



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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VOLUME 137 • NUMBER 125 • 1st SESSION • 37th PARLIAMENT

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, December 5, 2001**

—  
**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 5, 2001

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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●(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 Bras d'Or—Cape Breton.

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

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### CANADA LOVES NEW YORK

**Ms. Sophia Leung (Vancouver Kingsway, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on December 1, thousands of Canadians, including me, travelled to New York City as part of the Canada Loves New York campaign.

From coast to coast 20,000 Canadians joined with the Prime Minister and Mayor Giuliani in a spirited rally supporting New Yorkers and indeed all Americans during these difficult times. In fact so many Canadians participated in this event that Mayor Giuliani proclaimed the entire weekend as Canada Loves New York.

I encourage all Canadians to travel to New York and see a city that has dealt with a terrible tragedy and has emerged stronger and more united than ever. Canada loves New York.

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### MARINE CONSERVATION AREAS

**Mr. Andy Burton (Skeena, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say a special thanks for the time, talent and effort of a number of British Columbians who are fighting for changes to Bill C-10, the Marine Conservation Areas Act.

I publicly thank the mayor of Kitimat, Rick Wozney; business owner Reg Stowell; mayor of Telkwa, Sharon Hartwell; mayor of Smithers, Brian Northup, and councillor Cress Farrow; mayor of Prince Rupert, Don Scott, and councillor Paddy Greene; mayor of Port Clements, Joan-Ann Allen; chairman of the regional district of Kitimat-Stikine, Joanne Monaghan; chairman of the regional district of Skeena-Queen Charlottes, Ed Wampler; Phil Eidsvik of the B.C. Fisheries Survival Coalition; Michelle James of the B.C. Seafood

Alliance; chairman of the North Coast Oil and Gas Task Force, David McGuigan; and finally, the B.C. government MLA for North Coast, Bill Belsey. I thank them all for their efforts.

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●(1405)

### EDUCATION

**Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada has made public a study carried out by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. This study was conducted in 32 industrialized countries. It showed that Canadian students have superior skills in reading, science and mathematics.

Quebecers and Albertans are the standouts according to this study. They rank higher than the national average.

As a former teacher, principal, superintendent and as member of parliament for Oxford, it is my pleasure to congratulate our young people on their academic performance. This study shows once more just how much aptitude they have for thinking and learning at a high level, both lifelong skills that will serve Canada well in the future.

They are educated, open-minded and optimistic. The young Canadians of today have a great future ahead of them. I would like to tell them all that all Canadians are proud of them.

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### VOLUNTEERISM

**Mr. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, December 5, is International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development and the official close of the International Year of Volunteers.

It is a great day for Canada because at 1 o'clock this afternoon at the General Assembly of the United Nations the hon. minister of public works and the secretary general of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, unveiled a special International Year of Volunteers sculpture based on a coin designed by artist Anthony Testa of the Royal Canadian Mint. The sculpture will be displayed at the UN volunteers headquarters in Bonn.

Volunteerism has helped to increase literacy, protect the environment, stimulate cultural activity and promote co-operation with developing countries. Last year 6.5 million Canadians gave over a billion hours of their time volunteering.

*S. O. 31*

In keeping with the 1985 UN resolution I encourage all Canadians to volunteer their time next year. On behalf of all my colleagues in the House I applaud all the thousands of Canadians whose volunteer efforts this year helped make the world a better place.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**DAIRY INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Gérard Binet (Frontenac—Mégantic, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the appellate body of the World Trade Organization finally brought down a favourable decision on Canadian exports of dairy products.

This decision brings to an end the trade battle that has been going on since 1998 with the U.S. and New Zealand. It reverses the earlier decision by a special WTO group that Canada's milk export pricing practices constituted export subsidies.

This is excellent news for the Canadian dairy industry, which can now focus its efforts elsewhere, such as exploring new export markets.

This is good news for Frontenac—Mégantic. Congratulations to the Minister for International Trade on his excellent work.

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[English]

**GEORGE HARRISON**

**Mr. Chuck Cadman (Surrey North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, last weekend while in New York City I made my way to Strawberry Fields in Central Park to join a small crowd at a makeshift shrine to the memory of George Harrison. The mound of flowers, pictures and tributes accompanied by strains of Beatles songs gave me pause to reflect.

I was about 14 when the Beatles exploded on the world. Drawn by the strong, lyrical guitar solos I made a decision that set the course for my life. I bought a used guitar for five bucks and a book of nine basic chords. My parents were not thrilled when a few years and two bands later I took the vice-principal up on his offer and left school for rock and roll on the road rather than get my hair cut.

The drone of *Norwegian Wood*, the melding of Indian and western themes in *Within You, Without You*, the raw emotion of *Something* and *While My Guitar Gently Weeps* will endure. For me personally it is the melodic ring and lyrical optimism of *Here Comes The Sun* that defines George Harrison.

Coming from that kid in the early sixties who, influenced by Harrison's brilliant simplicity, picked up a guitar and lived a dream, I say thanks to George.

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[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

**Mr. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform hon. members that lawyers associations from all over the world will be meeting in Paris this Thursday and Friday. The purpose of this conference is to create an international criminal

lawyers' association for the International Criminal Court. This conference is organized by the International Criminal Defence Attorneys Association, the headquarters of which is in Montreal.

● (1410)

[English]

The International Criminal Court is a central element of Canada's human security agenda and Canada has long been a world leader in the creation of the court.

Accordingly the Government of Canada is co-sponsoring this conference through the ICC campaign of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. It will bring together over 300 experts from the bar associations of 60 countries, including from the developing nations, and with representatives from foreign affairs and national defence in attendance.

Reflecting its commitment to due process and the rule of law, the Rome statute provides for the provision of legal counsel both to individuals accused and the victims of crimes within the court's jurisdiction. Indeed the conference dramatizes just how close we are to having the ICC, with the Rome statute having received the 47th of the 60 ratifications needed to create the court just last week.

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[Translation]

**PATRICK CARPENTIER**

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize in this House the award given by the Société nationale des Québécois et des Québécoises de Lanaudière, the Marcel Bonin medal, to racing driver Patrick Carpentier of Joliette. He was honoured as sportsman of the year. Another famous Lanaudois, Gilles Villeneuve, was the very first winner of this award.

This season, Patrick Carpentier thrilled us and caused a stir of excitement with his first career victory on the Michigan course on July 22. His series of successes continued with 2nd place in Chicago a week later, 3rd place in the Mid-Ohio on August 12, and another rostrum in Germany on September 15.

Patrick Carpentier has distinguished himself both on the track and off and he is considered by his peers and by the sports media to be one of the nicest people in automotive sports. His exploits began in 1984, when he started in go-karting. Since then, he has recorded a championship in Atlantic Formula racing and won the title of recruit of the year in the CART series.

On behalf of people of the riding of Joliette and the Bloc Québécois, I salute the tenacity and the talent of Patrick Carpentier for whom the best is yet to come, as he said himself at the end of the season.

[English]

#### PARLIAMENTARY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

**Ms. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize some remarkable young Canadians. This week eight interns from the Ontario legislature internship program are on Parliament Hill for their annual study tour. Their visit is part of an exchange between the Ontario legislature internship program and the parliamentary internship program that places 10 young graduates here with members during the parliamentary year.

These young interns are bright and keen and have a promising future ahead of them. They are our potential leaders. This unique opportunity to develop skills and gain an understanding and knowledge of the parliamentary system is an invaluable exercise for all participants. I am proud that we all benefit from their experience.

I ask members to join me in welcoming the eight interns from Queen's Park and at the same time salute those 10 interns who are currently serving members on both sides of the House.

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#### ANDY SHOTT

**Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my warmest thanks and congratulations to Mr. Andy Shott. The photographic recording of the history of this place has been in his capable hands ever since Andy became the official photographer for the House of Commons when he started the department in 1993.

Andy has photographed all of our memorable official visits and notable events as well as just the daily business of parliament for the last eight years, and during that time Andy has become a parliamentary institution. An event just was not the same if Andy was not there with at least three cameras hanging off his neck.

I should also remind the House that before starting the photography department Andy had 20 years of service on Parliament Hill in a variety of positions.

Andy is retiring in the early part of next year and I would like to tip my hat to him for all his great work, great humour and excellent service over the years. I know I speak on behalf of everyone when I wish Andy all the best of luck in his retirement. We hope that it is truly picture perfect.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Serge Marcil (Beauharnois—Salaberry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on January 19, 2000, the Quebec minister of transport repeated, as he had on a number of occasions, "I extend my hand today to the federal government so it will participate in the completion of Highway 30. If it wants to take over the construction of the bridges over the St. Lawrence and the Seaway and 14 kilometres of road, we can move up the timetable for the work".

The Liberal members from the Montérégie are today wondering when the work on the Candiac and Sainte-Catherine leg will begin.

S. O. 31

What stage has the work for the completion of the road from Châteauguay to Highway 20 and Highway 540 reached? When will the construction work begin? The public hearings office approved this leg in 1998.

Why, in order to complete this leg, does he not make immediate use of the \$108 million the federal government is making available to him as part of the federal-provincial program on highway infrastructures?

Mr. Chevette should stop making a production out of this matter and make his intentions clear by starting construction on this road right now. This project is of major economic importance for the development of the economy of greater Montreal and Quebec as a whole.

\* \* \*

• (1415)

[English]

#### AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

**Ms. Wendy Lill (Dartmouth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the auditor general reported to the House that the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency is routinely ignoring the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

Her report examined 26 files requiring environmental assessments. It found that seven of them were approved prior to the completion of the assessments, seven more had assessments done calling for follow up action that never took place and twelve were approved without condition that the recommendations of the assessment be enforced.

The auditor general called this a worrisome trend, citing the case of a hotel in P.E.I. where an environmental protection plan for the construction period was a requirement of the environmental assessment. The agency blatantly ignored this requirement and the hotel was built without a plan to protect the fragile environment.

Atlantic Canadians, who saw the effects of the collapse of the cod fishery, know very well the importance of environmental protection. It is shameful that ACOA would become one of the most egregious violators of environmental laws.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### JEAN-PHILIPPE BOURGEOIS

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last weekend, Jean-Philippe Bourgeois, an avalanche expert from Drummondville, arrived in Afghanistan.

Accompanied by a 25-member Swedish team, which he will direct, Mr. Bourgeois' job will be to keep ground lines of communication open for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

### Oral Questions

This will require him to artificially trigger avalanches in high mountain areas, dangerous work which will be accomplished with explosives and in conditions of extreme cold.

Mr. Bourgeois, who has done this sort of work before for Médecins sans frontières, will be working for Care Canada this time.

This is a fine example of commitment and courage showing us once again that Quebecers are now to be found throughout the world and that they often play key roles on the international scene.

I wish to say bravo to Jean-Philippe Bourgeois and all his team.

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today we have the pleasure of welcoming a delegation from Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Chambly.

They are here to discuss economic development and infrastructures, and particularly the importance of extending Highway 35, which links Montreal and Boston and which is thus becoming an important link with our neighbours to the south, a link which is necessary to the growth of exports.

Mayor Dolbec and all the economic stakeholders are working hard. This project is vital to Quebec's economy and could create thousands of jobs in the medium and long terms.

I pay tribute to the energy and devotion they are bringing to this project, which is so important for our beautiful region.

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[English]

### AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

**Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, the auditor general has given a failing grade to treasury board. Here are some examples of Liberal misspending: a \$36 billion surplus in the EI account, \$20 billion more than required; 7,000 dead people given fuel rebate cheques; 1,600 federal prisoners given fuel rebate cheques; 4,000 people living outside of Canada given fuel rebate cheques; Sea King helicopters that spend 40 hours in repair for every hour of service; millions wasted on ill-conceived and poorly delivered programs at Health Canada; millionaire movie stars paying no tax, zero tax.

This is what happens when we have government spending by executive decree: billions wasted and no accountability.

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Before beginning oral question period today, since it is a Wednesday I would encourage all members to be careful in their choice of words, both in answers and in questions.

[English]

This week the Chair heard, in one case, the expression "spreading those lies" and, in another, the phrase "dishonours our word". Such language does little to raise the level of debate in this place. I ask for the co-operation of all hon. members in this regard.

With this gentle reminder out of the way we will now begin question period.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

• (1420)

[English]

### AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the auditor general has now confirmed graphically and painfully what the Canadian Alliance has been saying for over a year, and that is that this government, this group of Liberals, is quite possibly the worst bunch of money managers that the Canadian public has ever seen, through the sheer magnitude of dollars wasted, the worst ever.

If the Prime Minister and the finance minister were in a public company they would have been fired out the door.

To restore the shaken confidence of Canadians, will the Prime Minister please stand up and, at the very least, start the exercise by saying that he is sorry for presiding over the flushing of millions of Canadian dollars down the drain?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think I will be the one who will be fired soon.

I want to tell the Canadian public that they know better than the Leader of the Opposition. When we started we had a deficit of 6.2% of GDP and last year we had a surplus of 2% of GDP. We have managed to do that within eight years. No other country in the world has been able to do that. We have reduced unemployment from 11.5% to 7%. I could go on and on and still keep—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, no other country reduced its deficit by ripping dollars away from health care and the armed forces. That is how the Liberals did it.

[Translation]

The auditor general was very clear: our armed forces are not ready. During the war in Kosovo, we even had to borrow military equipment from Australia and spare batteries from Spain.

How long does this government plan on playing Russian roulette with our armed forces? When will our armed forces be getting the money they need to protect us?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not really sure what the Leader of the Opposition is getting at.

In all of the missions Canada took part in these past few years, whether in Kosovo or in Africa as part of peacekeeping missions, the Canadian army has always done very well.

Everyone says that Canadian soldiers are among the best and that they always do the best work.

I do not understand why the Leader of the Opposition would want to take away from the good work of Canadian soldiers in the eyes of Canadians.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, those cheap insults do not carry weight with Canadians any more. We value our troops and that is why we are asking our government to value the troops.

We know the Liberal strategy. They tell their ministers, in a time of crisis like this, to just cover their eyes, put their heads between their legs, wait for the Christmas break and this will all blow over. Well Canadians are not going to put up with it this time.

The armed forces need to know, in the budget he is writing, whether there will be the extra \$2 billion they need to protect our country. Will it be there?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a special feeling because I feel the Leader of the Opposition is using this week to launch his campaign to try to keep his job.

As you appealed to me, Mr. Speaker, and to the House of Commons, I would like to be very nice. I would like to be extremely nice to him because we do not want to lose him.

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the cheap political shots really do not help. On a serious issue like the Canadian military, the auditor general has identified waste and mismanagement right across government. For example, there was a \$1.3 billion shortfall in operations and maintenance in the budget of the Canadian forces. She identified another \$4.5 billion in the equipment budget of the Canadian forces over the next five years.

Will the Prime Minister promise Canadians that he will cut wasteful spending right across the departments so that the government can allocate the necessary funding to defence over the next five years?

**Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today the HMCS *Toronto* was deployed from Halifax. This is the sixth ship that Canada has sent out in Operation Apollo. Two thousand personnel have been deployed in this operation. The Canadian military is doing its job and doing it well. We should salute them.

