



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, March 13, 2001**

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 13, 2001

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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[*English*]

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association which represented Canada at the meeting of the defence and security committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly held in Washington, D.C., and Colorado Springs from January 30 to February 6, 2001.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### 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 Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed certain bills, to which the concurrence of this House is desired.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance)** moved:

That the government establish a national sex offender registry by January 1, 2002.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I advise the Chair that we in the Canadian Alliance will be splitting our speaking times today. This could be a good day for the House of Commons or it could be a very sad day. We will be voting tonight to determine whether members of parliament, not just the government, want to see a national sex offender registry installed in Canada.

Today I think it is important that we on all sides do away with the partisan politics that exists so often in the House of Commons and think about what is best for the children and women in our country. The motion today reflects the need for Canada, not the government nor the opposition, to have a national sex offender registry. We are asking the majority government to implement it by January 2002. That is a long time for the House of Commons to put in a bill that is absolutely necessary. I have seen bills go through the House in a matter of days.

My colleagues and I in the Canadian Alliance have pro forma legislation already developed and ready to go should the government need it and want to work with it. We are prepared to go right through committee with this to start it moving.

I want to first talk about what is a sex offender registry. I will give some of the common criteria used in the United Kingdom, the United States and Ontario. We would expect to see a national sex offender registry established and maintained by the Department of the Solicitor General, which basically means that it would be the

*Supply*

solicitor general's responsibility, and the involvement of the parole and prison system, as well as the RCMP.

• (1010)

It would contain the names, addresses, dates of birth, list of sex offences and any other prescribed information about a person convicted of a sex offence anywhere in Canada.

The need for a national sex offender registry is important. We have heard from many victims. One in particular, who we heard from this morning, is Jim Stephenson, the father of a child who was murdered by a sex offender. Victims are saying that it is no good just to have a sex offender registry in just one province because people move from that province to another province where there is no criteria at all, no registry in existence.

Information that would be included in a registry would be collected from the offenders themselves and from any other source available to the minister, that is, their CPIC system, correctional services, parole board, et cetera.

The need to have offenders themselves report is important because it then puts the onus on the individual to show up and admit the sex offence and to produce the criteria. Once the offender has registered there is then a hesitancy inborn that the offender had better not reoffend. If an offender does register, then police have good reason to worry about it and then make a check.

The registry would be available only to the minister and police forces for the purposes of crime prevention and law enforcement. This takes away any argument that it would be public information and that the privacy act would be offended, and so on and so forth.

The registry could apply to every person convicted of or found not criminally responsible for a sex offence due to a mental disorder or who is serving a sentence for a sex offence on the day the act comes into force. That is important. After the bill receives royal assent everybody convicted goes on the registry and all those currently in prison go on the registry.

Today there are about 6,000 inmates and people on parole in the country who have been convicted of sex offences. That is a lot of people considering that there are 15,000 people who are incarcerated. There is over a 30% recidivism rate for sex offenders. A registry would help police curtail that recidivism.

Another criteria could be that every offender who resides in Canada is required to register in person at his or her local police station.

Another criteria could be that persons convicted of a sex offence that carries a maximum sentence of 10 years or less would have to report to police for 10 years. Persons convicted of a sex offence

that carries longer sentence would have to report for the rest of their lives.

A police officer may obtain a warrant to arrest a person who fails to register and report as required. A person convicted of a first time offence could face a fine of up to \$25,000 or up to a year in prison. A person convicted for a second offence could face a fine of up to 25,000 and up to two years in jail.

Where do I get these criteria from? That is pretty well the criteria that Ontario uses for its sex offender registry. David Tsubouchi, the Ontario solicitor general, has basically said this about Ontario's sex offender registry:

Since it is now clear that the federal government will not accept its responsibility in this matter, Ontario will do what is right and act to protect its citizens.

I will not stand here today, and I hope none of us do, and slight the government for not implementing a sex offender registry. That is not what this is about today. This is about talking to our colleagues on the other side who have a majority in the House and who will determine tonight whether or not this bill comes into effect and the work begins on it. This is about us trying to convince all colleagues from all parties that a national sex offender registry is necessary for the protection of women and children.

• (1015)

I hope we do not get into fault finding or rhetorical statements from the other side, or from any side. Many people are watching the debate today and I think they will judge us on our decorum on the issue and the logic that we use for putting such a system in place.

I will quote some members of the British Columbia legislature and the current premier of B.C., Ujjal Dosanjh.

Here is one quote by B.C. Attorney General Graeme Bowbrick:

A national registry would help ensure consistency across provinces and give police a co-ordinated enforcement tool.

B.C. Premier Ujjal Dosanjh states:

I'm calling on the federal government to open their eyes and ears and hearts to the concerns of Canadians across the country and set up a national sex and violent offender registry right across the country.

Saskatchewan is calling for the same thing. There has to be a co-ordinated effort across the country.

The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the Ontario Provincial Police, the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police, and on it goes, all support an integrated police information system, a sex offender registry. Virtually every law enforcement agency in the country wants this registry.

Yesterday we received a letter from the Canadian Police Association which states:

On behalf of the 30,000 front-line members of the Canadian Police Association, we are pleased to convey our support for the creation of a National Sex Offender Registry. The Canadian Police Association is firmly on record in seeking a registry to assist in the investigation and apprehension of repeat sexual offenders.

I received a call from Kevin Nierenhausen of the Sexual Abuse Victims of Canada. He was asking for the same thing, the implementation of a national sex offender registry.

I have one minute left in this opening speech to appeal to all my colleagues in the House, and to all those watching to encourage all members of parliament, all the Liberals on the other side and all opposition members of parliament, to please do away with partisan politics in the House of Commons and implement a national sex offender registry. It is so vital and important for law enforcement and critical to the protection of our women and children.

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I commend the member for Langley—Abbotsford for this initiative today. As he has already mentioned, hopefully we can have a good debate today without any of the flights of rhetorical work for which the House is famous. This is a bi-partisan issue and an issue that concerns everyone in the country.

Does the member think there would be enough time to actually draft the necessary legislation and get the co-operation of the provinces on an issue like this? It would give us a year but there is a lot of detailed work to be done. Would that be enough time? Would we be able to pull it together in such a way that the provinces, the victims groups and the federal departments could get all the *i*'s dotted and the *r*'s crossed?

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, the date of 2002 is ample time. The government and ourselves in opposition would have many areas upon which to draw. The United Kingdom has a sex offender registry. Every state in the United States has a national or a state sex offender registry. Ontario has an outstanding example of it. Other provinces already have drafts available. This is not something that we have to reinvent. In fact, the Canadian Alliance has been working on draft legislation for a year and it is ready to go. It is not meant to embarrass anybody. It is meant to help. We are prepared to give this document to the government and to work with it. It can use the document if it wishes or it can draw on Ontario, as we have, or on any other organization.

● (1020)

In conclusion, I remind members of a letter that I received from Jim and Anna Stephenson, whose child was murdered by a sex offender. They wrote:

In 1988 our eleven-year old son Christopher was abducted, raped repeatedly and murdered by a known pedophile. Among many recommendations contained in the verdict in the 1992 Inquest into his death was a proposal for a national sex offender

### *Supply*

registry. Since then, my wife and I have been advocates for various changes in the criminal justice system.

Claiming there are programs and legislation currently in place and that a National Registry would only duplicate what currently exists, the Federal Government has yet to move in this direction.

That is not meant as fault finding. It is meant to say where we have to go. The letter continued:

In the continued absence of any Federal initiative, Ontario recently announced that it would introduce its own Sex Offender Registry. The legislation is named "Christopher's Law" in the memory of our son. While the other provinces have not announced plans to introduce legislation of their own at this time, each has indicated that Ontario's initiative is being followed closely.

We applaud the Ontario Government for the leadership it has shown with the introduction of the Sexual Registry. At the same time, however, Canadians everywhere, and not only those who are citizens of Ontario, also deserve protection from those who present danger to repeat a sexual assault. Clearly such protection is only possible under a National Registry.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member for bringing the motion forward. It is crucial in its timing and its content. It is one that we in the Progressive Conservative Party will certainly be supporting.

My question to the hon. member is quite simple. The registry that he speaks of has terrific preventive aspects to it. We know there is an existing firearms registry that was ill-conceived and has been entirely expensive. It is not based on safety and is probably doomed to failure.

The computers currently in place to register guns have no effect on safety. Does the hon. member feel that there could be any application of the firearms infrastructure that is in place? Is there any way that some of that infrastructure may be applied to a sex offender registry, which would have a much greater effect in terms of safety?

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I compliment my colleague on his work in terms of promoting a national sex offender registry. It is well acknowledged.

The resources that are tied up in the gun registry may well be used. I know an upgrade to the CPIC system is coming which may well be used. When we hear from the solicitor general on the issue hopefully he can shed some light on it.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I begin by congratulating and thanking the member for Langley—Abbotsford for the excellent motion. I commend him for all the work he does on important areas like this one.

Most parents keep a close eye on their children, but we as parents have all experienced those moments of terror when a child slips out of sight at a shopping centre, a playground or an amusement park. It can take a few seconds for a child to go missing and it is easy to fear the worst. One of the worst fears is that a sexual predator has taken the child.

*Supply*

For some, like the parents of Christopher Stephenson, the moments of terror can actually last a lifetime. When 11 year old Christopher disappeared in 1988, there was no reprieve. There was no happy reunion. A repeat sex offender, Joseph Fredericks, abducted Christopher from the mall where he was shopping with his mother. Fredericks took Christopher to a field where he repeatedly raped him. At some point he took him back to his apartment. At some point he murdered him.

• (1025)

An inquest into Christopher's murder led to recommendations that the government should create the national sex offender registry which the member for Langley—Abbotsford is proposing. Had such a registry existed and police officers were able to go right away to check the residences of all known offenders in the vicinity of Christopher's disappearance, they may have been able to save his life. The recommendations were made back in 1992 and the federal government has not acted.

Today we urge all parties to vote in favour of our motion that the government create a national sex offender registry. Such a registry would not only help to allay the fears of every Canadian parent, but it could save the lives of children like Christopher and help protect children from sexual predators.

The Ontario government has not waited for the federal government. As already mentioned by the member for Langley—Abbotsford, the former solicitor general of Ontario, David Tsubouchi, went ahead with legislation that became known as Christopher's Law in honour of Christopher. Around the time Mr. Tsubouchi introduced the bill he said:

Since it is now clear that the federal government will not do what is right and will not accept its responsibility in this matter, Ontario will do what is right and act to protect its citizens.

The Ontario legislature unanimously passed Christopher's Law last April. We are calling for the same all party support today for the creation of a national sex offender registry modelled after Christopher's Law.

Ontario is not the only province calling for the creation of such a registry. British Columbia plans to create its own registry. Its premier, as we have heard today, has called on the federal government "to open their eyes and ears and hearts to the concerns of Canadians across the country and set up a national sex and violent offender registry right across the country".

We know that many Liberal members of parliament also support the creation of such a registry. Peter Warkentin, the Liberal candidate in Surrey Central, advocated for a registry during the last election.

To day we are asking the Prime Minister and his Liberal caucus to give more than a blessing to an idea, to put partisan concerns

aside and to vote in favour of creating a national sex offender registry.

It is not a new idea on the other side of the House. When federal and provincial justice ministers met in Regina in October 1998, we understand the Minister of Justice told Alberta justice minister Jon Havelock that the federal government promised to amend the present system to allow it.

We have also heard some of the arguments some Liberals have raised against creating such a registry, arguments like the Canadian Police Information Centre already does the job and that the registry would duplicate what CPIC already does. We can ask any police officer who uses CPIC if the system does what a national sexual offender registry would do. CPIC does not tell police where all sex offenders in any given area are living.

We need to have legislation to mandate the collection of data necessary for police officers to do their job in this special area of crime prevention. We need to have legal requirements for sex offenders to provide that information and sanctions when they fail to do so.

There are an estimated 4,500 sex offenders either in prison or under some form of community supervision. Most researchers say that pedophilia is incurable and the risk of reoffending can remain for the rest of that person's life. Rapists also show a high degree of recidivism for violent crime. It is time for the Canadian government to show its concern for the victims of sexual predators. It is time for the House to do something concrete to prevent sexual offenders from drifting from place to place under a cloak of anonymity, putting vulnerable children and citizens at risk.

Christopher Stephenson's father, Jim Stephenson, wrote to the member for Langley—Abbotsford last Friday in support of the motion before the House today. He said he was encouraged that the Canadian Alliance was raising the need for a national sex offender registry for debate and a vote. He wrote:

Canadians everywhere, and not only those who are citizens of Ontario, also deserve protection from those who present danger to repeat a sexual assault. Clearly such protection is only possible under a national registry.

We hope that members of all parties will remember Christopher Stephenson today. We hope they will consider the lives of other children that may have been saved as Christopher's might have been. We hope they will consider the abuse and violation of innocent victims that may be prevented by the creation of a national registry. It is time that we set aside partisan politics and work together.

Every day we sit in the House as elected people and look across the aisles into the eyes of one another. We plot, plan and strategize, which is something politics and parliamentary behaviour is all about. Tonight when we vote, and as we look across the aisles, can we picture the eyes of Christopher or the eyes of our own children? I will be picturing the eyes of my grandchildren.

• (1030)

It is time to set aside partisan differences. It is time to work together for our children. Let us do this together.

I move:

That the motion be amended by substituting the number "1" with the number "30".

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The amendment is in order.

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech with great interest and I too have great concerns about what is going on. Parents now walk their children to and from school and a lot of parents absolutely refuse to let their children play in parks.

It has always been my understanding that the government's first and foremost responsibility is the safety and protection of its law-abiding citizens. Our children are the most vulnerable. Should that not be the government's first and foremost responsibility?

**Mr. Stockwell Day:** Mr. Speaker, I would concur with that suggestion.

We always talk about the future being our children. We need to think of their literal future. It should absolutely be the utmost and foremost in the minds of not only of opposition party members but also of government members. I want to presume that will be the case. I do not want to make a political statement to the contrary but we will see tonight. I presume that the children of this country are in their hearts.

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I was in the RCMP for 30 years. What the hon. member said about the Canadian Police Information Centre is accurate. It does not provide the full scope necessary for a police officer to keep track of the sexual predators who are loose in society.

I would also like to indicate that at the present time police forces are releasing information into the community about the whereabouts of an individual sex offender. However they are sometimes under civil threat of a lawsuit when they do that.

Will this registry help in the area of protecting our police forces when they do take action to monitor and follow these predators to make sure their whereabouts are known?

**Mr. Stockwell Day:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Selkirk—Interlake raises a valid point. I appreciate his experience in terms of policing as a good portion of his life was given to that.

• (1035)

Yes, this would be set up in a way that has been looked at by the legal experts to make sure that police officers have the guidelines

### *Supply*

to follow so that they do not run afoul of any possible rights or charter issues. That would be carefully done and implicated in this particular motion.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I commend the Leader of the Official Opposition for his remarks and his participation in this debate. My question is along the same lines as the comments with respect to CPIC.

Under the current system there is a process for red flagging individuals who have received pardons. There is obviously a system in place to try to ensure the accuracy of the information. I know the hon. member would agree that the accuracy of that information is crucial to this preventative nature that is behind a system such as this, an early warning system for police and for communities.

My question is twofold. With respect to the cost, and this is not to suggest that no cost is too great when it comes to protecting our children, I wonder if the member has any figures on the cost of this system. Second, with respect to the ability of the provinces to participate in this, does he have any thoughts along those lines?

**Mr. Stockwell Day:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concern raised. Relating to the CPIC, and I am not saying this in a pejorative way, it is important to look at some of the deficiencies. We know that CPIC does not tell police where all sex offenders live. We need to have legislation to mandate the collection of the data.

In terms of the cost itself, it would not be prohibitive. I appreciate the fact that the member acknowledged that there really is no cost too great in terms of protecting our children. These costs would not be prohibitive and could be handled within the fiscal capacity of the department. I am sure the minister himself could illuminate us on that even further.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member from Waterloo—Wellington. I am pleased to rise today to speak on the opposition motion in favour of a national sex offender registry.

I am sure this proposal is motivated by a sincere concern for the safety of our children and for all Canadians. This is a concern shared by all of us and certainly by this government. Since forming government we have taken a series of actions to better protect Canadians from sexual abusers and will continue to do so.

As early as 1994 we conducted extensive consultations with individuals and organizations with special responsibility for the care and protection of children. These included children's aid societies, school boards, big brothers and big sisters organizations, Volunteer Canada, police, victims and many other groups across the country. What they told us was that sex offender registries, like

*Supply*

those in the United States, would contribute little to the safety of children. What they asked for, and what we delivered, was a made in Canada solution that targets abusers who seek positions of trust with children and other vulnerable groups.

The national screening system was launched in the summer of 1994 by the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Health and the Solicitor General of Canada. It is the result of effective collaboration between police, child care agencies and the federal government.

The Canadian Police Information Centre, or CPIC, provides criminal records to local police forces who have helped these agencies conduct criminal record checks. At last count, more than 700,000 searches had been done on behalf of volunteer organizations across the country. This is an important tool that protects the most vulnerable from the most dangerous and is only one example of the measures that we have taken for the safety of Canadians.

• (1040)

We have created a new form of long term supervision for sex offenders after they complete their normal sentence. A national flagging system has been developed with our provincial partners so that prosecutors can identify offenders who should be considered for dangerous offender status. Peace bonds allow us to put special conditions on high risk offenders even when they are not under sentence. With these measures we have imposed tougher controls on sex offenders and we have made Canadians safe.

Sex offender registries as they exist in other countries have not prevented crime. Despite their heavy cost, they are easily defeated when offenders simply fail to register or provide false information.

In the American system only about 50% of those required actually register. In a lot of states it is less than that. In Canada we have chosen a different path. We already have a credible and comprehensive national registry. It is called CPIC. It is a national registry of all convicted offenders, including sex offenders.

CPIC is already the basis for the national screening system. It is a solid database of police information that can be accessed by all police agencies across the country. CPIC is already in place and does not have to be duplicated by another agency. It is highly reliable because it is based on fingerprints, not on whether or not an offender chooses to comply or not. In other words, CPIC is Canada's national sex offender registry. It does not need to be created because it already exists.

However, the government is open to improvements. We have already engaged in discussions with our partners across the country to enhance CPIC's role as Canada's sex offender registry. That collaboration is well under way and a truly national system can only exist if there is a national consensus. That is why we are working closely with provincial and territorial ministers of justice and solicitors general.

In 1998 ministers approved a report from senior officials who studied sex offender registries. Ten very useful recommendations were made. However, a new national sex offender registry was not one of them. A few provinces have expressed interest in establishing their own registry but most have made no decision and some are clearly opposed.

What we all agreed to do, when we met in Iqaluit last September, was to work together to most effectively combine our efforts to protect children. That is exactly what we are doing.

For those jurisdictions that are prepared to do so, we have offered to accept current addresses for known sex offenders to be placed on the CPIC database and to be updated as needed. One province has expressed an interest in such an agreement.

We clearly already have a sex offender registry on a national scale. It is an important public safety tool that will remain effective in the future. I was also very pleased that the government saw fit to put \$115 million into the CPIC system to make sure it was updated and one of the best systems available.

We are always working to ensure we have the best possible tools to protect Canadians in their communities. We will continue to review our progress on a regular basis to make sure that we are moving forward.

• (1045)

In closing, the government has and will continue to do its utmost to protect Canadians. We will continue to seek effective made in Canada solutions that will work for all of us.

We have a proven and reliable sex offender registry. We have already complied with the opposition's motion. We are committed to going even further. For that reason, I have absolutely no problem in supporting the opposition motion.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, if that don't beat all.

I want to compliment the government for, I think, listening. However I do want to correct a couple of statements the solicitor general made. I want to give some quotes that are very important to listen to from the solicitor general's point of view.

According to the Canadian Police Association, the government has established CPIC but "it does not provide police agencies with adequate information and notification concerning the release or arrival of sex offenders into their community". The Canadian Police Association, which has 30,000 members, has told everyone in the House that CPIC does not work.

When the Ontario officials were developing the Ontario sex offender registry they said "CPIC neither focuses solely on sex offenders nor has the updated address information needed to track them".



*Supply*

I wanted to correct the solicitor general's comments. I want to thank the government for supporting this motion. I hope we are now moving forward on a non-partisan basis to develop the legislation.

The sex offender registry, which is in every state in the United States and in every location in the United Kingdom, is, contrary to what the solicitor general said, supported by millions of people. Even though bureaucrats from Canada go there and say it is not working, it actually is working. I have a lot of information here that I would like to give the solicitor general to show that it is working.

I would like to know why and how he gets the information to say that these things are not working. Furthermore, why is it that Ontario has implemented a sex offender registry? It was sick of waiting for us in the House of Commons to do it. There must be something to it. In addition to that, B.C., Saskatchewan and Alberta are now moving toward one.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** Mr. Speaker, first, on his correction move, I do not understand what correction he is trying to put forward. In fact, CPIC is not specifically a sex offender registry. It is a registry of all people who commit criminal offences. What is important to know is that everybody who commits a criminal offence is on CPIC.

If an organization goes to the police and wishes to have a person evaluated as to whether the person has committed a sex offence, it can do that with CPIC. The system is there.

In the American system, as I said to my hon. colleague, in a number of states 50% or less of the people who should be on the system are on it. What is the good of that? What we have in Canada is a national system updated to be one of the most effective systems in the world, the envy of most police forces around the world. To the criminal justice system it is a very important arm.

What we must have is a national system with everybody involved. CPIC is exactly that. It is a national system.

**Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the solicitor general in his speech made reference to the dangerous offender status. I would like to draw his attention to an instance in my own constituency.

A teacher by the name of Robert Noyes in the community of Ashcroft offended and damaged many young students in his school for whom he was responsible. In the course of his conviction and sentencing, he was designated a dangerous offender. He has been in prison for a long time now. More and more he has been moved out of prison and into the community. I have resisted that subject since being elected. I have talked to the people responsible for him and they have said that he has had all the treatment and education they could give him and that he has done everything satisfactorily so they had to let him go. I asked if he would be offending again and the response was, probably.

• (1050)

What is offensive about this case is that this is a man who probably, in the minds of those who are responsible, will reoffend, and yet even though he is a dangerous offender—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired. With the indulgence of the House, I will give a minute to the Solicitor General of Canada to respond.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate colleague's comments. In fact, dangerous offender status is very important. Those convicted as dangerous offenders could be under supervision for the rest of their lives. That is very important.

I do not want to talk about individual cases, but we must have and do have a proper system in place to make sure nobody gets away. What my hon. colleague referred to as dangerous offender status was put in place by this government. It is more protection for the public in general.

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great honour to stand in the House to discuss the national registry for convicted sex offenders. It makes a valuable contribution to protecting the most vulnerable members of our society from the most dangerous offenders who would sexually abuse and exploit them. No one in the House or Canadians across our great country condone that kind of action.

I am sure all members of the House would agree that we want the best system possible to protect our communities from high risk offenders and to enhance public protection, especially for our children.

The primary goal of our national registry of convicted sex offenders is to prevent individuals from having the opportunity to perpetrate these horrendous crimes while remaining unidentified and undetected. To contribute to this most vital effort of prevention and protection, the government is committed to giving police better tools to help fight crime. We are fulfilling our commitments.

For this reason, the federal government can assure all Canadians that the Canadian Police Information Centre, or CPIC as the national registry for all convicted sex offenders, is the appropriate tool to achieve the goal of enhancing public safety through the timely and well directed sharing of relevant information.

As all hon. members in the House are aware, we in Canada are currently protected by a criminal justice system that actively encourages and participates in extensive information sharing. Furthermore, through co-operation and consultation with all partners and stakeholders, we are looking at ways to build on the framework now in place. Our ultimate goal is to find ways to

*Supply*

maximize the contribution that our criminal justice system makes to public safety and security.

With the primary goal of achieving excellence in protecting the Canadian public, the government has attempted to implement more effective practices and to correct any inadequacies. This means the focus now is on maintaining and improving the lines of communication between and among the police, the courts and the correctional and conditional release authorities.

As many members are aware, the Department of the Solicitor General has been leading a federally integrated justice information initiative. The goal of that initiative is to create a trans-Canada highway of criminal justice information to improve the sharing of offender and crime related information among all partners in Canada's criminal justice system.

The system is called the Canadian public safety information network, and it is a top priority of the government. A crucial improvement will be in the ability to share information more widely and in a more timely manner among police, prosecutors, courts, corrections and parole officials. The backbone of the initiative is a funding contribution of \$115 million to the RCMP to renew CPIC to which the solicitor general just referred.

• (1055)

However, because these tools are so critical for law enforcement agencies, it is necessary to embark upon important endeavours, such as the Canadian public safety information network, with foresight and planning. That is something that we as a government are doing. They need to be developed in close co-operation with partners in the system.

In addition to the well-directed efforts and initiatives previously mentioned, the federal government, in consultation with the voluntary and child care sectors and with police and provincial representatives, has chosen a range of other effective measures targeted to protect children from sex abusers.

First, we have put in place a national screening system based on CPIC that allows child caring organizations and individuals to access the criminal records of persons assuming positions of trust with children and other vulnerable groups.

Second, we have passed legislation to give police access to pardon records for screening purposes through Bill C-7, which was passed in the House last spring.

Third, we continue to work in partnership with Volunteer Canada to conduct training and public education about screening practices and to promote screening with voluntary and public sector agencies.

In addition to that, we have adopted strict measures for the most serious offenders, such as the dangerous and long term offender

designations. In addition, we provide support for post-sentence programs, such as circles of support.

We also work closely with local police to support public notification schemes about sex offenders. We have put in place special protections to restrict the movement and conduct of sex offenders after their release.

Finally, we have created new offences to protect children and other vulnerable groups.

All of this underscores the commitment of the solicitor general and the Government of Canada to ensuring the protection, safety and security of our children, especially as related to these horrific cases.

These are tangible examples of how seriously the government takes public safety. However, our work is not done. We need to continue to make good on additional work. We have made a good start with CPIC as a national registry of convicted sex offenders. We have already complied with the hon. member's motion, which is why I, for example, have no hesitation in offering my support.

The point is, as the solicitor general outlined in his speech, we will continue to ensure we have the absolute best possible tools necessary and available to protect all Canadians, especially our young people. The values of Canada and of the government are to ensure safety and security for our children and to ensure we have in place the kind of system necessary to ensure that ours is a good and decent society. That is precisely what we on the government side want, that is what the solicitor general wants and, more to the point, that is what all Canadians want.

I repeat that I have no hesitation in supporting this motion. It is something that we are already doing and will continue to do in the best interests of all Canadians.

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, many Canadians no doubt are watching today. Many Canadians across the country have made it very clear that they believe we have given more protection to the criminals than we have to the victims.

Would the member not agree that an all party support of the motion now before the House would not only show confidence in the House but would also gain the support we really need on a national level for the justice system across Canada?

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, I guess we will see tonight whether or not all party support is in place. What I do know is that we on the government side continue to ensure that there are laws in place to ensure effective public policy in areas of the criminal justice system. We also ensure that the values of Canada are taken into consideration when we provide public policy.

What I do not like seeing, and what I believe Canadians do not like seeing, is the opposition, especially the reform alliance people,

who seem to always want to fearmonger. They always want to scratch the surface of the scab to try to get to the bleeding of society. I do not understand that kind of negativity. I do not understand the politics of fear, the politics of blame, the politics of trying always to undermine the very values of this decent and just country. Unfortunately, that is who they are. That is the kind of people we have to put up with in the House.

• (1100)

We on this side will continue to work in the best interests of the public. We will work in the best interests of children and we will do the kinds of things necessary to ensure safety and security in this great country of ours. Why do we do this? We do it because it is in the best interests of all Canadians, no matter where they live in Canada.

**Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I could not help but listen to what the member was saying about fearmongering, picking scabs and taking certain issues out of context. I take exception to that. What we are talking about here is the safety of our children, not partisan politics, and I wish the member would get that straight.

Underneath the registry issue we are talking about, we all know that the average lifespan of a child who has been kidnapped for sexual purposes is seven hours. After seven hours, the chances of that child coming back alive just about disintegrate. My question to the member is, underneath this proposal, would that not speed up the process in helping to find the child?

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, with the CPIC system of course we continue to work very effectively and in the best interests of Canadians to ensure that timing is of the essence. This has to be something that is understood by everyone in Canada: we, with the police information system, are putting in place the necessary tools.

Do we need to do additional things? Of course we do. That is why, when the justice ministers and the solicitors general from across Canada met in Iqaluit, they put in place a kind of beginning process and mechanism, if you will, ensuring that what we will do as a country is ensure that in regard to those kinds of issues like the member's question in terms of timing, we find the perpetrators, the offenders, as soon as possible so that our children and all Canadians can feel safe and secure, not only in their homes and neighbourhoods but in their communities and in their provinces as well.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a quick question for the non-partisan parliamentary secretary.

With respect to the child sex offender registry, I am quoting from the auditor general's report of April 2000 in which he essentially refers to the fact that it was out of action for 11% of last year.

### *Supply*

It is easy to mouth the words about priorities on the part of the government. It is easy to talk about its top ten number one priorities. However, would the hon. member not agree that a stand alone system or even a sex offender registry specifically designated within the CPIC system and which is fully funded by the government—he can re-announce for the 113th time about the \$115 million, knowing that the Canadian Police Association was asking for double that amount—would achieve the objective that—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** A quick response from the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General.

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, the government and certainly the solicitor general as an individual are committed to the support of the police in all kinds of ways. We have committed and re-committed and will continue to provide the tools necessary to fight crime, not only in this area but in all areas that are necessary and important for Canadians wherever they live.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would point out that the Canadian Alliance will not be able to accuse the Bloc Québécois of being close-minded, after its most cavalier treatment of me yesterday.

That will not be the case today because, at a first glance, the proposal being debated now is of considerable interest, since it is aimed at introducing a measure that will act as a safety net against a specific type of crime and criminal. It is a sort of constructive control, but it is mainly a means of preventing sex offenders who have served their sentences from reoffending.

• (1105)

This idea of creating a national sex offender registry has been in the air for some time. It is, in fact, the outcome of a recommendation following on the investigative report on the murder of young Christopher Stephenson in 1988. A consensus followed on the critical need for this project in order to preserve the safety of all citizens.

More than a reflection of the public's will, the idea gathered the support of organizations such as the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime and political parties such as the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, the Canadian Alliance and the Bloc Québécois, under certain conditions, however.

They all suggested the Government of Canada act without delay by putting an end to a situation that appeared increasingly symptomatic of a weakness in our justice system.

Experience has shown and research confirms a high risk of recidivism among sex offenders, in most cases. This warning from

*Supply*

the experts together with the reactions of a number of police forces in the country have bolstered the convictions of victims and, accordingly, of the people with respect to a problem we can no longer ignore.

In an effort to take an enlightened and, if possible, a dispassionate look, let us examine just what the creation of a sex offender registry might mean.

Keeping such a registry of sex offenders appears at first glance to be based on a legitimate principle, that of protecting the public from the potential recidivism of offenders sentenced for specific sexual offences and now at the end of their sentence.

Often left to themselves and facing serious problems arising from repressed sexual urges, this category of offender is more likely to be a repeat offender. As we know, crimes of a sexual nature are especially heinous because they often involve our society's most vulnerable members. Children are the preferred victims of this sort of predator, who are not always settled down by a period behind bars.

Given this potential risk, prevention remains the best remedy to a problem which unfortunately makes headlines all too often. We do not want our communities to become hostages because of the inadequacies of a system that is powerless to eliminate a type of crime that puts lives in danger. The proposed solution is a concrete measure to correct a situation that could deteriorate if nothing is done to reduce its sad consequences.

The establishment of such a sex offender registry, which would include the offender's name, address and date of birth, and the list of sex crimes committed, would allow a much more thorough follow up on these people. Under such a procedure, offenders would have to inform local police forces of their whereabouts. This would allow society to keep an eye on these offenders who, in the absence of such a monitoring system, always remain a potential threat.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that the registry must be established under very specific rules. The inclusion of all offences related to a sex crime must be included in the offender's record. The rules must be clear.

Second, the registry must be maintained by responsible authorities and be consulted only by these same authorities. We are talking of course about police forces.

Third, we must ensure a long term follow up which, as suggested in some documents, would require offenders who have received a ten year sentence to report for a ten year period. Those who would have been handed down harsher sentences could be required to report to police forces for a longer period of time.

Finally, these sex offenders should be informed that their names will remain in the registry for a predetermined period. Thus, this close monitoring, which is not a guarantee against sex offences, will at least help lower the risk by reducing the chances of recidivism. It will ensure that police forces have all the information they need to keep tabs on offenders and act quickly when the worst happens. These few points form the basis for an approach that could be a practical way of easing the community's concern. Since every initiative rests on a solid foundation, those who favour such a registry have done their homework.

● (1110)

The American model has produced interesting results, which have been a driving force in this project. A number of states have introduced a sex offender registry, including California in 1947 and, quite recently, Alaska in 1994. Each state has its own registry, and the FBI is thinking of creating a national registry, which is a significant attempt to keep tabs on sex offenders.

Although we feel that such registries do not prevent all crimes, they do help the police to identify suspects and eventually make arrests. Such a program therefore meets a need and fulfils specific expectations.

If we look at the European context, 88% of the 641 respondents in a survey in Great Britain said that they would like to be warned of the presence of pedophiles in their neighbourhood. Once again, this is a trend that reflects the concerns expressed by Canadians.

Our case is therefore not an isolated one and is part of an approach that is increasingly becoming the norm. We cannot avoid it and we certainly cannot remain insensitive to the entirely legitimate demands of the community.

However, despite the enthusiasm of those in favour of creating such a registry, certain precautions must be taken in order to avoid abuses. To that end, the new powers assigned to the police forces must be given a framework, with the limits set right from the start in order to avoid problems later on.

First of all, it needs to be stipulated that the right of access to personal information on offenders must be given only to the solicitor general and the law enforcement agencies. The general public must at no time have access to this bank of information. It must not be in general circulation and it must be intended, not as an alert to the population, but rather as a means to enable the police to monitor the offender, somewhat along the lines of what a parole officer would do. The goal would be the same: rehabilitation.

