



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 137 • NUMBER 091 • 1st SESSION • 37th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, October 3, 2001

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

CONTENTS

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

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

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 3, 2001

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

[English]

The Speaker: As is our practice on Wednesday we will now sing O Canada, and we will be led by the hon. member for Saint John.

[Editor's Note: Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

ANTARCTICA

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members of the Canadian Committee for Antarctic Research and the Canadian Antarctic Research Network continue to contribute to the science and well-being of Antarctica. Our satellite Radarsat provides information on the flow of Antarctic ice. We have an exchange program involving Arctic and Antarctic scientists. Canadians are studying the Antarctic Ocean.

Last year 100 high school students went on a field trip to Antarctica and reported widely on their experiences. Yet Canada is still not a full member of the Antarctic treaty. We have not even ratified the treaty's environment protocol.

Let us listen to our young people in this regard. Most of the world's fresh water is in Antarctica. As a nation with exceptional cold climate science expertise we can help preserve that resource and gain valuable scientific expertise at the same time. Canada should become a full member of the Antarctic treaty.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I admire and support our Canadian men and women in uniform. When the opportunity to join the crew of a CC-130 Hercules on a transport mission to the Arctic presented itself it was a dream come true.

Under the Canadian Forces Parliamentary Program I travelled to Canadian Forces Station Alert, Canada's northernmost permanent

installation at the tip of Ellesmere Island in Nunavut. While en route to CFS Alert I became part of the crew of 429 Squadron out of 8 Wing CFB Trenton.

I have always called for a well trained and well equipped military. My time on board a 35 year old Hercules with over 40,000 flying hours has reinforced that support. The dedicated crew of Captain Rick Harper, Major Norm Patterson, Captain Michel Goulet, Captain Jennifer Kooren, Sergeant Steve Stewart, Master Corporal Kel Brown and Master Corporal Mike MacNeil all performed wonderfully with their aging equipment.

In light of today's war on terrorism our men and women in uniform must have better equipment to work with.

* * *

BURLINGTON ARTS CENTRE

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Burlington Arts Centre on its expansion and reopening last Sunday. The centre first opened in June 1978 and accommodated specialized areas of study including hand weaving, spinning, woodcrafting and ceramics. The arts centre has grown and launched fabulous exhibits like Fragile Embrace which received over \$100,000 from the millennium fund.

Recently the arts centre has tailored programs to fit the special needs of the Burlington Association for the Intellectually Challenged, Big Sisters and the East Burlington Home and School Association. It has developed community outreach programs for the Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital, the Royal Bank of Canada and Chapters. The 8,000 square foot expansion has increased space for the hands on program which hosted 3,500 school children last year.

The Burlington Arts Centre is unsurpassed in Canada. It is an important people place and a source of inspiration and learning. I congratulate the marvellous staff and volunteer team who have worked so hard to make the dream of this extension such a beautiful reality.

S. O. 31

DR. EVERETT CHALMERS HOSPITAL

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise in the House today to wish the Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital of Fredericton a happy 25th birthday. Named after a prominent Fredericton physician and Progressive Conservative cabinet minister, the DECH has played a vitally important role in our community. Today this regional hospital provides services to over 150,000 New Brunswickers.

In the spirit of the International Year of the Volunteer I thank all the people who have volunteered at the hospital over the last 25 years. I also thank John McGarry, president and CEO; Bob Simpson, chair of the board; and all those who have served on the hospital board prior to the regionalization of medical services in the province and on the regional board since for their commitment to the hospital and our citizens.

I congratulate the DECH for 25 years of meeting the health needs of the people of Fredericton.

* * *

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

KATIMAVIK

Ms. Yolande Thibeault (Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Katimavik is a national program that gives young Canadians the opportunity to discover our great country.

While they stay with a host family, young people do volunteer work and practice their second language skills. Most importantly, they discover their environment and learn more about their compatriots.

Over 20,600 people and 2,000 communities have taken part in the program since it was created in 1977 by former senator Jacques Hébert. Last evening, he launched a book entitled *Katima...Quoi?* on the program.

I invite my colleagues and all young Canadians to read this book. It will take you through an unforgettable experience.

* * *

[*English*]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the softwood lumber dispute is costing Canadian and American jobs and is benefiting only a handful of U.S. lumber producers and forest landowners.

Members of American Consumers for Affordable Homes wrote to President Bush yesterday and asked him to intervene in a preliminary decision to impose countervailing duties of 19.3% on lumber imports from Canada. They are appealing to Bush on the basis that the tariff is negatively impacting the housing sector and other lumber dependent industries that provide seven million jobs in the United States.

The dispute has also caused 15,000 forestry workers to be laid off in British Columbia alone, including many in my riding of

Nanaimo—Cowichan. Federal government bonding guarantees will help put some people back to work.

The deadline to apply for an exemption to the U.S. tariff has recently passed. Now we discover that the Liberal government neglected its duty to apply for a blanket exemption for Canadian companies. This is the kind of neglect and inaction the government has displayed from the beginning on the issue. The 2,000 laid off workers in my riding want to know why the government has put them out of a job.

* * *

TERRORISM

Hon. Stephen Owen (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, three weeks following the tragic terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, the religious leadership of British Columbia gathered together in a call to justice, peace and solidarity which was delivered to the Prime Minister today. It reads in part as follows:

The attack upon the United States of America on September 11th, 2001 was calculated to uproot the whole human family. This horrific affront was intended to make neighbours look upon each other with suspicion and hatred; to make us abandon our vocation to be united under God's love. Many people have died, innocent families have been left vulnerable to bigotry and violence, and a shadow has fallen over our ability to live together as citizens.

We affirm that God's justice and mercy are infinite, surpassing human power in majesty and perfection.

We affirm our solidarity as leaders in diverse faith communities, and urge our brothers and sisters to enrich the common good with brave new works of peace, mutual understanding and material assistance.

We call on all Canadians to join their prayers and goodwill to guard against prejudice and hatred and to befriend and support each other.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since 1985, National Family Week has been celebrated to remind us of the importance of the family and of its constancy as our primary source of support.

“Volunteering is a family affair. Connect with kindness” is the theme selected for this week, which is part of the International Year of Volunteers. The event reminds us of the opportunity we have to contribute something specific as a family to improve living conditions in our community through simple, sometimes trivial, but vital actions.

Let us serve as models of solidarity and help for our children to create in them the sense of civic duty vital in a fair and just society. Let us take part in their sports and school events to encourage and show them we are behind them.

During this National Family Week, let us meet the challenge of being more generous to those around us who need our help. But most importantly, let us take the time to join together in pleasure.

•(1410)

[English]

LANDMINES

Mrs. Rose-Marie Ur (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the global landmine crisis is one of the most pervasive problems facing the world today. It is estimated that there are between 60 million and 70 million landmines in at least 70 countries. Landmines maim or kill approximately 26,000 civilians each year, including 8,000 to 10,000 children.

On Friday, November 30, 2001, the Canadian Landmine Foundation and our partner, the United Nations Association of the United States of America, are calling on our friends to host a dinner for a dozen or so of their friends, clients and neighbours. People from all walks of life in countries all over the world will join in the massive event which they are calling “Night of a Thousand Dinners”.

Funds raised at the dinner will be matched by CIDA in Canada. All money raised will go directly to clearing mines in the most heavily mine affected countries in the world. There has been enthusiastic support from Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, Secretary of State Colin Powell and Sir Paul McCartney, to name a few.

It will be easy to host a dinner on November 30. People can simply visit the 1000 dinners.com website and sign up or contact the Canadian Landmine Foundation.

* * *

PROSTATE CANCER

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, on June 24 of this year I was one of several hundred participants in Vancouver's annual run to raise money for prostate cancer research. For the second year in a row I was sponsored by members of this place and for the second year in a row the total amount contributed by MPs, almost \$2,300, was the single largest lump sum donated to the cause.

The organizers of the event wanted me to place on the record their thanks to those members of parliament from the Liberal Party, the Canadian Alliance and the NDP who helped fund the research effort to find a cure for prostate cancer.

On October 30 there will be a PSA testing day on the Hill, an opportunity for the men who work here to attend an information session and have the blood test which will check them for the presence of prostate cancer.

An invitation will be in the mail in the next few days but members should mark the date on their calendars now. Prostate cancer information and PSA testing day will be here on the Hill on Tuesday, October 30.

S. O. 31

[Translation]

MARC GÉLINAS

Mr. Jean-Guy Carignan (Québec East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning we received some very sad news. Marc Gélinas passed away following a lengthy illness.

Marc Gélinas was an artist with many talents. We knew him as a singer and songwriter, and through his work in the theatre and television. As a singer and songwriter, he produced 300 titles, 33 forty-fives, 13 albums and two compact discs. He gave us such well-loved songs as *La Ronde*, *Aide-toi et le ciel t'aidera* and the Montreal Expos theme song.

As an actor, he made a name for himself in the series *Beau temps, mauvais temps*, *Les Berger* and *Kilomètre/heure*. His talent can still be appreciated in the series *L'or*, which is currently being broadcast on Radio-Canada.

Marc Gélinas has left us with a rich cultural legacy, but we share the pain that his friends and family are feeling. On behalf of my colleagues and myself, I would like to offer them our most sincere condolences.

* * *

LÉO DROLET

Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Monday we lost one of the Eastern Townships' great builders when Mr. Léo Drolet, founder of Sherwood-Drolet, one of the biggest hockey stick makers in the world, died at the age of 82.

The company started up in 1949 with a \$5 loan from his mother, and now sells more than 2.2 million hockey sticks yearly, all over the world. It is one of the foremost sports equipment manufacturers. Moreover, several of the top hockey players use made-in-Quebec sticks.

Mr. Drolet was an entrepreneur known for his creativity and his modesty. His passion for what he did has helped contribute to modernizing hockey by reinventing the hockey stick.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, and of all the people in the riding of Sherbrooke, I would like to extend my condolences to the Drolet family.

* * *

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in recent years we have all heard about the war that is being waged by the Taliban on their own women in Afghanistan, particularly from brave journalists such as Sally Armstrong. We can only imagine how much worse their situation has become since September 11.

It is estimated that by November 1 there will be 5.5 million Afghans who rely on UN food aid, the majority of whom will be women and children.

Oral Questions

It is easy for us in Canada to see the situation as hopeless. Canada's National Coalition in Support of Afghan Women has put together a practical action plan. It contains information on how to put pressure on governments that support the Taliban, how to help women in Afghanistan today, how to influence the Taliban and how to promote awareness in Canada and around the world. The information is available at www.yorku.ca/iwrp/afghanistan.htm.

One of the most important things we can do is acknowledge that the protection of human rights should be everyone's responsibility. It is our hope that whatever new government comes into Afghanistan, it will strive to vastly improve the position of the women in its country.

* * *

• (1415)

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and its president, Bob Freisen, for coming to Parliament Hill today to help raise awareness of the many serious issues affecting agriculture today.

Much of the recent media attention is focused on the unfortunate job losses in other industries but fails to mention that there has been a severe crisis in agriculture and in the agriculture industry over the past three years.

Many in the House probably do not realize that in the last year alone agriculture has lost 39,000 workers in the industry. Most may not realize that the grains and oilseeds sector could lose up to \$2 billion this year because of the devastating drought conditions.

Even though the Liberal government might not recognize that something more can and should be done to help agriculture, Canadians do.

According to a June 4 Ekos poll commissioned by the federal government, 69% of Canadians believe that the government should do whatever it takes, even if it means paying more taxes to ensure the survival of the family farm.

It is clear the will of Canadians is there; now it is up to the political will of this government.

* * *

MEMBER FOR HALIFAX

Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago today the hon. member for Halifax was elected to the Nova Scotia legislature as the MLA for her community, the only woman and the only New Democrat in a sea of suits.

During her 14 years there, she railed against political patronage. She successfully championed pay equity, women's and gay rights, and workplace health and safety legislation. In doing so, she changed the face of Nova Scotia society.

When she left provincial politics and became leader of the federal NDP in 1995 she brought with her the same principled toughness, the same warmth, enthusiasm and commitment to social justice.

She told me recently that not even on her worse day in her 20 years in public life has she ever wondered why she is doing this. "Because it needs to be done, because I can make a difference".

Fearless, outspoken and independent, she has many times over earned the label the iron angel. The hon. member helps us all to know that we can make a difference.

On behalf of this caucus, the people of Nova Scotia and Canada, I want to thank the hon. member for Halifax for being the standard bearer for social justice, for being the iron angel of Canadian politics.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

TERRORISM

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, members of the United States senate have called on President Bush to triple the number of border guards at the Canada-U.S. border. The commissioner of the immigration service told congress just today that the Canadian border is a matter of concern. Both sides agree with this.

The issues of sovereignty, security and freedom of movement back and forth across the border can be achieved if we get serious about the perimeter.

It is now day 22. How much longer will the Prime Minister take to negotiate a security and perimeter agreement with the United States?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I discussed that with the president of the United States and he said that it was very important for Canada and the United States to make sure the border operates in such a fashion that the goods coming from Canada to the United States and from the United States to Canada move freely.

All my ministers have been in touch with their counterparts in the United States and there is no report of any big problem.

Of course we want to have security. We said that we will work with them to make sure we have security in the United States and in Canada. We will pass laws in Canada for the Canadian territory.

• (1420)

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of reports, including from the U.S. senators, on this, the elected senators I might add.

A number of premiers and business organizations have called for a continental perimeter policy to be put in place now. This is the Prime Minister's opportunity for a genuinely non-partisan initiative that would be applauded by all Canadians.

Will the Prime Minister or his designate convene, as soon as possible, a non-partisan federal-provincial summit to discuss the issues of improved security, developing a strong perimeter and keeping—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one day the Leader of the Opposition is asking to have more people at the border. The day after he is arguing for less people at the border. We want to know where he stands.

We want to have a border where the goods can move freely from one side to the other. That is exactly what the president of the United States and I discussed and agreed to do.

Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, we have asked the same thing every day, and that is for some action on any of these initiatives to improve confidence.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the premiers are asking for the establishment of a North American security perimeter to guarantee the free movement of goods and persons, while maintaining maximum security.

Business people and the public are also asking for such a perimeter. Who then is opposed to the idea of organizing right now a non-partisan summit to create this security perimeter with our American neighbours?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been co-operating for years with the United States regarding our border. Every year there are people who arrive at the Canadian border and who are sent back to the United States because they are undesirable individuals.

Just this morning I read an article that said that several individuals whom authorities were looking for were turned back at the Canadian border, because Canada Customs and Revenue Agency employees at the border did their job. This is how things work. We co-operate with the Americans.

What do Canadian Alliance members have in mind? Some days they want more people at the border, while on other days they do not want anybody. They should make up their minds.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, in the last 24 hours three people with Canadian connections have been arrested in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Massena, New York; and Mauritania. All three are suspected of having ties to terrorist organizations that may be connected to the September 11 attacks.

Even though none of the 19 hijackers in the September 11 attack are known to have come from Canada, how can the minister remain confident that no others in Canada were involved in the plot?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all I can give my hon. colleague are the facts. There is no evidence directly linking any Canadian to the activities that took place on September 11.

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, there are a few other facts. We have seen people arrested or detained in Germany. We have seen people arrested in Spain and in the United Kingdom. We have seen 400 arrested in the United States. We know that many of the same terrorist organizations are active here in Canada. With the exception of only one man on a flight bound for Chicago, no one has been arrested in this country.

Why is it that suspected terrorists known to have been in this country have been arrested only abroad and not here at home?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, is my hon. colleague disappointed that there have been no arrests in this country?

The fact is that the RCMP and CSIS work with the FBI. I discussed the issue yesterday with the attorney general of the United States. He thanked the government, CSIS and the RCMP for their support in making sure that North America remains free and democratic, and we will do that.

* * *

● (1425)

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the September 11 attacks, the Bloc Québécois has repeatedly called on the government to come up with an emergency plan to bolster the economy, to no avail.

Since the government was doing nothing, the Bloc Québécois therefore proposed a \$5 billion plan to stimulate the economy, without any deficit.

Since the government will have over \$13 billion to play with by the end of the year, does the Prime Minister intend to consider the Bloc Québécois's proposals and quickly adopt a plan to cope with the downturn in the economy?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is certainly prepared to consider anything that will help Canadians.

For example, the President of the Treasury Board said she was open to the idea of accelerating the infrastructure program, if a suitable arrangement could be worked out with the provinces.

As well, the Minister of Transport said he would help the airlines.

I can well understand the Bloc Québécois leader's desire to help Canadians, but I can assure him that the Canadian government is taking action.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I see that the Minister of Finance is on the right track. He himself can apparently see that last year's measures were not enough.

One need only look at the infusion that is needed for defence, security and assistance to the airlines.

Last year, the Minister of Finance could not foresee this year's events, and that is only natural.

Here is what I am asking him to do. Since he has clearly stepped in with respect to security, defence and assistance for the airlines, will he consider extending assistance to businesses, helping workers directly affected by the economic downturn, and sectors other than the airline industry?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Human Resources Development announced improvements to the employment insurance program. This is direct assistance to employees.

Oral Questions

The member mentioned the \$13 billion surplus. He will have to consider the impact in the third and fourth quarters of this year. I would love to say that there will be no impact on the surplus, but unfortunately, such is not the case.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Minister of Finance, we took our responsibilities and we did take into account the economic slowdown to arrive at the result mentioned by our leader.

Does the Minister of Finance realize that 97% of the companies in Canada are small and medium size businesses and that they create 80% of all the jobs in the country?

Also, will the minister agree that during an economic slowdown like the one we are currently experiencing, he could take low cost but effective measures to support small and medium size businesses, which create 80% of all the jobs in Canada, while ruling out the prospect of any deficit for the current year?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are certainly aware of the contribution made by small and medium size businesses. This is why the taxation level for these businesses is much lower than for other companies.

This is also why, in the last budget, we improved the tax system for small and medium size businesses. This being said, I have already had meetings on this issue, and small and medium size businesses are the first ones to say that they do not want us to generate another deficit through spending.

Looking at our figures, one can see that this is precisely what we want to avoid.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in a difficult time like now, workers and small and medium size businesses expect the Minister of Finance to be a little more serious.

Taking into account the budget constraints that he is facing and without generating a deficit, would the Minister of Finance be prepared to give a little more oxygen to small and medium size businesses, which greatly need it right now, by exempting them from making employment insurance contributions and by following Quebec's example—this is not costly—and allowing these businesses to postpone until March 31 of next year the payment of their instalments?

The minister's responsibility is to put some oxygen into the economy, to support small and medium size businesses and to help the workers who have lost their jobs or who could lose them.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is suggesting that we do what we have already done. We lowered taxes for small and medium size businesses. We helped them but, as I said, they are the first ones to tell us that they do not want us to go back to a deficit situation generated through spending.

We are taking action to avoid precisely what the hon. member is recommending, that is, to go back to a deficit situation. We will not do that.

[English]

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In times of crisis coalitions should be crucial. The government was quick to join the international coalition to defeat terrorism, but it has ignored the coalition of airline workers to deal with the crisis here at home. Early retirement packages are key to minimizing job losses and worker displacement.

Will the government work with the coalition of airline workers and support early retirement measures to stabilize the industry today and avert trained labour shortages tomorrow?

• (1430)

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of meeting with union representatives yesterday. We discussed the issues facing their workers in a number of different occupations.

We have agreed that the right first step is to ensure that the employer, the unions and the government are there to talk about the programs and services that do exist and to make sure they are readily available to any employees who need them, and we will do just that.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we desperately need a comprehensive, co-ordinated approach here. It is not good enough for the government to pass the buck from department to department or onto the next generation to solve this problem. We need a co-ordinated response today, if we are going to create a stable industry tomorrow.

Why are workers being shunted from one minister to another? If the government can respond to airline executives, it can surely respond to airline workers.

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the hon. member. Workers are not being shunted from one minister to the other.

We met yesterday. The union officials put their case to me. We will be discussing it, but most important is to ensure that the programs that do exist are there and readily available to Canadians who need them. We will ensure that that is the case.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, another 20,000 layoffs were announced today. U.S. officials say their country is in recession, yet the Minister of Finance in Canada refuses to bring in a budget.

Canada is the only country in the G-8 with no budget. The minister says the situation is too uncertain. The answer to uncertainty is leadership and the active leadership needed now is the budget this minister has promised.

Will the Minister of Finance either give us a date today for a full budget or will he give us a commitment that such a budget will be introduced before the end of October?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the leader of the fifth party that the budget in the United States will be delivered in January 2002.

Oral Questions

Here the minister has said he is looking at all the options and there will be a statement by him, as he does every October, on the state of the economy. If there is a need to change some of our programs and a budget is needed, there will be one. At this time of uncertainty, it is better to know all the facts before moving.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PCDR): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister gets more incredible every day.

We know that the Americans—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. The right hon. member for Calgary Centre has the floor.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, he gets more incredible every day.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Perhaps the right hon. member could assist the Chair by only repeating his question once. I am able to hear when the noise dies down, but saying it twice perhaps only provokes a reaction that is unnecessary.

