that information will have to write again and tell her that they really, really want copies of their file.

Why is the minister not complying with the Privacy Act?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should quit chasing headlines and get her facts straight. No one has to reapply. If they have asked us for the information, they will receive it.

She is right that it will take us some time because we have dismantled the files. We have been working with the privacy commissioner's office so that we will not have a significant delay. No one who wants the information will have to reapply.

Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I do not think we are chasing headlines, we are chasing the truth. It would be just slick if we could find it as soon as possible in the House.

Yesterday the minister claimed in the House and in her press release that she had dismantled the big brother database. She also claimed that she would respond to the thousands of requests from Canadians to see their personal files. On the one hand she said that she had destroyed that database, and on the other hand she said that she will provide copies of it to Canadians.

It is pretty simple: Does she have access to that information or does she not?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe the hon. member should review *Hansard* from yesterday where I said that indeed the system had been dismantled and that we would ensure that those Canadians who want their information will get it. We will help them facilitate getting that information from agencies like the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency which now has its information that was in our consolidated files back in its hands.

Miss Deborah Grey (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, now you see it, now you don't. The minister's track record proves that she simply cannot be trusted and yet she does have access to all Canadians' most private information. Her own press release said that access to the big brother database would still be granted on a case by case basis. Not only is the information still there somewhere buried in a computer, I bet she can find it, but it also will still be used.

The question is this: Is it not true that the only thing this minister has really dismantled is her own credibility?

• (1420)

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the opposite is quite true. It is the hon. member opposite who continues to bring fear into the hearts of Canadians. She should pay attention to what happened yesterday, look at the response of the privacy commissioner and actually accept that we are in the process of dismantling the file. The privacy commissioner is overseeing its dismantling. She can go to him and ensure that the job is done.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, talking about yesterday, the minister said that she acted quickly to deal with concerns about the big brother database.

Oral Questions

It turns out that what really happened was that the privacy commissioner spent months trying to get the government to dismantle the database and only when he hit roadblocks with the minister did he go public.

Why did the minister give the impression that she acted quickly when in fact her hand had to be forced?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me just quote what the privacy commissioner said yesterday. He said “I think it is fair to say that from the outset the department recognized that major changes had to be made and I did not have to persuade them at all”.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will quote from yesterday’s *Hansard* where the minister said “I announced the dismantling of the longitudinal labour force file. It comes less than two weeks after the privacy commissioner tabled his last advice on this file”. This gives the clear impression that the minister acted very quickly. That in fact is not the case, is it?

The privacy commissioner has been urging this minister for months to get rid of this big brother database file and she refused. Only after the public found out about it did she act. Why did it have to take public disclosure to force her hand?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been consistent on my views on this issues right from the start. I continue to believe that good information is required to build good public policy. I continue to believe that the privacy of Canadians is paramount. I have said in the House that I will work with the privacy commissioner to ensure that we continue to have the balance, and that is exactly we have done.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government has been gathering personal information on members of the public unbeknownst to them since 1979, with some information dating as far back as 1971. Human Resources Development Canada has announced it will dismantle the megafile.

The link may be dismantled, but the data will be kept. What guarantee can the Prime Minister give us that all this information will not be combined again one day, and unbeknownst once again to the public?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I would direct the hon. member to look at the commentary from the privacy commissioner, the officer of the House that we trust to safeguard the privacy of Canadians.

He has identified that he is in full support of the undertakings that we announced yesterday.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for two years the privacy commissioner had been telling the department to intervene, and nothing was done.

Action was taken because the matter became public. The Prime Minister even told us last week that the megafile was legal, necessary and useful. Those were his words. This same government is today guaranteeing that the file will not be rebuilt in some other way.

Are we to understand that our only guarantee of protection of people’s privacy is the word of this minister, who, just last week, said that the megafile was legal and necessary to government administration? These are her words.

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the system that we had in place was completely compliant with the Privacy Act. Indeed, as the privacy commissioner indicated, there were no breaches of information. What is important to look forward to is the future. With the actions we took yesterday, in full compliance, recognition and support of the privacy commissioner, we have a system that will take us in secure privacy into the 21st century.

• (1425)

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said in the House “Everyone knows that the department has had this information for a long time, since well before we took office”.

Why is the Prime Minister trying to shift his responsibilities onto the backs of others, when the file came about between 1971 and 1979, during the term of a Liberal government, of which he was a cabinet member? He was therefore perfectly aware of the existence of this file and cannot pass the buck this time.

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member seems so concerned about databases and about personal information. I wonder if he is aware that the PQ in the province of Quebec have recently tabled bill 122. In that bill, the Institut de la statistique will be gathering and consolidating personal data from different provincial departments for research purposes. I wonder if the hon. member will be asking headquarters back in Quebec City about this.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister should know that it was because of Quebec,

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and that it was Quebec that wanted nothing to do with the sort of situation she is describing today.

Furthermore, the only guarantee we have that this will not happen again is the government's word. It is frightening.

Would she not agree that the only real guarantee for the public that it will not again be taken advantage of by the government would be for the Privacy Act to be reviewed as soon as possible, immediately?

[English]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member does not have to take my word for it. On May 29 the privacy commissioner's office, in its press release, said:

The Commissioner sees the department's decision as a recognition that departments can discharge their responsibilities and do the necessary research for the benefit of Canadians without sacrificing their privacy. In the Commissioner's view, the measures outlined by the Minister balance Canadians' right to privacy and the government's need for information on which to base policy decisions.

It is, I say again, the officer of this House responsible for privacy who supports this undertaking.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

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

According to the final report of a water issues case study in March 1998 by Environment Canada:

—water responsibilities have become disbursed within the federal government and water monitoring budgets have been significantly reduced. This is of concern to those outside the federal government seeking federal input for water issues, as they can not easily find out who is responsible for water.

Given the concern about water safety that we all have understandably had in the last few days, is the minister's department now reviewing these cutbacks to see what can be done to make sure that the federal government is never complicit in any tragedy like we have experienced?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report to the hon. member and to the House that in the two years that has passed since the report that the hon. member has quoted, there has been more of a consolidation within the Department of the Environment. We have increased budget contributions substantially to the Department of the Environment. We are working closely with the provinces on the accord on water.

In answer to his very general question, he will in fact have much better success at finding where responsibilities actually lie today than two years ago.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is now 15 years since the Pearse report called for a comprehensive water policy by this government. I can remember a time in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the member for Davenport and members of the NDP were calling for a national safe drinking water act. Pearse himself said that if nothing was done, that the federal government should show leadership in this. It is clear that whatever policy we have in place at all levels is not working now.

Is the federal government prepared to take some initiative in this area and make sure that this kind of thing never happens again?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the first question related to a report two years ago. The next question related to a report 15 years ago.

• (1430)

If the hon. member would persuade the NDP provinces of British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba to sign on to the national accord on water, we would be substantially better off. I expect they will.

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AIRPORTS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, this morning the Minister of Transport made some questionable remarks about the airports at Moncton, Fredericton and Saint John.

In those remarks he said "I come from Toronto. We have one airport that serves eight million people. If someone wants to come there it takes a three hour drive. We are used to that kind of sacrifice, and I hope that people in New Brunswick could make some accommodations".

Is the minister trying to get the people of New Brunswick ready for news about Saint John, Fredericton or Moncton airports? Where does the government stand on the future of those airports?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it would be better to pursue this line of questioning in debate after 3 o'clock. I will be pleased to participate in that debate.

The point I made is that the marketplace will determine under the local airport authorities those airports that have the best means of serving the public.

The point I raised was that while a lot of people had talked about how far it is to drive to and from the various airports in New Brunswick, I was contrasting that with the numbers of people who

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have to drive to Pearson airport. These are accommodations that people make on a daily basis. I assume they make them in Ontario and they make them in New Brunswick.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, that is a nice long answer, but the only conclusion I can draw is that he is getting the people of New Brunswick ready for some bad news.

Will the minister just stand and say that Saint John, Moncton and Fredericton will keep their airports as they have for decades and decades and decades?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no pretence at all that those airports should disappear. In fact there is the Moncton Airport Authority and the Saint John Airport Authority which have 60 year leases with Transport Canada. We are now in the process of Fredericton having the same.

How can the hon. member stand in the House and talk about those airports going or being closed when we have entered into deals with two and we want to enter into a deal with the third?

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CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the revenue minister's track record in abusing the privacy of Canadians is just as bad as that of the HRD minister.

Just ask Suzanne Thiessen of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Revenue Canada turned over her confidential tax information to the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation without her authorization. Why can the government not be trusted with the confidential information of Canadians?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government can be trusted with the confidential information of Canadians. We have an excellent record in that regard.

Only a few days ago some other members in the House were accusing the government of not providing Revenue Canada confidential information to people when they thought it was a good idea.

Under section 241 of the act our government does protect, as it always should, that kind of information in the interest of all Canadians and in the interest of our tax system.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, let us just have a look at this great track record to which the minister is referring.

Winnipeg resident Jackie Courteau was appalled to learn that Revenue Canada had turned over her personal tax information without authorization. Jackie Courteau has been forced to turn to

the courts because the government refuses to address the infringement of her privacy.

Why do Canadians have to go to court to protect their privacy from the government that they elected?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite knows of all the procedures and all the safeguards that exist at the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. Obviously I will not disclose publicly a particular case. He would be the first to criticize it. He actually did so in the preamble so I will not do that.

He knows that even members of parliament need waivers before we can have confidential information. He knows about the privacy protection and he knows of the importance of doing so for the integrity of our tax collection system in Canada, and we respect that.

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[Translation]

CANADA INFORMATION OFFICE

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Information Office, the propaganda arm of the Liberal Party, as is well known, has spent \$2.7 million on all manner of contracts to finance Liberal ministers' travels around Quebec.

The minister made the following statement before the standing committee on government operations, "I can tell you we will continue to arrange such visits, whether some people like it or not".

● (1435)

How can the Minister of Public Works, who is also the chief organizer of the Liberal Party of Quebec, announce unabashedly that he is going to continue to dig into public funds to organize pre-election tours by the Liberal Party?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that we are going to continue because Quebecers and all Canadians want to receive information from the government.

The ministerial tours in question are specifically for the purpose of informing Quebecers about the programs the Government of Canada has put in place for them, which the Bloc Quebecois members do not promote. The only thing they promote is destruction of the country.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is true that the credibility of Liberal ministers in Quebec is close to zero. Still, a modicum of decency is in order here.

Administration Leduc et Leblanc received \$85,000 in contracts from the CIO and donated \$15,000 to the Liberal Party. GPC International and Rémi Bujold received \$87,000 in CIO contracts

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and donated \$25,000 to the Liberal Party. Everest received \$75,000 in contracts from the CIO and donated \$20,000 to the Liberal Party.

Is this going to go on much longer, this scandalous use of public funds, with no bidding process, giving contracts to buddies of the Liberals in order to get funding for the party?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Information Office follows Treasury Board guidelines—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano: —and all contracts relating to the ministerial tour were tendered.

I understand that the Bloc Quebecois does not take kindly to the ministers' visit to Quebec. It bothers them that Quebecers are made aware of what the Government of Canada is doing for them. That is what makes them uncomfortable.

Yes, we are going to continue, because Quebecers are entitled to have all—

The Speaker: The hon. whip of the official opposition.

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[English]

CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the HRDC minister has announced that the big brother database is being dismantled and tax files returned to Revenue Canada in order to secure the privacy of Canadians.

Yet in the Thiessen case in Manitoba the privacy commissioner stated "Personal information was disclosed as a result of negligence on the part of Revenue Canada". Given this, why should Canadians trust the government with their most personal and private information?

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they can trust the government because we respond to their concerns.

When we look at the longitudinal file that was held in my department, I want to remind the hon. member opposite that the privacy commissioner said time and again there had never been any breaches of that file. He commended the department for ensuring that information was held secure.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, this minister has announced that information is now being transferred to Revenue Canada and it certainly cannot be trusted, given its track record.

When CINAR, a Montreal animation company, was investigated for fraud the RCMP were denied access to CINAR's tax record by the Privacy Act. Yet when the Manitoba Public Insurance Company

wants tax information on its clients Revenue Canada freely gives more than it even asks for.

My question is for the revenue minister. Why does his government protect the tax records of federal fund recipients but not those of private citizens?

Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is mixing apples, oranges and bananas together and is not doing a very good job at making a fruit salad.

The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency makes every effort to safeguard the security and confidentiality of all client information. That is what it does.

As a result of our investigation of the allegation of unauthorized release of confidential information to the Manitoba commission an internal investigation was undertaken. The investigation concluded that there in fact was no intent to do any—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Jonquière.

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• (1440)

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the commissioner of the environment said in his annual report that the federal government is having a hard time acting on its commitment to sustainable development. He cited serious problems in connection with smog, climactic change and biodiversity.

How can the Minister of the Environment let us think he wants to act on these issues, when his government offers only fancy words by way of solutions?

[English]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member attentive though she is perhaps has missed some of my recent speeches at the Globe in Vancouver, in Toronto and in Seattle. We have stressed time after time—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. David Anderson: On the issue of smog, we have a three pronged process. We are working with the provinces on Canada-wide standards on benzine, ozone, particulate matter and mercury.

We are working with the United States on an ozone annex to the clean air agreement that we have with them. We expect that to be signed in November.

We are working directly with the new CEPA, the Canada Environmental Protection Act, so that we could, as indeed the Minister of Health and I did only last Saturday, put particulate matter 10 microns and below on the list of toxic substances. We have a three pronged approach.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have just heard more words from the Minister of the Environment. Greenhouse gas emissions were already 13% above the 1990 level in 1997. They are forecasted to continue increasing.

What is the minister waiting for in order to develop approaches and strategies for the development of sources of renewable energy?

[English]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once more I thank the hon. member for her pertinent question. We have had an increase in some greenhouse gas emissions since the period she suggested, 1990, and particularly, I might add, since the tremendous burst of economic activity that took place since 1993 when this government took office.

The result however is that we do have a bigger problem to deal with greenhouse gases than we would have had if the party over there had remained in power or that party had taken power, because then the economy would have collapsed and the problem of the environment would have disappeared.

I am suggesting that we will have in place in the next five months a plan to deal with greenhouse gases—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Peace River.

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ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago the minister insisted that golf courses could not obtain grants from ACOA. In fact his own words were “For the last five years we have been giving only loans that have to be paid back”.

In 1998, ACOA approved a \$1 million non-repayable contribution for a golf course in the minister’s own riding and, to sweeten the pot just a bit, HRDC gave it another \$200,000. When will the minister put an end to this boondoggle spending?

Hon. George S. Baker (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member thinks he has made a hole in one with this one he has double bogeyed again. ACOA does not fund golf courses. How many times do we have to repeat that?

It did under the Conservative government that was in power prior to the Liberals, but under the Liberals ACOA does not fund golf courses at all, not one penny from the ACOA fund.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I guess the Liberals were not in power in 1998. The minister sounds like a bit of a duffer—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Peace River may begin his question.

Mr. Charlie Penson: Someone asked me if it was doofus, but it was duffer that I said. Not only is the Atlantic Canada overblown agency a waste of taxpayer dollars, the program simply does not work.

• (1445)

For the \$1.2 million that ACOA and HRDC spent on the golf course project, the long term benefit will be the equivalent of five full time jobs at the golf course. That works out to \$240,000 per job.

When will the minister discontinue this kind of spending? How can he possibly justify spending of this kind on golf courses?

Hon. George S. Baker (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me clarify for the hon. gentleman how golf courses have been funded in eastern Canada in the Atlantic provinces.

They have been funded by federal-provincial agreements for such things as the infrastructure program, being one-third municipal, one-third provincial and one-third federal. The point is that the money in Atlantic Canada came through ACOA. It was the agency that delivered on behalf of the three governments. That is where the confusion exists. ACOA does not fund golf courses.

* * *

[Translation]

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Ms. Hélène Alarie (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his report tabled today, the commissioner of the environment deplors the federal government’s approach to biosafety and more specifically to GMOs.

In black and white, the report states that the final bargaining position, in both Cartagena and Montreal, strongly reflected Canada’s commercial concerns.

Does the Minister of the Environment intend to ratify the protocol on biosafety, which is currently being discussed, in order to put human health and the environment ahead of commercial concerns? Will he sign the protocol?

[English]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question.

It is true that there is a difficulty facing many countries in the world, in fact all trading nations, in making sure that environmental considerations are taken fully into account when economic decisions on trade are made.

Oral Questions

Nevertheless, in Montreal in January we managed to agree to the Cartagena protocol on biodiversity. We think that provides a real opportunity for all the nations of the world under the United Nations to move successfully to reconcile these difficulties.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. John Bryden (Wentworth—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the access to information commissioner tabled a report today in which he expressed concern about the time it takes the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to process access to information requests.

Can the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration tell the House what she plans to do to address the commissioner's concerns?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the information commissioner actually acknowledged the excellent progress that citizenship and immigration has made in meeting the requirements.

Last year we were at 51% and this year we are at 75%. We are hoping to improve that record so that we can join the privy council office and Health Canada, which both received an A this year with 95%.

I want to point out one thing. When I went to high school 75% was an A. While we have to do better to achieve the 95% required by the information commissioner to get his A, we are making progress and we do want to do better.

* * *

ACOA

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister in charge of ACOA.

He said they did not fund one penny for a golf course in his first answer. In his second answer he said that golf course funding is one-third municipal, one-third provincial and one-third federal. If ACOA did not fund it, where did the one-third federal money come from?

Hon. George S. Baker (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the infrastructure program was a national program. It gave funds right across the country on the same principle: one-third federal, one-third provincial and one-third municipal.

However, in the case of Atlantic Canada the funds were delivered through ACOA on behalf of the federal government. The funds did not come from the ACOA budget. ACOA does not fund golf courses.

• (1450)

Mr. John Reynolds (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I hope the minister can play golf better than he can answer this question.

Could the minister explain? He talks about one-third, one-third, one-third. We understand that one-third came from the federal government. The federal government is the taxpayer.

Will the minister agree that one-third of the funding for a golf course in his riding came from the taxpayers of Canada?

Hon. George S. Baker (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the research work from the official opposition be improved.

The last time the hon. member asked a question on ACOA it was alleged that ACOA gave grants to big corporations like Global and IBM. After we checked we found out that the so-called grant to Global was for studio time and the IBM grant was \$29.40 for a floppy disk. Their research work is a flop.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Dennis Gruending (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today's report from the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development exposed the government's failure to deliver on a range of environmental promises.

For example, the commissioner says that the government and the provinces have been talking about smog reduction for 10 years, but that virtually nothing has been done. This deadly smog kills an estimated 5,000 Canadians every year.

Last week the minister did begin to play catch up, but the government has been in power for seven years. What has taken so long and how does the minister explain this lack of leadership?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once more one of these questions from the NDP, which is stuck in the past.

I outlined to the House very recently the steps that are being taken on smog. This requires international action with the Americans on the ozone annex. It requires co-operation with the provinces, including the three provinces which have NDP governments, on Canada-wide standards for things like benzene, mercury, ozone, as well as particulate matter and others.

We then have domestic Canadian actions, which the Minister of Health and I are undertaking under the new CEPA which came into effect April 1.

Oral Questions

Mr. Dennis Gruending (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it was the environment commissioner himself who said this morning that we need leadership, not more talk.

The government has promised to lead by example, but today's report shows that government departments do not even know how much water they use, how much electricity they use or how much waste they produce.

How can the government set targets for the efficient use of water and electricity or greenhouse gas reductions if it does not even have this basic information about itself? How can Canadians trust the government to clean up their environment when it cannot even begin to manage its own?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know this is question period and when he asks a question and gets words he should not complain about hearing talk. That seems to be ridiculous.

With respect to the programs we are putting in place, I trust the NDP will support us and make sure the provincial governments which are controlled by the NDP similarly support us because, as the commissioner made clear, it is the failure of the provinces to proceed which is at the core of our problem.

* * *

TRANSPORT

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

A short while ago I asked the minister for an indefinite rate freeze on the ferry run from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland and the minister scoffed at the idea. Even though this ferry route is essentially part of the Trans-Canada Highway, the cost of travel on it is much higher than an equivalent trip by road.

Given the importance of the ferry link to the future development of Newfoundland, and given that P.E.I. now has a fixed link, why can we not have our fixed rate?

● (1455)

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I might remind the hon. member that there has been no increase for three years. Recently on a trip to St. John's I said that we had no intention of increasing the tariffs this year.

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, PC): Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister about freezing the rate.

Given that he continues to evade that answer, let me try him on this one. Quite often the threat of a strike by workers disrupts tourists headed for Newfoundland. Given the importance of this

ferry link to the economy of Newfoundland, would the minister consider having that service declared an essential service with no strikes facing the travelling public and some form of binding arbitration for the workers?

Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these are questions that really should be addressed to my colleague, the Minister of Labour.

However, there are ongoing discussions and some disagreements among the workforce as the result of the temporary ferry, the *Max Mols*, coming into service this summer. I hope that the collective agreements will be used to settle those particular disputes.

I might say that this government delivered on extra ferry capacity for the gulf service this summer. We are going to give Newfoundlanders the best service they have ever had. There will be no more rotting vegetables, no more rotting meat, no more stranded passengers. There will be first class service for a first class travelling public.

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CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Lou Sekora (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration inform the House as to the status of the criminal prosecution of the nine people accused of people smuggling with the boat arrivals off the coast of British Columbia last summer?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people smuggling is an international issue and every country of the world that cares as Canada does about both trafficking and smuggling is taking action to address this matter.

At the present time there are charges before Canadian courts and, while I cannot speak to the individual cases, what I can tell the member is that it is the intention of this government to prosecute to the full extent of the law so that we can send the strongest possible message to those who would traffic in human lives and smuggle people around this world. That is our policy.

* * *

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on March 17 CSIS released a southeast Asian security report written by Professor Peter Chalk of Queensland University in Australia. That report identifies the Federation of Associations of Canadian Tamils as one of the most active and vital fundraising bodies for the Tamil Tigers.

When the finance minister said yesterday that he likes to celebrate the cultural heritage of such groups, what exactly does he

Oral Questions

mean; that Tamil Tigers supporters wearing combat fatigues and carrying replica assault rifles in a Toronto elementary school, as pictured in today's *National Post*, is the sort of thing Canadians should celebrate?

The Speaker: Before the minister answers, I find that the question does not relate directly to the duties of the minister. However, I see that he is on his feet. If he wishes to answer he may, but the question is out of order.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the question is out of order. The motivation behind it is out of order as well.