What needs to be kept in mind is that this registry must not become a means of allowing the public to conduct witch hunts. It must not be a means of stigmatizing all of these offenders, for some of them do manage to get over their obsessions. It is a useful tool, but it must be used only for its intended purposes.

Some people see the creation of an offender registry as a kind of attack on rights and freedoms. Of course, the usual steps need to be taken in order to safeguard the basic principle of rights for all. The interests of the community as a whole must also be considered, however. The Alaska legislative assembly is one example of this. It has adopted the creation of such a register, with the following statement:

—since there is a strong likelihood of repeat offences by sex offenders, and since it is . . . vital to protect the public from sex offenders, protection of these offenders' privacy is not as important as the State's interest in protecting the public.

This principle also serves as the basis for an approach that places the community's interests above the individual interests of criminals who continue to present a risk to society.

In this regard, a ready link may be made with the other file being defended by the Bloc Québécois, which, for the same reasons of protection, is fighting to have membership in a criminal group declared illegal. Others are expressing certain fears about such an initiative, because of the precedent it may establish, for example. People go so far as to think the establishment of this registry of personal information will open the door to other much more disquieting initiatives.

In this spirit, the allusion to the centralized megafile that put the Liberal government on the hot seat not so long ago rises as the ghost of the return of this form of register, the idea being that there would not be a series of this type of files gathering information here and there on the public for purposes other than public security and protection. I point out once again that it is by proceeding clearly from the outset, setting up specific guidelines, that we will prevent excesses.

In conclusion, after reviewing the benefits of the proposal we are debating here, and identifying the pitfalls to be avoided, I believe a national sex offenders registry could function.

• (1115)

Beyond the natural concerns raised by this measure, which is entirely new to us, with its objectives it will have a direct and, we hope, positive effect on the public. This effect will be felt as a preventive measure, an approach that has always had good results, so the public may feel truly safe.

This motion is broad enough to earn the support of the Bloc Québécois. However, when a bill is formulated in this regard, we will ensure that it contains the conditions we have mentioned.

[English]

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member's support for the motion. I clearly remember her saying that the general public should never be able to access the information. I do not think anyone would quarrel with that.

*Supply*

Does the member consider it wrong for the police to issue a warning to the community once it knows of the presence of a sex offender in that community? Would that be inappropriate action on the part of the police?

[Translation]

**Ms. Pierrette Venne:** Mr. Speaker, warning the general public would certainly not be acceptable to us.

As we see the bill, this would be confidential information, for the exclusive use of the police and, of course, the solicitor general. There is no question of tacking up pictures of sexual predators or any sort of general public information on lampposts. My answer is definitely no.

[English]

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I compliment the member on her previous work in the House on justice issues. I respect her opinion.

Would my colleague be able to shed some light on the CPIC system which the police has? I know now government members will support the motion to develop a national sex offender registry by January 2002, but there seems to be some waffling on whether or not they see it as just the CPIC system or something else.

Could the member give us some level of confidence that the CPIC system is doing today or even tomorrow what the people on the other side think it is doing? I understand from the police that its CPIC information system does not look after the problem of sex offenders in communities.

[Translation]

**Ms. Pierrette Venne:** As I understand the Canadian Alliance member's motion, responsibility for gathering and maintaining the information would not lie with CPIC but with police forces, which would be individually responsible for all the information they would receive, since sexual predators would be listed with local forces.

I do not think that this would be the case if CPIC were used. Since we have seen how effective they are right now, it would perhaps be an idea to use other means and to list offenders with local police forces.

**Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on the clarity of her remarks regarding this motion.

I would like to ask her how it would be decided that those in the registry present a high risk of recidivism.

**Ms. Pierrette Venne:** Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of deciding whether or not a sexual predator presents a high risk of recidivism. All sexual predators should be listed. This way, there is

*Supply*

no discrimination, there are no supposedly objective criteria, all sexual predators have to register.

• (1120)

[*English*]

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to say that I am tempted to call quorum. The idea of the opposition day is to provide the opposition with an opportunity to put forward points of view to which the government listens.

It was created to replace the thorough examination of the estimates that used to exist before 1968 or 1969 when government members had to stay in the House, particularly the cabinet minister in charge, to listen to the opposition and answer questions, et cetera. When I look across the way and I see only 3 government members out of 175, it does not exactly inspire one to think that there is a great zest for the House of Commons over there.

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member opposite has been here a long time. He knows full well that references are not made to attendance in the House. The government is very interested—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** That is not really a point of order, but your point is as well taken as his. There is a very clear message in his words, too.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, in that case, if what I just did was offensive, I will do what is permitted within the rules and I will call quorum.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** A quorum has been called. The bells should ring for a maximum of 15 minutes, but as they are not working are you willing to withdraw your quorum call?

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, ask not for whom the bell tolls. It is tolling for no one at this point. Apparently the bells are not working and therefore we cannot even call a quorum when we want. The government is let off the hook this time by a technological glitch.

**An hon. member:** It is time for electronic voting.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** Someone says that it is time for electronic voting. This is already electronic and it has failed us. Perhaps that should be a warning to us. We could all come in here some day to vote electronically, press the button and nothing would happen. Then what would we do?

**Mr. John McKay:** What difference would that make?

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** The hon. member asks what difference it would make. It certainly would not make any difference to members of the government. They always do what they are told anyway, whether or not it is electronic.

I am pleased to rise in support of the motion moved by my Alliance colleagues on their opposition day. I listened with interest to the solicitor general's reply. I might be mistaken, but I had the impression as I was listening to the solicitor general that he was speaking against the motion. Then of course at the end of the speech he announced that the government would be supporting the motion, which I think took the member from White Rock somewhat by surprise.

• (1125)

Sometimes it is hard to know what is really best, whether to have the government oppose a motion or support it. I have had this experience before. I was reminded today of February 8, 1999, when the government supported an NDP motion with respect to a national ban on water exports. The Liberals all stood and said they supported the motion. The next day they had a press conference to announce a policy that was entirely different from a national ban on water exports and said that they were living up to the opposition day motion to which everyone had agreed.

There is a bit of that going on here if I understand the solicitor general correctly. The argument he was making was that he was supporting the motion but he did not really agree there was any need for the motion or any need for what the motion calls for.

What that means to me is the government simply did not want to endure the political price of voting against this motion and being subject to the considerable vituperativeness of the solicitor general critic of the Alliance Party and others who would have called it to account for not supporting this motion. As I listened to the solicitor general it seemed he was saying the country already had one in the context of CPIC.

The reason we have the motion before us is that no one, except for perhaps the solicitor general and his parliamentary secretary, believes that CPIC as it now stands is anything like what the people who are calling for a national sex offender registry have in mind.

It is a legitimate point that CPIC could be transformed, changed substantially, and used as the basis for a national sex offender registry. That means it would have to include the kinds of information it does not now include. It is a legitimate option. If that is what the government wants to do, perhaps it could have put it forward in a much more clear and convincing way, but it did not.

People who are calling for a national registry are calling at the moment for a stand alone registry. Whether it happens in the form of a stand alone registry or in the form of a substantially transformed CPIC, it remains the case that the people who have to deal with it on an ongoing basis, the police forces represented through the Canadian Police Association, are saying that what we have now is not working, contrary to what the solicitor general has said, and

*Supply*

does not constitute the kind of national sex offender registry which they and others think would be very useful to have.

For the solicitor general to sing the praises of what they are already doing and support the motion, while at the same time not really appreciating the worthiness of the arguments being put forward for a stand alone national registry, seems to me to be somewhat politically ambiguous, if not intellectually dishonest.

We support the motion. We think it has to be done properly. There has to be a balance struck between certain privacy rights and the protection of the public. If there is to be any kind of bias, it should be in favour of protection of the public, particularly protection of children who are vulnerable to people who want to exploit them sexually or in any other way.

If I understand what the mover of the motion had in mind the registry would be a separate thing. It would be established and maintained by the solicitor general. It would contain the name, address, date of birth, list of sex offences committed and convictions anywhere in Canada. It would be a national registry because it is not good enough to have it in any one province. We know all Canadians move around, but some people tend to move more than others, particularly if they are trying to lose themselves in the community and reappear in a way that their past is no longer with them.

● (1130)

However, what we and, I think, people who want a registry want, both for people in authority and people who may want to contact those in authority about people seeking positions of trust with young people, is for those people's pasts to in some senses always be with them. This is not because we do not believe people can be rehabilitated, but because we think people who are dealing with young people have a right to that kind of information so that we do not have more tragedies like those that have already occurred.

This is the reason why we rise in support of the motion. We think it has its limits and I do not think that anyone here thinks this will be the answer in that this does not change the psychology or inner consciousness of sex offenders. It does not deal with a lot of the social and spiritual problems that lead to sex offences in the first place and which sometimes create a kind of chain reaction, because we also know that a lot of people who are sex offenders are people who have been offended against themselves, although that is not always so. There is a lot of other work to be done and we need to see this in context.

However, it seems to me that it is something that is supportable. The motion is just that, a motion, and it does not lay down the details. I think as a House we should all be able to support the idea. Again, that is within certain limits of expectation, because it is

somewhat debatable whether a registry would be preventative or whether all this would do is help police forces when there has been an occasion of an offence in regard to perhaps finding that offender sooner because they will know who is in the community in which the offence has taken place. That is not prevention, but enforcement, and enforcement is also important. To some extent it might also be prevention if this registry makes it possible for people to preclude previous offenders from having positions of trust with children which would present them with opportunities to reoffend.

Finally, I cannot resist this comment in closing. Listening to the solicitor general make the arguments against a registry, before he said he was in favour of the motion, it sounded an awful lot to me like what might come from the Alliance. He said that offenders would not all register, that they would not all do this or do that. That is his argument against a registry. It is funny that these kinds of arguments did not seem persuasive when people were arguing against the registration of .22s, but that when it comes to the registration of sex offenders these arguments are suddenly very convincing.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I will relate to the member a situation that took place in Calgary some months back, where a sex offender who had offended not only in Canada but in the United States finished serving his time in Bowden penitentiary in Calgary. He served his complete time. Of course there was no registry in the province of Alberta and it just so happened that this offender moved to Oklahoma. He did not tell anyone. Through family and friends, word came back to my office that this offender was down there. He was a serious sex offender who had served several years in prison.

What do we do in a situation like that? It is difficult. We took the initiative and phoned the local sheriff where we knew he was staying in Oklahoma. The local sheriff was quite surprised that he had such an offender in his area and said that according to Oklahoma law the onus is on the offender to register in that area. Of course the offender had been in the States and knew what the laws were there, so the sheriff sought him out. The driving force for a pedophile or a sex offender to react to the registry in a positive way in Oklahoma is a five year sentence if he fails to do so. This is quite significant and it is cut and dried.

● (1135)

Would the member see something like that working in this jurisdiction of Canada? If so, what form should it take?

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, as I understand what has been put forward today, there would be an onus on people to register themselves when they arrive in a particular community or within a limited time after their arrival, and there would be penalties for not doing so.

*Supply*

Obviously these penalties have to be sufficient to be a deterrent. When we get down to having legislation before us, we can talk about what that might be, but in terms of the principle that there should be some penalty for not registering, I would certainly agree with the hon. member.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague is aware of the respect I have for him when he speaks in the House and the respect I have for his experience. Once in a while when things happen in the House involving partisan politics and how the House runs, we go to our colleague because he has the experience.

There is an issue that has been bothering me all morning since the solicitor general said the government would vote for the motion but that the government is already doing what is in it. In fact, 30,000 policemen in the country say the government is not doing it. Virtually everybody we have talked to says the government is not doing it and that the system does not work right.

It looks like we have unanimous consent on the motion, but the trouble is that on the other side I think the government is saying it will agree with the motion but it will not change anything.

I would like the member's comments on how he reads the way the government shuffles through this kind of issue.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, to elaborate on the point I made earlier, I think the government does sound a bit self-contradictory in supporting the motion, which clearly calls for something that is not now the case. In supporting the motion, the government says that what the motion calls for is already the case. I do not think it made a very good argument—at least it did not convince me—that what we have now is what the motion calls for. It has not convinced the Canadian Police Association and I do not think it would convince anybody who takes a decent look at the facts.

However, this has been the government strategy on a number of occasions. One of the other things it has tried to do from time to time in regard to previous opposition day motions is to make a motion to amend the wording. Rather than having the motion say "bring in X", the government amends it to read "continue to do X", as if it had always been doing it. The government did not have that opportunity today, so the only way it has to blunt the effect of the motion is to vote for it.

There would be nothing wrong with voting for it if the government were actually willing to admit that what it has now is not adequate. That would not be a sin. That would not be the end of the world. Part of the problem is that is very difficult for a government to say that what it has now is not working, that it realizes this, that the motion is an idea whose time has come and that it will vote for

it. I think that is something the opposition benches could genuinely have celebrated.

However, for the government to say it will vote for the motion after it has mounted a cheerleader type of defence of everything it is doing now is just not quite as satisfying.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In the debate, the member for Langley—Abbotsford and the member for Winnipeg—Transcona clearly outlined a problem facing the House of Commons, that is, we will be voting on a motion tonight and yet there is not a clear understanding of the purpose or the intent of the motion. Government members indicate that they intend to vote for it, yet it is obvious that—

• (1140)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but he is making more of a speech than a point of order.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw:** My point is that we are talking about apples and oranges. I seek the unanimous consent of the House to continue the debate with the members for Winnipeg—Transcona and Langley—Abbotsford, to invite the participation of the solicitor general and his parliamentary secretary, and to hash out what we are really talking about today. Otherwise it is making a mockery of the House of Commons. The Liberals will vote for something they say is not what we are debating.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The hon. member cannot refer to members who are not in the House.

The hon. member has asked for unanimous consent of the House to give a speaker who has already spoken to the bill the opportunity to speak again. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on this very worth while and very common sense motion that has been brought forward. I am equally pleased that the matter will be voted upon, whereby all members of the House will have an opportunity to express their support or lack of support for the motion.

I would deem this motion to be a very common sense, mother's milk type of motion that is very much aimed at protecting our most vulnerable members of society, our children. This motion would put in place a registry that would provide information which would allow the police to have better access to information about the whereabouts of offenders and about convictions of a sexual nature that have been registered in the courts. This would provide them with the enhanced ability to protect society and to carry out their



appointed task. It would simply give them more tools with which to do their job and protect society and, more specifically, protect children.

The motion calls upon the government to establish a registry by January 1, 2002. The member for Langley—Abbotsford is to be commended for bringing this motion forward with the honest intent of ensuring that the registry system is in place by that date.

The government has indicated, in its attempt to co-opt this motion—and there has been some discussion about methods in which it often does this by amending—that it will be supporting the motion. One can only hope that there is a similar and genuine intent behind it to fulfil this commitment, but again, the House will have to excuse my skepticism. We have seen instances as recently as a few weeks ago in this parliament, when Liberal members voted against a motion that essentially came from their own red book. We know that in the Liberal red book there is in fact a reference, albeit an oblique one, to a similar commitment to put a sex offender registry in place.

Government members have indicated today that they may support the motion. Time will tell. Similarly, I hope Canadians, and in particular victims' groups and police officers, will watch what happens after today to see if there is a real commitment. I mean more than just the words, more than the mouthing of the words and the reannouncement of other motions and other commitments that have been made.

I should indicate at this point, Mr. Speaker, that I will be splitting my time with the indomitable, unsinkable member for Saint John. I can assure the House that she will be speaking in favour of this motion, as am I. We have unanimous support in the Progressive Conservative Party for this important motion.

There has been reference to the fact that models in other countries are working. I am talking about the United Kingdom and the United States. Most recently, we have seen efforts made in the province of Ontario to support a similar type of registry. Other provinces are also looking at bringing this motion forward. Members will know that the province of Ontario has put forth concrete examples of how it intends to approach this problem, and it is a problem.

• (1145)

It has been acknowledged by the president of the Canadian Police Association, Grant Obst, that the current system is not working. There is not a current system in place that necessitates the reporting upon release of those who have been convicted of sexual offences to police so that it can track their whereabouts and ensure that individuals who have this past will be identified and will not, often for insidious reasons, find themselves involved in groups where they would be in a position of trust, able to prey upon

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children and able to perpetrate horrific crimes which have lifelong implications that are so damaging and damning that the children's lives are ruined for all intents and purposes. Often, and I believe it has been alluded to in this debate as well, the same victims go on to perpetrate this type of heinous crime.

It cannot be any more fundamental than that. We should be tasked in this place to do everything we can, everything within our reasonable ability to ensure we are protecting children. This is a very straightforward, common sense way to go about it.

Much of the Ontario example to which other members and I have alluded was as a result of an horrific tragedy in the province of Ontario where Christopher Stephenson was murdered in 1988 by Joseph Fredericks, a convicted pedophile who was out on parole at the time. There was an inquest and a lengthy examination of the factual circumstances of the case and circumstances surrounding similar crimes. The inquest resulted in the suggestion that there should be a creation of a national sex offender registry.

The motion as presented does not bind the House to proceed in any certain direction. I would suggest that it could be used to complement the current CPIC system or it could be a stand alone system.

There is certainly ample evidence of a contradiction, to which the member for Winnipeg—Transcona alluded, that the government would somehow justify not pursuing this as a stand alone system. It used the same argument, because offenders would not voluntarily register, when the same system used for registering firearms was plagued with the issue of non-compliance and individuals who are not voluntarily complying on pain of criminal conviction, one might add.

The government is not prepared to put in place a system that would mandate that sex offenders participate in registry, but it is willing to put in place at huge expense to the Canadian public purse, \$500 million plus, that if people do not register their long guns, being law-abiding citizens their entire lives, they are subject to criminal prosecution. It is absolutely perverse, but it is atypical of the attitude of the Liberal government and the endless pursuit of bureaucracy in putting in place systems that will not work.

Here we have a system being presented, a common sense approach to protect children, and it will apparently be sloughed aside or given lip service in a vote later today by the Liberals. It will not be followed up. While other governments like the government of the province of Ontario are pushing for the federal government to create a national registry, this is being rejected.

Soon after the Liberals rejected Bill C-247, a private member's bill introduced by their own member for Mississauga East, we saw an attempt by one government member to bring forward a process that would allow for consecutive sentencing for repeat or multiple murderers, sex offenders, or those convicted of violent crimes.

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There was a rejection, an outright campaign on the government side to ensure that type of legislation did not come into effect.

The Ontario government in its wisdom passed that legislation 90 to 0, it is worth noting, in its provincial legislature on April 4, 2000. Christopher's law is the first of its kind in the country. It requires those convicted of serious sexual offences, those who are dangerous, high risk sex offenders, to register their names and addresses with the police in the jurisdictions where they will be residing.

• (1150)

The information in the registry could be available to local police forces. They would have the ability to release the information, when required and when justified, to public groups such as the Guides, the Scouts, Big Brothers and hockey organizations or athletic organizations.

That is the purpose for which this type of information could be used. There is also the deterrent aspect. Knowing that the registry is in place and that the information is available to police and to certain groups acts as a deterrent. It is the equivalent of the sword of Damocles hanging over an offender's head if he or she chose to be indiscreet.

There are practical implications for such a registry. The Canadian Police Association, 30,000 strong, strongly endorsed a registry. The victims groups, and I would suggest hundreds of thousands of Canadians, see the wisdom in having this type of system. Privacy rights could be protected. The system could be crafted in such a way that it would not infringe the charter of rights.

I wholeheartedly endorse and agree that we should always err on the side of caution when it comes to protecting children from the damage that can flow from the crimes perpetrated against them. The Progressive Conservative Party will be supporting the motion wholeheartedly. My colleague from Saint John will be adding her remarks to this debate.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it did not take long but I figured it out. The Liberals have been behind the curtains in the lobbies passing out this document entitled "Canada's National Screening System: Protecting Our Children Against Sexual Abuse". It is stated in the document they have printed for all us unwise people "CPIC serves as Canada's national registry of convicted sex offenders".

Actually the document indicates that basically it is good for a criminal record check. In fact they have missed the whole point of what everyone has been saying, including 30,000 policemen, that the system is not good enough. The national sex offender registry would apply to every person convicted and found criminally

responsible. It would require every offender who resides in Canada to register and there is a penalty for not registering. The Liberals will agree with the vote tonight, but what they are saying in the brochure is that what we have is acceptable. It is not acceptable.

I would like to ask my colleague what he thinks is the problem, because he knows a lot about this subject. No one in the country thinks the current national sex offender registry works because there is not one. This document is nothing more than government rhetoric.

What does he think is the hesitancy over there? If anything, everybody in Canada would applaud the government for developing a real national sex offender registry.

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge what the hon. member has said to be true. The current system is inadequate. It is not working. Police forces indicate that it is not working.

The current system allows convicted offenders to be released into the community, to change their addresses and to sometimes change their names or identities without notifying local police. In the event of an occurrence where there has been a crime committed, an abduction or a sexual offence, the lost identity or that person out there is like a needle in a haystack.

Police forces do not have the ability to act quickly. Equally important, they do not have the ability to make pre-emptive strikes, that is to put the information out where necessary to community groups. They do not have the requisite deterrent effect: the knowledge that offenders would have that they are registered.

Why would the government not do it? It defies logic. The only point I can come up with is that the credit might flow somewhere other than to the government. That is a sad comment.

• (1155)

I believe the hon. member when he says that the credit would go to the government. People would acknowledge that this was what parliament was supposed to do. There would be unanimous support for having a stand alone or a system that would work in conjunction with current computer programs to protect children. It is sad but there is manipulation going on when it comes to the facts surrounding the current system.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough. He referred to manipulation of the facts. Of course, he is referring to the fact that the government is opposed to what is being proposed. The solicitor general gave a speech completely railing against the proposal but then finished off by saying that the government would vote in favour of it.

As the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough stated, it is obvious that the reason behind it is that government members want to avoid the political backlash that would come from voting against what is being proposed. They will vote for it, without any intention of doing it. Clearly they are not supporting it, as illustrated in their speeches. I believe the member for Winnipeg—Transcona referred to that as being intellectually dishonest.

Does the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough believe that this is making a mockery of the House of Commons? Where exactly does this leave us? I think it is a pretty sad state of affairs.

**Mr. Peter MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, I agree that one would hope partisanship would not be what is getting in the way. It is important to have this open and full disclosure debate about the abilities and the shortcomings of the current system.

It is not with any pride that any member of the House would stand and say that we have a system that is failing. It is certainly not with any pride on the part of the police that are currently tasked with trying to make the system work, as inadequate as it may be.

I fully acknowledge that there has been money put into it. However it is not there yet. It does not have the ability to achieve what the motion envisions a sexual offender registry would achieve. For that reason I hope we will go further and take some positive reinforcement from the debate.

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for splitting his time with me. I thank the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford for bringing the matter before the House of Commons. It gives all of us on both sides of the House an opportunity to correct a great injustice in our country.

The creation of a national sex offender registry is an important and necessary step in the protection of our nation's children. I know that the people of Saint John in my riding support the idea wholeheartedly.

On a personal note, as a mother of two and a grandmother of two, there is nothing more precious to me in the world than our young ones. Many in the House will understand and agree when I say that nothing hurts us more than when a child is abused. Many more will share my frustration when I say nothing angers me more than when responsible criminals are able to use the present system of laws to their advantage and to strike again.

If we sit in the House and do nothing while sexual predators attack our children, we are as much to blame as the predators. Each and every one of us has a responsibility in the House to bring forth laws that will protect young people from the men who do this to young people. When we hold in place without change a system of

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laws that allows sex offenders to hurt again we are co-conspirators, each and every one of us. We have a duty and responsibility to protect Canadian families and to take swift and decisive action when we see Canadians are in danger. We must not shy away from our duties or sit idle while there is a clear course before us that must be taken.

• (1200)

Sex crimes are not just committed against our children. The victims can be seniors, adults or young men and women in the prime of their lives. Sex offenders do not discriminate. They are blind to what is right or wrong. They have a real problem. They prey on our best, our youngest, the disadvantaged and our seniors without consideration.

A month ago in my riding there was a man who was following the little elementary school buses. Someone saw him going from stop to stop. Finally someone called the police. As one little girl got off the bus he tried to grab her and put her in his car. Our people were there to protect her, and I thank God for that.

I want to applaud the vision and courage of the government of Ontario for doing everything in its power to create a safer province for its citizens. Christopher's law, which passed unanimously in the Ontario legislature last April, was the strongest signal ever sent to sex offenders that our young would be protected and that they would not be allowed to strike again.

We know that the Christopher's law loses its force and effect at the Ontario border. Sadly, this is a fact known all too well by the monsters who abuse the young. As it now stands, the sexual predator who crosses over the Ontario border may not surface again until he has abused more children in another province. That is a disgusting reality.

If the members on the government side of the House do not support the action we are debating today, they will extend the cover of darkness under which these criminals hide. We were not elected in the House to help criminals. We were elected to help and protect Canadian people.

**An hon. member:** The innocent.

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne:** Yes, the innocent. My colleague for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough brought forth a motion similar to this a year ago and the government defeated it. Today it is telling us that it will support this one. Let me say that I have reservations but I will be here tonight to watch. Every Canadian is going to be watching the House of Commons. This issue probably has a higher profile than any other issue that has been brought before the House.

Like others on the opposition side, we will support and praise the government and all those members who stand up tonight and vote

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in favour of the motion. To those who do not, I will have my say about what they have done.

Both sides of the chamber in Ontario, Conservatives, Liberals and NDPers alike, voted unanimously in favour of the Christopher's law. That is what should happen here tonight. All parties represented in that great place showed a wisdom and compassion which we should mirror here. This decision is not a difficult one. I cannot imagine anyone sitting in the House of Commons not wanting to bring forth a law in which we can protect our young.

There is no question whether this is right or wrong. There is no question whether this will protect children. There is no question whether parents or the police want us to do this. It is just a matter of common sense whose time has come.

I ask all members in the House to consider the stakes involved and think of that small child out there who can be abused. Just think about that child. Perhaps it is a son or a daughter. Perhaps it is a niece or nephew or maybe for some of us a grandson or granddaughter.

We should think of a sex offender living every day in our community. Consider that this particular sex offender is tempted to strike again. Consider for a moment that this particular sex offender can sit and watch that little child, like the man who followed the school buses carrying those little elementary children.

• (1205 )

Imagine, moreover, that the police in the area have no idea of the potential threatened danger because they do not have that man's name or address and have not been able to watch him.

If there is a member in the House today who can consider this very clear and present danger, who would still stand before us saying that a national sex offender registry is something that he or she will not support, then in my opinion he or she has no business being in the House of Commons.

There is already the infrastructure in place through the Canadian Police Information Centre system on which to build a national sex offender registry. I am proud to say that the party which I am part of will be supporting this motion in the House.

The call to arms was issued by our nation's police forces. The government did not act when the hon. member from Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough brought forth his motion. Despite pleas from parents and grandparents alike, the government did not act a year ago. It is the burden of shame that we refuse to carry on this side of the House and we do not want to see that happen again.

It is a sad and sorry thing that we might not otherwise have discussed a national sex offender registry if not for the actions of the opposition side of this great Chamber. Mark my words, not

only will we be watching for those who stands against this motion, but the eyes of 30 million Canadians will be focused on the House and on these benches to see how our people vote tonight. They will be watching each and every one of us.

I feel positive in my own heart that the Prime Minister will say that we all have a free vote on this issue. I do not think we will be dictated to.

The merits and logic are clear. There has not been a point made yet that would cause me to reconsider my position on this issue. I know in my heart that that is right. I feel in my heart that all members know that we should all vote in favour of this motion and save our children from that type of abuse.

**Mr. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the member for Saint John for her passion and usual eloquence on this and many other issues.

Canadians watching this debate must be cynical. The Alliance Party put forward a motion which reads:

That the government establish a national sex offender registry, by January 1, 2002.

It is like putting a motion forward that says the government should manage the fiscal resources of a government with care and diligence, which we do. Of course we agree with this because the government is already doing it. To put a motion in front of the House where the government has already implemented the policy, of course we will to support it. Canadians must become cynical when they see the opposition party putting forward a motion on something that is already being done.

There is another sense of hypocrisy. The opposition talks about supporting a registry for sex offenders, but it will not support a registry for gun control, which is an equally serious matter. It also talks about the members on this side supporting the motion and argues that there is no parliamentary dignity. When we support a motion suddenly we are charged with being hypocritical.

I would like to come back to the point the member for Saint John made. In my riding last year a pedophile was released into my community, in fact about a block away from where I live. His name is Peter Whitmore. It was well documented in the media. He served his full term of five years in a federal correctional prison and was then released.

We enacted legislation to put conditions on release. Those conditions were put in place and the offender was put into provincial custody when he breached that order. I know it caused a great deal of consternation in my community and a town hall meeting was held.

• (1210)

Eventually, because of the publicity and the reaction in the community, he was moved from that area to downtown Toronto. I believe he re-offended again.

This is a very serious issue. I will have no problem supporting the motion because the government is acting on a broad number of fronts.

I would ask the member, if the police are acting on the various infrastructures that are in place, the CPIC and other mechanisms, why does she think there is a problem being brought to the Chamber?

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has told us today why we need to have this national registry on sex offenders. The Canadian Police Association yesterday voiced its support for the motion. Mr. Grant Obst, the association president, stated:

At the present time, convicted offenders may be released into a community, or change their residence, without notifying the local police service.

The hon. member stated that the person who sexually abused that child was back on the street, was moved downtown and did it again.

We have to take stronger stands than what is in place today. What is there is not working and we have to correct it. We have the right to do it and we can. I ask every member to vote in favour of the motion. If in the end this does not correct it permanently, we will come back with even further recommendations in the future. We on this side of the House want to protect that little child.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is amazing that we would give the suggestion of hypocrisy in suggesting that we need a national sex offender registry. The government is saying it is hypocrisy to suggest that because it is already doing it. We are not already doing it. The whole darn country is saying that.

I would like to ask my colleague from Saint John this question. In her travels across the country did she hear people saying there was a need for a national sex offender registry outside of what this group is or is not already doing?

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne:** Mr. Speaker, yes, I have heard it. I heard it from Brownies, from Girl Guides and from Boy Scouts. There is an urgent need for it, more than there was 30 years ago.

Today we have our charter of rights and freedoms which left out responsibilities. Everybody has their rights and freedoms and they go out and abuse children.

I am saying this issue will not go away. It will not die. We will fight it until we have that registry in place to protect those children.

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**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I would say at the outset that it is an honour for me to split my time with my hon. colleague from Provencher who is the justice critic for the official opposition.

I wish I could say that it is a pleasure for me to participate in a debate this afternoon calling for the establishment of a national sex offender registry but to be honest it is not. I am very grateful for the opportunity to rise and express my support for this initiative but it is by no means a pleasure.

We were discussing the need for establishing laws that will enable us to protect society from sexual predators. This is hardly a topic that anyone would enjoy.

I find it particularly galling that the House has to devote its time to debating the underlying principles of our society that are so fundamental for its future survival. Clearly, the need for legislation in this area should be self-evident to everyone. That is everyone except the Liberals it would seem.

I am referring to the principles of safety and security, the ability for us to interact freely with each other without the threat of being targeted by undesirables who lack the social conscience to define right from wrong. It has been said by many authorities that we cannot lay the blame solely on the perpetrators of these crimes. The blame lies with society as a whole. There is some truth to that statement.

As a society Canadians have returned to office a government that has proven its inability to deal with social issues, a government devoid of anything resembling a spine, a government perpetually sitting on the fence trying to pander to both sides of every possible social issue.

• (1215)

Canadians are tired of this pass the buck approach to social policy, especially when it comes to protecting our children, wives and families from sexual predators. This is one issue that Canadians do not want packaged off for yet another ruling by the supreme court.

Canadians elected their members of parliament to debate and develop government policy and it is time that the government recognize that it has a responsibility to all Canadians, not just those with Liberal MPs. The creation of a national sex offenders registry is an excellent example of the kind of non-partisan social policy that the House should be proud to debate, develop and especially implement.

The members opposite are quick to leap to their feet to search for accolades, claiming to be the world leaders in this and the world leaders in that, and yet they are lagging behind the rest of the world

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in the most basic development and social policy. They are even lagging behind our own provinces. We have heard about that today from other speakers, but let me reiterate.

In April 2000, almost a full year ago, Ontario became the first province to establish a sexual offenders registry, passing Christopher's law by a unanimous 90-0 vote. B.C. and Saskatchewan claim that they will follow shortly unless the federal government acts to establish a national sex offenders registry. In my opinion the provinces have been more than patient with the Minister of Justice and her failure to follow through on the commitments she made in 1998 to amend our laws to finally afford some protection to potential victims instead of continuing to favour the rights of convicted sexual predators.

Our justice system, through its misguided direction from the supreme court, has cultivated an environment where we are afraid to take any action that would infringe on the rights of criminals. What has been lost in this dilution of criminal law is the principle that when people commit an offence against society by their actions they forfeit some of their rights as a citizen of that society.

I am not suggesting that criminals who have paid their debt to society have no rights, but there must be a balance between the rights of someone who has been convicted of violating our laws and the rights of the majority of us whom those laws are supposed to protect. I admit that this is a very delicate balance but in the end the scale has to tip in favour of protecting the law-abiding citizens.

Civil libertarians and other opponents of our proposal have been critical of the creation of a national sex offender registry claiming that it would be a further erosion of individual rights. They have been arguing that there is not a need to establish a new registry because the existing Canadian policy and information centre, CPIC, already does the job. If it did we would not be having this debate here in the House today. If it worked as the government alleges we would not have the Canadian Police Association publicly supporting our motion. The people who use CPIC on a daily basis agree that it does not do the job.

The government would like Canadians to believe that it is behind our motion and that it is being tough on sexual predators, but the truth is in its actions or, as the case may be, in its inaction.

Today, as we debate the motion, sexual predators are free to move around our country and in our communities with no requirement that they notify law enforcement officials of their location. They have been convicted but are not accountable for their deviant behaviour.

From the government opposite we hear that the current system works fine, that we should just leave it alone or maybe amend it slightly. We have come to expect these kinds of arguments from a government that was elected on a promise of maintaining the status quo.