* * *

TERRORISM

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, let me put a question to the Prime Minister about perimeter policy. We know the Americans are prepared to bargain seriously to assure security. To get agreements that they need, they have already dropped sanctions against Sudan, India and Pakistan. Therefore, there has never been a better time to have Canadian solutions accepted by the Bush administration, including on how we establish a secure perimeter.

In the three weeks since the terrorist attacks, will the Prime Minister tell the House what specific proposals Canada has made to the United States that would secure the perimeter, that would encourage—

• (1435)

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat again that it is better to know all the facts before moving. I remember in 1979, when the hon. member was the prime minister, he did not know how many members of parliament were in the House of Commons when we had a vote that caused the defeat of his government.

I just want to tell the House of Commons that we have already worked very hard with the Americans on making sure we have security in North America. Yesterday the solicitor general was in Washington and he was praised by the attorney general for the work that the RCMP and CSIS are doing.

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government is proud of the fact that it fails to find terrorists and leaves the real work to American police agencies. Now the Minister of Justice has refused to ask the supreme court to reconsider its apparent tolerance of foreign terrorists in Canada.

In light of the events of September 11, why has this minister refused to let the court know how its decisions on terrorism could threaten the security of all Canadians?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): In fact, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is referring to the case of R. v Suresh, which is before the supreme court now, as I indicated earlier this month, I reconsidered. I looked at the factum that we submitted in the case of Suresh. I sought the advice of our litigation committee. I sought the advice of an experienced litigator who argued this case for us before the court.

The hon. member knows that for the court to even grant leave to submit new evidence after hearing a case is a rare situation. After considering all the facts, I concluded—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Provencher.

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, instead of showing leadership in the supreme court, our justice minister simply asked the court to read the newspapers in order to make its decisions on terrorism.

Since the minister is not willing to voice the security concerns of Canadians to the supreme court, could the minister at least advise the House where she stands on the extradition of terrorists who commit murder?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the hon. member has not read the factum that the Government of Canada submitted in the case of R. v Suresh. If he had read it, he would know that we made a compelling case in relation to the dangers of terrorism and why this country cannot become and will not become a safe haven for terrorists.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as we know, year after year the government is accumulating billions of dollars in surplus funds in the EI fund.

We have always been told that the surplus was for a rainy day. That is certainly what is being experienced by the companies and thousands of employees who have recently experienced job cuts.

Would the Minister of Finance not be well advised to use a little under \$2 billion of that surplus to exempt workers and small and medium size businesses from having to contribute in November and December, thus helping them to get through this crisis?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, as the hon. member is well aware, the surplus in the EI fund is being used for health, for infrastructure programs, and for job creation.

At the same time, he is equally well aware that the Minister of Human Resources Development has already announced substantial improvements to the EI program, precisely in order to help the workers of Canada.

Oral Questions

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in order to counteract the disastrous effects on thousands of men and women who have been laid off, would the Minister of Finance not find it appropriate to extend EI benefits by 10 weeks in order to allow these people time to get themselves on their feet and find other jobs?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the employment insurance system is there now to help Canadians who are facing layoffs. Our annual monitoring and assessment report indicates that the program is working and working well for Canadians. The hon. member might be interested to know that only about one in five Canadians utilizes or exhausts full benefits.

I just want to point out that the system is there because we have made changes. It will be there for Canadians who are facing these difficult times, to help support them with income.

* * *

• (1440)

TERRORISM

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Convicted PLO terrorist Mahmoud Mohammad who shot up an airliner is still in Canada. The case reveals how inept and weak the Canadian system is. The Liberals railed against this when they were in opposition and in government they have had eight years to resolve it.

Is the minister finally going to pay particular attention to this case to show NATO and the world that Canada is not a safe haven for terrorists?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I share the member's concern and frustration when I read about such cases. Although I cannot discuss individual cases in the House because of privacy concerns, I can tell him that was exactly the motivation for bringing forward new legislation that would streamline our procedures so we could remove individuals more quickly.

While we believe in the rule of law and due process, we know we can do things faster. However, they voted against the new bill that would have allowed us to streamline the system which exists today.

Mr. Paul Forseth (New Westminster—Coquitlam—Burnaby, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the case has dragged on far too long. The minister can no longer blame the law of the courts. The government is accountable for the legal context in which the system operates.

Sergio Marchi said that there should be a sense of urgency rather than simply letting it languish at the bottom of the barrel. Then, as minister, Marchi did absolutely nothing. The lack of results reveals the disastrous political choices of the government.

If the minister cannot rid the country of a terrorist, how can the government claim to remove any security risk?

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me repeat again that I share the frustration of

all those who believe that it takes too long for us to remove those people who are unwelcome and unwanted in Canada. If they are criminals or security risks, we want them out of here but we do have the rule of law. That is why I proposed new legislation to allow us to streamline our procedures.

There is one point I want to make. Where we have evidence that someone poses a risk to Canada, we do have the authority to detain and arrest, and we do that.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, young people are often the last to be hired and the first to be let go when companies lay off employees.

In addition, they have to accumulate more hours to get employment insurance.

Does the Minister of Human Resources Development not see the current situation as a golden opportunity to eliminate the discriminatory clauses that hit young people hard?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we do not want to do anything that encourages young people to fall into the cycle of employment insurance. Rather we want to make sure that young people have the opportunity to work. That is why every year, through our youth employment strategy, we invest over \$400 million specifically in young Canadians.

We know young Canadians want to work and that is the policy strategy that we will take.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all of the minister's fancy words do not eliminate the discrimination, and when businesses lay off employees, as seniority is often the deciding factor, young people are all the more vulnerable.

Could the minister not use the current crisis to reach out to young people by making the protection of the employment insurance system more accessible to them and by treating them like all the other workers when they apply for benefits?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member points out, there are unique circumstances facing young Canadians. That is why we have programs specifically directed at Canadian youth to help them with the cycle of no experience, no work and no work, no experience.

Oral Questions

I say again that \$400 million is invested every year in young people in Canada to ensure that they have access to our economy and the employment opportunities it can provide.

* * *

TERRORISM

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the British government has seized \$88 million worth of assets of terrorist organizations. The Prime Minister said we were doing this two weeks ago. The Minister of Finance said we could do it last week. The reality is, Canadian financial institutions received effective legal authority only two days ago to freeze, and not even seize, these assets.

My question is simple. Why do we still not have the laws here in Canada to seize the assets of terrorist organizations?

• (1445)

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have pointed out before, we do in fact have the power to seize assets under the United Nations Act. That is found in section 3(2) of the United Nations Act. If information comes to my attention as Minister of Justice that assets have been frozen and if that information links assets to a prohibited or proscribed group, we will begin forfeiture proceedings in relation to those assets.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I will give the Minister of Justice a grand opportunity right now.

In 1999 the U.S. state department, our immigration department, our Senate and our justice department said that FACT is a front that raises funds for the terrorist Tamil Tiger organization LTTE, yet this group still raises funds here in Canada.

My question for the Minister of Justice is a simple one. Will the minister place FACT on that list of organizations that are banned from raising funds here in Canada?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the process is that the governor in council can add organizations or individuals to the list of proscribed organizations. If information is brought to our attention in relation to any organization, we will consider that and we will make a decision on a case by case basis.

* * *

FOREIGN AID

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Pakistan has been home to millions of refugees from Afghanistan for years. In the aftermath of September 11, there have been additional demands put on the government of Pakistan to not only respond to the refugees, but to join the fight against terrorism.

Would the Minister for International Cooperation tell the House what Canada is doing to help the government of Pakistan deal with the overwhelming burden of the Afghani refugees and their severe social and economic situation over the long term?

Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Afghanistan is faced with an enormous social and economic crisis. In recognition of the pressure put on the

government of Pakistan to try to accommodate the increased number of refugees and its co-operation in the coalition against terrorism, the Government of Canada has agreed to convert the \$447 million loan owed to CIDA into social programs, which will be about \$16 million a year. This means that there will be \$16 million a year used in Pakistan to assist in the area of social programs.

I will be working with the government of Pakistan and my colleagues to ensure that the money goes to the people. As well, the lifting of sanctions will allow me to reopen official assistance to Pakistan.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Nortel has just laid off another 20,000 people, many of them in this country. That means almost 70,000 Canadians have been laid off since last spring, including people in the high tech industry, the auto industry, the airline industry, and in agriculture and other manufacturing and service jobs.

What is the minister's strategy concerning jobs? How much more damage to the economy will it take before he brings down a budget? When he presents that budget to the House, can he tell us whether or not jobs and putting Canadians back to work will be the government's priority?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that jobs are the number one priority. That is why the first thing we did when we came to office was put in place a plan that would bring the unemployment rate down from 11.5% to where it is now.

The fact is that jobs continue to be the number one priority. That is why we proceeded to clean up the balance sheets, which is why we have enabled the Bank of Canada to bring down interest rates, which is why we have cut taxes, which is why we have invested in research and development, and which is why we will continue on that path.

Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 70,000 people in this country are out of work since last June and the number is rising every day. In addition interest rates are plummeting. The bank rate is now at a 29 year low. Despite that, millions of Canadians are paying an interest rate of almost 18% on their credit cards and they are not in a position to renegotiate that charge.

The Prime Minister is saying that people should spend some money. Will the Minister of Finance instruct the banks in Canada to get their credit card rates in line with the falling bank rate? Will he ask the banks to do their part and try to stimulate the Canadian economy?

• (1450)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the banks moved immediately on the reduction in interest rates. We have seen mortgage rates come down dramatically. What is very important is that we maintain the fiscal integrity of the country because that is what enables the Bank of Canada to bring interest rates down. It is what enables the banks to bring interest rates down.

Oral Questions

We are in the middle of a global slowdown. It is very important that we protect Canadians through the downturn and that we be in a position to lead the recovery when it comes.

* * *

TRADE

Mr. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, PC): Mr. Speaker, the security of our perimeter is Canada's number one economic issue. Canada's trade with the U.S. is currently around \$400 billion per year. Canada cannot afford to be outside of a fortress America.

Provincial premiers and business leaders are taking the lead on this issue. Why is the federal government not doing more to ensure the security of our perimeter and to ensure that Canadian exporters are not left out in the cold?

Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact the government started work on the question of customs and the volume it faced within a global area a long time ago. Back in 1995 the government signed a shared border agreement with the United States in order to ensure that we keep that land border open for trade.

As a matter of fact a year and a half ago the government tabled a brand new reform which brings a brand new vision to customs, Bill S-23. I will be present at the finance committee tonight in order to ensure that vision, which is a balanced approach to offering Canadian society security as well as keeping trade open on the land border. This is what the government wants to do.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon—Souris, PC): Mr. Speaker, according to the most recent Statistics Canada figures, the agriculture industry has lost 39,000 jobs this past year. That is 39,000 jobs. That is the largest single labour force reduction in all industries in the goods producing sector. Other industries have lost jobs as well.

The Minister of Industry, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Human Resources Development are paying lip service to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Why is the minister of agriculture so complacent when it comes to 39,000 jobs lost in the agriculture industry?

Hon. Lyle Vanclief (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will remind the hon. member again that with the safety net programs between the federal and provincial governments, the program payments to agriculture producers this year will be the highest they have been in a long time. They will be over \$4 billion. That will certainly help our agriculture industry.

* * *

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government shows its weakness even in setting up a so-called security committee. The terrorist threat of contamination of water supplies or the spread of deadly viruses is very real. Yet the federal health minister will be absent from the table even though these health concerns are of critical importance to Canadians.

Why is he not a key member of the new cabinet security committee?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member should understand that ministers on this side of the House work very closely together. I will be working with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and all of my cabinet colleagues. As a result of the horrific events of September 11 all governments are looking very critically at their capacity to respond to attacks, the nature of which were hitherto unimaginable.

The government is very much aware of that responsibility. Health Canada is on the team. We are working hard to make sure Canada will be prepared for whatever happens.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a matter of priorities. Canada's provincial health ministers are way out in front of the government. They are already working on their own emergency response plans. The U.S. secretary of health recently made a televised appearance to assure that his department is ready and prepared to respond to a chemical or biological terrorist attack. Yet our Minister of Health is not even on Canada's new security committee. The question is, if this is such a high priority issue, why is he not on the committee?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in July 2000 Health Canada opened its new Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response, led by Dr. Ron St. John, who has an international reputation for expertise in this area.

For the last 18 months he has been building and strengthening Canada's capacity to be ready for whatever might befall the country. We learned on September 11 a lot more has to be done and very quickly. Last week with the provincial ministers we agreed as a matter of priority to look at a list of things that must be undertaken immediately.

Health Canada is on the job. This minister is on the team. The job will be done.

* * *

• (1455)

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the events of September 11 have affected specific sectors of the economy, vital sectors such as aviation, tourism and air and road transportation.

Will the Minister of Industry acknowledge that his government has a responsibility to support these sectors, which were hit hardest by the events of September 11?

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have had questions on the economy today which to my mind have not been realistic. There have been questions in essence asking the Minister of Finance if that minister is responsible for a downturn in the economy worldwide. We know we have a powerful, persuasive and excellent Minister of Finance, but surely nobody would blame a downturn worldwide on one minister in Canada.

We are doing our jobs. We have positioned Canada well. We will ride out the storm. We will recover quickly because we have made the right decisions.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the public expects the government to do just that, its job.

In an economic downturn, businesses often cut their investments, especially in research and development.

Does the minister not think that it would be a good idea to establish tax incentives to encourage or speed up investment that otherwise might be put off?

Some hon. members: Oh, Oh.

[English]

The Speaker: Order, please. It is very difficult to hear. There seem to be a lot of conversations going on at once.

[Translation]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of French professors on the other side of the House.

[English]

I appreciate all the help I have been getting.

The Government of Canada will bring forward a budget in good time. That budget will continue to build on the future of the country. As we have said over and over, as important as the security issue is today in this country, it is important to continue to invest in Canada's economy. The member will see that we are going to do exactly that.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. ambassador says that Canada may be asked to fill in for American troops leaving the Balkans. The defence minister was bragging yesterday, in an open letter in fact, that the Canadian forces are in great shape and that there is no need for concern.

Will the minister please tell the House, if asked by the Americans for assistance, where is he going to get the 2,500 troops, which is well within the government's own white paper commitments?

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, whatever the United States has asked of us in this campaign on terrorism we have delivered on. We have put additional jet fighters into the NORAD system. We have been providing valuable assistance in terms of intelligence gathering and analysis. We have given the Americans the wide array of capabilities that we have. They know what capabilities we have. We are in discussions with them as to what role we might play.

The hon. member mentioned the American ambassador. What he forgot was the bottom line of his speech yesterday when the American ambassador said, "Whenever we have asked, the Canadian government has stepped up to the plate. I have no complaints".

Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the American ambassador has indicated that Canada may well be asked again to step up to the plate. What I want to find out from the minister is where is he going to come up with the 2,500 troops which is still well within the government's own white paper commitments? Where is he going to get the people from?

Hon. Art Eggleton (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have not heard the United States talk about any particular number. The Americans have not asked us for any specific number of troops. The member has it wrong. Again, we have said that we are going to be a key part of the campaign against terrorism in a number of different ways, not all of them military. If we are asked to step up to the plate, we will be there.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in a September 26 CBC radio interview the minister of immigration said she had given the order to do indepth security screening of entrants. She said this had begun and that they had not waited for Bill C-11.

Could the minister of immigration tell us, since Bill C-11 has not passed, under what or whose authority she is acting?

● (1500)

Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after the events of September 11 I instructed my department to intensify security screening at our ports of entry. This was purely an operational matter within the legislative scope that is available under the current law, requiring no new legislative authority.

While the current law does have grounds to bar access to the refugee determination system, it does require multiple steps and poses significant delays. That is why with Bill C-11 we have streamlined so that those who are eligible to make a claim will be identified—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister would not apologize for the thousands of dollars spent sponsoring a conference that became a venue for a hate speech. He said the organizations receiving the funding helped abused women and children.

Routine Proceedings

How does the hate filled, anti-American, anti-male rant help abused women and children?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me repeat again that these types of conferences are very useful in Canada and we will not stop having social dialogue in our nation because someone made a terrible speech that we condemn one hundred per cent.

In Canada we have to have meetings of that nature and we still—

Mr. Vic Toews: But we don't have to pay for them.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien: Yes, and that person was there but the minister was invited and she made a good speech on what the government is doing on that. We had Senator Pearson there. She is a very well known advocate for children and even Madam Justice Arbour was there, so—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys.

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, the government is using tax dollars to fund special interest groups that undermine Canadian principles. We saw 80,000 of those tax dollars at work at the women's resistance conference.

Would the money funding hate speeches against western civilization not be better spent on the safety and security of Canadians?

Hon. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this was a three day conference. It was a conference that spanned: there were academics there; there were people from 10 other countries there; there were people who had done long term work on this. There were people who had done groundwork and the grassroots people who have been doing the clinics every day.

The questions of women's equality, of sexual exploitation of children, of women's economic status, of violence against women and of the criminal justice system, these were supposed to come up with a report that would assist in good policy and program development.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Makram Obaid, Minister of Transport of Syria.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

• (1505)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has been consultation among House leaders. I think if you were to seek it you would find unanimous consent for the following. I move:

That, the first item to be considered under Government Orders on Thursday, October 4, 2001, shall be a motion by the Leader of the Government in the House

That the Report of the Special Committee on the Modernization and Improvement of the Procedures of the House of Commons, tabled on Friday, June 1, 2001, be concurred in, provided that the proposed amendment therein to Standing Order 52(13) shall be amended by deleting the words 'of his or her party' and that the recommendations of the Report shall come into force, as amended, on the Monday following the adoption of this Order; and

That, at 4:00 p.m. on October 4, 2001, or when no Member rises to speak, whichever is earlier, the said motion shall be deemed adopted.

The Speaker: Does the hon. government House leader have unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

[English]

Pursuant to its order of reference of Wednesday, September 26, 2001, the committee has considered Bill C-15, an act to amend the criminal code and to amend other acts, and has agreed to report that it has been divided into two bills.

* * *

PETITIONS

FALUN GONG

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition that I would like to present to the House today. It is from the Falun Gong-Falun Dafa organizations across the country. A number of constituents from my riding and surrounding Edmonton are calling on parliament to form part of Canada's SOS!Rescue Team to basically go to China and insist that the torturing and killing of the people who practise Falun Gong and Falun Dafa stop, and that all Falun Gong practitioners and Lin Shenli be freed now.

MARRIAGE

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions from different groups. One is a petition from people in Shelburne County on Bill C-23 from the 36th parliament. They would like to petition on the clarification of marriage.

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, the other petitions, with a couple of hundred names on them, are from the rural fire departments in different areas of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The petitions concern the \$1,000 tax deduction that the federal 1999 budget promised and offered to paid firefighters but did not give to volunteer firefighters, which most people consider to be very unfair.

On behalf of volunteer firefighters in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, I am very pleased to bring this petition to your attention.

• (1510)

VIA RAIL

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present another petition, a petition that now has been signed by thousands of people from the Peterborough area who would like to see VIA Rail service restored between Toronto and Peterborough.

These petitioners see great environmental advantages in the restoration of service: reduction in greenhouse emissions; improvement in health from the reduction in highway emissions; a reduction of highway accidents; and a great improvement in the business environment not only of Peterborough but of the GTA.

These petitioners are delighted at the response of our Minister of Transport to the announcement that Queen's Park will reinvest in municipal transportation.

LAND TITLES

Mr. Andy Burton (Skeena, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to present a petition on behalf of the people of Skeena regarding sovereignty of land title for citizens of Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the 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]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Notice of Motion for the Production of Papers No. P-8, in the name of the hon. member for Calgary Centre, is acceptable to the government with the reservations stated in the reply and the documents are tabled immediately.

Government Orders

That an Order of this House do issue for copies of all documentation, including briefings, memoranda, e-mails and minutes relating to the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Business Development Bank of Canada of June 2, 1999.

The Speaker: Subject to the reservations expressed by the parliamentary secretary, is it the pleasure of the House that Motion No. P-8 be deemed to have been adopted?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

COURTS ADMINISTRATION SERVICE ACT

The House resumed from October 1 consideration of the motion that Bill C-30, an act to establish a body that provides administrative services to the Federal Court of Appeal, the Federal Court, the Court Martial Appeal Court and the Tax Court of Canada, to amend the Federal Court Act, the Tax Court of Canada Act and the Judges Act, and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Robert Lanctôt (Châteauguay, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the act to establish a body that provides administrative services to the Federal Court of Appeal, the Federal Court, the Court Martial Appeal Court and the Tax Court of Canada.

One of the key principles underlying our legal system is that of the independence of the judiciary. The courts must contemplate this principle, the purpose of which is to reinforce our free and democratic system.

The same principle applies to the courts. They must be able to exercise their mandate of interpreting laws without being subjected to undue political pressure. That is one of the purposes of this bill.