This was a cultural event, with a group of Canadians celebrating the Tamil new year. These were young people. They were professional people. They were people with a vast range of occupations who had come to celebrate a period of enjoyment. The minister and I and others from the provincial government and municipal governments were there.

To condemn these people, to call them terrorists, is anti-Canadian. I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, there is Irish blood coursing through my veins, and I am not a member of the IRA.

* * *

• (1500)

[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île-d'Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois moved amendments requiring Air Canada subsidiaries to comply with the Official Languages Act.

The Minister of Transport opposed these amendments and thus jeopardized a significant presence of francophones in the airline industry.

With the warning from the Association des Gens de l'Air du Québec, does the Minister of Transport not realize that, by rejecting our amendments, he has himself compromised the francophone presence in Canada's airline industry?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Not at all, Mr. Speaker, because we introduced amendments to give full expression to the feelings of francophones and to provide means of ensuring good service to francophones throughout the country.

If there is a problem in future, it can be addressed in another bill, but it is very important that this bill be passed as quickly as possible. I must point out that consideration of the bill in the House has been concluded and that it is now before the Senate.

[English]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the president of the CBC has said that the broadcaster is not a priority for the government and that the CBC is on life support due to underfunding.

Due to passionate protests by Canadians from coast to coast, the CBC has pulled back from axing regional shows entirely. But the problem remains and it is one of money and political will.

My question is for the finance minister. At a time when the federal coffers are overflowing, why is it that the government is leaving the CBC, one of our most revered national institutions, on life support?

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is not totally fair to the president of the CBC. What he did say, and he did correct his statement at committee when the member was there, was that the priority was not to add money to the current envelope of \$901 million plus what CBC can get from the television production fund.

For the member to say that the CBC is not a priority is totally erroneous. The president of the CBC said no such a thing.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Mr. Speaker, here we go again. Today the commissioner for the environment released another damning report over the government's dismal environment record. He pointed out the government's lack to grasp or understand the benefits of aggressive tax incentives to support energy efficiency initiatives, not just lip service. Alberta's environment minister, Gary Mar, has recognized the need for this particular initiative in his best effort strategy.

Is the reason the government continues to flounder on climate change because the Minister of the Environment is fighting over the file with the Minister of Natural Resources, because the Prime Minister has no grasp of the file, or because the finance minister has no clue what a tax cut is?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in terms of internal political battles within a party, we certainly will say that the Tories have far more experience and are much better at it than we are. They have many more corpses on the floor.

I would say to the member that he has chosen the one minister of the environment from all the provinces, who drives the largest SUV with the worst gas mileage, to cite as his example for the rest of us. I think it is quite ridiculous that he would make such a suggestion.

Supply

[Translation]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in our gallery of His Excellency, Mr. Dieng Boubou Farba, Speaker of the Senate of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1505)

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, before question period I was talking about toll roads as being one method by which some governments have seen fit to put spending back into roads.

I received a letter from Bruce Law from the Lundar area of Manitoba. His opinion was that tolls on roads are another form of taxation. He was also concerned that the money collected from tolls on a specific road or bridge would eventually find its way to another fund. There is an element of distrust on the part of many Canadians with regard to the government taking in user fees, tolls and those sorts of thing for a specific purpose and then using those moneys for a totally unrelated initiative.

While I recognize that provincial jurisdiction primarily prevails in regard to highways, the federal government does take in the larger portion of tax money from Canadians and, as a result, has a responsibility not only for the national highway system but also to assist the provinces with their major roads.

The reason we have a crisis in transportation, particular on roads, is because the government has given no long term plan in conjunction with the provinces for infrastructure. It has indicated no long term funding. It is more a case of letting it get bad, letting it become a crisis and then it will do something.

With regard to the railways, in the past, when the Government of Canada owned the Canadian National Railway it was at the height

of being a regulated system. However, we saw that the Canadian National Railway, in its contracts with employees and different things, was a very inefficient railway. It signed contracts out of convenience. It made it hard for the normal competitive commercial industry. It is only now, with Canadian National being a private company, that we see it moving toward a more efficient system.

We see some of the same problems that Canadian National Railway had showing up in the case of VIA Rail. It is my personal opinion that the user fees being charged by VIA Rail are probably not sufficient and should be a little higher. As long as VIA Rail is totally protected from the marketplace, I think it will continue to have to be highly subsidized by the federal government. There needs to be some marketplace discipline associated with the operations of VIA Rail.

My final comment on transportation and this supply day motion is with regard to the airline industry. This is a current issue that is underdeveloped and is continuing to evolve. However, the one thing I do know is that we need airline competition in this country, real competition that puts the consumer and the air traveller first, not second.

• (1510)

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the member with regards to the transportation policy or the lack of a transportation policy.

I think the member would agree that there is a huge difference between western and eastern Canada. I contend that one of the reasons that eastern Canada does not have the economic clout that it should have and deserves to have is because of a lack of a cohesive transportation policy that allows us to transport goods in and out of Atlantic Canada. This goes back to the free trade debate in 1988.

As you well know, Mr. Speaker, and I know the member knows, the party opposite railed against the free trade debate. After forming the government, it embraced it as if it had invented it. If there has been any shortcoming in that free trade agreement with the Americans, it is the fact that we never actually developed transportation links in Atlantic Canada heading north and south which would have allowed us to move our goods out of the area. This has hampered development in Atlantic Canada.

To this day I cannot understand why the government has not come up with a policy that recognizes that difficulty. From confederation up until 1988, our trade links were east and west which benefited, for the most part, central Canada.

Does the member have any understanding as to why the national government, the Liberal government of the day, has not addressed

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the problem of modern transportation to our neighbours to the south?

Mr. Howard Hilstrom: Mr. Speaker, I agree with those comments in general. The Liberals do have a history of saying one thing, doing another and not living up to promises. The member pointed out many times the example of the GST.

The maritimes and western Canada do have a lot of similarities as well as some differences. The similarities are that they are small in population and that they have limited influence in the Parliament of Canada at times when Ontario and Quebec seem to hold sway.

The west has traditionally had north-south trade routes but they were artificially changed by government policies. The Crow rate was one example of artificial regulation by the federal government that did not let normal commercial patterns develop. I think the maritimes suffered from that same situation.

What the government should now do is make sure that trade between the maritimes and the United States is not hampered and that there is harmonization in any area where there is a need, for instance on trucking regulations and criteria like that.

The member has a valid comment in that the federal government should make sure there is road infrastructure. It should also get out of the way of the railways so that they can put in the type of rail service that is needed to deliver goods both north and south from the maritimes to the U.S.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, our point with this motion today is not actually on specific issues but on the concept, approach and inconsistency of the transport policies and unco-ordinated approaches. I am sure the hon. member does not have the 1999-2000 estimates at his fingertips, but I will read a couple of numbers for him and ask him to comment on them.

• (1515)

In the estimates for transport the government has allowed for funds to pay provinces under the elimination of the Atlantic regional freight subsidy program. The province of New Brunswick for instance gets \$500,000 under the elimination of the Atlantic regional freight subsidy program whereas the province of Quebec gets \$15,747,000. Perhaps the hon. member could comment on why the province of Quebec gets \$15.7 million and the province of New Brunswick only gets a half a million dollars under the elimination of the Atlantic regional freight program.

Mr. Howard Hilstrom: Mr. Speaker, certainly I do not know the details of those agreements. No doubt there is some justification for Quebec receiving more. It is a much larger province with its economy being that much larger. I am sure it was prorated on an equitable basis. If it was not, I would ask that the member submit

the figures which show that it was done on an inequitable basis or in preference of one province over the other.

The bigger issue in rail transportation is that the federal government continues to want to highly regulate and micromanage every aspect of the rail economy when it comes to grain transportation in the west. I am not sure what the major use of rail transportation is in the east. Certainly logging is a major issue there and mining is coming along with the nickel mines. Railways are important in the east too.

It is a matter of the government making sure that the marketplace is free to work in the manner in which it was meant to. It should not be artificially designed through freight rate subsidies to help one region over the other. That probably did not occur with Quebec and New Brunswick.

Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was particularly interested in the comment made by the member of the Conservative Party who said that his party put the motion not to deal with specifics but rather to deal with the big picture. I am not surprised. I do not think the Conservatives would want to deal with specifics when we consider that at their recent policy conference they approved \$23 billion a year to be spent in debt reduction and over \$100 billion over five years for tax relief.

Just about everybody who knows anything about what is going on around here knows that the total surplus that has been announced as available is about \$95 billion. Both private sector and government figures have confirmed that. I would not want to get into specifics too much about a transportation policy if my party's policy called for spending in the area of tax relief and debt reduction \$123 billion out of a surplus of \$95 billion. That would not leave a lot for specifics or spending on transportation. That was just a side point with regard to the member's comment.

When talking about national transportation in this country, it is most helpful if there has been an opportunity to travel in Canada and see exactly what our transportation networks are about. I recently had the distinct privilege of spending four days with my wife travelling through Nova Scotia up into Cape Breton and around the Cabot Trail. I would also point out that it is a province which is represented by many Progressive Conservatives.

We had the pleasure of landing in Halifax, renting a vehicle and travelling to Digby. Members will know that Digby scallops are the finest in the world. We enjoyed the wonderful friendship of the people, the seafood, the ambience. Interestingly, we enjoyed some incredible highways. Having travelled in every province in this country, the transportation network in Nova Scotia is second to none. It is quite remarkable.

We drove almost 2,000 kilometres exactly. When we got the rental car back to the airport, we had done 2,000 kilometres around Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. I do not intend to give a travelogue,

but I was so impressed with the quality of the roads, the lack of congestion, the monitoring, the safety and everything that I saw. Of course to do that kind of mileage we were in the vehicle eight and nine hours a day travelling from point to point.

• (1520)

We left Digby and went up through Mahone Bay. My wife did a bit of shopping. This was a vacation opportunity for us to see that part of Canada. We went into Lunenburg and from there up to Truro where we spent the night. Once again I was immensely impressed with the quality of the roads. Even the roads that were off the beaten path seemed to be very well maintained.

From there we travelled across the Canso Causeway into Cape Breton and the home of Al MacInnis, a terrific hockey player in the NHL. We went up what I believe is the north coast of Cape Breton Island along the Cabot Trail. It was spectacular scenery but I must say quite spectacular roadways. The Cabot Trail of course is historic and known throughout the world. There is a transportation system that is truly a marvel. We went right into Sydney, then on the last day from Sydney down the south coast and back through the heartland to the Trans-Canada Highway at Antigonish and from Antigonish back into Halifax. We flew home the next day.

My point is that the quality of the roads was superb. The traffic management systems were superb. It is interesting to have the party that represents most of the ridings in that province, unfortunately for us at the moment, telling us that we need some kind of transportation strategy. I think Nova Scotia has obviously done very well.

On other occasions I have had the privilege of driving from Halifax through New Brunswick and across the bridge into Prince Edward Island. The fixed link is truly a wonder of the world. It finally brings P.E.I. into the world of modern transportation. I am not 100% sold that the islanders necessarily want to be brought into that world. I think they quite enjoy their beautiful island and are happy to be left alone in some instances. But in all seriousness, they understand the importance not only for tourism, but also for moving goods to and from their island for export. They are very successful in exporting a number of their products, in addition to potatoes.

On the east coast we see a situation where transportation on the roads is second to none. I did not hear members opposite representing the Conservative Party say that. If I lived in that province I would be shouting about the successes that exist in that spectacular part of Canada. I would be telling Canadians to come and enjoy Nova Scotia, Halifax, the Cabot Trail, Sydney, Rita MacNeil's beautiful tearoom in Big Pond and all of the spectacular things that are there, and to admit that there is a physical infrastructure in place in that province that is second to none.

It brings me to the concept of a national policy. Let us look at Ontario. People would recognize in my case at least, I come from

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the city of Mississauga where one of the great strengths is the transportation available to us on the Great Lakes, on the roads, on the rail system and certainly in the air with Pearson International Airport.

There has been some concern about toll roads. The province has sold Highway 407 to a private sector consortium which in turn will be increasing the tolls to replace the income that was lost in the share that goes to the government.

There is a double sided edge with toll roads. Was it Nova Scotia that eliminated the toll road? The member opposite would know.

An hon. member: New Brunswick.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: It was New Brunswick. I thought it was. Premier Lord closed the toll road. The problem is that it is fine to do that, because I am not particularly a fan of toll roads, but what was it replaced with? It drove up the debt.

• (1525)

The federal party has decided to endorse that. I guess that is not a great shock when we consider the fact that the Conservatives left a \$42 billion deficit when they were in government. They shout over there because they hate for us to remind them of that, but it is the truth and it needs to be told. It needs to be spoken about because the obvious solution to their spending plans is to somehow take us back into the era of deficit financing.

I am really surprised at that. I would have thought that the Progressive Conservative Party had learned its lesson and had realized that the running of deficits every year is like running an overdraft. I have said it many times. When they run an overdraft, how do they pay it off? They pay it off by piling it on top of the national debt. If we equate it to a family, it would run an overdraft and pay it off by putting it on top of the mortgage on the family home. We all know we can only do that for so long. At some point in time something has got to give.

We do not have the answers. It is so easy to stand and pontificate, as the Conservatives have done in their motion, that we need to address the serious transportation problems facing the Canadian people. They do not have any specifics. They do not have any answers. They do not have any solutions they are prepared to put forward. They simply want to say that someone has to fix this problem.

Let us address the problem. I have already spoken about what would appear not to be a problem. Look at the shipping which comes into Halifax harbour. Are they going to tell us that there is not an infrastructure in the harbour in Halifax to accommodate international ocean-going vessels that come there on a regular basis? Are they going to tell us that the airport in Halifax is not capable of handling the traffic that comes into that province? Are they going to sit there and tell us that their province is full of congested roads with potholes when we know that it is not true?

Supply

I would suggest that the crisis they are talking about is a fabrication in their own minds. It is all because of one issue. It has to do with the so-called merger, although it is more of a takeover, of Canadian Airlines by Air Canada. Let us analyze that. Certainly there have been and will continue to be some route justifications in parts of the country, but the government realizes the importance of providing good quality service in the air. Look at the size of the country. We cannot expect that people are going to be able to get around without some kind of a national airline system.

The cry is that we need more competition. I hear the official opposition—I can never remember the new name, I am going to have to sit down and write it out 100 times or something, but whatever it is, the reform alliance conservative progressive whatever—

Mr. Stan Keyes: CCRAP.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Oh, I would not say that. This is a family show so I cannot use that.

Mr. Ken Epp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. On numerous occasions the Speaker has ruled that the name of this party should be used as it is properly registered. It is Canadian Alliance and I would urge the member not to demonstrate his total inability to learn two words by actually using the name Canadian Alliance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): The hon. member for Mississauga West is correctly admonished and I hope illuminated and elucidated.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Mr. Speaker, I have two words for the member and they are not Canadian Alliance, but that is another story.

I stand to be corrected but I think that it is the Canadian Conservative Reform Alliance Party. That is five words. That is the registered name or something like that. There are five words in the registered name, not two, so if the member thinks that I have a problem, maybe that explains why.

However, I want to get back to the issue of a national transportation strategy, because the reform party, or the Alliance Party, pardon me—

Mr. Ken Epp: Canadian Alliance.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: The Canadian Alliance Party. They have a party. I will call them what they want but the people will understand what they are voting for, believe me. They will be voting for the same old thing when they get an opportunity after the same leader is re-elected. We know that.

• (1530)

We also know that party's position. By the way, they are all over the map in this regard. The position of the official opposition is that all transportation issues should be run by the private sector, that there is no reason for government to be involved in providing any kind of infrastructure. Its own members have criticized the infrastructure program.

They love to throw around the word boondoggle. I think they learned it as a new phrase this year when they were away at a caucus retreat. We can just see them all gathering around going boondoggle, boondoggle. Anyway, they learned this word and have suggested that the infrastructure program is in some way not a proper expenditure of federal government money.

There has never been in my view a more successful uptake of a program that I can recall than the infrastructure program launched in 1993. Why? Because it involved the entire community. It was not the government coming out, cutting a ribbon and passing out a cheque: "Me and the Prime Minister bring you the cheque". It was not done that way. There was involvement with the municipalities across Canada. All the provinces had an opportunity.

Some hon. members: Nonsense.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: How can members opposite say that is nonsense? It is absolutely the truth. There was involvement with the private sector, the municipal sector, the provincial government, the territorial governments and the federal government. It was a true partnership. By and large, with a few exceptions, the money was used to build core infrastructure which included things like sewers, water pipes and roads.

Mr. Greg Thompson: Don't forget the golf courses.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: We need roads to get to the golf course. There are some beautiful ones in his part of the world. The roads to get there are wonderful. I was not talking about them. I was talking about the official opposition and its position.

Here is a statement by the member for St. Albert, a man for whom I have respect as chair of the public accounts committee. I serve as vice-chair. It is meeting at the moment so I will try to hurry. The member for St. Albert said that the newly announced infrastructure program had all the makings to become another administrative fiasco.

Was it an administrative fiasco in 1993? No. Was it a success? Absolutely. It was a success from sea to sea to sea. It seems that members of the official opposition in particular cannot take yes for an answer. If we looked in every one of their ridings in addition to the Conservative ridings that I referred to, I suspect we would find infrastructure programs where the entire community including the provinces were all involved in delivering high quality transportation systems to the people.

Supply

Let us ask another question. We all know that opposition parties submit closet budgets, phantom budgets, would be budgets or hoped for budgets. How much money did the official opposition budget for transportation infrastructure? Never mind the Tories. We know what the Conservatives have done. They said they would spend about \$30 billion more than already is available on debt reduction and tax reduction to help their rich friends. They would not do anything for transportation except maybe pray to the sky and hope that someone would solve the big picture problem.

How much has the official opposition put in? Nothing. How can its members stand with any kind of credibility and vote for a motion like this one? What do they call their alternative budget? They call it solution 17. In their budget there was not one dollar, not one loonie, toonie, or anything for transportation infrastructure. Their finance critic wrote about an alternative budget. He put the entire surplus of \$95 billion over the next five years toward a plan of tax cuts in debt retirement. The official opposition is actually a bit better than the fifth party. The reason is it has spent all the surplus whereas the fifth party spent the surplus plus \$30 billion and still did nothing for transportation.

• (1535)

I listen to the policies and to the ongoing leadership debate in the official opposition. I listen to candidates like Tom Long from Ontario. He goes around the country and gives one message in the west and another one in the east. He insists on telling people that he will cut their taxes and get an economic boom going in the country even though we are currently sustaining an unprecedented economic boom that is second to none.

It is amazing to see what is going on all over the country. All we have to do is travel to find out. Yet we have no commitment from any of the candidates who would be prime minister of this great land on what they would do for transportation infrastructure. At the same time we have a fifth party who stands in this place and whose leader will not run for a seat in the House. I wish he would. I would love to see him in here.

I should officially welcome the new member from St. John's to his new seat. I guess they did not tell him that it would be that far back in the corner. I am sure, with his credentials, that he will be moving up. He is a former minister of education in the wonderful province of Newfoundland. I sincerely welcome him to the House and into the fray.

Hopefully he will bring some good old down home Newfie common sense and recognize that when you put forward a statement on a national transportation policy you should try to gild the lily a bit and include some specifics. You should not just stand to make grandiose statements that everybody else should fix all the problems, especially when you come from a part of the country where you would be hard pressed to try to convince anyone who has been there that transportation is not in any kind of difficulty.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the hon. member who just finished speaking has been in the House for many years and does not even yet know the most rudimentary rules of this place. For example, he spoke about our new colleague in the first person. He cannot learn anything. He cannot learn the name of our party. He is clueless.

I have two or three questions or comments. The first one is with respect to debt retirement. We in the Canadian Alliance are promoting that we should get the debt reduced because it has a huge impact on our budget. Large amounts of money go to pay interest. To retire our present debt in 25 years would mean applying a total of \$50 billion in surplus every year for 25 years to pay the principle and interest on it. That is assuming that interest rates do not rise too much above what they are now. I do not think that I will get—

Mr. Stan Keyes: From where will you get the money?

Mr. Ken Epp: The question is from where will we get the money. That is a good question. Meanwhile the Liberals are trying to figure out how to spend the bit of surplus they get. They should be applying more of it toward the debt. That is exactly my point.

The other question I have is for the hon. member who gave his speech and not the parliamentary secretary who feels obliged to heckle me while I am making this wonderful dissertation.

Mr. Stan Keyes: You cannot get it right. I am not a parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Ken Epp: Are you not a parliamentary secretary?

Mr. Stan Keyes: Not for over a year now.

Mr. Ken Epp: The hon. member is not a parliamentary secretary. He could be but he is not.

• (1540)

In his speech the member indicated that the infrastructure program had nothing to do with politics. Then I have a very simple question. If it does not involve politics, why is it that the cheque was delivered by none other than the Liberal Minister of Justice who found it necessary to travel to my riding in a big flurry for only one purpose, to deliver the cheque?

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister wanted to ensure that the cheque arrived safely. I am not sure why it was done. In any event, it is nice that the member has acknowledged that indeed the cheque did arrive and the project was a go.

Let me just make one correction. I referred to the newest member in the House as the member from St. John's. Some may think he is a saint. People in his riding may think he is a saint but that is not his name. I did not refer to him in the first person. I referred to him as the member from St. John's. There are five

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names in your new silly party, not two. You should perhaps learn them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Let us just stop there and stick to the debate on transportation at hand.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Mr. Speaker, I guess you could say he started it but I will not get into that. Who cares? You are right, Mr. Speaker. We should stick to the debate on transportation. That is the important thing.

It is important that we pay down the debt and the government has started to do it. If we put all our eggs in one basket we wind up with nothing but broken eggs. That is exactly what the official opposition is doing.

Speaking of eggs, if we take a look at the policy of the fifth party, that is exactly what it is doing. Its members are not only putting all the eggs in one basket. They are adding eggs to it that they do not even have yet, that the chicken has not laid yet. How in the world will they fill a basket with non-existent eggs?

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the nice travelogue about Nova Scotia. He is absolutely right. It is entirely beautiful.

Mr. Steve Mahoney: A great transportation system.

Mr. Bill Casey: Yes, there are some good highways in Nova Scotia, but there are also some bad ones. It is interesting that he missed those highways. He missed the 101 where in the last few years 50 young people have been killed because there is no federal-provincial agreement to upgrade that highway. For decades there was money available from the federal government to be applied to main highways, but now there is none. Not one cent is budgeted for this year or next year in Nova Scotia where for years there was money to address those dangerous issues.