What the opponents have not been broadcasting is that the current system is 30 years old and in urgent need of a \$218 million overhaul.

In the past two weeks the Liberal government has been on a spending spree: \$2.5 billion in additional spending for HRDC, an agency that has proven it cannot manage its finances; \$89 million to Heritage Canada which uses the same accountant as HRDC and is infamous for handing out so-called free flags; \$26 million to the millennium bureau for new fountains; and an additional \$30.5 million to the government's propaganda department.

• (1220)

In total, the government will spend \$165.23 billion this year and less than 1% of that spending has been allocated to updating the antiquated system that we have for keeping track of criminals who are released into our communities. What a warped sense of Liberal priorities.

When I look at the statistics for sexual offenders my stomach turns: 4,951 sex offenders are under federal jurisdiction, 25% of the total offender population; of the 3,250 in federal institutions, only 19% are in maximum security; 1,341 sex offenders are under community supervision, comprising fully 15% of the conditional release program.

The statistics on the probability of an offender repeating are even more disturbing. A study done by Correctional Service Canada on recidivism among released federal sex offenders found that in a three and a half year period following release from custody, about one-third of sex offenders were convicted of a new criminal offence, nearly one-fifth for a violent crime and nearly one-tenth for a new sexual offence. One in ten preyed on more innocent Canadians, creating yet more victims, and those are just the ones that we know about.

As a parent, I am outraged each time I hear of another child being molested or raped by a sexual predator who was released into society after having been previously convicted of the same disgusting crime. As a member of parliament, I am appalled that the government allows this to continue. It is time that we as a society and as a government act to ensure that we have an effective means of monitoring offenders who are deemed reformed enough to rejoin society.

One of the disturbing trends of the government opposite is to completely discount any policy put forward by the opposition parties solely on the basis that it came from the opposition and without due consideration of the merits of that policy. I would submit that it is time for this juvenile behaviour to stop and for the members opposite to grow up and accept that we have a collective responsibility as elected officials to ensure the safety of this country and its citizens.

I would ask the members of the Liberal Party and all of the members in the House to think of their sons, their daughters, their

mothers, their sisters or their wives. I ask them to think for just one minute about what they would do to protect their loved ones and to keep them from harm. I would ask them to then recall how, as much as they wish they could, it is impossible for them to protect them 100% of the time. I urge them to think as individuals. I implore them to vote their conscience with the knowledge that this motion will go a long way to making their neighbourhoods and communities safer for all, especially the most vulnerable.

**Mr. John Cannis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed listening to the member's comments. He spoke so eloquently.

However, I want to turn the clock back to maybe 1995 or 1996. We all care for our society and our youth. As I have often said, if there is one crime it is one too many.

I am glad the member talked about non-partisan politics. In his closing remarks he referred to juvenile behaviour. I want to point something out to the member and ask for his comments. As a private member some years back I brought a private member's initiative forward on parole request and making parole request contingent upon successfully completing a rehabilitation program. During the last election they talked about parole being a right, not a privilege.

It was one of the saddest moments in my tenure in the House when the then Reform Party did not give its unanimous consent on that effort of mine. Today, six years down the road, we have shown on this side that when good policy comes forward, we support it.

Permit me to give one example. When the Conservative member brought forward a very good idea with respect to shipbuilding, we supported it on this side. When good initiatives come forward, we go beyond our party politics and support them. Why did those members opposite not support my effort back then on parole?

• (1225 )

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, I do not recall the exact instance to which the member is referring. I do not remember whether I was in the House, whether I voted or how my party voted on that particular item. I would suspect that he was seeking unanimous consent. Many times we deal with procedure in the House. As a matter of fact, just an hour ago one of my colleagues asked for unanimous consent on a motion and the Liberals defeated it. I suspect that if I were to check the records there would be some procedural reason why people voted against giving him unanimous consent.

That having been said, what clearly needs to be considered today, and it has been talked about by a number of my colleagues and colleagues from other parties, is what is taking place in the House today.

As the hon. member from the Liberal Party said, it really does not matter who brought forward the motion. In this case we have

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used one of our allotted days to bring forward a supply motion directing the government, if the motion were to pass, to establish a national sex offenders registry by January 1 next year. It is a pretty simple request, a request that should be acted upon in good faith.

Members will note that I used the term in good faith because what we are seeing here today is the exact opposite. We are seeing a government that will direct its members to vote for the motion. It will try to delude the Canadian people into believing that it has already acted and will continue to act with the CPIC registry that tracks released criminals.

However, the police association and other groups across Canada know that CPIC does not do it. They have repeatedly said that over the last number of years. There is no requirement for a convicted sexual offender, who is either released or who has served his time and gets out of jail, to register with local communities. We have no idea who is living down the street. We have no idea who we might hire to watch our children or our grandchildren because there is no requirement.

One of my colleagues asked a question earlier of a Liberal member. He referred to an instance of which he was aware in the state of Oklahoma where there is a potential penalty of a further five years in jail for a convicted sexual predator if he fails to register. That is a deterrent that we should consider if we were to even have the first step taken, which is to have a national sex offender registry.

I am appalled and I hope all Canadians who are watching the debate today and who watch the vote tonight are appalled at the government's hypocrisy in trying to claim that CPIC does the job when it so clearly does not.

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with my colleagues in support of the motion that calls for the implementation of a national sex offender registry by January 2002.

Noting some of the comments by the Liberal parliamentary secretary made earlier to the Progressive Conservative member, to accuse the Progressive Conservative member of hypocrisy is the ultimate hypocrisy. For years provincial attorneys general have been requesting some form of registry and for years the solicitor general and the Minister of Justice have been examining the issue. Today they suddenly say that they are already doing it. I am sure it is news to every provincial attorney general and to the police departments in Canada. The government is shamed into voting for it and yet it does not abandon the hypocrisy of its position.

I will begin by remarking on a story printed last Friday in the *Globe and Mail*. It was reported that the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council had been asked to rule on whether it was acceptable to criticize child molesters on the nation's airwaves. The broadcasting council had been asked to adjudicate the matter after a viewer complained that Mike Bullard on his late night talk

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show had made remarks about pedophiles that were deemed to be inappropriate, derogative, prejudiced and inhuman.

• (1230)

While Mr. Bullard's comments were admittedly in very bad taste and a poor attempt at humour, they expressed in a very blunt way the revulsion Canadians feel about dangerous sexual predators in society. I do not excuse Mr. Bullard's comments but they indicate the concern, fear and revulsion Canadians feel about this crime.

The question remains: Is there a need to debate whether it is acceptable to express distaste for pedophiles and other sex offenders? The issue demonstrates the extent to which we have allowed sympathy for dangerous criminals to impede our ability to protect children in society.

On a weekly, sometimes even a daily basis we hear horrific reports of sexual assaults on children, such as the incident reported in Calgary last week where two girls aged six and seven were assaulted. In addition to the apparently spontaneous attacks, I could cite hundreds of examples in which a teacher, a child care provider or another adult authority has unknowingly been given long term access to children and a tragedy has resulted. The frequency of these cases demonstrates a clear need to keep track of these kinds of criminals.

I think everyone admits that these types of criminals are not cured simply by putting them in jail. We know they need rehabilitation and treatment. We also know they are not cured once they are released from jail. There needs to be a mechanism for tracking them on an ongoing basis.

It is well known that sex offenders, pedophiles in particular, remain at high risk to reoffend sometimes for many years after they have served their sentence. Our fundamental concern in the motion is for public safety. The implementation of an effective national sex offender registry will give police and law enforcement officials an added tool to protect Canadians.

I noted the parliamentary secretary's comments when he said it was hypocritical that the Canadian Alliance wanted a national sex offender registry but not a national long gun registry. Those are very interesting comments but he was not listening. We said we wanted an effective registry. We support effective crime control. We do not support make work, political projects, and that is what the long gun registry is.

The current system of tracking sex offenders has proven to be ineffective. Although the Canadian Police Information Centre maintains a database of sex offenders, the information is inaccessible to many people in the justice system. It does not adequately identify sex offenders or where they live, as offenders who are

under supervision or have finished their sentences are not required to register changes of address. This puts police and others working in the justice system at a distinct and severe disadvantage.

Contrary to the comments made by the Liberals, the Canadian Police Association has said the CPIC system does not provide police agencies with adequate information and notification concerning the release or arrival of sex offenders into communities. In light of our motion, just yesterday the association reconfirmed its support for a national sex offender registry. It is saying the Liberals are not doing it. Police officers are the ones in the trenches and on the frontlines. They deserve our support.

• (1235)

The proposed registry would include only convicted sex offenders, requiring each sex offender to register with police in the jurisdiction where he or she will reside. The Canadian Police Information Centre already has a 24 hour registry that is used by every police force in the country to call up information on all types of convicted criminals, stolen property, firearms and missing persons.

The proposed sex offender registry would require an updating of the legislation so that police could access current information on sex offenders and their whereabouts. In this way a separate registry may not be necessary. However it is absolutely necessary that we have legislation spelling out these additional requirements. I am not particularly hung up on how we do it. I am more concerned that we do it. The present system is simply not doing it.

The registry would assist local police in identifying suspects and solving sex offences more quickly. Available only to the police, the parole board and the solicitor general's office, the registry would not inappropriately or unconstitutionally compromise the privacy of any individual. It would, however, assist in protecting the public from sex offenders, particularly children, the most vulnerable and susceptible members of society.

There was widespread public backing for a registry, including provincial politicians of all political stripes: New Democrats, Conservatives and Liberals. In the absence of an effective federal response to the issue the Ontario government created its province-wide offender registry last April. Again, as mentioned earlier, it was passed on a 90 to 0 vote in the provincial legislature.

What reasons could the federal government have for not taking these necessary and crucial steps? Perhaps it considers the cost too great. Perhaps the administration of the system would be difficult, complex and time consuming. However if the registry were integrated into the current CPIC registry then the costs and administrative difficulties would be negligible.



Perhaps the government is concerned with privacy issues. However the registry we are proposing is almost identical to the database already maintained on criminal records.

The motion calls for an effective alternative to the current registry system which is clearly not working. This is not a partisan issue. It is not a political issue. It is an issue about public safety and the protection of our children.

I urge all members to consider the motion carefully. I especially urge the Liberals not only to vote in favour of it but to urge the minister to actually implement the registry so that police forces have the tools to protect our children.

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, listening to the member opposite and the one preceding, the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River, underscores how the reform alliance people are prepared to push the hot buttons and always to take a knee-jerk reactionary position. It is almost a lynch mob mentality. It is kind of sad if we think about it. They always take the simplistic view on very complex issues.

Let us consider the Robin Sharpe case, for example, the pornography case. They all screamed and hollered about how we should scrap the charter and how we should invoke the notwithstanding clause because of pornography in British Columbia. Had we followed that lame advice we would be in deep trouble now.

Instead the government, with its rational, reasoned approach, was able to withstand that kind of nonsense. As a result the rule of law prevails, not the lynch mob mentality they are only too good at promoting.

• (1240)

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Earlier today in my address I talked about the need for discipline and proper protocol in the House when dealing with this issue. What I find offensive about the member's comments is that they are neither complimentary to his colleagues nor to his party. I would ask that he—

**The Deputy Speaker:** With the greatest respect to the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford, I believe we are engaging in debate.

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, do you remember when their former justice critic Jack Ramsay said that all sex offenders should be locked up forever? After some reflection did they not change their minds? All of a sudden it was diluted a bit. All of a sudden it became only after examination by two psychiatrists and then maybe they would look at it.

Mr. Ramsay was the same person, we will recall, who when speaking of sex offences went on to say that there should be blood taken from people even suspected of sexual criminal activity. They have walked away from that one too.

### Supply

Do you see what I mean, Mr. Speaker? They always have simplistic views on very complex issues. That is who those people are. They are always in a lynch mob mentality. They are always in a knee-jerk situation—

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Earlier today I talked about protocol and the need for our colleagues in the House to speak at least respectfully of one another in this debate which is so important to children and women in our country. The member is not abiding by any parliamentary courtesy whatsoever. I ask you to reconsider—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Again, with the greatest respect, the authority of the Chair must be maintained. I can only maintain the rules I have been given to handle and apply.

Notwithstanding the knowledgeable member for Langley—Abbotsford, I am very cognizant that on both sides of the House all of us should act very judiciously and respectfully of one another and of course particularly regarding the issue at hand. Certainly at this point we would be engaging in debate.

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, the member who intervened is the last one in this House to talk about protocol and decorum. On his brochure during the election he had the picture of Heather Thomas from Allouette Lake on it. He is the last—

**Mr. Randy White:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege. I think more important, what the member is about to report or to say in the House is absolutely 100% a lie where he is going. I expect you in the chair to keep that person accountable for what he says. That is shameful, disgusting.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. If I might, I want to begin by addressing myself to the member for Langley—Abbotsford for whom I have a great deal of respect.

I do not question anyone's strong views on a very important matter before the House of Commons today. There were some words used in his last intervention which require me to ask him, and hopefully he will see fit, to withdraw. Perhaps I could ask the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford to please withdraw.

**Mr. Randy White:** Withdraw what?

**The Deputy Speaker:** If I could be more specific, then, with the greatest of respect, the word lie, please.

**Mr. Randy White:** I withdraw it, Mr. Speaker.

• (1245)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford. Now I turn to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General. I would ask the hon. member to be mindful that we are in a very short period of questions and comments. He has already used up a good portion of that time. I ask him to direct his

*Supply*

question immediately and to do so in a very judicious and respectful way.

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, I want to pose a question to the member who spoke a bit—

**An hon. member:** What is the question?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I want to be clear. The hon. parliamentary secretary will put the question.

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** The question is simple. In September, in Iqaluit, the justice ministers, attorneys general and solicitors general met with respect to this very important issue.

**Ms. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Scarborough East. I hope we can refocus our debate on the issue. We are dealing with an extremely important issue and I know that we all have very strong feelings about it.

I am pleased to participate in the debate brought about by the motion put forward by the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford. I welcome the opportunity to demonstrate how the government has risen to the challenge of protecting victims and potential victims of sex offenders.

In the past eight years the Solicitor General of Canada and the Minister of Justice have taken a number of initiatives, each of which contributes significantly to public safety. In short, as other speakers will mention, the government has already taken action to prevent the victimization of children.

The motion put forward by the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford basically endorses the efforts undertaken on this side of the House and ultimately has my support and I would assume my government's support.

These efforts began immediately after the change in government following the 1993 federal election. In 1994 the Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General of Canada responded to the needs expressed by child centred organizations and groups representing victims by introducing the national screening system.

I was part of one of those groups that lobbied the government as a result of the horrible murder of little Christopher. I was very pleased to see the government listening to and responding to it. I wear a button today that I have kept for many years since meeting the Stephensons. Together with thousands of other Canadians I have worked on lobbying the government and pressing forward for these changes to happen.

Today, as in 1994, the RCMP's Canadian Police Information Centre, CPIC, already provides a national registry of all criminal convictions. It is not limited just to sexual offences. Employers and volunteer groups providing services to children can screen all potential employees by requiring them to obtain a CPIC check through the local police. Any individual who has a criminal record, no matter what, can be screened out by the agency.

To assist local agencies with the process, which in the beginning they found expensive to carry out, the government has also supported Volunteer Canada in providing a national education and training campaign for volunteer agencies to promote effective screening approaches for the protection of children and other vulnerable groups.

This database was enhanced by government action and these enhancements did not stand alone and unused. The announcement was followed by programs to promote awareness of its existence and the necessary initiatives to educate the appropriate individuals in the use of the database.

These efforts have enhanced the ability of child caring agencies to obtain the criminal records of those seeking positions of trust. Great efforts have been made by government officials and their counterparts in the private and voluntary sectors to educate those who are involved in the selection of employees and volunteers to work with the most vulnerable members of Canadian society.

For the most part, I have been referring to children as the potential victims of sex offenders. I am sure that the minds of most members take a similar direction when they hear of sexual exploitation of victims.

• (1250)

Children are not alone when it comes to victimization. I recognize that the institutionalized, the mentally challenged, the physically disabled and the elderly may also be particularly susceptible to victimization through the sexual misconduct of those who prey on the most vulnerable.

Canadians from all walks of life in various circumstances who until victimized participate in the daily life in their communities, oblivious to the predations of a small number of offenders who do not think that the rules and the mores of society apply to them. Nonetheless it is for our children that we reserve our highest level of concern. I am sure all hon. members will recognize that the positive actions of the government on their behalf contribute to the safety of all Canadians.

The most recent reform to strengthen our defences against sex offenders came into effect on August 1, 2000. In the spring of 1999 the solicitor general introduced legislative proposals to ensure that even the records of sex offenders who have been pardoned would be available for screening purposes. This addition to the CPIC

arsenal of information focused on the attention of police forces conducting criminal investigations of those offenders previously convicted of offences of particular interest to those who might otherwise engage them in positions of trust involving children.

Even a successful application for a pardon is no longer a shield against the discovery of relevant offences by a records check. The legislation was Bill C-7 and its provisions came into effect on August 1, 2000. Such government initiatives are not undertaken on a whim or without the recognition that other jurisdictions also have an interest in protecting Canadians.

Bill C-7 was born of the recommendations of a federal-provincial-territorial working group. It was supported by all jurisdictions in Canada as represented by federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for criminal justice. These officials heartily recommended and endorsed Bill C-7.

Through this forum the government has studied and discussed the question of a sex offender registry on more than one occasion and conducted extensive consultations. As requested by the federal-provincial-territorial ministers, senior officials have prepared a report entitled "Information systems on sex offenders against children and other vulnerable groups".

At their meeting in Regina on October 29, 1998, the FPT ministers accepted the 10 recommendations contained in the report and agreed to its public release. Since then FPT officials have met several times to review progress regarding the implementation of these recommendations.

At any rate, the recommendations in the FPT report became the foundation for the Criminal Records Act amendments of Bill C-7 that came into force in August 2000. These will provide genuine enhancement of the protection of children and other vulnerable sectors.

With the exception of the governments of Ontario and British Columbia, officials from all jurisdictions supported the amending legislation. We can conclude from the support that the majority equally rejected the notion of a sex offender registry, be it national or local, at that time.

Therefore the thrust of the current proposal for a national registry is largely addressed through the current practice of the government. The current national screening process announced by the solicitor general in November 1994 was done after careful study. The study was conducted by the departments of the solicitor general, health and justice. It included extensive consultations across the country. It involved victims, police and child serving organizations. There was a general consensus that a registry system would be expensive, difficult to administer and not very useful. It would also give the public a false sense of security rather than enhance public safety.

### *Supply*

We have a national registry of all criminal convictions which is provided through the RCMP CPIC database. There is broad agreement that the federal government has produced meaningful initiatives to protect all Canadians. In addition there is a degree of consensus that a national sex offender registry is not the answer to the problems identified by the hon. member.

The government is always open to suggestions that may promise positive reform. It is open to changes in policy that come from time to time when provincial elections are held or senior officials are given different positions within the machinery of government. This is a government that is open to constant review of its legislation to strengthen it in order to protect all Canadians.

At the recent meeting of the FPT ministers of justice, the Saskatchewan justice minister, with the support of his colleagues from Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario, favoured another review that would revisit options regarding the protection of children against sex offenders, including a national sex offender registry. The ministers agreed that officials would again study these options and related issues.

• (1255)

The government will never be satisfied that all possible measures have been taken to protect the vulnerable from sex offenders. As long as there are victims there will be the willingness to move toward a safer society. The federal door is not closed to suggestions, and motions such as the one before us today provide a welcome occasion to review positive action of the recent past as well as possibilities for the future.

Perhaps the motion will lead to reinforced protection for young and vulnerable Canadians as well as for any other individuals who might fall prey to the recidivism of a sex offender. We should not deny these proposals a chance to contribute to the ongoing improvements stemming from the government's public safety agenda.

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is amazing to listen to government member after government member saying that the legislation is working, there is a registry, there are no problems and it is all moving along very nicely.

I have a letter from a lady in my constituency that gives an example of just how well it is working. This lady had two young boys who were lured into a large truck with a sleeper in the back. They were sexually molested. The person was put in jail and is now out on parole. He is now allowed by the parole board to travel across the country in his truck. He is a truck driver. No one knows where he is. No one knows what community he will be in next. The same government officials say the person is likely to reoffend.

How could any member say that the parents, the grandparents, the people of Canada should not know where a Mr. Michael Duggan is at any given time? He could pick up somebody else's

*Supply*

kids or their grandchildren. That is what this lady in my constituency wants to know. I would like the member to comment on that.

**Ms. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about issues as though he has the only caring heart. All of us feel exactly the same way that he feels. We are continually looking at ways of improving safety for Canadians.

As a former police commissioner, I am well aware of the frustrations of the police in trying to deal with these issues. Bringing in a national registry or making our registry stronger will not be the answer. We have committed to continually look for improvements.

The answer at the end of the day is never having the offences occur to begin with, not only worrying about addresses. I do not want them to happen, period. I should like to see us put some emphasis in prevention and educating our children so that the offences do not happen.

**Mr. Roy Bailey (Souris—Moose Mountain, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it will soon be three hours since we started the debate. I am becoming more perplexed about it, listening to this side and to that side. They all say they will support the motion.

Am I wrong in assuming the motion says that we are about to establish a new registry? That is what I understand. Members opposite say they will be supporting the motion. Are they supporting a new registry? Is the member supporting additions to existing promises? Just what will they be supporting tonight in the motion?

**Ms. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, I refer to a pamphlet that was recently delivered to us. It refers to “CPIC serves as Canada’s national registry of convicted sex offenders”. We currently have a national registry for all people who have criminal convictions.

The question is whether we can continue to make it better. Are there ways of looking at our current registry that will improve safety for all Canadians? We are always prepared to continually look. It was part of the agreement last fall in Saskatchewan. Let us review and continually look at how we make it safer for all Canadians.

**Mr. Richard Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite still has not answered the question of the member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

Our motion specifically requests that the government support a new registry for sex offenders. While government members are paying lip service to what their whip has told them to do, obviously it is very clear they will perhaps support the motion in public but in

private will carry on with the status quo, with the inadequate screening they have in place now.

• (1300)

It is not just some tinkering we want in our motion but a complete overhaul, a new registry that will work to keep sex offenders away from our children.

**Ms. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, I have a bit of difficulty in the issue of separating completely sex offenders from other criminals. We all know what they are, but when they are convicted they are convicted. It does not necessarily have to specify. The current registry operating in Canada registers everyone who is convicted of a criminal offence, including those convicted of sexual offences or of being sexual predators. That is already happening. Can we make it better? We are open to constant review, as I have indicated previously.

**Mr. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to re-enter the debate. The members opposite talk about the wording of their own motion. I will read the motion to the House: “that the government establish a national sex offender registry”. It says nothing about a new national sex offender registry. We are not trying to be pedantic, but I think the members opposite should read their own motion.

That is part of the difficulty. The emotions have been running pretty high. This is a very serious issue. However, when the Alliance brings forward a motion like this and the members of parliament on this side look at what the government has done, it is confusing. The members on the other side are saying that what we have does not work and yet the information they have shared with other members does not seem to make that point very well.

As I said earlier, last year in my riding of Etobicoke North we had a sexual predator who was convicted. His name was actually quite high profile and got into all the media. Mr. Peter Robert Whitmore had been convicted and had served a full term of five years in a federal penitentiary. He was then released, but with a set of conditions. I would like to read some of the conditions to the House, because they were quite exhaustive. The one he did not adhere to caused him to be arrested again. He was moved out of the Etobicoke North area into downtown Toronto, breached one of the conditions and on the basis of that was put back in jail.

There was a list of 11 conditions for his release from federal penitentiary after serving five years. First, he was not to be in the presence of children under the age of 14 unless accompanied by an adult who had previously been approved by the Toronto Police Service. Second, he was not to attend any public park or public swimming pool where persons under 14 years of age were present or could reasonably be expected to be present. Third, he was not to attend any day care centre, school ground, playground, community

centre or arcade where persons under 14 years of age were present or could reasonably be expected to be present. Fourth, he was not to enter into any romantic relationship, cohabitation, marriage or common law relationship with a person who was the parent or guardian of a child under the age of 14 years until that person had been identified to the Toronto Police Service and there had been an opportunity provided to inform that person of his criminal behaviours involving children. Fifth, he was required to report once a week to the Toronto police at specified times. Sixth, he was to notify the Toronto Police Service of his current address and any change within 24 hours. Seventh, he was to notify the Toronto Police Service of any employment or change of employment within 24 hours. Eighth, he had to make himself available for random visits by the Toronto Police Service between the hours of 8 a.m. and 11 p.m. at his place of residence. Ninth, he was to notify the Toronto Police Service at least 24 hours prior to leaving the jurisdiction of the city, et cetera.

● (1305)

Peter Robert Whitmore served his full five years. There was a lot of rhetoric at a town hall meeting in my riding with some people saying that the reason he was back in the community was because of liberal attitudes and the soft attitudes of the Liberals. I will tell the House that he served his full five years in a federal penitentiary, he was released with 11 conditions, and one of the conditions was broken and he was put back in jail.

I find it disturbing when members opposite cite the pamphlet "Canada's National Screening System" and say that it is the only way in which the government has responded. In fact, the national screening system is one of a variety of responses and measures introduced by the government to deal with criminals and sex offenders. I would like to remind the House of some of these, because I think that Canadians watching this debate could be very confused, as they often could be because we often do not really deal with the facts.

The most important tool in our bag is CPIC, the Canadian Police Information Centre. This centre has a criminal history database that provides access to criminal information for law enforcement agencies across Canada. The government has just put another \$115 million into the system to upgrade it and make sure it is fully functional and operating smoothly.

In my riding of Etobicoke North I have not had division 23 policemen tell me that what they really need is a sex offender registry. We have had a lot of crime in Etobicoke North. We have had nine murders or thereabouts in the last year or so. That is why we had the chief of police, Mr. Fantino, out to the riding at a big town hall meeting. Basically the chief said that the whole community has to be engaged and involved. Yes, tougher enforcement could be implemented, and yes, the police could change their

### *Supply*

routines and techniques, but we as citizens all have to work together, not just the different orders of government. The federal government obviously has a role to play in terms of criminal law and many other aspects. There are the provincial government, the provincial court system and the police, all with a role to play. However, individual citizens also have to take some responsibility for their own behaviour.

At churches, gurdwaras, mosques or schools in my riding of Etobicoke North, I take the opportunity to tell people that this is where the rubber hits the road. Yes, we can ask for tougher laws and say the federal and provincial governments are not doing this or that, but if we do not start taking individual responsibility for our own behaviour and actions, we are missing the boat.

I mentioned CPIC, but the government has also lengthened sentences for dangerous and long term offenders. Perhaps the opposition has forgotten that. The government has tightened the rules for early parole. The government has passed one of the toughest child pornography laws in the world. Maybe that has escaped opposition members. The government has cracked down on child prostitution and stalking. We in the government also have implemented the very famous and very effective national screening system. Let me remind the House that this system empowers volunteer, community and service groups to screen persons seeking positions of trust with children and other vulnerable people. To date, over 700,000 screenings have been conducted using the CPIC system.

The government has done other things. It has partnered with Volunteer Canada to promote screening and to train users. The government has passed Bill C-7 to make pardon records accessible for screening purposes by flagging the records of pardoned sexual offenders on the CPIC system. The government has put in place extra protection to allow police more control of high risk offenders even after they have completed their sentences. The government also recently created a national DNA databank, a critical investigative tool that has already resulted in successful matches.

If the opposition party really wants a thoughtful debate on these opposition days, perhaps it should elaborate more on its motions so members could understand them. We are saying we already have this and the opposition is saying we do not.

● (1310)

Maybe members opposite have much more contact with the police than I do. I have a lot of contact with my police and, as I say, they have not been banging on my door saying that we need this registry. They have been banging on my door saying that we need to get the community mobilized, that we need everybody to take individual responsibility. Certainly there are things that different orders of government can do, along with the techniques the police use.

*Supply*

I think we should try to bring this debate back to some level of decorum and rationality. It is a very emotional issue. A pedophile was released into the community a block away from where I live. The community responded. I think there were over 1,000 people at a town hall meeting. What happened? The pedophile was moved to downtown Toronto and then breached one of the conditions and was reincarcerated.

It is a very serious issue. I certainly will be supporting the motion, but I am not exactly sure what the motion proposes that we do not already have. If the opposition parties have some information they could share with the House about why what we have does not work, I am sure members would like to listen.

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, throughout the day we have been pointing out to my colleague the deficiencies in the current system and we will continue to do that.

I was encouraged by my colleague's comment that he wanted to work together on this important issue. Obviously it is a very important issue. He mentioned initiatives the government has taken. We appreciate that, but what we are saying is this: why not move forward now and take another step that we can work on as leaders in the country in order to protect the safety of our children and our communities?

I am going to ask the member a direct question. He said he will support the motion. Will he, in his capacity as a parliamentary secretary, encourage his government to bring forward legislation that would put in place this type of registry across the country and see it brought through the process to royal assent in this place so that it would be put into law? Will he do that?

**Mr. Roy Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, if I were clear on what the issues were, I would automatically and categorically say that I would do that, except that there is some confusion, certainly to my mind.

What I will do, though, is go to division 23 next time I am in my riding and ask what is available now, what is working and what is not. If the division 23 police tell me that what is there is not working, I will undertake that I will work on this side of the House with members opposite and with the ministers involved to try to enhance the system. It is a very serious issue. Certainly constituents in my riding believe it is and I totally agree with them.

**Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear the hon. member talk about how the pedophile was known in the community and how he was dealt with when he did not keep the terms of his release.

The issue we are dealing with, though, is the issue of people who have offended, who have perhaps served their time and who are released and are not known by members of the community.

I would like to ask the hon. member what he would do with the person if the community was not Toronto, where he was known, but Ottawa or Kamloops, British Columbia, where he is not known and is another person on the street who no one has any information about. They do not know that he is a dangerous person who is apt to reoffend. The problem is, and I have dealt with this situation personally, many of these people get out of jail with the officials who are responsible for them saying that they will probably reoffend. That is the crime against our children that we are trying to deal with.

What would the member do with that person if he were in Kamloops and no one knew why he was there, who he was or what his history was?

**Mr. Roy Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me we have a sort of catch-22 here. We could talk about how long people should be incarcerated or whether they should be let out on parole, which is a debate we have had many times and will have many times in the House, I am sure.

• (1315)

Once a person has done his or her time and the parole board has a certain level of confidence that the person can be reintroduced back into the community, the community is informed. Some do get away but it is a low number.

In the case of Mr. Whitmore, the people in my riding were told that he would be reintroduced into the Toronto area, which was a good thing because people at least knew he might be someone who they should be concerned about.

However, let us assume that the person is someone who could come back into society, be productive and make a contribution to society. How would the person ever do that if he or she is jostled from one community to the other? How would the person ever re-establish himself or herself? Some offenders can come back into society. They have paid their dues, done their time and have been, in many cases, rehabilitated.

This is a catch-22. The moment we let people know that an offender is in the community, they will do what the people in my riding did. I am not arguing with what they did, but that person then had to be moved out of the area. Where does the person go? The person gets moved around from one community to the other.

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to talk specifically about the legislation but I think all of us know that there is no registry for sex offenders. There is CPIC, which covers everybody, but most police and certainly the police in my constituency tell me that it does not work, that it is out of date, that it does not really trace these people, that half the files do not have addresses on them and that basically these people cannot be found.

To stand and say that the police know where they are and that we already have a registry is not accurate. We do not have a registry for sex offenders.

In a householder I had 92% of people tell me they were unhappy with the justice system as it exists. I would like to use a couple of examples from my constituency, which I think will demonstrate the level of frustration that the people in my riding would have if they listened to some of the members on the other side.

The first case I want to speak about involves a pedophile. We have them in every riding right across the country. We were advised that this one pedophile would be released in March 1997 into my riding. There was no plan to release his name, his location or any details about his offence. We found out about his release from his concerned ex-wife who notified a couple of people in the constituency.

The person had served his full term. It was his ninth conviction for attacking female children. The youngest of his victims was three and the oldest was six. The person had been removed from a rehabilitation program because he was considered too dangerous. The prison officials said that he would reoffend within a year. The psychiatrists said that he would definitely reoffend within a year. The parole board said that it would not give him parole because he will reoffend. Canadians are frustrated when they hear that sort of thing.

The parents got together and had a meeting. They were not violent or mad. They were not asking for the person's head. They were saying that this was a sick individual and that society should not have to wait for another victim. The RCMP addressed that meeting and said that all it could do for them was to help them street proof their kids. The RCMP told them it would help street proof three to ten year old kids. Has anyone ever tried to street proof a three year old on sex offenders and expect it to always work?

As a result and after an awful lot of pressure, we received a picture of the person and we circulated it to let the people in the area know where he would be.

On April 8, 1997, I asked the following question in the House:

Mr. Speaker, on March 14 a pedophile, who is a nine time offender, was released into the community of Red Deer. I met with over 200 concerned parents in a gymnasium. At that meeting, the RCMP said that this person would reoffend. The prison officials said that he would reoffend. The parole board said that he would reoffend. They say that the next time his crime will probably be more violent. The people in my community, the young parents who were there, asked whether one of their children would be the 10th victim. What message will the justice minister give these parents?

• (1320)

The then justice minister answered my question by saying:

### *Supply*

Mr. Speaker, as a parent of young children, I recognize the concern that any parent feels about such an offender or such offences. It is because I am a parent of young children that I drew particular satisfaction with the initiative of which I was part when the government and the caucus introduced Bill C-55 to deal with exactly the kind of case that the hon. member has described.

He went on to say that the bill would solve the problem and that we should not have any worries. It is like what we are hearing now, that we have no worries because the people are being registered.

My supplementary question was even more interesting. I said:

Mr. Speaker, that is just not good enough. I looked into the eyes of these parents and they are feeling scared for their children. They are saying that the system and the justice department are failing them. They are not delivering. This pedophile committed nine other offences. The psychiatrists say he will reoffend. This individual is sick.