What is judicial independence? To begin with, it must not be confused with judicial impartiality. Impartiality is different from independence in that the impartiality has to do with arriving at decisions which are neutral, without prejudice, based solely on the facts presented at trial. Impartiality means that the trial judge will not hand down a ruling based on subjective impressions, but solely on the facts and the testimony presented in court.

While impartiality is exercised vis-à-vis the defendant, judicial independence is exercised vis-à-vis the executive and legislative arms of the government. Judicial independence is necessary so that pressure from the government does not interfere, or appear to interfere, with court rulings.

Government Orders

Should a reasonable observer be able to conclude that pressure has been brought to bear, that would be enough for there to be the appearance of interference in judicial independence. The same observer could thus conclude that judicial impartiality has been tainted through government pressure, whether or not such is the case. That is why it is important to ensure that the body which provides administrative services to courts under federal jurisdiction leaves the judicial body free of any form of interference.

Many rulings have reached this conclusion. In *Tobiass v Minister of Citizenship and Immigration*, and *Dueck v Minister of Citizenship and Immigration*, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the appearance of judicial independence must not be tainted.

In addition, the court held that judicial independence has an institutional aspect and a personal aspect. The supreme court emphasized that the judiciary should not only remain independent in fact, but that it should be seen to remain independent. Once again, the key test is what a reasonable observer would perceive.

This objective test means that any reasonable person must be able to conclude that judges are free to hand down decisions without any possibility of interference from the government or from other judges. That is what is important in this bill and what should be important in all the government's bills: protection against government interference.

In the preface to the Canadian Judicial Council annual report for 1996, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Antonio Lamer wrote that "the quality of their future depends on the existence of a judiciary system based on honesty, impartiality and independence".

Honesty and impartiality are only possible when there is independence. Independence is the basic element which keeps our judiciary free of vice and interference.

For some years now, the bench has been calling for an administrative body to support the judiciary system, rather than the opposite. For some years now, the judiciary has been stressing that independence is possible only if there is an absolute appearance of impartiality and honesty. There must be a clear separation between the bench and government pressures. An organizational format would have to be put in place to truly separate the administrative and the decision making aspects.

Judicial independence requires the depoliticization of the judiciary and must clearly demonstrate that there can be no pernicious interference by government. Once again, the reasonable person criterion must be applied.

At the international congress of the Canadian Council of Administrative Tribunals, held in Quebec City this past June, Justice Claire L'Heureux-Dubé confirmed the need for judicial independence and emancipation of the courts from political power. This is evidence that this bill is more than essential.

• (1515)

Justice L'Heureux-Dubé made it clear that there must be an increased perception of independence, and each judge must be protected from undue pressures. These are fundamental principles that must be not just respected, but also reinforced by the creation of an independent administrative structure.

This principle is international. At the same congress, an American, Judge Edwin L. Felter Jr., President of the National Conference of Administrative Law Judges, said:

Judiciary independence is not for the good of the judges, but for the good of the public, who expect judges to be fair and impartial, and to reach their decisions without constraint.

We confer a power of interpretation upon our judges. We must respect that power and therefore must provide them with the necessary tools to achieve those objectives. I repeat, there must be no interference of any kind in this decision making process which must be based on the facts.

The only obligation judges have toward government is to carry out their duties in a highly professional manner in keeping with their mandate.

For a judge to act in a highly professional manner, he must not be distracted from his mandate, which is to interpret the law according to the facts with which he is presented. To that end, the judiciary must also be freed up from any administrative and budgetary tasks. Any financial control over the judiciary might lend the appearance that there was interference.

As I stated earlier, we have given judges the power to interpret, and it is up to us, as parliamentarians, to provide them with the tools required to carry out this difficult task. An administrative body must therefore free judges from any restrictions and provide them with both the functional and institutional freedom needed to accomplish what they are appointed to do: hand down enlightened rulings without any interference.

One of the objectives of this bill is to enhance accountability for the use of public moneys. Once again, the notion of transparency is essential to the public's perception of our judicial system.

The criterion of accountability assures us that judges will appear more independent. The fact that it is the chief administrator who will be held accountable distances the judges from any apparent source of influence.

In short, the implementation of elements that strengthen the fundamental principles of judicial independence is seen as desirable and necessary to ensure the proper functioning of the courts and the entire judicial system.

Anything that helps ensure judges' freedom in ruling is desirable and necessary. Anything which helps eliminate interference or the appearance of interference is not only desirable, but essential and paramount. The government has no right to interfere here or elsewhere.

We must provide the judicial system with the necessary tools to ensure the fair and democratic protection of our rights.

All I can add at this point is that the only problem there may be with this bill is with the appointment of the chief administrator. I believe that it would be better if it were an elected position and the criteria could be established by parliament.

Government Orders

• (1520)

[English]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have just a brief comment on Bill C-30, formerly Bill C-40. It is a bill, as members will know, to establish a body to provide administrative services to the Federal Court of Appeal, the Federal Court, the Court Martial Appeal Court and the Tax Court of Canada.

The principal goal of the legislation, as I understand it, is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration of these courts while at the same time preserving the appropriate balance between judicial independence and financial accountability.

I understand that pursuant to a seminal case on judicial independence known as *Valente v The Queen*, the Supreme Court of Canada itself has indicated that the proposed structure satisfies in its mind the constitutional test for institutional independence, because this would certainly be one of the concerns people might have about the legislation.

The legislation follows again, as I understand it, upon the recommendation of a former auditor general who had recommended a complete merger of the Federal Court and the Tax Court of Canada as a means to address the administrative inefficiencies he identified but the government decided not to go this far. In my judgment it was probably right in not listening totally to the recommendations of the auditor general.

I might say in this context that I sometimes find, as I have said in the past, that the auditor general goes beyond what is required and goes much farther down the road in policy making and policy recommendation than I feel the auditor general ought to. I find it is often the case that the auditor general's office not only identifies inefficiencies or problems but then goes on to make recommendations, almost like an independent policy think-tank. I have had correspondence with previous auditors general on this but I do not want to grind that particular political axe this afternoon.

All I want to say is that although the bill is lengthy in terms of how much paper it consumes, the idea is pretty simple. The sooner we get this to committee and deal with it the better.

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I noted the comments of the member for Winnipeg—Transcona in reference to the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Valente v The Queen* and, of course, the more recent decision that some of my constituents referred to, when I was in provincial politics, as the case of the judges paying the judges, that is, the establishment of an independent constitutional authority that would require not simply government, be it order in council or parliament, paying judges but actually judges making sure that judges get paid. That was the classification that my constituents put that case into. That case as well talked about institutional independence of the courts.

While I generally support the bill, my concern is that as we move to the institutional independence of the courts, including administrative independence, how do we ensure accountability? We, as members of parliament, and the Minister of Finance are accountable to the taxpayers for the decisions that we make in respect of the

running of a department. Whether there are defence issues or health issues, ultimately we are accountable.

My concern is if we simply hand over administrative independence to the courts. I realize the bill does not quite go that far but we are clearly going down that road and we have to tackle the issue. Who will then call the courts to account for misspent money or inefficiencies?

We read in the auditor general's report that there are many unused courts now. The reference was that in the federal court system around 35% to 40% of the courts are being used. Therefore on any given day over 60% of our courtrooms are unused. One can only think of all the expenses involved in unused courtrooms.

I know, for example, from my provincial experience and my involvement in the justice system, that courts were open one hour a day and then shut and the judge gone; then other courts were backed up because that court had too many cases.

The real issue is not that we do not want independence for the court so that justice is done in particular cases, but if we simply hand over money to the courts to run the courts, how do we ensure that accountability?

I wonder whether the member has any issues or comments that he could make in that respect.

• (1525)

Mr. Bill Blaikie: Madam Speaker, the member for Provencher raises a good question. If I recall correctly, it is a question that he, in a former incarnation, had to deal with, or at least the government that he was part of had to deal with. I recall, and I hope correctly, the controversy in Manitoba when there was a decision by the provincial government of the day, I believe it was the Conservative government, with respect to the remuneration of judges, and there was a case which followed from that having to do with the independence of the judiciary. I believe that is the case to which the member is referring.

This is a genuinely tough question and I do not pretend to have the answers. Do we create an administrative and categorical enclave in which there is no accountability in the name of judicial independence? Having done that in the past to some extent, what claim can government or the larger society make on courts if we feel that they are being underused or the money is not being spent wisely? How do we do that without being open to the charges that the Manitoba government was open to at the time and which led to that court case?

Perhaps having the bill go to the justice committee might be an opportunity to hear some witnesses on this very difficult question, not so much by way of seeking amendment to this particular bill, although that might flow from it, but it certainly might be an occasion, not for lengthy hearings or anything, to hear some evidence on this very difficult question. I agree with the hon. member that in fact it is a difficult question.

Government Orders

• (1530)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC): Madam Speaker, Bill C-30 is a fairly large and cumbersome bill. It is one that deals with a number of technical changes that touch on the establishment of a body to provide administrative services to the Federal Court, the Court Martial Appeal Court and the Tax Court of Canada. The bill essentially deals with amendments to the Federal Court Act, the Tax Court of Canada Act and the Judges Act and consequential amendments that flow from them.

The bill, although procedural and voluminous, is one that is important. It is one that has to occur to attempt to streamline a very complex system that is already in place. It is an attempt to consolidate the current administrative services of the Federal Court of Canada, the Court Martial Appeal Court and the Tax Court of Canada into a single administrative service.

The legislation comes about as a result of a number of triggering mechanisms, including, as mentioned previously, the auditor general's steady, guiding hand in influencing this action from occurring as well as the court case of *Valente v The Queen*.

The attempt here is obviously to strike the age old balance of judicial independence and achieving a certain level of service. The Progressive Conservative/Democratic Representative coalition supports the legislation. It is one that requires a great deal of attention to detail and perhaps, most appropriately, that will occur at the justice committee.

The previous two speakers have alluded to the fact that there will be an opportunity at committee to delve into the details because time and time again we are reminded that the devil is often in the details. The justice department has, on many occasions, been renowned for bringing in legislation that has this large pith and substance to it. When one takes the time to examine it, there are often nuggets of change that are quite substantial and that sometimes get lost in the forest and do not appear so readily when one looks at a bill of this size at first glance.

Some of the other amendments that will come about as a consequence deal with federal statutes, such as the Judges Act, the Access to Information Act, Canada Elections Act, Corrections and Conditional Release Act, Employment Insurance Act, Extradition Act, Immigration Act, Income Tax Act, defence and privacy, to name but a few. One can quickly glean that the bill has incredible reach. It touches on a number of existing statutes. The changes themselves, although administrative in nature, are quite substantial.

The court shall consist of at least two divisions: the Federal Court of Appeal and the Federal Court trial division. These changes that deal with the way in which the courts currently conduct themselves will have a significant impact.

My friend from Provencher and my friend from Winnipeg—Transcona talked about judicial independence and the salaries that are tied to it. The debate about judges having the capacity to set their own rates of pay is a debate that has been very interesting and often emotionally driven. To add controversy to that, legislation passed last spring will now tie in any future changes to the salary structure of members of parliament. Our salaries will be impacted by the rate

of pay that judges receive. That can lead to an entire debate in and of itself.

Suffice it to say that the true intent behind giving judges a salary and setting their salary separate from the political process is to avoid any real or perceived interference from outside sources, be they political or, in a more nefarious way, I would argue, although some might suggest that the political influence can be just as nefarious, organized crime.

There has been ample evidence that organized crime is on the rise. It has reared its ugly head in many cities and towns throughout the country.

• (1535)

It is presenting itself time and again in a very aggressive way as we saw recently in the city of Halifax where the Hell's Angels opened a storefront operation, advertising in bright fluorescent lights their presence in the city.

There was legislation before the House in recent months that attempted to aid police in the difficult task of combating organized crime. There is a lot more to do in that regard. The resources, the training and the sophistication used by organized crime elements have to be motivation enough for us to step up every effort to give our law enforcement agents every bit of help in terms of resource support and legislative support.

Bill C-30 is very much in its purpose the pith and substance to keep the judiciary separate from that type of influence. Organized crime is not beyond attempting to influence the decisions of judges. It is not beyond any sort of act that is intended to destabilize or to bring the administration of justice into disrepute.

We have seen bold new efforts and aggressive acts on the part of organized crime. One could even make the leap to say that terrorism is in and of itself a more sophisticated and often a more philosophically driven form of organized crime. The results are staggering.

We are still reeling from the effects of September 11. The seriousness is there to underline the necessity of giving judges complete impartiality. That is a very difficult task indeed. Their financial compensation and salaries are often a way in which interference and influence can be exerted.

The coalition supports the legislation. We feel that it is necessary to bring about the changes, particularly in the area of the Judges Act where in recent years growing concerns were brought to bear about the increased elements of interference and influence.

Salaries for judges in the Federal Court are now tied to a schedule. No one would suggest for a minute that they are undercompensated when one compares those salaries to others working in the private sector. If we are to attract the best and the brightest and those individuals most capable of administering and administering law in the country, those salaries must be commensurate with the ability. That has to be the number one priority in terms of the selection of judges and ensuring that we get the best people on the bench.

Government Orders

The other sections of the act to which I have referred that impact the Elections Act and Corrections and Conditional Release Act deal with changes that are meant to streamline and bring about greater efficiency in the administration of those acts.

The Extradition Act deals with a clause wherein the Federal Court and the court of appeal in the province in which the committal of a person was ordered have exclusive jurisdiction to hear and determine applications for judicial review under the act made in respect of a decision of the minister pursuant to section 40.

There is a change where the court of appeal may grant relief under a section of the act on the grounds that a trial division or a Federal Court of Canada also grants relief.

All these interconnected and related sections of the numerous acts are covered under Bill C-30. It is one that took a great deal of time and effort to prepare. We are looking forward to having an equal opportunity at the justice committee to review the work of the justice department. I am sure we can present and advance the very best legislation possible.

• (1540)

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by the hon. member for Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough. As a member of the bar he understands very well how the judicial system operates and how various justice and court arrangements are made.

Would he agree with Alex Macdonald, either the solicitor general or the attorney general for the province of B.C. who is now retired? He wrote an exposé of what happened in the Canadian justice system. At the beginning of his book he makes a very strong indictment against the justice system. He goes so far as to say that Canada does not have a justice system; it has a legal system.

He describes how one court is loaded with all kinds of cases. There is such a backlog that they cannot get the physical time in court even if the judge and court space were available. Yet there is an empty court right next door where nothing is happening. Cases cannot be expedited simply because of a lack of space.

Does the hon. member feel that this legislation might actually help to speed up the justice system so that cases can be heard before juveniles become adults?

Mr. Peter MacKay: Madam Speaker, I have not had the pleasure of reading Mr. Macdonald's book. It is something I should do. He makes the point that there is a pressing need in the country to have sufficient judges and courtrooms as well as physical space to hear cases.

The issue of backlogs, whether they be in the justice system for adults or juveniles, is a huge problem. When I worked as a crown attorney we encountered that difficulty many times, particularly as it pertained to charges that proceeded by indictment and resulted in jury trials. The backlog often resulted in a waiting period of two years. In the life of a young person two years severely undermines the ability to bring about the requisite deterrence and rehabilitative efforts.

I have concerns about the system as it currently operates. There is an effort in the bill to streamline and to ensure that judges are

appointed in a timely fashion, to paraphrase the Minister of Justice and her favourite characterization.

I also believe that there is a huge problem looming with respect to the youth criminal justice act. We could be building new courtroom facilities and appointing judges. Yet there is a bill currently in the other place that is more complicated than the Income Tax Act. It is so convoluted, cumbersome, unmanageable and unenforceable that it will be an administrative nightmare. The local bar associations around the country are licking their lips in anticipation of that legislation passing.

On the one hand the government through the bill is attempting to streamline justice. On the other hand the justice department has produced Bill C-7 in an attempt to replace the Young Offenders Act, which will gum up the system.

The hon. member is exactly right. We will have young people who will be ready to collect their pensions before they will have made it through the youth justice system. It is rather incongruous that the justice department can work at such cross purposes at times and in essence leave the justice system cross threaded to the detriment of Canadians.

• (1550)

Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I appreciated the comments made by the member of the coalition. I am pleased to participate in the discussion regarding Bill C-30, the courts administration service act.

The bill would consolidate the administrative services of the Federal Court of Canada, the Court Martial Appeal Court and the Tax Court of Canada into a single courts administration service. It would create the position of chief administrator of the courts administrative service. The bill would also create a separate federal court of appeal and change the status of the tax court to that of a superior court.

Bill C-30 is the government's response to the 1997 report of the auditor general entitled "Report on the Federal Court of Canada and the Tax Court of Canada". The report reviewed the possible regionalization and or merger of the Federal Court's trial division and the Tax Court of Canada as well as the consolidation of their administrative support services. The report also presented the results of an audit of the registry services of the two courts.

The member for Winnipeg—Transcona indicated that he had some concerns about the auditor general moving into what he classified as a policy initiative. I welcome that kind of initiative by a public servant. It gives members of the House a clearly laid out plan and suggestion. Ultimately it would always be up to members of the House to determine whether or not we would accept that policy recommendation.

Bill C-30 enacts only the report's recommendation to consolidate the administrative services of the two courts, although it may be viewed by some as a first step toward an eventual total merger.

Government Orders

The arguments in favour of the proposed consolidation of the administrative services in Bill C-30 appear to be reasonable and sound calculations. The main concern articulated by the auditor general was that significant improvements were needed in the area of court registry cost effectiveness.

Among the existing problems cited were poor planning of facilities, lack of information technology and the fact that the supply of courtrooms exceeded the combined needs of both the federal court and the tax court.

With respect to the excess of courtrooms available, the auditor general simply noted what most members of the bar have been stating for years. His affirmation of this in the report was an important step which we can now use to proceed.

The report examined the physical facilities of both courts to determine whether they were being planned or used in an effective manner. The conclusion of the auditor general was that the two courts had an oversupply of courtrooms and that the actual use of courtrooms was low. The Federal Court's rate of use of its own courtrooms was about 21% based on data from 1993 to 1995.

• (1555)

Other users account for about 16% of overall use and total use amounts to only 36% of total availability. The tax court's use of its own courtrooms is slightly higher at 35% to 38% and total use ranges between 37% and 41%.

If we were any kind of a private business that needed to account to shareholders for efficiencies, our shareholders would have this board of directors out on its ears. We are in fact accountable but not just to shareholders. We are accountable to the voters of Canada. This kind of glaring problem staring us in the face demands action.

Again it illustrates the concern that I voiced earlier. I have no problem with the consolidation of courtrooms and administrators and the like to improve efficiencies. My concern, which I see as an apparently inevitable road that we will go down, arises as we move toward the independent administration of the courts by judges. As the members responsible for taxpayer dollars, how do we ask judges to account if we turn this over to them?

Looking at the rate of use now, I think most judges would say we would not have much trouble trying to beat that record. Therefore, we as parliamentarians, and specifically the Liberal government, have done nothing to encourage efficiency in that respect. That may be a good reason for saying that the government has done nothing to encourage efficiency and that the courts should do it. I have a better plan which involves this side of the House sitting in the government benches, but that will have to wait for a number of years.

The auditor general's report claims that consolidation of courtrooms and registry offices could yield major savings, perhaps \$1 million just in leasing expenses. The auditor general further estimates that millions of dollars of possible savings could be gained if all recommended changes within the report were implemented.

Let us take a brief look at the report's specific recommendations to consolidate the administrative services to the Federal Court of Canada, Trial Division and the Tax Court of Canada.

The report recommends the consolidation of corporate services for the court registries, estimating the savings at \$600,000 per year. The report states that consolidation could greatly facilitate improved planning and use of resources, as well as increase the opportunity to plan for federal judicial centres that would meet the needs of the courts, federal boards and tribunals.

Of course many of the issues reviewed in the auditor general's report are not new to the two courts being considered. Many of the recommendations of the auditor general have been previously endorsed by the courts.

As part of a government wide series of program reviews in 1994, the Federal Court undertook a review of its activities. The Federal Court's program review recommended that the government consider consolidation of judicial responsibilities presently held by different courts and different tribunals.

The Federal Court's program review suggested that the government also explore amalgamation of the Federal Court with the tax court and opportunities where by responsibilities of boards and commissions could be dealt with more appropriately, by a trial court for example.

The tax court also recommended to the government a possible consolidation of corporate services among the Supreme Court of Canada, the Federal Court of Canada and the Tax Court of Canada, as well as quasi-judicial commissions, boards and tribunals.

• (1600)

They believe a consolidation could eliminate duplication of work and harmonize policies and procedures in areas such as personnel, finance, security, administration and information technology.

Although the bill only proposes to consolidate the administrative services of the two courts, a move which would not face much opposition from each court, I would suggest, as I stated earlier, it may be viewed by some as the first step toward a total merger of the courts.

While consolidation of the administrative services of the courts as outlined in the bill is a reasonable solution to the many problems articulated by the auditor general, a total merger of the courts is a far more contentious issue. The tax court and legal counsel appearing before that court are known to be strongly opposed to a merger. Those employed by the tax court believe that the efficiency of the court would be lost in a merger and maintain that the hearing of tax cases requires a specialized court.