•(1425)

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Lakeland, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian military is doing its job in spite of the government. The auditor general said that was exactly the kind of comment that should be taken with a grain of salt. She pointed out in her report that our air force needed to borrow parts and equipment from our allies in the war against Kosovo.

The government's cuts to defence, combined with waste and mismanagement across government, have gotten in the way of vital investments. Our troops can only carry this weight for so long.

Will the Prime Minister tell Canadians that waste will be cut and that at least \$2 billion will be added to new spending for defence in the next budget?

**Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I naturally thank the member for asking for more money for the military. Certainly that is being considered. The Prime Minister has indicated that it will be a security budget and that we will look at more funding for the military.

The military, whenever it has been asked, has done its job. The military should be praised, not denigrated as the member has said. The member should also take into consideration that the auditor general's report was written before September 11.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, while the government is depriving thousands of seniors of the income supplement to which they are entitled, while it is massively dipping into the employment insurance fund, in short, while the poor are left to fend for themselves, it is promoting tax evasion for the rich by maintaining the agreement signed with Barbados. So much for the sharing of wealth.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his government's priorities are ill advised, as illustrated by the deliberate misappropriation of billions of dollars from the employment insurance fund?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that employment insurance is a government program and that revenues go into the consolidated revenue fund.

When the employment insurance fund is running a deficit, it is the government that makes up that deficit. This is the way it has been for a very long time and the system works very well.

This is why we were able to successfully restore sound financial management while preserving social programs.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the surplus is in excess of \$42 billion and the auditor general said that a \$15 billion surplus is sufficient to meet the needs of the unemployed.

She added that the size of the accumulated surpluses in the employment insurance fund is totally unjustified. This is what the auditor general said. Moreover, the government is refusing to improve the program.

Will the Prime Minister recognize that the employment insurance program must be used to share the wealth, not to fill the government's coffers, not to divert money that should go to the unemployed?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is at the request of the auditor general himself that we, not our government, but the previous one, stopped having a separate fund and paid into the consolidated revenue fund employment insurance contributions, which were at \$3.07 per \$100 of insurable earnings when we took office in 1993 and which are now at \$2.20 or \$2.25.

So we succeeded in reducing workers' contributions to the employment insurance fund by one-third.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the auditor general has spoken out against the huge surplus in the EI fund, which will have reached \$43 billion by next March, and wonders why such huge amounts have been collected without justification.

Will the Minister of Human Resources Development admit that the only solution is the creation of an independent employment insurance fund, as the unions, the workers, the employers and the Bloc Québécois have been calling for?

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, the Standing Committee on Finance has suggested a program to review what can be done about contribution rates.

The EI fund is not a shoebox and, as the Prime Minister said, what we have done is put it into the consolidated fund on the advice of the Auditor General of Canada.

• (1430)

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the surplus of an independent fund could also be in a government consolidated fund, as is the case with the CSST fund in Quebec.

What is the most scandalous, however, is that this surplus has already been used, whereas if the fund were separate, it would still be there.

Will the minister admit that this surplus has already been spent and that if we are hit by a recession she will not be able to meet her obligations?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what is very clear is that on this side of the House whenever there is justification to increase and improve the benefits for employment insurance recipients, we have done that.

What is equally clear is that whenever that side of the House has had an opportunity to support us it voted against those changes. That is what is clear.

[Translation]

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the surplus in the employment insurance fund is organized crime, pure and simple.

The government is using the workers and taking their money, yet when it comes time for workers to receive assistance, they close the door in their faces. "Ineligible", says the minister. What we should close the door on is this government's policy of stealing.

Will the government finally give their money back to the workers?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have clearly indicated that the current system was imposed upon the previous government by the auditor general, who found it unusual, at the time, that there was a deficit every year in the employment insurance fund.

So, the auditor general at the time said that the fund had to be included in the government's consolidated revenue fund. That is what the previous government did.

Currently, in order to help workers, we have also reduced their contribution from \$3.07 to \$2.20.

[English]

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the blah, blah, blah does not just come from the minister. It is coming from the Prime Minister on this question.

We are not talking about the practices of the previous government. We are talking about the practices of this government condemned by the auditor general.

This is supposed to be the festive season yet the government continues to pick people's pockets and leave the unemployed in the cold while the grinch sits on the EI chest.

Will the finance minister put an end to this organized theft and put the money back where it belongs, which is in the—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I would draw to the attention of the hon. member for Halifax the words I said at the beginning of question period and ask for a little restraint.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** I do not think she listened to you, Mr. Speaker, or she cannot improvise so she had to read a text that was prepared before the question. I think it leads nowhere when words like that are used.

We have administered the programs of the government very well. It is why rather than having a deficit of \$42 billion we had a surplus of \$18 billion last year. It is the proof that we have provided an excellent government for the people of Canada.

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**AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT**

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, what is unprecedented about this auditor general's report on defence is that she questions both the government's preparedness and the government's word. The department's claim, she said, "should be taken with a grain of salt".

The government's response yesterday admits that, and I quote, "national defence does not yet have a reporting system that tracks overall equipment availability".

Why not? If the government is so well prepared, why can the minister not even track the equipment our forces need?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at her press conference yesterday the auditor general said "If you want a really quick summary, the army seems to be able to maintain its level of activity and has done so pretty consistently. The navy as well".

They do not look at all of the report. They just take a little bit of the report. There is one thing: never have the Canadian armed forces been abroad like in the last years. They have always done a great job and Canadians have always been proud of them. Only the opposition is dumping on the Canadian army.



•(1435)

[Translation]

#### HEATING FUEL REBATE

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, just before the last federal election, the government delivered its pre-election economic statement.

The most remarkable result of that Liberal initiative was that 7,500 deceased persons received cheques for heating costs.

Could the Prime Minister tell us how many of these deceased persons voted Liberal?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, you asked us to be nice today, so I will be nice.

In regard to this program, the Minister of Finance had to make a decision. There were problems in two-tenths of one per cent of all cases.

There is an amount of \$2 million that cannot be fully accounted for. The Minister of Finance figured that in order to monitor such a program down to the last penny, it would have cost tens of millions of dollars.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Richmond, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, on November 30, EI premiums were cut by a measly nickel. This will save Canadian workers \$19.50 a year. In January CPP premiums will go up by \$172. This means that Canadian workers will pay an extra \$150 a year in premiums.

How, then, can the Minister of Finance claim as he does that premiums have been cut?

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we took office the rates were at \$3.07 heading to \$3.30. We have cut them in every single budget since then and they are now down to a low of \$2.20. That is saving the taxpayers \$6.8 billion a year.

If the member wants to talk about tax cuts, let us look at what we have done for the workers: record tax cuts of \$100 billion and the tax cuts which have gone to workers with families, 35%. That is how we are helping the workers.

**Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Richmond, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member did not realize that I did not ask about taxpayers' dollars. I spoke about Canadian workers' premiums. That is the problem. The government simply does not get it.

The chief actuary has said that EI premiums could be cut to \$1.75 and the EI system would still break even. There is a \$36 billion surplus. The auditor general says that the EI surplus is so large that the EI law is practically being broken.

Is the reason the Minister of Finance has not cut premiums that he has already misspent and misallocated the surplus?

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one has to be responsible. One has

#### Oral Questions

to look at exactly what we have done given the mess that we inherited in 1993. We have continually been able to cut those taxes. That has been one of our priorities. We have said that we will continue to cut those taxes.

The EI fund is not a shoebox. There are many priorities, but the big thing that we have done to help workers is to cut the income taxes of workers with families by 35%.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, not only has this government exploited the unemployed, but for the past eight years it has unfairly treated thousands of seniors, who are among society's most disadvantaged, by depriving them of the \$3.2 billion owed them under the guaranteed income supplement plan.

I ask the Minister of Human Resources Development what she is waiting for to reimburse these seniors the money she owes them?

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, I am pleased to get the report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development on this important part of the Canadian pension program.

We will examine it in detail and respond to the committee within the timeframe set by the law. We want to be sure that every Canadian entitled to the guaranteed income supplement will receive it.

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister could easily have approached the Association québécoise de défense des retraités to identify the persons involved.

How does the minister explain the government's creativity when it goes after money owed it and its inefficiency when the time comes to pay its debts to seniors?

•(1440)

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I also said yesterday, we are taking action to ensure that all Canadian seniors who are eligible for the guaranteed income supplement do have access to it. I am working with my colleague, the Minister of National Revenue, to do just that.

I would note that St. Christopher House has written us a letter stating:

We are so pleased to learn that HRDC will be working with CCRA to directly contact these seniors. This seems like an efficient and effective way to address the problem.

*Oral Questions***HEATING FUEL REBATE**

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, we know that the Liberals are in favour of prisoners' voting rights, which perhaps explains why they sent 1,600 vote buying cheques to inmates last year, but it also appears that they were courting the cemetery vote when they sent gas rebate cheques to 7,500 members of the grateful dead.

Why did the government send half a billion tax dollars to the imprisoned, the dead and the wealthy, and when will the government show respect for real living taxpayers by apologizing for this atrocious abuse of tax dollars?

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we set up this program we had two criteria that were necessary to fulfill. First, it had to go to those who were going to need it the most, and second, it had to get there on time. This is why we had to choose the existing vehicle and this was the vehicle that was available.

**Mr. Jason Kenney (Calgary Southeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals had one criteria and that was to buy votes. They sure did not get there in time for 7,500 dead people.

When they say that they targeted low income people, that clearly contradicts what the auditor general said, that 40% of the cheques, \$560 million worth, went to people who were not low income, who were either in prison, deceased, lived outside the country or were wealthy and had good incomes.

Why does the finance minister continue to refuse to apologize for this gross abuse of tax dollars? Why does the government not show some respect for taxpayers and just apologize?

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will not apologize for giving this tax credit to those who were going to need it the most.

What excites me is this newfound concern for low income Canadians. Perhaps the hon. member could tell us what the impact on low income Canadians as opposed to rich Canadians would be of his flat tax proposal, or has he scrapped that stupid tax?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT**

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, seniors have been done out of \$3.2 billion by the government, and, in our opinion, there is only one thing to do: Give them what the government owes them.

I call on the minister to rise in the House right now and tell us whether she will pay back the money she owes.

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the guaranteed income supplement is a very important part of the overall pension program. What is extraordinarily important is to ensure that Canadian seniors who are eligible for this supplement have access to it.

As I pointed out, we are very aggressively going into communities, working with voluntary organizations. I am working with my colleague, the Minister of National Revenue, to ensure that all seniors who have eligibility for this program do have access to it.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we have a hard time understanding the reticence of the minister, who, for the past eight years has denied our society's most vulnerable people \$3.2 billion.

Why is the minister refusing to do the only honourable thing, which is to announce that she will be reimbursing the money?

Seniors have rights: Respect them.

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, making sure that Canadians who are eligible for this important supplement know about it is a priority for the government.

The hon. member knows that there is a retroactivity provision in the act as it exists. The committee has made some recommendations that I am looking forward to reviewing and I will be responding to them in an appropriate fashion.

\* \* \*

●(1445)

**AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT**

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the auditor general says that the Minister of Canadian Heritage has no control over the spending in her department. Last year we went round and round this issue of waste and mismanagement of grants and contributions. One would have thought that by now the Minister of Canadian Heritage would have got the message that Canadians do not want their money wasted.

What does the auditor general say? Money is still being handed out with no documentation, money is still handed out in excess of the application and money is still handed out when there is a conflict of interest.

My question is for the minister. When is she going to get serious about waste and manage her department in the way that Canadians expect her to manage the department?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the auditor general also said that major changes in the way the department processes grants and contributions have been made and that we have made good progress in acting on the problems reported in 1998, so we have already dealt with the issue.

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the minister said 1998. That is right. The auditor general said in 1998 there was a problem in that department. The auditor general said yesterday there was still a problem in that department.

The question is, when is the minister going to get that department cleaned up so that Canadians can be assured the money is not being wasted?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact a statement from the auditor general that we have made good progress in acting on the problems reported is in the conclusion of the auditor general's report.

\* \* \*

#### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Bras d'Or—Cape Breton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. We have been asked by constituents as to the status of EI rebate cheques.

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member is making reference to the important practice of allowing employment insurance claimants to request advance cheques during the Christmas season. This very important practice is of value.

I want to assure the House that, as in the past, employment insurance claimants will be able to make a request, make their claims in advance and receive cheques for the Christmas period.

\* \* \*

#### TAXATION

**Hon. Lorne Nystrom (Regina—Qu'Appelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the auditor general reported that in one recent year some 20 wealthy foreign actors evaded an estimated \$10 million in taxes. Why did the Government of Canada ignore this \$10 million in taxes that could have gone to paying for social programs and who gave the order not to collect?

I know that there is no business like show business, but why did it take until June of this year to close the tax loophole to prevent this outrage from happening again in the future? Why did it take so long to close that loophole?

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we all know that there is a tax credit that exists. We all know as well that based on Canadian legislation, there was a 15% withholding with regard to the non-resident actors on their contracts with Canadian producers.

We have been discussing that problem over the past decade. The government has had the courage to solve the problem. In consultation with CCRA and the finance department, we changed the legislation. Today there is a withholding of 23% on a contract. We are proud of what we are doing.

\* \* \*

#### SOFTWOOD LUMBER

**Mr. Svend Robinson (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

In the softwood lumber negotiations, B.C. forestry workers and communities are being sold out by the B.C. Liberal government which is caving in to the U.S. government on raw log exports from crown lands. Exports of raw logs mean exports of good quality Canadian jobs.

#### Oral Questions

Will the minister assure the House that he will not in any way weaken or remove federal controls on raw log exports from private lands as part of a deal with the U.S. on softwood lumber?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I totally disagree with the analysis made by the opposition member. He just throws out everything and every effort that has been done by the British Columbia government in managing its forests in a way that would be better for its industry and in trying to solve the long term dispute on softwood lumber with the United States.

We are working as a team, the Government of Canada and the Government of British Columbia. It has been audacious and courageous. I really hope that we can settle the dispute on softwood lumber for the benefit of our workers all across the country.

\* \* \*

• (1450)

#### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence continues to tell the Canadian people that the Canadian forces are more combat capable than they were 10 years ago but the auditor general says this is not true and we all know it is not true.

Our national media is flooded with the embarrassing and disturbing details of the results of the bad management and inadequate resources the government has offered our military.

How can the government expect our men and women in the military to do their jobs properly and safely, given the lack of support from the government?

**Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I once again thank the member for trying to get the military budget boosted.

Canada's defence policy calls for multi-purpose, combat capable forces. Time and time again our forces demonstrate their capability in a post cold war security environment: Kosovo, Eritrea, and now Bosnia. We are doing our part and doing it well. We should salute the Canadian forces and say job well done.

**Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, we all want to salute our forces but we cannot salute the government.

Our military personnel are being put in harm's way by their own government according to the cold, hard facts of the auditor general's report: borrowed batteries; duct tape; the Aurora fleet not ready 58% of the time; Sea Kings not ready 70% of the time; training problems; no spare parts; lack of specialists; tour fatigue; scheduled maintenance cut in half.

What does the government intend to do to correct this injustice to our Canadian forces?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. John O'Reilly (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think I can cover all those topics in 35 seconds. I will say that we are pleased with the solid things that the auditor general has pointed out in her report. We always appreciate getting her report and making sure that the items she states in it are looked after on an ongoing basis.