The Liberal answer that I got is not good enough. I want the justice minister to tell the people what he is going to do for them. This is happening right across Canada.

His answer was "I shall have to send to the hon. member a copy of Bill C-55".

The story gets worse. The individuals in our community who were living next door to the pedophile were terrified. I have a letter from a next door neighbour who described what the person was like. The neighbour said "This person then went on to paint swastikas on my building. He stalked me and he was fined \$150 for that offence."

Thirteen months later, what everyone had predicted would happen, did happen. The person picked up two six year old girls who were playing in their sandbox. He did not do it in that community. He went 15 kilometres down the road. He now not only had his 10th and 11th victim, but the system had failed the people of that community totally.

There is not a record of the person. We are not keeping track of these people, and that is what the motion is all about today.

At that point, I again asked a question in the House. In the first question I asked the former justice minister about the nine-time convicted pedophile who was released into my riding. I was told that I should not worry about it. The answer I got this time from the new justice minister was:

Mr. Speaker, obviously the situation that the hon. member refers to is a very serious one and a very tragic one. My colleague the solicitor general and I have discussed this issue and we are going to be looking at it further.

That was in May 1998. It is fine to keep putting these issues off, to keep saying that we will do something and that we do have a registry there. This is happening over and over again. That is why we have to keep track of these people. We have to know where they are. We have to know their addresses and they have to report in. It

*Supply*

is not because we are vicious and mean. It is because we do not want more victims.

In another example, a mother, Mrs. Lisa Dillman, called me on Friday. She has two daughters aged five and six. She is the ex-wife of Dr. John Schneeberger who was convicted of raping a patient. He sexually assaulted his 11 year old stepdaughter for three years. He was convicted in November 1999 and is eligible for parole in June of this year, serving less than two years of a six year sentence. This person had put somebody else's DNA in his arm so as not to get caught but the police took a hair sample from him and managed to do a DNA match.

A judge has forced the mother of those two girls, the five year old and six year old, to bring the girls to Bowden Penitentiary for unsupervised visits with Dr. John Schneeberger. Neither the mother nor anyone else can be there. These two young girls will be left in a prison with a sexual offender.

What kind of justice system are we talking about? We need to start talking about the victims.

• (1325)

What will be the psychological impact on these two young girls? The person was actually going through immigration hearings at the time of his criminal hearings and he said that he did not have a criminal record. He lied to the immigration people to become a Canadian citizen. To say that CPIC is working, that it is doing its job and that we know where the sexual predators are, is wrong.

I talked earlier about a truck driver in my constituency who had attacked two young boys aged four and five. He is now driving across the country in a truck with a bedroom in the back to pick up other potential victims.

We are doing nothing to keep track of these sexual predators. That is what the motion is all about. It is about those little kids, about our kids and our grandchildren. That is why we have to get a registry for sexual offenders. Do not throw CPIC back in our face.

**Mr. Jim Pankiw (Saskatoon—Humboldt, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just illustrated some very graphic and disturbing examples of sexual predators who the system is not dealing with properly.

We are advocating a sexual offender registry that would track people and make reporting mandatory in order to try to prevent more of these types of occurrences. We see an obstinance in and a refusal by the Liberal government to want to address the problem.

This reminds me of the British Columbia court ruling last January or the January before when it ruled that the possession of child pornography was legal. We put a vote in the House of Commons to invoke the notwithstanding clause in the constitution to override that. It was basic common sense and the government voted it down.

Why does the member think the Liberal government is reluctant to deal with such a serious problem in our society? Why does it refuse to act?

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Mr. Speaker, this should be a non-partisan issue. All of us care about our children and, in many of our cases, our grandchildren. I know you do, Mr. Speaker. The children are the ones I am most concerned about when it comes to sexual predators. It is our job as members of parliament to protect the children.

What we have here is a very liberal point of view. I do not understand the psychological thinking of people who can be more concerned about the rights of a nine-time offender than they can be about the potential 10th and 11th victims. I do not understand that when these are six year old kids.

I come from a province where Liberals are an endangered species and perhaps that is why I do not understand that Liberal thinking. However, that is the way it is. It is a Liberal way of thinking.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, what I really would have liked to have seen today is the solicitor general stand up and say that all parties agree on the issue, that it is a good idea, that the government has been working on it and that we should take the proposal, bring it forward and develop a national sex offender registry. Instead, he has said that he does not agree with what we have said but that he will vote for it because the government is doing it anyway.

The problem is, and here is where we differ, that the country says we need a national sex offender registry. It can be handled within CPIC but it does need legislation to mandate reporting systems. It needs legislation to provide penalties if one does not report. The government says that it is taking care of it in CPIC but we are saying that CPIC is missing part of it.

How does my colleague think we can influence the government to say more than just yes, it is doing it? How can we actually get it to understand the severity of the case and to change it?

• (1330)

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Mr. Speaker, what has been the surprising is that people will stand up and say that it is covered by CPIC. All they have to do is talk to some of the police officers, the lawyers and the judges and they will tell them that the information is inadequate, that it is out of date and that it is just not there.

We need this registry. We need it to be accurate for sexual offenders. We need to know their addresses and phone numbers. The police need to be able to go to them instantly. Remember that this is for the police. They need to be able to go to the offenders instantly if there is an offence in a particular jurisdiction. What this motion is all about is to prevent there being more victims. It will work.



*Supply*

Obviously there will be penalties if offenders do not register but those penalties need to be enforced. Those people must do that. For people to simply wash over it and say that it is already there, they must have their heads in the sand if they do not listen to what experts are telling them.

**Mr. Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the people of Surrey Central to participate in the debate on the official opposition's supply day motion calling on the Liberal government to immediately create a national sex offender registry.

Creating a national sex offender registry is a non-partisan issue because it is about the safety and protection of Canadians and our children and their futures. It is about making our streets, our neighbourhoods and our communities safer. I would expect the Liberals to not look through the lens of political stripes but rather through the lens of issues and to the importance of this issue.

Once again the Canadian Alliance must twist the arm of the government. We did that two weeks ago. We forced backbench Liberal MPs, all Liberal MPs except two, to vote against Liberal Party policy. In red book one the Liberals called for the establishment of an independent ethics counsellor. Because they have yet to fulfil that promise, the Canadian Alliance gave the Liberals that opportunity two weeks ago, but they voted against their own promise.

As the official opposition, not only do we provide effective criticism of the government but we also provide alternative solutions. As the official opposition we carry the flashlight and very often show the Liberals their darkness. Sometimes we even make them read their own red books.

I commend the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford for spearheading the Canadian Alliance supply day motion on the creation of a national sex offender registry. He has been working on the issue for quite some time. I feel that I bring a unique perspective to the debate today.

In the last election the three-time defeated Liberal candidate advocated in Surrey Central that, if elected, he would create a national sex offender registry through a private member's bill. The Liberal candidate in Surrey Central was already told, probably before the election, that a new Liberal government would not create a national sex offender registry. That is why he resorted to a private members' bill.

The Prime Minister admitted that parents have the right to be concerned and he virtually confessed to the candidate in Surrey Central that he could not stop him from trying to create the registry through a private members' bill. The Prime Minister knew that his office and the cabinet do not listen to backbench members after an

election. The MPs listen to the Prime Minister's office and the party whip.

The Prime Minister knows that private members' business is a weaker tool in the House since all private members' bills are not votable. Very rarely does a private members' bill or motion become law. A private members' bill is like a pacifier given to a baby. It keeps the baby busy and hopeful but nothing comes out of it. That is how private members' business in the House operates because they are not votable. We keep working hard but very rarely does something come out of it. That was the point the Liberal candidate from Surrey Central was trying to make.

• (1335)

The official opposition motion is about creating a national sex offender registry. The motion is votable. It is a litmus test for Liberal members in the House. I am proud to be here today joining my colleagues as a member of the official opposition team calling for the establishment of something that was promised by my opponent in the recent election.

The sex offender registry would be established and maintained by the solicitor general's department. The registry would contain the name, address, date of birth, list of sex offences and any other prescribed information about a person convicted of a sex offence anywhere in Canada.

Information to be included in the registry would be collected from offenders themselves and from any other source available to the minister such as Correctional Service of Canada, the National Parole Board, et cetera.

The registry would be available only to the minister and police forces for the purpose of crime prevention and law enforcement. The registry would apply to every person convicted of a sex offence or found not criminally responsible for a sex offence on account of a mental disorder. This would include anyone serving a sentence for a sex offence on the day the registry comes into force and would not apply to young offenders.

Every offender who resides in Canada would be required to register in person at his or her local police station at least once a year and provide updated information to be added to the registry. The offender would be required to register within 15 days of release from custody.

Persons convicted of a sex offence that carries a maximum sentence of 10 years or less would have to report to police for 10 years. Persons convicted of a sex offence with a longer sentence would have to report to the police for the rest of their lives.

Any person pardoned for all of their sex offences would be relieved of the requirement to report to police and his or her record would be deleted from the registry. Any offender whose name appears in the registry may ask to see the information and correct it if necessary. Regulations may be made to limit the number of times

*Supply*

a person may ask to see such information. A police officer would be able to obtain a warrant for the arrest of a person failing to register and report as required.

If convicted, the offender would face a fine of up to \$25,000 and/or up to a year in prison for the first offence. A second offence would bring a \$25,000 fine and/or up to two years less a day in jail.

Such legislation is long overdue. One-fifth of all offenders in Canada are sex offenders. One-fourth of the total federal incarcerated population is sex offenders. Out of sex offenders under community supervision 14% are on day parole, 31% are on full parole and 54% are on statutory release. They are out in the community. This illustrates the gravity of the situation and the importance of passing the motion.

In the United States the registries assist police to identify suspects and solve sex offences quicker. In the United Kingdom the sex offenders act has been in place since September 1997. The province of Ontario has created a provincial registry due to government inaction at the federal level. Other provinces like British Columbia and Saskatchewan will also be establishing similar registries.

A national sex offender registry has the support of many groups, including the Ontario and Saskatchewan associations of chiefs of police, the Canadian Police Association, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. There is widespread support for such a registry. In Surrey Central, Councillor Dianne Watts has collected a large number of signatures on a petition which will be tabled in the House later.

● (1340)

In conclusion, it is appropriate that we are discussing the matter today. Last week the police arrested a convicted pedophile after the man allegedly breached probation in Saskatchewan and was applying for jobs at Ontario day care centres. He was caught allegedly shoplifting at a local department store.

All David Caza's applications were rejected after the day care centres did a criminal background check. We are debating today a Canadian Alliance motion to create a national sex offender registry which would disable people like David Caza from pursuing innocent victims. The government should give police this new and effective tool for crime prevention and law enforcement.

**Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat of a strange day when the opposition motion is such that government members all agree with it. There does not seem to be much argument as to whether there should be a so-called registry of offences. The question is whether there should be a separate registry of offences.

Members opposite think that in some measure the creation of a separate registry will protect people and children from dangerous pedophiles. The people in Canada listening need to know there is a registry of offenders. If an hon. member is convicted of a criminal code offence it goes into a police registry system. It is called the Canadian Police Information System, or CPIC as it has been referred to. It is a fairly simple system and yet a lot of detailed information goes into it.

For example, if an hon. member is convicted of an assault, that information appears along with all relevant information pertaining to his or her blood type, fingerprints, last known address, age and height, et cetera. It is a fairly elaborate system. When a police officer or any of his colleagues across the country punch the name into the computer they have access to that information. The information on the computer shows what the individual has been convicted of. It also includes sexual offences.

I am a little hard pressed to know how the opposition motion assists the concerns of Canadians that there will be somehow more information if we have a separate registry system. If the argument were rephrased in terms of making more information available in the CPIC system, it would get even more support from members on this side of the House.

To set up an additional registry system that would in theory require a police officer to look at the CPIC system and then to check an additional system does not make a great deal of sense on the face of it. If the argument in the motion is that the systems should be merged and that information generated in the CPIC system should disclose not only criminal information but also information regarding sexual issues, I think all members could support that.

Unfortunately there does not seem to be a great deal of consensus among attorneys general across the country on the efficacy of a separate system. From the standpoint of this side of the House there does not seem to be any great reason for a separate system if attorneys general across the country had consensus that the necessary modifications to the CPIC system could be set up.

● (1345)

Members need to know that information can be forwarded to CPIC automatically if a police officer gets information on a new address of a convicted pedophile. That is process rather than a legislated information update. Rather than forcing it, it is simply good police practice.

In Ontario there is a strange situation where a sexual assault registry has been proposed. I am hard pressed to understand how it works. If people are convicted of a sexual assault of some kind they generally do not go to police stations after the completion of their sentences to tell the police where they are living. To have an additional sanction of a \$25,000 fine seems like a response to an

issue, but I respectfully submit it is more of an appearance of a response to an issue rather than a meaningful response to an issue.

Police officers are generally at the forefront of soliciting information pertaining to people who are convicted of sexual offences. When they come in contact with an individual they can certainly update the CPIC information so that all police officers across the country know of it.

Canadians should also know Bill C-7 was passed in the last parliament which closed an anomaly in the pardon system. Prior to the passage of Bill C-7 a convicted individual who had completed his or her sentence for a sexual matter could have the record sealed and ask for a pardon.

Parliament was persuaded this was a loophole and addressed it, so that if an individual applies to teach school or participate with children in a Boy Scout's activity or something of that nature, a criminal record check is now done. Even if the record is sealed the individual is tagged. A little flag comes up on the CPIC system saying that the individual has been convicted of some sexual matter. Then the organization receives the information. That is significant to people who are concerned about known pedophiles in individual communities.

Canadians also need to know about subsection 753(1) of the criminal code which is generally known as the dangerous offenders legislation. It is an extensive section that was passed to address this issue, if not by the last parliament, the one before. Any crown attorney dealing with matters pertaining to sentencing can make an application concerning a dangerous offender.

It would be instructive to read into the record that section of the criminal code. People should know that a crown attorney can make an application at any time after a conviction. Once the sentences of individuals are completed their names can be tagged. They can be required to report to probation officers and to provide updates on their addresses.

The criminal code says that the court may find an offender to be a long term offender if it is satisfied that there is a substantial risk that the offender will reoffend, that there is a reasonable possibility of eventual control of the risk in the community. It then gives a list of sections where this application may be made: section 151, sexual interference; section 152, invitation to sexual touching; section 153, sexual exploitation; and section 271, sexual assault. It lists all the sections that concern Canadians the most about this issue.

• (1350)

The crown can make that application and can say that it has reason to believe that an individual will reoffend. That is consistent with the testimony that we heard on the justice committee, which was that people who are convicted of these kinds of offences do reoffend. Pedophiles do not get over whatever it is that affects them and creates the behaviour that they participate in.

### *Supply*

If the crown can make the case and if an offender has been shown to have a repetitive behaviour of a particular pattern, then the crown can order that at the end of the individual's sentence, whether it is a five year jail sentence or whatever, the individual would have a period of up to 10 years of community contact with the probation services. That is a pretty effective way in which the community can be advised of the presence of the individual in the community and can then take whatever preventative measures are necessary.

There are two fairly significant initiatives in parliament's recent past that address the concerns of Canadians in a substantive way. The first has to do with tagging people who are making applications for pardons. The second has to do with the creation of dangerous offender legislation. This is a pretty substantive intrusion into people's civil liberties.

I appreciate that members opposite have mixed views on the rights of the accused. They argue that there are rights for the accused but they want to know where the rights are for the victims. Members should bear in mind that all Canadians have exactly the same rights. We are intruding in, on this schedule offences, on the notion that an individual has served his or her sentence and time to society.

To give an example, if I assault an individual and I serve my sentence, at the end of five years I will not be categorized as a dangerous long term offender. However, if I sexually assault an individual and it is found to be a repetitive behaviour on my part, I can be, in effect, on parole for up to 10 years after I have served my sentence. That is a pretty significant change in the thinking. I would support that change because the people for whom the legislation concerns are people who simply do not get over whatever it is that they have.

Canadians need to know that when the opposition members raise the issue of a separate sexual offence registry, it is in the context of these two fairly significant initiatives on the part of previous parliaments, namely, the pardon issue and the dangerous offender issue. Those are two very significant issues.

Would we have a better system if we created a separate sexual offence registry? I submit that is a dubious proposition at best. We may have some rather bizarre anomalies where an individual may show up in the one registry as having been convicted of a sexual offence of some kind, but the other registry would have all the material pertaining to the fact that the person had been charged and convicted with attempted murder or a variety of assaults, et cetera. It seems somewhat strange that we should be arguing about whether we should have two registries or one registry.

• (1355)

If the argument is simply that the current system be updated, I do not think that is difficult. If the argument is that the current system is inadequate in some respect, again I do not think that is difficult. We are into arguments about technicalities. If the argument is about whether the police communicates properly with their communities

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or whether there are dangerous offenders released into the community, I think we can talk about that.

The hon. member for Etobicoke North made a rather significant point, that at some time all offenders end up back on the street. At one point or another every convicted criminal ends up back on the street somehow or other. We could say that we will lock these people away forever. That does not work, so the question is: Can we stage it?

If we create with these kinds of debates an hostile atmosphere toward the release of these individuals back into the community, we have the ironical issue of creating the very conditions we wish to resolve. It is a bit strange. If we are not careful about what we are saying we are in fact creating conditions which will make hostile the release of any individual into the community. Therefore we marginalize the individual and the more we marginalize the individual we have the ironical impact of the individual repeating his or her behaviour. In effect, in some bizarre fashion we create more difficulties than intended. A bit of Murphy's law applies here.

Those are the issues of significance to Canadians. Canadians legitimately are concerned that there are people in their communities they should know about. I believe, with the greatest respect to colleagues opposite, that we are not debating whether the information is not available. The question is whether the information should be formatted within the greater CPIC system or whether it should be formatted in a separate registry altogether.

This is not merely a criminal justice issue. It is as much a social justice issue as anything. All criminal behaviour occurs in a social context. I hope that members concerned about amending the criminal code regarding dangerous pedophiles would also be supportive of initiatives on the part of Correctional Service Canada and of provincial governments that in fact create conditions which prevent that behaviour. My concern is that if we hit from the left and hit from the right we see these initiatives not merely in the context of criminal justice but in the context of social justice.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

### MINING

**Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Sigma-Lamaque complex of the McWatters corporation has been closed since February 14, 2001, while the Beaufor mine has been shut down since August 2000.

The government should take action to increase its presence and its involvement in resource regions that have difficulties adjusting to the new economy.

The government should set up a financial assistance program for thin capitalization mines located in Canada's resource regions.

The government should reinstate the Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act to help Canada's gold mine operators deal with the low price of gold by guaranteeing them a fixed price for the gold they produce.

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[*English*]

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Matthew Coon Come, is seeking to empower grassroots aboriginal people in Canada by enabling them to vote for the person of their choice for the office of AFN's national chief: one member, one vote.

● (1400)

Mr. Coon Come is not the first national chief to believe that such a move toward grassroots democracy would be a positive step. Former national chiefs Ovide Mercredi, in 1991, and Phil Fontaine, in 1998, supported this proposal for democratic change.

Mr. Coon Come is not trying to do anything alarming or unprecedented. He is simply moving the Assembly of First Nations in the direction of democratic accountability to grassroots aboriginals so the ordinary band member can be assured of proper representation.

This initiative is based upon the same principles of grassroots democracy that are important to the Canadian Alliance. I applaud Mr. Coon Come and the many aboriginals who support him for trying to move in this direction.

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[*Translation*]

### SEMAINE NATIONALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are celebrating the Semaine nationale de la Francophonie from March 11 to 25. This is an opportunity for the nine million French speaking Canadians to show how proud they are to speak and to live in French.

The Semaine nationale de la Francophonie is a major celebration that allows francophones and francophiles to express their attachment to the French language and culture. This celebration of the French fact in Canada is testimony to the vitality of the Francophonie.

While these events provide a window on our francophone heritage, our Francophonie is very much a contemporary reality with ever growing ties. This week is also an invitation to discover or rediscover those who help promote the Francophonie and make it thrive.

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[English]

#### MINISTER OF FINANCE

**Mr. Andy Burton (Skeena, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the recent visit to western Canada by the Minister of Finance was billed as an opportunity to gather feedback on western concerns through face to face meetings with community leaders.

I do not know what the protocol was for other stops on the minister's tour, but in my riding of Skeena, B.C., three MLAs and myself were neither notified nor invited to participate. Curiously enough, however, three Liberal mayors were invited. I am sure they provided input to the minister, but surely the duly elected provincial NDP MLAs and the Alliance MP could also have contributed significantly to the discussion.

It is a shame that partisan politics is allowed to interfere with the necessary process to alleviate western concerns on economic difficulties. I for one am quite prepared to put politics aside in working toward common goals and solutions for my region.

Was the minister's true purpose for his western visit not so much to deal with western alienation but to build support for his eventual race for the Prime Minister's Office?

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#### CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as part of the second national symposium on fairness, the Minister of National Revenue unveiled the new corporate identify of Canada Customs and Revenue Agency.

This new image provides CCRA clients with a unified and consistent design approach to information products. This strong

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graphic vision reinforces its commitment to improve communication with clients across Canada.

The new approach will reinforce the CCRA slogan "More Ways to Serve You" and its commitment to client service. I congratulate the minister and the agency for the progress they have made in implementing their seven point plan for fairness and in addressing the requirements for improved communications with Canadians.

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[Translation]

#### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, agriculture and agri-food must be able to rise to all of today's challenges and opportunities, be they globalization, new technology, the preservation of high standards in food safety, environmental protection and so on. Our agricultural leaders must be equipped to address these challenges and opportunities.

A group of Canadians, leaders in the various agricultural sectors, are in Ottawa today to gather information and have discussions in the context of the Canadian agriculture lifetime leadership program.

I want to salute them, their commitment and their devotion and, more specifically, I salute Aimé Jacob of my beautiful riding of Brome—Missisquoi.

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#### AIRPORT FACILITIES

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the firm Au Dragon Forgé of Terrebonne has been awarded three new contracts worth \$49.5 million, which include the engineering contract for a new building for the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec in Montreal. The two other contracts awarded are in the States, including one at the Miami airport.

● (1405)

Maintaining its reputation, this Quebec firm was chosen, among other reasons, for its ability to manage the particularly complex and restrictive aspects of airport facilities. Its expertise makes it a leader in its field, and its successes—regional, national and international—bear witness to the high quality of the work done by its employees.

I offer my warmest congratulations to the executives of ADF in Terrebonne and want them to know just how proud I am of their dynamism and their contribution to spreading the fame of Terrebonne—Blainville.

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[English]

### GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

**Mr. John Harvard (Charleswood St. James—Assiniboia, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on March 10 our government announced a contribution of close to \$3 million to six community rural health and research initiatives in Manitoba.

I remind the House that these projects demonstrate the ongoing commitment of the Government of Canada to maintaining and improving the health of Canadians. Projects like these, which protect and promote good health, are vitally important and contribute to the commitment made by all first ministers in September 2000 to improve wellness.

This announcement complements the close to \$4 million announced earlier by the Government of Canada for Winnipeg based community health and research initiatives, including two telehealth projects that will have a positive impact on rural residents.

These items, in addition to the increase in federal transfer payments to the provinces for the delivery of health care services, represent a strong commitment to the important rural health needs of Canadians.

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### MEMBER FOR EDMONTON NORTH

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the 12th anniversary of the first election to parliament of a special friend of mine. On March 13, 1989, she won a byelection in the riding of Beaver River.

During those lonely days in Ottawa she kept the faith alive for a new political movement. She acted as a leader and encourager of the Reform Party as that party grew and eventually became the official opposition. She played key roles throughout the united alternative process which led to the Canadian Alliance and in the election in November, which saw an increase of 750,000 votes and an increase to 66 seats while other opposition parties decreased.

Her intelligence, her quick wit and her many skills have made her shine in whatever role she has played, whether as caucus chair, deputy leader or even as leader of the official opposition. She is living evidence that someone can be principled and authentic and still succeed in public life.

Her private life is also an example. During her years as a schoolteacher she opened her home as a foster parent to several aboriginal children. She is a hard worker and a loyal and loving friend.

It is with great affection and respect that I say happy 12th anniversary and congratulations to the hon. member.

\* \* \*

### HOUSING

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the government's priority of helping the homeless, the Metro Non-Profit Housing Association will open a new housing facility in Halifax with the help of nearly \$1.6 million from the Government of Canada and the province of Nova Scotia.

In addition to accommodating 18 residents and a live in staff person, this facility will provide a base for the association's work. Its community support team will provide advocacy and support for homeless people with complex mental, physical and social needs. It will work to help them become part of a supportive, healthy community.

The federal funding for this project is part of the \$753 million the Government of Canada has committed to combating homelessness from coast to coast to coast. It is money well spent. It is a sound investment.

\* \* \*

### VETERANS

**Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada holds the proud distinction of being the oldest veterans organization in the country.

With units from coast to coast, members of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans provide important services to disabled veterans and their dependants. They support the teaching of sportsmanship and high ideals of youth through sponsorship of sports, scholarships and other activities. In so doing, ANAVETS practises the democratic principles for which so many Canadians gave their lives and helps to make our communities better places in which to live.

I ask all here to join me in congratulating the unit of Thompson, Manitoba, unit 388 of the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans, on the 20th anniversary of its charter on March 1, 2001. This unit dedicated to serving our community and our country also supports the only Junior ANAVETS unit in Canada.

• (1410)

I thank all its members, the ladies auxiliary, and past and present presidents Jim White, Maurice Roberge, Bob Walker, Frank Morrison, Keith Flight and Ron Robertson.

[Translation]

### SOLANGE TREMBLAY

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to speak of Michel Dumont.

Michel has spent the past ten years with a blot on his name, a criminal record that led to his spending 34 months behind bars for a crime he did not commit. This unpardonable error was acknowledged by the courts last month.

The truth would never have come to light without the spouse, Solange Tremblay. Year after year, she battled the legal system and overcame countless difficulties.

If Michel has now been exonerated of the crime for which he has already been punished, it is essentially because of this woman, who is with us today in the House, seated at his side. I salute her.

Congratulations to you both, Solange and Michel, and best wishes for a long and happy life together.

\* \* \*

### PREMIER OF QUEBEC

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again yesterday the new Premier of Quebec attempted to prove that Canada is not working, serves no useful purpose, and has done harm to the economic development of Quebec. Nothing could be further from the truth, as he well knows.

Not only has Canada not done harm to the economic development of Quebec, it has done much good. One need only think of the international WTO agreements, and the Team Canada trips and their benefits to businesses.

If Mr. Landry considers Canada a hindrance to the growth of Quebec, why is he insistent that sovereignty include an offer of partnership with that same Canada?

We invite Mr. Landry to stop looking for hidden motives and to give up his separatist rhetoric in order to work along with the Government of Canada for the betterment of the people of Quebec and of Canada. That is what the public wants of us.

\* \* \*

[English]

### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister of agriculture's announcement of

*S. O. 31*

only \$14.1 million of new money for struggling P.E.I. potato farmers falls far short of a meaningful level of disaster relief.

An immediate influx of over \$40 million was requested to go with the approximately \$15 million the P.E.I. government had already contributed.

The crisis over potato wart has left farmers with no option but to destroy millions of tonnes of potatoes due to the questionable U.S. ban based on a fear of potato wart found in only 24 potatoes. The ban continues and P.E.I. has absorbed the loss for the entire country, a sacrifice that has devastated Island farmers.

CFIP is a flawed formula that will not help most producers. Fifty-three per cent of the Island agriculture industry is potato farming and farmers face a 60% drop in net income this year, a \$30 million loss.

The solicitor general and Liberal MPs from P.E.I. have failed Islanders. They did not impress upon the cabinet the urgency of this crisis. They did not deliver to farmers in their time of need.

\* \* \*

### LEARNING DISABILITIES MONTH

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Waterloo—Wellington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, March is learning disabilities month in Canada and the theme for this year's public awareness campaign is "Early Help Means Early Success".

Some 100,000 Ontario children are identified as having learning disabilities. As we all know, learning disabilities are not merely an educational issue. They impact on all aspects of a person's life.

Research has shown that by identifying a child at risk as early as senior kindergarten and providing the appropriate help at that moment in time, the need for more lengthy interventions at a later date is greatly reduced. It helps prevent emotional and behavioural problems later in life.

I encourage all members of the House to raise awareness of learning disabilities in their communities and to foster the understanding that people with learning disabilities are competent individuals who sometimes have to do things differently to succeed in life.

\* \* \*

### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Howard Hilstrom (Selkirk—Interlake, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, today I mention to the minister of agriculture that in fact there is a farm crisis in the country and that this week there will be protests in Saskatoon, in Winnipeg and in Ottawa.

It seems that farmers believe that the minister does not and will not acknowledge that there is a crisis. In fact, \$500 million is insufficient for the crisis at hand. Farmers have asked me to stand

*Oral Questions*

here to ask where the other \$500 million is. Also, today the Prince Edward Island Potato Board is stating that the assistance announced today was too little, too late. Something has to be done for agriculture across the country.

\* \* \*

• (1415)

[Translation]

**NATIONAL EPILEPSY MONTH**

**Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this month Epilepsy Canada and other organizations involved with the fight against this disorder have launched National Epilepsy Month. Epilepsy is a serious brain disorder affecting close to 30,000 Canadians.

It is characterized by seizures, uncontrollable trembling, convulsions and confusion. There is no cure, and the medications available for treatment often have severe side effects.

I strongly encourage Canadians to make a special effort during this month to learn more about epilepsy. Working together with medical researchers, we could improve the quality of life of those around us who suffer from epilepsy.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

**IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the solicitor general has claimed that the RCMP could not arrest alleged cop killer Gaetano Amodeo in 1999 because it had not received an extradition request from the Italian government. We have now received new information which throws into question everything the solicitor general has said.

Tomorrow the *Corriere Canadese*, an Italian newspaper, will report that on January 13, 1999, over two years ago, along with the original warrant the Italian government sent the RCMP a formal request for Mr. Amodeo's arrest.

My question is for the solicitor general. Why did the RCMP not arrest this man in April 1999, two years ago?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not decide when the RCMP decides to arrest or not to arrest an individual. However, it is important to note that this individual was a fugitive from justice. He has been arrested and is now in jail awaiting a deportation hearing.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, he decided not to give us the information or to give us wrong information.

[Translation]

Tomorrow, the *Corriere Canadese*, a Toronto Italian paper, will publish what the Italian authorities had been seeking since January 1999, the arrest of Gaetano Amodeo, in preparation for an application for extradition. The RCMP had monitored him and even photographed him with a head of the Montreal Mafia.

How does the Solicitor General explain the RCMP's decision to photograph this killer instead of handcuffing him?

[English]

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition would be aware that I do not decide how the RCMP conducts its investigations. I do not tell the RCMP whether it should take pictures or whatever it should do. The RCMP is a well respected police organization around the world.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is not a matter of deciding what the RCMP should do. It is whether you decide to tell the truth or not.

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

**Mr. Stockwell Day:** The minister of immigration and the solicitor general both—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I am sure all hon. members know that hon. members tell the truth all the time. The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Stockwell Day:** Mr. Speaker, both the minister of immigration and the solicitor general have clearly indicated that it is only recently they knew about this situation.

Yet the evidence is very clear. It has been over two years that they have had this information. They have either withheld information or they have not given accuracy to the House. Either of those is a great failing.

Which of these two ministers, or both, will the Prime Minister ask to resign on the grounds of ministerial accountability for this lack of action?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is always what they resort to as a last argument when they cannot establish anything they are talking about.

I have two very competent ministers who are trying to deal with a very difficult file. They are both serving Canada very well.

[Translation]

**Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Richmond, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the name of Gaetano Amodeo appeared on an application for permanent residence on June 28, 1999. The warrant for his arrest had been issued six months previously.



• (1420)

My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Why did her department not check for a criminal record?

[English]

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the individual the member refers to is not an immigrant. He was refused permanent resident status. As soon as the RCMP concluded its investigation my department, CIC, acted and within three weeks the man was in custody. He is now awaiting the deportation hearing.

**Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Richmond, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, on September 1, 2000, Mr. Gaetano Amodeo applied again for permanent residency. His arrest warrant was issued 18 months before.

Again I ask a question of the minister of immigration. Why did her ministry fail a second time to conduct a police check?

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my department relies on evidence. We need evidence and warrants before we can arrest and deport someone. Unlike the member opposite we do not rely on whisper and innuendo.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the list of opportunities missed by this government in the Gaetano Amodeo affair is a long one.

In January 1999, the RCMP learned from Italian authorities that a warrant for Mr. Amodeo's arrest had been issued by a Palermo court.

Why did the office of the solicitor general not advise Immigration Canada in January 1999 of the criminal charges against Gaetano Amodeo, when this notorious criminal was trying to move to Canada?

[English]

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP had been working with Italian police from 1999, but I would like to remind my hon. colleague that it does not inform me of its investigations. I do not decide who it investigates, who it tells or who it does not tell.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP did not inform the solicitor general or Immigration Canada.

### Oral Questions

But in September 1999, the Department of Justice received from Italy an official request for the extradition of this same Gaetano Amodeo. The Minister of Justice received a request for extradition at that time.

Might we know why the Minister of Justice, who knew this fact, who had been informed, did not advise Immigration Canada that a request for Mr. Amodeo's extradition had been received?

[English]

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as soon as the RCMP completed its investigation and notified my department that it had sufficient evidence we were able to move. We were able to get a warrant. The man was detained and he is now awaiting a deportation hearing.

My officials acted promptly once they were given the information that they needed.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will put my question to the Minister of Justice again.

I do not want to hear that the government was not aware, that there was insufficient evidence, when this was a duly completed request for extradition, when photographs were taken in April 1999, but of the wrong person, when he and his wife subsequently applied here, when the minister had received a request for extradition and did not think of advising Immigration Canada.

There is something wrong with this picture. I can believe that the solicitor general did not know, but the Minister of Justice did.

[English]

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will repeat once again that as soon as the RCMP had completed its investigation and had sufficient information my department was notified. We obtained a warrant. The individual was arrested. He is now awaiting a deportation hearing.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, three weeks after the Department of Citizenship and Immigration was—supposedly—advised, Mr. Amodeo was arrested, but this could have been done 14 months earlier.