The tax court indeed has highly specialized judges and it is seen as efficient and effective by the lawyers who appear before it.

Government Orders

The tax court also maintains that most of the significant problems in registry services are related to the Federal Court and not the tax court. It argues that there would be increased delays in hearing tax cases if the tax court merged with the Federal Court. Furthermore, the judges of the tax court joined the court with the understanding that they would deal primarily with tax matters. They may view a merger that requires them to deal with other matters as a breach of that understanding.

Tax counsel have stated that at a minimum judges experienced in tax law are needed to hear cases and that if the courts are merged a separate tax division should be established. I do not think that is a radical suggestion. We have done that with other superior courts in the area of provincial superior courts. For example, we would have a general court of justice and then a specialized family law division. I do not see as being a negative thing. Indeed, I think we could respect that specialization and yet still have the flexibility of ensuring that the courts and the courtrooms are used more effectively.

However, many of the counsel also maintain that tax court judges are already working at full capacity, so in their case they argue productivity is not an issue as has been suggested by some may be the case in the Federal Court.

Currently the administrative services of the various courts are independent of each other. The bill creates the position of a chief administrator who would have the rank and status of a deputy head of a department, creating another layer of government, and that is a concern.

Furthermore, the chief justice of the tax court, when he reviewed the auditor general's report, did not agree with all of the calculations that indicated the need for increased cost effectiveness of the court nor with the methods used to determine possible advantages of a merger.

Those are my comments. I am prepared to move ahead on the bill, but there is still a lot of work that needs to be done.

● (1605)

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the erudite analysis of Bill C-30 that my hon. colleague from Provencher just gave us.

Given his experience as attorney general and, in his previous life, as a practitioner and a member of the bar, would he agree with the comments of Alex Macdonald, the former attorney general of British Columbia, regarding the prodigal law in the justice system in Canada? He said that the law states that the amount of time it takes to bring a case to its culmination depends directly on the amount of money and the amount of time available to service the case.

The auditor general showed us that roughly less than 50% of the courts actually were occupied by judges and lawyers hearing cases. There is a tremendous inefficiency here. It must have taken a lot of ingenuity on the part of the judges and lawyers to bring it up to 50% because clearly their interest would be to make sure they have access to the space and that it would be free and independent as it possibly could be.

The auditor general has provided us with a tremendous insight here. He was able to unearth something that apparently was clear to

everyone, yet at the same time these people had a vested interest to make sure they did not find that.

Could the member comment on the prodigal law and on the vested interest that individuals have in making sure that the space is available in the public sector that they want but may not need?

Mr. Vic Toews: Madam Speaker, with respect to the concept of the prodigal laws where cases and time expand dependent upon the amount of money available to serve the cases, that is clearly true. Litigation is a very expensive business. One has to have the money in order to fuel that fire. Depending upon the goodwill or indeed the lack of goodwill of some litigants, we can see time being eaten away by the courts.

In all fairness, many trial judges that I appeared in front of recognized the problem. They tried to do things about it. They did not like abuse of the court system. They did not like counsel wasting time. However, there was always a fear by the trial judges that, if they cut short frivolous arguments they would be overturned on appeal because they did not give the lawyer or individual a fair hearing.

I have found that judges have been more than tolerant of the comments, the length of comments and the time they take, not because they do not recognize the problem at the trial level but because of their fear of being overturned by a court of appeal which may not have that hands-on day to day experience and not see the problem creeping up. It is a serious problem.

When I was serving as a provincial justice minister, we tried to do a number of things to increase the efficiency and the use of the courts. It was extremely difficult to get the facts and the figures. The clerks who answered to a deputy minister and who answered to me kept all the records of the use of the courts but were prohibited by the judges from providing that information to me. Eventually after a long protracted battle I got some of it.

It essentially demonstrated that even in our provincial judges' courts, which are considered the workhorses of the court system, the day to day courts where 90% of the cases are heard, that three to three and a half hours a day was the average. That indicated to me that there was something wrong but I could not quite put my finger on it.

I have a tremendous concern that as we move toward the independence of the administrators of the court the very small ability that elected officials now have to demand some type of accountability will disappear completely. That is my concern.

I share some of his concerns but I would not necessarily fault trial court judges in that respect. Generally speaking they do a very good job of trying to move matters ahead.

● (1610)

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Kelowna, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, we have an interesting bill before us. It is probably one of the simplest and most incontrovertible bills we have seen for a long time. It rationalizes what would appear to be a logical thing to do: to organize these courts under one umbrella and one chief administrator. It makes eminent good sense.

Government Orders

As a business person and an administrator in a previous life I think it makes jolly good sense. It is about time someone did something like this. The auditor general said it would be a good thing to do and it is. On the face of it that part makes excellent sense.

For the benefit of our listeners and viewers this afternoon I will indicate exactly which four courts would be rationalized under one administrative body. They are the Federal Court of Canada, the Federal Court of Appeal, the Court Martial Appeal Court of Canada and the Tax Court of Canada.

As we all know there is entrepreneurial bureaucracy in the world. There are entrepreneurial bureaucrats whose function seems to be to increase the number of people under their administration. The salary structure is put together in such a way that the more people one administers the greater one's pay, and of course the greater the responsibility and the more the work expands.

We have created a super administrative body whose chief administrator has one of the most auspicious jobs in the world. The administrator's job is to tell judges they cannot use a particular room on a certain day. That is a tremendous power. The chief administrator can tell judges, who for all intents and purposes are superior, where they can go to practise their art.

I am overstating the case. I am not really serious but I am sure that kind of thing will happen. The independence that my colleague mentioned is a real issue. The way the government states the case in terms of the purposes of the bill is significant. I will read from the bill. It states:

The purposes of this Act are to

(a) facilitate coordination and cooperation among the Federal Court of Appeal, the Federal Court, the Court Martial Appeal Court and the Tax Court of Canada for the purpose of ensuring the effective and efficient provision of administrative services to those courts;

Here is the significant part. Its purpose is also to:

(b) enhance judicial independence by placing administrative services at arm's length from the Government of Canada and by affirming the roles of chief justices and judges in the management of the courts; and

(c) enhance accountability for the use of public money in support of court administration while safeguarding the independence of the judiciary.

Three issues are at stake here: independence, accountability, and not only independence for the justices but independence from the Government of Canada. Is it not interesting that the judiciary should be placed in a position where there is independence from the Government of Canada? I am not entirely sure how a judge would interpret this. In the final analysis the courts are set up by legislation which is a function of the Government of Canada. We do it here.

In one sense we want judges to be independent when they interpret laws. In their interpretations judges should take into account the intent of the Parliament of Canada when it passed the laws. That is what they should do. I want judges to be independent and not influenced by the political vagaries of the day a law was passed. However I want them to know what the intent of the law was.

When the Canadian constitution and the bill of rights were passed certain clear indications were made by the Parliament of Canada. The Supreme Court of Canada later read into those provisions

certain clauses, interpretations and definitions that were never intended by the House of Commons.

● (1615)

That means there is independence not only in terms of interpreting the law but in the sense of judges telling parliament what they think it should have done. A power exists in Canada today that ought not to be there as far as judges are concerned.

One might ask whether I am taking this too far. I do not think so. There is evidence that this has happened. We need to be careful in considering this type of legislation which seems so innocuous on the surface. When it is working its way through the system we should examine what its end result could be.

It is interesting that the auditor general not only recommended a body that would tie together the administrative services of the courts under one umbrella, he also suggested some courts ought to be amalgamated. My hon. colleague said there was opposition to amalgamation.

I talked earlier about bureaucratic entrepreneurship. One of the laws of bureaucratic entrepreneurship is that no one shall ever take away one's authority or reduce the number of people over whom one has supervisory responsibility. That is anathema to being a bureaucrat.

Am I suggesting bureaucrats are bad people? Heavens no, I am not. They are wonderful people. They help us a lot. It would be terrible if bureaucrats were not extremely jealous about their positions. They had better be, or what are they doing there?

I want bureaucrats to be truthful and honest. In discussing his experience in the provincial legislature the hon. member indicated that it was difficult to find out from the people he was responsible for what was happening with the utilization of space they were paying for.

I do not blame these people for making it difficult, but there is something wrong with the system when it is that difficult to get at the truth. We need to recognize that as a society. We need to recognize it in the House of Commons.

I will move away from Bill C-30 for a couple of minutes to talk about its timing. Canadians are neighbours of the United States of America. Twenty-two days ago we witnessed a horrible event. Terrorists killed innocent people. Yet here we are today being asked by the government and the House to consider legislation to rationalize the administrative services of our courts rather than legislation to deal with terrorism. I question the timing. How could this be more important than the September 11 tragedy?

What we need in our society today is a commitment to honesty, truth and the recognition that terrorism does not arise out of poverty. Terrorism does not arise out of the fact that someone did not get his way. Terrorism arises from a heart that wants to kill or destroy, for whatever reason. There is evil in the world. That is what gives rise to terrorism. The best laws in the world will not prevent evil. All they can hope to do is push it back a bit so it does not become the force it could become.

Government Orders

The hon. member from the coalition indicated the establishment in Halifax of the Hell's Angels. The group had a storefront advertising the fact that they were there. We would not call them terrorists at this point; however, what goes on in the hearts of people who are organized for the specific purpose of defying the law?

• (1620)

What goes on in the mind of a judge who issues a perfunctory punishment to people who deliberately and in an organized manner grow marijuana? The judge slaps them on the wrist with a \$5,000 fine. They laugh at the judge and say it is an expensive business licence, and they carry on doing business.

It used to be that law enforcement officers and the judges who found these people guilty could confiscate the material they used to grow the marijuana, or whatever the criminal offence was. They cannot do so any more.

What has happened to us? What has happened to our school systems? The system does not seem to care any more whether students cheat on an examination. Yes, we make noise and tell students they shall not cheat, but the kids go home and say that everyone is doing it. What is wrong when students feel they cannot perform too well because they will be frowned upon up on? They do not make their best effort.

We need to move ahead with truth, honesty and integrity so we can do the things that will build our society and make us strong. That is the strongest instrument against terrorism we could possibly devise.

Does that mean we should not have good legislation against terrorism? Of course we should. However we should also challenge parents, school teachers, MPs and every leader of the community to instill into the hearts and minds of people that it is important to pass good laws, obey those laws and make sure our kids do the same.

We need to be sure Bill C-30 achieves its purpose of giving independence to the administrative body. That is what we need to go for. However it will depend on judges who have the right heart. It will depend on administrators who have the right heart. The intent of Bill C-30 will need to be observed by the judges who are asked to interpret and apply it.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, I got the feeling from the member's speech that he had two major concerns. First, while consolidation of the various court administrations might make things more efficient and less costly, the bureaucratic aspect to all this and the fact that the jobs will probably be preserved means we might only be transferring costs to another area of government without cutting them at all. Is that one of the member's concerns?

Second, while perhaps making the administration of the courts more efficient the act would do nothing to improve the judgments coming out of them. The member used as an example the current terrorist threat and a recent court ruling that has made it virtually impossible to deport terrorists.

It brought to mind a case from North Vancouver. I received a fax a moment ago from one of my constituents. Mr. Alastair Ritchie called to remind me about the case of a man who was forging passports in

North Vancouver. We wanted to see the man deported but he still lives there. I just remembered the case. The man was convicted in North Vancouver three years ago of forging passports and the judge gave him a six month suspended sentence.

We must ask ourselves what on earth goes through the mind of a judge who would do that. I criticized the judge openly. The hon. member talked about accountability. I criticized the judge openly. The judge called me and said we should have lunch because he wanted to talk with me about what happens in courts and so on.

We went to lunch together and he tried to justify giving a six month suspended sentence to someone who forges passports. I said to him in the end that he had become jaded and insensitive and was no longer in touch with the values of the community.

Does the hon. member get the sense, as I do, that the bill would not change court judgments? Does he feel the government should be tabling meaningful legislation that gets on top of the problems instead of twiddling around the edges as it usually does with administrative matters?

• (1625)

Mr. Werner Schmidt: Madam Speaker, my colleague from North Vancouver understood my speech very well. He understood exactly what I was trying to say.

It is interesting that the claim is made that the savings from bringing them under one umbrella would be somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$600,000 to \$1 million. That may or may not be true. There is absolutely nothing to show that would happen.

Although Alex Macdonald uses the prodigal law in the context of the legal system, that prodigal law also applies in administrative matters where the activity in a particular office expands to cover the time available to the individuals sitting there. Sometimes when asked how much time people spend in the office, they will say six hours. The question is about what they achieved. The important aspect is not how long they were there but rather what they achieved. It is one of the issues that is very critical.

The other point I want to emphasize is that we need to recognize that the intent of legislation is every bit as important, maybe more important, than what the legislation actually says word for word. Too often legal expertise is very good at pulling out the tiny little issue, and one word will slit a particular meaning of a section in an act. Sometimes people will be declared innocent or acquitted on one tiny technicality. Sometimes a technicality is critical because it does reveal the intent but sometimes it does not. It is critical that we recognize that sort of thing and deal directly with the level and degree of punishment involved.

These are questions of intent. They are also questions of values that operate in our society. It is very important.

I have to use this opportunity to refer to something else. In terms of terrorism, a committee of 10 senior cabinet ministers has been created. They are to look after the domestic security of Canadians. That sounds very good. The head of the committee is the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Government Orders

This is really interesting because in the government cabinet there is a solicitor general. He has CSIS and the RCMP under his jurisdiction. CSIS is supposed to provide intelligence about what is happening, particularly in regard to terrorism and other threats. The RCMP does that as well.

Mr. Stan Keyes: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if you could ask the hon. member to address the issue that is before the House, specifically Bill C-30 on streamlining and the effectiveness of combining the administration of the courts.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): With respect to the Chair occupant guiding the member's topic, I am sure the member is coming to the end of his remarks and his time.

• (1630)

Mr. Werner Schmidt: Madam Speaker, if the hon. member had listened just a little longer, he would have gotten the connection right away.

Mr. Stan Keyes: Oh, I have been listening to your whole speech. I haven't missed a word.

Mr. Werner Schmidt: It is wonderful, Madam Speaker, that he took the time to listen. I am so glad he did that. That is excellent.

Mr. Stan Keyes: But I have not heard anything.

Mr. Werner Schmidt: That is because you were not listening.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Members will address questions and comments through the Chair.

Mr. Werner Schmidt: Madam Speaker, the whole business of setting things up in such a way is to make sure that the judges who are appointed for each of the specific courts make the decisions that they ought to be making. When this does not happen, when the solicitor general loses the particular responsibility through the formation of a committee, that is not doing what was originally intended for the solicitor general. It is an illustration of what happens here.

I will support this piece of legislation because its intent is okay. I also want to caution that unless it is administered in such a way that the intent is realized, it will not meet the objective that was set for it in the first place.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Airline Industry; the hon. member for South Shore, Harbours; the hon. member for

Acadie—Bathurst, Employment Insurance; the hon. member for Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, Shipbuilding.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRANSPORTATION APPEAL TRIBUNAL OF CANADA ACT

Hon. Stéphane Dion (for the Minister of Transport) moved that Bill C-34, an act to establish the Transportation Appeal Tribunal of Canada and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it gives me pleasure to have the opportunity to speak about the establishment of the Transportation Appeal Tribunal of Canada. We are going through a period characterized by great insecurity in the field of transportation and this affects not only the Department of Transport but almost all departments. Clearly there is no simple solution to a complex problem.

In this spirit, I wish to pay tribute to the excellent work done by our colleague, the Canadian Minister of Transport, who has played a very important role in co-ordinating the activities of various departments. From the very first day of the crisis, when terrorism invaded all the countries of the world, he showed great wisdom in implementing concrete measures, which will not be in place forever but which were very important in the short term.

I have frequently heard certain members of the opposition criticizing some of these measures. They would have liked to see a simple response to something as complex as terrorism. Nonetheless, the minister has moved forward, implementing measures which will help, in the very near future, we hope, to put the airline industry back on its feet, and which will have an impact on all economic activities and all aspects of our economic and social life.

It should be pointed out that in spite of the grievances of some opposition members, there are many who would find it a lonely place if they were members of other western parliaments. I think that Canada and the Canadian parliament have been models of consultation and information since the beginning of the crisis.

We have had tens of hours of debate, the Prime Minister has been present at almost every oral question period and the Minister of Transport has been present at all of them. He was also here throughout the emergency debate that we had on Monday evening to discuss the air transportation issue. I should also mention the availability of all the committee members. Not many parliaments in the western world have been so open to a largely public discussion on the enormous challenge that faces us in the area of security.

I am pleased to support Bill C-34, an act to establish the Transportation Appeal Tribunal of Canada and to make consequential amendments to other acts. This bill is another illustration of the federal government's commitment to reform the legislation on national transportation and to improve safety and security in the national transportation system.

Government Orders

In order to have the safest possible transportation system, it is very important that Transport Canada officials have a broad set of effective powers to ensure compliance and enforce regulations.

When serious offences are committed, we rely on criminal proceedings and penalties. We will continue to deal with these types of offences through the use of enforcement powers and criminal penalties. However, because of certain acts governing transportation in Canada, the department has had to rely on criminal proceedings to deal with minor offences.

Criminal proceedings can be very costly and in some cases they can drag on for years. Moreover, the vast majority of offences under the various federal transportation laws are not of a criminal nature. There is a huge discrepancy between the offence and the criminal penalty that may be imposed. For these two reasons, there has been in recent years a marked tendency to decriminalize federal transportation laws and implement an administrative process instead of resorting to criminal proceedings, except for serious offences.

Administrative measures can take various forms: licences, certificates and permits may be suspended or revoked; compliance transactions may be concluded; pecuniary penalties may be imposed; and orders can be issued.

• (1635)

Current federal legislation on transport, as well as that proposed, contains examples of these administrative powers.

There is another point that is as important as the matter of administrative powers and that is the need for individuals and businesses that have been taken to court to have recourse to an independent entity able to review the way Transport Canada is using its powers.

As far as aviation is concerned, individuals and companies against which administrative measures have been applied under the Aeronautics Act have recourse to the civil aviation tribunal. There is no similar tribunal for the maritime or rail sector. In those sector, the examination processes, if there are any, take place typically within the department.

The purpose of Bill C-34 and of the creation of the transportation appeal tribunal of Canada is to enable the maritime and rail sectors to have the same effective right to recourse as the civil aviation sector does with the civil aviation tribunal with respect to administrative decisions by Transport Canada.

The civil aviation tribunal was created in 1986 to examine cases of infractions of the licensing or other regulations by companies or individuals under the Aeronautics Act. The tribunal is completely independent of Transport Canada.

For more than 15 years, the civil aviation tribunal has been providing admirable service to the aviation industry and the department. In the course of a typical year the CAT holds about 100 hearings as well as settling some 100 other cases without involving the entire hearing process.

The new transportation appeal tribunal of Canada would replace the civil aviation Tribunal as well as encompassing the marine and rail modes. The three major circuits would therefore be integrated.

Cases would be heard relating not only to the Aeronautics Act but also to the Canada Shipping Act, the Canada Transportation Act, the Marine Transportation Safety Act and the Railway Safety Act. Thanks to the creation of a multimodal tribunal, the aviation, maritime and rail sectors would all have similar rights of recourse in connection with administrative decisions by Transport Canada.

The new tribunal would adopt many of the specific characteristics that have made the civil aviation tribunal so effective. Members of the transportation appeal tribunal should possess expertise in the specific transport field. For example, cases relating to the maritime shipping sector would be heard by tribunal members with knowledge of that sector, and the same for the rail sector.

Under this approach all the cases would be heard by people who have the necessary technical and operational background to understand the evidence, determine if all the regulations and security standards were complied with, and identify the impact on security of failing to comply with regulations or of engaging in dangerous practices.

The process the tribunal would adopt would be informal, inexpensive and quick, because the tribunal would be an administrative body as opposed to a court of justice. It would not be subject to some of the costs, restrictions and other matters associated with criminal procedures.

Operators or individuals could represent themselves instead of hiring a lawyer, but the parties would be free to do so if they wish to.

The new tribunal would examine all the cases in two stages. First, a review hearing would be held by a single member of the tribunal. After having heard the two parties and taking into consideration all the evidence adduced, the member would make a determination. The individual against whom the measures would be taken could appeal to an appeal panel, which would usually consist of three of the members of the tribunal.

In some cases the department could also appeal the determination made by the member and the decision of the tribunal would be final. Moreover, the appeal could not be taken to the courts if it was based on the same facts as those examined by the tribunal.

• (1640)

The powers of the transportation appeal tribunal of Canada would depend on the nature of the cases it hears. Should the penalty be essentially punitive, the tribunal's decision would take precedence over that of the department. A good example would be the levying of a monetary penalty by the department based on the breach of a regulation.