The Canadian military is in better shape now than it has been for 10 years. The recruitment program is over the top. The Canadian forces are doing what they have been asked to do time and time again.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK OF CANADA**

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP has failed to confirm the Prime Minister's allegations that a document showing him in direct financial conflict of interest was indeed a forgery. Some of the best forensic investigators in the country have refused to endorse our Prime Minister's story. The cloud of suspicion continues to hang over the Prime Minister. What will the Prime Minister do? How will he clear his name?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the suspicion and the clouds are obviously only in the mind of my hon. friend.

The Prime Minister's Office, the Prime Minister and the Business Development Bank of Canada say this document is a forgery. This document was in the files of the Business Development Bank of Canada. When the document came to light it was turned over to the mounted police, who are investigating.

My hon. friend ought to get a fan to blow the cloud of fog away. He is the one who is in a daze, not the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Business Development Bank of Canada have worked for the past eight months to prove to the RCMP that indeed the document was a forgery. They have been unable to convince the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Will the Prime Minister admit either that he was in a conflict of interest or bring forward the necessary documents that will prove his version of the story?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is one of the basic principles of Canadian and British justice that those who assert must prove. It is not up to the Prime Minister to prove that he was acting in the right way, although in fact he was. It is up to the hon. member and those who have these fanciful, wrong allegations to bring forward their evidence.

The hon. member is wrong. The RCMP has not found any wrongdoing. The member ought to withdraw his unwarranted assertions if he has any decency at all.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**TAX CONVENTIONS**

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, according to the auditor general, while the government is depriving 270,000 of the most disadvantaged members of our

society of \$3.2 billion, Canada is maintaining its tax convention with Barbados so that 53 of the richest members of our society can claim more than \$800 million in capital gains deductions.

Will the government listen to the demands of the auditor general, which echo those of the Bloc Québécois, and end its tax convention with Barbados?

• (1455)

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have more than 70 such conventions, the purpose of which is to prevent double taxation.

What the auditor general basically says in her report is that we did intervene. We were vigilant. She even mentioned certain cases where our intervention produced extremely good results. She also admits that when we had to amend the legislation in the past, we did so.

In this case, if we must intervene to amend the convention or the legislation, we will do so to protect our tax base, as we normally do.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is not possible to avoid double taxation with Barbados since the rate of taxation there is zero, by the way.

While the Minister of Finance merrily helps himself to the money in the EI fund, while the government is depriving seniors of \$3.2 billion, this same minister is encouraging people to avail themselves of the tax convention with Barbados, which is a boon to eight of the eleven subsidiaries of his own shipping company.

My question for the Prime Minister is this: Is this not a real conflict of interest?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this sort of personal accusation is inappropriate in the House of Commons. The Minister of Finance placed all his assets in a trust when he took up his job. He has served the country very well.

This sort of attack shows only too well how desperate the opposition parties are.

\* \* \*

[English]

**TERRORISM**

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the sole purpose of Hamas is to destroy Israel. The organization uses charitable work as a public relations tool to recruit members, to generate sympathy for its terrorist cause and to even run kindergartens for terrorists. The Prime Minister says that is okay, but Canadians know it is not okay. Canadians are puzzled and in disbelief at the Prime Minister's lack of resolve in the war against terrorism.

The Canadian Alliance wants to shut down terrorist organizations. Why does the Prime Minister insist on giving them tax receipts?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada condemns all terrorist acts and any organization that supports terrorists. Like the British, we added the military ring of Hamas to those groups with assets that were frozen in Canada. We will continue to take any appropriate action.

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to seeing tax breaks for terrorists in red book four. It will be a good plank for members opposite.

Yesterday the Prime Minister refused to condemn Yasser Arafat for condoning terrorism and harbouring terrorists. Today in Geneva, a one-sided United Nations declaration singling out Israel for censure was passed. Sadly the government supported that resolution. This spineless position will allow opponents of peace to undermine the bilateral peace process. It will be used by terrorist groups to legitimize their attacks against Israeli civilians and it will jeopardize Canadian neutrality.

Is that what the Liberals mean by a balanced approach?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we were present but some decided not to be there. We believe in the policy of being present. Our representative there made it clear that the resolution, as far as it concerned Israel, was completely unacceptable. We believe it is better to be present and speak than not to be there and let the resolution go without anybody talking against it.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**VOLUNTEERS**

**Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of Treasury Board. Today is International Volunteer Day, the closing day of the United Nations International Year of Volunteers

What has the Government of Canada done to fulfill its commitments made in the 1999 Speech from the Throne to improve relations with volunteers and the community sector?

• (1500)

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this morning the Prime Minister of Canada signed an accord with the volunteer sector and announced funding of \$50 million over five years for the Canada volunteerism initiative.

This accord will help enhance our relationship with the volunteer sector, a relationship of co-operation, trust and partnership.

[*English*]

We all value the contribution of volunteers in our communities. I would encourage all members of parliament to volunteer themselves and to support voluntary organizations in their communities.

\* \* \*

**AIRLINE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, thanks to the transport minister and the government, Air Canada has a virtual monopoly on

air service in this country on the domestic side. In response, the transport minister said yesterday “It is untenable from the point of view of government and parliament; I would suspect it is untenable from the point of view of the public who want a choice”. His policy to back up that statement and the idea that he floated yesterday was that Air Canada should be given a monopoly for domestic service on major routes.

Why is it untenable for Air Canada to have 85% of the market, but the government now supports giving it 100% of the domestic service in this country? How does that work?

**Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am getting used to the hon. member uttering false statements in his questions.

The fact of the matter is that the policy of the government, endorsed by his party in the year 2000, was working before September 11. On September 11 there was an incident which caused grave harm to the airline industry not just in Canada but around the world. I would hope that he would work with us to try to find a solution instead of making those false accusations in the House.

**Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, part of the solution is certainly going to be a new transport minister, which is something the government will not agree with.

The transport minister, rather than blaming September 11 which his government does for everything, needs to look in the mirror and blame himself. He gave \$100 million to Air Canada for its out of pocket costs. It took that money, launched Air Canada Tango and knifed Canada 3000 out of business.

It is because of the transport minister and the government that airline competition is dead in two-thirds of the country. Why does the government not take responsibility for its own actions in the death of competition in our skies?

**Hon. David Collenette (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one would think the member would be on his feet praising the government for bringing in tougher measures with respect to the Competition Act, to allow airlines like WestJet from western Canada to come into eastern Canada and give the service that people deserve.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, despite the fine words of the Minister of Transport concerning the respect of the Official Languages Act by Air Canada, the government set us straight yesterday with the statement that there is no specific penalty relating to non-compliance with this legislation.

*Government Orders*

Does the Minister of Transport not agree that, in actual fact, there is no political will to enforce the law and that this situation will have to change if there is any real desire to protect French, in particular its use on Air Canada?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Air Canada is required by law to comply with the Official Languages Act. This is not negotiable. Thanks to the determination of the Joint Committee on Official Languages, the President of Air Canada has said that he would have an action plan in place for March and has signed a memorandum of agreement with the Commissioner of Official Languages to ensure, in conjunction with the unions, that complaints are handled better.

The government is determined to keep close tabs on the reorganization of Air Canada from the official languages point of view.

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Julian Reed (Halton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the amount of energy generated by renewable low impact sources, such as water, wind, solar, biogas, biomass and others is increasing every year in Canada. National associations have asked the federal government for a certification program to identify power generated from renewable energy sources.

Could the minister tell the House what the government is doing to help consumers identify eco-friendly power?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government supports the development of renewable and environmentally sound alternatives to power generation. The new guidelines will be released on December 8. They will establish criteria for the certification and the licensing of renewable low impact energy. That will further encourage the diversity in the marketplace and, of course, renewable, low impact energy sources.

\* \* \*

**AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT**

**Miss Deborah Grey (Edmonton North, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, well, it is hurrah for Hollywood. It fooled this government, but it certainly did not fool the auditor general. She says that the revenue minister turns a blind eye while American millionaire movie stars evade paying millions of dollars in Canadian income taxes.

With the government there is no money for troops, no money for health care, there are billions for boondoggles, but it forgives taxes for Hollywood movie stars.

It took until this June to finally close that loophole, but the question is this. When will the government bring the curtain down further on all waste and mismanagement?

**Hon. Martin Cauchon (Minister of National Revenue and Secretary of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that problem was there and has been there for decades. That problem was there when the Conservative government was in power back in the 1980s. It closed its eyes on that problem, which affected our tax base.

We on this side of the government have been able to fix the problem in consultation with the finance department and the whole industry. Actually, those people will have to pay their dues to Canadian society.

\* \* \*

● (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 have been consultations among parties in the House and I believe, if you would seek it, you would find unanimous consent to put to the House and immediately vote on the ways and means Motion No. 11.

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**WAYS AND MEANS**

EXCISE ACT, 2001

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.)** moved that a ways and means motion to introduce an act respecting the taxation of spirits, wine and tobacco and to implement increases in tobacco taxes and changes to the treatment of ships' stores, laid upon the table on Tuesday, December 4, be concurred in.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Speaker:** Call in the members. Is it agreed that the members are in?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

● (1515)

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

*(Division No. 212)*

## YEAS

## Members

Adams  
Anderson (Victoria)  
Assadourian  
Bachand (Saint-Jean)  
Baker  
Barnes  
Bélair  
Bellehumeur  
Bennett  
Bertrand  
Bigras  
Blondin-Andrew  
Bonwick  
Bourgeois  
Brown  
Bulte  
Caccia  
Cannis  
Cardin  
Catterall  
Charbonneau  
Coderre  
Comuzzi  
Cotler  
Cullen  
Dalphond-Guiral  
Dion  
Dromisky  
Dubé  
Duhamel  
Easter  
Farrah  
Folco  
Fournier  
Gagnon (Québec)  
Galloway  
Girard-Bujold  
Goodale  
Gray (Windsor West)  
Guarnieri  
Guimond  
Harvard  
Hubbard  
Jackson  
Jordan  
Keys  
Knutson  
Laframboise  
Lancôt  
Lavigne  
Leung  
Longfield  
MacAulay  
Malhi  
Marceau  
Marleau  
McCallum  
McKay (Scarborough East)  
McTeague  
Mills (Toronto—Danforth)  
Mitchell  
Myers  
Normand  
O'Brien (London—Fanshawe)  
Owen  
Paquette  
Parrish  
Peric  
Peterson  
Phinney  
Pickard (Chatham—Kent Essex)  
Plamondon  
Price  
Provenzano  
Reed (Halton)  
Richardson  
Rocheleau  
Saada

Allard  
Assad  
Augustine  
Bagnell  
Bakopanos  
Beaumier  
Bélangier  
Bellemare  
Bergeron  
Bevilacqua  
Binet  
Bonin  
Boudria  
Brien  
Bryden  
Byrne  
Calder  
Caplan  
Castonguay  
Cauchon  
Chrétien  
Collenette  
Coppes  
Crête  
Cuzner  
DeVillers  
Discepola  
Drouin  
Duceppe  
Duplain  
Eyking  
Finlay  
Fontana  
Fry  
Gagnon (Champlain)  
Gauthier  
Godfrey  
Graham  
Grose  
Guay  
Harb  
Harvey  
Ianno  
Jennings  
Karetak-Lindell  
Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast)  
Kraft Sloan  
Laliberte  
Lastewka  
Lee  
Lincoln  
Loubier  
Mahoney  
Maloney  
Marcil  
Matthews  
McGuire  
McLellan  
Ménard  
Minna  
Murphy  
Nault  
O'Brien (Labrador)  
O'Reilly  
Pagtakhan  
Paradis  
Patry  
Perron  
Pettigrew  
Picard (Drummond)  
Pillitteri  
Pratt  
Proulx  
Redman  
Regan  
Robillard  
Rock  
Sauvageau

*Government Orders*

Savoy  
Scott  
Shepherd  
St-Jacques  
St. Denis  
Stewart  
Telegdi  
Tirabassi  
Tonks  
Ur  
Vanclief  
Volpe  
Whelan  
Wood— 183

Scherrer  
Sgro  
St-Hilaire  
St-Julien  
Steckle  
Szabo  
Thibeault (Saint-Lambert)  
Tobin  
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay)  
Valeri  
Venne  
Wappel  
Wilfert

## NAYS

## Members

Abbott  
Anders  
Asselin  
Bailey  
Blaikie  
Brisson  
Cadman  
Chatters  
Comartin  
Day  
Doyle  
Elley  
Gallant  
Goldring  
Grey (Edmonton North)  
Hearn  
Hill (Macleod)  
Hilstrom  
Jaffer  
Keddy (South Shore)  
Lill  
MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough)  
Mark  
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
McDonough  
Meredith  
Moore  
Obhrai  
Penson  
Reynolds  
Skelton  
Sorenson  
Stinson  
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)  
Toews  
Wasylycia-Leis  
Williams

Ablonczy  
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)  
Bachand (Richmond—Arthabaska)  
Benoit  
Borotsik  
Burton  
Casson  
Clark  
Cummins  
Desjarlais  
Duncan  
Epp  
Godin  
Grewal  
Harris  
Herron  
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)  
Hinton  
Johnston  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni)  
Manning  
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)  
Mayfield  
McNally  
Merrifield  
Nystrom  
Pallister  
Peschisolido  
Ritz  
Solberg  
Spencer  
Strahl  
Thompson (Wild Rose)  
Vellacott  
Wayne  
Yelich— 74

## PAIRED

## Members

Carroll  
Eggleton  
Lalonde  
LeBlanc  
Roy

Desrochers  
Gagliano  
Lebel  
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)  
Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis)— 10

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

*Routine Proceedings*

\* \* \*

**PRIVILEGE**

## BILL C-42—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam on Thursday, November 22, regarding Bill C-42, an act to amend certain acts of Canada, and to enact measures for implementing the biological and toxin weapons convention in order to enhance public safety, introduced earlier that day.

[*Translation*]

First, I would like to thank the hon. member for raising this matter as well as the hon. government House leader for his contribution.

In his submission, the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam alleges that the contents of Bill C-42 were leaked to the media before it was introduced at first reading in the House. As proof, he mentioned two newspaper articles, which appeared on Thursday, November 22, 2001, the first in the *Globe and Mail* and the second in the *National Post*.

[*English*]

I have examined the articles in question and can find no clear evidence that a leak actually occurred. The articles make reference to a number of sources, all unnamed, and include both speculations about the bill as well as assertions about its contents. Nowhere is any source, governmental or non-governmental, quoted with respect to the confidential contents of the bill.

On reading the text of these articles it is not possible for the Chair to distinguish between information, if any, that was directly communicated to the authors and material that is merely speculation or inference on the part of the authors for there seems to be no lack of ancillary material on which to base such speculations.

The hon. government House leader, for instance, noted that the very title of the bill, namely an act to amend certain acts of Canada, and to enact measures for implementing the biological and toxin weapons convention in order to enhance public safety, provides an important clue.

Intrepid journalists ready to invest the time to research the text of the biological and toxin weapons convention itself, not to mention the ongoing work of the international conference now reviewing its provisions, can expect to reap tangible benefits since Bill C-42 is the enabling legislation for Canada's ratification of that convention.

The mere fact that those speculations or inferences accord with the contents of the bill does not by itself constitute a prima facie breach of privilege.