Can anyone explain to me how it was that the RCMP did not have the sense to visit the wife of the man being sought? That would strike me as a good place to start, particularly when they could take a picture of the right person.

Would the Minister of Justice, who knew that there was an extradition request, tell us why she did not advise the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration?

*Oral Questions*

● (1425)

*[English]*

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, CIC relies on warrants and in order to get a warrant we need to have evidence.

The RCMP provided that evidence. We moved quickly and within three weeks the individual was apprehended. He is detained and is now awaiting a hearing. In order to get that warrant we need evidence, not just whispers.

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**TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary for heritage scooped the industry minister yesterday by announcing an expert panel to look into the growing problem of corporate concentration in the media.

Another panel is about to be announced to plot the future of Canadian broadcasting and telecommunications. It is rumoured that cable lobbyist Janet Yale and senior Bell Canada executive Sheridan Scott will chair this panel, arousing deep concern about whether we will have a regulatory regime at all in Canada or just a free-for-all among corporations. Which will it be?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member should know that in fact the Broadcasting Act and the Telecommunications Act for a number of years have been shared responsibility. As late as last year we began the process of looking at some analysis for dealing with the issues facing us over the next five years.

I think it is a proactive approach. We know that we are living in a modern world. The Telecommunications Act and the Broadcasting Act will obviously be included in this review.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have two committees here: one a dog and pony show designed to distract from the real and growing problem of corporate concentration in the media and the other designed to advance the real agenda: further concentration of power in the hands of fewer corporate giants.

We want to know: Is Captain Canada about to adopt a new persona and emerge from his telephone booth as Captain Concentration?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is hardly appropriate to characterize as a dog and pony show a review which has not even been announced yet, but I can assure the hon. member that in the course of the last couple of years we have had a number of concerns expressed about

the issue of diversity of Canadian voices, both on television and through the Internet.

We want to make sure in our review of CRTC policies that we make more space for more Canadian voices. That is the objective that we are underscoring, which I hope is supported by all political parties.

\* \* \*

**CORPORATE CONCENTRATION**

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC):** Mr. Speaker, my question to the Prime Minister is about the panel of experts the government decided to set up to investigate corporate concentration after the Asper affair.

The leader of the government in the Senate stated yesterday that she would be partial to a Senate committee study of this issue instead of a panel. I wonder if she was speaking for the government.

In any event, will the Prime Minister bring the proposed terms of reference of any review to the House for advice and full debate prior to deciding the mandate or the membership of any review or panel?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the original discussion of the panel predates the hon. member's question by about 12 months, so we can hardly be accused of creating this process to meet a problem that he claims occurred this week.

The fact is that as a result of our concerns we undertook to have a number of reviews done by a number of experts. They have been taking the course over the last number of months. There have been seven studies sought by independent experts. Six have been completed and we are awaiting the seventh. When that study is in, we will move forthwith with the panel which can focus on these very important issues for the country.

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC):** Mr. Speaker, so much for parliament. The Prime Minister claims that he sold his golf club shares to Jonas Prince in 1993, yet the 1994 declaration of registration of 161341 Canada Inc. with the government of Quebec does not show Jonas Prince or any of his companies as a shareholder. Nor do six subsequent annual declarations. Why not?

Will the Prime Minister now table a copy of the agreement respecting the golf club shares so Canadians can know if this was about a sale or simply about an option to purchase?

● (1430)

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the facts of the matter are clear. This is a question which has been looked into by the RCMP. The RCMP has closed the file. It is a matter which has been looked at by the ethics counsellor. The ethics counsellor has very clearly pronounced himself on the file.

*Oral Questions*

The member may ask questions again and again and again. It does not change the fact the Prime Minister has complied fully and completely with the requirements of the ethics counsellor.

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**IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, let us go through this again. In April 1999 the RCMP took photos, commonly called evidence, of Gaetano Amodeo meeting with Nick Rizutto, a Montreal mob boss.

The RCMP knew he was considered armed and dangerous. In fact it had an arrest warrant. I would like to ask the person who really should know, the solicitor general, why he was not arrested at the time.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the important thing to remember is that we had a fugitive fleeing the law. Because of the RCMP gathering the evidence and with the co-operation of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the man is now arrested, in jail and going before a deportation hearing.

Surely my hon. colleague does not want me personally to handle RCMP investigations.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, we are getting somewhere. We have a fugitive who was fleeing the law. That is right. We have evidence. We have photos of his meeting with a Montreal mob boss. We have a warrant that the police had for two long years.

Could the solicitor general explain how it is that an organized crime hitman who had a Canadian arrest warrant out for him for two years, who was wanted in Italy and wanted in Germany, is not only not arrested but fully expects to become a Canadian citizen?

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hypothesis of the question is complete nonsense. The individual is not an immigrant to Canada. He was refused status.

Further, what the member opposite is suggesting, if I hear correctly, is that without any evidence, without any warrant, we should pick up people off the streets and deport them. That is a police state and that is not what Canada is all about.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in the Amodeo affair, the solicitor general claims not to have been informed. He did not notify the minister because he himself had not been informed. Yes, but the Minister of Justice had been informed. In fact, the Italian government had sent a request for extradition to the Canadian Department of Justice as long ago as 1999.

Why did the Minister of Justice, who had been informed, not have the professional conscience to notify her colleague in immigration?

[*English*]

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member should be aware, any extradition request is in the form of a state to state communication. Those communications are confidential and it would be inappropriate for me to comment on them.

However let me say that we do know, because the Italian embassy has reported to the media, that an extradition request was made. I also want to inform the House that at no time was any court file opened in this country in relation to the extradition of Mr. Amodeo.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, are we not up to our necks here in government irresponsibility? We have a solicitor general the RCMP does not talk to, a Minister of Justice who knows but does not tell her Cabinet colleague. As far as I know, they are all supposed to have taken the same oath.

What kind of people do we have governing us? Who is responsible for international criminals seeing Canada as a kind of Club Med, a country with revolving doors as far as immigration is concerned?

Is it the minister responsible for the police who is not doing his job, the Minister of Justice who is refusing to talk to her colleague, or the Minister of Immigration who does not know what she is doing?

• (1435)

[*English*]

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if my hon. colleague wishes for me to get involved in RCMP investigations and relay information from investigations to other government departments, I am sorry but that is not the way the system works in this country. Politicians do not get involved in law enforcement.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance):** That is pretty clear, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Deputy Prime Minister said the reason his government did not deport suspected terrorist Ahmed Ressaym years ago was because Canada does not deport to his homeland of Algeria. It is part of its tolerance for terrorists policy.

Instead we let him roam free in our country, take out a phoney Canadian passport and travel back and forth to a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan where he learned to make bombs.

My question is simple. How could our security be so lax that people with this kind of background are allowed to enter undetected and roam around free within our borders?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again the member opposite speaks to a case that is before the courts.

This is an individual who was arrested. Surely he would not expect us to give a play by play of what is happening in a court in the United States and would not want to jeopardize the outcome of that trial.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, that is completely irrelevant. We are looking for an explanation of how our security can be so lax at the borders that these sorts of people can come in undetected and jeopardize the lives of Canadians and the reputation of this country.

Former CSIS director, Reid Morden, has said that as a result of this incident Canada has been exposed as a haven for terrorists. There are anti-terrorism laws in other countries like the U.S. and the U.K. which make this kind of activity completely illegal. Why is Canada refused to bring in that kind of legislation?

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in fact our frontline officers are experienced. Last year 65,000 people were stopped. Some 7,200 of them were stopped because of criminal concerns.

When we have evidence, our frontline people can refuse admission to Canada to those who are inadmissible. That is the way it works. They have to have evidence before they can stop them.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice tells us that she could not inform her colleague at the Department of Citizenship and Immigration about the extradition request because it was part of a confidential state to state communication.

Am I to understand that Mr. Amodeo could thus have become a Canadian citizen with the assistance of Immigration Canada because the minister and the department were apparently not told of the extradition request from Italy?

Is that in fact what she is now telling us? Would the confidentiality behind which she is taking cover have allowed this gentleman to become a Canadian citizen?

[English]

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** No, Mr. Speaker. This individual was not granted permanent residence status. He was refused permanent residence status.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, how can the Government of Canada receive an extradition request and the Minister of Justice not inform the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration?

During this time, court proceedings may have been under way because, up until June 1999—and the RCMP knew this because the extradition request was made in September 1999—Mr. Amodeo was still on the list of those applying for citizenship or permanent residence.

How is it that the minister did not know? One knew and the other claims she did not.

[English]

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me make it absolutely clear. As I indicated, what we are dealing with in an extradition request is a state to state communication. The confidentiality imposed upon that communication prevents me from making the contents of those communications known publicly.

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**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, economic warning signs continue to come in both here and abroad. In February Canadian employment posted its weakest record in four months with a reduction of over 23,000 positions. Equity markets continue to take a tail dive here and among our second largest trading partner, Japan.

When will the finance minister finally take action that reflects these troubling economic developments by tabling a pro growth, tax cutting budget?

• (1440)

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, in October we tabled an economic statement that led to the largest tax cuts in Canadian history, the largest amount of stimulus we have ever seen.

If I might be allowed, the organization WEFA which is one of the leading forecasting organizations in the country, one which we have used and one which in fact the Alliance used to look at its own information, said:

Because the economy is expected to be moving at reasonable pace... in the latter part of this year, it is not advisable to reduce taxes beyond the reductions currently scheduled.

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, we have seen how the markets have responded to that October financial statement, but the finance minister continues to live in fantasyland when he tells us again and again that the economic fundamentals are right. He sounds like Michael Wilson 10 years ago.

Canada continues to have the highest income taxes in the G-7 and the second highest level of debt in the developed world. We are moving inflation beyond the target set by the Bank of Canada, and we continue to suffer with a 65 cent dollar.

*Oral Questions*

How could the finance minister tell us that we are well prepared for the choppy economic waters ahead when in fact all economic fundamentals are wrong in the country?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is pretty clear that the hon. member has been sleeping for the last 10 years. The fact is that our capital gains taxes are lower than those of the United States. They are much lower than they were 10 years ago. Our corporate taxes are lower than they were 10 years ago.

We have reintroduced indexation of the tax system. Our unemployment is four points lower and two million jobs have been created since that time. I could go on.

The fact is our inflation is low and our interest rates are lower. The fact is we will do better than the United States. That is the fundamental difference between today and 10 years ago.

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**INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION**

**Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a year ago at a benefit reception held on Parliament Hill, parliamentarians and others demonstrated their generosity in helping to raise funds for the flood victims of Mozambique.

Today, Mozambique is facing a second year of flooding. Could the Minister for International Cooperation tell us what Canada is doing to respond to the international call for help by Mozambique?

[Translation]

**Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is very concerned about the flooding in the southern part of Africa.

[English]

We have contributed to date \$2 million in humanitarian relief for essential basic needs for flood victims in Mozambique and Malawi as well as logistics support and airlift capacity for relief operations.

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**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 190 workers from Star Metal will be refused EI benefits because the employer is in no hurry to call back the workforce after a lockout. Also 50 workers from Aradco in Windsor cannot receive EI benefits because of regulation 53 of the EI act.

The Department of Human Resources Development said it is reviewing this regulation. Could the Minister of Human Resources Development tell us if she is in favour of changing the regulation? Yes or no.

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are in favour of ensuring that employment insurance benefits are not used in favour of one or another party when there is a labour dispute.

I would note that the 85% rule is the court's interpretation of a fair business resumption and is now recognized in legislation as regulation 53. Indeed it provides an objective test of when unemployment caused by a labour dispute has ended. It does not favour either the employer or the employees.

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**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last month the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food said in the House that farm income for the grain and oilseed sector was the challenge. He mentioned that some sectors like dairy, poultry and livestock were doing reasonably well. However 12 days ago, in announcing a stopgap measure which even he acknowledged was not enough and that he would like to have seen more, the money was spread across all sectors.

Knowing the money was insufficient and that some sectors were doing reasonably well, why would the money not have been targeted to those people, the grain and oil seed sector, who need it most? In the answer I ask the minister not to give us the bromide about what we cannot do it. The Americans are doing it. The Europeans are—

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

● (1445)

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the money will be distributed to the provinces to use in companion programs. If the government in the province that he comes from wishes to use that in a companion program to support the income of grains and oilseed producers it will have that opportunity.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow thousands upon thousands of farmers will be protesting across the country in cities such as Saskatoon, Regina, Swift Current, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Guelph and Pickering. They are protesting not in support of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food but against the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and his inability to provide the necessary support programs for farmers.

I would like the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to tell the House why he failed to deliver \$900 million minimum to farmers. What will he tell the protesters tomorrow here in Ottawa?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the hon. member how successful we have been. Three and a half years ago this government gave

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\$600 million in support to farmers. We are now giving \$1.6 billion, the highest amount since 1995. When the provinces put in their portion it will total \$2.66 billion in income support to farmers this year. This goes along with the announcement last week that farmers will be able to borrow up to \$50,000 interest free to help put their crop in the ground this year.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC):** Mr. Speaker, let me tell you just how successful this government and this minister have been. We have lost 22,500 farmers. With the package the minister has put together now it is anticipated we will lose many more producers before the spring of this year, before planting.

I would like to know how the minister can stand in the House and say that he has been so successful when in fact he has not been. Again I ask him, what will he tell the producers tomorrow who unfortunately will not be able to seed this spring?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will tell the farmers tomorrow what I and this government have been telling them all along. As resources become available we will put as much there as possible to support farmers. We have increased that a tremendous amount. I will not go over the figures again. Obviously the hon. member does not want to listen. However, no government since 1995 has given as much support to farmers as we are at the present time.

\* \* \*

**LUMBER**

**Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, some in the U.S. forestry industry are asking their government to impose billions and billions of dollars on duties against the Canadian softwood lumber industry.

I would like to ask the minister just exactly what his plans are on April 2 when these threats could become a reality. How does he plan to back up our industry? What will he do for the Canadian industry?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we hear all kinds of noises coming from the United States right now where U.S. producers are saying all kinds of things about the nature of our industry in Canada.

Some of them might be preparing to impose tariffs and countervailing duties on our industry. I am telling the American producers that time and again they have been proven wrong in their allegations that we subsidize our industry.

The government will stand by its industry which is much better organized than it has ever been to meet the challenges of the U.S. producers.

**Mr. Gary Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the U.S. administration has told our Minister for International Trade that it is prepared to back its industry to the wall.

Just what exactly does the minister plan to do for our industry? How will he back up our industry? How will he protect our industry from having these billions of dollars of duties imposed on it which could cripple our forest industry here in Canada?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to monitor the situation very closely with them in Washington and we will continue to lobby the congress in the United States to find allies for our Canadian producers because we have allies in the United States. We have homebuilders and homeowners who want and need our wood.

This government will stand with its industry from coast to coast to coast and we will again unite to meet the challenges that the American producers are putting to us.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in the Amadeo affair, the Minister of Justice is trying to get us to swallow the story that the rules require her to conceal from a Cabinet colleague the fact that she had received an application for a citizen's extradition, someone considered a dangerous criminal.

• (1450)

My question for the Minister of Justice is this: Will she rise in this House and tell us just what rules require her to keep to herself some extremely revealing information on a criminal likely to become a Canadian citizen if she does not speak up? Under what rules is she protecting criminals?

[*English*]

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has it wrong again. The RCMP conducted an investigation. Once it had the evidence it gave the information to Citizenship and Immigration Canada which got a warrant and detained the individual who is now awaiting a deportation hearing. Those are the facts.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Here we have a justice minister who claims that her duty to Cabinet, as Minister of Justice, is to keep secret the information she has on a criminal, to conceal it from her Cabinet colleagues.

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I am asking the Prime Minister, the one responsible for his team and a former Minister of Justice, if he considers that the Minister of Justice has a duty to keep information of this type quiet, even if the individual involved becomes a citizen of Canada as a result.

[English]

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is obviously not listening. Let me clarify it for him and the House. What we are dealing with in an extradition request is a state to state communication. The rules around state to state communications prohibit me from making the contents thereof public.

\* \* \*

**RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the throne speech committed the government to supporting the new economy and the scientific infrastructure required to sustain it.

There is broad agreement among the research community that Canada needs a new neutron generating facility at Chalk River as part of that 21st century scientific infrastructure, but this requires a decision from the Department of Finance to fund it.

Is the minister prepared to fund the Canadian neutron facility in Chalk River?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, I want to pay tribute to Mr. Hec Clouthier, a former member of parliament, who was and remains a vigorous advocate of this particular project.

The government is examining the funding requirement for a neutron facility with all due diligence and care. It could well become a very important part of the research establishment within this country. We will be considering in due course where it fits within the important priorities of research for the future.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I think the voters of that riding paid tribute to Mr. Clouthier.

There is some urgency to this matter. The old Canadian neutron generator is scheduled to be shut down in four years. Even if the government made a decision today to proceed with the new facility, it would take five or six years to construct. That means there is a gap in which Canada loses clients for this facility and, more important, the scientists who are needed to make it work.

What is required is a financing decision. In order to finance this facility is the finance minister prepared to make that decision?

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course we take very seriously the timing considerations and the magnitude of this particular science proposal. That will all be considered very carefully.

In the context of the due diligence that the opposition would want us to give in the economic choppy waters to which the Leader of the Opposition refers, we have to be very careful about spending decisions that could total \$500 million in this one case.

\* \* \*

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister of agriculture will know that potato producers in Prince Edward Island affected by the illegal blockade of potatoes by the U.S. are very frustrated with the time it has taken Agriculture Canada to put an assistance package together.

Could the minister now inform the House what assistance will be available to alleviate this financial hurt? Further, how will these potatoes be disposed of in an environmental way?

**Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to announce earlier today up to \$12.6 million for the province of Prince Edward Island to assist with its environmental proposal, as well as \$1.5 million to buy potatoes and transport them for food aid to other parts of Canada.

● (1455)

When we put this together with the existing farm income programs that are there at the present time, this makes up to possibly \$50 million available to assist Prince Edward Island potato farmers.

\* \* \*

**FISHERIES**

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, last month a forest company in my riding was having a community meeting to discuss forest management planning with residents in the High Level area.

However, like a scene out of a Clint Eastwood western, in walked two Department of Fisheries and Oceans officials outfitted with flak jackets and sidearms. They pulled aside the forestry officials and the official from the Alberta government and notified them of a cease and desist order.

Why did the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans think that it was necessary to have a dramatic show of force in this matter rather than meet in their offices in a civilized way?

**Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important to make sure that we take our

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responsibilities seriously in protecting fish habitat. There are times when department officials do take enforcement action. That is part of their job, which they do every single day, and they do a tremendous job.

In this particular case, I will certainly look into all the facts because usually members opposite have their facts all wrong. We will look at it and review it.

**Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I would call that a pretty dramatic show, flak jackets and guns at a public meeting.

What is interesting here is that the government and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have mismanaged the fishery on both the east and west coasts. Now they have had to move inland to landlocked Alberta to ply their trade. In fact, 70 DFO officials have been transferred to Alberta. Heaven help us.

I would like to ask the minister of fisheries, or maybe the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs can answer it better, whether he thinks this heavyhanded, guns ablazing approach of DFO is better than negotiating with the Alberta government in a civilized manner?

**Hon. Herb Dhaliwal (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what is really dramatic is the opposition leader coming to do a press conference in his wetsuit. That is what is really dramatic.

It is the Alliance Party members who stand up in the House all the time talking about providing guns and providing protection for our enforcement people. They cannot make up their minds what they want. One day they want them to get guns and flak jackets and the next day they are not interested in giving them all those protections.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice tells us she cannot intervene publicly on the matter of extradition. I can accept that. However, a discussion with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is not public any more than Cabinet information is public, so far as I know.

If she informed Cabinet or the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, why did the latter not take action immediately. That would have prevented the office of her colleague the Minister of Public Works and Government Services from being involved.

If she did not inform the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, since it was not public, could she tell us why? She could have

done so, as it was not a public matter. Could she give us an answer that holds water, if there is any logic there?

[English]

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, the individual is not a landed immigrant or permanent resident of Canada.

Second, there were no inappropriate interventions made on his behalf. My department receives over 6,000 requests from members of this House annually.

Third, it was the RCMP that did the investigation. As soon as it had the evidence it gave it to my department. Within three weeks that individual was detained and is now awaiting a deportation hearing. That is the way the job is done.

\* \* \*

**AMATEUR SPORT**

**Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, knowing how important the Toronto bid is for the 2008 Olympics and knowing that the technical evaluation has just been completed, could the Secretary of State for Amateur Sport enlighten the House and tell us what the Canadian government has done to make sure we win the 2008 Paralympics and Olympics bids?

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Secretary of State (Amateur Sport), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, finally a serious question. I think the first thing I should do is pay tribute to the organizing company that did a tremendous job. I want to pay tribute to the Toronto bid because it was the only bid that focused on the athletes, which is the most important thing.

• (1500)

[Translation]

Finally, I want to express my pride in this government, because we did more than our homework, we are investing \$500 million in the waterfront and we are putting all our efforts into finally winning this bid.

[English]

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I would like to inform all members that there is a technical problem with the bells. Work is ongoing to rectify this situation.

As today's opposition motion is votable, the proceedings will be interrupted at 5.15 p.m. to put the question to the House. Should a recorded division be demanded, the bells will ring for 15 minutes.

[Translation]

Should the bells not work, the vote will be held at the end of a period of at least 15 minutes and after the arrival of the whips. I therefore encourage the members to act accordingly. I regret any inconvenience this may cause the hon. members.



*Points of Order**[English]***POINTS OF ORDER**

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order arising out of today's question period. There was an announcement made by the minister of agriculture on a very important issue involving a package of aid to Prince Edward Island potato farmers. This was essentially a duplication of effort since the announcement had already been made at the press gallery earlier today.

This is a practice that the government has undertaken time and time again. It has been put on record that the government House leader intends to address the situation and remedy it, but it has not happened yet. In fact, the minister responsible for amateur sport similarly chose question period as the forum to make his ministerial announcement.

The Speaker would be well aware that there is a place in time to do so. There is a designated period during routine business in which a minister of the crown can rise to make an announcement, honour the House with his or her presence, and display an important respect for the Chamber in making these announcements through the Chamber to the Canadian people. Instead the government repeatedly, for reasons that cannot be explained, chooses to honour the media as its forum.

I say with the greatest respect that the media will be here. If there are important announcements that are to be made and relayed to the Canadian people, it can be done more effectively and purposefully through the Chamber.

In his efforts to modernize and to put more relevance and importance in the Chamber, the government House leader mouths those words. Yet the evidence is clear. The government chooses to use the press gallery rather than the Parliament of Canada to make these important announcements.

• (1505)

We would like some direction from the Chair because this is becoming a repeated problem. I respectfully suggest that it further undermines the importance of the Chamber, it adds to this level of cynicism and marginalizes us again.

I urge the Chair to send at least some admonition of this practice so that the government will heed these words, respect the Chamber

and put greater emphasis on this practice of making announcements outside the Chamber.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, the House leader of the Conservative Party, for raising the matter. I was of a mind to raise it myself because today we have had a couple examples.

I was thinking particularly of the announcement made by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. This is the kind of announcement that at one time would have been made in the House, at all times should be made in the House and today should have been made in the House so that members of the opposition could have had a chance to comment.

The member said that this is nothing new. It has been a growing problem but it is new to this extent. There was a time when governments would make much more use of the Chamber.

Given all the talk coming from the government about parliamentary reform, it would seem to me that one of the ways in which opposition members can be inspired to think that the talk about parliamentary reform and restoring dignity to parliament and to this Chamber is serious, is for the government to prevail upon its colleagues and cabinet ministers to not do this sort of thing, but come into the House and make announcements.

This is the place where decisions are made. This is the place where announcements are made. This is the place where the nation's business is supposed to go on, not over in the press gallery. That is why we have these things up here, so the press can come in and see what is going on, not so we can be somewhere else while the business of the nation is being conducted in the press gallery. It just shows a contempt for this place and undermines everything the government might say about parliamentary reform.

I can remember responding to ministerial statements. I am sitting beside a former prime minister. When he was the minister of External Affairs, I was his critic. I will give him the credit because he used to make many government policy statements in the House. That was not true of all his cabinet colleagues. It was during that time that others started to do what this government now does as a matter of routine.

We need to get back to taking the House seriously. That is what we are here for. As long as we have a situation where anything that is really important gets announced somewhere else, and anything that is really important legislatively cannot be debated for more than a day and a half, then what the heck is the point of being here if the government is going to treat this place they way they are treating it?

*Points of Order*

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I would like just to agree briefly with the hon. members who have just spoken. I would ask the Speaker to check back on Speaker Parent's ruling in the start of the last parliament.

He was confronted with the same sort of a problem where the government consistently made announcements outside this place instead of using ministerial statements. Speaker Parent at that time said he was disturbed by the trend. He urged the government to change its policy and to start treating the House with the respect it deserved. The error, if I can say, was not in the ruling of Speaker Parent. The error was in the lack of follow-up.

What happened was that although the Speaker chastized the government for what was done, and although many people on the government side kind of nodded that they should do that, nothing changed. The Speaker did not intervene at successive times to say that he had enough and that he wanted this place treated with the respect it deserved.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to review the ruling of Speaker Parent where he urged the government to change its ways. I urge you to do the same, only this time say that there will be follow-up on it, that there will be teeth to your ruling, that you will not only agree with the suggestions of the opposition parties, but that you insist that the House be treated with respect.

Even earlier today we could take our pick of subjects. I listened to the Minister of Canadian Heritage talk about a blue ribbon panel that she was going to strike to talk about the future of the CRTC. What is going on? There is a blue ribbon panel, chosen by the minister, with people who she is comfortable with. The decision is probably already cooked up and made, instead of referring the future of broadcasting in Canada to a parliamentary committee where it should be discussed and debated by parliamentarians.

• (1510)

What is going on? Why is it that whenever the government wants something in a certain manner, preordained or in a controlled press release fashion, it does not come to the House and involve members of parliament. It does it by fiat. It is time that the government change that. No wonder its own backbenchers cannot even see reason to show up for work when the work is all done by ministers at an executive level somewhere else outside of this place.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to prolong this debate, but still I would like

to join my colleagues in saying how damaging this practice is for the institution of which we are a part.

Increasingly, we are seeing the public lose interest in politics, a trend about which, unfortunately, it appears nothing can be done. We are seeing a growing cynicism with respect to political institutions, and this chamber in particular.

I think that one explanation for such an attitude on the part of the public is the cynicism shown by the government when it trivializes this institution as it does when it makes announcements outside the House that have a direct impact on the conduct of the government's affairs.

I urge the Chair to give very serious thought to this matter, which has quite rightly been submitted to it by the member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough.

[English]

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to contribute only briefly to this debate. As you know, Standing Order 33 refers to the fact that the government may make short factual announcements or statements in the House under the provision of that particular standing order. That does not say that government announcements of any kind must be made in the House, although I agree that more announcements should be made on the floor of the House of Commons.

If we are successful in undertaking a program of reviewing our standing orders, together with colleagues of other parties, I certainly would be willing to do my share to ensure that we increase the number of announcements that are made on the floor of the House.

That being said, I am sure the Chair has probably already thought of this because it cuts both ways. Today we are debating an opposition motion on a very important subject. I learned of this opposition motion because a press conference was held. It was not because the motion was tabled on the order paper or that it was made aware to the House in any other way. It was because a press conference was called in the same room where it is now denounced that the cabinet minister made his announcement several days before the debate even took place in the House.

Therefore, although I agree in principle with what is said, it is not something that applies only unidimensional in this place. The amount of usage of the facility of this place to make things known, if it is to increase, and I am one of those who thinks it should, it has to increase on all sides of the House. Calling press conferences about a private member's bill not yet released on the floor of the House and making it available to the public when a government bill for instance cannot even get that treatment right now, is not something that I particularly enjoy either.

It works both ways. I am willing to do my share should we be able to get that committee started. I hope hon. members from other political parties will go at it with the same attitude to see what we can do to increase those kinds of statements, announcements, motions being introduced and so on on the floor of the House as opposed to elsewhere first.

**The Speaker:** I think the Chair has heard enough on this point to be able to bring the matter to a conclusion. I appreciate the intervention of all hon. members on this very important point.

[*Translation*]

When the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough began his remarks, I thought he would quote me on this point, because I clearly remember raising the same point from time to time in the House when I was in opposition.

• (1515)

[*English*]

Having done so, I have to say that the points of order I raised at that time were unsuccessful, as his are today, because there is now a series of precedents that in my view are quite binding on the Chair on this point. I refer all hon. members to that wonderful work, Marleau and Montpetit, at page 379. It states:

A Minister is under no obligation to make a statement in the House. The decision of a Minister to make an announcement outside of the House instead of making a statement in the House during Routine Proceedings has been raised as a question of privilege, but the Chair has consistently found there to be no grounds to support a claim that any privilege has been breached.

The learned authors of this work cite a series of examples starting in the *Debates* of November 1, 1974, and in March 2, 1977, February 17, 1978, February 8, 1982, December 2, 1985, October 4, 1989, February 18, 1998, and December 3, 1998.

I would urge all hon. members interested in this point to look at these precedents that are referred to in footnote 145 on page 379 of Marleau and Montpetit, to examine the words that were used then and to examine the rulings of the Chair in each case. I am afraid I have to agree with those rulings, however reluctantly today, having made, as I say, the same argument myself when I sat in a position similar to that of the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough. I think the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona and I probably argued the same point at one time as well.

I am very sympathetic to the point raised and I think the government House leader has shown some sympathy, but I hope that in discussions between the parties suitable arrangements can be made. Those are beyond the control of the Speaker.

I thank all hon. members for their interventions on this point.

*Supply*

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

**Mr. John McKay (Scarborough East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if I may, I will make a final point with respect to the DNA registry which was created in the last parliament.

Canadians need to know that in the last parliament there was a DNA registry created. DNA can be obtained by two methods. One is under section 487.05, which has an ex parte application. Canadians need to know that when an ex parte application is made by a police officer to a judge or by a crown attorney to a judge, he or she has to be satisfied that it is in the best interests of the administration of justice to issue a warrant.

Then it goes to a schedule of offences for which a warrant can be issued for a DNA analysis. They include a number of the offences that members opposite are most interested in with respect to their motion, namely: section 151, sexual interference; section 152, sexual touching; section 272, sexual assault with a weapon, et cetera. There is an ability on the part of the police and the crown to get evidence of a DNA nature available to them in order for them to be able to compare their crime scene index with the analysis.

In the last parliament we also passed a bill which is in some respects quite radical and to my knowledge has not been tested before the courts at this point but likely will be, and that is the ability on the part of the crown to obtain DNA from people who are convicted and not necessarily make the linkage between one crime scene index and another. This would apply to people under section 487.055, before the coming into force. Before the coming into force of this section, one may make an ex parte application for someone who has committed a murder, more than one murder at different times, or who before the coming into force of this subsection is convicted of more than one sexual offence within the meaning of subsection 487.05(3).

• (1520)

These are the kinds of applications that members opposite are most interested in. They give the police a tremendous tool to compare what they have on their crime scene index with a convicted pedophile. They can compare those two and in fact link individuals in prison with DNA analysis.

*Supply*

In summary, the past parliament passed Bill C-7, which tags pedophiles for pardon applications. Bill C-753 is a long term offender designation so that people who are convicted of these kinds of crimes can be required to report for up to 10 years after they have served their sentences. There is also the DNA section.

I am quite supportive of the motion and if it means that the registry needs to be expanded or the computer system needs to be upgraded, I cannot see how I would mount any argument against the motion.

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the comments of the member opposite. I think we are getting closer to an understanding.

There is no question that with an upgrade of the 30 year old CPIC system it is possible to integrate it with a sex offender registry. I hope that is the intent of the government.

However, a couple of things are missing. For a sex offender registry to be current it is necessary to have an obligation on behalf of the offender to report all changes where they occur, at the time they occur and to reconfirm at least once a year. That puts the onus on the individual to keep the system upgraded. That is what we are talking about.

The Canadian Police Association said very recently that CPIC does not provide police agencies with adequate information and notification concerning the release or arrival of sex offenders into their communities. That is what we have been talking about all day. The difficulty we are having on this side is that government members are saying they agree with the sex offender registry, as I think we all do, but they are saying that what is, is okay. However, the rest of the country is saying that what is, is not okay, including the police, who ought to know.

I would like to ask my colleague how on earth it is possible to just plain use what is currently in CPIC without the mandate for the offender showing up in person to update the record and for providing a penalty if the offender does not. Let us not debate about what the penalty is. However, there must be a penalty if the offender does not show up. That is how we get the mandate. I would like the hon. member to answer that.

**Mr. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that we are changing the focus of the debate. The initial debate as I had understood it was that the opposition wished to have the government create a separate offender registry for sexual offences. Now the debate seems to be focusing on whether an individual can be forced to report his or her whereabouts on a certain schedule of offences.

In principle I cannot argue with that point, except that I would then ask the member opposite if it is more important that a community have sex offenders report to a registry or would one include additional criminal code offences as well, such as murder

or manslaughter. If the member still wishes to limit it to a certain schedule of sexual offences, I would like to know why those offences are of more critical importance to the community than the knowledge with respect to other kinds of criminal code offences. I am happy to debate that point, but I think that is the essence of it. If we are going to open it up for these kinds of offences, why not for all other criminal code offences as well?

• (1525)

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, certainly this would be an issue where we would want to examine the very point the member makes: the protection of our children and the protection of our communities. That is the point we are attempting to make in the House today. Perhaps that is lost on my colleague. I do not expect it is, because he is a knowledgeable individual.

I am going to ask him a very direct question. Will he support this motion, and not only that, will he also, in his capacity and his influence with the government, move forward to ensure that legislation is put in place which will be put into effect to implement this registry? Rather than simply saying yes, the government agrees with the motion, will he take the steps necessary within his own group to move this forward and put it in place as legislation in order to protect our children?

**Mr. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, I think I have spoken for the last 20 minutes in support of the generalized motion. What the hon. member is asking is how to get down to the specifics.