I want to go through some of the points he made. He mentioned that the fixed link is a wonderful piece of transportation infrastructure. He is absolutely right. That was a Conservative project right from beginning to end.

He did not mention the toll highways in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. He missed the toll highways in his travelogue. He went all around the toll highways. He did not go across the toll highways. He probably does not like paying tolls any more than we do every day of coming and going. He avoided that toll highways.

I will tell the hon. member who did not avoid the toll highways. It was the voters in the last elections in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. We cannot find a Liberal anywhere near either of the toll highways in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick. The hon. member may think the Liberal policy is great, but I can tell him the voters know that it is not a good policy.

He went on to talk about the great port of Halifax. He is absolutely right. There is infrastructure there, but last year when Halifax needed help to compete with other ports in the United States for post-Panamax containers where was the federal government? It was hiding somewhere. It was completely invisible. Even though other governments in other countries helped, Canada did not help the port of Halifax and it lost that competition.

The hon. member mentioned that we were complaining about potholes. We are not complaining about potholes in our infrastructure. We have a highway in Nova Scotia, to go back to the highway that he missed, highway 101. It is between Halifax and a large university community. Some 50 people have been killed on that highway since 1993. A lot of them were young people. We are not talking about potholes. We are talking about serious business.

I want to read something from the *Globe and Mail* this morning and then have him comment on it. It is a comment about France's policy on highway reconstruction. It reads:

According to *Le Figaro*, even though France has Europe's third highest road mortality rate. . . bureaucrats won't fix deadly stretches of highway if the work costs most than. . . \$750,000.

German planners, however, will spend up to \$937,000 to save a life while the Swiss will go as high as \$2 million.

We have a highway in Nova Scotia on which we have lost 50 lives in seven years and not one penny has been assigned to Nova Scotia for highway work this year. I would like to hear the member's comment on that.

• (1545)

Mr. Steve Mahoney: Mr. Speaker, when we talk about issues concerning young people who are killed on what could be considered low grade roads, those are not matters which should be bantered about in this place. These are matters on which all levels of government have to work together. They all have a responsibility.

By the way, I was close to that highway, but the hon. member is right in that we turned off at Highway 104 to go into Halifax.

The Government of Nova Scotia has a strong responsibility within its local community, if it has those kinds of tragic numbers, to ensure the road is upgraded. As I have said, and the hon. member has agreed, it has managed to do it throughout the entire province with a transportation system that is second to none. If the hon. member can point to the stretch of highway that has had the carnage and loss of lives of the nature and the magnitude he has just told us about, then I believe he should take it up with the minister of transportation in that province and he should ask that it be addressed as quickly as possible.

We have problems in our own communities. In Ontario young people are killed on our roads. Tragedies occur and we must do

something to stop them. We must continue to fight drunk driving. We must continue to educate our young people through better licensing programs and better education to try to deal with the carnage on our roads. To turn it into a political issue by saying that the federal government has somehow not addressed a national roads policy or a national transportation policy and to use that kind of statistic is most unfortunate.

I would support the hon. member in his attempts to have that road upgraded and fixed so that we can put an end to the terrible tragedies.

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that I did not have a chance to question the hon. member from Ontario who just spoke. As usual, he is fast and free with the information, but when he is taken to task by anyone in the House to either back up what he is saying or provide us with some real information, he always falls short of the mark. Is that not the Liberal way? We have been waiting seven years for a national highways program. The hon. member completely ducked the issue because the Liberals do not want to take responsibility. It is as simple as that.

This year, just as a note, the federal government will take in about \$4 billion in fuel taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel. Transport Canada will have a surplus of approximately \$3.9 billion this year, but again there is no highway policy.

I want to compare our position with that of the United States to give an example of where we are really falling behind in terms of infrastructure; that is, highways and those things that are needed, whether it is highways or air transportation, to move our goods and people around and to grow the economy as we would like to see it grow.

Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for West Nova. I am sure you will be interested to hear another Nova Scotian go into detail on some of the shortcomings of the federal government in that province.

Getting back to our case versus that of the United States, just a couple of years ago the President of the United States announced the TEA-21, the transportation equity act for the 21st century. I have a summary of the act which I would be pleased to table for any member who might want to take a look at it.

On June 9, 1998, President Clinton signed into law the transportation equity act for the 21st century. This guaranteed a level of federal funding for surface transportation. I will give an example of how much the Americans are putting in at the federal level on highways alone.

• (1550)

The amount guaranteed for surface transportation under that act is estimated to be \$198 billion. In essence, the guaranteed amount

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is the floor. It defines the least amount of the authorizations that may be spent. The least amount that would be spent is \$198 billion. Let us assume, and for the most part everyone would agree with me, that the American economy is basically ten times that of Canada's. At a minimum, if Canada were to reflect what the U.S. is doing, we would be spending \$20 billion on surface transportation in this country. We simply are not doing that. We are falling behind.

The member for Cumberland—Colchester mentioned the number of deaths on the infamous Highway 101 in Nova Scotia. There have been over 50 deaths in the last seven years alone.

Not only from the public safety point of view should the federal government be doing something, but also from the standpoint of growing the economy.

I had a question for one of the Reform members—

Mr. Ken Epp: The Canadian Alliance.

Mr. Greg Thompson: Excuse me, the Canadian Alliance.

The question concerned the free trade agreement. We remember the huge debate that we had in 1988 leading into the election. In fact, the 1988 election was called the free trade election because that was the number one issue that dominated the hustings. We know that the Liberals, in fact every member seated opposite, raged against the free trade agreement.

When the Liberals took office in 1993 the economy was growing and it has been grown ever since. We have not had a downturn since they took office. Eventually it will happen and none of us wants to see that. However, the truth is that the Canadian economy has grown largely because of our export capacity, largely because of the free trade agreement which they railed against, but now they embrace it as if they invented it. We know full well they did not invent it. In fact, they were going to tear it up. They were going to nullify it.

With that growth in the economy comes an obligation on the part of government to do something about transportation. What I am leading to is that there are some parts of the country which are suffering because of our transportation links. One of those areas is Atlantic Canada. Unfortunately, the Canadian Alliance, formerly the Reform Party, looks at Atlantic Canada and says "What is wrong with you people? Why can you not get your act together? Why do you not have the kind of prosperity that we witness in western Canada, particularly Alberta and B.C., or the type of economic growth that we see in Ontario?" That party misses the point that we have been trying to make for years in this House, particularly the last three or four years, with respect to transportation. If we are going to grow the economy we have to have links in and out of our provinces to trade goods, which other areas of the country have been able to do successfully. Ontario has great transportation links to the United States.

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We embraced the free trade agreement, along with the Liberal premier of New Brunswick at the time, because we saw it as an opportunity to enhance our markets to the south of us, because we are always forced to trade east and west from one end of Canada to the other. Since then we have not seen growth in infrastructure, particularly highways, to move our goods and people in and out as efficiently as might be the case. That has certainly hampered us.

• (1555)

I really believe the government has a responsibility to build that infrastructure. What we are saying is, give us a chance to compete and we will compete successfully, which we are doing. However, we are certainly denied some of the growth that other parts of Canada have experienced because of the lack of efficient transportation in and out of Atlantic Canada.

To add insult to injury, when the member for Cumberland—Colchester questioned the minister in the House today, the minister alluded to the airport in Toronto and the travelling time of two to three hours for people travelling to that airport. He inferred that in the province of New Brunswick we will at some point be left with one airport. Which one will it be? Will it be Moncton, Saint John or Fredericton? The government does not understand Atlantic Canada and it is not willing to do anything to help Atlantic Canada. It does not understand the big picture.

My party is saying that the government has to come up with a policy. The Liberals cannot fly by the seat of their pants on every issue. They have done it on health care and transportation, and the Canadian public will simply not tolerate that type of make it up as they go along, fly by the seat of their pants attitude.

Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment my colleague from the Conservative Party on his perspective as an Atlantic Canadian.

I would concur with him that for far too long those of us in the Atlantic region have been disadvantaged because of the historical trading links that went east to west. At the time of Confederation, we in the Atlantic region gave up the natural north-south trading routes, and we did so in good faith. As the member said, today we find that without the necessary infrastructure it is difficult to compete.

I would question my colleague on the issue of airports because I found his comments to be most interesting. We have a small airport in Cape Breton that is absolutely essential if we are to develop and grow an economic base. Yet we are threatened at various times with the loss of the flight service station and the loss of the people who operate the runway. We have been told that this could be centralized and done from Halifax.

The member spoke about the loss of two airports in New Brunswick, but I think we face the same thing in all of the Atlantic

region. The government's philosophy might be to have one central airport, not in New Brunswick, but maybe in Halifax. I wonder if the member would care to comment on what the loss of these vital airports would do to areas like Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Cape Breton.

Mr. Greg Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments. I do not think we disagree on what we see happening.

I wonder if Doug Young is going to be the author of the privatization or the elimination scheme when we take a look at airports in eastern Canada, as he was with port privatization. That is a name that would probably shell shock everyone on the Liberal side and send them into hiding.

It is frightening to think about what might happen. Who knows? We will just have to wait and see. That could be in the works for New Brunswick. I know the airport authorities in Fredericton, Saint John and Moncton are pretty concerned about it, but there is no evidence coming out of Ottawa that we want to grow those areas. They could abandon them at a minute's notice. None of us know.

• (1600)

It is quite disturbing, and it goes back to what I concluded in my speech, it is sort of like flying by the seat of our pants, with no long range planning. The premiers across the country are screaming for a plan. If there is a plan, not everyone will get everything their way, in particular premiers or even the federal Minister of Transport, but there is always a little give and take. Canadians deserve a plan.

Only in that way can we plan for the future. We want to make the right decisions as we go along but we cannot make the right decisions if we are flying by the seat of our pants in a sort of ad hoc planning committee, if there is one. We want to see a plan. Until we see it we are going to be pretty concerned about what might happen in Sydney or in Saint John, New Brunswick.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member's opinion on something to emphasize my position that the policy of the government is inconsistent and does not make any sense.

In the government's transport projections for spending next year under contributions to provinces toward highway improvements, it says that under the Outaouais development agreement it gets \$4.7 million, whereas the province of Nova Scotia gets \$1.8 million.

The Outaouais area, wherever the Outaouais area is—

An hon. member: That is right here in Ottawa.

Mr. Bill Casey: —gets two and a half times as much as the entire province of Nova Scotia for highway funding, even though—

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): We are going to give the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest 30 seconds.

Mr. Greg Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I am sure I will get unanimous consent to go on and on because I am sure the government wants to hear more of what I have to say.

The member is right. I believe the Outaouais is the Ottawa area. Obviously the Ottawa area is represented by a Liberal member of parliament. That is probably the difference.

An hon. member: Is that what it is?

Mr. Greg Thompson: I am sure that is what it is, but I could be proven wrong on that.

The province of New Brunswick, under that agreement, is getting about \$56 million, which would build about 10 kilometres of highway if we are lucky, not to mention any bridges or infrastructure.

At the end of the year 2050 we would have about half of the province completed under the scheme that the federal Liberal Party is suggesting.

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to have a chance to participate in this debate. It is an issue that all Canadians, regardless of where they reside in Canada, feel that parliament should have had quite some time ago.

I want to take this particular moment to commend the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester for his work as transport critic in actually raising this particular issue and bringing this debate to the floor of the House of Commons today.

Mr. Speaker, I know that you understand this particular issue as I do. When it comes to long range planning, whether it is on transportation issues, environmental issues, climate change, or the development of tax policy or trade policy, the government is absent in terms of actually having a long term vision, regardless of what the actual topic might actually be. Whether it is the need to develop an implementation strategy for the Kyoto climate change, whether it is planning in advance to avoid a pollster strike which we had just a few years ago, or whether it is the same kind of vision that we actually had when we were in government with respect to trade—our trade with the United States was around \$90 billion each and every year and today we trade over \$260 billion each and every year—it was that kind of long term planning for which this government is absent.

What all the provinces have been advocating for quite some time is to have some federal leadership with respect to a transportation policy for this country. One of the greatest challenges that a country as complex and as large as Canada is, is the geography

from coast to coast to coast. The size of this country gives us as a nation an immense amount of challenges that we have to recognize. It was the same kind of challenge and vision that actually built the railroad that we have from coast to coast. Now we need to take that vision that we had for the 19th century and put it into a 21st century context.

• (1605)

The transportation challenges that we have right now in this modern, globalized world is that we need to be able to move our goods and our people from point to point in rapid fashion in order to stay competitive, to be able to function as a modern country and to maintain our place in the global economy.

We know now that the stresses of our cities, which have changed just over the last two or three decades in the population growth, whether it be in Vancouver, Halifax or Toronto, is that from an urban planning and an urban transportation perspective the federal government has a role to help maintain that public transport infrastructure so it does not wear down our roads and wear down our other infrastructure so that we spend so much money in maintenance. More importantly, we need to encourage and have modern up to date transportation policy so that people can commute to and fro from our cities which would actually put less stress on our infrastructure and less environmental pollution with respect to smog or that of climate change.

The government went to Kyoto in 1997 to establish and agree to a target and a timeline without any consultation with the provinces, the municipalities or Canadians in terms of accepting a target to reduce greenhouse gases by 6% below 1990 levels by the year 2008 to 2012 with no plan on how to do that.

One of the things the government should be doing, and with what I call no regrets, things that we should be doing for many reasons, whether it be human health, smog or just saving money on urban infrastructure, is to develop a sound urban transportation policy. The federal government has a role to work with the provinces and municipalities in that particular fashion.

I also want to comment on some callous remarks that were made by the Minister of Transport earlier today to the member for Cumberland—Colchester and to the member for Saint John. When it comes to an airport perspective in the province of New Brunswick, he said that he would let market forces decide what happens in terms of the principal airports between Saint John, Moncton and Fredericton.

We can let market forces actually make that decision to some degree or we can do what the Progressive Conservative Party wants to do and our transport critic wants, which is for the federal government to demonstrate leadership for the maintenance of those three airports or to actually develop a vision in terms of what air transport policy should be in the province of New Brunswick, but

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not from a top down perspective by waiting to see what happens or letting the chips fall where they may.

The government should be working in conjunction with the province of New Brunswick, with Premier Bernard Lord and with the municipalities that are serviced by those three cities to determine what the best thing would be to do, as opposed to just ignoring the remarks by the member for Cumberland—Colchester. At a minimum, the government should be stating that all three airports will be maintained in their present fashion unless the federal government provides some vision that the province, the municipalities and all citizens in southern New Brunswick could actually concur with.

We need to upgrade our transportation system because it is deteriorating. We do have challenges today that we did not have a few years ago. The member for Cumberland—Colchester showed me statistics from 1993 and the number of accidents involving dangerous goods was approximately 250. Today, on average, each and every year there are almost 450 accidents involving dangerous goods. I maintain that because of our growing economy, our growing population and the growing stresses in our transportation infrastructure that these kinds of things are bound to happen unless we actually make the investment in our rail systems, our trucking system and our roads, including the Trans-Canada Highway. We are bound to have these kinds of accidents time and time again unless we actually modernize our infrastructure to maintain the record growth that we have had.

• (1610)

The provinces have stated that the government's policy with respect to transport has been inconsistent, unco-ordinated and perhaps, above all, reactionary.

If we look back to the airline merger, everybody knew that Canadian Airlines was in financial trouble and that it was about to unfold but instead, the federal government allowed the market forces to decide the airline's fate. In some communities for a number of months transportation strategies were causing an immense amount of problems with respect to air transport and being able to move people the way that we wanted to do.

I would also maintain that when this government took office in 1993 the revenues for the Department of Transport from fuel taxes and user fees, whether it was leases on airports or whatever, were essentially equal to its expenditures. Right now the Department of Transport takes in \$3.9 billion more each and every year from resources, such as fuel taxes and leasing fees. I guarantee that the provinces are not getting anywhere near that kind of return on their highways.

At a minimum, the federal government should be dealing with these four particular issues: first and foremost, working in collabo-

ration with the provinces to develop a national transportation strategy for highways; second, having a clear vision in terms of urban transportation; third, working with the municipality so that we can develop the infrastructure for public transport; and fourth, to recognize that the transportation strategy that it has will assist in its strategy with respect to greenhouse gases and climate change.

Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed listening to the comments from that part of Canada. It is rather interesting to compare the thinking in different areas of Canada.

In my province we have two airports, which is all we have ever had and I guess all we can ever expect. The minister and other members mentioned three airports this morning. I believe they were Moncton, Fredericton and Saint John. I can appreciate that those members have the airports, and I hope that they can keep them, but it is very difficult for me to understand the concept of distance. Where I come from the joke is that if our dog runs away we can see the dog going for two days.

I want to draw a comparison here. I come from a rural constituency. If I really step on it I can get to the airport in an hour and a half to two hours, and I am one of the the lucky ones. My colleague from Yorkton—Melville is two to two and a half hours from the airport. My colleague from Cypress Hills—Grasslands is five hours from the airport. In those terms, I have never heard anyone in my province complain about having only two airports.

In getting to the airport, is it the time restraint the member for Fundy—Royal has or is it the mileage? For instance, when I stayed with my brother in Burlington it sometimes took him two hours to get me to Pearson airport.

I think we have to put things in perspective. I am not trying to criticize the hon. member's position. I am just trying to get a picture in my mind of what the problem is with the airports. Is it the distance or the obstacles in getting to the airport?

• (1615)

Mr. John Herron: Mr. Speaker, the issue at hand here is that the three towns, Moncton, Saint John and Fredericton, are about the same size. If they were on their own, clearly they would have some kind of an airport. It is paramount for economic development reasons.

I accept the argument that those three airports are within an hour or an hour and a half driving distance. As opposed to taking a hands off approach and saying whatever happens happens between those three airports or whatever happens happens to the economic development in those three towns, the federal government owes it to the citizens in those three towns to step forward and provide leadership in terms of other solutions with respect to air transportation, whether it is one centralized airport or whether it is rebuilding

one of the existing airports. That becomes a very difficult issue to manage. It is very parochial in nature regardless of where we live.

The issue is that the federal government at a minimum should maintain those three airports unless it has agreed with its provincial partners and the citizens who reside in those three towns to build a better transportation system.

Mrs. Michelle Dockrill (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it fascinating to listen to my hon. colleague with respect to the motion by the Conservative Party.

Recently in Nova Scotia Premier Hamm announced his government's intentions to privatize a large portion of the department of transportation. From what I understand after talking to individuals, Cumberland—Colchester is going to see about two-thirds of the department of transportation privatized. I heard the member talk about the federal government's obligation for a national transportation policy.

Is he in agreement with the premier of Nova Scotia's intentions to privatize the department of transportation?

Mr. John Herron: Mr. Speaker, I am quite proud of the initiatives John Hamm is taking for the province of Nova Scotia. Because of the tax and spend liberalism and the socialist individuals who have created the financial crisis in that province, Premier Hamm has had to make some choices.

This is a mere experiment within the government to see how it can deliver some services in a more cost effective manner. My perspective is I support my provincial cousins in their initiatives to deliver services in innovative ways. If it turns out that it was not the best course, it was an experiment.

The Government of Nova Scotia has been forced into making some tough choices. We should give that government the chance to get its fiscal house in order.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know quite where to begin. There is so much to offer on the motion of the day by the Conservative Party, particularly the member for Cumberland—Colchester.

We heard the Tories say it was the Liberal way. Then we heard some Liberals say it was the Tory way. A constituent just called me and said, "You can all take the highway".

The debate has to centre around whether or not it is the responsibility of government to proceed in the fashion it is proceeding and to gain the support of the public that elects it. So far since 1993 that has happened and as far as I can tell, it may happen again for another four years at least. Why is that? The Canadian

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public sees that the government does have control of the agenda and that it does have a plan for the many different ministries the opposition are raving about today in the House of Commons.

Let us read again the Tory motion by the member for Cumberland—Colchester:

That this House recognize the urgent need to address the serious transportation problems facing the Canadian people, and call upon the government to establish a comprehensive national transportation policy that demonstrates leadership on this issue and which provides solutions to the problems shared coast to coast by all Canadians.

● (1620)

Establish a comprehensive national transportation policy that demonstrates leadership. The member for Fundy—Royal kicked off his address by talking about the need for infrastructure in a country this size in order to maintain the transportation links in a safe manner so that we can proceed to build economically in this country and be successful as a country in a globally competitive world, or something to that effect.

Let us start from the premise that Canada's transportation infrastructure extends over some nine million square kilometres, includes almost one million kilometres of road, 50,000 kilometres of rail lines, 646 certified airports, and over 300 commercial ports and harbours. This network involves millions of components and thousands of people all working together to keep the system running smoothly. It is not the member for Hamilton West saying this, that is according to the World Economic Forum's global competitiveness report.

Canada's transportation infrastructure is ranked first among the G-7 countries. Why do we suppose that is? Is it because, as the member for Cumberland—Colchester suggests, the government has not established a comprehensive national transportation policy that demonstrates leadership? Nonsense. This is a nonsensical motion that we are debating today quite frankly for many of us in the House, and there are not too many of us probably because the motion is highly partisan and quite ridiculous.

What have we been doing for infrastructure over the years we have been in power? Before I get to that, before we came to power in 1993, I had the privilege of being elected back in 1988. From the first week that I was elected in 1988 I sat on the Standing Committee on Transport. I remember fondly old Pat Nowlan sitting in the committee in 1988. In those days we could smoke in the House of Commons. He would be charged there with a huge cigar and next to me was Les Benjamin. Now there was a guy who knew about trains. And there was Iain Angus. We could always judge how long the transport committee meeting would be by the number of cans of Coke Iain Angus had lined up in front of himself.

We did a lot talking back then. We travelled the world and looked at high speed rail systems. After having been here for 12

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years I look back at those five years fondly and as a great experience being in opposition with a Tory government. But then I look back and ask what we accomplished back then.

In the five years that I was there in transport, we accomplished zip as a government. We travelled a lot. We went around the world and saw many countries. We saw ports. We saw harbours and did not do anything with them under the Tories. We studied all kinds of high speed rail in five or six countries. Now the TGV is a huge success in Paris. We did not do anything with it back then. The Conservatives did not want to touch it. Why did we study it if we did not want to touch it?