Under these circumstances it is by no means evident to the Chair, based on the evidence submitted by the hon. member, that any actual disclosure of Bill C-42 has taken place prior to its introduction in the House. In the absence of such evidence, the Chair can find no basis for a question of privilege. I thank all hon. members for their attention to this matter.

**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 four petitions.

\* \* \*

**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Hon. Brian Tobin (for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-46, an act to amend the Criminal Code (alcohol ignition interlock device programs)

(Motion deemed adopted)

**Hon. Jim Peterson (for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada)** moved that the bill be read the first time and printed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

• (1520)

**INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

**Mr. John Maloney (Erie—Lincoln, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34 I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report from the Canadian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association concerning the 13th seminar of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which was held in Tasmania from October 15 to October 21, 2001.

**Ms. Sarmite Bulte (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34 I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report from the Canadian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association concerning the 24th Canadian regional seminar of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which was held in Regina, Saskatchewan from October 18 to October 21, 2001.

**Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34 I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association which represented Canada at the joint meeting of the Defence and Security Political Science and Technology Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly held in Kiev, Ukraine from November 7 to November 9, 2001.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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



*Routine Proceedings*

[English]

Pursuant to its order of reference of Wednesday, September 26, the committee has considered Bill C-15B, an act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals and firearms) and the Firearms Act and has agreed to report it with amendment. I thank members of the committee and staff for great work in very short order.

## TRANSPORT AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

**Mr. Ovid Jackson (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Standing Committee on Transport and Government Operations I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the eighth report of the committee.

Pursuant to its order of reference of Friday, November 20, the committee has considered Bill C-44, an act to amend the Aeronautics Act and reports the bill with amendment.

As well, pursuant to its order of reference of Friday, November 20, the committee has considered Bill C-43, an act to amend certain acts and instruments and to repeal the Fisheries Prices Support Act and reports the bill, in both official languages, with amendment.

## INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Ms. Susan Whelan (Essex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology on Bill C-23, an act to amend the Competition Act and the Competition Tribunal Act. The committee reports the bill with amendment.

I thank all witnesses, committee members, researchers and everyone for their hard work and co-operation throughout the proceedings with respect to the bill.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Don Boudria (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, now that the committees have reported. There has been consultation among House leaders and I believe you would find unanimous consent to the following order to offer convenience to hon. members. I move:

That notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice, the report stages of Bill C-15B and Bill C-44 may be taken up on or after Thursday, December 6.

In other words, the bills that were just reported could be taken up tomorrow.

● (1525)

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Translation]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

**CANADA ELECTIONS ACT**

**Mr. Janko Perić (Cambridge, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-418, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act (voting in place of a mentally incapacitated elector by power of attorney)

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce my private member's bill, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act.

The proposed amendments would permit an individual to possess a legal power of attorney certificate on behalf of individuals for whom he or she is legally responsible. A case such as this arose during the 2000 federal election in my riding of Cambridge. I encourage all members of the House to support the bill.

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

**Mr. Peter Adams:** Mr. Speaker, if the House would give its consent I would move that the 41st report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the review of the radio and television broadcasting of proceedings of House committees presented to the House on Monday, December 3, be concurred in.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Peterborough have unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

**Mr. Keith Martin:** Mr. Speaker, in an effort to avoid the imminent massacre of thousands of innocent black civilians in Zimbabwe, I ask for unanimous consent of the House to move that the government, in co-operation with other international states, freeze the personal assets of President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe; ban all international travel by Mr. Mugabe and his ministers; suspend Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth; and call for an arms embargo on Zimbabwe.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca have unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

## TERRORISM

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by 150 individuals from my riding of Vancouver Island North. The petitioners ask parliament to fight terrorism in a just manner and to exert a restraining influence on those who would retaliate with violence.

## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Mr. John Maloney (Erie—Lincoln, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I have three petitions to present that deal with protecting people with disabilities.

The petitioners call upon parliament under section 51 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to uphold the Latimer decision of the Supreme Court of Canada.

*Government Orders*

## CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

**Mr. John Maloney (Erie—Lincoln, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions dealing with the wanton cruelty to or torture of animals. The petitioners feel that it is a serious criminal offence and that the penalties should reflect that. They call upon parliament to pass Bill C-15B forthwith.

[*Translation*]

## PEACE

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I have the honour to submit the following petition signed by 918 students and teachers at the Collège Notre-Dame de Montréal.

Following the tragic events of September 11, they denounce any act motivated by a desire for revenge or racial or religious prejudice.

In this spirit, they ask parliament to ensure that Canada is a model of peace for all humanity, based on justice for all, respect for each human being and an equitable distribution of wealth.

[*English*]

## PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Raymond Bonin (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a petition from a number of my constituents who call upon parliament to enact legislation against the production and distribution of pornography.

## GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from citizens of the Peterborough area who support Bill C-287, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act regarding genetically modified food.

The petitioners support mandatory labelling which would allow for research and post-release monitoring of potential health effects of genetically modified food. They call upon the Parliament of Canada to support the principles in Bill C-287 and to allow all Canadians the right to decide whether to purchase products containing modified material.

I wonder if I could have unanimous consent to return to motions.  
● (1530)

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Peterborough have unanimous consent to return to motions?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion. I move:

That the 41st report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the review of the radio and television broadcasting of proceedings of House committees presented to the House on Monday, December 3, 2001, be concurred in.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Peterborough have unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[*English*]

## 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.

\* \* \*

## MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

**Mr. Geoff Regan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

## CANADIAN COMMERCIAL CORPORATION ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-41, an act to amend the Canadian Commercial Corporation Act, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

**Hon. Jim Peterson (for the Minister for International Trade)** moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

**Hon. Jim Peterson (for the Minister for International Trade)** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

\* \* \*

## CARRIAGE BY AIR ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-33, an act to amend the Carriage by Air Act, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

**Hon. Jim Peterson (for the Minister of Transport)** moved that the bill be concurred in.

*Government Orders*

(Motion agreed to)

**Hon. Jim Peterson (for the Minister of Transport)** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

\* \* \*

### NUCLEAR FUEL WASTE ACT

**Hon. Jim Peterson (for the Minister of Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board)** moved that Bill C-27, an act respecting the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Development and Natural Resources for its thoughtful review of Bill C-27, an act respecting the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste. I also take the opportunity to thank all witnesses who took the time to present their views to the committee on this important issue for all Canadians.

It is absolutely clear that along with the benefits of including the nuclear energy option in Canada's energy supply mix comes the responsibility of properly managing the resulting waste.

The waste in question is solid fuel bundles discharged from reactors built with our own Candu technology. Existing waste is currently stored safely at reactor sites while it awaits a long term management strategy. The nature of the waste requires a management approach covering the long term. Development and control of nuclear energy is a federal responsibility. It falls within federal jurisdiction. The Government of Canada has a duty to assume its responsibilities in this area which include the critical matter of an oversight function.

Bill C-27 is a major step forward for Canada with respect to the management of nuclear fuel waste over the long term. The bill is the culmination of more than 25 years of research, environmental assessment and extensive consultations with stakeholders including waste owners, the province, the public and aboriginal organizations.

The majority of Canadians who voiced their views want a solution to the issue. They are looking to the Government of Canada to establish a clear, fair and comprehensive strategy to make effective progress.

Bill C-27 is entirely consistent with the Government of Canada's radioactive waste policy framework of 1996. That policy framework makes clear that the government's objective is to ensure radioactive waste is disposed of in a safe, environmentally sound, comprehensive, cost effective and integrated manner.

I will be perfectly clear. Government oversight of the health, safety, environment and security aspects of long term management of nuclear fuel waste has long been provided through the 1945 Atomic Energy Control Act. This act was strengthened and replaced by the Nuclear Safety and Control Act which entered into force on May 31, 2000.

The proposed nuclear fuel waste act is needed to implement the Government of Canada's radioactive waste policy framework and ensure waste management operations are carried out in a comprehensive, cost effective and integrated manner which includes financial, social, ethical, socioeconomic and other broader considerations.

Should parliament assent to Bill C-27 it would be complementary to the Nuclear Safety and Control Act. Together both acts would ensure waste management activities are carried out in a safe, environmentally sound, comprehensive and integrated manner.

From the general principles established in the policy framework arose the specific requirements that are the backbone of the legislation before us. At the outset we wanted to ensure we heard the views and interests of stakeholders and strove to achieve an appropriate balance among competing priorities.

This was a challenging task and not one reached rapidly or in haste, however, an acceptable balance was achieved. I am confident this legislative framework would assist in making effective progress toward the implementation of a solution in the best interest of Canadians.

Bill C-27 would build on the good work of the nuclear fuel waste and disposal concept environmental assessment panel, or the Seaborn panel, and the government's response to it. The Seaborn panel carried out a comprehensive decade long review and Canada-wide public consultations. The panel made recommendations to the government, most of which were adopted as outlined in the government's response to the Seaborn report.

I reiterate our appreciation for the work carried out by panel members and the chair. We are thankful for their dedication in listening to all the views Canadians wished to convey. The government took seriously the work of the panel whose recommendations impacted significantly on the formation of government policy.

• (1535)

How has the public reacted to Bill C-27? There has been overwhelming support for legislation to deal with the long term management of nuclear fuel waste. Nonetheless concerns have been raised with respect to some of the details of Bill C-27. Members of the public have expressed concern that the government did not adopt the Seaborn recommendation to create a crown corporation to carry out the long term management of nuclear fuel waste.

The Seaborn panel stated that various plausible organizational scenarios existed, each with advantages and disadvantages. It concluded that:

Whatever structure is chosen, however, the agency's purposes, responsibilities and accountability must be spelled out as clearly and explicitly as possible, whether by legislation or in a charter of incorporation.

Consistent with past and current Canadian practices Bill C-27 would place primary onus for operations on the industry. This would be accompanied by appropriate government oversight. The government would exercise general oversight over the waste management organization established by the nuclear industry.

*Government Orders*

This approach has been chosen to allow us to move forward effectively. It would provide for a clear separation between those who carry out operations and those who regulate them, thus avoiding conflicts of interest. Similarly the waste management organization would be responsible for establishing and financing a credible and effective advisory council. Oversight would be exercised through the bill's transparency requirements.

In developing the oversight provisions of Bill C-27, care was taken to harmonize them with the federal oversight powers of the Nuclear Safety and Control Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act which would be exercised over the long term in managing nuclear fuel waste. Not only did we ensure there would be multiple government oversight mechanisms at play as recommended by the Seaborn panel, we assured ourselves that no undue overlap or duplication would occur among the mechanisms.

We have heard the public's call for transparency. Members of the public want to participate in important decisions that affect their lives and those of their children. Bill C-27 would provide for mandatory transparency. This was recommended by the Seaborn panel and agreed to by the Government of Canada as an essential condition for increasing public confidence.

For example, all waste management organization reports submitted to the minister, including the initial study of options, would be made public. The waste management organization would need to carry out public consultations at every stage of the process. All the advisory council's comments regarding the waste management organization's reports would need to be made public. The government would have additional consultation requirements under the Nuclear Safety and Control Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

How have the affected utilities and provinces received Bill C-27? The main owners of nuclear fuel waste have conveyed to the government and the House committee that they welcome the increased regulatory certainty the legislation would provide. Bill C-27 would provide them with a clear framework to fulfill their responsibilities. The bill would not create an unmanageable financial burden. Small waste owners noted that the waste management organization would be required to provide them with services at a reasonable cost.

In developing the legislation the government consulted Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick, which are the affected provinces. We addressed many of their concerns. We showed as much flexibility as possible without compromising the Government of Canada's policy objectives for federal oversight. The provinces recognized that development and control of nuclear energy falls under federal jurisdiction. They were all supportive of the bill's principles.

How have aboriginal peoples engaged in the process? Aboriginal peoples have shown considerable interest in this federal initiative. The Minister of Natural Resources has sought their active participation in future steps regarding the long term management of nuclear fuel waste. They participated extensively in the Seaborn public hearings. The Minister of Natural Resources has met with a number of aboriginal leaders to discuss how they wish to be consulted on the next steps. The active involvement of aboriginal peoples would be recognized and ensured by Bill C-27.

In addition to requiring the input of traditional knowledge from affected aboriginal communities during future siting phases, the bill would require the government to continue to carry out parallel consultations pursuant to its fiduciary responsibility. The Government of Canada recognizes the valuable perspectives and insights of aboriginal peoples.

Matthew Coon Come appeared before the House committee to speak for the Assembly of First Nations. Amendments were proposed and the committee recommended Bill C-27 be amended to include traditional aboriginal knowledge and expertise on the advisory council before the governor in council selects an approach for the long term management of nuclear fuel waste.

● (1540)

What would be the immediate impact after entry into force of the nuclear fuel waste act? The trust fund would be kick-started and the waste management organization would begin preparing its study. This report must be submitted to the government within three years. The study would include a comparison of risks and benefits of each option. The waste management organization must examine those options explicitly outlined in Bill C-27 but would not be limited to those options and may propose others.

Several stakeholders and some members of the House committee doubted whether three years would be enough time for the waste management organization to carry out the required work for the study. In this regard it should be noted that the Seaborn panel suggested that two years would be sufficient. Like Seaborn, the Government of Canada requires the study to contain sufficient information to compare options and decide on the most acceptable long term management approach for Canada.

After consultations, it was concluded that a three year period was appropriate in view of all the work that has already been done in Canada and elsewhere. It is now time to move forward. Utilities have been made aware of potential legislation for several years and have already started work.

What about the administration of the act? The bill indicates that the Minister of Natural Resources would be responsible for the administration of the nuclear fuel waste act. The department would be the focal point for interdepartmental consideration of technical, financial, social and ethical reviews and for any independent reviews that might be necessary. The department would provide the government's direct and indirect liaison with the waste management organization, the public, the provinces, aboriginal groups and other interested parties. The department would ensure compliance with the nuclear fuel waste act. It would manage all auditing, verification, inspection and enforcement measures.

*Government Orders*

A key aspect of Bill C-27 is its focus on a transparent process. Modern regulation seeks to involve the active participation of the public and to make clear the decision making role of the elected government. The activities of the nuclear utilities, the waste management organization and the minister are to be made transparent. The information should be made easily and promptly available to the public. Operations would be audited effectively.

In this regard the oversight approach taken in the bill is based on strong transparency requirements while leaving the organizing and implementation of the operations with the nuclear industry, combined with effective government oversight.

Does Bill C-27 address the broader nuclear energy policy issues? The nuclear energy option attracts interest on broad matters, for example, the appropriate mix and supply of available energy resources, sustainable development of energy projects, the social impact of high technology and globalization, the export or import of waste, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and, more recently, acts of terrorism. These are serious issues but all fall outside of the scope of this bill.

Of the issues I just mentioned, I will highlight one that commanded a lot of attention during the House standing committee review, namely the export and import of nuclear fuel waste.