The issue is that the index would have to be expanded. If it is within the context of CPIC, then I cannot see what the argument is. If in fact we get the co-operation of all police forces and all attorneys general, then I cannot see what the argument is. If in fact there is a funding formula that would be available to this kind of issue, then I cannot see what the argument is.

I can see some debate as to why it would be this kind of set of convictions as opposed to a more expanded set of convictions. That is somewhat more problematic, because we are running into the fundamental principle of law that once someone has served a sentence he or she has paid their debt to society and it is over with. If we can get past that intellectual point, then I can see how members on this side could actually be much more aggressive in their support of the motion that is put forward.

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, what we are hearing today from the hon. member across the way is just absolutely unbelievable. He is suggesting that we should get concurrence from all the attorneys general and all the police forces across the country—I do not know whether he is going to take the time to ask every single police dog what it thinks too—before the government gets off its hind end and actually thinks about passing some legislation to protect our children.

*Supply*

It absolutely confounds me that the government has no problem imposing upon every legal law abiding gun owner in the country that he or she must register their firearm. When that was brought forward it was supposedly because if one life was saved it would be worth the hundreds of millions of dollars it would cost, worth all the inconvenience it would impose and worth the attack on the privacy of our citizens. The government said it was fine if it saved one life, but when it comes to bringing forward meaningful legislation to initiate a sexual predator registry, suddenly we have to get all the provinces, all the police forces and everybody else in line. That did not seem to be a problem when it imposed upon the provinces the so called national firearms registration.

Why is it that the government can pick and choose? It can bring in something very quickly when it wants to, like the registration for firearms, but it has to have everybody singing from the same song sheet when it comes to something as fundamental as protecting the lives and welfare of our children.

**Mr. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, there is a certain irony in the hon. member's question, because in certain arguments the hon. member wishes to argue that our indexes and registry systems do not work, that they are too expensive and that they do not catch any criminals anyway, but for this kind of registry, it is not expensive, it is protection and it is a good initiative in criminal law. I must admit that it does strike me as a somewhat ironic argument from the opposite side.

Having said that, the administration of justice is a joint responsibility between the provinces and territories and the federal government. Frankly, if there is no consensus among the attorneys general and the police forces with respect to this issue, then I would respectfully submit that we are wasting our time.

• (1530)

I understand the police to be supportive of this initiative. At least the Canadian Police Association is supportive. I assume the chiefs are supportive. I assume that many of the municipalities are supportive. I assume that a number of the attorneys general are supportive. If all those people are prepared to be co-operative in this initiative then I cannot see why the Government of Canada would not be similarly co-operative.

I reiterate the point that if there is that high level of co-operation among all the participants in the system, then I cannot see why we would not update and upgrade the CPIC system to do what the hon. members have in mind.

**Mr. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, again I cannot understand where the hon. member is coming from. He says that it is ironic that the Canadian Alliance questions a registration system that imposes upon law-abiding citizens the need to register their firearms, but we do not impose the need for convicted pedophiles and sexual

predators to register when they move into a community. Can he not see the difference?

**Mr. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a mixing of apples and oranges in the hon. member's mind. Where there is an efficacy that can be established in the creation of the index, then I do not know why we would oppose it.

To stay with the debate, the issue is: Would this be a useful police initiative? Would it be a useful initiative on the part of the Government of Canada? Obviously, from our side, we think the motion is supportable. We are into the how's rather than the principle.

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege and a pleasure for me to stand and speak in support of establishing a national sex offender registry. I do so today in memory of Christopher Stephenson, an 11 year old Toronto boy who was abducted, raped and murdered by a repeat sex offender.

Joseph Fredericks had a long history of assaulting children. He spent most of his life in psychiatric institutions. He was on mandatory supervision when Christopher was killed. I fully recognize that in this particular case a registry may not have prevented this sadistic killer from committing such a horrific act. However, as many have argued here today, it may have prevented him from killing the young boy. It may have allowed police officers to find and incarcerate Fredericks before Christopher's death.

As noted in many of the speeches already presented by my colleagues, we are proposing to establish a registry that would contain the names and addresses of convicted sex offenders. Every offender would be required to register in person at his or her local police station at least once a year. During that time they would be required to provide any updated information that the police force may ask for in order to combat sex offences.

As already mentioned today, a number of provincial jurisdictions have established this registry already. In the case of Ontario, Christopher's law, or Bill C-31, received royal assent in April 2000. It established a registry that aims to ensure the safety and security of all persons in that province by providing the information and investigative tools required to prevent and solve crimes of a sexual nature.

Before proceeding further, I would like to caution members on the other side of the House, particularly those who were here in or prior to 1993, to carefully consider their position on the motion today.

I issue such a warning because I have a copy of an April 1993 document titled "A Liberal Perspective on Crime and Justice Issues". Contained within that document are a number of recom-

*Supply*

recommendations put forward by the then official opposition, one being to “combat Canada’s growing violent crime problem.”

I commend the Liberal Party that while it was in opposition it recognized and realized there was a growing violent crime problem. That problem is still here today.

• (1535)

One of the recommendations that was put forward appears on page 7 of the Liberal document: “to support the establishment of a national registry of convicted child abusers”. The rationale for the recommendation was:

Sex offenders represent almost 20 per cent of the incarcerated population and 10 per cent of the conditionally released population. These numbers are not an accurate representation as they include only those sentenced to two years or more in prison. Actual figures are much higher.

Over the past five years there has been a 20.4 per cent increase in the rate of admission of sex offences. Evidently more and more sex offenders will be reintegrating into Canadian communities.

The Liberal’s own findings went on to reveal:

Repeat sex offenders are more than twice as likely to commit further sex offences, much more likely to violate conditional release conditions and more likely than any other offenders to reoffend with a non-sexual offence. However, treatment programs for sexual offenders are sorely lacking.

When referring to the Tory government at the time the document stated:

The federal government is spending approximately \$98 million a year to incarcerate sex offenders and only \$2 million a year on treatment programs to rehabilitate them.

It went on to state:

It is the norm, when it should be the exception, that convicted sexual offenders return to communities without any counselling or rehabilitation therapy.

I do not often agree with the Liberal Party, but I certainly agree with its findings in this instance. Most of my colleagues and I agree with the information that was given out by the Liberal Party in 1993 to support its own recommendation for a national registry of convicted child abusers.

The Liberal’s information is fully supported by a number of good studies which repeatedly indicate that sex offenders have one of the highest recidivism rates of any criminal group, with an estimated 40% reoffending within five years of release.

As well, research indicates that offender treatment programs have shown limited results. Practitioners in the field of sex offender treatment never claim to cure sex offenders, but rather they claim to manage the risk of reoffending.

What has changed over the last eight years? What has changed since the Liberals produced this great document on growth and

violent crime? What is it that has so adamantly changed their minds that they have not implemented the program they wished to implement in 1993? Why have they not established this registry?

Moderately more money is being spent on treatment programs. According to the CSC’s most recent figures, approximately \$150 million is spent to incarcerate offenders and a little over \$8 million is spent on treatment. That is a slight improvement over the figures released by the Liberals when the Tories were in power.

Not all sex offenders are fully completing the courses, the necessary plans that are prescribed by the CSC officials, because treatment is not compulsory. When they are incarcerated it is not compulsory that they undergo rehabilitation programs.

I can only surmise that it must be amnesia. Perhaps the Liberal Party is growing old or perhaps it is strictly amnesia that is causing it to forget about the recommendations or promises it once so believed in, or claimed to believe in.

The Liberal government forgot the recommendation to support a registry just like it forgot the recommendation to scrap the GST, just like it forgot the recommendation to forget free trade, just like it forgot the recommendation to have an ethics counsellor who reported directly to parliament. We have a very forgetful government.

To better illustrate the need for a national registry I will read some excerpts from an article that appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* a number of years ago. It stated:

A pedophile named Martin Dubuc was convicted. . .for offences against children—again. This is the same Martin Dubuc who, as a boys’ hockey coach in Laval, was convicted in 1986 for molesting team members, the same creep who, after his release from prison, did not let a lifetime ban on coaching in Quebec stop him.

He simply changed locales, becoming a coach and eventually president of the Minor Hockey Association of Southwest Montreal. But that neglect by the recreation establishment is an old scandal. The new scandal involves the schools. It came to light last week when Dubuc pleaded guilty to using the telephone to threaten several boys aged 10 to 13 and to incite them to touch themselves sexually. Somehow, he had slithered his way into elementary schools as a substitute teacher. And this was not a slip-up by just one organization. In recent years, three different school boards in the Montreal area had hired Dubuc.

• (1540)

The *Gazette* went on to say:

This case illustrates the chilling way in which predators with long criminal records can worm their way into positions of trust and authority to harm children.

The author of the article went on to say that this was not a slip-up by simply one organization. It was a slip up by many organizations. One of those organizations was the Liberal organization across the way. One of them was the Liberal government because it failed to establish the national registry that it had once recommended.

In closing, I call upon members sitting opposite to honour their past promises. It is better to be late than never. Sexual criminal offences are all about control and power. For the sake of our children, let us take control away from the offender and give it back to our police forces, back to those who would fight crime. For the sake of our children, let us protect society and let us begin now with a national sex offender program and registry.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments of my colleague. He is certainly right.

Unfortunately the well known rat pack and the well known fighters for crime back in the good old days when the Liberals were in opposition have totally gone by the wayside in terms of the information they were trying to bring forward in this place to tighten the laws that protect our children.

Now they seem to have a short memory about what they intended to do. They have forgotten the vigorousness they put into proposing their solutions to the government of the day, the Conservatives, about what they would do. Now they have totally backed down. That is not a surprise. After being here seven years I see that going on all the time.

I am really concerned that we have a major issue here where a number of offenders are getting very short sentences. Our justice system is not doing a service to a lot of people when it comes to sentencing. These offenders are in for a short time so we know they will come out. They will come out in huge numbers because, as my colleague said, about 20% to 25% of those incarcerated are sex offenders. It could even be higher than that.

Does the member not agree that the justice system treats offences lightly and that the justice system believes in plea bargaining, such as with Karla Homolka who will be released one day soon because of plea bargaining? It has been stated numerous times that she will kill and offend again. These kinds of indicators are one of the greatest reasons we should have this registry in place? The government should be sitting here in droves to fight for the children of the country instead of the piddly few we see here.

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member beside me for such a good question. It boils down to this: Do we want to fight crime or do we want to deal with the effects of crime? Do we want to put in place what the police forces are asking for? They are asking for a registry that would not only be a record of the case or of the conviction of an offender but a record that would allow them to know where the offenders were so they could prevent it from happening again.

• (1545 )

We want more than record keeping. We want a tool put in place to help us fight crime. As we learned in question period today,

### *Supply*

people on the most wanted list are in Canada. They have been here for two years. The government does not seem anxious about this until these individuals are forced to leave. Then two years later it will deal with the crime and say that at least the individuals did not commit anymore.

The Liberal document that I received this morning deals with the need to fight pornography at the root and not allow it to go the next step. The document states that there should be a registry available to groups who would hire people who work with children. It goes on to talk about pornography and making it illegal to possess it.

In the past we have sat passively by watching the courts rule on decisions. The government has had no will to fight crime but there has been a will to rehabilitate and reintegrate. One of my greatest concerns is that we are now compromising on that. That is exactly what this member said.

We are now saying that not only are we not going to fight crime by giving police officers the ability to know where these individuals are, but we are going to lower the amount of time they are incarcerated. We are not going to make it compulsory for these individuals go through education programs while incarcerated. This is an injustice to our society and to our children. It is time we stand up for the sake of our children and our grandchildren.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, the Saturday headline in the *Globe and Mail* said it all “Pedophile back in jail for the fourth time”.

Finally after four convictions one sex offender has been required by the courts to tell police where he lives after he has been released from jail. A sex offender registry for one pedophile. What about the thousands of sex offenders who are on the loose and the police do not know where they live?

Last week the Calgary *Sun* headline screamed “Attack Stuns Community; Cops Launch Manhunt for Pedophile”. The newspaper reported that the assault took place Sunday night when a male armed with a knife rang the doorbell and forced his way into the house after the 14 year old babysitter answered the door. The pedophile locked the babysitter in the bathroom and then proceeded to sexually assault two sisters, aged 6 and 7.

Outraged Calgary parent Carrie Kohan said “What happened Sunday was the last straw”. She organized a rally last Friday to demand tougher first time penalties for child abuse and a national registry.

Fortunately the police were able to arrest the sex offender in this case within a few days. How much faster would they have apprehended this sicko if they had a registry of sex offenders residing in the city of Calgary? Would a sex offender registry have prevented this attack? We will never know.

*Supply*

It is terrible that the government has lost touch with the priorities of the people when it comes to fighting crime. Instead of implementing a national sex offender registry for convicted criminals back in 1995, the government implemented a national firearms registry for law-abiding citizens.

The Liberals by their actions demonstrated quite clearly that protecting women and children was not one of their priorities. They talk the talk but they do not walk the walk. This speech will expose the government's complete lack of political judgment when it comes to understanding people's priorities. The Liberals give the impression they are compassionate but the opposite is true when we examine what they did.

Until today, the government opposed a sex offender registry that could help police prevent crime and protect the public. Instead it supported spending \$600 million on a useless gun registry. The police asked for a DNA databank for all criminals which would operate just like the national fingerprint system. However, the government refused opting instead for a system that protected criminals more than it did victims.

While the government refused to give police real tools to use to investigate sexual crimes and violent offences, the government chose to blow hundreds of millions of dollars on a gun registry with a 90% error rate. Now in an admission of defeat, the government is laying off staff, tripling production of registration applications and halting all attempts to accurately verify and identify firearms. This is another broken Liberal promise.

Members may remember in 1995 when parliament was promised that the gun registry would help police trace firearms. Police cannot trace something the registration system does not accurately identify.

• (1550)

Why did the government refuse to implement a national sex offender registry? We will find the answer in a government document entitled, "Report to Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers on Information Systems on Sex Offenders Against Children and Other Vulnerable Groups". It was prepared by a federal-provincial-territorial working group on high risk offenders in October 1998.

The minister's working group reached a number of conclusions and arguments but not proceeding with the sex offender registry. I will spend the next few minutes outlining these reasons and arguments and commenting on each one.

First, the minister's working group said that a separate sex offender registry would duplicate a part of what has already available through CPIC. The same argument is true of the gun registry but that did not stop the government. Obviously the government thinks law-abiding gun owners are more dangerous than convicted sex offenders.

Second, the minister's working group said that a separate sex offender registry would be expensive and difficult to administer. The government has spent \$600 million on a gun registry and employs about 2,000 government workers. Would a sex offender registry for convicted criminals really have been more expensive and difficult to administer than the gun registry it uses to track law-abiding citizens?

Third, the minister's working group said that the sex offender registry raises serious privacy concerns. On February 16 this year the Privacy Commissioner of Canada wrote me a three page letter outlining the serious privacy concerns he had with the information being collected and how it is used in the gun registry. He said the RCMP's firearms interest police database of some three and a half million Canadians, which is only supposed to have the names potentially dangerous individuals, actually included the names of witnesses and victims of crime. RCMP sources tell us there is a 50% error rate in this database. Canadians will be wondering why the Liberals were more interested in protecting the privacy of convicted sex offenders than they are in protecting the privacy of witnesses and victims of crime and law-abiding gun owners.

Fourth, the minister's working group said the administration of a sex offender registry would be particularly difficult with regard to the verification of identity. This is somehow an insurmountable administrative problem when trying to create a sex offender registry. However when it comes to the gun registry, the Liberals came up with a simple solution, force every law-abiding gun owner to carry a photo ID card. Would the government please explain to victims of sexual assault why it forces law-abiding gun owners to carry a photo ID but a sex offender does not have to?

Fifth, the minister's working group said the information in a sex offender registry would be of limited value unless supported by a more comprehensive screening process. The government did not hesitate to implement a more comprehensive screening process for law-abiding firearms owners. It even asked about marital problems, common law relationships and financial difficulties. These people have not even broken a law. Could the government please explain to the victims of sexual assault why comprehensive screening of convicted sex offenders is off limits?

Sixth, the minister's working group said that the Canadian Police Information Centre, CPIC, is so effective that it really is a national registry of sex offenders. In the very next paragraph it states that CPIC does not provide "compulsory registration of current addresses of sexual offenders beyond the end of any sentence".

Why does the government not force convicted sex offenders to tell police where they live? A law-abiding gun owner can go to jail for up to two years if he or she fails to report an address change. If the Liberals force law-abiding firearms owners in the country to report every time they move, why not convicted sex offenders? The only conclusion one can reach is that the Liberals obviously think a



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law-abiding firearms owner is more dangerous than a convicted sex offender.

Seventh, the minister's working group said even with compulsory registration of sex offenders compliance would be low and that it would drive sex offenders underground. Gun owners who do not comply face a criminal penalty of up to 10 years in jail. Why does the government threaten sex offenders with 10 years in jail to see if they will comply? The Liberals are already claiming an 80% compliance rate with gun owners.

• (1555)

Eighth, the minister's working group said that without fingerprinting identification it would never be possible to be certain of the identity of a registered sex offender. The group says verifying the identity of the sex offender is further complicated by the falsification of records, misspelled names, duplicate names and can lead to serious problems of misidentification.

This is an every day occurrence in the gun registry where totally innocent people are confused with someone who incorrectly entered the RCMP database. Firearms officers are forced to investigate totally innocent people to confirm their identity. The RCMP records are never corrected so it happens again and again. Totally innocent people are publicly humiliated and investigated over and over again. Heaven forbid the Liberals would ever put convicted sex offenders through such a process.

Meanwhile, as the Liberal government put millions of law-abiding gun owners through this bureaucratic nightmare and humiliating hell making them pay a fee for the privilege, the Liberals gave thousands and thousands of sex offenders a free hand. Unfortunately some of these hands ended up molesting our children.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I did not expect there would be any Liberals who would get up and ask a question. Therefore, I am pleased to do so in order to give the member an opportunity to tell us more with respect to his excellent comparison he put forward on what the law-abiding people, called gun owners, are going through regarding the registration that was implemented by the government, by the way, without the approval of all the provincial attorneys general. However with this particular registry, it insists it must have the approval of all the provincial attorneys general.

Is there anything else that the hon. member could deliver with regard to this great comparison?

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz:** Madam Speaker, the member makes a good point. When the Liberals choose to find an excuse for not doing something they will find it. They will blame other people.

When they have ample opportunity to do something right, they do not.

In 1995 the government had a choice. Sadly for our children and the most vulnerable in our society they made the wrong one.

When the next election rolls around I hope that the women, the children, the elderly and all Canadians who care about making our lives safer will remember the bad choice the Liberals made when they opposed the sex offender registry.

The Liberals are good at sounding compassionate without really being compassionate. I will continue to tell Canadians the truth about what the Liberals do. It is always the opposite of what they say. Registering law-abiding citizens but not criminals may be the Liberal way but it is the wrong way.

I heard today about how the Liberals agree with this motion. Will they act on it? We will see. Their past record does not speak well for them. Everyone in Canada should know it should be the other way around but try to tell them that when they are playing politics with the safety of our children.

Just today the solicitor general said that the government was not just going to spend dollars to create new registries. What did it do? In the next two years it is going to create a registry of private property, namely firearms. It is going to cost a horrific amount of money and there will be no benefit to it.

Back in 1995 the government said that if it created a gun registry and it saved one life it was going to be worth it. It has already cost one life. It was so poorly drafted that it has already cost one life in Newfoundland. We do not hear the Liberals saying anything about it. Here we have the opportunity to save lives, to protect the most vulnerable in society and they talk the talk but they do not walk the walk.

The solicitor general said that politicians do not get involved in law enforcement. The police in this country would like to have what we are calling for today. If we talk to grassroots policemen they have no use for the gun registry. It is an absolute useless tool to them. Professional criminals do not use a registry that can link them to any crime. It is as simple as that.

I would like to conclude with this.

• (1600)

It seems that when real criminals become more difficult to find, arrest or prosecute, the government lawmakers, the courts and the police turn to increasing their control of law abiding citizens. That seems to be what is happening in Canada.

Let us go after the real criminal.

*Supply*

**Mr. Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this motion, which reads:

That the government establish a national sex offender registry, by January 1, 2002.

Obviously I am able to support that motion because there already exists such a national registry. It is called the Canadian Police Information Centre, CPIC. I want to make it perfectly clear that while I am able to support the motion, I certainly do not support some of the premises and some of the arguments we have been hearing from the official opposition in the course of today's debate.

If we would listen to the official opposition, we would believe that the government has been sitting on its hands and doing absolutely nothing as far as protection of society is concerned.

Madam Speaker, I know that as a former Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice you are fully aware of many of the initiatives the government has undertaken over the last few years.

I would like to mention just a few of them. There is the national screening system that was put in place in 1994 and allows an agency serving children to request a local police criminal background check through CPIC on anybody wanting to be involved with that agency. In 1999 the solicitor general announced an additional \$115 million to renew and enhance CPIC.

The Liberal government has taken a number of steps to protect our children and other targets of sex offenders. For instance, in 1997 the Liberal government passed a number of tough measures dealing with high risk offenders, including sex offenders, to strengthen the sentencing and correctional regime. These include a new long term offender designation which permits supervision of up to 10 years following release from prison. There is also a strengthening of the dangerous offender provision which requires judges to impose indeterminate sentences on all dangerous offenders. There are also new measures in judicial restraining provisions for certain individuals.

There is also the national flagging system. In the year 2000, Bill C-7 was passed, which ensures that even the records of pardoned sex offenders are available through the screening process. Colleagues have made also reference to the DNA identification act, whereby DNA profiles are preserved in a convicted offenders index.

These are all measures that have been put in place by the government to ensure the protection of society, and in particular, children and people who might be susceptible to sex offenders.

I will take the rest of my time to concentrate on what it is that we are doing here today and what the gist of the motion is. Today is a

supply day, commonly known as an opposition day, when the opposition gets to choose the topic for debate and put a motion forward for consideration by the House.

Unfortunately, inasmuch as the whole issue of sex offenders is a very serious subject, we are once again seeing partisan politics coming from the opposition party. We hear those party members complain about the way things function around here and about how the government does not listen to their concerns, et cetera. When they have an opportunity to bring forward serious subjects in a serious fashion, we get tricked up opposition day motions. They employ a little device whereby, in this case, they amend the date on the motion, which prevents the government from bringing forward meaningful amendments to the motion so that we can deal with the very serious issues that this whole topic engenders.

● (1605)

There are a lot of things we could be discussing. There are a lot of implications in the subject matter we have here, but with the limited motion designed to entrap the government members so that they would be embarrassed by the vote, it is that trick question where a person is held culpable whether he or she says yes or no. This is the type of tactic that has been employed here. That is why I personally have no compulsion in supporting the motion on the basis that the registry already exists, because I think that is more or less in the spirit of the motion that has been presented.

It also gets us to the point that the opposition would have Canadians believe that crime is out of control in our streets and that we need these draconian measures that have been suggested from time to time in order to increase penalties and in order to protect society. That is the spirit I do not want to be seen to be contributing to and supporting through my support for this motion.

We have a perfect example of this, and that was the Sharpe decision on possession of child pornography, where the opposition, in an opposition day motion, brought a motion to invoke the notwithstanding clause to overturn the B.C. court's decision. Obviously the government was not prepared to invoke the notwithstanding clause to overturn a trial court decision or even the British Columbia Court of Appeal decision when we had recourse to the Supreme Court of Canada, so the government voted against that opposition day motion.

Lo and behold, in the most recent campaign in November 2000 it became an issue when the Alliance candidate in my riding said that the member of parliament for Simcoe North obviously supported child pornography because he voted against an opposition day motion, refusing to invoke the notwithstanding clause to overturn the Sharpe decision. By the way, the Alliance candidate was only parroting what his leader was saying on that same motion in the middle of the campaign. To that I attribute the increase in my plurality from 45% to 51%.

*Supply*

[Translation]

The constituents of Simcoe North know their member. They know that he does not condone child pornography, but that these arguments go too far. When one is dealing with extremists who take their arguments too far, this is a big help in opposing them.

The House should also know that polls were released this week showing that 54% of the Canadians questioned think that more funding is needed for crime prevention programs. What we do not need are measures such as those proposed by the opposition, which keeps calling for tougher sentences because they think that is what the public wants, even though all the experts say the opposite.

[English]

However, I think the Canadian public has passed the opposition on this issue. The Canadian public in that poll this week is way ahead of the opposition and knows full well that crime prevention and measures that lead toward rehabilitation are the best ways to protect Canadian society. The best way is not necessarily to bring in more draconian measures.

In conclusion, I just want to confirm that since the CPIC system already exists, which is in conformity with the motion, I will be able to support the motion, but I do want to make it very clear that I certainly do not support the spirit behind the motion.

• (1610)

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I think it is a known fact in the House and certainly I believe in Simcoe North and elsewhere throughout Ontario and Canada, that the hon. member who just spoke is a leading advocate when it comes to crime prevention and rehabilitation. At the end of his speech he spoke eloquently about that.

Over the last little while and certainly today again we have heard from the reformed Alliance people the knee-jerk kind of reactionary, simplistic view that they hold with respect to issues regarding law and order. It really is unbelievable.

Registries do not work, they said. They are too bureaucratic, they said. Registries are too expensive, they said. They are too expensive to justify the crimes they prevent, they said. They will not work if people are expected to voluntarily register. There it is. There the reformed Alliance people go again, saying one thing when it suits their purposes and quite another when it suits other purposes, and usually in different parts of the country. Gee whiz, is that not always the way they are?

My question to the hon. member for Simcoe North is this: would he go on to elaborate a little about the benefits of crime prevention

and the good work the government has done in that area? I know that he has worked hard and has done so, rightly so.

**Mr. Paul DeVillers:** Madam Speaker, I think the government has demonstrated through its crime prevention initiatives and in the most recent election platform where more funds were dedicated to crime prevention that this is definitely the way to protect society. We need to invest in programs. In my riding of Simcoe North there are several good examples of groups of people working with young offenders and taking a sort of sentencing circle approach, where the young offender is brought before the person who suffered the damage from the offender's acts of vandalism et cetera.

These are the types of initiatives that the crime prevention funds are there to support. Those are the kinds of initiatives that will be successful in protecting our society. We need to know that early intervention is the best method of dealing with these folks.

What we do not need are references to Karla Homolka, because that catches people's attention. I heard it referred to again today. I noticed in the TV coverage this morning that the corrections minister for Ontario was talking about Karla Homolka and using her as an example of how statutory release is not working, but Karla Homolka has been detained until her warrant expiry date.

The minister of the provincial government was referring to Karla Homolka in a statutory release situation and saying that the federal government has to fix it. The problem with the Karla Homolka case was the plea bargain that was done through the office of the attorney general of Ontario. It is a provincial issue. There is no lax federal policy that contributes to the concern that people are experiencing there. It is something that they can look to their own backyard and deal with, but no, they want to use that example because they know it catches the attention of the media and the public.

That is the type of thing we do not need. What we do need are reasonable programs of crime prevention and rehabilitation.

**Mr. Bryon Wilfert (Oak Ridges, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on the motion. When it comes to the matter of protecting children and other potential victims from sexual offenders, as an educator for over 20 years I certainly support the motion and indicate that in our society there are no more precious individuals than children. Anything we can do to protect them from the scourge of sexual predators is extremely important.

• (1615)

In a nutshell, it is acknowledged that our shared objective in the House as parliamentarians is to put into place every measure we can find within the jurisdiction of parliament that will effectively protect society from the threat posed by sex offenders.

*Supply*

Because of the importance of this issue, deserving of the utmost attention from all levels of public policy makers, it is only logical that any such registry does not and cannot exist or operate in isolation from other tools and elements in the criminal justice system. These other elements include tough penalties in the criminal code to punish sex crimes, restrictions on parole and probation, peace bonds, treatment programs and crime prevention strategies.

I would like to take a moment to examine the various tools that are already being used to respond to the threat posed by convicted sex offenders.

First and foremost, and in the spirit of prevention, effective criminal laws are key tools and parliament can be proud of its legislative record over the last five or so years in addressing the vulnerability of women and children to sexual exploitation. I would commend the legislative package that was passed in 1997, generally known as Bill C-55, which strengthened the dangerous offender rules in part XXIV of the criminal code and also created a new sentencing provision called long term offender.

Members will recall the dangerous offender system allows the sentencing judge to designate a serious offender to be in a special category based on proof that this individual poses a high risk of violent re-offending.

Studies have shown that over 90% of successful dangerous offender applications involved sex offenders. It was clear that the DO law was a useful tool for going after criminals with long patterns of serious sex crimes but that, given the limited number of dangerous offender designations each year, there were probably a lot more potential DOs out there.

Bill C-55, which was passed early in 1997, strengthened the dangerous offender system. Where it had once been possible to order a dangerous offender to be incarcerated for a certain limited period, the law now required the sentencing judge to impose an indeterminate period of incarceration. The process of risk assessment was streamlined. The amendments also shifted the initial parole review of dangerous offenders from three years into the sentence to the seventh year.

Since 1997 we have seen a doubling of a number of successful dangerous offender applications each year. This is an example of a legislative approach that is meeting the test of effectiveness.

The Bill C-55 package also created an innovative sentencing measure called long term offender. Whereas the dangerous offender sentence targets the worst kind of offenders, as reflected in the fact that we lock them up indefinitely, it was recognized that there were other sex offenders who might not quite meet the high threshold of violence and the risk of a DO but who were risky enough to require an extensive period of supervision.

As specified in the criminal code, sex offenders are clearly the focus of this sentencing category. A convicted long term offender will receive an appropriate penitentiary sentence according to the crime for which he was found guilty, but the court will add up to 10 years of intensive, parole-like supervision. The offender must complete his penitentiary sentence in its entirety before the long term supervision period kicks in. Federal correctional authorities will then add special conditions to the long term supervision order and a breach of those conditions may result in a person being brought back into custody and charges may be laid. This innovative measure has already resulted in over 60 successful long term offender applications.

It is a tragedy that any people, especially children, are subject to sexual abuse and exploitation. The government has declared that the well-being of children and youth is a top priority. In 1997 and later in 1999 parliament passed important measures to protect children from being drawn into the sex trade. The new offence of aggravated procuring was created with a minimum five year sentence to deal with those who use violence against a child and force that child into prostitution related activity. Special protections were instituted to make it easier for children to testify against pimps.

• (1620)

However I must highlight the fact that legislation is not the only solution to the problem of sexual abuse of children. In 1995, in conjunction with the Canadian law enforcement agencies, the solicitor general released a police manual for cases of child exploitation. It is used throughout the country for training. In 1999 the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, working with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, added new guidelines for law enforcement to handle sexual exploitation cases. The guidelines cover intelligence sharing, investigations, officer training and media awareness.

Furthermore, in November of last year the government convened a meeting of federal, provincial and territorial officials to discuss integrated approaches to helping youth involved in prostitution. This turned out to be a good opportunity for workers in the justice and child welfare systems to exchange ideas on prevention, physical and emotional recovery and ways of reintegrating these young people into society. In fact police forces in Canada are steadily improving their ability to deal with sex offence cases.

As another example of progressive contributions to the law enforcement agencies, the RCMP sexual assault investigation course which teaches investigative techniques to members of the force. It is also a forum in which police and social workers communicate and co-operate in techniques to assist sex abuse victims.

In November 1999 the Department of Justice launched an initiative aimed at these citizens who all members would agree are

the most vulnerable. The consultation called “Children as Victims in the Criminal Justice System” had the goal of consulting as widely as possible on four areas: deterring sexual offenders from reoffending against children; creating further child specific offences if needed; making it easier for child victims and child witnesses to testify in court; and reviewing related issues in the area of age of consent. I understand the project is closely linked to the government’s national children’s agenda.

It is unfortunate that abuses continue requiring us to be vigilant in protecting vulnerable groups from exploitation such as the example of pornography. Fortunately, the supreme court upheld for the most part the existing criminal code provisions outlawing the possession of child pornography. However, there is still the risk posed by distribution of pornography on the Internet. I know there are plans in the works to present a new anti-luring offence to parliament which will combat the insidious form of exploitation.

I am providing this background in order to impress upon all members the fact that protecting our children from sex exploitation is a multifaceted approach. It is the process of building on what has proven successful and then innovating with new strategies. It involves an interlinked system of laws and law enforcement, of education and prevention. The initiatives that I have highlighted in the House have been tested in the crucible of the streets, the courts and the prison system.

It is evident that sex offenders would be required to register once they are released from prison or penitentiary, presumably at the expiration of their sentence, although that is not entirely clear. Perhaps they would have to register even if they were still serving their sentence on probation or parole. It is important that we know where these people are. It is important that there is a penalty if they do not register. I do not necessarily think the penalty would be financial. I think it would be re-incarceration.

I conclude by saying that parliament in 1997 passed a peace bond measure, section 810.2 of the criminal code. This recognition applies more generally to anyone who poses a risk of committing a serious personal injury offence. It is not confined to situations where the potential victims are under the age of 14. I commend members to support this resolution.

• (1625)

**Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the House that I will be splitting my time with the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam.

The Liberal Party justice system is not working. It is long past time that the government went back to the drawing board to revise

### *Supply*

its philosophy. Even that most liberal organization known as the John Howard Society seems to finally be accepting that all we have been doing is warehousing criminals for a period of time in our institutions, only to have them released back into society to continue their offending ways.

Maureen Collins, executive director of the Edmonton John Howard Society, stated:

For some people, jail won’t teach them a lesson. It just gets them off the street long enough so they don’t victimize any more people. They go away for a long period of time and never really show any signs of rehabilitation and when they get back on the streets, they re-offend. It’s their choice. And it’s those few who never change their ways who may be forcing the violent crime rate up.

When rehabilitation does not work, and there is more than ample evidence that it does not, then what we are doing is releasing dangerous and violent offenders back into a society where they will commit further violent offences. Is this any way to protect our citizens? With sexual offenders, the victims are almost entirely women and children. As parliamentarians we have a duty and responsibility to attempt to provide whatever protections are necessary while being fair and still recognizing the rights of the offenders.