Then I remember fondly, or maybe not so fondly, Mr. Corbett. I think the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester will remember Mr. Corbett who was the chairman of the Standing Committee on Transport. Now there was a leader among leaders. Imagine, and I do not like to speak disparagingly about people, but we did not have a committee meeting of the Standing Committee on Transport for nine months. Why? Because the chairman was recreating the sailing adventure of Christopher Columbus from his east coast riding to Europe. For nine months we did not have a meeting of the Standing Committee on Transport and the Conservative Party has the gall, the unmitigated nerve to stand in the House today and say that the government does not have a plan for transportation.

As I recall it was this government two weeks after we were elected in 1993 that brought forward an infrastructure program. Why did we bring it forward? Because this government recognized that the cities, the municipalities, the provinces, indeed the country, needed help with infrastructure. We did not want to go the way of Pittsburgh or Buffalo where the infrastructure of the city, the very heart of the city, the water, the sewers, the roads, was crumbling underneath their feet. We did not want that to happen. We did not want to go that far.

• (1625)

We had a comprehensive plan and a commitment. We have a commitment to negotiate an agreement by this fall with the provinces, the municipalities and the private sector for a multi-year plan to improve provincial highways and municipal infrastructure in cities and rural communities right across Canada.

We also have a plan to allocate hundreds of millions of dollars over the next five years for municipal infrastructure in cities and rural communities right across Canada, including affordable housing, green infrastructure and up to \$150 million for highways. Does that sound like a government that has not established a comprehensive national transportation policy that demonstrates leadership? I do not think so.

We have just invested hundreds of millions of dollars into VIA Rail. We did not do that under the Tories. In fact I remember the member from London and I getting on a train going across Canada

and wearing yellow VIA Rail hats trying to convince the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney to spend some money on VIA Rail to keep it alive. It did not happen, but it did under the Liberal government. This government has demonstrated some foresight. It has demonstrated some investment in VIA Rail.

The member for Cumberland—Colchester who moved this nonsensical motion today sat in committee with us. There were 53 meetings of the Standing Committee on Transport that dealt with airline restructuring. The government was not about to put tens of millions of dollars into an airline called Canadian. We tried that. We had promises from it. We tried it and it failed. Why? There was a lot of capacity and not enough people flying. It was a simple business response. Canadian Airlines did not have the passengers and could not compete.

The member for Cumberland—Colchester sat with us in committee day after day. The committee produced a solid report which was unanimously endorsed by members of the standing committee who told the government that it had to address the issues of fair pricing, competition, Canadian ownership and control, service to small communities and fair treatment of employees. We all agreed on that. We had a terrific report which was praised even by the *National Post*. Imagine that. Everybody thought it was great.

Then we came back with legislation in short order because we realized the circumstances facing the airline industry in Canada. The committee sat again for weeks and came up with legislation. Was it good enough for the committee as it came to us from the government? No. It was the committee that struck nine amendments to the bill. Everybody agreed that it was the right thing to do and the amendments carried and they made the bill stronger.

The member who moved today's motion sat in committee and said that he was going to move a motion because he felt we should have an ombudsman to look after customers' concerns. The committee said it was a good idea. But the government had the foresight and it had a plan. It said, "We do not want to create a new infrastructure for an ombudsman with the staff and all the costs associated with it. We already have something in place".

The government moved an amendment to have a watchdog. The Canadian flying public and businesses could complain to that individual. This individual was put under the auspices of the CTA because the infrastructure was there already.

• (1630)

The minister had the vision and the foresight to realize that we had to have something in place for the flying public. We were already down the road. The minister had already initiated a venue for the public to make complaints.

The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester even admitted that it was a lot stronger than even his amount. He pulled his limit

and went with that of the government. That is good planning. Then he came to us with the motion today saying that the government is not establishing any kind of comprehensive national transportation policy that demonstrates leadership.

I had a great speech on intelligent transportation systems which I could give. It is a wonderful speech. It talks about government planning an intelligent transportation system and about how we are planning ahead and dealing with provinces and the private sector. We are dealing as a government to have a comprehensive plan on how to deal with the new way we do transportation.

The transportation system has changed. We no longer depend on the ribbon of steel taking us from coast to coast. People want to get to where they are going yesterday and so they hop on a plane. That is the way it is. If that is what the people want then the people shall receive that.

I look back over my five years in opposition, sitting on the committee day after day and researching everything we had done to try to move transportation ahead. Nothing seemed to come of it, but when we took government in 1993 things sure changed.

Hon. members opposite spoke a bit about Doug Young. Let me tell the House about Doug Young. At least Doug Young had a vision and it certainly has worked out. The first thing the Standing Committee on Transport did when we became government was to privatize CN Rail.

The NDP said it was a terrible thing to do that to the national railroad company. It was the most successful privatization in the country. It has done a magnificent job. Look at the stock exchange. There it is and it is doing well. The government had a vision with respect to a railroad and decided to move ahead, and we did with 51% Canadian ownership.

What did we do next? It was the commercialization of airports across the country. The taxpayer was looking after hundreds upon hundreds of airports. It was incredible. Some of them were landing strips with gravel on them perhaps twice as long as the House of Commons. We were paying money out hand over fist to keep the airports. What did the airports look like? We did not know but we had to give them money to keep them going. Now look at our airport system. It is highly successful. Nav Canada privatized our air navigation services.

Mrs. Michelle Dockrill: And don't we all feel a lot safer?

Mr. Stan Keyes: Yes, we should feel a lot safer. If the hon. member has a complaint about Nav Canada and its record of safety, I challenge her to walk out the door and say it in public. She knows she would not do that. I do not think she would because she knows that Nav Canada is doing the job and is doing a much better job than I dare say the government did.

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Then what did we do? We looked after the airline industry. We came up with something called the Keyes report. I am damned proud of it because the Keyes report was the result of weeks of work by the Standing Committee on Transport and all its members travelling the country from port to harbour to port. We obtained all the information we could from those witnesses on how to make a better port system.

• (1635)

We created a report much like the airline industry report our committee wrote and we submitted it to the government. The government took it in hand, said that it was a damned fine report and built legislation around it. What was the result? The Canada Marine Act. Again more vision and more planning.

The Canada Marine Act today is successful because every port and harbour on that list, save one, is now a Canada port authority. They are all very successful because they are community led. The community is doing with its port what it thinks is right to do with its port.

NDP members laugh. That is typical of the NDP. It drives me crazy. They have no idea how many ports and harbours there were in the country before we brought forward the Canada Marine Act. There were hundreds upon hundreds. Can we imagine a port being no longer than 30 feet off the end of some soil and going out to wherever on the east or west coast with a harbour master being paid to look after it? The taxpayers were supporting it.

We had to look at the whole picture and ask how much the taxpayer could really support. We changed it. Again, does that demonstrate, as the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester stated, that the government has not established a comprehensive national transportation policy and leadership? I do not think so.

I am standing here living proof that for five years under Tory rule we did nothing. From 1993 to this day we have looked after harbours and ports, air navigation, airports, highways, ferry services and many other things. That demonstrates leadership. I would hope the hon. member would now take the opportunity to rise in his place to say that the chairman of the transport committee is absolutely correct and withdraw his motion because it truly is a foolish one.

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I heard the last sentence. I think the member said I should stand and say that he is foolish. Is that what he said? It sounded something like that.

Certainly that was nothing less than what we should expect from the chairman of the committee who I certainly acknowledge ran a very tight committee in which we did a lot of good work. However

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he has certainly taken a lot of licence with the things that have happened and what we did.

I notice both he and the minister focused on the airline merger. It is just part of the transportation infrastructure although an important part of it. They both focused on it, on Bill C-26 and on how they managed to negotiate a wonderful merger which they did not negotiate at all. Mr. Robert Milton negotiated the merger and they are playing catch-up, as we all are. They cannot take credit for establishing an aviation policy because Air Canada did that.

The member also suggested that he had travelled a lot when he was an opposition member. He said he travelled all over on VIA Rail issues. It seems to me he travelled in government on VIA Rail issues looking for options. He went to Europe and the committee went several places. I did not go myself, but I understand committee members travelled a lot.

What did they do? They did not do a thing. They did not come back with any innovative ideas. They did not come back with one new innovative approach. All they did was say that they had to put back in some of the money they had been robbing out of the VIA Rail system for years. It was not to increase capacity or improve the system but to replace the rail cars that had fallen apart and to replace the switches that were failing and things like that.

It was not to increase capacity, availability, routes or anything else. It was just to do some maintenance and repairs and to replace the deficient equipment that expired for all intents and purposes years ago. To say they did something with VIA Rail is just not true. They put some money back in after they reduced it year after year after year.

• (1640)

The member also talked about \$150 million for highways over so many years and over 10 provinces. That will not do anything. That is a joke when it comes to highway work.

Almost every provincial transportation minister has written to me. I will just read from a couple of letters. The chairman of the committee keeps talking about how they have leadership. The minister from Alberta wrote that the federal minister expressed his support for the strategy of a highway system and further outlined his views on the essential components of a possible program but that there was no discussion on how the program was to be funded. Is that leadership?

The minister from Newfoundland said that the province would be pushing for a national highways program that addresses the serious concerns. I could quote the minister from the Northwest Territories, and on and on and on.

There is no leadership. There is a complete hodgepodge of highway programs right now. Actually there are very few. I think

Newfoundland will get \$100 million over the next two years. New Brunswick will get \$100 million over the next two years. Nova Scotia will get zip.

Again I ask the chairman of the committee where is the leadership. Where are the programs? Where is the overall comprehensive policy on transportation that ties it all together? There is none.

Mr. Stan Keyes: Mr. Speaker, as I always do, I take the hon. member's question very seriously. He said that the minister and I had focused somewhat on the airline industry. Rightly so, I say to the member. Quite frankly the government should take credit for the work it did on the airline industry.

The hon. member opposite who just asked the question, the member for Cumberland—Colchester, should take credit for the hard work he did on the Standing Committee on Transport in order that the government, with his assistance, could save 16,500 jobs in the country.

One week before Christmas last year, that is how many people could have been out on the street without a job. It was the government, with the assistance of the hon. member opposite as a member of the committee, that decided what the criteria would be: fair pricing to look after the consumer; competition to look after the consumer; Canadian ownership and control, a big bugaboo of the NDP; service to small communities, very important to the Conservatives especially on the east coast that they represent; and fair treatment for employees. We answered every call. Every one of those calls were answered thanks in part to the member who moved this motion. We did demonstrate leadership.

In his second question he mentioned that we travelled a lot and he did not see much happen as a result. I was in opposition. If he wants me to, I will supply him with every one of the reports produced by the Standing Committee on Transport and he will see the opposition at the time and its dissenting views of the government in those reports.

His third point was that the commitment to highways is a joke. Only a Mulroney Tory would call \$100 million in 2000-01, \$350 million in 2001-02 and \$550 million per year for the next four years up to 2006 a joke. Only a Mulroney Tory would take all that money and say it is a joke.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member a very pointed question. He likes to talk about the rating among the international scene of Canada as one of the best in infrastructure. I am sure we can go to countries where the infrastructure is not as good, but we have some large problems in this country.

Even though it is not in my riding, I am thinking of that area in Saskatchewan where my kids live. The roads are being beaten to

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pieces by huge trucks hauling grain, now that the rail system is being dismantled.

• (1645)

The Trans-Canada Highway is the country's major artery from east to west. In Saskatchewan and I understand in other parts as well including parts of Ontario, it is a narrow two lane road which is so incredibly dangerous it is not acceptable.

We had the occasion to visit Swift Current shortly after a horrendous accident on the Trans-Canada Highway just west of Swift Current. It involved a half-ton with some workers for a siding outfit. Two new buses that were being transported were in that accident. They all were completely destroyed in the fire that ensued. It involved two semi-trailer trucks. If I remember correctly there were three deaths on that one occasion.

My brother took me over to see the wrecks. Our hearts went out to the families whose loved ones had been needlessly killed on a highway that is totally inadequate as the Trans-Canada Highway, the main transportation artery across the country.

Surely the member must feel at least a little tinge of conscience and must admit that our system is just not quite up to where it should be.

Mr. Stan Keyes: Mr. Speaker, I feel more than a tinge, I tell the hon. member. If we were flush with money and we could put it into changing every road in this country to make it a better road; if we could put up medians in the middle to ensure that cars would not cross over; if we could ensure that every driver knew how to drive properly, wore their seatbelt, did not drive drunk, obeyed all the rules of the road, did not tailgate and did not speed, it would be perfect.

For all the highways across this country that the federal government looks after, we would have to come up with \$17 billion to repair them all. It is a lot of money.

We are trying to do it incrementally. We have made commitments of hundreds of millions of dollars. We will attempt to fix each one of these roads. Everything has to be done in balance. Roads and highways are not the only preoccupation of the government. There are many issues that are very important to Canadians. We have to find that balance and we have to stay within our means so that, and I am sure the hon. member would agree, we do not climb back into a deficit situation again.

Mr. Peter Mancini (Sydney—Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the very eloquent member for Palliser.

I want to comment on some of the comments made by the chairman of the transport committee on a number of issues. He bragged today about the privatization of CN. He bragged today about Nav Canada. He bragged about the privatization of the airports. He bragged today about the privatization of the ports.

He pointed the finger at the NDP. He said that this was the bugaboo of members of the NDP, that they believe the government should be involved to ensure that communities do not face economic devastation. He is right. We do believe that. I thought at one time he might have believed that as well.

I will quote from a book I picked up the other day. "The question is who puts bread on the table when the private markets fail to do so? The long term role of the state will not be determined by the necessity in the short run to solve fiscal problems. There are signs now that the fashion of denying on principle a positive role for the state is losing its grip. The avoidance of social disharmony makes it imperative that those in authority will not lag behind their public in realizing that the state still has a role in keeping bread on the table. The people as a whole will have the final say in determining the future role of government and I am content to rely on their judgment".

Those are the words of the Hon. Allan MacEachen, a well respected former Liberal. I wonder how he would feel about the comments of the transportation chair about the great, wonderful role of privatization of the transportation industry in this country.

• (1650)

I also think that the chairman and some of the members need a little history lesson. In condemning the Conservatives, he talked about how the Liberal plan has benefited the country. There may be some truth that it benefited parts of the country. Probably Toronto is doing very well. I pick up the *Globe and Mail* and I read about the economic growth in parts of Ontario. However there is a history here.

There was a time a hundred years ago when the economic centre of growth was Atlantic Canada. The transportation routes to Atlantic Canada were the most travelled in the country. A deal was made. It was called confederation. As part of the deal, some of the transportation routes would be bypassed in order for the country to forge into the west. For a hundred years we developed a transportation policy that allowed that to happen. We enhanced the St. Lawrence Seaway which allowed some of the ships that would normally stop in Atlantic Canada to find their way through the continent to the port of Montreal and the ports of Ontario.

Now Atlantic Canada finds itself in a most difficult situation. As the government of the day decides that privatization and the natural market forces are the way to compete, we find ourselves scratching

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our heads asking what happened to the concept of confederation where we were going to give a little bit in the interests of building a nation.

Now that the playing field is tipped a little bit in central Canada's favour, all of a sudden that does not matter anymore. All of a sudden we are all supposed to compete. Atlantic Canadians, and when I say this I know I will be supported by my colleagues in the Conservative Party who represent Atlantic Canada, can compete with the best of them when the playing field is level. But it is not and it has not been for some time.

When the member of the government says that there is a transportation policy in place that has created economic growth in this country, I say again maybe for some parts. In the region of the country I represent we are fighting desperately to keep in place a rail system so that when the federal government withdraws from the Cape Breton Development Corporation we have something to attract businesses so they can ship goods out.

They keep telling us in Atlantic Canada to pull ourselves up, to be competitive and to manufacture goods. We agree with all of that, but it is not much good to manufacture goods if we cannot get them to market. We do not have a sufficient population base. We rely on markets to the east where Europe is, to the south where there are huge markets in New England, and to the west, to Ontario. Without substantial investment from the government in the infrastructure of Atlantic Canada, we simply cannot compete and find our way to the same level of prosperity as other parts of the country.

We require a strategy that will invest heavily in those areas of the country that are not benefiting from the current economic growth. Atlantic Canada is one of them. That can be done in a number of ways.

I have advocated for some time the restoration of passenger rail service in my own hometown. We had a passenger rail service until the Conservative government took it out in the 1980s. It was a well used and profitable VIA Rail line. There was no reason to take it away. The city of Saint John found itself in the same situation. It had a rail service that was profitable. Prime Minister Mulroney said if the rail line was used, he would not take it out. We used it. We took him at his word and it was gone.

Consequently the community I represent is faced with an aging population. The major medical centres are in Halifax. People have the choice of driving to Halifax in a minivan at considerable cost or driving themselves on highways which have become incredibly terrifying for senior citizens because of the trucks and increased traffic. It is not like it was 25 or 30 years ago.

• (1655)

One of the things the government could do is re-establish passenger rail service in the communities where it was profitable.

That would maintain the rail lines so that as we try to develop some economic growth, the rail line is there and is used and maintained for both passengers and freight on which we could build an economy.

Let me talk a little about the airports. The chairman of the transport committee talked about what a wonderful job Nav Canada was doing, how good it was that it had been privatized out to a private corporation. Let me relate some of the experiences we have had.

There was a period of time about two years ago where Nav Canada decided it would downgrade the airport in Cape Breton. Again, as we are trying to build an economy, trying to take the government at its word and trying to be innovative and entrepreneurial, not only did we have a problem with the rail lines, but we also heard that the flight service centre would be removed from our airport.

Being a member of parliament and a community activist, I got the community involved. I said, let us talk to the people at Nav Canada. Surely they would be reasonable and understand that we need to maintain this service. Their response to me was that this was community consultation but they would make the final decision. They said, "We are a private corporation. What matters to us is the bottom line. It does not matter that you guys are trying to pull yourselves up. It does not matter that you need this airport if you are going to build any kind of economic infrastructure. We are interested in the bottom line and whether you are making money right now".

Fortunately we are a tough lot in Cape Breton. The community got together. We fought hard enough and we kept the flight service station. Had it been government that was involved in that, it would have at least understood there was a social policy attached to the dismantling of that airport. However, the Liberal government in its move to privatization and its newfound zealot's belief in the private market, decided it would disband that.

That was the consequence for small communities in the country. I know what we face is no different from small communities in the west and in northern Ontario that are trying to build up their economic base.

The chairman of the transport committee, with some wry humour I suppose, talked about the small little ports in the east and the west. Those little ports represent an opportunity for economic growth for many of those communities. Maybe it is because I represent an island that has an inland sea in the centre of it that we are so sensitive to the ports. Those small communities rely on the ports to ship gypsum and lumber in and out. They rely on them as they plan their economic future for tourism and all kinds of activities.

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When we got word that the government was divesting itself of the ports, the community was concerned because the economic base is not there for the community to say it can afford to take it over and have a port authority maintain it. Many communities in Atlantic Canada cannot afford that at this point in time, yet the port is essential if they are ever going to get to a point where they can afford to maintain their own ports.

Once again the playing field has been shifted. We have to run uphill and just as we are about to get there the ropes are being pulled away.

I accept the motion moved by the Conservative Party today. It provides important debate in terms of the transportation problems facing the Canadian people.

I want to talk about one other aspect of transportation. It is one which I do not think has been mentioned yet, although it may have been by the newest member of the House of Commons. I am sure he will find some interest in it as will my other colleagues from Newfoundland, and that is Marine Atlantic. It is a vital transportation link for the people of Newfoundland. It is a partnership between the Government of Canada and the province of Newfoundland.

• (1700)

I conclude by saying that those are all vital transportation links to Atlantic Canada. We will fight to maintain them and we will demand from the government the honouring of the contract that was made so long ago.

Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his words today. I share with him many of the views he expressed relative to the malaise in our federal transportation policy, if I could call it that, particularly relative to Atlantic Canada.

I am not certain whether the hon. member was able to hear the member for Mississauga West speak of the highways and roads in Nova Scotia earlier today. The member for Mississauga West went on at great length about how Nova Scotia had excellent highways, that there was nothing to complain about, that the main highways were excellent and that the byroads were terrific.

I would like to know whether the hon. member agrees with me that the member for Mississauga West was clearly misinformed. He is one who is sometimes prone to hyperbole and exaggeration and maybe he had fallen into that trap. Would the hon. member agree with me that rural roads in Nova Scotia are in significant disrepair and that the issue has to be addressed from a tourism perspective?

Where I live, in Cheverie, Hants County, it is so bad that I have to go to the dentist every six months to have my fillings replaced.

Secondly, not just from a tourism perspective, but from a safety issue, Highway 101 has been an issue for a number of years. There have been over 40 deaths on the highway since 1993. It has the highest level of traffic in the province of Nova Scotia.

The federal government is now investigating the notion of a cost share program with the provinces. Does the hon. member share with me the concern I have about cost sharing programs? Because of the mess that the current government in Nova Scotia inherited from the government of Russell MacLellan, the province does not really have the ability to match funds. Should the federal government not be more proactive in addressing these safety issues and spend some of the money that it receives by way of fuel taxes, of which only 5% is invested in highways?

In view of the fact that the province of Nova Scotia is clearly not in a financial position at this time to enter into a cost sharing agreement, why is the federal government not recognizing the safety issues, including Highway 101, and spending a greater level of the tax money collected from fuel taxes on highway priorities like Highway 101 instead of simply creating these straw man arguments around cost sharing programs in which clearly the province is not in a position to participate?

Mr. Peter Mancini: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. If we wanted to look at what was the growth industry in Atlantic Canada or where we should invest funds, the auto repair industry, the shop industry, is probably the only bright light in Cape Breton and Nova Scotia at the current time.

I share with the member that concern. That is not just my concern. I have received a number of letters from constituents in my riding who talk about that very issue. They say that we are supposed to be developing tourism as an alternate industry in Cape Breton. As the government withdraws from Devco it keeps pointing to tourism as one of the areas of potential economic growth. However, as the member says, for people to get from one place to another with their car intact is no easy feat. We could all participate in some international races because we have learned to weave in and out and around the potholes. I share with him that concern.

I also share the concern that the smaller provinces or the provinces that find themselves economically strapped simply cannot afford the kind of extensive repairs that are needed. If the federal government wants to enter into some kind of agreement, there has to be the recognition that not all provinces have the same resources. That is one of the founding principles of this country and Confederation. I will be getting a sign again, but I would concur with the member and his comments.

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• (1705)

Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Sydney—Victoria for allowing me to share his time.

The member for Hamilton West, who is the chair of the transportation committee, talked a few minutes ago about what has transpired in this country for the last 133 years with governments alternating between the Liberals and the Conservatives. When the Liberals are in everything is great and it is the fault of the other guys. It is a game that is wearing a bit thin. I am sure it is for you too, Mr. Speaker, as it is for those of us in the New Democratic Party caucus.