There has been some talk about Canada becoming the dumping ground of the world for nuclear fuel waste. Let me assure the House that the government's first concern is to deal with nuclear fuel waste generated in Canada. There are no plans either to import or to export nuclear fuel waste. Bill C-27 was not designed to address these practices. Should they ever be considered in the future, there are existing federal mechanisms which would allow full public consultation and would guarantee that any application would not pose any unreasonable risk to health, safety, security and the environment of Canada. The two main mechanisms are the Nuclear Safety and Control Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

Addressing broader public policy matters must not serve as an excuse for delaying our current responsibilities for the long term management of nuclear fuel waste. Ensuring appropriate waste management is a laudable objective in its own right. We already have nuclear fuel waste currently in storage at nuclear reactor sites. Storage activities are safe but are not designed to be permanent solutions. No longer are there any good excuses for delaying what our generation, which benefits from nuclear power, must do to deal with the waste.

What can we conclude at this time on Bill C-27? This legislation is the culmination of years of work and was not established in a contextual vacuum. Policy development was guided by extensive consultations with all stakeholders by modern regulatory practices, social justice concepts and by experience gained in other countries. Policy development was influenced by the invaluable work of the Seaborn panel, including contributions of all those Canadians who actively and conscientiously participated in the public hearings.

• (1545)

The result is a phased, step-wise, decision making process allowing for all planned and executed waste management operations

to be reviewed on an ongoing basis and for the public to participate effectively at every step along the way.

Implementing a solution will take many years and will possibly affect future generations. The focus of legislation is on the responsibility of today's generation while at the same time allowing sufficient flexibility to allow decision making by future generations. Much progress has been made internationally on implementing a solution for the long term management of nuclear fuel waste.

The challenge for the government in developing legislation was to be fair to all stakeholders and to strike an effective balance in the public interest. I firmly believe that the proposed legislation fully meets the challenge.

With this legislative framework, Canada will be able to move ahead effectively in a reasoned fashion toward the implementation of an appropriate solution for the long term management of nuclear fuel waste and take into account not only the technical matters but incorporate in a central and integral way the social and ethical values of Canadians.

I look forward very much to parliament's approval of this very important bill.

• (1550)

**Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have this final opportunity to speak on Bill C-27. I have been involved in the process of the bill, which has been in the works for months and years.

Generally speaking, it is my position, and the position of my party, that the bill does achieve some important things and certainly is worthy of support.

Before I get into the analysis of the bill, I want to express some of my frustration with the process that brought us to this point today.

The speech of the member on the government side of the House is part of that frustration. During the hearing of witnesses who expressed their concerns and on whose concerns we based that amendments, I never saw that member present. I very much suspect the speech he just presented was drafted within the bureaucracy of the department and presented here just as the bill was.

Part of my frustration is the way the process works and the mockery it makes of democracy. There are so many better ways to deal with the development of legislation, which would result in better legislation that would better reflect the concerns of a broader section of the Canadian public.

The bill came to parliament, then went to committee. At committee, we went through the process of calling in countless expert witnesses on the issues. They presented their concerns, their analyses and how the bill could be made better. Then we went into the clause by clause process. Some 70 amendments were proposed based on what a lot of us heard from those witnesses.

*Government Orders*

When we presented those suggested amendments and concerns in committee, the entire government side of the committee sat like a bunch of posts and refused to debate or engage in any discussion about the bill and the rationale for the amendments. Instead, the bureaucrats from the department, who wrote the bill and understood what was in it, sat at the end of the table and answered those questions. That was a very frustrating process.

This could be done in other ways that would include all parties of the House in a committee setting, with experts from the various departments, such as justice, technical, et cetera. Together we could sit down, draft a bill and enter into some discussion as to why it should be done this way or that way and how the bill could be made as good as it possibly could. That just does not happen.

It seemed as though the members of the government side of the committee table were so arrogant that felt they did not need to enter into any discussion because, in the interests of time and expediency, they would simply use their majority in committee and in the House to pass the bill whether we liked it or not. Perhaps they did not understand the bill and the implications of the sections for which we suggested some amendments and therefore passed off the responsibility to respond to those things to the departmental experts at the end of the table.

Whatever the case, it truly was a frustrating process. I find the same frustration over and over again whenever we get into a bill that falls within my area as critic of natural resources. It seems to be a practice that repeats itself over and over again.

● (1555)

I have been here for over eight years. There certainly has not been any demonstrated desire to give elected members of parliament any degree of authority or any real input in the development of legislation which we will all have to live by for many years to come.

Having vented my frustrations with all of those things, I will proceed to discuss the bill.

There is a lot of merit in the bill. It deals with an area that we in Canada have needed to address for a long time. As the member opposite suggested, this is a process that has been going on for 25 years in Canada without any resolution. Bill C-27 takes us a little way toward some resolution of the problem of nuclear waste disposal.

For the most part the bill is a reflection of the recommendations of the Seaborn panel which did an excellent job in its study and its recommendations on how we should handle this matter. It did not comply in a number of ways that would have had merit and would have made the bill better. The Seaborn panel suggested strongly to have some kind of outside independent oversight over the waste management organization. The government for whatever reason chose not to do it that way.

Bill C-27 reflects some of the recommendations made by the disposal concept environmental assessment panel and presented to the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of the Environment in February 1998.

Some might imagine that an issue as important as the management and disposal of nuclear fuel waste would have fast tracked its way

through the House of Commons. However, we saw those recommendations back in 1998 and here we are in 2001, almost 2002, and only now are we at third reading stage of this important bill. Despite the time lag, the bill has a lot of merit.

Canada's nuclear industry has stood alone for many years because of the fact that the industry does not have a producer pay approach to the cleanup of waste products. Other industries, particularly other industries within natural resources, have had to concern themselves with the cleanup of potentially dangerous or damaging materials and have similar funds built into a condition of their licensing. It is common within the industry.

Those costs are so well ingrained within most industries that the fact that the nuclear industry has never had that requirement probably has raised concerns in many parts of Canada for many years. The legislation will finally put the nuclear industry on a par with other resource industries in its requirement to be financially and morally responsible for the disposal of hazardous waste.

I believe that by using this piece of legislation the government intends to create an accountable management system for the long term management and disposal of nuclear fuel waste. I would quantify that to restrict it to high level nuclear fuel waste. I can only hope that the road the government chooses to take is not just paved with good intentions. I hope that the bill will quickly lead us to some concrete action.

I am pleased to see that the major players in the industry, namely, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, or AECL as it is known, Ontario Power Generation, Hydro-Québec and New Brunswick Power Corporation are all involved in the process. The bill will ensure that this collective group will be required to establish a waste management organization that will implement the long term management of nuclear fuel waste.

● (1600)

One of the other concerns, which we heard a lot of talk of in committee and from the previous speaker, is the need for transparency. There is at least the transparency of the requirement to table the studies and the annual reports of the waste management organization, and I was glad to see that. However any time it is suggested in the bill that there is a responsibility either to report to, or for the governor in council to make a decision on, it makes me a little nervous. I think it makes a lot of Canadians nervous.

It seems that only by allowing members of cabinet to make final decisions with no role for parliament in those decisions, especially on something as important as nuclear fuel waste, it opens a decision to Liberal insider trading. Certainly we saw a lot of that yesterday in the auditor general's report. It is a reasonably common phenomenon. Who knows what friends the governor in council might have in the business of nuclear fuel waste disposal. It could of course present some very lucrative contracts to individuals who are running the right business at the right time and of course have made the right levels of contributions to the Liberal Party of Canada. That is a legitimate concern, a concern backed up as I said by some of the comments of the auditor general yesterday.

*Government Orders*

Furthermore, the major owners and producers of nuclear fuel waste have to establish a trust fund and make set annual payments into that trust fund to finance the long term management of the waste.

Finally, the new waste management organization has the responsibility to determine fiscally responsible, realistic options for the long term management of nuclear fuel waste.

Once these options are determined, they will then be presented to the governor in council through the minister, who will then make a choice as to the best approach. That decision having been made, the waste management organization may, and I emphasize the word may, then move forward to waste disposal.

One of the most outstanding weaknesses of the bill is that once the report is done, the trust fund is set up, the study is done and the recommendations are made to the minister, there is really no assurance that will require the waste management organization to proceed with implementation of any of the chosen options. We could sit on this issue for another 10 years before anything concrete was done.

While the waste management organization may identify a technically feasible process for disposing of nuclear fuel waste, it may find, as the Seaborn panel did and as the department has for a number of years, that while technically the idea is acceptable, it simply cannot find a location, a community or a province that will allow such a facility in its backyard. It is a well known fact that it is hard enough in this day and age to find something as simple as a nuisance ground, a non-toxic waste disposal site if you will, for the huge amounts of urban garbage that we produce. It is very difficult to find a site that is acceptable for those kinds of facilities. It is no small feat to find a community anywhere that will jump at the opportunity to accept the kind of facility that we are proposing for the disposal of nuclear fuel waste.

One of the key recommendations of the Seaborn report that appeared in the legislation is the need for an independent advisory board. I referred to that suggestion earlier. In the Seaborn report the advisory council would be given the responsibility of ensuring openness and transparency of nuclear fuel waste management, particularly in areas related to public and aboriginal participation, environmental assessment, monitoring, mediation and dispute settlements. Furthermore, the Seaborn panel recommended that the agency should be heavily involved in all stages of the agency's work and options for long term management.

I am pleased to see that the government has incorporated the general idea of an advisory council in the legislation. However it concerns me and others on the committee and others in the public that the original spirit of the council seems to have been lost in the translation into this legislation.

• (1605)

As far as I can see there is little in the bill that structures the advisory council to be the watchdog of the agency. In fact it seems to me that the council is to be given a much smaller role than what the Seaborn panel recommended.

The government's record on openness and transparency when it comes to governor in council appointments is not good. There

simply is not another word for it. The Seaborn panel made solid recommendations to enable the agency to be an open, honest, transparent and accountable organization, yet the government seems unwilling to open up its process to that kind of scrutiny or that kind of input. I must confess that it makes me wonder exactly how the government intends to set this whole process up if it is unwilling to ensure transparency and accountability from the very beginning.

Obviously a key area of the bill is the process by which a method of disposal of nuclear fuel waste will be chosen. As described by the bill, within three years of the coming into force of the act, the waste management organization shall submit to the minister a study setting out its proposed approaches for the management of nuclear fuel waste along with the comments of the advisory council on those approaches, as well as the organization's recommendations as to which of its proposed approaches should be adopted.

Realistically, and this is reflected in the legislation, there are only three real choices for the disposal of nuclear fuel waste. The idea that the waste management organization has a broad range of options to study, examine and recommend really is not realistic. There are three choices, those being deep geological disposal in the Canadian Shield, storage in a nuclear reactor site, or centralized storage either above or below ground. The only feasible one is the first one, the deep geological disposal in the Canadian Shield, with some variations as to how that is done and whether it is absolutely permanent or is a type of storage system that will allow reclaiming of that buried fuel waste if technology should come along in the future that would allow for a better method of disposal.

Certainly we already have above ground storage at the nuclear reactor sites. We have had in the past to some degree some centralized storage at some of those sites as well. The very fact is that the industry and Canadians and a number of the panels that made recommendations do not deem what is presently taking place as being acceptable in the long term. At least in my opinion that narrows the choices down to the one that was looked at and the one which the Seaborn panel suggested was technically feasible. The problem was there was no public support to allow that proposal to go ahead.

According to the Seaborn panel, whichever method the waste management agency chose, the choice had to meet several key safety and acceptability criteria. To be considered, the concept must have broad public support and, as I suggested, that is not the case.

It has to be safe from both a technical and a social perspective. That criteria seems to be at least within reach. It has to have been developed within a sound ethical and social assessment framework. There has been a lot of good work done but I am not sure that particular criteria has been met at this point.

It has to have the support of aboriginal people. We heard at committee that this support is certainly not there at this time. Some very stringent conditions were placed on that support being forthcoming.

It has to be selected after comparison with the risks, costs and benefits of the other options. As I said, the other options are very limited.

*Government Orders*

It has to be advanced by a stable and trustworthy proponent and overseen by a trustworthy regulator. I suggest it has yet to be determined if the waste management organization could be deemed to be a trustworthy proponent. I certainly hope it would.

• (1610)

There are those on this side of the House, at least, and I think a fair number of people across the country who would question whether the government is in fact a trustworthy regulator of this system.

It seems to me that in some ways it is the first of those conditions that will be the most difficult to meet. Having broad public support on an issue such as this where there is such a strong sense of “not in my backyard” will be a truly tough obstacle for this agency to overcome. Of course there are also a number of other conditions which, as I said, will be some challenge to meet.

The choice, according to the Seaborn panel, must: demonstrate robustness in meeting appropriate regulatory requirements; be based on thorough and participatory scenario analyses; use realistic data, modelling and natural analogues; incorporate sound science and good practices; and demonstrate flexibility.

Of course we will not know until the report comes to the minister and then becomes public whether in fact the chosen one will meet those criteria.

I certainly hope that any organization working with nuclear fuel would already have the stringent safety regulations and good practices, but even that is in some question considering the conditions under which Ontario Hydro had to shut down a number of its nuclear reactors. That process was forced upon it not by Canada's own industry regulators but by a U.S. industry inspector.

There certainly are a number of concerns about the stringent safety regulations and the compliance with those regulations and good practices and they will remain.

One of the key issues this agency will have to contend with is the question of how safe is safe enough, taking into consideration different technical and social perspectives. Nuclear scientists are likely to have views on the issue that are very different from those on the environmentalist side of the equation, yet somehow, if the plan is to go forward, both groups must be made to feel comfortable with and accepting of this plan.

As far as I can tell the only really viable course of action for the long term disposal and management of nuclear fuel waste is that which has been proposed by AECL, that is, the deep geological disposal in the Canadian Shield. However, as I mentioned, in its study the Seaborn panel concluded that it seems to meet the requirement from a technical perspective and states that:

—safety of the AECL concept has been on balance adequately demonstrated from a conceptual stage of development, but from a social perspective, it has not.

Furthermore, the study concluded that:

—the AECL concept for deep geological disposal has not been demonstrated to have broad public support. The concept in its current form does not have the required level of acceptability to be adopted as Canada's approach for managing nuclear fuel waste.

I know only too well how the government likes to operate when there are contentious matters that do not have public support. A

perfect example is the MOX fuel that was flown into Chalk River without any sort of public support after numerous towns, cities, native communities and the Ontario provincial government raised their opposition to the MOX plutonium test plan. Without any public notice, and showing complete disregard for public concerns, the government went ahead and flew in the MOX for the test.

I would like to urge the government to take a more responsible, measured and, frankly, more reasonable approach to nuclear fuel waste management. There is simply too much at stake to just put a stranglehold on opponents of the proposal.

As I said at the beginning of my comments, I am pleased that the legislation has finally come to the House and that the government seems to have taken to heart most of the recommendations of the Seaborn report.

The committee discussions on the bill were certainly interesting and could have been even more interesting if we had had a little more participation from the government side. Not surprisingly, the government did not allow any opposition amendments to the bill, which could have been to the benefit of the waste management agency as well as all Canadians.

While I do have hopes that the good intentions of the bill will actually turn into solid, responsible legislation I am not convinced that the government intends to follow through with total accountability and openness. The bill certainly has merit, and while I am pleased to see that the government has finally taken action on this issue, I believe more should have been done with the bill. Consequently, with some reservations, we will be supporting the passage of Bill C-27.

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to address Bill C-27, an act respecting the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste.