First, I would like to mention some of the recidivism rates of sex offenders. In 1991 the British Columbia ministry of health tracked the history of 30 child sexual offenders. That study found that each sex offender had molested an average of 70 children, for a total of 2,099, by moving around 62 communities and across five provinces. A similar study in the United States found that 453 offenders admitted to molesting more than 67,000 children in their lifetime. Those who abused girls had an average of 52 victims each, but men who molested boys had an average of 150 victims.

Psychologist Vern Quinsey found that 38% of the sex offenders treated or assessed at the regional treatment centre inside the Kingston penitentiary were rearrested for violent or sex offences after they were released. I am astounded that 38% reoffend.

We allow these individuals to return to our communities without a whole lot of supervision or control and almost 40% of them are caught reoffending. I wonder how many are not caught? We are deliberately permitting violent offenders to return to society and we do not even provide a system whereby our police become aware that these people are in their jurisdiction.

What are we doing? Is this some kind of game where we ensure that the police and the criminal have equal opportunity to do their thing? Are we afraid to put too much information into the hands of law enforcement personnel so that these criminals are given a better than even chance to commit their hideous crimes?

Perhaps the government refuses to create a sex offender registry because the police would have more information on potential suspects within their area. The government seems to want to

*Supply*

prevent the police from becoming too successful. We recently saw how the government, through the office of the corrections commissioner, had a quota system to get 50% of sentenced individuals out into the community in order to cut down on imprisonment costs.

Sex offenders are the fastest growing segment of federal offenders. From 1990 to 1995 the number of imprisoned sex offenders grew by 50%. More than 700 federal sex offenders were being released back into our communities each year during the mid-nineties. I do not have more recent statistics, but would suppose those numbers rose under Commissioner Ole Ingstrup's regime of getting more and more criminals released in order to reduce the workload within our institutions.

Even the government seems to acknowledge the risk to our children of sex offenders being returned to the community. The government program known as the national screening system permits organizations to inquire within the Canadian Police Information Centre, or CPIC, to determine whether potential employees or volunteers working with children have a criminal history. Child sex abusers can be screened out from involvement with children. The system is only good for those sex offenders who apply to work or volunteer with these organizations.

The screening process is limited only to those offenders who decide to participate in the scheme. The system does nothing to stop those who live in the community and prey on children for their sexual gratification. That type of offender remains protected and hidden from disclosure and police supervision. A sexual offender registry would assist to keep control over those individuals.

While the government closes its ears to the complaints and concerns raised about sex offenders continuing to terrorize citizens, it is interesting to see the provinces being forced to act.

• (1630)

The Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police, or SACP, has unanimously supported a provincial sex offender registry. Terry Coleman, chief of police of Moose Jaw and vice-president of SACP states that it does potentially provide a measure of deterrence for offenders because it removes a degree of anonymity.

Ontario has Christopher's Law. It received royal assent back in April 2000. I understand other provinces have been looking at setting up their own sexual offender registry, including my own province of British Columbia.

However this is not the proper way to proceed. Crime statistics support the fact that sexual offenders will move from one province to another. We need a national system. Only in that way can we have a uniform process to assess all our criminals to determine whether they should be included within the sex offender registry.

We have seen time and time again that with justice issues a national setup is often necessary as it cuts the costs to the taxpayer by having one system rather than 13 different operations. With a national system we can also utilize RCMP facilities to maintain the information for everyone. For example, the only way a police officer in British Columbia can learn about a sex offender who used to live in the maritimes is by checking with a central agency or by checking with each of the maritime provinces.

For almost four years now our country has been waiting for the government to act and set up a national sex offender registry. Ontario has grown tired of waiting and has decided to go it alone. It seems to care more for our women and children than do the Liberals, especially the majority of whom come from the province of Ontario. The problem created by this situation is that Ontario may in fact be forcing its sexual offenders to move to other provinces to commit their sexual crimes. The failure of the federal government to act has created a problem in and of itself and has put citizens of other provinces at greater risk.

I recall how the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance used to belittle the Ontario government when it decided to reduce taxes to generate the economy. It took the federal government a couple of years to come to its senses and realize the intelligence behind that move. Last fall the finance minister finally decided to follow the Ontario example and promised lower taxes.

Similarly I recall the Prime Minister being encouraged to address the brain drain a couple of years ago. His answer was that there was no brain drain, that it was all fear mongering. Just this past week I note the industry minister was quite proud to announce \$750 million in new money toward addressing the brain drain that has been dramatically hurting our country. It would seem that the light does indeed go on occasionally.

The government has indicated that it will support the motion. I suggest that it is attempting to scam the Canadian public. It qualifies its support by saying that we already have a registry in the form of CPIC. Thirty thousand members of the Canadian Police Association do not seem to share that few.

In the last election my colleague and neighbour from Surrey Central soundly defeated his Liberal opponent, Peter Warkentin, who proudly proclaimed to the media and anybody else who would listen that he had permission from the Prime Minister to put the issue of a national sex offender registry before parliament if he got elected. I note that he had to have the Prime Minister's permission to do his job, but that is debate for another day. The Liberal campaign co-chair confirmed the commitment and is quoted as saying that the Prime Minister responded by saying that pedophilia was a big issue and that parents had the right to be concerned about that.

I say to the Prime Minister that the issue is now before parliament. This is where the rubber hits the road. Each and every

day citizens are put at risk and we will continue to have needless sex offences committed against more innocent victims.

**Mr. Philip Mayfield (Cariboo—Chilcotin, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Surrey North for the way he has presented his research and the amount of research that he has brought to his speech today.

Knowing his reputation and his interest, is it his opinion that convicted juvenile offenders who have been sexual predators should be included in the proposed registry?

**Mr. Chuck Cadman:** Madam Speaker, in my opinion, yes. I will use one example that I use every time I speak to the issue of young offenders and sexual predators.

In October 1992 in Courtenay, British Columbia, there was the case of a 15 year old offender who had been convicted of molesting three children. Indeed there were up to 22 but he plea bargained to 3. He was put on probation for a year and was supposedly receiving treatment.

• (1635)

He moved from Nanaimo to a Courtenay, unknown to the residents, the townhouse complex and the elementary school that he lived right next door to. One year later he murdered a little six year old girl named Dawn Shaw after sexually assaulting her in the bush. He was the next door neighbour. Her parents, Ron and Carol Shaw, obviously did not know about him and indeed the RCMP in Courtenay did not even know about him.

In my opinion young offenders who are convicted of violent sexual offences, and we are talking about convicted, not suspected, should be included in the registry.

**Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the Canadian Alliance motion on the establishment of a national sex offender registry by January 1, 2002.

At the outset I should like to wholeheartedly thank my constituents in Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam for having endowed me last November with their trust and confidence to represent their best interests in the House. I also thank the member for Langley—Abbotsford for drafting and raising the issue in the House, because it is a central concern to countless families in my constituency.

This is my maiden speech, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the debate on what is the first order of responsibility of the state. What do I mean by that?

### *Supply*

Simply put, if the government cannot balance its budget, if it cannot agree on a standard for weights and measures, if it cannot organize its monetary framework or agree on a national anthem, the first principle and responsibility to state, above all else, is to protect law-abiding citizens from law breakers. It is to separate those who play by the rules of civilized behaviour from those who do not. This is reflected in Abraham Maslow's famous hierarchy of needs that many academics speak about.

The Canadian Alliance motion calls for an effective and meaningful national sex offender registry with teeth. It is something which despite declarations from the government side does not yet exist. We are talking about legislation which mirrors laws that currently exist in the province of Ontario and is being considered in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia. The United Kingdom has already implemented a sex offender registry and all 50 U.S. states have sex offender registries. There are national governing mechanisms in place to organize it.

Instead of taking bold steps and showing leadership, the government has taken refuge in the Canadian Police Information Centre rather than offer real protection for Canadian families and their children through a new national sex offender registry.

The very fact that provinces have moved to implement registries should compel the government to act on a national basis to avoid differing regional and jurisdictional standards and to prevent sex offenders from wandering from one province to another, avoiding accountability for their actions.

This was the exact problem that Americans faced before former president, Bill Clinton, established a national registry with uniform standards. Different states were using different registration criteria and standards as well as different notification and database logistics. This led to inter-jurisdictional disputes and confusion. Under national laws that were established many of these problems have been ironed out.

Canada has an opportunity to learn from those difficulties and establish a national registry. This is an opportunity for the government to show leadership by setting up a national registry ahead of time and avoiding the pitfalls experienced by the United States. The issue is about more than jurisdictions, amendments, committee work and legislation tightening. It is about victims and the right to live free from fear.

Abby Drover is a constituent of mine. In 1976 she was the victim of a horrendous crime. For 181 days she was sexually assaulted and brutalized by Donald Alexander Hay. From March to September of that year, Mr. Hay kept the then 12 year old Abby in a prison under his Port Moody garage for his sexual pleasure. He lured Abby to his house on the offer of a ride to school and forced her into a 36 square

*Supply*

foot room. He handcuffed the young child and secured the handcuffs to the wall of her cell with chains that were bolted into studs anchored into the cell's concrete walls. He fondled, sexually assaulted and raped the young girl repeatedly.

During the final six weeks of her captivity all he brought her to eat was two chocolate bars. He later testified in court that the reason he did this was because he hoped she would just die. On the 181st day of her captivity police found Hay with his pants around his ankles coming up from the entrance to Abby's prison.

• (1640)

He was charged with kidnapping and having sexual intercourse with a female under the age of 14. He was jailed and sentenced to life, but like so many spineless laws we have in the country, Mr. Hay's life sentence allows him to apply for freedom every 24 months.

Parole reports say that Hay has low victim empathy and still needs more insight into his offence. There is every legal possibility that every 24 months Mr. Hay could be released into my constituency and my community.

Will he reoffend if he is released? We do not know. What we do know, according to U.S. department of justice statistics, is that about 50% of rapists and sexual assaulters released into society are rearrested for a new crime and more than one-third are reconvicted. In Canada research from the federal government shows that the longer one tracks a sexual offender, the higher the recidivism rate is. Data indicates that between 42% and 45% of sexual offenders will in fact reoffend.

At issue here is the potential to reoffend and the right of communities to live free from fear. Given the statistics associated with sex offenders and their recidivism rate, there seems to be an obvious responsibility on the House, on our shoulders, to prevent future crimes when and where we can. The registry is a tool to help do precisely that.

Recognizing this reality, some Canadian provinces have already shown leadership in creating sex offender registries, as has been mentioned by the member for Surrey Central and others. In Queen's Park on February 28, 2000, the standing committee on justice and social policy met to debate bill 31, also known as Christopher's Law. The most interesting aspect of the committee's meeting was the cross party support for the bill. It was a cross party consensus that a sex offender registry was needed, appropriate, and would move the province toward greater justice and greater responsibility to victims.

The all party support was not a tongue in cheek, foot dragging type of endorsement like we heard this morning from the solicitor general but a thorough commitment to a registry with teeth. All NDP, Liberal and Conservative MPPs in Queen's Park supported

the bill. Not only did Dalton McGuinty's Ontario Liberals support the bill, but in committee the Liberal attorney general critic, Michael Bryant, who is an adjunct law professor from Osgoode Hall Law School, mentioned "We support this bill and this bill should have been passed a long time ago". All three elected political parties recognized that the government should establish a sex offender registry because public safety should reach beyond partisan slugs.

Our proposed national sex offender registry would provide our police with something that they have not yet had: a mechanism to keep track of sex offenders from coast to coast to coast. The registry would be a vital investigative tool allowing police to monitor sex offenders in our communities.

Studies from the United States show conclusively that registries have enabled law enforcement agencies to solve crimes quicker and to identify suspects sooner. Convicted sex offenders would be required to register as a condition of release from custody. Any failure to do so would be a violation of a condition of their release and result in an immediate return to custody. The information would be entered into a national sex offender database and made available only to police services.

Ontario's law provides for effective monitoring of the offenders by requiring them to register with police within 15 days of a change of address or within 15 days of coming to or leaving Ontario. The offender must provide the police with his name, address, date of birth and other information deemed necessary by the police, not bureaucrats, not politicians, not posturers, that will best suit the safety of citizens in their communities.

If an offender does not comply, Ontario's legislation mandates a first time penalty of \$25,000 or a year in jail and for more than one offence, \$25,000 and two years in jail. This is a common sense approach to crime prevention. It provides for safer streets and a sense of security in neighbourhoods like Port Moody for victims of sex offences like one of my constituents, Abby Drover.

In conclusion, a national sex offender registry is long overdue. Safe communities should be a national priority as is the case in the United States, our largest trading partner, and in the United Kingdom. Police deserve every reasonable tool available to protect the innocent from the evil and the depraved.

I urge my colleagues in the House, especially the government members, to think of innocent victims of sexual abuse, rape, torture and torment when they consider supporting the Canadian Alliance motion to establish a meaningful and effective national sex offender registry tonight.

Let us join with other provinces and nations, the real leaders of the world, in taking a solid step forward for a safer future for all Canadians in their communities. Safer families and safer children is the way to go.



*Supply*

• (1645)

**Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I have a quick question for the member. Today we have heard a number of government members talk about prevention and early intervention. I do not think any of us on this side of the House would disagree with that. That is obviously the way we stop these things from happening in the first place.

I just wondered if the member would agree with this. How can it not be preventative to know when convicted offenders are in a community? How can that not be considered prevention? Prevention is what this is all about. We know these people are in our communities and they are convicted pedophiles and convicted sex offenders. I am not quite sure where the government side is coming from when it does not see this as preventative.

**Mr. James Moore:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Surrey North for the question. This is one of those difficult aspects of law, where a government gives, frankly, awkward explanations for why it is supporting a bill. Why does it not just come out and show leadership? Why does it not just come and say that this might prevent some crimes, that maybe we are right, that maybe it should have supported this a couple of years ago?

The government members say that CPIC already provides this service but it does not. If it did, victims would not be calling our offices and e-mailing and faxing us and asking us to support this motion. I would not have had Abby Drover tell me yesterday that I had her consent to tell her story because Canadians needed to know about it and because she would like to know when Mr. Hay is going to come out of prison so that she and her family can feel safe.

If constituents are calling our offices and telling us all these stories, and if police associations, victims' right groups and CAVEAT are contacting us, then clearly there is something in this motion and something in the potential for a sex offender registry that is not already on the books. However, the government does not seem to recognize this and that is not leadership.

Why does the government not just say that its legislation falls short? The RCMP recognizes that. Canadians recognize that. Abby Drover recognizes that. Organizations and academics recognize that. Everyone recognizes that. Why does the government not admit that and say that it is going to adopt this motion and make some serious reforms because the country and victims deserve it? That is leadership. Leadership is admitting insufficiencies and taking risks, and the government should be doing it.

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague for bringing up the very personal story that he did, with the permission of Ms. Drover. I would like to add a bit to that story.

I was a young person in that community who was very much the same age as Abby Drover. I remember reading in my local community papers about this incident and I remember how horrified I was and how horrified the entire community was that this young girl had disappeared. We suspected that she had been murdered, that something terrible had happened. We found out that something very terrible did happen. To learn that she had been abducted by her neighbour and kept in a closed dungeon and repeatedly assaulted for months was beyond the scope of our understanding. It has taken her very many years to talk about this, which is understandable. I think that very personal story illustrates why we need to move on this issue.

I wonder if my colleague could add a bit more to that particular story and tell us how this proposed change would make a difference.

**Mr. James Moore:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from my neighbouring riding of Dewdney—Alouette for his question. This specific story does speak volumes.

Abby Drover was abducted in March of 1976. Three months before I was born she was abducted and here we are, 24 years later, finally seeing an ounce of progress. She was abducted. Halfway through her abduction I was born. She was finally found in September of 1976. I was born in June. Here I am, 24 years later, and finally the House is moving a step closer, in the right direction.

What does it say about the injustice of our laws that it takes that long, 24 years, for the government of this country to show a bit of sanity, compassion and respect for victims of crime, and to put in a mechanism so that people and police services know who the bad guys are and where they are living, so that we can separate those who play by the rules from those who do not?

• (1650)

Finally, I hope that tonight when we vote the government will make the right choice and will, in a good faith effort, take this to committee and establish real laws with real teeth and real foundations so that it can show justice 24 years later, finally, to people like my constituent, Abby Drover.

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today in the *National Post* I read that the opposition MP who spoke earlier and his colleagues support this registration. At the same time, he admits that this registration will not prevent people from committing a crime.

Let us compare this registration to gun registration. Why is it that in this case registration will help to prevent crimes but gun registration will not?

*Supply*

**Mr. James Moore:** Madam Speaker, quite frankly the hon. member is totally missing the point. If a registration is good on one hand and not on the other, the hypocrisy is on the government's side. It is absolute hypocrisy. It would rather register pieces of long—

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Order, please. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Champlain, Lake Saint-Pierre.

[*English*]

**Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, first of all I want to apologize. I am sporting a bit of a cold, but in spite of that this is an issue that I feel very strongly about and that I want to speak about in this place.

The first thing I want to say is that it is interesting to me that the opposition does not seem to be able to take yes for an answer. I have heard member after member after member stand up in his place here today and say he will vote for this.

I will vote for it. I will put that on the record right now.

However, maybe the motivations and the reasons are important so that we in fact understand what is going on with this particular motion. Members opposite will know that I can be as partisan as anyone in this place over certain issues from time to time, but this is an issue that is unfortunately being used for what we can only call partisan political purposes.

Who cannot feel sympathy when the member speaks of Abby Drover? Who cannot feel that the 24 years of torture she has suffered reliving that horrific crime is the worst thing anyone can imagine? Who cannot feel frustration and anger when we read the inquest report on the death of Christopher Stephenson, which happened in a community just up the road from where I live? A young man, an 11 year old boy, was sexually assaulted, tortured, raped and murdered by a pedophile who was out on parole and who was subsequently incarcerated. These are the most horrific crimes imaginable.

I listened to the member for Surrey North speak. I know of his personal involvement in the loss of a loved one due to violence. While it might not have been of this nature, it was still violent and it was still a young person. I understand, I think, because I do not know if I truly can. I do not know if we can truly understand the loss of a child. We are not supposed to outlive our children. The fact of having a child die is unimaginable in itself. To have that child murdered or sexually assaulted by a perverted, sick individual, I do not know how I would live with that, I really do not.

In the inquest into the death of Christopher Stephenson, which I share with you, where the members of the jury dedicated their report to the memory of Christopher, they said they would like to express their deepest appreciation to Jim and Anna Stephenson for showing great courage in their pursuit of the truth.

• (1655)

It is one thing for us to bring these examples forward. We cannot hide from them. We have to talk about them. However, would somebody please tell me that a national registry that requires convicted pedophiles who have completed their sentences to register their addresses is going to save an Abby Drover or someone else from being assaulted sexually? Is this really the panacea?

We in the government have done some things. If the members would be honest when they speak, they would admit that the government has made some financial commitments to try to resolve the problem. However, no one can stand on either side of the House, including the mover of the motion, and with any amount of sincerity claim to have the solution to the problem.

I will tell the House what the one solution is. The one solution is the one that was imposed on Mr. Bernardo.

**An hon. member:** Lock him up.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** That is right. We declare them dangerous offenders at the time of conviction. I recall listening to the news on the reports of the jury's decision in Paul Bernardo's trial for one of the most horrific crimes we have ever seen in this province and in this country. I remember waiting for the report to come out and praying that this man would be declared a dangerous offender so that we would never—whether we are in elected office or anybody is, or just as unelected Canadians—have to face the fact of someone like that being released into society.

Families of victims continue to go through these unbelievable, painful scenarios of having the murders and rapes of their daughters and young boys, their children, dragged through the press, and for what?

I have respect for the member for Surrey North who had a personal tragedy, but when he stands up and says that the Alliance members care—I wrote this down—for women and children more than the Liberals do, goodness gracious. Can anybody honestly say that because one belongs to a particular political party one somehow cares more about our women and children and the safety of our communities? It is just impossible for me to understand that.

One could have the most right wing approach to this thing, a lock them up and throw away the key approach, or one could have the most left wing approach, where one thinks that the solution is in mollycoddling or rehabilitating them without ever putting them in jail. One could take either of those extreme positions, but I think it

is so unfair to suggest that because someone belongs to a particular party or happens to belong to the government of the day he or she does not care about this issue.

**An hon. member:** Stick to the subject.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** The member says to stick to the subject. The subject is about solving and somehow finding a way to prevent horrific crimes against our children. This may help, just as our CPIC system may help. It does not solve it all. I am the first to admit that. That is why I am willing to support the motion. It is an add-on. It is an addition. It is something else that might help.

What the province of Ontario has put in place is a system whereby the convicted pedophiles are released from jail and have to register where they are living. They have to register within 15 days where they are moving to or after they have moved. If they fail to do that, they can be arrested. They can be fined a minimum of, I think, \$25,000 or receive one year in prison. For subsequent offences, it is another \$25,000 or two years in prison, et cetera.

Yes, it is a mechanism, so that if in fact the police are able to find these individuals, if the police happen to pull them over in some kind of a traffic violation, if they are arrested in some other scenario or if the police come across them, the police will be able to find out whether or not these individuals have indeed registered where they are living.

• (1700)

It is not a panacea. The member says we are missing the point when we compare the registration of weapons. A sick pedophile is a weapon, without a doubt.

**Mr. James Moore:** So register them.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** The member says that we should register them. We will, as I said in the beginning. Those guys cannot take yes for an answer.

We are agreeing with the motion, not because it is politically expedient or somehow we can stand and say that only we on this side of the House want to stop the terrible travesty of having our young people raped and murdered. We do not say we are the only ones with a social conscience, with a respect for justice or with a concern for our kids. That is what I have been hearing all day.

What Christopher's Law does is put in place a system. Members opposite say the gun registry is no good and that it will not work because criminals will not register their guns. That is not a bad point. Are we then to say we will not do this because convicted pedophiles will not register their addresses? That is the point. Will it solve the problem?

**Mr. Darrel Stinson:** There is a difference.

### *Supply*

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** I understand the difference. The member should not worry. I am not picking on him. I have been nice to him lately. He should settle down. I do not want the member for Wild Rose to have another heart attack at my expense so he should take it easy.

The point is that if we are counting on all these people to register we should at least recognize it is only one more thing we can do to try to solve the problem. If they honestly believe we have seen the end of pedophilia, or that we will never see another tragedy like Abby Drover or like Christopher, I say with all due respect to the mover and his colleagues that they are very naive.

I do not know what the total solution is except for the Bernardo solution: declare them dangerous offenders. The man who did what he did to Abby Drover 24 years ago was not declared because there was not a dangerous offender section in the Criminal Code of Canada at the time. It is there now, and it has been used and will be used to ensure that these monsters are not allowed to prey on our children.

**An hon. member:** Tell me about Karla.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** He asks me to tell him about Karla. Let us take a look at what the conviction is about. It is a different issue and they know it.

Does anyone think we like that? Does anyone in the country like the fact that she was able to cut a deal because evidence was not found by the police officers when they did their investigation? They had to make a deal to get a conviction against Paul Bernardo. After they made the deal they found the tapes in the ceiling. Does anyone like that? Absolutely no one likes that.

**An hon. member:** Stay on the topic at hand.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** The topic at hand is about creating a registry system for convicted sex offenders who commit sex crimes, particularly against children. I do not think anyone around here would say this is a bad idea. I wish it would have been put forward in the spirit in which it was intended: to try to solve the problem instead of grandstanding.

We all know the story of when the Leader of the Opposition was in Alberta. He decided he would publicly write to criticize a local lawyer-school trustee because he had the unmitigated gall to take a case defending someone who had been charged, not convicted but charged, with pedophilia.

**Mr. Randy White:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As we started out I had hoped that all members would treat this subject with the respect it deserves in the House of Commons and not slag on one another or one another's parties. It is much too delicate a subject. I would hope that the member would keep the subject as delicate as possible without the slagging. It would help a lot.

*Supply*

• (1705)

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Madam Speaker, I feel duly admonished. The point I am trying to make is that we must find solutions for the problem that work. I have not seen anybody in this place on either side, other than the dangerous offender declaration, come up with something that will solve the problem. This will not do that. I think we should do it but it will not solve the problem.

The dangerous offender aspect of it does at least create the ability for us to ensure, as in the case of Paul Bernardo, that he lives in his little cell and is locked up for the rest of his life. I could care less if he watches a colour television as long as he does not get out on the street to do what he did to Kristen French and Leslie Mahaffy.

That is what we care about, how to solve that problem. That is an aspect of our justice system that has evolved. I recognize that it evolved too late for my friend's case in point in his riding 24 years ago. Not all problems can be solved instantly.

It concerns me when we think that one way of dealing with it will eliminate all the problems. I heard one member opposite make the statement that rehab does not work. When the Ontario government to its credit brought in Christopher's Law it was supported on all sides of the House. Had I still been in the Ontario legislature I too would have supported it. However, it did something that was not talked about in its press releases or other information. It cut funding to treatment by 85%.

Will we just wash our hands and say that as long as we have a registry where these people can register their addresses we do not need to worry? Can we say that as long as we have the CPIC system that allows volunteer organizations and sports groups to do background checks, and that as long as there is all the good due diligence that is required and necessary and should be done by anybody, we can sleep at night and have what the member referred to as a feeling of safety in our communities? We know that is not the case.

What can we do? Do we just ignore the treatment side of it? The inquest jury into Christopher Stephenson's death recommended a number of things over and above something like a registry. It recommended that funding be provided for research into psychopathy and sexual disorders.

What is it in the makeup of human beings that would drive them to sexually abuse a child? God knows none of us in here would understand it. Should we not try to understand it? Should we not put money into research to try to find out what it is that drives and motivates that?

**Mr. Randy White:** Nobody disagrees with that.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** The funding for exactly that kind of research has been cut by 85% in the province of Ontario.

I do not think that would solve all the problems either. I have said and continue to say that there is not one issue. There is not a panacea, save and except the Paul Bernardo solution. If that is what we will do, simply lock up dangerous offenders and never deal with anything, then I am afraid we will have jails full of people. We will have serious cost implications and we will not be dealing with the broader picture, the societal problem.

• (1710)

If they are indeed dangerous offenders, if they are declared dangerous offenders, then that is what should happen to them. Under the current justice system that is exactly what happens to them when they are declared dangerous offenders.

The frustration is that some people opposite would not suggest that we deal with some form of research into what drives it and what causes it. Is it a chemical imbalance? Is it abuse by an parent somewhere in the past? Did they suffer through some problems perhaps in school? What has driven them to this situation in life? With this registry how do we control the person who lives in Brampton where Christopher was murdered and decides to travel across Canada? I do not see that here.

The registry system in Ontario provides that they will give their name to the police, that it will be registered and that they must continue to register it for a period that approximates the time they were incarcerated. If it is a 10 year sentence it will be a 10 year registration period, but then it is over. What happens in the 11th year? Do we say we have not spent any money on research and therefore do not understand?

I will support the bill but I think we all collectively need, as much as possible in a non-partisan way, to find better solutions than just simply having a registry.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I listened for 20 minutes to the hon. member for Mississauga West going through his rendition of how he sees this bill coming into effect.

I know he has concentrated, as have most members on the Liberal side of the House today, on the value of CPIC as a form of registration. Yes, CPIC is a tool. It is a tool used by the police. That is what it is designed for. It is designed to collect and build up a database on the criminal pasts of many people. Sex offenders certainly would be part and parcel of that whole affair. Nobody denies that CPIC is a tool. However we are talking about something far beyond what CPIC provides.

As a police officer for 22 years I know the value of CPIC. I also know it does not track pedophiles or sexual offenders. It does not require sexual offenders to register. That is the downfall of relying solely on the CPIC system that is designed for a police database and expecting it to account for that problem.

*Supply*

I recognize that the member realizes that CPIC is not the total panacea. It will not fix everything. This registry, I believe, will be a leap forward in making sex offenders more accountable.

To go back to the CPIC situation, what happens if a pedophile changes his name? They do that on a regular basis while in jail. What happens if a sex offender has a pardon? That is as much a part of the process as it is for any criminal. They are changing their names and receiving pardons, and a stop by a police officer on the street or even a check on the CPIC system will not reveal that they are in fact a criminal.

**Mr. Randy White:** What if they are out on parole?

**Mr. Art Hanger:** Or if they are out on parole. There are a myriad of things that must be dealt with.

Those are questions I would like the member to answer. The one thing I feel is probably the most important, and I think other jurisdictions have really come to grips with this issue, is placing the onus on the sex offender to keep the registry current. CPIC does not track an offender if he goes from Halifax to Vancouver. These characters are very crafty. Sex offenders are probably the most manipulative of all criminals when we look at how they operate just to get hold of our kids. On that basis, I would like the hon. member to comment.

• (1715)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Unfortunately the member does not have time to answer.

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 question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** The next question is on the main motion, as amended. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**An hon. member:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** In my opinion the yeas have it. The Chair sees four members standing.

**Ms. Marlene Catterall:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am simply trying to clarify what is happening here. You called the vote on the motion and as I recall most people said carried. You called for yeas. Everybody on the government side of the House said, yes, carried and you said the yeas have it. Then the members of the Alliance stood, but only four stood to request a recorded division. Is that right?

**Mr. Randy White:** Madam Speaker, we had agreed and we want a standing vote. Under the provisions of getting a vote that is the way we had to do it. I hope the Liberals understand that we want this vote on a national sex offender registry recorded. That is all we are trying to do.

**Mr. Sarkis Assadourian:** Madam Speaker, everybody agreed to the motion in the name of the hon. member for Langley—Abbotsford. Obviously he stood up and voted against his own motion. How can that be?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** We will call in the members because, I have to admit, members of the opposition were up and down. There were four to six members standing but I believe the consensus among the House leaders was that there would be a vote.

Call in the members.

*And more than five members having risen:*

• (1750)

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

(Division No. 17)

## YEAS

## Members

Ablonczy	Alcock
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	Anderson (Victoria)
Assad	Assadourian
Asselin	Augustine
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	Bachand (Saint-Jean)
Bagnell	Bailey
Barnes	Bélair
Bélanger	Bellehumeur
Bellemare	Bennett
Benoit	Bergeron
Bertrand	Bevilacqua
Bigras	Binet
Blaikie	Bonin
Bonwick	Borotsik
Boudria	Bourgeois
Bradshaw	Breitkreuz
Brien	Brisson
Brown	Bryden
Bulte	Burton
Caccia	Cadman
Calder	Cannis
Caplan	Cardin
Carignan	Casey

*Private Members' Business*

Casson	Castonguay
Catterall	Cauchon
Chamberlain	Charbonneau
Chatters	Chrétien
Coderre	Comartin
Copps	Cotler
Cullen	Cummins
Cuzner	Davies
Day	Desjarlais
Desrochers	DeVillers
Dhaliwal	Dion
Doyle	Dromisky
Drouin	Dubé
Duceppe	Duhamel
Duplain	Easter
Eggleton	Elley
Epp	Eyking
Farrah	Finlay
Fitzpatrick	Folco
Fontana	Forseth
Fry	Gagliano
Gagnon (Champlain)	Gagnon (Québec)
Gauthier	Girard-Bujold
Godin	Goldring
Goodale	Gouk
Gray (Windsor West)	Grewal
Grey (Edmonton North)	Grose
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond	Hanger
Harb	Harris
Harvard	Harvey
Hearn	Hilstrom
Hinton	Hubbard
Ianno	Jackson
Jennings	Johnston
Jordan	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Keddy (South Shore)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Keyes
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Laframboise
Laliberte	Lancôt
Lastewka	Lebel
LeBlanc	Lee
Leung	Lill
Lincoln	Longfield
Loubier	Lunn (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)	MacAulay
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)	MacKlin
Mahoney	Maloney
Manley	Manning
Marceau	Marcil
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Matthews	Mayfield
McCallum	McCormick
McDonough	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough East)	McLellan
McNally	McTeague
Ménard	Meredith
Merrifield	Mills (Red Deer)
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)	Mitchell
Moore	Murphy
Myers	Nault
Neville	Normand
Nystrom	O'Brien (Labrador)
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Pallister
Pankiw	Paquette
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Penson
Peschisolido	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Picard (Drummond)	Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)
Pillitteri	Plamondon
Pratt	Price
Proctor	Proulx
Provenzano	Rajotte
Redman	Reed (Halton)
Regan	Reid (Lanark—Carleton)
Reynolds	Richardson
Ritz	Robinson
Rocheleau	Roy
Saada	Sauvageau
Savoy	Scherrer
Schmidt	Scott
Sgro	Shepherd
Skelton	Solberg
Sorenson	Speller
Spencer	St. Denis
St-Hilaire	St-Jacques

St-Julien	Steckle
Stewart	Stinson
Strahl	Szabo
Telegdi	Thibault (West Nova)
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tirabassi
Tobin	Toews
Tonks	Torsney
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)	Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)
Ur	Valeri
Vanclief	Vellacott
Venne	Wasylycia-Leis
Wayne	Whelan
White (Langley—Abbotsford)	Wilfert
Williams	Wood
Yelich—255	

**NAYS**

Members

\*Nil/aucun

**PAIRED MEMBERS**

Crête	Dalphond-Guiral
Godfrey	Lalonde
Minna	Perron
Volpe	Wappel

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion, as amended, agreed to.

It being 5.50 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance)** moved that Bill C-247, an act to amend the Criminal Code (forfeiture of property relating to child pornography crimes), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to be here today to once again present my bill, Bill C-247. For those who do not have a copy in front of them, Bill C-247 is an amendment to section 163.1 of the criminal code which would allow a court that convicts a person of an offence under those provisions to order the forfeiture of anything by means of which or in relation to which the offence was committed.

Before I start, I would like to recognize a number of people who have helped me with this process. One of the main drives behind this bill and this initiative is Detective Inspector Bob Matthews. He is the head of Canada's lead agency in the fight against child pornography. That is the 16 member Ontario Provincial Police child pornography unit, project P.

● (1755)

Detective Inspector Matthews is a widely respected voice in the debate between free speech advocates and law enforcement, and is

one of Canada's top law enforcement agents in the field of child pornography investigations.

The second person I wish to thank is Detective Noreen Waters of the Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia. Detective Waters has been a child pornography investigator for eight years and was part of the team that brought in the now infamous John Robin Sharpe. She has been an enthusiastic supporter of our bill.