I want to talk about transportation policy from the point of view of Saskatchewan, which is a landlocked province. I want to talk a bit about air, rail, highways and roads. There is not much point in talking about shipping unless we want to go canoeing in northern Saskatchewan where there are some terrific canoe routes.

Transportation for the New Democratic Party and for our constituents is absolutely vital to Canada's future economic development. We need an efficient, high quality and safe network of highways, railways, ports and airports to move not only goods, but people as well.

Our transportation infrastructure has deteriorated under this government, as it did under the Mulroney government in the 1980s and early 1990s. Despite the member for Hamilton West, we insist that this government lacks the vision and the will to develop transportation infrastructure worthy of the 21st century.

Let me talk a bit about the airline industry. We feel it has been in a state of perpetual crisis since the late 1980s as a result of unregulated competition. More recently we saw the total demise of Canadian Airlines and the creation of one big airline. On this side of the House we have consistently called for a modern regulation regime to protect the public interest.

I will make a few observations on air travel as it has affected people coming in and going out of Saskatchewan since the merger took place. I do not believe that I have been on a flight recently from Ottawa to Regina—and other members fly the same route—that has not been positively and absolutely booked. Of course, the flight from Ottawa to Regina is not a direct, non-stop flight. It either goes through Winnipeg or Toronto, and occasionally both. Often they try to bribe people with \$300, for those who do not need to get there yesterday, as the member for Hamilton West was suggesting. The flights are full, there are fewer seats on the planes and it is very expensive.

Not everybody needs to get there yesterday. Some people would enjoy taking the train. In the southern part of Saskatchewan that is very difficult to achieve. People either have to go to Saskatoon, which is almost a three hour drive from Regina, or perhaps two and

a half hours from Moose Jaw, to get a train usually at 2 o'clock in the morning, or they can go to Melville, which would take a couple of hours, to get the train at 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock in the morning, depending on whether the person is heading east or west. The train station in Regina is now a casino. The train station in Moose Jaw just recently reopened as a state of the art liquor store.

Despite the injection of hundreds of millions of dollars into VIA Rail which the government announced recently, I doubt very much whether VIA passenger train service will ever be restored in southern Saskatchewan, except perhaps for the occasional high priced tourist train that will go through in the summer months between Winnipeg and Vancouver.

• (1710)

We do not all need to get to our destination yesterday. Some of us would like to take the leisurely route, but it makes it very difficult given the logistics of getting to where the train is at these days.

The riding of my colleague for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar is situated on the VIA line that goes from east to west. The train that runs through Biggar in the middle of the night requires people to stand outside in summer or winter because the station is not open to allow folks to board the train. People stand at the side of the tracks, which is clearly not an incentive to take the train.

Let me turn to the highway system. I think we are the only country in the world that does not have a national highway transportation system. About three or four years ago the Government of Saskatchewan committed some \$1 billion over the next 15 years to be spent on upgrading highways. Work has been undertaken to twin the highways. There is work being done in the area of Gull Lake, on the east side of the province, that the member from the Canadian Alliance spoke about. There is no question that work would be done much faster if some federal money went into the program.

I read recently that the twinning which is scheduled to be completed in about five or eight years could be cut in half if the federal folks would step up to the plate and put some money into our highway infrastructure program to get the death traps cleaned up and turned into four lane highways. It would be safer for the travelling public and a lot more enjoyable.

There is no question that big trucks are a cause for grave concern. That is part and parcel of our grain transportation system. I will not get into that issue because we will be debating it over the next couple of weeks. As farmers have to move their grain farther and farther to inland terminals and other elevators to get to the main lines, it is putting additional pressure on roads that were never intended to carry the kind of weight that the tandem and the Super Bs are putting on our highways. That is part and parcel of the problem.

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The \$175 million announced by the government a couple of weeks ago as part of the grain transportation bill that is coming forward will be welcome news. However, we need to note that it is \$175 million for western Canada, so it will not amount to a heck of a lot. If it were \$1.75 billion it would be significant. Nobody is going to turn down \$175 million, but nobody is jumping too high about it either.

We in the NDP support the motion presented by the Conservative member for Cumberland—Colchester, my well travelled colleague. We support this call for collaboration between all levels of government and the private sector. These groups must work together to make sure that our national transportation infrastructure serves the public interest and meets the needs of all.

The federal government must, in partnership with the provinces, invest in highways to facilitate the movement of people and goods. If the government allows the deterioration of our highways to continue, the economic cost will continue to rise.

The federal government must commit to ensuring that our national transportation system serves all parts of the country. That is a concern of my party. The member for Sydney—Victoria indicated that it is a concern in Cape Breton. I am trying to signal that concern from my part of the world. The government has 101 seats in the province of Ontario. It has very little understanding or recognition of the problems that many constituents in the so-called hinterland of this nation feel, the difficulty we have in getting our products to port and getting our people, goods and services moved from our part of the world to tidewater, to the big smoke of Toronto or wherever.

This is a timely motion. I hope the government takes it very seriously, although I am skeptical that will be the case.

• (1715)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It being 5.15 p.m. it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The first question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): Call in the members.

• (1750)

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

(Division No. 1324)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bailey	Benoit
Blaikie	Borotsik
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Brisson
Cadman	Casey
Casson	Chatters
Cummins	Davies
Desjarlais	Dockrill
Doyle	Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
Duncan	Earle
Elley	Epp
Forseth	Gilmour
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Goldring
Grey (Edmonton North)	Gruending
Hardy	Hearn
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Jaffer	Johnston
Keddy (South Shore)	Konrad
Laliberte	Lill
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Mancini
Mark	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mills (Red Deer)	Muise
Nystrom	Obhrai
Pankiw	Penson
Proctor	Reynolds
Riis	Ritz
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
Solberg	Solomon
Stoffer	Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Vellacott
Wasylcia-Leis	Wayne
White (North Vancouver) —65	

NAYS

Members

Alarie	Anderson
Assad	Augustine
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Baker
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélaïr	Bélangier
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bennett	Bergeron
Bertrand	Bigras
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brien	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Caccia
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Cardin

Supply

Carroll	Catterall
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Clouthier	Collenette
Comuzzi	Cotler
Crête	Cullen
de Savoye	Debien
Desrochers	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepolo	Dromisky
Drouin	Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Duhamel	Dumas
Easter	Eggleton
Finlay	Fontana
Fry	Gagliano
Gagnon	Galloway
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godfrey	Godin (Châteauguay)
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Harb
Harvard	Hubbard
Iftody	Jackson
Jennings	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Lalonde	Lastewka
Lavigne	Lebel
Lee	Leung
Limoges	Lincoln
Longfield	Loubier
MacAulay	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Manley	Marchand
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews	McCormick
McGuire	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague	McWhinney
Ménard	Mercier
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Minna
Mitchell	Myers
Nault	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Paradis
Patry	Peric
Perron	Peterson
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Plamondon	Pratt
Proulx	Provenzano
Redman	Reed
Richardson	Robillard
Rocheleau	Rock
Saada	Sauvageau
Scott (Fredericton)	Sekora
Serré	Sgro
Shepherd	Speller
St. Denis	St-Hilaire
St-Julien	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)	Turp
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Venne
Wappel	Whelan
Wilfert—169	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Copps	Lefebvre
Normand	Nunziata

The Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

The next question is on the main motion.

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, 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 the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 1325)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bailey	Benoit
Blaikie	Borotsik
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Brison
Cadman	Casey
Casson	Chatters
Cummins	Davies
Desjarlais	Dockrill
Doyle	Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
Duncan	Earle
Elley	Epp
Forseth	Gilmour
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Golding
Grey (Edmonton North)	Gruending
Hardy	Hearn
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Jaffer	Johnston
Keddy (South Shore)	Konrad
Laliberte	Lill
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Mancini
Mark	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Mills (Red Deer)	Muise
Nystrom	Obhrai
Pankiw	Penson
Proctor	Reynolds
Riis	Ritz
Schmidt	Scott (Skeena)
Solberg	Solomon
Stoffer	Strahl
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Vellacott
Wasylcia-Leis	Wayne
White (North Vancouver) —65	

NAYS

Members

Alarie	Anderson
Assad	Augustine
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Baker
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélair	Bélanger
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bennett	Bergeron
Bertrand	Bigras
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brien	Brown

Bryden
Byrne
Calder
Caplan
Carroll
Chamberlain
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
Clouthier
Comuzzi
Crête
de Savoye
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Drouin
Duhamel
Easter
Finlay
Fry
Gagnon
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Guarnieri
Guimond
Harvard
Iftody
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Knutson
Lalonde
Lavigne
Lee
Limoges
Longfield
MacAulay
Malhi
Manley
Marleau
Matthews
McGuire
McTeague
Ménard
Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Nault
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pagtakhan
Patry
Perron
Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Plamondon
Proulx
Redman
Richardson
Rocheleau
Saada
Scott (Fredericton)
Serré
Shepherd
St. Denis
St-Julien
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Thibeault
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Ur
Vanclief
Wappel
Wilfert—169

Bulte
Caccia
Cannis
Cardin
Catterall
Charbonneau
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Collenette
Cotler
Cullen
Debien
DeVillers
Dion
Dromisky
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Dumas
Eggleton
Fontana
Gagliano
Galloway
Girard-Bujold
Godin (Châteauguay)
Graham
Grose
Guay
Harb
Hubbard
Jackson
Jordan
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Lastewka
Lebel
Leung
Lincoln
Loubier
Mahoney
Maloney
Marchand
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCormick
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McWhinney
Mercier
Milliken
Minna
Myers
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Paradis
Peric
Peterson
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Pratt
Provenzano
Reed
Robillard
Rock
Sauvageau
Sekora
Sgro
Speller
St-Hilaire
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Telegdi
Torsney
Turp
Valeri
Venne
Whelan

PAIRED MEMBERS

Copps
Normand

Lefebvre
Nunziata

Government Orders

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed from May 19 consideration of Bill C-12, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code (Part II) in respect of occupational health and safety, to make technical amendments to the Canada Labour Code (Part I) and to make consequential amendments to other acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

The Speaker: Pursuant to the order made on Friday, May 19, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of Bill C-12.

The question is on Motion No. 1.

[Translation]

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent that the members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yes.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Jay Hill: Mr. Speaker, Canadian Alliance members present this evening will be voting in support of this motion.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, the members of the NDP will vote in favour of this motion.

[English]

Mr. Norman Doyle: Mr. Speaker, members of the Progressive Conservative Party will be voting in favour of this motion.

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was agreed to on the following:)

Government Orders

(Division No. 1326)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Anderson
Assad	Augustine
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bailey
Baker	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélaire
Bélangier	Bellemare
Bennett	Benoit
Bertrand	Blaikie
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Borotsik	Boudria
Bradshaw	Breitreuz (Yellowhead)
Brisson	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Caccia
Cadman	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Casey
Casson	Catterall
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Chatters	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Clouthier	Collenette
Comuzzi	Cotler
Cullen	Cummins
Davies	Desjarlais
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Dockrill	Doyle
Dromisky	Drouin
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duhamel
Duncan	Earle
Easter	Eggleton
Elley	Epp
Finlay	Fontana
Forseth	Fry
Gagliano	Galloway
Gilmour	Godfrey
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)	Goldring
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grey (Edmonton North)
Grose	Gruending
Guarnieri	Harb
Hardy	Harvard
Hearn	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hubbard
Iftody	Jackson
Jaffer	Jennings
Johnston	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Keddy (South Shore)
Keys	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Konrad	Kraft Sloan
Laliberte	Lastewka
Lavigne	Lee
Leung	Lill
Limoges	Lincoln
Longfield	MacAulay
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Mahoney
Malhi	Maloney
Mancini	Manley
Mark	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Matthews	McCormick
McGuire	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague	McWhinney
Mifflin	Milliken
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Mills (Red Deer)
Minna	Mitchell
Muise	Myers
Nault	Nystrom
O'Brien (Labrador)	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Obhrai
Pagtakhan	Pankiw
Paradis	Patry
Penson	Peric
Peterson	Phinney

Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pillitteri
Pratt	Proctor
Proulx	Provenzano
Redman	Reed
Reynolds	Richardson
Riis	Ritz
Robillard	Rock
Saada	Schmidt
Scott (Fredericton)	Scott (Skeena)
Sekora	Serré
Sgro	Shepherd
Solberg	Solomon
Speller	St. Denis
St-Julien	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Stoffer	Strahl
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Vellacott	Wappel
Wasylcia-Leis	Wayne
Whelan	White (North Vancouver)
Wilfert—199	

NAYS

Members

Alarie	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bellehumeur	Bergeron
Bigras	Brien
Cardin	Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
Crête	de Savoye
Debien	Desrochers
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)	Dumas
Gagnon	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin (Châteauguay)
Guay	Guimond
Lalonde	Lebel
Loubier	Marchand
Ménard	Mercier
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Rocheleau
Sauvageau	St-Hilaire
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)	Turp
Venne —35	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Copps	Lefebvre
Normand	Nunziata

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 carried.

The next question is on Motion No. 2.

[Translation]

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that we are voting on Mrs. Lalonde's motion, that is, Motion No. 2.

The Speaker: It is Motion No. 2, but the name I have here is that of Mr. Crête. So it is Motion No. 2 moved by Mr. Crête on behalf of Mrs. Lalonde.

The question is on Motion No. 2.

Mr. Michel Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like a bit of information to be sure we are indeed voting on

the right thing. Mrs. Lalonde here present informs me that she was in the House and that she moved this motion. Mr. Crête confirms this. A correction should perhaps be made. This is Mrs. Lalonde's motion.

The Speaker: So this is the motion moved by Mrs. Lalonde, seconded by Mr. Laurin.

• (1800)

[English]

(The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 1327)

YEAS

Members

Alarie	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bellehumeur	Bergeron
Bigras	Brien
Cardin	Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
Crête	de Savoye
Debien	Desrochers
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)	Dumas
Gagnon	Gauthier
Girard-Bujold	Godin (Châteauguay)
Guay	Guimond
Lalonde	Lebel
Loubier	Marchand
Ménard	Mercier
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Rocheleau
Sauvageau	St-Hilaire
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)	Turp
Venne —35	

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Anderson
Assad	Augustine
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bailey
Baker	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélaïr
Bélangier	Bellemare
Bennett	Benoit
Bertrand	Blaikie
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Borotsik	Boudria
Bradshaw	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brison	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Caccia
Cadman	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Casey
Casson	Catterall
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Chatters	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Clouthier	Collenette
Comuzzi	Cullen
Cummins	Davies
Desjarlais	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepolo	Dockrill
Doyle	Dromisky
Drouin	Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)

Government Orders

Duhamel	Duncan
Earle	Easter
Eggleton	Elley
Epp	Finlay
Fontana	Forseth
Fry	Gagliano
Galloway	Gilmour
Godfrey	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Goldring	Goodale
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Edmonton North)	Grose
Gruending	Guarnieri
Harb	Hardy
Harvard	Hearn
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hubbard	Iftody
Jackson	Jaffer
Jennings	Johnston
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)	Keys
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Konrad
Kraft Sloan	Laliberte
Lastewka	Lavigne
Lee	Leung
Lill	Limoges
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Mancini
Manley	Mark
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Matthews
McCormick	McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)	McTeague
McWhinney	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mills (Red Deer)	Minna
Mitchell	Muise
Myers	Nault
Nystrom	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Obhrai	Pagtakhan
Pankiw	Paradis
Patry	Penson
Peric	Peterson
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Proctor	Proulx
Provenzano	Redman
Reed	Reynolds
Richardson	Riis
Ritz	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Schmidt	Scott (Fredericton)
Scott (Skeena)	Sekora
Serré	Sgro
Shepherd	Solberg
Solomon	Speller
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Stoffer	Strahl
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Vellacott	Wappel
Wasylcia-Leis	Wayne
Whelan	White (North Vancouver)
Wilfert—197	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Copps	Lefebvre
Normand	Nunziata

Government Orders

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 2 lost.

Hon. Claudette Bradshaw (Minister of Labour, Lib.) moved that the bill be concurred in.

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find consent to apply in reverse 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 the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 1328)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Anders	Anderson
Assad	Augustine
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bailey
Baker	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélair
Bélanger	Bellemare
Bennett	Benoit
Bertrand	Blaikie
Blondin-Andrew	Bonin
Borotsik	Boudria
Bradshaw	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brisson	Brown
Bryden	Bulte
Byrne	Caccia
Cadman	Calder
Cannis	Caplan
Carroll	Casey
Casson	Catterall
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Chatters	Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Clouthier	Collette
Comuzzi	Cullen
Cummins	Davies
Desjarlais	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepola	Dockrill
Doyle	Dromisky
Drouin	Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)
Duhamel	Duncan
Earle	Easter
Eggleton	Elley
Epp	Finlay
Fontana	Forseth
Fry	Gagliano
Galloway	Gilmour
Godfrey	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Goldring	Goodale
Graham	Gray (Windsor West)
Grey (Edmonton North)	Grose
Gruending	Guarnieri
Harb	Hardy
Harvard	Hearn
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Hubbard	Iftody
Jackson	Jaffer
Jennings	Johnston
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)	Keyes

Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Konrad
Kraft Sloan	Laliberte
Lastewka	Lavigne
Lee	Leung
Lill	Limoges
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Mancini
Manley	Mark
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Énard)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Matthews
McCormick	McGuire
McLellan (Edmonton West)	McTeague
McWhinney	Mifflin
Milliken	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mills (Red Deer)	Minna
Mitchell	Muise
Myers	Nault
Nystrom	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Obhrai	Pagtakhan
Pankiw	Paradis
Patry	Penson
Peric	Peterson
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Pratt
Proctor	Proulx
Provenzano	Redman
Reed	Reynolds
Richardson	Riis
Ritz	Robillard
Rock	Saada
Schmidt	Scott (Fredericton)
Scott (Skeena)	Sekora
Serré	Sgro
Shepherd	Solberg
Solomon	Speller
St. Denis	Steckle
Stewart (Brant)	Stewart (Northumberland)
Stoffer	Strahl
Szabo	Telegdi
Thibeault	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Torsney	Ur
Valeri	Vanclief
Vellacott	Wappel
Wasylcyia-Leis	Wayne
Whelan	White (North Vancouver)
Wilfert—197	

NAYS

Members

Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bergeron
Brien
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
de Savoye
Desrochers
Dumas
Gauthier
Godin (Châteauguay)
Guimond
Lebel
Marchand
Mercier
Picard (Drummond)
Rocheleau
St-Hilaire
Turp

PAIRED MEMBERS

Copps	Lefebvre
Normand	Nunziata

Private Members' Business

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1805)

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from March 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-205, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (deduction of expenses incurred by a mechanic for tools required in employment), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Monday, May 29, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-205 under Private Members' Business.

• (1815)

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

(*Division No. 1329*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Alarie	Anders
Anderson	Assad
Augustine	Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Baker	Barnes
Bélaïr	Bélangier
Bellehumeur	Bellemare
Bennett	Benoit
Bergeron	Bertrand
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Blaikie	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Borotsik
Boudria	Bradshaw
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Brien
Brison	Bulte
Byrne	Cadman
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Cardin
Carroll	Casey
Casson	Catterall
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Chatters	Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)
Clouthier	Collenette
Comuzzi	Crête
Cummins	Davies

de Savoye	Debien
Desjarlais	Desrochers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Discepola	Dockrill
Doyle	Dromisky
Drouin	Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duhamel
Dumas	Duncan
Earle	Easter
Eggleton	Elley
Epp	Fontana
Forseth	Fry
Gagliano	Gagnon
Galloway	Gauthier
Gilmour	Girard-Bujold
Godfrey	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Godin (Châteauguay)	Goldring
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grey (Edmonton North)
Gruending	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond
Harb	Hardy
Hearn	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Hubbard
Iftody	Jackson
Jaffer	Jennings
Johnston	Jordan
Karetak-Lindell	Keddy (South Shore)
Keys	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Konrad	Kraft Sloan
Laliberte	Lalonde
Lavigne	Lebel
Lee	Leung
Lill	Limoges
Lincoln	Longfield
Loubier	Lunn
MacAulay	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Mancini
Manley	Marchand
Mark	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McGuire	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague	Ménard
Mercier	Mifflin
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	Mills (Red Deer)
Minna	Mitchell
Muise	Myers
Nault	Nystrom
O'Brien (Labrador)	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Pankiw	Paradis
Penson	Peric
Perron	Peterson
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Pratt
Proctor	Proulx
Provenzano	Redman
Reynolds	Richardson
Riis	Ritz
Robillard	Rocheleau
Rock	Saada
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Scott (Fredericton)	Scott (Skeena)
Sekora	Serré
Sgro	Solberg
Solomon	Speller
St-Hilaire	St-Julien
Steckle	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	Stoffer
Strahl	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibeault
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)	Turp
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Véllacott
Venne	Wappel
Wasylcia-Leis	Wayne
Whelan	White (North Vancouver)
Wilfert—213	

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Beaumier
Bryden
Cullen
Finlay
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Reed—11

Brown
Caccia
DeVillers
Grose
Pillitteri

PAIRED MEMBERS

Copps
Normand

Lefebvre
Nunziata

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

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1820)

[*English*]

CITIZENSHIP OF CANADA ACT

The House resumed from May 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-16, an act respecting Canadian citizenship, be read the third time and passed, and of the motion that the question be now put.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the previous question at the third reading stage of Bill C-16. The question is on the motion that the question be now put.