A few days ago, I spoke on Bill C-10, an act respecting the national marine conservation areas of Canada. My Bloc Québécois colleagues also addressed Bill C-36, the anti-terrorism act, and Bill C-42, the public safety act.

I would like to explain from the outset what issues I will discuss over the next 40 minutes. First, I must point out that this government constantly displayed a confrontational attitude, despite the fact that Bloc Québécois members were committed to co-operating regarding this bill, whether at second reading, during the review in committee, or at report stage.

The Bloc Québécois, which acted in good faith at all stages of the parliamentary process, was always told by Liberal members opposite no, no, no.



*Government Orders*

This afternoon, I will again directly address my constituents and all Quebecers and Canadians. We feel that Bill C-27 is incomplete. It lacks transparency and it does not take into account public opinion.

Under the circumstances, we could have said no right from the beginning and made things complicated for the government, but no, we felt that we had to give our support at second reading in order to improve the bill in committee.

However, during the review in committee, when we heard witnesses and when the time came to amend the bill, Liberal members sitting on the committee said no, no, no, without really knowing what the issue was all about.

We are talking about the management of the country's nuclear fuel waste. I was stunned to hear the Liberal member for Frontenac—Mégantic say, as he was leaving a meeting, that plutonium and uranium were no more dangerous than asbestos. The chair of the standing committee on natural resources and member for Nickel Belt also made a similar comment.

This is a serious matter. We heard many witnesses at the standing committee on natural resources. My colleague, the hon. member for Sherbrooke and Bloc Québécois critic in this area, has done an excellent job, with some contribution from myself, in his desire to improve this bill.

It is clear, however, that the Liberal members of the committee did not have any idea what we or the witnesses were talking about. At that time, and still today, we were addressing nuclear waste, precisely, 24,000 tonnes of uranium and plutonium which will remain radioactive for some 25,000 years. This has nothing in common with asbestos.

● (1620)

When I hear comments like that, I feel there is no point in talking to the Liberal MPs. They heard all the same things we did, but understood nothing. I think they were there with their ears and eyes firmly closed. The only thing they could say was no, no. That was all we got out of them.

I will therefore continue to talk to our audience instead. Despite what the Liberal committee members have said, the taxpayers of Canada and Quebec are very much attuned to what is going on as far as waste in general is concerned, and nuclear waste in particular. I feel their judgment is far superior to that of the Liberals.

What is Bill C-27 all about? The whole thing dates back to 1989, when the Minister of the Environment of the day mandated the nuclear fuel waste and disposal environmental assessment commission, known as the Seaborn panel, from the name of its chair, to come up with a concept for the permanent storage of this country's nuclear waste.

I would like to digress for a moment. It would be mistaken to mix things and say that the Bloc Québécois is opposed to Bill C-27. The Bloc supports strict management of nuclear waste. This is a matter of huge importance, and the government has not bothered in recent years to resolve it. The situation has continued, and today we realize that problem must be solved, but not at any cost.

The main recommendations of the Seaborn panel were that an agency be established that would hold public hearings and propose a type of management for this country's nuclear waste. It recommended as well that the cost of this country's waste management be assumed by the nuclear energy industry.

What is there in Bill C-27? Does it follow the letter of the recommendations of the Seaborn report? We must remember that the Minister of Natural Resources was drawing on the recommendations of the Seaborn report when he said he was going to draft the bill. This, however, is not what the chair of the standing committee on natural resources said to me. He said that the Seaborn report is outdated. I think the Seaborn report is very important. The Seaborn panel was independent. It lasted 10 years, cost a small fortune, but it has given us guidelines for the successful management of nuclear waste.

The management is to be independent of the nuclear energy industry. As the committee studied the matter, the Bloc Québécois proposed a number of amendments to bring Bill C-27 closer to the conclusions of the Seaborn panel. Contrary to what the Minister of Natural Resources said in his speech at second reading, his bill bears no relation to the main recommendations of the panel.

Indeed, the Seaborn panel recommended that energy companies be excluded from the management committee that would propose a form of nuclear waste management.

Let us look just at recommendation 6.1.2, which advocates the creation of a nuclear fuel waste management agency. It reads as follows:

For various reasons, there is in many quarters an apprehension about nuclear power that bedevils the activities and proposals of the nuclear industry. If there is to be any confidence in a system for the long-term management of nuclear fuel waste and—

● (1625)

I am still quoting the Seaborn panel:

—a fresh start must be made in the form of a new agency. The agency must be at arm's length from the producers and current owners of the waste. Its overall commitment must be to safety.

Bill C-27 specifies that energy companies will have to establish a management committee to propose to the minister a long term nuclear fuel waste management concept.

Such a situation is tantamount to opening the henhouse door wide open to let the fox in. As far as the Bloc Québécois is concerned, recommendation 6.1.2 should be fully implemented. Unfortunately, the Liberal government rejected it out of hand. Incidentally, a number of witnesses who appeared before the standing committee on natural resources also asked that Bill C-27 be amended to reflect that recommendation.

I will quote a few. Irene Kock, a research consultant with the Sierra Club of Canada, testified before the committee on November 8, 2001. She said, and I quote:

The Seaborn panel recommended that an independent agency be formed at arm's length from AECL and the nuclear utilities in order to manage the programs related to long-term nuclear fuel waste management, including detailed comparison of waste management options. The waste management organization must be at arm's length from the nuclear industry. This is a very key part of the recommendations from the Seaborn panel.

*Government Orders*

It is not just the Bloc Québécois who says it. All the witnesses said the same thing to the committee. Irene Kock added "It was a very well thought out conclusion and must be incorporated in this legislation".

I will quote from another testimony, namely that of Brennain Lloyd, a co-ordinator for Northwatch, who also testified on November 8, 2001:

The context is that there have been a number of experiences on the part of the public with Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, and with the nuclear industries more generally, specific to this issue of nuclear waste management and related siting processes. They've been very negative experiences for the greatest part, and that needs to be kept in mind.

She was warning the government about certain past experiences. Ms. Lloyd went on to say that:

The resulting mistrust and apprehension on the part of the public must be kept in constant consideration...Third, the waste management organization lacks independence. Given the track record of a number of the agencies that are proposed to be involved, that's particularly problematic. The panel was clear that the waste management organization must be independent and it must be perceived to be independent.

It said an independent agency, not an industry agency. This would be an industry agency. This in fact is what Bill C-27 proposes: a management committee composed of members of industry. This can only be problematic in terms of delivery, the ability to look more broadly at the issues, and the ability to engender public trust and engagement.

The Bloc Québécois therefore proposed that paragraph 6(2) be amended as follows:

No nuclear energy corporation may be a member or shareholder of the waste management organization.

But what did the Liberal members say? No, no, no.

• (1630)

We have not lost our sense of humour or our desire to see the government make this bill into something that would be what the Seaborn panel and the general public wanted. We proposed other amendments.

I could talk all day about the amendments which the Bloc Québécois proposed in committee. There were, and the member for Sherbrooke is nodding, between 40 and 45. The New Democratic Party and the Progressive Conservative/Democratic Representative Coalition also moved amendments.

But each time, the committee, which was chaired by a Liberal member and contained a Liberal majority, said no, no, no. At every stage of the process, they said they were right.

Earlier, the Canadian Alliance member spoke about the fact that the public had to be consulted, but it is plainly written in the bill that the governor in council "may". In other words, it is not required. When you are told "you may do something" you always have a choice. The majority prevails. If one says "I have everything I need" or "I do not have what I need", I am going to go ahead. In this case, what it says is that the public may be consulted.

This reminds me of the very moving times we went through in the summer of 2000, when this government wanted to import MOX fuel

from Russia and the U.S. I stood up to this, all five feet, five inches of me.

The people of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, hon. members will recall, were on side with me on this. A total of 99.9% of my constituents said they were opposed to the importing of MOX. Some 120 municipalities throughout Quebec and a number of regional county municipalities did the same. The Quebec government and the aboriginal peoples voiced their opposition.

Atomic Energy of Canada officials came to the region, telling us that this was just a little rod that went into a big cylinder. They made it out to be such a wonderful and attractive thing that I would have been happy to have it as a decoration in my living room.

Away we went to consult people. This is not an expensive proposition, and it provides us with an opportunity to speak to people concerned by a problem. We talked to the experts. We asked their opinions. We also consulted the Quebec department of health. We even went to a university, along with our regional environmental committee, and held an information session. We invited three experts, who told us that the concept of importing MOX and the method planned for its transportation were not safe.

According to U.S. studies, this concept was not acceptable because it was not 100% sure. Afterward, people were entitled to make comments via the Atomic Energy of Canada website, and this took some 28 days.

So 99.9% of those in our region were opposed. Nevertheless, they went ahead and did it. One fine evening, I am not sure exactly when, the MOX shipment set out. Everyone was on the alert. We have the Bagotville military base in our area. They said they were going to bring the shipment in via CFB Bagotville or an Ontario military base. Let us remember that the MOX was headed for the Chalk River nuclear facility in Ontario.

One night—and I know because I took a stroll near the military base in Bagotville—there was quite a flurry of activity. We did not know when the big day would be, but people from national defence, from public safety and from the health sector were there. There was this flurry of activity. And yet, officials from Atomic Energy of Canada told us, when they came to see us, that there was no danger.

• (1635)

What was all the commotion about if there was no danger and if it was not serious, as they said at the time? Everyone was on edge.

They went ahead and they took it to Chalk River. This proves the government's attitude, that they went ahead despite what everyone thought. In my riding, it was a very strong majority. I held my own consultations. Representatives of Atomic Energy of Canada were in one room and I was in another, that the hotel where the consultation was taking place graciously let me use.

Before going into the room with the Atomic Energy of Canada representatives, people came to see me and sign a petition. They would then come back from the consultation and say to me, "Ms. Bujold, if I could, I would sign the petition twice. I am not sure about what they are saying".

*Government Orders*

So we can see just how important the issue of nuclear waste is. We must consult with people. But this is not reflected in this bill.

We must manage our nuclear waste, because it our waste. We have to store it in a way such that it remains inactive for many years to come. Most of the waste that is currently being stored is at nuclear reactors located in Ontario. There are 24,000 tonnes of nuclear waste being stored there. That is a lot of nuclear waste.

We cannot count on the goodwill of a management committee that says it is the representative of these companies that are going to manage the storage.

We, elected members who represent people, must be kept informed of what is happening. We need to challenge them and say "Show us what you are going to say and do. We will accept it or reject it on behalf of our constituents, because we have been democratically elected."

In committee we proposed a clause to the government which stated that members would have to be consulted in the House of Commons.

Madam Speaker, you are a member like me. When we run for election we say to our constituents "I am going to represent you on all issues. I am able to represent you. If I cannot represent you, I will consult with you and you will give me your opinion".

People know that whether we are talking about domestic, nuclear or other kinds of waste, we must not become the world's dump. Nobody wants to have any kind of wastes in their backyard. We always say "Not in my backyard".

So to reassure the public, we had asked the government that the plan be submitted here, in the House of Commons. What did the Liberals say? They said no, no and no. They refuse to be accountable to the people who elected them on a most important issue.

I do not think this is being very transparent. Since we have been sitting in this House, we have noticed that when introducing bills the government always says that it will listen to us, that it will refer the bill to committee for further study, that it will hear witnesses and be open to amendments.

That did not happen for Bill C-27. Nor did it happen for Bill C-36, Bill C-44 or Bill C-42. Who does this government take people for, particularly those people who represent all those who did not vote for the Liberals and that the Liberals no longer represent? I am talking about opposition parties.

I am thinking of people who take the trouble to appear before the committee. I recall that on the last day, before the committee began to examine the bill clause by clause, the mayors of Ontario municipalities came before it. They were involved with this issue because there are nuclear plants in their municipalities. They came to say to the committee "We have to be informed and be part of the development of management. We are involved on the front line because we have to protect our people".

A member from the Progressive Conservative Democratic Representative Coalition proposed an amendment in this regard, and the members of the Liberal Party once again said no, no, no.

● (1640)

It was also pointed out that consideration should be given to having people representing the native communities on the committee. Some witnesses said that it was important that these communities be consulted. There are not just the experts, there are ordinary citizens as well, who have some expertise in this regard. The answer was no, no, no.

I think we should call them the no, no, no gang. This is what comes out as soon as opposition members introduce something intelligent. Initially they suggest that a bill be drafted. Officials then draft it. Then the minister or members representing the Liberal majority in committee must defend it. Most of the time, I think they do not even know what the subject is and this is unfortunate because it is extremely important.

It was not only yesterday that I started being concerned about nuclear waste and all sorts of waste that we import from the United States and elsewhere. The Bloc Quebecois even asked, through an amendment it put forward, to have the bill provide that we manage our own waste and contain a clause banning the importing of waste from elsewhere. This amendment too was rejected. The Liberal members said no, no, no and yet we know how important this is.

The Seaborn panel was set up by people who wanted to do something about an issue that had been dragging on for years. It took time to write the report. The panel made excellent recommendations. The Minister of Natural Resources, whom I really like, seemed to show goodwill. He had said from the beginning, and I believed him, "I rely on the reports of the Seaborn panel". But over time he made an about-face.

Now I cannot make sense of the bill. There are many Quebecers and Canadians who will also be lost. Why? Because when it is passed, they will no longer be consulted. It will be the governor in council who will consult, because he "may" do so.

The first recommendation of the Seaborn panel was that the public should be consulted on any nuclear waste management principle. This is what should have been done. That was the panel's first recommendation. This is the one recommendation that should have served as a basis for all the other ones. The government ignored the one recommendation that should have been taken into account with this bill.

Had it not been disregarded, I would have told myself "At least the government is taking this issue seriously. It is not doing this to please people who are close to the powers that be. No, it is really presenting a bill that will reassure Canadians and Quebecers". I would have welcomed this initiative.

*Government Orders*

I sat on the Standing Committee on the Environment for two years. When good things were happening, I would always say to the minister and the Liberal members “Yes, we will co-operate, because when it comes to the environment we have to co-operate to advance government initiatives”. That was always my attitude during these two years, and things worked well. When I did not agree with something, I said so.

This bill is now at third reading. Yesterday we voted on the last amendments at report stage. The Bloc Québécois presented four amendments. They were not even examined. They were rejected out of hand. It was time to do something about this issue, but the government should act in the respect of people, of the public.

● (1645)

That is not what the government is doing. This bill will be studied by the other place, and I hope that they will be able to do what the Liberal government has not done.

Such a bill, such an issue, must not be dealt with casually, as we have seen. I was not present for all of the hearings, but my colleague, the hon. member for Sherbrooke, was. He told me “It makes no sense. There are so many things going on; the witnesses that are appearing are only talking about the Seaborn report. They thought that the government wanted to implement the recommendations”.

Do we bring in witnesses in as a formality, or are we there to listen to them? Most of them are experts. Sometimes, regular citizens can become experts. They came in good faith to warn this government about the problems with this bill. They came and said “We are warning you; listen to us, introduce amendments. It needs to be done properly”.

But the Liberals did what they did to the opposition: they turned a deaf ear. They turned deaf and blind. As far as they were concerned, it was no, no, no. Their answers were dictated by the minister's instructions and the overall bill.