After considering the evidence provided by the parties, the tribunal would be authorized to make a final, mandatory decision as to whether or not there actually was an offence committed and, if so, what the appropriate penalty should be.

Conversely, when measures are more concerned with qualifications for holding a licence, a certificate or other documents, and other matters of safety and security, the tribunal could, as a general rule, merely confirm the department's decision or refer it back to the department for review.

Government Orders

The purpose of the bill is not to water down the Department of Transport's basic responsibilities for safety and security under various statutes. As I have already said, the transportation appeal tribunal of Canada would operate in essentially the same manner as the civil aviation tribunal.

I am certain that the transportation appeal tribunal of Canada, as proposed in Bill C-34 would provide the department and the air, rail and marine sectors with a process for reviewing enforcement measures that is fair, rapid and cost effective. The tribunal would promote greater compliance with federal statutes governing transportation and would enhance safety and security in the national transportation system.

• (1645)

[*English*]

Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance): Madam Speaker, Bill C-34, the transportation appeal tribunal of Canada act, would create a transportation appeal tribunal that would replace and expand upon the civil aviation tribunal by extending its jurisdiction to cover rail and marine. It makes consequential amendments to various other transportation acts in order to make this possible.

It is certainly a good idea, but given the circumstances in which Canada finds itself one has to ask the question: Why now? Why are we dealing with this now? Given all the other issues that are at stake in the aviation and the transport industries in general, why are we dealing with this issue now?

The legislation was tabled on September 26, 15 days after the terrorist attack. On the transportation side, the government could have chosen to table any legislation it wanted to. It could have tabled literally anything. The members of all the opposition parties have said that they would be open to any legislation that advances the ball in terms of airport security, airline security and now, given the reality of Air Canada and Canada 3000, the concerns we have with the layoffs and so on. We would be willing to consider any legislation that deals with the health and financial stability of the airline industry as a whole.

Instead, what does the government table? It tables the transportation appeal tribunal of Canada act. Do not get me wrong, it is decent legislation. In fact, the official opposition will support the legislation. However we have to ask where are the priorities of the government.

The immediate impact on the airline sector of the September 11 attack has been a serious lack of consumer confidence. Bookings are way down. Air Canada reports that bookings are down anywhere between 30% and 35%. There is a serious loss in consumer confidence.

People still have very serious safety concerns. I raised the issue in the House that Transport Canada, through its own internal studies and tests, tried to smuggle mock knives, guns and bombs past airport security. Transport Canada knows statistically that over the past year one in five attempts to smuggle replica guns, knives and bombs past airport security has been a success, or a failure, I guess, as the average Canadian would look at it.

Canadians have serious concerns about that. We have serious concerns about a gentleman flying from Yellowknife to Vancouver

who managed to smuggle two submachine guns and several boxes of ammunition onto an airplane and onto the ground. The gentleman was drunk. He threw two submachine guns and a few boxes of ammunition into a duffle bag. He was not attempting to smuggle. He was not a MacGyver in a unique attempt to get things past security. He just threw this stuff in a duffle bag and walked onto the plane drunk. Airport security is failing in the country and it is having a dramatic impact on consumer confidence in flying, but the government is not doing anything about it.

The official opposition has repeatedly called in the House for the institution of air marshals. The institution of air marshals would be a dramatic and positive step in terms of airport security. The United States has been doing it on international flights for over 30 years. Air marshals are plainclothes police who are specifically trained to deal with security concerns on planes while they are in flight. As a deterrent, they are put cyclically on different flights so terrorists do not know which flights they are on and which ones they are not on.

If the government were to institute that post-September 11 it would do two things. First, it would add another level of security in the air. That is important. It is important given the realities we are facing; as the Prime Minister, the president of the United States, NATO, article 5, and the House have said, we are facing a war against terrorism, against people who do horrendous things like hijack planes and fly them into buildings. Once they are on those planes they use them as missiles and guide them in a kamikaze mission to murder innocent people. There is no other way to stop them but in the air with armed air marshals. This would provide another important level of air security.

What this would also do, and this goes under the issue of consumer confidence, is boost consumer confidence in a dramatic way. The government has failed to do that.

There have been calls for financial support for the airline sector. Again the government has not really said or done anything. The transport minister yesterday announced \$160 million for Canada's air carriers for the out of pocket costs they incurred on September 11, and again the official opposition supports that, but he announced it across the hall. He announced it in a press conference.

• (1650)

He did not show due respect to this place by announcing it here where we could have had an open debate to find out exactly how the \$160 million was arrived at and how it was meted out to the different air carriers. Every party in the House has said that it will support the idea of paying for the out of pocket costs incurred by the air industry. If the minister had announced that in the House rather than at a press conference he would have had political parties supporting it; that would have been a vote of confidence for the airline industry that the government did not seize upon. The government is failing in that sense.

The United States congress has approved over \$15 billion for the air industry. I am not calling for us to give \$15 billion to the air industry or 10% thereof, but the U.S. has put concrete legislative proposals on the table, good or bad, in the long term interest or not, and we are dealing with the transportation appeal tribunal of Canada act.

Air Canada has asked for \$3 billion to \$4 billion in bailouts. The government has not ruled it out. The official opposition sure has. We could currently buy every single share of Air Canada stock in the stock market, I am told, for in the neighbourhood of \$695 million to \$711 million.

Air Canada has publicly said that it wants \$3 billion to \$4 billion but its net worth, if one were to purchase every single share of its stock, is in the neighbourhood of \$700 million. Somehow that does not add up yet the government has not ruled that out as an option. In fact it has not put any numbers at all on the table for us to discuss and to deal with. It has not brought a single thing before the transport committee for us to deal with and sink our teeth into so that we can contribute to a positive alternative solution to the situation we are facing.

The transport minister needs to reassure the public that the government is doing something. Bill C-34 does not reassure the public that the government is doing something because of the September 11 attack. The fact that we are debating Bill C-34 right now is an indication that the government is totally out of step within the realities of the world post-September.

Since I have been the transport critic for the official opposition or since I have been a member of parliament, I have not had a single call to my office asking me when Bill C-34 would be tabled nor have I had people telling me that they are really curious about the transportation appeal tribunal act or that as I am their member of parliament they really want me to expand the civil aviation tribunal so could I please deal with that. That is a really important issue right now.

The terrorist attacks and the status of Air Canada with 9,000 to 12,000 people laid off can be put aside. We talk about a tribunal act. Nobody is calling for that. We have to wonder: To whom is the government listening? What leadership role is it fulfilling by doing this?

Again, the government needs to address safety concerns for a whole host of reasons, like boosting consumer confidence and providing more security for flying Canadians. It also needs to ensure long term competition in the air industry.

I noted that the transport minister in an interview yesterday said that we may need to have a thorough restructuring. He said this at the same press conference where he announced the \$160 million for the airline industry. He said that we may have to restructure the entire airline industry again, not that the restructuring that was done 24 months ago was bad, but it may need to be restructured again. However, we should not ask him if the last one was a success or not, but we may have to restructure again.

Those are the sorts of things that we need to be dealing with, the restructuring of the airlines, airport security and airline security. The situation with Canada 3000 may be more volatile in the short term

Government Orders

than that of Air Canada. The transport minister is just not showing leadership.

We should compare what Canada's transport minister, the finance minister and the Prime Minister are doing with what the United States is doing. In Chicago on Thursday of last week President Bush did three things. First, he called up the national guard and placed guardsmen at inspection stations in airports. They are still there. He said:

—we will work with the governors to provide security measures—visible security measures—so the traveling public will know that we are serious about airline safety in America.

The second thing he did was dramatically increase the number of air marshals on planes. He said:

When Americans fly, there need to be more highly-skilled and fully-equipped officers of law flying alongside them.

The third thing he did was give \$500 million in new funding for aircraft security, the physical infrastructure of planes. He gave grants to airlines for enhanced cockpit protection. He will work with the pilots and airlines to fortify doors and provide stronger locks so pilots will always be in command of the airplane and no one can get into the cockpit.

• (1655)

Again this goes back to what I said before, about the transport minister announcing \$160 million, but across the street. He announced that the government would be closing cockpit doors and that it would be mandated now on every flight. Fine. That is good and we support that. It is a solid step in the right direction. Good show. However, again he announced it outside the House.

I will applaud the minister when he announces an initiative, a bold initiative, any initiative, a meagre initiative, but that will be the day when he actually does it in the House. When he does he will earn our applause. However he has not done it yet and he is abdicating his responsibility to make parliament the decision maker in terms of the long term interest of our airline industry, in terms of security and in terms of competition. Parliament should decide it, not just the transport minister. The transport minister can propose it. That is the duty and obligation of the transport minister and of the executive of the government, but parliament as a whole should be deciding these issues.

Relative to what the United States has done, the government's response has been utterly and completely lacklustre. Air Canada, as I have said, has announced that it will lay off 5,000 people in addition to the 4,000 already announced. The numbers may be as high at 12,000 when all is said and done.

I have called on the transport minister, and I will do it again, to do four concrete things. I call on him to reconvene the transport committee, which happened on Monday, but to give us a set agenda to address the security and financial issues the air industry is facing.

Government Orders

I was happy to learn this afternoon that the transport minister announced he will be appearing before the transport committee tomorrow. I hope he comes with better answers and solutions than he came to the House with when we had our take note debate on the airline industry as a whole. He came to the House and said literally nothing. He said that everything was fine. He did not mention any specific numbers with regard to Air Canada. He did not share with the House the specific financial crunch that Air Canada is facing. He did not tell the House exactly what Air Canada has asked him for in private, which he could share with the House so that opposition members could consider those numbers and consider how we might approach these things. He did not say anything. I hope that when he comes before the committee tomorrow he actually has something concrete to contribute.

The second thing the transport minister should do is ask Robert Milton of Air Canada and the heads of all of Canada's national and regional air carriers to appear before the transport committee immediately, for the committee to hear arguments for and against any potential financial support.

The third thing he needs to do is institute air marshals today, as I said, to boost consumer confidence in the airline industry and to offer another layer of air travel security. We have to think of this not only in the context of boosting consumer confidence and within the context of giving another layer of security in the air but also to the extent that specifically, if there is ever a financial bailout beyond the \$160 million, the lion's share of that money will go to Air Canada, principally because it has a dominant share of the domestic air travel in this country with the customers it flies. It will take the lion's share of that money.

Given that reality and the fact that Air Canada is the only real Canadian based competitor that competes internationally, Air Canada will be competing against American carriers that now have air marshals. In the United States as a whole there are over 12,000 people who are now being trained and assigned as air marshals. Air Canada will be competing on the international stage with Lufthansa, United, American Airlines, Continental and a host of other air carriers that will all have air marshals on planes.

In the future when people fly the questions they will ask will not simply be about what the in cabin amenities will be, how long the flight will be, how much leg room they will have, what movies will be shown and whether a hot or cold meal will be served. They will also be asking serious questions about the security of the airplanes. They will ask about cockpit doors. They will ask about air marshals.

In regard to the United States having air marshals, the transport minister said in the House that he is ruling out the idea of air marshals altogether as an extreme and radical proposition. He is just ruling it out right away. What he has done is cement himself into a position that will force Air Canada into a situation where it has a competitive disadvantage with other international carriers in trying to bring more people on board. That is a big mistake, not only in the security sense, not only in the sense of not boosting consumer confidence but in the sense that he is putting Canadian carriers at a competitive disadvantage by ruling out the idea of air marshals. That is a big mistake.

The fourth thing I would ask the transport minister to do is ask all of Canada's air carriers to submit a full list of their direct out of pocket expenses incurred during the days that Canada's airports were shut down so that consideration can be given to compensation for those costs. We are told that the transport minister has those numbers and therefore acted to give \$160 million. We support the giving of the out of pocket costs, but it is very difficult to say whether or not we support the precise figure of \$160 million when the transport minister has not tabled the exact figures before the House.

• (1700)

The out of pocket costs incurred by the airline industry on September 11 are legitimate costs. The skies were closed, not because of any market forces but because of a government mandate. Therefore it is entirely reasonable for the government to compensate the airlines for the closing of the skies.

I assume those airlines gave the transport minister an itemized list of what all their expenses were but he has not shared them with the House. That is irresponsible. Given the fact that we have not had a budget in 18 months and we may not have a budget for another 18 months as we have not had a firm commitment on that front, the House needs to send a signal by voting on specific measures. I would be proud to vote in favour of giving \$160 million to the airline industry, given that the appropriate accounting has been done for those expenses. That would be a signal from the House that we will support the airline industry for the tough times it experienced on September 11.

Specifically on Bill C-34, the transportation appeal tribunal act, on the face of it the idea of a transportation tribunal is a good one. It is clear that some bright person looked at the civil aviation tribunal which so efficiently deals with the suspension of a pilot's licence and with airworthiness certificates, and said "I bet this would work in shipping and I bet this would work in rail as well". It has been expanded and we support that.

It is a good idea. Anything that lets minor disputes be settled outside the court system, specifically when the decisions are made by people with some expertise in the area in question, is a positive step. To have some injection of some common sense into disputes makes a lot of sense and we support it.

However, the transport committee really needs to be brought into a broader discussion, as I have said before, not only on this legislation but on other pieces of legislation. Canadians think that the transport committee should be plugged in so that we can make travel safer on airplanes, highways, rail and in seaway navigation. They want us to encourage competition, service to communities and affordable prices. Right now Canadians want airline competition among healthy airlines. They want safer skies, better airport security, stronger cockpit doors and air marshals. They want the same standards the United States has.

Let us have a level playing field. We always talk about a level playing field in terms of trade and in a lot of areas. Let us talk about a level playing field in terms of aviation as well.

Government Orders

The transport committee needs to deal with a lot of things and it is not. We have some extraordinarily experienced parliamentarians on the committee. I think of the member for South Surrey—White Rock—Langley who used to be the transport critic for the official opposition. I think of the NDP member for Churchill, an outstanding member of parliament who has done a lot of hard work on committee. I think of the member for Toronto—Danforth and the member for Winnipeg South. There are a lot of very good, highly competent, very experienced people in the transport committee who are really ready and anxious to do a lot of good work, to help contribute.

The transport minister has not plugged in the committee. He has not given us any guidance or pushed us forward. He has not tabled any meaningful legislation. What on earth are we doing talking about Bill C-34, a tribunal act, when at this very moment we could be talking about airport security and the question of whether or not we should re-nationalize airport security?

We could be talking about the guiding principles of a possible bailout for the airline industry and whether or not it is appropriate. We could be talking about air marshals. We could be talking about mandating that older planes still in service have reinforced cockpit doors with the newest technology such as the Kevlar coming out of Boeing.

That is the sort of legislation we could be dealing with, but we are not being shown that leadership. We are being shown legislation, well meaning, decent legislation that would cut down on bureaucracy and would increase efficiency and inject some common sense into things, but on the radar screen of Canadians in terms of the legislation they want to see and the priorities they have for the transport committee, the transport minister and the transport industry of the country, the legislation is way wide of the mark. Canadians deserve better. They deserve better leadership.

I have one piece of advice for the transport minister. I have told him this in private and I have told him that I will say it publicly. I will do so now. The best thing parliament can do on a cross-party basis for the airline industry as a whole in this time of crisis is to stand shoulder to shoulder with the U.S. and announce the kinds of things that President Bush did in Chicago on Thursday of last week.

President Bush went to Chicago and stood on a podium in front of 1,200 airline employees, the people who check the bags, the in-cabin flight crews, pilots, security guards, everyone. He stood in front of 1,200 of them with the transportation secretary at one shoulder, with the governor of Illinois at the other shoulder, with a couple of senators on his flank and members of congress and the state assembly on the other flank. He stood on that big stage with a big American flag and he said his government would put air marshals on planes, mandate the reinforcement and renovation of cockpit doors, beef up security on the ground with the latest technologies and retrain everyone on the ground. "Fly the friendly skies" he said. He said there was no reason why Americans should not fly in their country. He said America will not be afraid, Americans will not allow the terrorists to alter their way of life, they will soldier forward.

President Bush did it. He made a big public statement. However the transport minister said in the debate on Monday night that he

does not want to make big public statements. I know that he is not a shy man. He is a good guy, but he needs to make big public pronouncements. That is precisely what is called for. He says he does not want to make big public pronouncements because he does not want to send some kind of signal. Most people I talk to do not understand the signal he is trying to avoid.

The transport minister says he wants to make little announcements such as the announcement that he made across the street in a press conference. He wants to make announcements in scrums. He wants to make announcements as he is running down the hall and avoiding reporters. He does not want to stand up and make big public announcements, but that is exactly what is called for, a big public announcement, a big vote of confidence and a big boost to the airline industry, to say to Canadians that we are taking action, that we will not let the terrorists alter our way of life. That announcement would say to people that they are safe in the skies, the government is behind them, the airlines are safe and the Government of Canada will not fail them.

If the minister did that and put in the measures we are talking about, the kinds of measures I have outlined in my talk, if he put those things on the table, the official opposition would be proud to stand behind him if he initiated those things, because that is progress and growth and a step in the right direction. I am sure the other opposition members would be as well. We reconvened the transport committee on Monday and had a meeting yesterday. Right off the top, across all party lines, we all said that the big thing we want to talk about when the transport minister comes to committee tomorrow is the issue of airline security. We are all concerned about this, just as all Canadians are concerned about it.

● (1705)

Rather than substantive legislation and a substantive signal from the transport minister that he will get behind this, encourage, push and mandate new security measures, what do we get? We get Bill C-34, the transportation appeal tribunal of Canada act.

This is an abdication of leadership. This is an abdication of responsibility on the part of the transport minister. We need to be showing leadership, putting real solutions forward and seizing the moment, *carpe diem*, so we can encourage more people to fly and have a better transportation industry. Bill C-34 does not accomplish that.

It is a real disappointment to have to say as a Canadian, not even as a parliamentarian, that the government is sleepwalking through what may be the largest crisis in our transportation industry with the layoffs at Air Canada and sagging consumer confidence. The government is sleepwalking through this entire episode and abdicating its responsibility to show leadership and put substantive reforms on the table that will make our industry better.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate on Bill C-34. I should note that the parliamentary secretary, who in his introduction deemed it appropriate to congratulate the minister for his availability and his quick reaction, seemed uncomfortable with the fact that the first debate we have on transportation is on a bill to establish the transportation appeal tribunal of Canada.

This bill has nothing to do with the great debates of the last few weeks. Since the events of September 11, transportation has been in the forefront of all our discussions in the House. Take note debates were held, special committees were created and the first piece of legislation dealing with transportation to be tabled in the House is aimed at establishing an appeal tribunal.

As I said, the parliamentary secretary seemed uncomfortable, and I will take this opportunity to respond to some of the comments he made. He talked about the availability of the Minister of Transport. The parliamentary secretary said that the Prime Minister was always available, as well as the Minister of Transport. I should certainly hope so. The least we can expect from the Minister of Transport is for him to be here in the House to answer our questions and the least we can expect from the Prime Minister is for him to do whatever he can to be with members of all parties as often as possible to deal with such a serious situation as the terrorist attacks of September 11 against the United States.

• (1710)

The Minister of Transport was indeed available Monday when we had the emergency debate. All day that day, the propaganda machine of the Liberal government was hard at work on the radio and on television, delivering the message that there would be a great debate that night on the situation facing airlines in Canada following the sad events of September 11.

Everybody was looking forward to the minister's statement. True, he was here, but he did not have to be here to make the statement he made. We learned nothing new about what the government intends to do, what the airlines were asking or what the government's financial capability is to deal with the terrible events of September 11 and all the consequences.

This is worth mentioning. Monday night, 13,602 jobs were lost throughout Canada. I said in this House that we did not want to be doomsayers, we just wanted to prevent further job losses, but Boeing has since, just two days ago, announced more layoffs in Canada and the United States. Messier-Dowty, the landing gear specialist supplying Boeing and other airliners, has now put on hold the \$70 million capital investment project previously announced as part of its expansion plan.

The situation is undeniably getting worse. Granted, the minister and the Prime Minister are available, but I wonder if they are also available when it comes to addressing these problems. They are available to discuss the issues, to use the propaganda machine, to be on television and on the radio to reassure everyone that they are dealing with the issues, but they should also be available to address the problems. I must say that is not what we have seen so far.

I am trying to stay calm, because the situation is getting worse and it will get even worse. It is unfortunate, but it is having a domino effect. It is the same thing all over the world, not only in Canada. We have to stop reacting.

The problem with the Minister of Transport and the Liberal government is that they are always reacting. These are difficult times, when action is really required, not reaction. That is what they did. The government intervened quickly in reaction to terrible situations. However, when the events are examined and security assessed, clearly the message was already there in the Ressam case. The United States gave Canada strong warning, saying "Look at the problem of terrorism in Canada. You should tighten your borders and your security". Nothing was done.

• (1715)

I was surprised to hear employees of all the airlines, who came to meet me as transport critic, mention the Ressam case; they told me the airlines had not been asked to take any additional security measures. I assume that no additional measures were required of the others involved in security.