Mr. Bob Kilger: Mr. Speaker, if the House would agree I would propose that you seek unanimous consent that members who voted on the previous motion be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House with Liberal members voting yea.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed as described by the chief government whip?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 1330)

YEAS

Members

Anderson
Baker
Bellemare
Bertrand
Blaikie
Bonin
Bradshaw
Bryden
Byrne
Cannis
Carroll
Chamberlain
Clouthier
Cullen
Desjarlais
Dhaliwal
Discepola
Dromisky
Duhamel
Easter
Finlay
Gagliano
Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Graham
Grose
Guarnieri
Hardy
Hubbard
Jackson
Jordan
Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Kraft Sloan
Lavigne
Leung
Limoges
Longfield
Mahoney
Maloney
Manley
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews
McGuire
McTeague
Mifflin
Minna
Myers
Nystrom
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
Pagtakhan
Patri
Phinney
Pratt
Proulx
Redman
Richardson
Robillard
Saada
Sekora
Sgro
Solomon
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Stoffer
Thibeault
Valeri
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Augustine
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Blondin-Andrew
Boudria
Brown
Bulte
Caccia
Caplan
Catterall
Charbonneau
Collenette
Davies
DeVillers
Dion
Dockrill
Drouin
Earle
Eggleton
Fry
Godfrey
Goodale
Gray (Windsor West)
Gruending
Harb
Harvard
Iftody
Jennings
Karetak-Lindell
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)
Knutson
Laliberte
Lee
Lill
Lincoln
MacAulay
Malhi
Mancini
Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
McCormick
McLellan (Edmonton West)
McWhinney
Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Mitchell
Nault
O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Reilly
Paradis
Peterson
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Proctor
Provenzano
Reed
Riis
Rock
Scott (Fredericton)
Serré
Shepherd
Speller
St-Julien
Stewart (Northumberland)
Szabo
Torsney
Vanclief
Whelan

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Alarie

Ablonczy
Anders

Government Orders

Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bailey	Beaunier
Bellehumeur	Benoit
Bergeron	Bigras
Borotsik	Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)
Brien	Brisson
Cadman	Calder
Cardin	Casey
Casson	Chatters
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Crête
Cummins	de Savoye
Debien	Desrochers
Doyle	Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Dumas
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Forseth
Gagnon	Gauthier
Gilmour	Girard-Bujold
Godin (Châteauguay)	Goldring
Grey (Edmonton North)	Guay
Guimond	Hearn
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hilstrom
Jaffer	Johnston
Keddy (South Shore)	Konrad
Lalonde	Lebel
Loubier	Lunn
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	Marchand
Mark	Ménard
Mercier	Mills (Red Deer)
Muise	Pankiw
Penson	Peric
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Reynolds
Ritz	Rocheleau
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Scott (Skeena)	Solberg
St-Hilaire	Steckle
Strahl	Telegdi
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Turp	Ur
Vellacott	Venne
Wayne	White (North Vancouver)—88

PAIRED MEMBERS

Copps	Lefebvre
Normand	Nunziata

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

The next question is on the motion for third reading. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

• (1830)

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:

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 1331*)

YEAS

Members

Anderson	Augustine
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Baker
Barnes	Beaunier
Bélaïr	Bélangier
Bellemare	Bennett
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Blaikie	Blondin-Andrew
Bonin	Borotsik
Boudria	Bradshaw
Brisson	Brown
Bulte	Byrne
Caccia	Cannis
Caplan	Carroll
Casey	Catterall
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Clouthier	Collenette
Comuzzi	Cullen
Davies	Desjarlais
DeVillers	Dhaliwal
Dion	Discepola
Dockrill	Doyle
Dromisky	Drouin
Dubé (Madawaska—Restigouche)	Duhamel
Earle	Easter
Eggleton	Finlay
Fontana	Fry
Gagliano	Galloway
Godfrey	Godin (Acadie—Bathurst)
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West)	Grose
Gruending	Guarmieri
Harb	Hardy
Harvard	Hearn
Hubbard	Iftody
Jackson	Jennings
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Keddy (South Shore)	Keyes
Kilger (Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh)	Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)
Knutson	Kraft Sloan
Laliberte	Lavigne
Lee	Leung
Lill	Limoges
Lincoln	Longfield
MacAulay	MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)
Mahoney	Malhi
Maloney	Mancini
Manley	Marleau
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Matthews	McCormick
McGuire	McLellan (Edmonton West)
McTeague	McWhinney
Mifflin	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna	Mitchell
Muise	Myers
Nault	Nystrom
O'Brien (Labrador)	O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)
O'Reilly	Pagtakhan
Paradis	Patry
Peterson	Phinney
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)	Pratt
Proctor	Proulx
Provenzano	Redman
Reed	Richardson
Riis	Robillard

Private Members' Business

Rock	Saada
Scott (Fredericton)	Sekora
Serré	Sgro
Shepherd	Solomon
Speller	St. Denis
St-Julien	Stewart (Brant)
Stewart (Northumberland)	Stoffer
Szabo	Thibeault
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Torsney
Valeri	Vanclief
Wappel	Wasylcia-Leis
Wayne	Whelan
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PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS*[English]***SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN DAY ACT**

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC) moved that Bill C-428, an act establishing Samuel de Champlain Day, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting bill that we will be debating. I have had a lot of support from my colleagues on both sides of the House. To begin, I want to go through exactly what the bill really does.

This is a bill to establish what we would call a day for Samuel de Champlain. What would happen is that beginning in the year 2004, June 26 from then on would be known as Samuel de Champlain day.

I know that raises a number of questions in the minds of everyone here and some of those listening, particularly those back in Quebec. There has been a lot of interest in the province of Quebec on this bill for obvious reasons. Champlain is known as the founder of New France and has been recognized as a significant part of their history for many years. The question that I often get asked is why an anglophone member from New Brunswick would come up with the idea of recognizing Champlain.

Champlain first settled on a little island on the St. Croix River in the year 1604. Just as a note, it was the first European settlement on the north Atlantic coast. If you are a historian, Mr. Speaker, this might be of interest to you. It preceded both Jamestown in 1607 and Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620. There is a lot of history on this little island on the St. Croix River, the island being situated about halfway between the town of St. Stephen and the town of St. Andrews, New Brunswick. It has international implications as well.

The Americans have taken a great interest in this little island called St. Croix Island because it is actually American property. The island itself now belongs to the United States government. Although we are more closely associated with it, the Americans recognize it as a piece of their territory. They themselves have been doing a number of things to commemorate this event, marking just slightly short of four years from the 400th year celebration of the founding of this little settlement by Champlain. The United States

NAYS**Members**

Abbott	Ablonczy
Alarie	Anders
Bachand (Saint-Jean)	Bailey
Bellehumeur	Benoit
Bergeron	Bigras
Breitkreuz (Yellowhead)	Brien
Bryden	Cadman
Calder	Cardin
Casson	Chatters
Chrétien (Frontenac—Mégantic)	Crête
Cummins	de Savoye
Debien	Desrochers
Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière)	Dumas
Duncan	Elley
Epp	Forseth
Gagnon	Gauthier
Gilmour	Girard-Bujold
Godin (Châteauguay)	Goldring
Grey (Edmonton North)	Guay
Guimond	Hill (Prince George—Peace River)
Hilstrom	Jaffer
Johnston	Konrad
Lalonde	Lebel
Loubier	Lunn
Marchand	Mark
Ménard	Mercier
Mills (Red Deer)	Pankiw
Penson	Peric
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Reynolds
Ritz	Rocheleau
Sauvageau	Schmidt
Solberg	St-Hilaire
Steckle	Strahl
Telegdi	Tremblay (Rimouski—Mitis)
Turp	Vellacott
Venne	White (North Vancouver)—74

PAIRED MEMBERS

Copps	Lefebvre
Normand	Nunziata

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

• (1840)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It being 6.40 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's order paper.

Private Members' Business

is getting ready to celebrate the historical significance of the settlement on this island in a big way.

I want to quote an editorial from the St. Croix *Courier* that was written on this very topic. It is entitled "It's time for Canada to move on St. Croix Island's 2004 celebration".

• (1845)

The editorial goes on to say:

Congratulations to the Maine Delegation in the U.S. Congress. It is taking major steps to celebrate the heritage of our area and Saint Croix Island. Maine Senators Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe are co-sponsoring The Saint Croix Island Heritage Act, legislation which will help develop a heritage centre in Calais.

Most Francophones pronounce Calais the French way but the Americans have anglicized it. It is a little border town that is across from St. Stephen, New Brunswick.

The people in the United States are making moves to recognize the importance of this island. What I am suggesting to the House is that we do the same thing, hence, the idea of recognizing a Champlain day. The date that is mentioned in my bill identifies June 26 as being the most likely date for this.

I have talked to some of my friends in Quebec, and in particular René Lévesque, a historian and archaeologist in Quebec City, who many of my colleagues from the Bloc will know. The last time we met he suggested to me that we might consider altering the date. In other words, I am suggesting June 26, because that is the likely date in the year 1604 that Champlain settled on that island, but he has said that because July 1 is Canada Day and July 4 is the American Independence Day, where they celebrate their birth as a country, that some date in between might be better. He has suggested that July 3 might be the date because it has historical significance in Quebec. I am very open to that.

I am very open to any changes that have to be made in this bill to make it work. We are not fixed on anything that cannot be changed to make the bill better.

The trick now is to make this bill votable, which it obviously is not at at this time. Therefore, I will call on my colleagues from the Bloc and the other parties to help me expedite the passage of this bill. We must make this bill votable and get the attention of the government on it.

When I met with the heritage minister she told me that she was anxious to help. She recognizes that as Canadians we do not acknowledge our heroes as much as we should. She has suggested that we do something for the schools so there will be pamphlets and historical reference to Champlain, et cetera, so that when we get to the year 2004 our children and teachers will know a bit about him and the historical significance of this man who has played such a huge role in the development of what we now know as Canada and

whose early beginnings was on that little island in the St. Croix River.

Aside from giving credit to my colleagues on the American side, Senators Snowe and Collins, I want to acknowledge the work that the mayor of the town of St. Stephen has done on this issue. He is a bit of an amateur historian and is really working hard to get this date recognized and get some celebrations on the Canadian side of the border in recognition of this date. That would be Mayor Allan Gillmor of the town of St. Stephen, New Brunswick. St. Andrews is also working on this, but I wanted to single out the work of the mayor of St. Stephen, New Brunswick, in particular.

St. Stephen has also hired or commissioned a young lady for this project, so that by the time we get to the year 2004 we will have something for which we can be proud. This is little bit of history that we simply do not want to lose.

• (1850)

I hope I will get support from my colleagues tonight. I hope that in their remarks they will suggest ways we can improve the bill.

I did hear one complaint about the bill. We often hear of Champlain and de Monts. Mr. de Monts is sometimes credited with being the leader of the expedition. I think that is legitimate but I want to point out that de Monts went back to France and left Champlain basically in charge of the outpost. It was Champlain who was buried in Quebec City.

When I was in Quebec City not too long ago, René Lévesque, who has done a lot of work on this file, actually took me to the gravesite which is considered the gravesite of Champlain. It is in the basement of one of the older buildings in the historic section of downtown Quebec City. It was quite a moment to get into the building and witness firsthand what is considered to be the gravesite of Champlain.

I think the argument on the de Monts side is worthy of comment, discussion and debate, but the true historical character who has to be recognized is Champlain. It is important that we do that simply because we can also have a day for de Monts if we wish. We do not have to limit the scope of the bill or limit the possibility of bringing other names before the House in terms of discussion on a day of recognition.

I am certainly not trying to diminish the role of de Monts. He obviously is a very important part of this picture. At some point some of the other members can stand on their feet and introduce a bill that would in some way honour his contribution to the country as well. I am not against that at all.

One of the points that the heritage minister made to me was that maybe we should have a day honouring our first prime minister, or perhaps Sir Wilfrid Laurier. I think that is all credible and worthy

Private Members' Business

of discussion, but the point I go back to is that we do not do enough to recognize our own heroes in this country.

Most of us know who Davy Crockett was but a lot of us never paid attention to Champlain. I have because when I leave my door I am looking at this little piece of history in my backyard. It is significant I guess that I should do something in the House, as opposed to any other member, but I am going to count on the generosity of the members in the House, which we often see in this place, to help me get this through the system. It is very seldom that we get a private member's bill through here.

This is actually the start of the process. I know it is not votable at this point, but I am going to ask my colleagues to help me get this votable. I have even suggested that if the government, in its generosity, wants to take control of this file and introduce the bill itself, I have no difficulty with that. I do not care who gets credit for it, I just want it to happen.

The Bloc members can also introduce it if they wish. If there is some way they can introduce the bill to make it votable, they will have my support. In fact, a senator in the Senate of all places, to show just how nonpartisan it is, told me "Greg, I can introduce it in the Senate and we will bring it over to the House". That is a possibility as well.

What we are attempting to do is use the generosity of this place to pay tribute to someone I think is important to this country. I do not think there is anyone any more important than Champlain. The discovery of New France, the settlement in Quebec, is a rich part of our history and we do not want to lose that.

Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate any suggestions from you, because I know you are somewhat of an amateur historian. I hate to use the word amateur because you are a professional in your own league. However, if there is any way in terms of the rules and procedures of the House that we can use to expedite this bill, please let me know because I am open to suggestions and I certainly need help to recognize Samuel de Champlain in the way that we should.

• (1855)

The date that we have in mind is June 26 but that date can change subject to debate in the House. The year we are looking at is 2004. For once we are doing something ahead of time. We have a four year lead on this project. The way things move around this place, four years might not be enough to make it happen but I am certainly hoping it will.

I would like to ask for unanimous consent to make this bill votable?

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to make this bill votable?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-428, an act establishing Samuel de Champlain day. The bill is sponsored by the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest.

Under this bill, commencing in 2004, June 26 will be designated as Samuel de Champlain day. The timing of the enactment is to coincide with the 400th anniversary of the establishment of the first French settlement by Champlain on St. Croix Island in 1604.

The hon. member, when introducing the bill in the House, mentioned that passage of this bill would be important to those in New Brunswick due to the planned celebrations for the 400th anniversary of Champlain's first North American settlement.

It should be remembered that Champlain's association with New Brunswick is but one small component of a life of much larger travels. If Champlain were to be honoured for his discoveries, that honour should be shared by southern Ontario, the northern United States, southern Quebec, as well as New Brunswick. It should also be remembered that Champlain's discoveries were on behalf of France. His reward for those discoveries was to be named the governor of New France.

While Champlain's voyages were on behalf of France, some might argue that there was no Canada at the time to reference Champlain's accomplishments. People might then be inclined to argue that Champlain's discoveries were closely tied to the French origins of New France. In my view this misses the point. If Champlain is so important to Canada as we know it today, he should be equally heralded in the United States. After all, the majority of the territory that Champlain discovered and mapped is now part of the northeast United States.

Champlain's famous 1632 map of New France, while lauded as a demonstration of the extent of his discoveries, in fact includes land that was mostly explored by others. Who explored the Labrador, the Hudson Bay, the Rupert's Land and the Northwest Territories coastlines? It was not Champlain. It was Henry Hudson, the discoverer of Hudson Bay; Captain Vancouver, after whom the city of Vancouver was named; and John Cabot, considered to be the first discoverer of Canada. Their discoveries are no less significant to the establishment of Canada than those of Champlain, yet we do not honour them or accord them any particular federal honours.

In my opinion, exalting Champlain's accomplishment in the manner proposed demonstrates an elitist-centrist approach to the discoveries of our country. Many appear more than willing to honour anyone who explored in the area around the St. Lawrence rather than those who bravely mapped our significantly more vast northern and western territories. People who consider the north to

be Lake Nipissing ignore the reality of geography and history of 80% of Ontario.

In my view, an appropriate manner by which to view Champlain's accomplishments is illustrated by how he was honoured by Canada's Merchant Navy during World War II. The Merchant Navy fleet had many ships known as park ships. In time of war, when an accurate representation of a nation was crucial, there was no Champlain fleet delivering supplies to the troops. Rather, Champlain's name was on but one of the ships in the fleet. In a similar vein Champlain's accomplishments should be viewed as part of a much larger group of discoveries. No one person is accorded a federal honour. Rather the federal honour is to the collective effort.

• (1900)

The bill is too narrowly focused and it is for this reason that I am reluctant to support it. Samuel de Champlain is more commonly more known as the father of New France, relative to his later establishment of settlements in Quebec. This fact is acknowledged in the preamble of the bill where it is stated that he was influential in the development of two further settlements: one at Port Royal on the Bay of Fundy and one at Quebec. The Quebec settlement was established in 1608, four years after the events which are to be commemorated by the bill currently under consideration.

The issue raised here is whether it is more appropriate for Samuel de Champlain day to be proclaimed by the New Brunswick legislature rather than by this House. At the federal level we should acknowledge Champlain for his discovery or for the discovery that he is best known nationally. Even the Acadian Centre in a publication on Champlain acknowledges that Champlain is above all recognized as the founder of Quebec.

Champlain exemplified the multi-talented nature of many of our nation's heroes. He was both an explorer and a cartographer. He also wrote much about his travels and lived from 1567 to 1635. His first voyage in 1599 is when he explored the West Indies and Mexico. In 1603 at the age of 36, sponsored by a fur trader, Champlain commanded a ship that explored the St. Lawrence River as far as Montreal is located today. The purpose of this voyage was to colonize the new world though this objective apparently was not accomplished.

Champlain's 1604 actions in Acadia on the Isle of St. Croix appear to be categorized by its nature as a trading post creation. While Champlain arrived in Acadia in 1604, the first fort in the area, Fort Latour, was not constructed until 27 years later in 1631. In fact, at least one historian considers that Champlain essentially lost his optimism for the future of Acadia after having spent three winters there. This is one of the explanations given for Champlain's 1608 voyage and consequent founding of Quebec City.

It was in 1608 that Champlain is regarded as having established his first European settlement in what is now known as Quebec City.

Private Members' Business

One reason for this is the official capacity in which Champlain returned to North America. He was the lieutenant governor of New France. The Quebec City settlement was followed by the establishment in 1611 of a settlement in Montreal.

In 1629 when Quebec was captured by the English the 62 year old Champlain was sent back to England as a prisoner. Champlain only was able to return to Quebec after New France was returned to France. He returned to his trading post in 1663 and to his position as governor of New France where he died two years later.

Acadians in New Brunswick understandably have an identification with Champlain and he should be honoured accordingly. His identification with Canada as a nation as well as his association with North America generally are somewhat different. In Acadia Samuel de Champlain is honoured by an educational school and a community centre being named in his honour as of 1985.

Champlain's name is also encountered on educational and other buildings throughout Canada. Lake Champlain is named after him, a lake that Champlain discovered in 1609. The Centre for Study of Canada at Plattsburgh State University has an annual scholarly symposium named after him. Ironically the theme of this year's Samuel de Champlain symposium 2000 is "The Quiet Revolution in Quebec: Looking Back After 40 Years".

Based on the foregoing sentiments Champlain may certainly be viewed as having involvements in some significant events prior to the founding of Canada. I believe that his official role as governor of New France points to the greater appropriateness of a Quebec based commemoration of his life. Accordingly I cannot support the bill before the House as it is currently worded because it focuses too narrowly on one man when many more explored and established Canada.

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-428 proposes the creation of a Samuel de Champlain Day.

As you and everyone else are aware, Mr. Speaker, Samuel de Champlain founded what was to become Quebec City, where I had the pleasure of growing up. He is commemorated all over the city, by statues and in street names, with the boulevard Champlain and an absolutely charming street called rue du Petit-Champlain.

The hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest's bill proposes that a federal statute institute a Samuel de Champlain Day. In his opinion, the contribution of Champlain merits a day right across Canada in his memory. The date the hon. member recommends to us to honour Champlain is June 26, because he supposedly established the first French settlement on that day in 1604.

Private Members' Business

The hon. member refers here to the colony on St. Croix Island in New Brunswick, an island the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest says he can see from his home every day, when he is in New Brunswick, not when he is here, of course. His bill proposes that throughout Canada, in each and every year, beginning in the year 2004, the 26th day of June be known under the name of "Samuel de Champlain Day", because that date will mark the 400th anniversary of the founding of that island settlement.

For Quebecers, Samuel de Champlain is first and foremost the founder of Quebec. In 1608, Samuel de Champlain founded what was, in fact, the first city in New France, and now the national capital of Quebec.

It is not just Quebecers who associate Champlain primarily with the founding of Quebec. There are also thousands of Canadian and foreign tourists who visit Quebec City every year and who, walking along the famous Dufferin terrace, admire the imposing statue erected in honour of the founder of the city. As you can see, Quebec did not wait for the federal parliament to act in order to honour this great man.

But let us talk about the Isle of St. Croix. The French settled first on this island under lieutenant general de Monts, assisted by Champlain. They numbered about 80. The winter of 1604-05 on the Isle of St. Croix was disastrous because of the terrible cold and scurvy—35 colonists died. The colony was therefore moved the next year to Port-Royal, an area Mr. de Monts hoped would be more favourable to the establishment of a permanent colony.

Life in Port-Royal was no doubt more comfortable for the colonists. It was here in Port-Royal that de Champlain founded what is known as the *Ordre de Bon temps* in an effort to break the monotony of the long North American winters. Thus, the *Ordre de Bon temps* was a sort of brotherhood where members took turns putting game or fish on the table for a festive and well lubricated meal.

Can we say, though, that Champlain played a greater role in establishing this second colony? Historian Trudel, in an authoritative publication, the *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada*, answers the question, saying that in Port-Royal Champlain was a simple observer. He says that Champlain was not in command either on the Isle of St. Croix or in Port-Royal.

Thus, we have before us today a bill which, in order to commemorate Samuel de Champlain's contribution to history, picks the anniversary of an event in which the person in question played, to all intents and purposes, a secondary role.

Of course, I understand the member, who probably chose this date because of a sentimental attachment to St. Croix Island, which he can see out his window every day, but I feel that the commemorative date chosen should have reflected the historic contribution

for which Champlain is really recognized, which is the founding of Quebec.

That is where he made his real mark. In 1608, on his fourth voyage to North America, Champlain landed at Quebec and built a settlement there.

● (1910)

It was thus that Quebec's history began. The settlement was to become the birthplace of New France and that is why historians referred to Champlain as the Father of New France.

During the decade following the founding of Quebec, Champlain travelled back and forth between North America and France. It was in 1620 that he really began developing the new colony.

Between 1620 and 1624, on his tenth voyage, he set about constructing fortifications and renovating the settlement, which was home to about 60 people. During an eleventh voyage in 1625, he strengthened the fort. Quebec was captured by the Kirke brothers in 1629, but was returned to the French in 1632.

Champlain's twelfth voyage in 1633 was his last, since he died in 1635 after serving as governor of the colony for two years. At the time, Quebec was simply a trading post. Despite everything, Champlain had time to note the promising start of the colony before he died.

Although he was given the title of the father of New France, Champlain is one of a gallery of historical figures who built New France. In other words, he is not the only famous person of the period.

There was, to start, Lavolette. Sent by Champlain in 1634, he had a fort and a settlement built at the fork of the Saint-Maurice and St. Lawrence rivers. Missionaries arrived there the following year. Trois-Rivières was founded. After Lavolette came Maison-neuve, who founded Ville-Marie in 1642. Ville-Marie later became Montreal.