I am very disappointed for the people of the riding of Jonquière, which I represent, and I am also very disappointed for future generations. I have grandchildren, two boys. My daughter has given me two beautiful grandsons aged 5 and 3. Tomorrow, I do not want to tell my grandsons “You know, grandma could have done something. She tried, but nobody on the other side listened to her”.

I am very disappointed because they are the ones who will have to live with the results of our lack of action on December 5, 2001. We will have failed to convince the government to change Bill C-27 into the bill that we wanted at the outset.

This is a sad situation. The holiday season is upon us, and in 20 days it will be Christmas. This is a time of celebration, a time for enjoyment, for spending good times together, but I will be using that opportunity to tell my constituents “We did everything we could to get the government to listen to us, but to no avail. It is doing as it pleases, and it is not even interested in consulting you”.

I think that this government sees itself as the one possessing the truth. Of all those listening to us today, there is not one who possesses the whole truth. When one has an idea in mind, one must take into consideration the opinion of those who want to caution us, who tell us “Take care, there, don't go in that direction. I have proof

of my stand, just listen to me and I will tell you why”. We need to listen to others if we are members of parliament. Otherwise, we would be better off elsewhere.

I believe that all members of this House, be they Liberals or opposition members, should have that ability to listen to others, yet in the standing committee on natural resources, I could see that the government MPs lacked that ability.

This has been a great disappointment to me, because today we are forced to acknowledge that we could have done something worthwhile, something to advance a cause that involves everyone. Last week, my colleague from Sherbrooke told me that there were people in one region discussing bringing in waste from the United States to bury in their area. One might also bring up a matter that we settled last year.

● (1650)

Do you remember this, Madam Speaker? At the time, you were not the acting Speaker. They wanted to bury waste from the Toronto area in northern Ontario, near the Témiscamingue area in Quebec.

With the help of the member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik, we set up emergency hearings. The Minister of the Environment arranged for an environmental assessment to be done. People came to tell us that there were many irritants and they were right, so the government said that this would not be done and it was not.

All the witnesses who appeared before the committee at various times told us the same thing. The city of Toronto was forced to back down.

The government could have done the same thing with Bill C-27. It could have said “Yes, there are irritants”. We never said that this bill was all bad. We said that there were things that were not what we were looking for and that the bill needed to be improved.

We are calling for consultation, management and a report to be tabled in the House. The other day, we suggested the services of the Auditor General of Canada. Yesterday she told us about what was going on with employment insurance and about the \$75 that the government handed out before last year's election to individuals below a certain income. She told us about that. The auditor general is credible.

The government members refused. They said that they want an independent auditor appointed by the governor in council.

Our request for clarity demanded an answer, but we can see beyond any doubt, and it is a shame to have to say this, and I am sad to do so, that there is no clarity. Clarity is not a predominant characteristic of the Liberal government in this issue. I am sorry to see this because I am certain that there are members across the way who would have liked more clarity too, when they realize how little there is, and that they too hear from their constituents on the whole topic of waste. They are going to start looking at the bill and I hope that they will ask themselves what questions their constituents will have for them when they see this.

We must not disappoint the people who elect us. We must ensure that issues as important as nuclear waste management are not relegated to the back burner, as a third, fourth, or fifth priority.

*Government Orders*

This is a top priority. We have done much harm to our planet in the past. Today it suffers from what we humans have inflicted upon it. With this bill, we had an opportunity to lessen the burden that we have placed on the planet.

However, we did not. The government turned a deaf ear and did not innovate. We hear the word innovate a lot. Today we need to innovate more and more. Since the events of September 11, the world has changed, I believe.

Every weekend I meet a great number of constituents who always tell me, "You know, Jocelyne, we have changed since September 11. Our values are different. We see things more clearly now and we want to change the little day to day things that we overlooked".

This bill was an opportunity to change the little day to day things and allow us to finally keep an open mind and consider the winds of change on this very complex and difficult issue.

Today the Bloc Quebecois can say that it is against this bill and that it will continue to oppose it. I hope that my speech will spark something in the members opposite. That is my wish.

• (1655)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Order, please. 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 St. John's West, Infrastructure; the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest, Human Resources Development; the hon. member for Lanark—Carleton, Terrorism.

[*English*]

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—St. Clair, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to say that I enjoy rising to speak to the bill but that would be dishonest. All the opposition parties were quite offended by the process we were put through at committee stage with regard to the conduct around processing the bill. Although I am new to the House, I found this very difficult.

After talking to other members of other parties who sat on the committee, the so-called democratic process was a real sham for all of them.

As we have already heard from both the Alliance and the Bloc members, over 75 amendments were brought forward, on a bill that is not very large, and not one, in whole or in part, was accepted.

Speaking on behalf of all opposition parties, there were some very appropriate amendments that would have significantly strengthened the bill and made it more palatable not only to the opposition parties but, more important, to citizens of the country. However, not only was every amendment and any part of the amendment rejected, it was rare to get any response from government members as to why the amendment was not appropriate.

We need to put the conduct of the government in the context of what has happened with nuclear waste. It is not like it is a new field. It is not like we have not been studying this for quite some time as a society. It is not like we are going to come up with a solution tomorrow or anytime in the near future to properly deal with this waste. There is no sense of urgency, real or perceived, that is applicable in these circumstances.

This is one of those bills and one of those issues that needed full consideration through the democratic process but it did not even come close to that.

I will try to set some of that background. As we all know, we began having a problem with how to deal with nuclear waste from the very inception of the development of nuclear weapons. However, there was a real hiatus during that period of time until we began developing nuclear sites for power purposes.

By the early 1970s, in this country and around the world, we knew we had a major problem with this power source in the form of not only radiation but of radioactive fuel waste. Every other country that has nuclear power is in the same situation. No one has been able to come up with, in any fashion, an adequate means of dealing with nuclear waste. What it has led to, in a number of cases, is that countries have begun phasing out or stopping their use of nuclear power. However, they still have no solution for disposing the waste or, for that matter, what to do with the plants as they are decommissioned.

• (1700)

Some interesting research is going on now. The scientific theory is that we may be able to run the fuel back through the process again and significantly reduce its volume or to perhaps eliminate it completely. However, we are literally years if not decades away from perfecting that if in fact we ever do.

The bottom line is that no one on this planet knows how to deal with nuclear waste. We only know how to store it.

The Atomic Energy Commission came up with a proposal called deep geological disposal, or, what I call it, dumping in the Canadian Shield. When the proposal surfaced it received such a negative reaction that a further commission was appointed by the federal government. It was called the Seaborn commission and it did its work over about a two to two and a half year period. If nothing else came out of that, it was that the proposal for deep geological disposal of waste was something that no one in Canada wanted: no community, no matter how small or large, would accept it.

The Seaborn commission came to the conclusion that there was no trust in the country for AECL with regard to a methodology for disposal. The commission was very clear in its recommendations: that whatever steps we took as a country we had to build consultation into the methodology so we would build that trust in whatever community or communities would eventually end up with the waste.

*Government Orders*

Then came the bill and the process we went through. The bill and the conduct of the committee were supposed to build trust. Let me assure members it did not do that and it will not do that. The bill has some major conflicts of interest built right into it. The industries that create the waste will be the ones investigating and making recommendations to the governor in council on to how dispose of the waste. The Seaborn commission specifically recommended against that type of structural institutional setup. It recommended an independent body and we got just the opposite.

The Seaborn commission recommended extensive consultation processes be built in. We did not get that in the bill either. It recommended that whatever was necessary from a time standpoint be allowed both for the recommendations and the process. We have some very tight time limits that were built in here.

The bill also has some very limited parameters for the waste management organization that would be set up, the one that would be entirely controlled by the industry, as to the methods it would address. The way the bill is worded it basically limits the methods to three types: the one we have already heard about, the deep geological disposal methodology; leaving it the way it is now, which is stored at the sites owned by the plants; or bringing it all together in what is being called a temporary or interim storage site.

• (1705)

Basically the bill does not leave open the possibility of a breakthrough in technology in terms of dealing with this. The bill is all about burying the problem, and I mean that both figuratively and literally. The government just wants to get rid of it by shoving it through. It is quite clear that the committee's reaction to the witnesses we heard confirmed the statement I just made.

I would like to talk a bit more about some of the other witnesses but I will concentrate on what we heard from the mayors of three communities in Ontario. They appeared at the last minute because all the witnesses were sort of being rushed through so the committee could get to the clause by clause debate. They all showed up but they were given relatively short periods of time to address the bill. They thoroughly impressed members from all parties. Their position was relatively straightforward and simple, but it was also very eloquent and very telling.

What did they tell us? They told us that they had lived with the problem for decades, that they understood what it meant for them but that it did not make their lives simple as municipal councillors. They said that they strongly believed they had the right to be involved in the decision making process as to how the wastes would be disposed of.

They were given short shrift by the committee. Although several amendments were brought forward that specifically dealt with their concerns and what they would like to see done with the bill, the amendments were simply rejected by members of the government with no discussion and no comment about why we should not give them some representation or why we should not augment the consultation process so they would have some input. There was total silence. A vote was taken and the proposed amendments were rejected.

Those three mayors had every right to be angry for the cavalier fashion in which they were treated and in the total rejection of the proposals they had put forward in such a simple but eloquent manner.

The consultation process is meaningless. There is no funding for it. In fact, if we look very closely at the bill, the bill proposes to cut out all the NGOs across the country. These are people who have followed this issue for over a decade now and who participated in the Seaborn commission study and research. The only people with whom the government will allow any consultation, and that is fairly meaningless, will be the people in the communities it picked as proposed sites. A number of the NGOs across the country who have real expertise in this area will not even get any notice and certainly will be extremely limited in their ability to be involved in the process.

The other issue we raised, because of the September 11 incidents in New York City and in Washington, D.C., involved security. The amendments put forward would have heightened the level of security and the analysis of security brought forth by the waste management organization, but they were also defeated. If there were some urgency, that was definitely one area but it was rejected.

Some of the amendments put forward would have prohibited the importing of waste so that Canada would not become a dumping ground for the rest of the world, and it is at some risk, but those proposed amendments were rejected without discussion. The vote was taken and the proposed amendments were rejected. That was the process.

• (1710)

I will finish by saying that at second reading our party indicated its willingness to vote in principle to pass this over on the basis that there would be serious consideration given to the recommendations that were in the Seaborn report and to try to implement the amendments that came from the opposition parties. We did not get any of them, nor did any of the other opposition parties.

As a result of that, perhaps the last chance we had as a government to convince the Canadian populace that we needed to deal with this issue was lost, and it will be lost assuming the majority on the Liberal side pushes this through.

What will be the effect? Let me do a little prophesying, because I have heard this already from some of the groups and I think it is going to just flow out automatically. We will have communities across the country, many of them in the Shield, passing resolutions, whether they are first nations or local municipal councils in Ontario and Quebec in particular. They will start passing resolutions to prohibit any consideration of this waste being moved into their communities. We will have ongoing work done by those groups interested in this issue which will give no credibility to the government at all and will simply reject it out of hand. That will be the result.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first I would like to congratulate the member for Windsor—St. Clair for his speech, of course, but also and especially for his active participation in committees, particularly in the standing committee on natural resources. His participation is highly appreciated.

He talked about the many relevant and intelligent amendments brought forward by the New Democratic Party, by the Progressive Conservative/Democratic Representative Caucus Coalition and, needless to say, by the Bloc Québécois. We often supported and helped each other in that regard, but of course the party opposite would not listen.

I would like the member to share with us his first impression of the government's perception regarding the Seaborn panel report. After all, it is the basis of this bill. The government says that it used that report as a basis to introduce this bill. However, we say that it goes against the main recommendations of the Seaborn panel report.

I would like to give the member for Windsor—St. Clair the opportunity to enlighten us, to enlighten the House and particularly to enlighten the members opposite on this issue.

• (1715)

**Mr. Joe Comartin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Bloc Québécois for his question. I also want to say that the Bloc Québécois proposed a lot of amendments of which I was very proud.

[*English*]

There were a number of those amendments I would have liked to have made myself, in particular those around democratic principles, around review that could be done by a parliamentary committee, again all of which were rejected.

To address specifically the question about the Seaborn commission, this is part of the sham that is being created by the bill. As I was preparing for my speech I was reading over some of the material we received from the department and the government about how the bill was carrying out the Seaborn commission recommendations. That simply is not true.

The list of recommendations from the Seaborn commission was quite lengthy and they were very specific in a number of ways. I do not think I found one carried out either literally or at least in its spirit in the bill. There is not one. The commission did a lot of work. There was a lot of excellent work in reaching out to the community and building that trust I talked about. There was a real feeling that if in fact the Seaborn commission recommendations were put into law this issue would be properly addressed and would be accepted by communities across the country. We did not get that at all.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, it had been my intent to split my time with the member for Saint John. Unfortunately it appears there will not be enough time today to split it, so I will continue with the remainder of the time allowed for debate.

There are several issues involved in speaking to third reading of Bill C-27. The first comment I would like to make is addressed to the member for Windsor—St. Clair, the member for Sherbrooke and the member for Athabasca who sat on the committee. We all worked diligently in attempting to improve this piece of legislation by

putting amendments forward but unfortunately we were not successful. We did manage to get in two amendments. The member for Athabasca and I were able to get in amendments to improve this piece of legislation. They certainly improved it, but unfortunately they did not go far enough to allow the bill to be a workable bill that our party, the PC/DR coalition, could support.

It is very unfortunate when a piece of legislation that is needed and requested reaches third reading stage and cannot be supported because it is simply poor legislation. This bill is not unlike my Christmas tie with a grinch on it, the difference being that the grinch story is about evil turning good. The grinch becomes a good member of society and enjoys the fruits and pleasures of the holiday season.

This piece of legislation is just bad legislation, which we attempted to improve so everyone in this nation could enjoy it and benefit from it, but unfortunately we were not able to do that. Even members in the lobby are wearing their festive stockings and holiday gear at this time when we should be working together in the House to improve legislation and pass legislation that is seriously needed so the country as a whole can benefit.

Members who spoke earlier raised very cognizant and real points that needed to be raised. However, there are a number of other points that need to be raised. One of them is the discussion of the significant dollars being put into this waste management organization by industry, and we are not talking about a couple of million dollars. The initial down payment comes into effect 10 days after the bill is passed. Ontario Hydro will put up \$500 million. That is not small change. New Brunswick Power will put up \$20 million. Hydro-Québec will put up \$20 million. Atomic Energy Canada Ltd., which claims to have no responsibility for any nuclear fuel waste, and in fact a lot of responsibility for nuclear fuel waste, I think, and which is the very perpetrator and supporter of the industry, put up \$10 million.

**An hon. member:** That is the Canadian taxpayer.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** Exactly. The point was raised and is worth repeating. It is not Atomic Energy Canada Ltd. but Canadian taxpayers who are reaching into their jeans pockets to come up with those dollars.

On an annual basis, Ontario Hydro will fork over \$100 million to keep this waste management organization active. Hydro-Québec will fork over \$4 million. New Brunswick Power will give \$4 million. Atomic Energy Canada Ltd., with somehow no responsibility for nuclear waste, will still fork over another \$2 million per annum.

• (1720)

We are talking about significant dollars going into a waste management organization. I cannot help but think that we have it backward. Perhaps Atomic Energy Canada Limited should be putting in the primary dollars. The subsidiary dollars should be put in by the industry itself because it certainly is responsible for nuclear waste.