Therefore, despite what it knew, the government continued to follow its economic policy and announced a budget. It was mentioned earlier that there had not been a budget in 18 months. There was an economic update. The government tightened the belt, it is true. Canadians were asked to tighten their belts. Belts had to be tightened, but Canadians and Quebecers still had to be given the security they expected.

Belts were tightened, but the government did not invest in security. It is no longer involved in it. Security has been handed over to private companies according to the lowest bidder. We can see what that means. Security measures have been relaxed over the past 10 years.

In airports we get our boarding cards from electronic machines. There are no more personnel. Security experts all tell us that the first intervention in security matters is the instinct of the people who have worked in the field for years. I mean the employees behind the counter in airports who, instinctively and because of their training, are able to recognize security problems first.

Employees, human beings have been replaced by machines. Since September 11, there have been days when these machines were not used and other days when they were put back in use.

There is always a reaction somewhere. This is what must stop. The government, the Liberal Party, must stop thinking that it has all the solutions. It is true that things are going well for the Liberals. They are doing well in the polls, but at some point the political propaganda must stop and the government must give the public what it expects. Right now, people want to make sure that what occurred on September 11 never happens again.

Government Orders

• (1720)

Of course, we cannot ever guarantee anything in our societies, because they are liberal societies. The challenge for us consists in protecting liberalism in our societies while imposing as few constraints as possible, but we must have the required personnel at the borders, at airports and everywhere. We must be able to provide adequate training, but all this costs money.

The government must stop saying that it acts quickly when a catastrophe occurs. Sure, the Minister of Transport acted very quickly after the catastrophe, but today we are asking him to be proactive and to invest so that such catastrophes do not happen again.

The old adage says that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Since September 11, the Minister of Transport has been trying to find a cure. The grim reality is that he never focused on prevention. The Liberal government decided to win the election by saving as much money as possible, but it did so in areas where it should not have, despite repeated warnings.

After the Ressam case in 2000, Canada was told to tighten security. It continued to save money, to make use of the private sector and, above all, to give contracts to the lowest bidder. It is not anybody's fault. No one can blame the employees who are there and who have not received the proper training. The only reason is that the government is trying to save money. It chose not to invest in our security. That is why we are faced with this grim reality today.

I understand why the parliamentary secretary is uncomfortable with Bill C-34, which establishes the transportation appeal tribunal of Canada. The current situation does not call for the establishment of appeal tribunals. It is a serious situation that must be dealt with in terms of security and in terms of economic intervention.

We certainly hope to see the kind of quick reaction that the member was talking about on the part of the government. So far the government's reaction has been purely political. Every week it has made a small announcement, but not in the House, not in front of members who were elected by their fellow citizens to discuss these things. The government does not make these announcements in front of parliamentarians.

Every week, in what will probably be an orchestrated performance with a good communication plan, the government will try to lull the good people of Quebec and Canada into thinking that it is looking after their affairs.

If the government had actually done this we would not be looking at the situations we are today. If the government were to take rapid action, if it were to step in quickly, it could try to prevent the domino effect in the airline and aviation industries and in international tourism. That is what is required and it must be done soon.

Right now all it will do is stand by while everything falls apart. It will let everything fall apart and will then take stock of the damage and slowly but surely decide to put up a few million dollars every week to show the public that it is looking after them and that it is capable of sorting out their problems.

That is not what is needed. What is needed is a real solution. What is needed is a real plan and it is time that the government told us

what that plan is. It is not the time for the government to come to this House with a bill like Bill C-34, on which we are agreed. I say this up front. There will not be any long debates about Bill C-34 and the creation of the appeal tribunal, which should have been set up years ago.

For years now the Bloc Québécois has been calling for the integration of these four tribunals that were subject to the Aeronautics Act, the Shipping Act, the Marine Transportation Security Act and the Railways Safety Act. This is what this bill is all about and we are happy about it. However, it should have been done during the last parliament, and even a year ago.

At this time last year the government once again called an early election, which took all Canadians and opposition parties by surprise. It rushed the election. The government's goal was, of course, to win the election and as we can see it managed to do so.

Right now, however, Canadians and Quebecers are not feeling totally safe with a Liberal government at the helm. More and more, they approach the opposition parties to speak for them. The workers who lose their jobs come to the opposition parties to have their voices heard in this House.

This is exactly what we are trying to do and what we have been trying to do since September 11. We are trying to speak on behalf of those families who are going through some rough times because of their employment situation, but again, nobody in the House is listening to us. With legislation such as Bill C-34 the government is saying "See how we are trying to deal with the transportation issues".

• (1725)

We are having serious discussions with various unions about the proposed changes to the Employment Insurance Act and the way to deal with all those job losses. Why is it always the little people and not the managers who are affected by the layoffs? Why is it always the young workers, those who have less seniority, who lose their jobs?

Why not arrange with the companies for major early retirement programs, which are expensive but are a one time thing? The money is paid out only once. It would be possible in the airline industry, with the help of the unions, to use attrition in the industry as a whole to benefit the young people who are the last to arrive, but the first hit by any draconian cuts, such as those that result from major events like those of September 11. The employees did not ask for this but they are being hit with it.

Once again, employees who have lost their jobs may find it all very well for the minister to say on Monday "Look, security has finally been improved since September 11, flight decks will be better protected". There are 13,600 of them who have lost their jobs. Some will lose their jobs with Boeing in Canada. Some will lose a job or not get the one they were in line for at Messier-Dowty. This will happen with other companies too. All these people are entitled to say to the Minister of Transport "Why did you not think of this before"?

Private Members' Business

Why did the Minister of Transport not think before of tightening flight deck security? That is today's harsh reality. The government reacted. It was quick, yes indeed. It found the solution, but why did it not think of it before? There are other airlines around the world with flight deck security measures.

This is a question we all must ask ourselves. We will have the opportunity to do so in the transport committee. My colleague in the Canadian Alliance said this earlier. This committee began deliberations this week. Believe it or not, air transportation was not even on the agenda of the government representatives sitting on the transport committee. Air transportation problems were not on the agenda. It was the agenda from the committee's previous deliberations, as if September 11 had never occurred. That was the harsh reality. That is the harsh reality. Why is this so? Because government members on this committee think their excellent minister is available, acts quickly, and will react swiftly if there is a problem.

I will repeat that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. We should try to involve all those concerned, in all parties. In a crisis such as this one there is no room for politics or propaganda, but this is all the Liberal Party has been doing since September 11. Once more the public is being lulled by announcements.

Monday night's debate is a good example. It was announced on all radio and television networks that there was going to be a great debate that evening on the future of the airline industry in Canada. What did the minister have to say? He was very glad he had successfully addressed the issue of cockpit safety. He enumerated all the things he had done since day one of the crisis, but strictly nothing has been done concerning a financial assistance plan for the airline industry.

The day after the debate the Minister of Transport announced the investment of \$160 million. That was just to cover the losses of September 11 to 16, when all of the airlines were grounded because of these tragic events. They experienced losses because their employees were stranded and so on.

The Minister helped out with those losses and must be thanked for that, but since then, since the airspace shutdown from September 11 to 16, 13,602 jobs have been lost. There will be even more job losses at Boeing. Messier-Dowty will not be able to carry out its \$70 million capital investment plan announced last June. There will be other repercussions.

The same goes for international tourism, which has experienced huge losses in Quebec City and no doubt in most of Canada's tourist centres. What the Liberal government is doing with its propaganda policy is to watch and wait until everything comes tumbling down, then take note of the damage and see what it will be capable of investing.

Today the Minister of Finance said that the estimated surplus is not as great as expected; we are heading for an economic recession. He would not dare to use that term, of course. We will have a third or fourth quarter that may not be as good as forecast.

Obviously that is the way to get out of the situation without spending money and avoiding a deficit above all. No opposition party in the House, the Bloc Quebecois included, has called for the government to aim for a deficit. It is estimated, as we speak, that

there will be a \$13 billion surplus this year and that is with the worst case scenarios for the third and fourth quarters. That is reality.

Why do the Minister of Transport and all Liberal members of the House not decide to demand the true picture of Canada's economic situation from the Minister of Finance so they can pass it on to the public?

Finally, the government should meet with representatives of the airline, aviation and international tourism industries and those involved in tourism in general who are having such a terrible time. It should sit down with them and say "We are going to help you out".

This is not what we feel. I realize that the parliamentary secretary was not comfortable when he presented Bill C-34, because the message really is that the government, the minister and the Prime Minister are available and quick to take action but only once the damage has been assessed. This is what is hard to accept for opposition members. The government will once again wait until the airline, aviation and international tourism industries collapse; it will wait until the house of cards comes tumbling down and then look at the whole situation and take quick action.

Naturally, this is hard to accept. As we speak, workers, both men and women, have lost their jobs. There will be others, particularly in Quebec, where the aviation and aerospace industries are concentrated, but also across Canada, because Boeing has investments right across the country. Large numbers of jobs are disappearing in this sector.

As for international tourism, it is not just Quebec that is affected. Our province attracts a significant proportion of international tourists, but there are cities in all regions of Canada that are centres for tourism and these cities are definitely feeling the effects of the September 11 events.

If government members in this House think that things are going well for international tourism, they should visit the tourist attractions in their ridings. They will realize that we are going through a serious crisis that will have major consequences.

I hope that the parliamentary secretary will tell his minister "Dear Minister, your availability and your quickness to react would be more useful before everything collapses, as opposed to after". This is the message that the Bloc Quebecois wants to give to the House, and this is the view that it will promote in the coming weeks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): It being 5.30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1730)

[Translation]

THE ACADIANS

The House resumed from March 27 consideration of the motion.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and pride that I rise today in this House to speak to Motion No. 241 brought forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes, which reads as follows:

That a humble Address be presented to Her Excellency praying that she will intercede with Her Majesty to cause the British Crown to present an official apology to the Acadian people for the wrongs done to them in its name between 1755 and 1763.

A lot has happened since we first started the debate on this issue, on March 27, 2001. After dispelling doubts about his Acadian origins, the hon. member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes travelled to Acadia on three occasions to submit his proposal to the Acadian people.

His first visit, in May, took him to New Brunswick. His second, in June, took him to Prince Edward Island for the annual general meeting of the Société nationale des Acadiens. His latest one, in August, coincided with the celebration of national Acadian day.

During these visits, my colleague made some important contacts and broadened the support for his proposal within the Acadian community.

One of the first to support Motion No. 241 brought forward by my hon. colleague was a lawyer from Louisiana, Warren Perrin, who has been fighting for more than 10 years to have the wrongs done to the Acadian people during the deportation between 1755 and 1763 recognized.

A descendant of exiled Acadians, Warren Perrin has become an unswerving defender of the rights of the francophones known today as the Cajun and of the Acadian culture in Louisiana. Since 1990, Mr. Perrin has tirelessly organized a petition to cause the British crown to apologize for the deportation of the Acadians.

Besides the support of hundreds of individuals and associations as well as history and international law experts, he has received the support of the legislatures of Maine and Louisiana. Democrat Senator John Breaux even intends to raise the issue before the American congress.

I find it bizarre that the Parliament of Canada, to which our Acadian fellow countrymen elect representatives, is choosing to sit on the sidelines, legislatively speaking, on this issue.

On June 2, 2001, the Société nationale des Acadiens held a general assembly where it reconsidered its initial position and unanimously supported Motion No. 241. The Société nationale des Acadiens has great influence, credibility and a whole network of contacts in the maritimes and throughout the world and it represents the Acadian community of Atlantic Canada and elsewhere.

In the opinion of the members of the Société nationale des Acadiens, this motion gives the Acadian people the opportunity to have the wrongs done to their ancestors, as well as the concrete impacts that are still felt today, officially recognized.

To its credit, the Société nationale des Acadiens wanted to take this issue outside of the parliamentary framework. To legitimize its position, on August 16, 2001, it set up an advisory committee led by Maurice Basque, an historian and the director of the Centre d'études acadiennes of the Université de Moncton. The main purpose of the

committee was to consider the historical, legislative and social issues surrounding Motion No. 241.

As indicated in its report, the committee heard from about 140 individuals, associations, municipalities and Acadian organizations from Canada, the United States and France. After analyzing all the proposals, the advisory committee came out with a number of recommendations, including the two following:

That the Société nationale des Acadiens pursue its representations to cause the British crown to officially recognize the historical wrongs done during the deportation of the Acadians.

That the motion be sponsored by all Acadian members of the House of Commons, regardless of political stripe.

The third recommendation concerns the mustering of Acadian forces to consolidate their promotional and developmental efforts in order to catch up economically, socially and culturally. The final opinion is that the Société nationale des Acadiens should continue to support the Government of Canada in its efforts to promote cultural diversity and the struggle against intolerance and in discrimination.

● (1735)

In an article in the September 26, 2001 issue of *La Voix Acadienne*, journalist Annie Racine lists some of the organizations supporting the action by the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes:

—Motion M-241 has the support of the Société des Acadiennes et des Acadiens du Nouveau-Brunswick, of the Société nationale des Acadiens, of the Association des juristes francophones and of the Association francophone des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick.

I should mention that this last association represents 40 municipalities in the province of New Brunswick and nearly 100,000 Acadians.

There seems to be a growing consensus around the motion in the Acadian population, as Hector J. Cormier, an editorial writer, indicated in *Le Moniteur Acadien* on September 27, 2001, and I quote:

—Acadians are justified in demanding apologies for the wrongs done to their people in the deportation. It would put an end to unconscionable treatment, to centuries-long suffering and to a collective fear it will take long to dispel.

Wrongs done by a group of individuals can have repercussions over a lifetime, lasting decades. At some point someone has to recognize the errors made and wounds must be healed to enable people to live in the present, work for the future and stop feeling obliged to look back to the pain of the past.

According to Philippe Ricard's article in *L'Acadie Nouvelle* on September 20, 2001, “—Liberal members have to stop being afraid of the “machinations” of the Bloc members. Because, if the motion were defeated, Acadia and Acadians would slip further behind”. The wound would remain unhealed.

The former member for West Nova, Conservative Mark Muise, said in a speech in the House on November 30, 1999:

It took several centuries for Acadians to recover from this tragedy. Some would argue that we are still suffering. Historians do not all agree about this deportation. Was it a war against the Acadians or an ethnic cleansing operation? This, I guess, depends on the viewpoint of the historian. Nevertheless, no one can deny that this tragedy happened and that the measures taken by Great Britain had serious consequences.

Private Members' Business

The motion itself does not call for compensation and does not invite descendants of those who were deported to return to occupy their land. It is simply aimed at obtaining an apology for the pain and suffering inflicted upon the Acadian people.

The member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes is saying to anyone who is willing to listen that if necessary he will have his motion sponsored by a member of another political party in the House and he is even willing to accept amendments to his motion, in keeping with the proposals contained in the report from the Société nationale des Acadiens.

Above all, this is not the motion of one member or one political party but of the Acadian people. This initiative by the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes goes beyond the partisan considerations that usually prevail in this House. It is part of the preparation for the 3rd Congrès mondial acadien and the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the founding of Acadia, which will take place in 2004.

Above all, however, we think that the 250th anniversary of the deportation of Acadians, which will be commemorated all over the world in 2005 by the Acadian diaspora, among others, would be a most appropriate time for such an apology.

The parliamentary process is such that it will be a long time before the House can vote on this motion. Let us use this time to ensure that this issue is not affected by partisan considerations. Nobody would gain anything should this motion be defeated. However, many people would lose a lot, and they are not necessarily the ones that the opponents of this motion want to punish by voting against it.

What message would we be sending to the world should that happen? That the Canadian parliamentary system is unable to disregard the origin of an initiative when making a decision.

Most importantly, what message would we be sending to the Acadian people? That the deportation is an event that is not worth recognizing here in parliament? That this issue is not important enough for the elected representatives of the people to show some openness and maturity in dealing with it? That parliamentarians could not reach the type of consensus that we witnessed with regard to many other often less significant issues? In any case, everybody comes out a loser.

• (1740)

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Carleton, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that I will be voting against Motion No. 241. My reasons for doing so are twofold.

First, I feel that this motion is based on a faulty premise, that being that guilt can be collective and can be passed on from one generation to the next.

Second, despite the good intentions of those who drafted it, the motion seems to attribute ultimate responsibility for the expulsion of the Acadians to the crown, which is not an accurate reading of the events of 1755. A more historically accurate reading would lay blame with the colonial governors of New England and the pioneers they represented.

I will begin with the historical argument and come back later to the philosophical one.

Many of the facts surrounding the deportation of the Acadians are unchallenged. In 1755, the colonial authorities began a process of uprooting and deporting that part of the Acadian population which had settled on British lands, beginning with the centre of the Acadian colony along the east shore of the Bay of Fundy.

Nova Scotia's Governor Lawrence, and Governor Shirley, commander in chief of the British forces in New England, began by seizing colonists' firearms to prevent them from using force to resist. Then they took a large number of adult males hostage in order to guarantee the docility of their families at the time of deportation.

In the years that followed, approximately three-quarters of the total Acadian population, or 13,000 people, were deported. Some of these people were sent to New England, others to Louisiana, and still others were returned to France.

Although we know with certainty the degree of suffering caused by the deportations between 1755 and 1763, it is much more difficult to pin down historical responsibility for them. One thing is certain and that is that governors Lawrence and Shirley were at the heart of the decision making and must bear ultimate responsibility, but nothing proves that they acted with the approval of the parliament of Westminster.

According to the most commonly accepted version of events, Lawrence acted with the authorization of the local council in Nova Scotia, and parliament and King George did not take part in the planning of the deportations.

More recently, Roger Paradis, a professor of history at the University of Maine, has uncovered documentary evidence suggesting that the authorities in London were involved. He cites a bill, sent to London in 1758 by Governor Lawrence, listing the expenditures incurred for the deportation. He has also revealed the existence of a circular sent by Lawrence to governors of the New England colonies, which presumes that these governors were, at the very least, aware of the events taking place in Acadia.

However, what strikes me is that even in this revisionist interpretation of history, the colonial authorities in Acadia and New England take on the primary responsibility for the acts committed while the crown only has a secondary responsibility. Moreover, it is obvious that the first ones to benefit from the military security that was increased as a result of ethnic cleansing in Acadia were the New England pioneers and specifically those living in the portion of the colony of Massachusetts then known as the "District of Maine".

I emphasize that I will not support the notion of a collective or hereditary guilt, but even if I did support it, I think that the first collective excuses that should be conveyed to the Acadian people should come from the government of Maine.

Private Members' Business

•(1745)

It is therefore interesting to know that on April 13, 1994, the Maine legislative assembly passed a resolution regarding the deportation of the Acadians. It was carefully drafted in such a way that the blame is laid exclusively on the British, and it never hints at the fact that Maine, a sovereign state, or its predecessor, the English colony of Massachusetts Bay, could have been involved in any way. I think that the best we can say about this statement is that it comes from a serious misinterpretation of history.

Unfortunately, the motion before us today is based on the same mistake. The motion calls on the crown to “present an official apology to the Acadian people for the wrongs done to them in its name”. However, the fact that the deportation was ordered in the name of the British crown does not mean that the crown itself was the primary culprit, even in 1755.

Similarly, history is full of outrageous acts committed in the name of various religions or in the name of the people of one territory or another, while the authority named had very little to do, if anything, with the harm that was done in its name. A more historically accurate motion could demand official apologies from the legislative assemblies of each of the New England states for the harm done in their interests and with their complicity.

[*English*]

I should be clear about the fact that I would oppose this too. I would do so because I do not accept the notion that an institution can maintain a heritage of collective guilt which is imposed upon successive generations of those who become members of that institution or who fall under its protection.

It seems to me that some participants in the debate over this motion and in similar debates that have occurred in the past have contemplated two quite different concepts. The first concept is the expectation, which I regard as legitimate, that all participants in the public life of a civilized society should adopt a moral attitude toward the past. A moral attitude involves recognizing and embracing those past actions that are regarded as good and just and rejecting those that are regarded as unjust or monstrous.

The second concept is the idea that guilt for a past injustice can be passed on, institutionally and collectively, in precisely the same way that the residual effects of that wrong continue to have some impact on the descendants of those who suffered the initial wrong. This is simply untrue.

The adoption of a moral attitude by an actor in political life allows us, as potential voters or as potential political allies, to assess how that individual might act in the future should he or she be a decision maker in some similar future circumstance. Such a calculation is necessary in a system of representative democracy because it is always conceivable that one can win an election in a time of peace and then find that his or her mandate extends into a period of unexpected turmoil or war. After the events of September 11, I think we can see the utility of such expectations.

By contrast, an attitude of collective guilt or responsibility, or worse yet, of expecting others to assume a mantle of guilt or responsibility for acts in which they themselves did not take part, strikes me as being of no utility at all.

A debate similar to the one taking place today took place in this House 17 years ago on Pierre Trudeau's last day as prime minister. He was asked by Brian Mulroney in question period to issue an apology for the wartime internment of Canadians of Japanese descent. Trudeau's response reveals a subtle grasp to the distinction that I am attempting to draw here today.