There were courageous women as well in the gallery of heroes of New France. There was, first, Jeanne-Mance, who established the first hospital in Ville-Marie. Marguerite Bourgeoys established the first school in New France.

Dollard des Ormeaux is also an uncontested hero of New France. While the natives were preparing to destroy Ville-Marie, des Ormeaux decided to fight and save the colony. He and his companions died in the fight, but they saved New France from destruction.

And what about Madeleine de Verchères, who, in 1692, for eight days in a wooden fort, fought off almost single-handed an Iroquois attack until reinforcements arrived from Ville-Marie. Her courage was heroic.

Finally, the historic figures of New France must also include those who explored the vast North American continent. I am thinking here of Joliet and Marquette, who discovered the Mississippi, and La Salle, who was to follow them and take possession of the Mississippi delta in 1682, giving these territories the name of Louisiana in honour of the King of France.

These are just some of the heroes who have left their mark on the history of New France along with Samuel de Champlain. I could name many more, but I will stop there in order to go on with my argument.

Were we to comply with the wishes of the hon. member of the Conservative Party to establish a Samuel de Champlain Day, it would be difficult, in my opinion, not to also recognize all of the other men and women who built New France. Would there have to be one for Maisonneuve, one for Lavolette, one for Madeleine de Verchères, and so on?

The hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest certainly means well, but he is putting us in a problematical situation. Bill C-428, which is intended to honour an important figure in the history of Quebec and of Canada, leaves in the shadows all the other historical figures who have marked the history of Quebec, Canada and the United States. Indirectly, the bill obscures the accomplishments of all these other builders.

This is why I cannot subscribe to the good intentions of this bill, out of respect for all these other men, all these other women, who left their mark on the history of Quebec over 300 years ago.

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is often said that Canada is a young nation. But our heritage and our development as a society can also be measured by criteria that go back much further than our 133 years of official existence as a country.

[*English*]

Indeed our ability to truly understand and appreciate who we are is enhanced when viewed in a much broader context.

• (1915)

The Canada of today has been shaped by events and people whose importance and contributions we must not allow to be forgotten or diminished by the passage of time.

[*Translation*]

So let us take a brief look at this important explorer. For over 40 years of his life, between the time of his first visit to Canada in 1603 and his death on Christmas Day, in 1635, in the settlement at Quebec, Samuel de Champlain devoted himself to building what

would become a strong and vibrant French colony in North America.

Samuel de Champlain's courage and perseverance in pursuing his dream left a legacy that we should preserve and celebrate. That is the underlying purpose of the bill before the House today.

Bill C-428, an act establishing Samuel de Champlain Day, calls on the government to pay tribute to this great Canadian explorer each year on June 26, beginning in 2004.

According to some, this date is an extremely important one in our nation's history because it is recognized, at least by some historians, as the 400th anniversary of the establishment of the first French colony on St. Croix Island, in Acadia, on the border of New Brunswick, in the Bay of Fundy. Marking the 400th anniversary of the founding of this community is quite an occasion.

Champlain, who was a geographer on the de Monts expedition, which landed in Acadia in 1604, was looking for a location for a permanent French colony. With Mr. de Monts, Champlain chose this island at the mouth of the St. Croix River, because of its central location and its accessible and sheltered harbour.

His interest in this region in southern Acadia also had to do with his primary concern, which was to find a passage to reach China's riches. The west facing slopes of the Atlantic coast in the area made Champlain believe that such a passage might exist. As we now know, Champlain was going to be disappointed in his quest for the East's wealth, but very pleased with his discovery of Canada's riches.

As some members mentioned, the first winter in New France for Champlain and the members of the new settlement was terrible. Of the 79 men that accompanied him, 35 died of scurvy. This was definitely not a promising start, but these difficult beginnings eventually led to a lively and solid French presence in the New World.

Champlain spent three consecutive winters in the Bay of Fundy. During his stay, he explored the region between the Isle of St. Croix and the settlement of Port-Royal, now Annapolis, in Nova Scotia. He also ventured south as far as Cape Cod.

For Champlain, the second voyage in New France was soon followed by a third one. The highlight of this trip occurred on July 3, 1608, when the great explorer founded a small colony in Quebec—a colony that slowly grew to become the very heart of the French language and culture in North America.

Samuel de Champlain had done great things as early as the summer of 1608, but many of his trips and discoveries would come later. One year after founding Quebec, he travelled with the Hurons, the Algonquins and the Montagnais to explore the area, including the lake south of Montreal which now bears his name.

Private Members' Business

Married to H el ene Boull e during a brief trip to France, in 1610, Champlain returned to Canada less than a year later, continuing his exploration of the St. Lawrence and opening a trading post in Mont-Royal. Those who have visited Place Royale in the historic old port of Montreal have been struck by the spirit of one of its first European visitors, Samuel de Champlain.

In 1613, Champlain left the island across from the port of Montreal,  le Sainte-H el ene, which he had named in honour of his wife, and began to explore the sites familiar to generations of Canadians who have visited Parliament Hill, the Gatineau River, the Rideau River and the Chaudi re Falls.

[English]

Subsequently, Champlain would extend his travels as far westward as Lake Huron in 1615 and southward along the Trent River to the Bay of Quinte crossing Lake Ontario to portions of what is now New York State.

I would be remiss not to mention Explorer's Point Park in my hometown of Mattawa which was dedicated to the memory of Samuel de Champlain, and the Samuel de Champlain Provincial Park a few kilometres up the Mattawa River between Mattawa and North Bay.

Honoured for his accomplishments, Champlain was entrusted with the overall direction of political affairs in New France. The explorer's considerable talents and stamina had already been tested by his arduous journeys, hostile encounters and struggles against the harsh Canadian climate.

• (1920)

The task of colonizing this new outpost of the French empire proved equally challenging for Champlain. He understood the need to encourage and foster human settlement, agriculture and commerce if these new territories were to remain under the flag of France. While dealing with the challenges posed by his various political enemies at home, his repeated trips between new and old France gave him the opportunity to encourage settlers to join him in building a new society on the shores of the St. Lawrence River.

[Translation]

In 1629, Quebec fell to the English forces. The colony surrendered, and Champlain was taken to England as a prisoner. Four years later, following the signing of a peace treaty, he returned to Quebec with the title of commander and remained there until his death in 1635.

All told, Samuel de Champlain made more than a dozen crossings between Europe and the new world, changing both the map of the known world and the course of history.

[English]

Champlain might be surprised to know that almost four centuries after the founding of the first French settlement on St. Croix Island

his name and legacy enjoy an honoured place in the history of our nation. Today a country called Canada flies neither the flag of France nor England but proudly celebrates the heritage of both these founding cultures.

Through his remarkable achievements Samuel de Champlain helped to secure the presence of the French language and culture in North America. In very real terms Champlain helped define who we are. At the dawn of this century and millennium, Canada is a modern outward looking nation that recognizes and celebrates the contributions of cultures from every corner of the world. Anchoring this vision of openness and accommodation is our official recognition of not one but two official languages.

Samuel de Champlain was a key contributor to Canada's evolution. Because of our history based on two of the great languages of the world, we are a society that easily communicates and interacts with a great number of other nations.

[Translation]

Canada's role as a leader in the Francophonie is an important example of this scope and influence. In this major international forum, Canada plays an active role in promoting French language and culture and building ties among the francophone peoples of the world.

This is an achievement that would no doubt bring great satisfaction to Samuel de Champlain.

The approaching 400th anniversary of Champlain's participation in the first French colony on the Isle of St. Croix will provide an opportunity to mark this stage in our life as a nation significantly.

This would be a proud anniversary for Acadians, who can trace their heritage back to these courageous ancestors, for all the people of New Brunswick, the frontier where this modest first colony was built, and for all the people of Canada.

This serves as a reminder that, while our country is considered still relatively young, we are beginning to measure our history in centuries. We can be justly proud of our history and of the famous figures, such as Samuel de Champlain, not to exclude the others, who contributed to the writing of that history.

The spirit of Champlain is a presence for us until today. Not far from this House, visitors to the Museum of Civilization in Hull can see the astrolabe Champlain used to navigate his way through the Ottawa valley four centuries ago.

It is highly unlikely that this great explorer would have expected his lost instrument to someday find a place in a major national institution. It is even less likely that he would have dreamed that the nation he helped found would one day be recognized as one of the best in the world.

Our history teems with examples of women and men whose heroism, leadership, energy and vision have contributed to the growth and development of Canada. Samuel de Champlain is among their number.

[English]

Without question we must ensure that Canadians keep alive the memory of this great explorer. We must ensure that his extraordinary efforts to help the French language and culture take firm root in North America are both remembered and celebrated.

[Translation]

During the debate on this motion, it is obvious that the concept on which it is based is worthy of our recognition and appreciation. This concept is of vital importance, and we hope to be able to continue to celebrate our heritage, through either legislative measures or some other means. Building our future together requires us to keep alive the memory of our past, and to honour that past.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest. I should advise the House that if the hon. member speaks now, he will close the debate. The hon. member will have five minutes for his remarks.

• (1925)

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC): Mr. Speaker, I will say from the outset that I am a little disappointed in the remarks that were made by the member of the CA, formerly known as the Reform Party. I guess that is what we would expect from that party in terms of recognition. I was extremely disappointed when he termed the bill “an elitist centrist approach”. I cannot believe he would say that. I think he loses the generosity which this bill encompasses. I am very disappointed in his remarks.

Again I am somewhat disappointed by the Bloc. I was told by some people that the members of the Bloc would probably not support the bill simply because they did not invent it. I am very disappointed. It does not exclude anyone who contributed to the establishment of Quebec and those other great explorers and cartographers. This bill simply does not do that.

There are other members who do support it and I am somewhat encouraged by what the government has had to say. The generosity of this place indicates that we should go back to the drawing board and find a way to make this happen, whether it is through the legislative process of a bill or something else. I think this is a Canadian who deserves recognition. I do not think we should get lost in the semantics. Was he Canadian, was Canada a country, et cetera, is all lost in debate. Nobody wants to debate those issues.

We are talking about an individual who very much contributed to what we know as Canada today. It is not at the exclusion of anyone

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else regardless of who that anyone else might be, whether it is Henry Hudson or Jacques Cartier. That is not the point of the bill. It is simply to give recognition to someone who had a significant contribution to the founding of what is now known as Canada. It is as simple as that.

I take heart from the support I have had in the House. I am sure that with a little re-engineering and ingenuity we can find a way to honour what we consider to be one of Canada's heroes in what we now know as Canada. We will continue the debate on this issue at a later date.

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. As the motion has not been designated as a votable item, the order is dropped from the order paper.

[Translation]

Pursuant to the order adopted earlier today, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Government Business No. 11.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

MIGRATORY BIRDS CONVENTION ACT

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.) moved:

That this House take note of the Order amending the Schedule to the Migratory Birds Convention Act to incorporate the Parksville Protocol, which amends the 1916 Migratory Birds Convention, tabled on Thursday, May 18, 2000.

[English]

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, amending the migratory birds convention represents the fulfilment of a goal particularly to ensure its conformity with the aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada. The migratory birds convention is North America's oldest international wildlife conservation pact. Together with the sister treaty between the United States and Mexico, it provides the framework for the management and conservation of migratory birds in North America.

The convention was created to preserve species of migratory birds considered beneficial or harmless to people. Since 1916 Canada and the United States have achieved a remarkable story of conservation success. This act enabled us to end an era of severe overexploitation of migratory birds by market hunters and nest collectors. Today together with Mexico our unique tri-national

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partnership is continuing to respond to the changing conservation needs of these species.

The conservation of habitat is key to the conservation of species. For migratory species like birds, it is essential that our countries work together to conserve breeding areas in the north, staging and stopover sites along flyways and wintering areas in the south. The North American bird conservation initiative ensures we accomplish that goal.

• (1930)

Let me tell all members of the House that I had the great privilege of being at Last Mountain Lake in Saskatchewan where we have the most amazing flyway. I encourage everyone to take the chance to get out there and see the magnificence of our nature and the great conservation system that is in place.

We are relying on sound science. We are identifying bird conservation priorities, expanding traditional partnerships and working on a co-operative basis, particularly with landowners and users, to conserve birds and their habitats. The foundation of this effort is the international migratory bird treaties.

The need to amend the convention has long been recognized, but previous efforts were not successful. The protocol to amend the migratory birds convention is the product of extensive consultations in Canada and the United States that began early in the last decade. The protocol was negotiated and signed in 1995 and was formally ratified by Canada and the United States in 1999. Its entry into force is an important event.

At their core, the convention amendments are migratory bird conservation amendments. They make more explicit the conservation principles underlying the management of these continentally shared species.

The protocol itself represents the first ever amendments to the convention and sends a compelling message that we cherish the richness of our shared migratory bird species and their critical habitats, that we respect the diverse cultural traditions and the subsistence way of life of our aboriginal peoples, and that we understand the imperative to expand and strengthen our partnerships for responsible conservation and stewardship of migratory birds.

Among its amendments the protocol removes inconsistencies between the 1916 migratory birds convention and aboriginal and treaty rights protected under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 by recognizing that aboriginal and treaty rights to harvest migratory birds may exist. It opens year-round hunting privileges to qualified non-aboriginal residents of Canada's northern communities who depend on a subsistence lifestyle where relevant aboriginal agreements permit the activity. It permits an earlier opening date for the fall hunting season in northern Canada, allowing more equitable access for qualified northern residents. It recognizes the

traditional harvest of murre in Newfoundland and Labrador, an activity not recognized in the convention which was signed more than three decades before Newfoundland joined Canada in Confederation.

The need to amend the migratory birds convention has existed since the convention was first drafted and was heightened with the Constitution Act, 1982. It must acknowledge the customs, traditions and rights of Canada's aboriginal peoples.

The protocol accommodates traditional and customary hunting patterns that were not part of the 1916 treaty and brings provisions into line with Canada's constitutional obligations to our aboriginal peoples.

The migratory birds convention prohibits hunting migratory game birds from March 10 to September 1 and all other migratory birds year-round. Migratory birds have left large areas of Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut by mid-September and in these areas they generally do not return before March 10. As a consequence, much of the traditional harvest of migratory birds in the territories has taken place, and continues to take place, during the closed season portion of the year, especially in the spring.

Aboriginal and subsistence hunters in Canada want to hunt within the law when they take what is often the first meat that is available in the spring. It is an important part of their food supply. Aboriginal and subsistence hunters want to participate in managing the birds they share in common.

Active participation by aboriginal hunters and co-management councils will help make sure that these important changes to the convention are successful both legally and practically, leading to substantive improvements in the conservation of waterfowl and other migratory birds. The protocol before the House will do this. It provides a platform to involve aboriginal people in the management of these species. It will improve efforts to conserve migratory birds by allowing sound scientific data and traditional and local knowledge to be collected on the spring harvest.

• (1935)

Included in the amendments is the authority for Canada to manage the hunt of murre by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. This issue was in need of being addressed since Newfoundland joined Confederation in 1949.

Amending the convention has heightened the ability of Canada and the United States to manage for sustainable use the migratory bird populations of North America. It contributes to our government's "Gathering Strength" initiative aimed at renewing our relationship with our aboriginal peoples.

May I offer my congratulations and the congratulations I am sure of the entire House to the team members responsible for bringing this important initiative to fruition. It is a crucial step toward protecting wildlife species and their habitats across North America

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and in acknowledging the customs, traditions and rights of Canada's aboriginal peoples.

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have looked at the Migratory Birds Convention Act and the amendments thereto, and I have boiled it down to three main messages that I would like to deliver tonight.

The first is, basically, that this take note debate tonight and the lack of a ratification process in Canada points out the inadequacies of our Canadian parliamentary practices and our system very clearly. Here we have a bilateral agreement with the United States and essentially this agreement comes into play when the U.S. ratifies it through its senate and then through presidential signature. In our case we do not have any checks or balances.

The second major message is that there is another bilateral treaty on migratory birds in North America. It is not the one between Canada and the U.S., it is the one between the U.S. and Mexico. That migratory birds convention treaty will have some ramifications on the Canada-U.S. treaty. I think we ought to recognize that and talk about it a bit.

The third message that I have is that the language which Canada has chosen to use in dealing with a very important amendment to the migratory birds convention, which is a schedule to the Migratory Birds Convention Act, that deals with aboriginal issues uses open ended language that will lead to open ended issues. It requires better clarity and better language in order to avoid creating the problems that will derive because, once again, Canada chooses to use a waffle in the language. It is very apparent when we read the U.S. legislation that enables the amendment that applies to indigenous peoples' issues in Alaska that they have done everything they can to narrowly define their terminology, and we have done everything we can to do just the opposite. Those are my three main messages.

The migratory birds convention was ratified by the U.S. and Canada in 1916. The parliamentary secretary described quite well why that came about. There were many vanishing species of birds as a consequence of things that were happening at the time. It is a pioneering document. It was an important international treaty. The main thing it did was to control the hunting of migratory birds, primarily by prohibiting hunting during closed seasons.

• (1940)

The other treaty I referred to between Mexico and the U.S. came along 20 years later, in 1936. The Canada-U.S. model was there to act as a prototype.

Since the inception of the migratory birds convention there have been problems in the U.S. and Canada where the act or the convention has not corresponded with the traditional hunting of birds by aboriginal or indigenous peoples and aboriginal people

have been charged under the Migratory Birds Convention Act. This has been an ongoing conflict.

We would be the first ones to agree that amending the migratory birds convention, because it is an international treaty, is politically and procedurally difficult. Therefore, there have been no amendments to date.

Since at least the 1975 James Bay and northern Quebec agreement the federal government has been promising the aboriginal peoples that there would be amendments. In 1990 the Canadian Wildlife Service began meetings with governments, non-governmental organizations and aboriginal people. Finally, in December of 1995 this led to the U.S. and Canada signing a protocol to amend the migratory birds convention to allow traditional hunting by aboriginal people.

In 1997 the U.S. senate gave its advice and consent. That is what the U.S. senate is for. It is the elected senate. The President of the United States finally signed the protocol to allow its implementation in late 1999.

On the Canadian side we had the Minister of Canadian Heritage. I am not sure in what capacity she signed that document in 1995.

Ms. Paddy Torsney: She was then Minister of the Environment.

Mr. John Duncan: The Minister of the Environment. In our system there is no check or balance whatsoever. In our system that constitutes ratification.

I have a basic fundamental problem with that, as does the opposition. However, that is the way it is. Our signature meant nothing until 1999 because it was not ratified by the other party. Now that it has been ratified by the other party, our signature is taken for granted. That is a fine way to do business. I am being facetious, of course.

The protocol entered into force when the instruments of ratification were exchanged on October 7, 1999.

In 1997 a protocol on changes to the Mexico-U.S. migratory birds convention was also consented to by the U.S. senate. That has happened along the same timeframe.

What we are debating tonight is basically an amendment to the old 1916 migratory birds convention, which is a schedule or an appendix to the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994. That is what we are talking about.

• (1945)

Ours is called the Migratory Birds Convention Act. The American legislation is similar but different. I think theirs is called the

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migratory birds conservation act, for example. There certainly are major differences in how they deal with aboriginal peoples in our case or indigenous peoples in their case.

The new regulations include a whole new section, section 4, which basically talks about harvesting by aboriginal peoples. It says that migratory birds and their eggs “may be harvested throughout the year by aboriginal peoples of Canada having aboriginal or treaty rights”.

It further states that inedible byproducts may be sold but the birds and eggs so taken shall be offered for barter, exchange, trade or sale only within or between aboriginal communities as provided for in the relevant treaties, land claims agreements, self-government agreements or co-management agreements made with the aboriginal peoples of Canada.

That is one of the proposed sections in our amendment to the Migratory Birds Convention Act. I just want to point out that the old language did not use the term aboriginal. The old language, which is still in the regulations, does not talk about aboriginals. It talks about Indians and defines the word as having the same meaning as in the Indian Act. It talks about Inuk and defines it as meaning a person who is a direct descendant of a person who is or was of the race of aborigines commonly referred to as Eskimos and possesses at least one-quarter Inuk blood.

I am very familiar with the Indian Act. I am very familiar with all the definitions surrounding the terms Indian, Inuk, Inuit, Metis and several others. I was unaware until today that Canadian documentation anywhere referred to blood quotient, but indeed I find it in the regulations attached to the Migratory Birds Convention Act when it talks about Inuk. I was quite surprised to see that. It tends to be an American convention or way of doing things. I had not seen it in Canadian statutes or regulations at any time before. It was a bit of a surprise.

At least we have a pretty clear definition in the regulations. Where we have a problem now is that this new amendment states that migratory birds “may be harvested throughout the year by aboriginal peoples of Canada having aboriginal or treaty rights”.

That was probably imported from the constitution because similar language is used in section 35. However, if one wanted to define aboriginal it is simply not there. I looked. It is not defined anywhere in the act or the regulations. Neither are aboriginal rights defined. We all know what a treaty is. It either is or is not, but aboriginal rights are not defined either. This is totally open ended and I will relate some of the ways it is open ended.

• (1950)

We may have one definition in Canada but we cannot constrain this agreement to Canada alone. This is a bilateral agreement. Let us talk about the Nisga’a treaty which we debated at some length

in this place. It said that Nisga’a citizens had the right to trade or barter among themselves or with other aboriginal people any migratory birds harvested under this agreement.

I went to the glossary in the Nisga’a agreement. There is no glossary in the Nisga’a agreement. I went to the definitions. There are definitions in the Nisga’a agreement but they do not cover that part of the alphabet or do not cover aboriginal, aboriginal rights or aboriginal people. None of those words were defined. The only thing relied upon in the Nisga’a agreement once again is the Indian Act definition of Indian. That is how the Nisga’a define themselves in terms of whether or not they are eligible to become Nisga’a citizens. That does not help.

Why am I expressing a concern? One of my concerns is who are other aboriginal people. Are they confined to Canada? Are they confined to British Columbia in this case or are they not? Is it confined to status Indians and Inuit? Is it confined to status or non-status Inuit? Is it confined to status or non-status Metis and Inuit?

This is not good enough. Let us look at the American language and the following terminology:

The protocol establishes eligibility for the indigenous inhabitants of Alaska. Indigenous inhabitants are defined as permanent residents of a village within a subsistence harvest area, regardless of race. Subsistence harvest areas are established to include most village areas within the Alaska peninsula, Kodiak archipelago, the Aleutian Islands and areas north and west of the Alaska range. Areas that would generally not qualify include the Anchorage, Matinooska, Susitnu and Fairbanks North Star Burrows, the Quini peninsula roaded area, the Gulf of Alaska roaded area and southeast Alaska. Exceptions to these areas can be made through a deliberative process which includes the management bodies established by the service.