I also wish to thank Sergeant Randy Brennan of the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police high tech unit. Sergeant Brennan has been involved in many successful child pornography investigations and is a valuable source of information.

I also want to recognize Mr. Steve Sullivan, the hardworking president and CEO of the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. Steve has been a tireless advocate of victim's rights and has worked with members of parliament to change the justice system to place the rights of victims before criminals.

The list goes on. These individuals and many other law enforcement officers, victim's advocates, federal parliamentarians, provincial justice ministers and everyday normal Canadians from across this country have contacted me and offered their support. I want to thank these concerned Canadians and tell them to keep up the good work. I also want to thank them for fighting to protect children because today more than ever they need our help.

I want to broaden the theme of my speech today to discuss the challenges of controlling child pornography in today's Internet age. In my speech I hope to expose the depth of the problem facing policy makers and law enforcement. I also wish to share with members and viewers some of the ideas that I have to tackle these challenges.

At the root of these challenges lies the hydra like nature of the Internet. In its humble fledgling as a forum for academia and the military, the Internet was boring and difficult to navigate. It contained only dry text, no images or flashy graphics. However the creation of the graphical interface known as the worldwide web in 1993 has created a surge in popularity.

From just over 100 sites in 1993, the web has exploded to the point where some industry experts estimate that over 800 million web pages exist today with some 160,000 pages being added each and every month.

The Internet has revolutionized communications. Most of us in the House did not even know what e-mail was up until five years ago, yet today our children and our grandchildren are growing up having never known anything else but instantaneous communication. Businesses, organizations, government agencies and individuals have seized upon this technology by setting up websites and revolutionizing the interaction between people.

### *Private Members' Business*

As in all facets of life there are decent, virtuous online users and there are deviant predators making use of this potent tool. In his report "Innocence Exploited: Child Pornography in the Electronic Age" prepared for the Canadian Police College, Winnipeg Professor Doug Skoog estimates that there are at least one million pornographic images of children on the Internet.

Detective Waters shared recent statistics with me that estimate that 53% of Internet traffic is concerned with sexually explicit material.

Calgary police detective Butch Dickens of the vice unit had this to say about child pornography on the Internet in a newspaper article last year. He states:

A year ago, we probably only got one phone call a month about it. Now we get four a day.

Before the advent of the worldwide web, child pornography detectives around the world could say with confidence that they were winning the war against child pornography. The old methods of creation and distribution were extremely perilous. Carefully arranged meetings, secret mailing lists and postal drops placed pedophiles at tremendous risk of being caught and punished. Those days are gone.

Inspector Bob Matthews relates:

The Internet has become almost the perfect vehicle for pedophiles to distribute child pornography, the reason being that at the stroke of a key, anyone can send large volumes of information from one country to another without being detected by the authorities.

The anonymity offered by the Internet allows child molesters to stalk their victims in their homes, schools and libraries without ever being physically present in any of those places.

The following are a few of the techniques they use to exploit children: Chatting online, Internet chat rooms, where users can send type to each other in real time, provide plentiful hunting grounds where child pornographers can stalk their young victims.

The next one is the sex tourism trade. With the increase in use of the Internet for the sex trade and sexual abuse against children, the number of websites providing information to travelling pedophiles has increased dramatically and is extremely explicit in detail.

Another technique is image morphing. With a decent computer and a little skill child pornographers can turn almost any picture into a pornographic image.

• (1800)

One of the worst of all is real time molestation, or streaming video, which shows live video on the Internet and enables child molesters to display their victims in real time to selected members of child pornography rings and clubs.

*Private Members' Business*

Skilled child pornographers will encrypt their messages, rendering them unreadable to outsiders.

These are some of the ways that they have been intruding into our homes and the lives of our children using the Internet.

Parents who were once confident that living in a small town would insulate them from the troubles associated with big cities can no longer be unmindful about the security of their children. With the click of a mouse, children in remote areas can be exposed to the seamy underside of the net. In what is becoming an all too often occurrence, cases are occurring where children under the age of 18 are being threatened or even molested by someone they met online.

In July of last year, a 45 year old man from the P.E.I. town of Summerside plead guilty to a child pornography charge. He had secretly videotaped a 14 year old girl whom he had coerced into doing a striptease and then played it live on the Internet for viewers in a special interactive online chat room. That same month, on the other side of our country, police arrested a 28 year old Washington man in the ferry line up, ready to leave Vancouver Island. Police found a 14 year old B.C. girl in his van. They had been exchanging e-mails.

In March of last year, the Ottawa *Sun* reported that an 18 year old man was arrested and charged with possession and distribution of child pornography. An undercover police officer met the man online while the accused was looking for a partner in a plot to kidnap, rape and kill a young child.

While for pedophiles, child molesters and pornographers the Internet is like a dream come true, it has become a nightmare for decent Canadians. The downward spiral into child exploitation usually commences with the collection of child pornography, progressing to sexually explicit online conversations with youngsters and eventually seeking child victims online for sex.

Tragically, authorities can only act when the pedophile acts on his urges. Experts report that before they are arrested, the average child molesting pedophile abuses 35 children. They will share methods and techniques in finding children, gaining their trust and facilitating seduction. Along the way many, compulsively save mementoes to validate their actions. This is how child pornography is created.

However, understanding the problem, as difficult as it may be, is only half the job. Problems require solutions. Some of those concerned about this problem advocate complete censorship and regulation of anything that appears online. Others lecture that any restriction on speech is unacceptable and prefer to place the responsibility on the users. The answer lies somewhere in the middle of these two polar viewpoints. As policy makers, it is our task to strike that balance, for we alone have the democratic mandate of the Canadian people.

Shortly after her swearing in as chief justice of the supreme court, Madame Justice Beverley McLachlin predicted the court would deal extensively with issues of computer crime. The court, she said, would have to find ways to cope with offences that were international in scope, given the breadth of the Internet and computer communications.

Strong, effective legislation is one way the impact of child pornographers can be reduced. The supreme court did the right thing in upholding the ban on this illicit material in the Sharpe case, but now we must provide another tool to the justice system to stem the tide of child pornography flooding the web.

In 1993, in the wake of the R. v Butler decision, parliament passed Bill C-128, criminalizing all aspects of child pornography, including the creation, distribution, importation and possession of such material. It is considered among the strongest anti-child pornography legislation in the world. That is something of which all Canadians can be proud.

Unfortunately, a provision ordering forfeiture of equipment was omitted. This omission can be best described as an oversight when one considers forfeiture orders exist in 55 different federal statutes and in various places in the criminal code. This clearly demonstrates the justice system is not opposed to such penalties for criminals. To correct this omission in the law, I introduced C-247, which would have given courts the authority to order forfeiture, providing police with an extra weapon in their fight against child pornography.

Currently, forfeiture of equipment, in the context of a child pornography offence, is handled differently across the country. In Ontario the equipment is often forfeited as part of a bartering between the defence and the prosecution. In British Columbia prosecutors rarely ask for equipment to be turned over.

To see the danger in this patchwork practice a little insight is required into how charges under Section 163.1 of the criminal code are dealt with.

One must struggle to conceive of a crime more horrible than the sexual victimization of children.

• (1805 )

Because of the strong public condemnation of child pornography, many offenders will do anything to keep their names out of the public domain, often eagerly agreeing to plea bargains, resulting in reduced sentences and often with no jail time. This creates a situation where the case law on this section is scant because the courts have had few opportunities to comment on it.

More dangerous is the fact that these plea bargains often allow the offender to return to the same environment in which he initially committed his crime. Returning him to that environment with high



tech equipment intact is a temptation that could prove too strong to resist.

By ordering forfeiture, I believe the risk of recurrence can be lowered. Because a child pornography addiction is fueled by psychological problems, not by profit, many offenders will have limited means. Indeed, their compulsion likely creates financial hardship as the individual spends much of his free time and money in pursuit of his fantasy.

Confiscating several thousand dollars worth of computer equipment and perhaps even a vehicle or something more substantial will create a financial barrier to reoffending. I understand it is only money and does not address the root of the problem, but it is one way we can slow down the traffic in this repulsive time.

The technology of our rapidly changing world continues to create legislative challenges for parliament. Expanding the legislation, filling in the holes, adapting to change, as we are trying to do, is necessary. Criminals do not stand still and neither should we.

It is out of my concern for the safety of Canadian children that I took this initiative, researched the issue of child pornography and the Internet and tabled the bill. I acknowledge that my bill may not have been written in the most precise of legal terminology, but I am nevertheless disappointed that it was not deemed votable this year, as it was last.

I took on the challenge of tabling a private member's bill, a justice themed bill no less, knowing the odds were stacked against my success, but I did it because I believe in the spirit of the bill and I could not stand by without doing something to help.

I urge all members to take some time to think of the difference, even if it is a small difference, that the bill could make in the fight against child pornography so that one like it may return to the order paper in the near future. I implore the justice minister to take the spirit of the bill and enshrine it in law. Consider the law enforcement agents who have made it their life's work to make our country safe from the perversions of these child molesters. Think of the victims of these cold-blooded criminals and help us make a difference.

**Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the second reading debate of Bill C-247, an act to amend the criminal code, forfeiture of property relating to child pornography crimes. I share the hon. member's concern about child pornography and I congratulate him for introducing the bill.

I can assure the hon. member that the concern about protecting children from predators is also of primary concern to the government. The Speech from the Throne was clear on that point. In the

### *Private Members' Business*

Speech from the Throne our government stated its full intention to "act to safeguard children from crimes, including criminals on the Internet" and to "take steps to ensure that our laws protect children from those who prey on their vulnerability".

We all recognize that our children are the most vulnerable members of our society and we must do all we can to protect them from harm. No one will deny that child pornography seriously harms children. It does so in at least two ways. It creates a permanent record of the sexual abuse of children and it perpetuates the message that children are appropriate sexual objects. Indeed, they are not.

Child pornography was specifically prohibited by an amendment to the criminal code enacted in 1993. This amendment, which is now 163.1 of the criminal code, creates new offences for the production, importation, distribution, sale, possession for purposes of sale or distribution and simple possession of child pornography. All these offences carry a greater penalty than the offences prohibiting obscene materials involving adults.

These criminal code provisions against child pornography were enacted to respond to the prevailing practices at the time. These practices were still primarily paper oriented and involved mechanical production and physical distribution practices.

Although the current offences have been successfully applied to electronic practices relating to child pornography, no one in 1993 anticipated the technological advances that were experienced in the last five years. No one anticipated how quickly new technologies would be embraced by such a large portion of the population, particularly young people. In particular, it was not anticipated at the time that computer systems, including the Internet, would become the instruments of choice for trading child pornography.

The Internet has made it easier to communicate valuable information and carry on discussions on all kinds of subjects with people who share similar interests. Unfortunately, it has made it easier to disseminate and collect images of child pornography.

• (1810)

Perhaps the time has come to take a close look at the child pornography provisions in order to determine whether they still apply to current practices.

The purpose of Bill C-247, like the purpose of Bill C-321 introduced by the hon. member for Lethbridge in the previous parliament, is to create an additional deterrent to the commission of a child pornography offence. The bill would add a component to the sentence currently available under the criminal code and deprive the person convicted of the offence of all tools and instruments that were used to commit the offence. The bill would provide for the forfeiture of these instruments to the crown.

*Private Members' Business*

I note the hon. member has added to the bill an element that was lacking in Bill C-321. It now specifies that an order cannot be made in respect to a thing that is not the property of a person who is not a party to the offence. It also specifically excludes the forfeiture of communications facilities and equipment.

I recognize that these changes make the bill more sound. However I have some questions on the working of the provisions as drafted.

For instance, while the bill provides that the judge should not order forfeiture when the person guilty of the offence is not the owner of the thing, it does not provide for the manner in which the owner would have his or her right to the property recognized.

I commend the hon. member for introducing the bill. It is a step in the right direction in our fight against child pornography. I support the principle of the bill. However more must be done if we want to adequately protect our children against sexual exploitation.

The Minister of Justice has a bill currently on notice. The hon. member might be pleasantly surprised when he sees it after introduction.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I too must congratulate the member on his tenacity when it comes to this issue because, in an earlier parliament, he introduced a similar bill. He made certain amendments in response to comments made in the House.

Today, we have a bill that is, all in all, very acceptable. I would immediately say to the member that he has the full support of the Bloc Québécois in his efforts to have the criminal code amended.

I am the third member to speak. Those members of the House who are listening are aware of the bill and the amendments. I just want to remind them, and I will do this quickly, that the primary purpose of the bill is to protect some very vulnerable people, children, from actions of adults which are completely unacceptable.

I think that, of all the offences mentioned in the criminal code, those involving child pornography, using children for sexual purposes, are the most serious. Amending the criminal code to permit the seizure of any thing used by the offender for child pornography, for these very reprehensible actions, has my full support.

As the Canadian Alliance member noted, many of Canada's statutes, including the criminal code, provide for the seizure of certain property in certain cases.

I will give an example familiar to everyone, from the Tobacco Act. When people smuggle cigarettes, when they have contraband cigarettes in a vehicle, the vehicle is seized because it was being used to break the law, to seek to commit an offence.

Why not apply this to computer equipment, since more and more people have computers, and computers are more and more powerful, and can yield far more information? Why not allow police forces and the justice system to seize these assets?

Was a mistake made when the government amended section 163 in a previous parliament without allowing such a seizure? Perhaps it was, and perhaps not. At that time, I did not consider it a priority or a goal in itself to seize computers that had been used to view images of child pornography. Today, however, I think we need to conclude that yes, seizing these assets that have been used by the offender would be a normal thing to do.

• (1815)

The wording would, I believe, allow this to dovetail very nicely with the section of the criminal code. It is also in keeping with the philosophy of the criminal code and related legislation allowing police and crown prosecutors to impose a sentence on the individual who has been found guilty, to impose a fine, but, more importantly, it sends a fairly strong signal that computers are not intended for such purposes and that individuals caught using them for those purposes stand to have their computer confiscated.

The important point the member has added in his bill, from the remarks made in the House when Bill C-321 was introduced, concerns the restrictions on the assets of third parties in order to protect people who lend their computer to a friend or employers who are not aware what employees are doing at lunch with office equipment. Just like that, because the individual is caught at child pornography sites, the computer loaned by a friend or belonging to the employer is confiscated.

Subsection 163.2(2) included in the bill provides a restriction to the effect that the equipment or computers will not be seized because they belong to a third party who was unaware of the use being made of them.

At the time, when we debated the bill in the House, this was our greatest concern. Today, we note that, on the whole, the remarks and adjustments made in this clause with respect to the amendment of the criminal code fully satisfy the concerns of the Bloc Québécois.

Accordingly, we offer the hon. member our full co-operation and support this approach. We hope that we will find these amendments in the criminal code one day.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Lethbridge for his efforts on this file and for the opportunity to denounce child pornography.

The people of Saint John and my party support the bill with great enthusiasm and with a strong determination to stop the creation, production and distribution of child pornography. *Hansard* will show that it is not the first time I have risen in the House to denounce the sexual abuse of our children. When I rose earlier this

afternoon I said that there was nothing that hurt or saddened me more than when a child was abused.

It was some time ago that one of the hon. members on the government side brought forth a bill to make changes to the criminal code. It would have allowed the RCMP or the police department to enter a home and seize material, where it was suspected that a person was dealing in child pornography and had pictures and other material. As hon. members know, it went through the process and it was not changed.

I asked the Prime Minister a question at the time and he assured me afterwards by saying that he did not believe in child pornography and that the government would straighten it out sooner or later.

Tonight members on both sides of the House voted on a national registry to try to put a stop to sexual abuse of children. Once again we have again another opportunity to do what is right for our young people.

● (1820)

Let me be clear when I say that we consider child pornography to be nothing short of child abuse. I will not hold back from saying that I believe child pornography is not only disgusting but that those who take pleasure in it are sick and perverted.

**Mr. Roy Bailey:** You can say that again.

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne:** I will say it again. They are sick and perverted. They truly are. It is only logical therefore that anyone who seeks to participate in this obscene trade should have the tools of the trade seized by authorities and destroyed.

The laws of Canada and the charter of rights and freedoms must not be used as a shield for those who would seek to corrupt and exploit our very young. Any just society must balance the rights it extends to its citizens with the responsibility it expects its citizens to undertake.

Persons violating the spirit of the law should not be afforded any protection by the mere letter of the law. Canadians are compassionate and understanding. We are a patient and respectful people who have on many occasions sent our sons and daughters into harm's way to protect our way of living. Yet when the system, whatever its best intentions, becomes a tool for evil it should not be left unchanged.

Earlier today we debated a national sex offender registry. I said then that we had a duty and an obligation as representatives of the people to take the action required to protect our people. Tonight we are fortunate to have another opportunity to send to the government a clear signal on what action is required for the sake of our children.

### *Private Members' Business*

I hope that our plea falls on the same compassionate ears that heard our call this afternoon for the national sex offender registry. I hope that the same courageous members on the government benches that saw fit to support that registry will stand with us again on Bill C-247.

There comes a time in public life when we are forced to decide on a personal course of action. We sit down with a piece of legislation to try to determine what the people who elected us would want us to do. We have before us an excellent piece of legislation and one that I know my people back home in Saint John, New Brunswick, would cheer with a loud chorus of support.

The House would suspect that I find pornography in any form to be distasteful and degrading. If it were possible for me to detest one form of pornography over all others, it would be child pornography. The House knows that I am a mother and a grandmother. To think that someone could do this with my grandson or my granddaughter, I will fight that tooth and nail.

The House knows that I have tried to use my time in public service to work with children and families in need, not only in Saint John but across the country. It is for these reasons and many more that even the thought of someone profiting from the illicit trade of child pornography makes me feel very ill.

I also know that the Minister of Justice has wrestled with the same issues for some time. I know that various members on the government back benches have been forced to hold back tears in the past because they have not seen their government take the decisive action against the disgusting child pornography problem. We saw it with that man out in Vancouver.

I consider Bill C-247 to be a solid first strike against the child pornography trade. It would give pause to those who deal in this perverted trafficking. The hon. member for Lethbridge has ensured that we remain as respectful as possible to property rights of law-abiding Canadians. Bill C-247 is clear in its limitations and clear to avoid the unlawful seizure or forfeiture of the property of those who are not a party to child pornography offences. It is a necessary limitation and one that strengthens the legislation and the laws it seeks to change.

The House may not recall that my cousin is Gordon Fairweather. He stood side by side with John Diefenbaker when they first crafted the bill of rights. I know that when they set out to protect the rights of Canadians they did not do so with the intent of protecting criminals or the tools of their trade.

● (1825)

When the charter of rights and freedoms was being crafted it was not created to shield those who would seek to abuse and exploit children. Knowing this, I say without hesitation that Bill C-247 is in keeping with the best intentions of both the bill of rights and the charter of rights and freedoms. If my cousin Gordon Fairweather

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were back here, he would be with the hon. member for Lethbridge all the way.

This is a step worth taking to strengthen the security of our children from the clutches of truly depraved individuals. Even if one child is spared from exploitation and abuse by the child pornography trade, and it is a trade by its very nature, it will have been all worth while. That said, could we deny our families that added security for mere partisan political reasons?

If we do not support Bill C-247 are we not saying that we accept in some form or another that child pornography is tolerable? Is that the message we want to send out to the mothers and fathers of Canadian children? Is that the message we want to send out to my grandson Matthew and granddaughter Lindsay?

We have a duty and obligation to all Canadians to deliver them from evil and to protect them from injustice. We have a duty and obligation to every generation of children to make them safer from the generation before them. This is the mantle of responsibility we all assumed when we put our names on the ballot last fall. It is a duty from which we must not shy away. I fully support Bill C-247 and so do my colleagues in the PC Party.

**Mr. Grant McNally (Dewdney—Alouette, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I too commend my colleague from Lethbridge for bringing forward this very important bill. I know he has worked very hard behind the scenes gathering support from many organizations, groups, police associations and those involved in having to deal with the issue firsthand.

I am encouraged tonight by the debate I have heard in the House from members of all parties who have spoken in favour of the bill. It is fitting that we would be debating this topic on the evening where we also, as was indicated by my hon. colleague from Saint John and others, worked together to support the creation of a national registry for sex offenders. It is a great accomplishment that we have been able to achieve together in the House.

Some of the debate was a little off topic today and somewhat partisan at times, but for the most part it was not. That is encouraging. The legislation fits very much into that very same category. Who could stand in the House and defend child pornography? No one has tonight and no one will. We understand the seriousness of the issue. The bill being brought forward by my colleague is another tool being offered as a way to combat a very serious issue.

By focusing on important issues, it is time that we work together in the House. We must look to build with each other on the commonalities, across party lines, including government members, to solve the issues before us. That is what people are looking for,

from those of us who have been sent as leaders to this place. It is with passion, conviction and strength of mind that we must work together to solve these very serious issues.

The issue of child pornography is one that has a very great implication. Our children are our greatest resource. There is nothing we could hold more dear than the health and well-being of our children, the next generation coming up behind us, not only for ourselves as individuals, as members, as families and as communities but for the future of our country.

• (1830)

A big part of the health of our children has to do with protecting them. We only have the opportunity to live as children once in this life. We have all experienced that. We are involved in the joys, triumphs, tragedies and moment to moment involvements with children in our families, or those without children with relatives. We know this is a very important thing to focus our attention on.

We know there are individuals involved in activities that will harm children. Child pornography is one of them. My colleague, the member for Erie—Lincoln, the parliamentary secretary, raised some very good points. I agree with what he said on those points.

He mentioned two points about the crime of child pornography creating a permanent record of the abuse of children. For that very reason it is wrong to be participating in such an action. The creation of child pornography creates victims itself. This causes not only great damage for those children who are victims of those crimes, but they are then a part of this permanent record that is being used, abused and displayed on the Internet and other ways. It is at the very hub of this issue.

It violates what is right. It is wrong to be involved in child pornography. It causes children to be abused by creating a permanent record of that. My colleague's bill attempts to address that. The bill attempts to shut this down. It is to be used as a tool to help stop the spread of this issue of child pornography.

I will agree with my colleague from Saint John when she said it was evil. We have the right as members in this place to say such things because it is truly wrong. I believe there is such a thing as right and wrong. Many of my colleagues would agree with this particular point. Let us build on what we can agree on and we can agree. Tonight we heard that we agree child pornography is wrong. This is a bill that is being introduced to help address that.

I was encouraged by my colleague for Erie—Lincoln who said changes will be coming to the criminal code. I can only hope and encourage him to work with his government. We will work together to bring these changes forward, to incorporate this forfeiture clause that my colleague brought forward, so we can help stop the wrongs that are occurring. We can help stop the individuals who are

involved in this industry. We can help stop the wrongs that are being perpetrated against our children.

I may have indicated inadvertently in my earlier comment that I do not have children. I would like to correct that because I have four young children. My oldest daughter is 10 and my youngest, who is a son, is four years old. The others are six and eight. This is an issue that strikes at home for me.

I worked for 10 years as an elementary school teacher. I was able to see the need for our children to be protected, not only in our homes and communities but in our institutions like schools and in other areas. Those who attempt to abuse children in this way find their way into those areas of protection that are supposed to be safe havens for our children. We need to be on guard for that. With the tools suggested in this piece of legislation from my colleague from Lethbridge, we need to be able to shut down this kind of activity.

I am encouraged by the agreement tonight from all parties on this issue. In fact, we have agreed that child pornography is wrong. This amendment should move forward and should be put into practice immediately.

• (1835)

Would it not be wonderful if we could do that tonight, on a night where we have already had agreement on a major issue having to do with protecting our children.

We should not wait another day. We should move forward on this issue right away. Our children are our most valued resource. We need to show, not only in our words but in our actions, that we mean that. There is an opportunity to do that tonight. I hope we speak loudly with our words on things that need to be fixed, but even more loudly with our actions.

In closing, I would like to commend my colleague, the member for from Lethbridge, once again. We do not care who gets credit for the idea or the issue, we want to see it put in place no matter where it comes from. That is why I think there would be agreement on this issue from all members. We need to move forward on it.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to lend my support to Bill C-247, tabled in the House by the hon. member for Lethbridge.

This House was seized with the issue of child pornography, probably polarized mostly by the Sharpe case, the B.C. case where the constitutionality of our laws on the possession of child pornography were challenged in the B.C. court. In fact the court case was lost. As members will recall this was quite outrageous to Canadians at large and certainly to everyone in the House.

However, we have a process and that process led that case, not only through the B.C. Court of Appeal but also right to the Supreme Court of Canada. I think we are all very grateful that the

### *Private Members' Business*

decision of the supreme court upheld the law. However, in a way that raised some interesting questions for the House.

The fact that the member has brought forward a bill that addresses another element of the child pornography issue, probably should remind us that we should continue to work on developing good legislation, step by step, to be sure that we deal with many of the items which hon. members have raised in the debate.

This particular bill seeks to provide the court with the discretion to forfeit anything by means of which, or in relation to which, a child pornography offence was committed. It basically says that the tools of the person who was in possession of or creating child pornography would be forfeited to the crown. There were some questions raised by the parliamentary secretary with regard to this matter, but the questions are resolvable. Fundamentally, the proposal is sound.

As we know this is a non-votable matter. That is unfortunate because when items like this come before the House, especially when they are so important, not only to the members proposing it but to Canadians in this case, there should be a greater debate. Using it as a starting point, we can make it deal with the principle that has been raised by the bill. We can work on the technicalities to make sure that the protection of third parties is dealt with. We can make sure that, for instance, employers are protected in the event that an employee would use employer assets for the perpetration or production of child pornography.

I wanted to lend my voice as support. Members know that today we unanimously passed a resolution before the House to consider the creation of a national registry for sex offenders. It is characteristic that the motion was unanimously endorsed by the House. We all want to be constructive and productive on legislation that will create a safer and healthier environment for our children and our families.

• (1840)

I congratulate the member for bringing this bill forward. I am sorry that it is not votable but I think it is encouraging that the Ministry of Justice has indicated that the principle is a good one and that it will be dealt with by the government. The member should take full credit for it when it happens. I hope that he will.

Private members' business is a maligned part of the business that we do in this place. I cannot say that I am very happy with the way it works. I have seen many good bills come before this place that were not votable and I have seen some questionable bills come before this place that were votable. I am not sure whether the system right now is serving the best interests of the House.

I also lament the fact that so few private members' items ever get through the full cycle of second reading, committee consideration, third reading and report stage, as well as Senate review. It is

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unfortunate because many good ideas do come forward to this place.

I hope members will remember this particular bill the next time we come around to a debate on the propriety of how we handle private members' business. Perhaps they will use it as an example of just another good idea of members of parliament that somehow have to be set aside for the wrong reasons.

I appreciate the member's thoughtfulness in bringing this bill forward to the House. I think it is important to have every opportunity to talk about issues that are important to Canadians. This is a non-partisan issue. We should be grateful to the member for raising it in the House today.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, a few minutes is all the time I will need. I want to say just a very few things in the highest support possible of the bill.

Today has been a really heart-rending day in the House. We have been dealing with issues which really in a respectable society should not even have to be mentioned. We have been dealing with sexual predators. Now in this evening's session, we are talking about a bill that would limit and restrict advantages that people can make in producing child pornography.

I just want it on record that I fully support this bill. I am very concerned that in our society we somehow think that by passing a whole bunch of laws that we can make people good. I do not think we can. We have to really do what a number of members said in the debate; that is we have to look at moral teaching when these children are young, so they grow up to be responsible adults and behave in a socially acceptable way.

The role of law is still to restrict those who will not conform to that. While law cannot make people good, it can serve to restrain the evil. I think that is really the essence of what we are dealing with today and in this bill as well.

I want to congratulate the member for Lethbridge for the bill. We need to support it. I sincerely call upon the government to act, not just to engage in a bunch of nice words here, but to act and to put into place mechanisms that would fulfill what this bill requires.

• (1845)

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I thank all members who spoke tonight for their support. This is obviously an issue that needs to be addressed. As the member for Elk Island said, we have talked all day about the things that happen in our society that we should not really have to talk about but we do.

We need to give our law enforcement agencies and our courts the tools to do a good job, and that is where we went with this bill. The

research that was done on it was to add one small item to their arsenal that would help them put a pedophile or a pornographer out of business for as long as possible.

I am encouraged by the comments made by the parliamentary secretary. I will take him at his word that there are some changes to the criminal code coming down and that this particular aspect of the amendment to the code to allow for forfeiture will be included.

I hope that when the legislation comes before the House again there will be a public and open debate on it and all Canadians will have input. Literally thousands of Canadians have supported me in this endeavour. The Canadian Police Association on down through the police organizations in Canada have supported this bill as well. This is something that needs to be done and I am encouraged to hear that the government has recognized that.

The issue of our children and the Internet scares me. I have two granddaughters, aged five and eight. The five year old can sit down at the computer and make it do things that I cannot. This scares me but that is the way of the world.

The one thing I would like to leave with the people who are watching is that as parents we have to be diligent when our children are on the Internet and on the computer because there are all kinds of people on the Internet system who like to prey on kids. Parents should keep an eye on what their children are doing and be aware of who they are talking to and the agreements that are being made.

I was going to ask for the unanimous consent of the House to make this bill votable but I will take the parliamentary secretary at his word, that this bill will be included in the amendments that are coming in to the criminal code, and leave it at that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. As the motion has not been designated a votable item, the order is dropped from the order paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

LAKE SAINT-PIERRE

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Madam Speaker, on February 26 of this year, I asked the Minister of National Defence a question in the House about Lake Saint-Pierre. The answer did not satisfy me, nor did it satisfy those who live on the shores of this body of water and even use it to earn their living.

Lake Saint-Pierre is one of the lakes which purify the St. Lawrence River. It purifies the water from the Great Lakes, from cities such as Montreal, and from tributaries and various rivers. UNESCO has recognized Lake Saint-Pierre as a world reserve.

The lake is extremely rich in flora and fauna. There are professional fishers and hunters. For fifty years now, the Canadian army has been firing shells into Lake Saint-Pierre, for training purposes I believe.

• (1850)

More than 40% of the southern section of Lac Saint-Pierre, some 22 kilometres starting with the channel, belongs to the Canadian Forces. The lake has been polluted by some 300,000 shells, 8,000 to 10,000 of which are potentially dangerous. They are moved around by the ice in the lake.

They travel so far that every year helicopters scan both shores of the St. Lawrence right up to Île d'Orléans to try to recover shells that had been carried away by the ice. Even last year, a little girl found one, which most fortunately was disarmed.

What I am asking of the minister, on behalf of the users of Lac Saint-Pierre, is that it be restored to a safe condition, so that it can again be used as it ought to be. It is nonsensical to say that it cannot be cleared because there are no known techniques for doing so. This is not true. There are techniques known at this time for clearing the lake, and even people prepared to bid on cleaning up the lake and removing the potentially dangerous shells in and around it.

I am therefore calling upon the minister to promptly review the Lac Saint-Pierre situation. It is extremely important for the flora, the fauna and the users of the lake, both those who make a living from it and the tourists. It is a huge tourist attraction, because it is a large lake, some fifty kilometres in length and some twenty wide, stretching from Trois-Rivières to the islands at Sorel.

We are told it would be too costly. However, if the Canadian forces spend some \$200 million on shells they say are no longer used, I think we could perhaps cut part of this money and take some \$40 million a year to clean up this body of water. This is what I am asking the minister.

The minister said "Yes, eventually. We are studying and perhaps". I say to the minister that this needs to be done urgently. Every year the ice carries shells, and they are found along the shore of the St. Lawrence. Action must be taken before something dramatic happens. There has already been loss of life. It could be even more serious, because some of these shells could be armed just by fishing gear.

I do not want to cause anyone to panic, but Lac Saint-Pierre has to be cleaned up. The Canadian forces, responsible for its pollution, have to do their job as user-payer. Companies are asked to clean up the sites they have polluted, but the Canadian forces have been polluting this lake for 50 years.

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I think urgent that the Minister of National Defence ask the Canadian forces to return the body of water to the state the users want it in.

[English]

**Mr. John Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, sustaining and protecting the environment as well as human life are priorities for the Department of National Defence.

The Proof and Experimental Test Establishment at Nicolet, Quebec, has provided technical services and carried out munitions proof and engineering tests for the Department of National Defence since 1952.

The ammunition tested at Lac St-Pierre is used by Canadian forces members on military operations all over the world as well as in their day to day training.

The main objective of the munitions testing program is to ensure the safety of the men and women in the Canadian forces who use the ammunition. We must have absolute confidence in the safety and suitability of our munitions. Firing a small sample from each new lot of ammunition that is produced is the only way to ensure the safety and suitability of the ammunition.

Lac St-Pierre was initially selected because of its proximity to several munitions factories. This rationale still holds. Testing at Lac St-Pierre minimizes the costs of transporting the ammunition as well as the public safety hazard associated with the transportation of live ammunition.

The Department of National Defence takes its public safety responsibilities very seriously. It has always had an open relationship with local residents, working with them to satisfy their concerns.

We in the department also have a close working relationship with Environment Canada and provincial officials, and we ensure that all our activities comply with provincial standards and regulations.

Since the early 1990s, we have cut test firings in half and reduced noise levels. Almost all firings are now done through muffers and all ammunition is now fired into a mound of earth from which we can recover the ammunition. We no longer fire into Lac St-Pierre itself.

• (1855)

We have always undertaken measures to clean up projectiles. Every spring and summer the shoreline of Lac St-Pierre is examined for projectiles that have been freed from the lake bed.

Additionally, in 1999 DND began an environmental study of the sediments of Lac St-Pierre in co-operation with Environment

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Canada. The study will be completed in the fall of 2001. Preliminary results indicate that the ordnance on the lake bed has not caused any environmental damage. DND is also examining a proposal to begin a more thorough cleanup of projectiles from the lake. However, this is a long term project with no quick fix.

There are very real environmental challenges and difficulties involved in cleaning up unexploded munitions in water. We are actively pursuing potential solutions with all stakeholders.

As one of the federal government's largest landholders, DND remains strongly committed to minimizing the impact of its activities and operations on the environment.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.56 p.m.)

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