He said:

I do not see how I can apologize for some historic event to which we...were not a party. We can regret that it happened. But why...say that an apology is much better than an expression of regret?

I do not think that it is the purpose of a government to right the past. It cannot rewrite history. It is our purpose to be just in our time—

This does not excuse us from a responsibility to adopt a moral attitude of condemnation toward this great wrong any more than we can adopt an attitude of moral neutrality toward the monstrous evils of more recent times. As moral actors, we need to recognize the existence of these past wrongs, to identify them to our fellow citizens and to do all that we can to ensure that no modern version of this wrong can occur.

Therefore, let us vote against this motion in its present form, but let us vote for it if it is reintroduced in the House in a form that allows us to express, without apology, our sorrow over this past wrong and if it allows us, without condemning others, to indicate our determination that no such wrong will ever in the future be tolerated on Canadian soil.

•(1750)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Andy Savoy (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.) Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in speaking today to Motion No. 241 by the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes.

Our Bloc Québécois colleague would like the British crown to offer apologies for the deportation of the Acadians in 1755, which in Acadia is still called the “Grand Dérangement”.

The Acadian people suffered terribly in this period of our history. The government tried to get rid of the Acadians by deporting them and dividing them to better assimilate them.

The Acadian people are still here, ever more vibrant thanks to their artists, writers, actors and even politicians.

We all recognize that our country's history includes some darker and more painful events. Unfortunately, the “Grand Dérangement” is one such event.

However, we sincerely believe that we cannot live in the past, but must continue to build this country, as have past generations of Acadians.

I have said that we should not live in the past, but I do not think we should forget our history either. We have to draw from its strengths and from its weaknesses. I have also said that we must keep on building this country, building our Canada. We here in the House all know that it is not a goal that is shared by the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes or the other members of his party.

Private Members' Business

The member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes considers himself to be the advocate for the Acadian people; at least that is what he wants us to believe by bringing this motion forward in the House. When he spoke in the House on March 27, my colleague, the member for Madawaska—Restigouche, referred to the logic of the Bloc Québécois, explaining that the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes' sudden interest for the fate of Acadians and of francophones outside of Quebec was surprising.

This is the main thing. It is this logic that we have to question. In fact, the real question is quite simple. We have to ask ourselves why. Why this sudden interest from the Bloc for the Acadians? What motivates this interest?

We all know the main goal that the party of the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes is pursuing. He and his colleagues in the Bloc have but one goal, the destruction of this country. Unlike the other members of this House, they are not here to work toward making Canada a better and safer place to live.

Why is the Bloc Québécois suddenly so interested in the plight of Acadians and francophones outside Quebec? We all know that according to the Bloc Québécois logic there are those who are saved, who live in Quebec, and those who are lost, who live outside the promised land.

My colleague from Madawaska—Restigouche already said that Acadians helped build this country. They worked hard to protect their culture and their identity. They do not need the help of the Bloc Québécois.

Acadians founded schools, colleges, universities, theatres, newspapers and publishing houses. They achieved extraordinary cultural success in areas such as theatre, cinema, visual arts, music and literature. They gave the world writers, poets, artists, musicians and singers. They developed an impressive network of businesses and created jobs.

• (1755)

They helped make Canada what it is today. They did not wait to be taken by the hand and have decisions made for them. Instead of doing what is being proposed by the Bloc Québécois, I think we should focus on celebrating and recognizing the enormous contribution of the Acadian people to this great country that is Canada.

Motion No. 241 proposed by the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes hides the true intentions of its sponsor and his party. For that reason, we cannot support it.

I will conclude with a quote that truly reflects the position of the Bloc Québécois. Here is what the Bloc member for Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis said on September 30, 1997:

I have no objection to there being a French Canadian people. But I am no longer part of that group. When I was growing up, I was taught in school that I was a French Canadian. Later on, I was told that I was a Quebecer and I like that better. But I will not be faulted for preferring to be a Quebecer to being a French Canadian. As a French Canadian, I am a second class citizen. As a Quebecer, I am a first class citizen. That is the difference.

[English]

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Musquodoboit Valley—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great privilege to rise in the

House to debate Motion No. 241 on behalf of the Acadian residents of West Chezzetcook and Grand Desert in Nova Scotia.

It is a sin and a shame that the member for Tobique—Mactaquac whom I respect very much would play politics with this serious and compassionate motion. The member for Lanark—Carleton is trying to rewrite history.

I would suspect that probably not one person from his caucus has ever gone to Grand Pré and read the 300 names on the stone in the church in Grand Pré which is in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

It is one of the most beautiful sites in all of Canada. It is a place of remembrance. It is a sort of Holy Grail for all Acadians to visit when they come to Nova Scotia. They come from around the world to Grand Pré to worship and pray for those people who were expelled in 1755. It is a sin that these people would play politics on a motion of this regard.

All we are asking is that the House of Commons send a message to the Queen through parliament to request an apology. It does not say when. Nor does it have to be tomorrow. We are only asking that it be given careful consideration.

The Queen is making a visit to Canada in 2002. The Acadian festival is happening in Nova Scotia in 2004 and there is another festival in 2005. The Queen has a lot of time in which to decide. We owe it to the crown to allow it time to mull this over and give it careful consideration. We should not play politics with the motion. It is a sin that we get caught up in this. It is no wonder that many minorities in the country, including Acadians, give up on parliament so easily.

Every Acadian association supports the motion. It is really misleading for the minister responsible for official languages, for whom I have great respect, to say there is no support coming from the Acadian group. It is simply not true, as every association supports the motion.

All that Acadians are asking for is the correction of an historic wrong. The Pope apologized to the Jewish nation for the expulsion of Jews during the war. Canadian churches apologized for the residential schools. Mr. Mulroney, a former prime minister, stood in the House and apologized for Japanese internments during the war.

In an era of compassion and forgiveness we should be able to apologize on behalf of the Queen, when she comes to Canada or through other means that she may decide, for the expulsion of Acadians in 1755.

For anyone to assume that the king at the time was unaware of the actions in the colonies is simply nonsense. That kind of talk originates from the south end of a northbound cow. It is simply unacceptable.

I must say how proud we all were in Nova Scotia when the Governor General of Canada, Roméo LeBlanc, a very proud and distinguished gentleman, became the first Acadian to reach the highest post in our land. I am also very proud to see his son sitting in parliament today.

The New Democratic Party also had a first. In 1997 the first two Acadians ever elected to the House of Commons under the New Democratic banner were the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst, our party whip, and a previous member who jumped ship, Angela Vautour. They were two Acadians who were very proud to run in New Brunswick under the Acadian banner.

We are very proud to have had them in our caucus. We are very proud of our whip for the job that he does. He brings the passion and the caring of the Acadian community to our caucus and to the House of Commons on a daily basis. It is a voice that I am sure the House of Commons will hear for many years to come.

It is also remarkable that the Minister of State for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, who is from West Nova, does not support the motion. When one goes through West Nova one can see the pride and the outstanding ability of the Acadian people. Their flag, language and culture are everywhere.

● (1800)

In the two communities I represent, West Chezzetcook and Grand Desert, the people are very proud to be Acadian and very proud to be part of Nova Scotia and part of the greater country of Canada.

It is remarkable that the minister for ACOA would not want to support this motion when ACOA just gave \$4 million to the Grand Pré site. The government gave \$4 million in tax dollars in order to build up the site, to make it better, to improve the historical aspect of Grand Pré. On the one hand he gives the money to support them and on the other hand, in a hypocritical sense, he turns around and will not support the motion. It is absolutely incredible.

Here is what I recommend to everyone in the House. If members really want a taste and a feel of what Acadian culture is all about they should visit Grand Pré, Nova Scotia. They will not be disappointed. Then members can take a trip to the Acadian villages throughout all of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, parts of P.E.I. and to everywhere else Acadians reside.

What happened to the Acadians from 1755 to 1763 was a sin. Thousands of people were ejected from their land. These were hard working people who wanted nothing to do with war. All they wanted to do was farm their land, look after their children and live in peace. They were not allowed to because they refused to swear an oath to the king. Because of that they were told either they were with us or against us. At that time they were kicked out.

Members can imagine that happening. All those families suffered greatly from it. Families were separated. I know of one family, that of Joe Jacquard of Wedgeport, Nova Scotia. He told me the story of his great-great-grandfather hiding in the woods at that time to get away from the English.

Many of the Acadians there have the oral histories of what happened to their families. The names of those original families are in the church in Grand Pré. I recommend that everyone have a look at it, especially the member for Lanark—Carleton. His was a disgraceful display. I respect the man having his opinion in the House of Commons, but to try to rewrite history and say that we do not have any responsibility in today's society for something that happened is simply nonsense. I stand in the House and I refute the hon. member's speech because it is simply wrong.

Private Members' Business

Many things have happened because of this event. My wife is from Longueuil, Quebec and my daughter is in full French immersion, and what the Acadian people have brought to my family is absolutely fabulous. I know I am not very good at the English language, let alone the French language, but I cannot thank the Acadian population of my province enough for what they have done, not only for our communities but for our way of life and the diversity of our culture.

Lately we have been talking about the diversity of cultures in Canada with our Arab and Muslim people. We should not forget that the Acadians themselves gave us a diversity of culture that was fabulous, that was fantastic. We are indebted to those people. Every single one of them through their associations is asking for this motion to be passed. I again encourage the House to carefully reflect upon the motion, damn well keep politics out of it and just reflect on what we should do to make an historic wrong right.

All the Acadians are asking for is the ability to have an apology from the Queen and to allow the Queen to do it herself. Allow the House to be mature enough to have the debate, move it in a positive sense and allow Her Majesty to make that decision. We should not do it, and there should be no sleazy politics about it.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot thank you enough for the opportunity to speak to this today on behalf of all the Acadians of West Chezzetcook and Grand Desert and anywhere in my riding, and especially on behalf of my colleague, the MLA Kevin Deveaux, himself an Acadian and an elected official to the assembly in the Province House in Nova Scotia, and many others.

We stand in the House to support Motion No. 241 and also to support our great colleague from Acadie—Bathurst. I cannot say his name, but he is our whip as well.

● (1805)

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure I rise this evening to speak to the motion of our colleague, the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes.

Motion No. 241 got people talking and it still has people talking. Some groups and some members are not comfortable with the idea of this motion and they are both right and wrong, depending on the perspective.

The coalition has a tradition of free votes in the case of private members' bills. Right now it is interesting to hear what members of the Bloc, of the New Democratic Party and of all other parties have to say.

Another important point is the fact that things were properly done; frankly, that increases the credibility of the whole process. The Société nationale des Acadiens asked that the historical context be taken into consideration and in my opinion that was well done.

Private Members' Business

We will remember that in the beginning we were afraid of the nasty separatists. Even in the coalition, which did not exist then, we thought these people were nasty separatists and therefore they certainly had a hidden agenda. Maybe the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes does have a hidden agenda. It could be, but that is his problem. Nevertheless we must take the motion as it is and raise our hats to the Bloc member who went to Acadia to meet the people.

If I had doubts about the motion's intellectual honesty, not the member's intellectual honesty, but the motion's intellectual honesty, I think the Acadian people have done remarkable work. This relieves me of a certain weight of justification.

One must examine the motion as it stands. We can twist our history a little bit to determine who was responsible. It could be that responsible government as we know it today did not exist then, but I will remind the member of the Canadian Alliance who has just spoken that the empire's responsibility was everywhere.

When one says that we are not attacking anyone, the motion is not attacking anyone. We are not asking the Queen, the crown. Here again, it was done properly. We are not talking about an individual. We are talking about an historical event and the consequences of the deportation of the Acadians. The consequences did not last only a few years. They are still felt today.

Let us imagine 10,000, 12,000 or 14,000 Acadians, men, women and children, living in a territory that is now part of Canada. Things have changed over the last 10 or 15 years, but we know what francophones could do as to the number of children in a family. At that time, families had a lot of children. That would have changed everything and there would have been more francophones in the Atlantic provinces.

Having said that, let me say that the Acadian people have met incredible challenges; all they were a minority that faced the deportation and experienced serious problems afterwards, both with the British crown and the Canadian government, and had to struggle for decades. Hats off to them.

I have learned a lot. I even read a bit about the history of the deportation to get to know the context a little better. For my part, I will support the motion. I will ask for an admission and I will say "I am sorry, this does not mean that you are a bad person today". We can acknowledge historic events.

It is particularly important to amend this motion because some see it as being negative with regard to the monarchy. It is not that at all. This could be done in the context of celebrations, for example during the third congrès mondial acadien, or the 250th anniversary or the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Acadians in America. We could do that. It could be positive.

The governor general could, as part of the celebrations, read a nice speech and say "We recognize our faults. Having said that, we will work together and we will see to it that the Acadian people keep on developing and prospering in this country". That is all. The motion involves no money.

In this regard, I praise the work done by the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes. More than that, I would say that he is

open to changes, or rather to improvements. However, those across the way are slamming the door shut.

• (1810)

I would like to say to my colleagues opposite "Do not send the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs to Acadia too often, because it is the whole federal government that will lose its credibility". Because the motion comes from a Bloc member, it is not good? Because a motion comes from an Alliance member, a NDP member or a coalition member, it is not good? We must take the time, we are adults, to look at what the motion is all about.

That said, it is not because one is a nasty separatist that people should denigrate everything one does. On the contrary. I believe that in the last decade we have learned a lot about respect for parliamentary traditions thanks to members of the Bloc Québécois and other parties, especially the Bloc.

The crown has apologized on several occasions. A number of people mentioned the Boer War in South Africa and the Maori in New Zealand. These situations did not result in a collective uprising. It is an apology. One recognizes an historical fact and says "I apologize".

In recognizing this historical fact, one moves toward a much more positive action. No one is being asked to kneel down and apologize for what was done. It is simply an historical fact and life goes on. We know there was even a request not long after the deportation of the Acadians, in 1763, made to the crown. With everything that had just happened, this was fresh in their memory. Members will understand that the timing was perhaps not very good, but there were still some efforts made.

In 1988, some efforts were also made from the other side of the border, by an American. This even went all the way to the office of the then prime minister, Mrs. Thatcher, but nothing came of it. But considering what is coming, this could be done.

I am not at all uncomfortable with this. Supporting this motion does not make me an anti-monarchist, nor am I pointing a finger at anyone. I would especially like the government members who are Acadian to give this matter some thought.

Let us recall that there were two ridings that were Conservative ridings and will certainly become Conservative ridings again after the next election, namely Tobique—Mactaquac and West Nova. I am quite disappointed that the two Acadian members representing these ridings do not support the motion. We know that in September 2000, prior to the last election campaign, West Nova MP Mark Muiise was in favour of the motion. I am sure that Gilles Bernier, the former member for Tobique—Mactaquac, would also have supported the motion.

We must stand up and be counted. This is not an attack against any group or person or against the crown, but quite simply an acknowledgment. Even my former colleague, Angela Vautour, would have supported this motion.

I am asking the members opposite to keep an open mind. The party line is one thing, but for Acadian members, what they feel in their hearts may be more important at this stage. The reason Acadians managed to survive and prosper in the face of all difficulties is that they had their hearts in the right place. I hope our Acadian colleagues in this House will be guided by the same sentiments.

We are not trying to rewrite history, obviously. This is not about pointing a finger, nor is it about asking for money in reparation. This is not at all the case. Governments since 1867 have also made mistakes and it is well for apologies to be forthcoming. There have been a great many wrongs since 1867 toward the first nations of Canada. These need to be acknowledged and apologies made. The Acadian people experienced something that was absolutely horrible and managed to survive despite everything. Recognizing this fact by supporting this motion is a positive step.

I would once again like to congratulate the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes on the tremendous work he has done. Clearly he has a reputation such that people are wary of everything he does. In this case, he has recognized an historic event suffered by a people and he came up with a positive gesture for the future.

• (1815)

[English]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to respond to the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes and to his motion asking the Governor General to intercede with Her Majesty, the Queen of England, to present an official apology to the Acadian people for wrongs done in its name between 1755 and 1763.

Canada's history, like that of all countries, has skeletons in its closet of which we are not proud. These are events that took place sometimes hundreds of years ago, such as in the case of the Acadian deportation. History can sometimes be cruel, however, Canada's history does not include only injustices. It is a history which for the most part is one of progress and growth. Today we must look to the future.

Canada's Acadian community is not one but many communities spread throughout the Atlantic provinces. In New Brunswick, Acadians are concentrated in the southeast, the northeast and the northwest, with groups in Fredericton and Saint John.

In Nova Scotia there are dynamic communities in Baie-Sainte-Marie on the southwestern coast and in my own constituency of Bras d'Or—Cape Breton. Both Île-Madame and the Chéticamp region are beautiful communities, proud and progressive.

In Prince Edward Island Acadians are in the region of Évangéline. In Newfoundland they are found near Cape St. Georges and in Saint-Jean and in Labrador City. They are also situated at Îles-de-la-Madeleine in the Gaspé, in the Montreal region and in western Canada. All these communities, no matter how big or small, are testament to the vitality of Canada's people and our two official languages.

It takes extraordinary courage and strength to develop a community which lives in a minority situation. The members of the Acadian communities have founded schools, colleges and

Private Members' Business

universities. They have established theatres, newspapers and publishing houses. They have made outstanding strides in culture, theatre, cinema, visual arts and music as well as in literature. They have blessed the world with writers, poets, artists, dancers, musicians and singers. They have established an impressive network of businesses and created jobs.

The Acadians of Canada are part of what makes Canada able to be successful and prosper. The Government of Canada recognizes this dynamic and vital contribution to Canadian society. They count among the seven million people in Canada who speak, sing, write, work and live in French. These francophones are proof of the vitality and extraordinary determination to grow and expand on a continent with an anglophone majority.

The English and French languages and the people who speak them have shaped Canada and helped define its identity. Canada's linguistic duality has its origins in the very nature of our country. It is hard to look at Canada today without seeing the importance of these two languages and their communities within Canadian society.

The official languages support programs of the Department of Canadian Heritage are designed to provide opportunities for Canadians to fully appreciate and profit from our rich linguistic heritage. The Government of Canada believes that the great majority of Canadians share these goals.

Few would doubt the importance of education to any community. Through the support for minority language education, the Department of Canadian Heritage works toward the full participation of both language groups in all aspects of Canadian life.

These programs not only further the vital cultural contribution of the English and French speaking minority communities, but also promote access to the economic mainstream. For instance, progress in the area of French language minority education has had a prominent role in lowering illiteracy and school dropout rates and increasing post-secondary attendance.

Thirty years ago the quality and availability of French language minority education was not only a national disgrace but also a significant barrier to the development and survival of francophone communities throughout Canada. We set out to change this. In the process, schools were built where none had existed. Community centres were built where none had existed. Colleges were built where none had existed.

We have worked with the provinces and with francophone and Acadian parents from one end of the country to the other. The economic value of quality public education in their language for the 1.6 million Canadians who are part of official language minority communities cannot be underestimated.

• (1820)

All Canadians have a stake in minority language education programs. In their absence, as the bilingualism and bicultural commission pointed out, these Canadians would not be able to make their potential contribution to society. The Department of Canadian Heritage, in particular the official languages support programs branch, has concluded a series of agreements which greatly benefit the Acadian and francophone populations of Canada.

Private Members' Business

Collaboration between both levels of government within the framework of the official languages and education program allows more than 150,000 young people from official minority language communities to study in their language in 700 elementary and secondary schools in all regions of the country, and 18.5% of these schools are situated in the Atlantic provinces.

The official languages and education program contributes to the financing of a network of 19 francophone colleges and universities outside Quebec, many of which are located in the Atlantic provinces and which serve the Acadian population. It is also through these programs that 2.7 million young Canadians are learning a second official language, including more than 318,000 in immersion classes, thus greatly increasing the number of Canadians with an appreciation for the French language and culture.

While I will not go into details about all the good work that is being done, I would like to outline some of the noteworthy accomplishments which have been achieved in minority education and which have directly benefited the Acadian communities over the past few years.

In Nova Scotia, major roles in French education are played by Collège de l'Acadie, to which I will speak in more detail, and Université Sainte-Anne, which has been funded for many years by the federal government.

Created in 1988, Collège de l'Acadie is now a key institution within the francophone and Acadian communities. Having two in my own constituency, I certainly can speak to the role they play.

The considerable distances that separate the different Acadian regions of the province could have posed problems with respect to the service delivery but, undiscouraged, the Acadians adjusted and established training centres attached to Collège de l'Acadie throughout the territory. There are now seven and there is no doubt that these training centres contribute directly to the economic expansion and development of the Acadian communities.

The college and its training centres have state of the art technological tools such as video conferencing and teleconferencing, offering superior distance education programs. On the eve of a new focus on knowledge and communications, a French language distance education capacity is certainly a sign of prosperity for francophones and Acadians in Canada.