It is pretty definitive. There is a lot of clarity. Is this important? I believe it is.

First, the primary goal of the whole treaty process is conservation. Conservation is achieved most successfully when it is rules based and everyone knows what the rules are and to whom the rules apply.

Second, we are now at the point where what was clearly aboriginal harvest for domestic use has been expanded by the amendment and by the terms of the Nisga’a agreement. It is clearly a new direction to include the sale or possible commercial exploitation of migratory birds.

• (1955)

Any sale of migratory birds will be in accordance with federal and provincial laws of general application and with any Nisga’a law in respect of the sale of migratory birds harvested under the agreement. Nisga’a citizens have the right to sell inedible byproducts including down of migratory birds harvested under the agreement. It does not even constrain that by saying they have that right to sell only to other aboriginals.

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Given that we do not have a high level of historical exploitation, I am suggesting that this could lead in that direction. We ought to be concerned about the clarity of the language and the clarity of the language is simply not good enough.

I will go back a bit to the second major point I want to talk about. The Canada-U.S. treaty is impacted by the Mexico-U.S. treaty on migratory birds. We could look at that plus the fact that we want the agreement to deal with conservation of species. We also want the agreement to allow for the fact that some species listed under the migratory birds convention have become pests since 1916 or even since 1985.

Snow geese are one example. The nesting grounds in the Arctic were getting beat up. They were taking a major hit. It took quite an effort by the federal government to come up with a way to get around the constraints of the migratory birds convention and allow a targeted hunt of snow geese to prevent the habitat destruction.

We currently have a similar situation in the middle part of our country and the middle part of the U.S. I spoke with a congressman from Minnesota last week who said they have the same problem there with cormorants. Cormorants are a listed species. I understand one of the reasons has everything to do with the reverence attached to blackbirds by the people of Mexico. That kind of got translated into the Canada-U.S. agreement.

We should be able to deal much more quickly with that issue than we have done up till now. Cormorants are major fish eaters. They are cleaning out lake habitats in the spring and summer in the prairies and in the mid-west. They are becoming very much a pest. We need to do something in that regard.

Those are the points that I wanted to make. I very much want to say that I think we all agree with the intent of the migratory birds convention. It is the role of the opposition to point out some inadequacies. We have some shortcomings here. We have some inadequacies in the way we have handled this issue. Because these agreements are so difficult to amend, when we do it we should do it right. We should clarify our language very precisely. That simply has not happened.

I hope we do better next time. Who knows when the next time will be? There is no doubt that an agreement which dates back to 1916 has basically stood the test till now.

• (2000)

Probably it will not be that long again until the next episode, simply because the world is changing and we are much more attuned to the environment that surrounds us. There is a degree of management that has to happen. Species do require some management from time to time.

We look forward to seeing some productive changes to the Migratory Birds Convention Act in the future.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the order in council introduced on May 18 to amend the schedule to the Migratory Birds Convention Act so as to include the Parksville protocol, which amends the 1916 Migratory Bird Convention.

The government's proposal is merely intended to inform us about the change which will be made to this legislation. Members are not required to comment in any way on this legislative amendment.

Like the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry, I find this situation unacceptable because I feel it is essential to debate the issue of migratory birds today. I cannot but deplore the fact that the House of Commons is not permitted to take a stand with respect to international treaties, such as the biosafety protocol, which Canada did not sign, despite its fine promises in Montreal last winter.

The biosafety protocol is based on the concept of prior agreement reached with all the facts on the table, so that countries will consider the harmful effects that a genetically modified organism could have on their biodiversity before importing it and introducing it into the environment.

I am dismayed to note that the right to ratify international agreements is limited to the executive arm, which is peculiar to the British parliamentary regime on which our system is based.

It should be noted that the situation is very different in the United States, where the separation of the legislative, executive and judicial arms proposed by the French philosopher Montesquieu is followed to the letter.

I will now address Bill C-214 introduced by the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry, which would correct this situation. Under this bill, the Canadian government could not negotiate or conclude a treaty without first consulting provincial governments and the House of Commons.

As well, Bill C-214 would not in any way limit the royal prerogative of provincial governments to negotiate and sign treaties in an area under provincial jurisdiction. Bill C-214 would mean that Canada could not ratify any important treaty without the members of this House having first approved that treaty by resolution.

The case before us today is the order-in-council amending the schedule to the Migratory Birds Convention Act, which constitutes an important treaty because its implementation has, among other things, brought about the enactment of a federal statute. Why then does this government not want to consult members of parliament on this?

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Just as was the case for MOX, it is obstinately forging ahead without consulting parliamentarians or the population, despite the recommendations of the Seaborn report, which stated as follows, in subsection 6.2.1.1 that the public must accept the plan for import-ing and stocking nuclear wastes before it is implemented.

• (2005)

I believe that, when Canada plans to ratify a treaty, this must not be done unless the Minister of Foreign Affairs has first tabled the treaty in the House of Commons, with an explanatory memorandum concerning the subject matter and the effects of the treaty, not later than twenty-one sitting days before it is to be ratified.

Thus, Canada should not ratify a treaty amending a treaty that it has ratified, as is the case today, unless it has notified us with an order making it possible to include in its federal legislation the amendments to the international agreement that has already been in place for some time. The Minister of Foreign Affairs should also have first tabled it in the House of Commons, not later than twenty-one sitting days before the amending treaty is to be ratified, with a note explaining the contents and effects of the treaty.

There is one very important point still to be mentioned. The intent of this bill is to fill a democratic gap resulting from the lack of real participation by the House of Commons and its members in all stages of the conclusion of international treaties.

We parliamentarians do not have a very high trust rating with the public. According to a poll taken in 1995 for the magazine *L'Actualité*, 4% of the population had full confidence in us. This poll stopped me in my tracks. At the time, I was not a member of parliament, but I was political assistant to the late member for Jonquière, André Caron, and I could not imagine such a thing.

The situation before us today does not improve our image with the public. I would hope that the bill of my colleague, the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry, will be passed thus correcting the current situation.

One thing is sure. The government could have arranged for the provinces and the House of Commons to have a say on this piece of legislation. We must not forget that the federal government asked the provinces to decide on the coming into force of the free trade agreement with the United States in the 1980s. Doing the same with the order amending the schedule to the Migratory Birds Convention Act would not have set a precedent.

Now that I have concluded these few introductory remarks, I will focus more specifically on the government's motion.

At the beginning of the century, in 1916, Canada and the United States recognized the need to protect certain common species of migratory birds. They signed an international agreement to protect

those migratory birds considered useful or harmless to humanity. For almost 80 years, the 1916 Migratory Bird Convention provided the framework for the conservation of populations of migratory birds common to both the United States and Canada.

In 1994, the Canadian parliament introduced the Migratory Bird Convention Act, paving the way for tougher legislation to better protect migratory species. This legislation is administered by the Department of the Environment's Canadian Wildlife Service in co-operation with the governments of the provinces and territories. In fact, the provinces are responsible for enforcing the legislation. It is the provinces who are in a position to keep an eye on the public.

• (2010)

Through the enforcement and administration of this legislation in Quebec, the Government of Quebec was able, in April 1996, to hand out an initial important sentence in a case where the former owner of an outfitting operation was fined for using bait to hunt ducks, which is contrary to the regulations under the Migratory Bird Convention. Quebec is thus doing its job under the legislation.

However, certain species seen as harmful at the beginning of the century, and subsequently left unprotected, are now recognized as important to the environment and to our ecosystems.

Similarly, the guidelines set down at the beginning of the century are no longer completely consistent with today's reality. Increasingly, there is agreement that effective protection of species is not possible if we do not take into account all the factors that affect them, such as their habitats. Close and ongoing co-operation is essential between the various levels of government involved.

I will, if I may, quote from the report by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development tabled this morning in the House, which says, and I quote “—the shared nature of environmental jurisdiction requires close co-operation between federal, provincial and territorial governments”.

It is sad to see this increasingly centralizing attitude on the part of government members regarding environmental issues. Instead of working with the provinces, the federal government ignores their specificity and comes up with new programs or acts that encroach on their jurisdictions.

Migratory birds know no borders. Therefore, it is important to legislate at the international level. The protection of migratory species comes under federal jurisdiction, while the protection of their habitats is a provincial responsibility. This is why it is important to have sound agreements between the provinces and also adequate provincial laws. We do not question that reality, but we have a right to expect that much from the federal government.

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Still, as I said before, what upsets me about the Migratory Birds Convention Act is not the need for international agreements on the protection of migratory birds, but the way the negotiation, signing and ratification of international agreements are conducted in Canada. That approach is seriously flawed.

We feel as though we are back in the 19th century, when it was common to sign bilateral agreements, including mutual defence agreements, in absolute secrecy. How can parliamentarians fulfil their responsibilities if the executive branch does not allow them to do so?

I remind members of the executive branch that they do not enjoy more public legitimacy than I do. They were elected, just like me, as parliamentarians and, if they hold a cabinet post, it is simply because the Prime Minister decided so, not because they were mandated by the public. But the public should be aware of our frustration as parliamentarians when we cannot express our support for or opposition to a treaty ratified by the executive branch. The public might wonder, and rightly so, what we are doing here. What is the point of going to the polls if members of parliament only enjoy limited power?

All these questions remain unanswered with the government's proposal before us.

• (2015)

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Laliberte (Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to start off by saying that the migratory birds convention in North America has a history dating back to 1916. The amendments that are taking place today are probably long overdue in terms of the relationship this country and the nation to the south of us called the United States have with aboriginal people. It would be more clearly rectified on the rights and the privileges that the indigenous populations have here in this country and this continent.

We sit in the House of Commons. The original protocol was signed in 1916 and was between the United Kingdom and the United States of America, which brings us back to recognize that Canada at the time was a colony of Britain. Under these perspectives I draw to the attention of the House that the indigenous and aboriginal peoples of this country should have been dearly respected right from the creation of this country as opposed to being marginalized by an Indian Act, by the crown defining who is an aboriginal person, who is an Indian child, or who is an Indian mother. All these terminologies are a grave mistake. To correct and update the migratory birds convention to May 30, 2000 is what we are debating in the House today.

I would like to draw to the attention of the hon. member who spoke on behalf of the opposition that we do not share some of these views. The views may change in light of respecting one's

place and one's rights, Canada being a country which is part of North America. I wanted to jump up and say something at one point in time here.

We are dealing with the migratory birds convention and luckily so. Ducks may fly high enough that we do not get them all when we are harvesting or hunting, but we should have had a migratory bison convention. The buffalo were wrecked to the point of extinction on this continent for the mere purpose of marginalizing the dependency of aboriginal people. It is truly a travesty in our history.

Bison should still be roaming free on the prairies and plains but we did not have regulatory systems. There were no regulatory systems because they wanted to make the indigenous population dependent on the newcomers and their new foods. An independent nation or an independent people would be a lot freer to negotiate their way into this constitution or to any other constitution.

At this time in the year 2000, we now have a government that is willing to negotiate on behalf of the aboriginal people of this country, to negotiate with another country a rightful place for harvesting for food and sustenance, and down to protect ourselves from the winter cold. Down comforters are probably the best way to fight off the winter cold no matter where we live.

The snow goose and the cormorant are two contentious issues. I have never heard that the U.S. and Mexico migratory birds convention deals with cormorants as a recognized black duck. I call them Daffy Ducks because that is what they look like when they fly by. They do wreak havoc in the fishing population in our northern lakes and northern states.

• (2020)

The culling of the snow goose may have been too reactionary. I believe a proper harvest could have been planned without being detrimental to its habitat as was highlighted.

There is a need for an international convention and that is what this is. The protocol that was negotiated after some public consultations brought forward three provisions: to provide year-round access to migratory birds for food by qualified non-aboriginal residents of northern Canada living in a subsistent lifestyle; to allow for earlier opening of the fall hunting seasons for residents of the northern territories; to enable partnerships to be developed for migratory bird conservation and provide a mechanism for input by aboriginal communities into the continental management regime for migratory birds.

These are the major components of the protocol. A specific convention in this protocol states to be aware that changes to the convention are required to ensure conformity with the aboriginal and treaty rights of aboriginal peoples of Canada. As I mentioned, this is a long overdue amendment. It can be found in subsection 4,

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“In the case of Canada, subject to existing aboriginal treaty rights of aboriginal peoples of Canada under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, and the regulatory and conservation regimes defined in the relevant treaties, land claim agreements, self-government agreements and co-management agreements with aboriginal peoples of Canada”.

All this language is required today because there has been an evolution of different terminologies, different arrangements and also court decisions. I would also like to challenge the present environment minister to have a legal grasp of some of the recent decisions being made and to acquire an up to date knowledge on the matters of aboriginal rights and treaty rights that have been brought down by supreme courts and lower courts.

The other point I would like to raise is the signature at the bottom of the protocol. As we all know, in 1995 the then Minister of the Environment signed this protocol. We also have a history of some other protocols and agreements that the government has signed, one of them being on MMT. The hon. former Minister of the Environment had signed this agreement recognizing the international concern of MMT and banning the interprovincial trade of MMT as an additive in this country. Now the government has reversed its perspective on MMT. It has signed off, paying off the MMT Ethyl Corporation and has now sanctioned MMT as a fuel additive.

I would just like to stay on the record of the government for the time being. There might be differing opinions of our minister or some international criticisms that come his way. I just want to share this one with the House.

Recently an esteemed environmental guest visited our country. Robert Kennedy Jr. was here on the Hill speaking on issues of concern. He is an internationally respected and recognized conservationist. Upon reflection our minister stated that Mr. Kennedy should have perhaps thought about politicking and failed to understand the constitutional division of Ottawa's powers.

Our environment minister had high hopes of improving the environmental standards and the reputation of Canada. I say to the House that a lot of improvement is required in the present government.

The current federal government has had a lengthy record since 1993 of signing protocols and then not following through with its international commitments. This has been an embarrassment to Canada's once noble and honourable reputation on the international environment stage.

• (2025)

This government's limited effort to meet our limited protocol requirements is proven by the increase in our targets and our lack of hitting these targets.

There is also the government's refusal to sign the Basel convention side bar agreement to ban toxic waste shipments to the developing world.

There is the government's continual refusal to appoint a new ambassador for the environment, who plays a major leadership role in negotiating international protocols. The new ambassador of the environment should be named immediately.

That role is needed now for a protocol such as the precautionary principle. It was needed in the POPs protocol at a recent meeting in Bonn, Germany. The persistent organic pollutants treaty is an international United Nations protocol yet Canada neglected to follow its Rio protocol to which we are all signatories. Domestic law has included the precautionary principle but it is rarely followed in our country. The list continues.

We welcome this protocol to the Migratory Birds Convention Act. It is a much needed amendment to bring us to the point of recognizing aboriginal rights in dealing with migratory birds. But do we believe in our hearts that the government can ensure the commitments and timetables can be met?

There are commitments here that our country would stand by protecting the habitat. If pollutants have infiltrated the migratory birds' habitats, would our country uphold these obligations to stop polluting the habitats? The government has not recognized and has not been able to enforce the adequate habitat protection commitment. It is weak.

It is also highlighted in terms of the new legislation being debated in Canada now, the endangered species legislation. If the Americans are listening, we do not have an endangered species act in this country. Many Americans may be surprised to hear this since they have had theirs for many decades.

Our American neighbours would be more surprised to learn that specific recommendations of endangered species listings would be political as opposed to scientific decisions. If an endangered migratory bird flew from a rock on federal land and landed on a field outside federal land, it could be shot. These issues have to be resolved here in this country and by a government that has the will and the resources to enforce these protocols and regulations and the protocols we have with other nations.

With regard to an issue that is dear to our community, I just came back from my constituency. Many residents back home, my father included, for years have harvested duck eggs. Little did we know it was illegal. He is a Metis person and all his life he has been illegally harvesting eggs.

Birds are a good source of nutrition. Ducks are usually saved in the spring because they provide young ones. Nowadays a lot of hunters will not select a duck arriving in the spring because it comes from polluted areas down south. They prefer a cleaner duck that has been hatched and is ready to fly south in the fall.

The Migratory Birds Convention Act is certainly a much needed protocol between two countries to save the species. At this time this amendment has corrected the wrong by our country in overlooking aboriginal rights to harvest migratory birds, giving special preference to northern locations where the hunting and harvesting seasons might be different from those in the south.

At this time, I congratulate the former Minister of the Environment for boldly negotiating an issue that is really needed at this time. I also caution some of the hon. members who have raised a concern about specific rights, privileges and definitions. This continually requires a whole new will from the government and the House to find a rightful place for the indigenous and aboriginal peoples in the government, this parliament and the legislatures of this country.

• (2030)

I believe there is a time and place for that, and it is certainly a welcome opportunity to see these amendments come before the House.

Mr. John Herron (Fundy—Royal, PC): Mr. Speaker, as a blue heron it gives me great pride to participate in the debate this evening concerning migratory birds.

It will come as a surprise to no one that what we are talking about this evening is an act about protecting and maintaining the populations of birds of a migratory nature between Canada and the United States. This is an environmental initiative and I know, being the knowledgeable man that you are, Mr. Speaker, that it comes as no surprise whatsoever that this environmental initiative was brought forward by the Conservative Party of Sir Robert Borden when he was the prime minister of this country.

In the true essence of the word conservative, he was a conservationist of the finest kind before we even thought about having an environment minister. It was because of that kind of leadership that was brought forth by perhaps one of Canada's greatest prime ministers that his legacy remains and the act remains on which we are having the opportunity to speak in this place this evening.

This convention was a response to a drastic decline in migratory bird populations in the early 1900s. The legislation was the first legislative effort designed to regulate hunting, prevent trafficking and control the uses of migratory birds through permits. It also created migratory bird sanctuaries that were intended to control and manage areas important for the protection of migratory birds.

Behind the legislative framework between the United States and Canada, I would like to take this opportunity to point out the many private citizens who reside in the United States and indeed within the borders of this great country, Canada, who have taken it upon themselves to maintain wetlands for migratory species. The organization I am speaking about, which I am quite sure members are

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familiar with, is Ducks Unlimited. I have witnessed the preservation activities of the DU groups in the wetlands of Fundy—Royal and throughout Atlantic Canada. More money is raised for the preservation of wetlands on a per capita basis for Ducks Unlimited in Atlantic Canada than in any other region in North America. That initiative is fundamentally critical because, from a wetlands and waterfowl perspective, Atlantic Canada is one of the most critical migratory habitats that exists.

However, weaknesses in the convention such as the lack of protection of habitat led to the call for strong endangered species legislation. We now are debating the initiative brought forth by the government known as the species at risk act, Bill C-33, which is intended to help maintain the biodiversity legacy that we wish to leave to future generations. My primary analysis of the bill is that it dovetails with the Migratory Birds Convention Act quite importantly. The issue we are concerned about primarily is the fact that the species at risk act is perhaps too discretionary in nature.

• (2035)

Our first objection to Bill C-33 is that the very listing of whether a species is at risk is a matter of political choice and not merely that of science.

Clearly the Progressive Conservative Party understands that the listing of a species, and the habitat restoration perspective, is that we must take into account social and economic implications as well.

Ms. Paddy Torsney: Let's talk about the Migratory Birds Convention Act.

Mr. John Herron: The parliamentary secretary, once in a while, gets a little concerned when we criticize a particular piece of legislation that is part of the framework. The Migratory Birds Convention Act and the species at risk bill are critical pieces of legislation in the overall framework. We only have to refer to the position paper of the Minister of the Environment released at the Calgary zoo. He referenced that act when he brought forth his species at risk bill.

It is indeed very relevant to speak about both pieces of legislation, and I am sure there have been other speakers who have referenced both pieces of legislation this evening.

Our concern is that there are not enough financial incentives, not enough carrots, and there is too much emphasis on sticks. The carrots are needed to help the stewards of this land. The best stewards of this land for quite some time have been the farmers and the woodlot owners. They have been the best stewards at maintaining species at risk.

Whether it is a migratory bird which is of concern or whether it is another species, it is critical that we have legislation that works.

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I cite this example to illustrate my point. Because the burrowing owl is not deemed to be a migratory bird, it does not have the same protection as a bird that might be migratory in nature, such as a blue heron.

It is fundamental for us to maintain the biodiversity of the country and for us to have strong species at risk legislation as well.

Since the parliamentary secretary is listening so intently, I want to reiterate where this species at risk legislation is at fault. Listing is a matter of political choice, not of science. The protection of habitat is discretionary.

Habitat loss represents 80% of the reason a species becomes at risk in the first place. The species at risk bill does not necessarily make habitat protection mandatory for a listed species. That is part and parcel of why this bill, if it becomes an act, would not work. It does not have the financial levers or incentives to help the stewards of our land, our farmers and woodlot owners, to maintain those good practices which are required to protect species that are endangered in Canada, whether they are migratory in nature or whether they are a species maintained within our own borders.

I think it was healthy to have a chance to speak about this pioneering piece of legislation, which was founded long before we ever thought we would have a Department of the Environment.

The Conservative government of Sir Robert Borden recognized the fact that it was imperative that we conserve the biodiversity of the country. The fact that we are speaking about that Conservative prime minister's legacy in the House is indeed a pleasure. I reiterate that we need to have a species at risk act which is strong and effective, which does not penalize our farmers and woodlot owners, so that it will complement, dovetail and support the initiatives that first began in 1916, which we are discussing here tonight.

• (2040)

On that note and on this take note debate I want to thank the House sincerely for the opportunity to participate in this mandatory review. I wish you all the best this evening, Mr. Speaker, at this late hour. I would like to extend an invitation for you to attend our Tory Tuesday activities in West Block after you finish your activities here.

Ms. Paddy Torsney: Was that for me too?

Mr. John Herron: If I may, I think the Progressive Conservative Party wants to build a broad coalition. We have always been successful when we have invited a number of individuals to actually form coalitions, whether it was the Cartier and Macdonald coalition, the coalition that Robert Borden of whom we spoke today formed during wartime leadership, the coalition that Diefenbaker formed with the Union Nationale, or the coalition that was formed by the Conservative government of 1984 and 1993.

I would like to invite the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment and the Speaker tonight—I am not sure if he is independent. I know he will soon be a provincial Tory and I wish him all the best in that election—to our Tory Tuesday activities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): There being no members rising, pursuant to order made earlier this day the motion is deemed withdrawn.

(Motion withdrawn)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McClelland): It being 8.41 p.m. the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8.41 p.m.)

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