Also in Nova Scotia, federal funds have supported the construction and expansion of the Carrefour du Grand Havre school and community centre in Dartmouth. The opening of the Étoile school and community centre in my neighbouring constituency of Sydney—Victoria was equally an occasion to celebrate a victory for the francophone population in the greater Sydney area. Along with offering quality education in French, it is a centre where the Acadian community can gather together as well as a place to promote the Acadian culture.

In New Brunswick, the federal government also has widely and consistently supported the development of well established institutions, such as the University of Moncton. It, like any other educational institution, plays an important role as an engine of social, economic and cultural development for the Acadian communities.

Created in 1963, the University of Moncton is the second largest university in New Brunswick and the biggest French language Canadian university outside of Quebec. It has three campuses: Moncton in the southeast, Edmundston in the northwest, and Shippagan in the northeast. There is no question that the University of Moncton contributes directly to the vitality and dynamism of the francophone and Acadian communities of Canada.

Also in New Brunswick, federal funds have helped in the construction of three school community centres at Fredericton, Miramichi and Saint John, as well as funding for four community colleges. In Prince Edward Island another community centre has been established. Newfoundland's Acadians can soon be celebrating the signing of an agreement with the federal government for francophone school management.

The federal government also supports the Acadian associations that bring Acadian institutions and organizations together.

• (1825)

These associations work hard for the Acadian cause and have over the years brought about many positive changes. There is no doubt the Acadian deportation is an event that ranks among the great tragedies of history in Canada.

That fact and the effects of it should never be forgotten or diminished in our memories. Historic and commemorative venues, such as Grand Pré, have been established so that Canadians will always remember this part of our history.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The hon. member for Laval Centre. I would point out that she only has three minutes left.

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, knowing how wise the hon. members are, I wish to seek unanimous consent to use the 10 minutes provided to speak to motion No. 241.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, now, at the beginning of October, I have just lost another illusion of mine, but not to worry, I will keep on smiling.

I am pleased to take part today in the passionate debate on Motion No. 241 tabled by my hon. colleague, the member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes.

I am even more pleased to speak to this issue because a lot of people have taken the time to express their views on this motion, which has become very significant because of the importance it has for many of our citizens.

There are two points I want to make here. Because of the great number of comments that have been made, I cannot guess as to the political stripe of all the people who made them. But given the law of averages, I would find it very surprising and even unthinkable that all these people share my political opinions.

However, each and every one of them supported this motion unconditionally, as if it were the most natural thing to do in the world.

The people watching this may ask why I am making these two points. It seems that this issue has become the focus of the debate on the motion, although it should not even be addressed during our discussions.

Moreover, there was an unfortunate misunderstanding during the weeks following the tabling of this motion. Some people have suggested that my hon. colleague from Verchères—Les-Patriotes was playing petty politics by putting forward Motion No. 241, while others showed more respect and simply stated that they would wait to find out the position of the Acadian community on this issue.

Now that this misunderstanding is behind us, the situation has cleared up. The hon. member for Verchères—Les-Patriotes has publicly demonstrated that there was absolutely no partisanship behind his tabling of Motion No. 241.

Moreover, the consultation process in which Acadians took part ended yesterday with the tabling of the report of the advisory committee set up by the Société nationale des Acadiens.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that this issue will unfold in the next hour of debate. You can count on my being here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1830)

[English]

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Ms. Val Meredith (South Surrey—White Rock—Langley, Canadian Alliance): Mr. Speaker, since I first stood in the House two weeks ago today to ask the Minister of Transport about the problems facing Canada's airlines, a number of things have happened.

In answering my question, the minister said that neither the Bush administration nor the American congress had decided on any measure to help the U.S. airline industry. Yet two days later both the U.S. house of representatives and the senate passed identical legislation to assist the American airline industry. The president signed the legislation into law the following day.

Contrast that with the response of the government which only yesterday announced its compensation package to Canada's airlines for the direct losses they incurred as a result of the closure of Canada's airspace. It took the government an additional week and a half to address the obvious, which is that Canada should compensate the airlines for these losses. That was a no-brainer. Canadians

Adjournment Debate

support that. There was overwhelming support from every party in the House for that concept.

However the American legislation went further than direct compensation. It was also designed to offset the loss of passenger revenue between September 11 and December 21, 2001. Whether one agrees with that kind of an action or not, the result is that American air carriers flying transborder routes in direct competition with Canadian airlines will be subsidized while the Canadian air carriers that compete with American air carriers will not. What does the government do about that discrepancy? Nothing.

With regard to security, the Americans have again acted quickly. The U.S. government has taken control of airport security. It has reintroduced the use of air marshals and has developed tough new policies. What has the Government of Canada done? It told Canadian pilots to lock the cockpit door and keep it closed. That is just one more example of the government reacting with too little too late.

While I agree that we cannot always compare ourselves to the Americans, in this instance we cannot afford not to reach a certain level of security or to be any less diligent in providing security for Canadian travellers or any travellers on Canadian airlines.

What does the government do now? I will agree that there are no easy fixes. It will not be easy for the government to resolve the issues that are before the airline industry.

For one thing, not all the airlines in Canada are in the same shape. It is well documented. When the market closed today, Air Canada's shares were listed at \$2.48, down from a 12 month high of \$17.50 last November and a pre-September 11 value of \$6. WestJet's shares, on the other hand, at today's close, were at \$19, down from its 12 month high but up from its pre-September 11 value of \$17.

It is quite clear that not all Canadian airlines are in the same shape. The only way the government can help Air Canada to resolve its problems is to eliminate the 15% limit on domestic ownership of Air Canada's shares.

Is the government prepared to eliminate the 15% ownership restriction and allow the private sector to save Air Canada?

• (1835)

[Translation]

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and congratulate her on her interest in a matter of extreme importance and timeliness. Transport Canada acknowledges that the implementation of enhanced security measures is putting enormous pressure on airports and air carriers.

The shutting down of airports for a number of days obviously led to marked decreases in revenue. I would, however, point out that the government's contribution of \$160 million is connected to the closing down of air space for a number of days, which obviously had significant impact on the carriers.

Adjournment Debate

This is an arrangement that compensates airlines for the Government of Canada's decision to close down Canadian air space. It provides airlines and operators of specialized air services with the funds they have been so anxiously awaiting, which will enable them to recover from the abrupt interruption of their activities.

An examination of the financial data was carried out with executives directly involved in this sector. The Air Transport Association was also involved in assessing the costs.

Those who will be directly concerned and will benefit from that allocation of funds are obviously air carriers and service operators.

With this compensation package, Transport Canada and the federal government continue to monitor the situation very closely. Our main concern is of course the security and safety of the travelling public.

[English]

HARBOURS

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC/DR): Mr. Speaker, this is an important opportunity during what we commonly call the late show to discuss harbour bottoms.

The government has not only made a conscious decision through Transport Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to divest itself of wharves and wharf infrastructure, but now it has gone a step further and fully intends to divest itself of the very bottoms of the harbours. That is extremely problematic for the South Shore of Nova Scotia, which is a very important player in the fishing industry. A number of wharves have been divested already.

An hon. member: Digby was divested.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: My colleague mentioned Digby wharf.

There is a real concern on behalf of the mayors, the MLAs in the provincial legislature and the provincial government that the federal government is divesting itself of harbour bottoms.

I raised a question in the House regarding the actual selling of the harbour bottoms because that is exactly what is going to happen.

In several of these harbours, in particular the harbour of Bridgewater, which goes several kilometres up the LaHave River, and the harbour of Shelbourne, which is several kilometres long, if the government actually sold the bottoms of those harbours to a private individual, then what would happen to them?

Who would be responsible for any environmental assessment or environmental cleanup? Would that person own all the rights to the harbour? Could we set lobster gear on the bottom of the harbour? Could we set nets on the harbour? Would the person put the navigational aids in that harbour? Would he or she be responsible for the moorings not only for the commercial fishery but for the recreational boaters? Would he or she be responsible for harbours in front of the yacht clubs and sheltered coves where recreational boaters would be?

On June 8, as a supplementary to my question, my colleague from St. John's West asked the Minister of the Environment whether or not this was perhaps some attempt to avoid the responsibility for environmental cleanup in ports such as Liverpool or Lunenburg

which have been shipbuilding centres for hundreds of years. There are perhaps things in the mud that are secure there, lead and other toxic chemicals or substances, that would be the responsibility of the federal government. As long as that bottom is not disturbed, that bottom is perfectly safe. If that bottom were disturbed, would there be a problem?

There are way too many unanswered questions.

It should be noted that the mayors of the towns on the South Shore, the wardens of the municipalities, the municipal councillors, the MLAs and the provincial government are all against the federal government divesting itself of the harbour bottoms.

It is inconceivable that the federal government would want to sell the harbour bottoms. It should maintain authority over them. If an individual wants to build a wharf or wants to put moorings in for recreational boating or for a commercial fishery venture, then he or she could go to the federal government and get the appropriate permits. However, the federal government absolutely must maintain control and ownership of what is under the salt water.

● (1840)

[Translation]

Mr. André Harvey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that in 1995 the government put in place the national marine policy, which has allowed for the commercialization of the operations of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the creation of 19 Canada port authorities and the divestiture of many public harbours under which came the divestiture of the harbour bottoms.

The divestiture of harbour bottoms is part of the national marine policy. Transport Canada owns 43 of them. Obviously they were first offered to federal departments and then to the various provinces.

In Nova Scotia, negotiations started up with top officials. Transport Canada manages 15 harbour bottoms in Nova Scotia. Discussions are going on and these are things that must not be done hastily.

Obviously there are also benefits related to harbour dues, since in Nova Scotia alone there might be potential savings of \$900,000.

When a harbour bottom is divested, it is important to remember that the federal government will continue to enforce federal laws, including the Canada Shipping Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

In short, and I want to reassure my hon. colleague, absolutely no final decision has been made with regard to the divestiture of Transport Canada harbour bottoms.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on May 31, I put the following question to the Minister of Human Resources Development:

Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Human Resources Development received a copy of the additional report on the employment insurance program tabled by the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development.

Last November, the Liberal government admitted that the program was too rigid and required changes.

Adjournment Debate

Is the minister going to give serious consideration to the recommendations contained in this report, and will she commit to making significant changes to the employment insurance program, to at last correct the errors of the past?

I am talking about the errors of the past because they hurt people. It is beyond me that we have an employment insurance plan subsidized by workers when the government has accumulated a \$40 billion surplus in the EI fund. Workers and newcomers on the labour market are discriminated against because they have to work 910 hours before qualifying for benefits.

Today, with all the layoffs we hear about across the country, people who work in seasonal industries will not be able to qualify for EI. It is most unfortunate.

On behalf of Canadian workers, I sincerely hope that the federal Minister of Human Resources Development will carefully examine the report tabled in parliament by hon. members from all parties, Liberals, members from the Alliance, the Bloc and the New Democratic Party, as well as Conservatives. They unanimously asked the minister to bring in amendments that would be effective immediately, amendments that are needed.

For example it is recommended to go from 910 hours worked to 700 hours. I do not necessarily agree with this recommendation but this is what is recommended, and I am satisfied with that. It makes more sense because more people would qualify.

The minister already recognized that even 700 hours was too long for parental leave; she reduced that to 600 hours.

In regions like ours, and our region is not the only one, the situation is the same all over the country, there are seasonal jobs. It is not because of the workers. The situation is controlled by employers and local economy. These people can no longer qualify for EI.

We can say that 85% of those who should qualify for employment insurance do so. However, that is not the problem here. The problem is that nobody has access to the employment insurance program any more. We are not talking about people who are no longer eligible; we are not talking about people who worked for eight, ten or even fifteen or twenty weeks, for example in the tourism industry. We are not talking about these people who no longer qualify for EI.

Given the number of layoffs announced, it is high time the minister proposed a plan to change the employment insurance program for the good of all workers in our country. I am sure they would be pleased and they would greatly appreciate such a gesture on the part of the minister, if ever she or the federal government decided to make those changes.

• (1845)

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague opposite that the government and the minister in particular are in the process of drafting their response to the recommendations of the House standing committee that looked at the EI issue. We will respond to the committee report within the timeframe prescribed by the act.

I can assure my colleague and all members of the House that this concern about a certain clientele that is not covered under the

employment insurance plan is shared by government members as well.

That is why, over the last few years, we made changes to the plan to ensure that it meets the needs of Canadians and is better adapted to the changing labour market.

[*English*]

Most recently under Bill C-2, the bill on employment insurance which the House passed, we eliminated the intensity rule because it did not improve workforce attachment. We adjusted the clawback provision which no longer applies to Canadians who seek temporary income support for the first time or those who receive special benefits.

Under Bill C-2 parents coming back to work after taking care of young children qualify for regular EI benefits with the same number of hours required of other workers.

[*Translation*]

Each year we assess the impact of the plan on Canadians across the country. We will continue to ensure that it is well adapted to the changing labour market and to the needs of Canadians. Our plan is flexible and it meets the needs of Canada's labour force.

SHIPBUILDING

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in this debate on the adjournment motion I would like to talk about a matter I have raised in this House and the answer given to it last Thursday. I asked the following question to the Minister of Industry:

Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, the Minister of Industry told Davie Industries officials that he could not do anything to help their company until the proposals made to the government are accepted.

I was referring to an action plan that the minister had prepared and tabled in June.

Could the government pledge to quickly adopt the proposals of the Minister of Industry regarding the shipbuilding industry, so as to avoid the closure of another company and, more importantly, the loss of jobs?

The parliamentary secretary is the one who answered, and I see that he has been asked to answer again today. I will let him give his answer, but what he was saying was that the Minister of Industry had met with the officials but agreed with the decision made by Investissement Québec to reject Davie's request. He therefore said that he agreed and answered that the federal government would not do anything.

I would like to point out that shipbuilding, under the constitution as it stands, is first and foremost a federal responsibility. People from Davie Industries approached Investissement Québec because they were fed up with nothing happening on the federal side. Yet, the Minister of Industry did present a plan of action in June, the week after the House rose.

Week in and week out, day in and day out, we are told that soon there will be announcements of funding. Meanwhile, not only in Lévis but elsewhere in Canada shipyards are closing. We are losing a whole infrastructure that was important to us.

Adjournment Debate

Today I hope the government and the parliamentary secretary, who has former shipyard workers living in his riding and who long chaired his regional caucus and is aware of the situation, given that the matter is up for discussion at Treasury Board and in cabinet in the coming weeks, will seize the opportunity I am offering them today to announce that the government will do something to help Davie Industries.

I warn him that I will not be very happy if he says, as usual, that they can do nothing for shipbuilding.

• (1850)

Mr. Claude Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for giving me this opportunity to talk about government assistance to Davie Industries.

The government sympathizes with the workers and the management of Davie Industries, whose future is uncertain.

Numerous factors are at the root of the difficulties of that industry, including a lack of investment and innovation, and also foreign trade practices.

It is in light of these difficulties that the government took some measures to implement a new shipbuilding policy. In October 2000, the Minister of Industry established a new partnership project on shipbuilding. The project was co-chaired by officials representing

the owners and the union. The partnership held broad consultations across Canada and it submitted its report to the minister in March.

In response to this report, the minister adopted a new policy framework with over 20 realistic and affordable measures, including: a new competitive financing mechanism for foreign and domestic buyers of Canadian built vessels; improved export financing through the Export Development Corporation; increased benefits for the Canadian industry from the development of offshore oil and natural gas; access by the shipbuilding and industrial marine industries to Technology Partnerships Canada for the development of innovating technologies; and the creation of a new energy and marine branch at Industry Canada for the effective implementation of the department's policy framework.

We worked very hard to develop a shipbuilding and marine industries policy that is competitive and efficient. We will help the industry, including Davie Industries, to take advantage of all the opportunities that it is entitled to under the new policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.53 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, October 3, 2001

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Antarctica			
Mr. Adams	5903	Mr. Duceppe	5907
National Defence		Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	5907
Mr. Casson	5903	Mr. Loubier	5908
Burlington Arts Centre		Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	5908
Ms. Torsney	5903	Mr. Loubier	5908
Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital		Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	5908
Mr. Scott	5904	Airline Industry	
Katimavik		Ms. McDonough	5908
Ms. Thibeault	5904	Mrs. Stewart	5908
Softwood Lumber		Ms. McDonough	5908
Mr. Elley	5904	Mrs. Stewart	5908
Terrorism		The Economy	
Mr. Owen (Vancouver Quadra)	5904	Mr. Clark	5908
National Family Week		Mr. Chrétien	5908
Mr. Lanctôt	5904	Terrorism	
LandMines		Mr. Clark	5909
Mrs. Ur	5905	Mr. Chrétien	5909
Prostate Cancer		Mr. Toews	5909
Mr. White (North Vancouver)	5905	Ms. McLellan	5909
Marc Gélinas		Mr. Toews	5909
Mr. Carignan	5905	Ms. McLellan	5909
Léo Drolet		Employment Insurance	
Mr. Cardin	5905	Mr. Crête	5909
Human Rights		Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	5909
Ms. Bennett	5905	Mr. Crête	5910
Agriculture		Mrs. Stewart	5910
Mr. Borotsik	5906	Terrorism	
Member for Halifax		Mr. Forseth	5910
Ms. Lill	5906	Ms. Caplan	5910
ORAL QUESTION PERIOD		Mr. Forseth	5910
Terrorism		Ms. Caplan	5910
Mr. Day	5906	Employment Insurance	
Mr. Chrétien	5906	Ms. Guay	5910
Mr. Day	5906	Mrs. Stewart	5910
Mr. Chrétien	5907	Ms. Guay	5910
Mr. Day	5907	Mrs. Stewart	5910
Mr. Chrétien	5907	Terrorism	
Mr. Sorenson	5907	Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	5911
Mr. MacAulay	5907	Ms. McLellan	5911
Mr. Sorenson	5907	Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	5911
Mr. MacAulay	5907	Ms. McLellan	5911
The Economy		Foreign Aid	
Mr. Duceppe	5907	Ms. Phinney	5911
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	5907	Ms. Minna	5911
		The Economy	
		Mr. Nystrom	5911
		Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	5911
		Mr. Nystrom	5911
		Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	5911

Trade	
Mr. Brison	5912
Mr. Cauchon	5912
Agriculture	
Mr. Borotsik	5912
Mr. Vanclief	5912
National Security	
Mrs. Ablonczy	5912
Mr. Rock	5912
Mrs. Ablonczy	5912
Mr. Rock	5912
The Economy	
Mr. Bergeron	5912
Mr. Tobin	5913
Mr. Bergeron	5913
Mr. Tobin	5913
National Defence	
Mr. Benoit	5913
Mr. Eggleton	5913
Mr. Benoit	5913
Mr. Eggleton	5913
Immigration	
Mr. Gallaway	5913
Ms. Caplan	5913
Multiculturalism	
Mrs. Hinton	5913
Mr. Chrétien	5914
Mrs. Hinton	5914
Ms. Fry	5914
Presence in Gallery	
Business of the House	
Mr. Boudria	5914
Motion	5914
(Motion agreed to)	5914
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Regan	5914
Committees of the House	
Justice and Human Rights	
Mr. Scott	5914
Petitions	
Falun Gong	
Mr. Jaffer	5914
Marriage	
Mr. Keddy	5915
Volunteer Firefighters	
Mr. Keddy	5915
VIA Rail	
Mr. Adams	5915
Land Titles	
Mr. Burton	5915

Questions on the order paper	
Mr. Regan	5915
Motions for Papers	
Mr. Regan	5915
(Motion agreed to)	5915

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Courts Administration Service Act	
Bill C-30. Second Reading	5915
Mr. Lanctôt	5915
Mr. Blaikie	5917
Mr. Toews	5917
Mr. MacKay	5918
Mr. Schmidt	5919
Mr. Toews	5919
Mr. Schmidt	5921
Mr. Schmidt	5921
Mr. White (North Vancouver)	5923
(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)	5924
Transportation Appeal Tribunal of Canada Act	
Mr. Dion	5924
Bill C-34. Second reading	5924
Mr. Harvey	5924
Mr. Moore	5926
Mr. Moore	5929
Mr. Laframboise	5930

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

The Acadians	
Motion	5933
Mr. Roy	5933
Mr. Reid	5934
Mr. Savoy	5935
Mr. Stoffer	5936
Mr. Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)	5937
Mr. Cuzner	5939
Ms. Dalphond-Guiral	5940
Ms. Dalphond-Guiral	5940

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Airline Industry	
Ms. Meredith	5941
Mr. Harvey	5941
Harbours	
Mr. Keddy	5942
Mr. Harvey	5942
Employment Insurance	
Mr. Godin	5942
Ms. Folco	5943
Shipbuilding	
Mr. Dubé	5943
Mr. Drouin	5944

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:

Communication Canada - Publishing
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S9

En cas de non-livraison,

retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :

Communication Canada - Édition
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S9

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

Also available on the Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire at the following address:

Aussi disponible sur le réseau électronique « Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire » à l'adresse suivante :

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

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Additional copies may be obtained from Communication Canada - Canadian Government Publishing, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S9

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Communication Canada - Édition, Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S9

**On peut obtenir la version française de cette publication en écrivant à : Communication Canada - Édition
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S9**