*Private Members' Business*

I found a number of issues in this piece of legislation to be problematic. The bill pretends to deal with the issue of nuclear waste but it does not satisfy the problem. Nor does it completely deal with the issue. We end up with a piece of legislation which would allow for on surface or on site management of nuclear fuel waste for perpetuity.

There is absolutely nothing in the legislation which would force the nuclear energy sector in Canada and Atomic Energy Canada Limited to come up with an option. We must consider one option which is on site storage if we are to deal with the problem.

My colleagues mentioned earlier that we could recycle the fuel, run it through reactors so that it would become inert and the radioactivity would be taken out of it. Perhaps science will find a way of dealing with this through transmutation. Those are not options that are realistic at this time but they are still options. They are worthy of debate and that debate was curtailed in committee.

It should be noted that prior to our last debate at report stage on Bill C-27 there was a piece of legislation that was important to the security of Canada. Bill C-36 was as important to our security as this piece of legislation. Yet the government forced closure on Bill C-36 because it did not have time. It was an emergency. We did not have time to debate it. The next day there were not enough government members to continue debate at report stage of Bill C-27. Debate failed on Bill C-27.

What is important and what is not important? Canadian voters will make that decision a few years down the road.

It is true that the issue has been around for 50 years. We need to deal with it in a timely manner. This does not necessarily allow us to deal with nuclear waste in a timely manner because it does not preclude on surface and on site storage forever.

There is the issue of accountability to the public. It is also important for the bill to establish a waste management organization and an advisory council that would be reflective of Canadian society.

The member for Windsor—St. Clair talked about the amendments that were put forth by Ontario municipalities which have nuclear reactors in their midst. The PC/DR coalition put forth amendments on behalf of those municipalities as did other members. There was unanimous support for the amendments on the opposition side. That speaks to some unity that we found as we all worked together on this piece of legislation.

The government claims to represent Ontario because it has a lot of members from Ontario. However it does not represent Ontario when push comes to shove and we are trying to get amendments passed that were proposed on behalf of the people from Ontario. They wanted their concerns reflected in legislation that will affect them more than any other group in Canada.

● (1725)

The bill does not mention property values in municipalities that have nuclear reactors or on site storage facilities. People tend not to like to be near radioactivity. They tend to have doubts, concerns and worries about radioactivity. They tend not to buy houses and properties or to build businesses there.

It is a cheap source of power. We would not see that reflection in the property values if we assured Canadians that it was safe and if we dealt with the issue in a timely fashion. A municipality that has a nuclear reactor in its midst would benefit from it because it would be an immediate source of electricity and corporations would come to the area for that reason.

I want to talk about the issue of foreign waste being deposited at some type of a waste management facility in Canada. That issue is neither dealt with nor precluded in this piece of legislation. Most Canadians do not understand that.

The legal authority from the department stated in committee that the intent of the bill did not cover the question of the import of nuclear fuel waste. Another piece of legal advice was that the scope of the bill did not touch upon the importation of nuclear fuel waste from outside the boundaries of Canada. It did not speak to that point.

That is important to me and is one of the reasons, if not the main reason, that the PC/DR coalition will not support the bill. It does not preclude Hydro-Québec, Ontario Power Generation, New Brunswick Power Corporation or any corporation from setting up a plant in the U.S. It does not preclude them from producing nuclear fuel waste at a foreign owned plant and bringing that waste back to a depository somewhere in Canada. It is unfortunate that the legislation was drafted so poorly that we will not be able to support it.

**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.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1730)

[*Translation*]

### INCOME TAX ACT

**Mr. Gilles-A. Perron (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ)** moved that Bill C-397, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (support payments), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be allowed to speak to this bill. I want to take a few moments to thank my colleague from Sherbrooke who agreed to support this bill.

Unfortunately, it is with a lot of bitterness that I rise to speak to Bill C-397, an act to amend the Income Tax Act. In fact, my bill is aimed at amending only one section, section 118 of the Income Tax Act dealing with child deductions.

I am disappointed because I believe that this bill should have been votable. I believe so, since the required tests for making a bill votable are, first, that the bill be written clearly and effectively. My bill and I am convinced that you have read it entirely, is very clear and effective.



The second test is that the bill must be under federal jurisdiction. This is just common sense. If it were not under federal jurisdiction, I would not be here today discussing it.

The third test is that the bill should deal with a matter that is clearly in the public interest. That will be my main point in my remarks and, naturally I will emphasize the merits of my bill.

There should be a clear interest. In this case, it is more than clear because, after I introduced my bill, the justice minister sent to all members and senators a summary of the report of the federal, provincial, territorial family law committee. This report mentioned child custody, access and support for Canadian children. I will refer to this report several times in my remarks.

I am sorry that this bill is not votable. I have hundreds of cases of Canadian and Quebec citizens, mothers and fathers, who asked me to correct certain injustices in the present legislation. I am all the more sorry because my bill, as I indicated, does exactly what is being requested in the report: parents who share parental responsibility—we no longer say shared custody—should have a tax deduction that is proportional to the number of days they have custody of the child.

For a parent to be considered to have parental responsibility, he or she must have custody during at least 100 days in a year before he or she can claim a certain percentage of child care expenses for the days he or she has custody, and benefit from tax deductions in his or her income tax return.

• (1735)

Let us take, for example, my own situation. I have joint custody of my children during weekends. On the basis of 52 weekends, I have custody of my children during 104 days. Therefore, I could deduct 104/365ths of the costs incurred for the custody of my children.

Unfortunately, divorce and separation occur much too frequently these days. We are living in the year 2001. It is a fact that divorce and separation are commonplace occurrences. Frequently when parents divorce or separate they try to avoid litigation, to not traumatize their children and make them suffer.

Unfortunately, money matters are always the most contentious issues between parents and are often the cause of disputes. This is why I think the Income Tax Act as it now stands is unfair. Why could we not allow a parent who has joint custody of a child or who shares parental responsibility to deduct a portion of the costs incurred for the custody of the children?

Unfortunately, since this bill has not been declared votable, my remarks are only idle chatter. I most sincerely hope that the finance minister, and I intend to pressure him on this, will in the name of equity and parental responsibility take my bill under his wing and amend section 118 of the present legislation.

I will stop here. I know that my 15 minute period is not over, but I nevertheless will stop here because I am very disappointed, of course, that this bill has not been declared votable. Most of all, I am very sad for all the parents who thought that I could succeed in pushing forward this issue and convince the government to forward to the present as in the year 2001 unfortunately divorce and separation occur too frequently.

### *Adjournment Debate*

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for having listened so carefully to my speech. I want to take this opportunity to wish you and your family as well as the people of my riding a happy holiday season, much happiness and, most of all, peace.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I thank the hon. member for his good wishes.

Since no one else seems to want to rise on the bill, the period set aside for private members' business has now expired. Since the motion has not been declared votable, the item is dropped from the order paper.

• (1740)

[*English*]

**Ms. Marlene Catterall:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. With the unexpected termination of the debate, I wonder if the House might suspend for a few minutes to allow the members who are involved in the late show to arrive in the Chamber.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Is it agreed that we suspend until 5.50 p.m. to give those members who want to be here for the adjournment debate a chance to be present in the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 5.40 p.m.)

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1750)

[*English*]

INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, some time ago in the House the Prime Minister, while speaking to the downturn in the economy and the need to stimulate some employment, mentioned that perhaps the minister responsible for ACOA would advance some infrastructure funding. I asked a question a few days later whether or not any determination had been made as to when and how much. The answer I was given related to the amount that was already in the mill, \$6 million in the case of Newfoundland, some of which has not been taken up to date.

The needs are severe not only in my province but I am sure across the country as well. The more infrastructure funding we can put into the mix during this present downturn in particular, the better it will be for many reasons.

*Adjournment Debate*

There is a severe need to address critical freshwater supplies in certain areas. There is a need to address environmental concerns in relation to taking care of sewage disposal. There is also a need to stimulate the economy by getting people back to work. The construction field offers tremendous opportunities for employment. By putting more money into our infrastructure programs we can get people working and solve the problems of fresh water and environmental concerns at the same time.

In the St. John's region there are a number of major problems in relation to these issues. I will mention a couple to illustrate why it is so important to get money flowing through the infrastructure program.

One is the lack of fresh water in the part of the city called Goulds which is now part of the city of St. John's. Many residents in that area do not have access to good clean drinking water. There are also parts of that same section of the city that do not have sewer services. This causes a major health problem in that immediate area.

Despite the pressure from the people concerned, the city puts the blame on the provincial government. The provincial government puts the blame on the feds. It is everybody's fault and nobody is focusing on the problems, bringing the agencies together and addressing the overall problems. The one factor that quite often prevents addressing the problem is sufficient funding.

The other major problem in St. John's is the harbour itself. We have to stop talking about addressing the harbour cleanup and do something, whether it be St. John's, Halifax, Vancouver or any other harbour, in the same terms as we do general infrastructure funding. These programs to address harbour cleanup have to be separate and specific.

I hope that the parliamentary secretary can tell us there will be more money for infrastructure and that we will focus on priorities. Perhaps he could give us an idea of the route that is taken in order to get such funding flowing.

• (1755)

**Mr. Alex Shepherd (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am certainly happy to respond to the member for St. John's West who quite frankly has been a vociferous candidate for his riding in the House.

I am pleased today to speak about the infrastructure Canada program, a Government of Canada initiative that will improve the quality of life for Canadians in rural and urban communities.

When I gave the answer originally to the member, I talked about the \$6 billion which is across the country. I am happy to note that \$153 million of that has been directed toward the province of Newfoundland.

The member himself was concerned about drinking water in that area. A good portion of the infrastructure program was earmarked for environmental and green infrastructure.

Infrastructure Canada makes green municipal infrastructure a priority. Why? Because nothing is more fundamental to communities than clean drinking water, clean air and a healthy environment. These areas are very fundamental to the vibrant communities. Without them, Canadians cannot enjoy the high quality of life they

have every right to expect in this country. There are many other important areas in municipal infrastructure but we believe that investment in green infrastructure comes first.

We did not reach this conclusion alone. Partnership with other levels of government is one of infrastructure Canada's unique strengths. When we designed the program, we consulted broadly with municipalities. Indeed, I believe that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities originally was the impetus and the driving force in getting the government way back in 1993 to start the very first infrastructure program. It told us quite clearly that green infrastructure was an immediate priority. The member is drawing that to our attention once again. We consulted with the provinces and the territories and they too identified this area as one of urgent need.

We listened and we have responded. In each infrastructure Canada agreement we took steps to stipulate a minimum level of green municipal infrastructure investment in each jurisdiction. Newfoundland has agreed with that. I have noticed that many of its projects have zeroed in on green infrastructure.

I think the member's real question was that he wanted to know if we were going to accelerate the program. The \$6 billion is over a five or six year period. I think a number of our own ministers have mentioned the possibility of accelerating that program, in other words, moving the funding from year three or four into year two and so forth. The answer is that it requires agreement among three levels of government. I think those negotiations are in progress but I cannot actually say where they stand at this time. It is a difficult commitment for some of the provinces and municipalities because they are one-third partners and they have to come up with the money as well.

In conclusion I would say that we have a litany of projects in Newfoundland. There is a \$1.1 million investment in the Placentia water treatment plant and a \$45,000 upgrade to the Trepassey chlorination system. I think those are in the member's own riding. There is a \$3.8 million investment in the Shoal Harbour treatment plant, a \$1 million upgrade of the Victoria sewage system, and \$647,000 toward the Lourdes water system. We have been committed to solving the member's problem.

• (1800)

**Mr. Loyola Hearn:** Mr. Speaker, let me thank the parliamentary secretary for his concise answer. I guess he answered my question to the best of the government's ability because if negotiations are under way with the other parties, I understand fully that all three must come to the table. I appreciate that and his frankness.

I would ask if he would clearly outline the process. My understanding is the cities or towns outline their priorities and submit their list to the province which in turn will select its priorities, the priorities of the government members. They are then submitted to the committee representing the feds and the provinces to decide how much funding is available and where it will go. I wonder if the parliamentary secretary could clarify if that is the process.

*Adjournment Debate*

**Mr. Alex Shepherd:** Mr. Speaker, the member has got it fairly close. Actually in Canada it is handled differently depending on the province. In my own province of Ontario it is handled quite differently because the province of Ontario has its own infrastructure apparatus. What we are trying to do is work through that apparatus. I think it is similar in Quebec. It has its own apparatus for infrastructure funding. What we are trying to do is not duplicate that structure.

In others areas, like Newfoundland, I believe, the province would apply directly to a body administered by the treasury board. The member is quite right that the municipalities move forward with, if I can say it, their wish lists. I know that there are more projects than there is money available and that is unfortunate, but it seems to be the nature of government. There are always more ways to spend money. Then the province goes through a process of approving those it thinks are priorities to try to put them in some kind of prioritization sequence. The province then sends that to us.

All we are trying to do is not pick and choose. We are trying to ask if it fits within the original concept of green infrastructure. In other words, if it is a swimming pool and we thought we would improve the water quality of St. John's West, it probably would be rejected.

If what the member is orienting himself to, if it is a water treatment facility—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I am sorry to interrupt, but I gave the hon. member almost an extra minute.

## HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, PC/DR):** Mr. Speaker, this is in relation to a question I put to the Minister of Human Resources Development about a week ago regarding EI benefits.

We have been down this road before in question period in the House. In fact it has been a national case, if you will. It is basically about abuse of EI recipients by the department itself.

I take exception to some of the questions and techniques used by the department to determine whether or not individual clam diggers are eligible for EI benefits. What I contend, and I stand by it, is that their right to privacy has been violated on the basis of 42 questions on a questionnaire they are forced to answer. These claimants are forced to answer these questions without any thought to legal counsel or help within the room to do so, which they are entitled to.

Then, when they are through answering those 42 questions, some of them very personal and having nothing to do with clam digging, they are forced to sign a statement attesting that everything they have said is true.

There is a place on that form for a witness signature. It is not interesting that a witness signature never appears on those forms?

The question is, why clam diggers? Why the lowly clam digger? Why do they have to be interrogated in this fashion?

The example I used, and members are familiar with this, is the billion dollar boondoggle in HRDC a couple of years ago. We raged about that in the House. The question would be how many chief executive officers in companies that were not entitled to benefits

from or contributions by the Government of Canada were subjected to that type of interrogation. The answer would be none. Not one of them was interrogated in that way. If they were, they would have legal counsel with them, which they are entitled to, as the clam diggers are.

It is the same situation with the bureaucrats. Not one single bureaucrat was questioned by the department without legal counsel. How many of them lost their paycheques? Not one of them.

There is only one reason for this. It is that these people are poor and they are not quite as articulate as some of the smart, and I wanted to say smartass, bureaucrats. That is simply the case. They are an easy target for this type of interrogation and it has happened time and time again.

When I showed this 42 part questionnaire to the minister what she told me was "I agree with you, Mr. Thompson, that it is wrong and we should not be asking those types of personal questions". Yet when it goes back to the bureaucrats, what do they do? They convince the minister that it is right, that there is nothing wrong with it and that they will continue to do it.

There is something about this country of ours. When we get up and want to rage about the indignities that are passed on and pushed on to the poor people of this country, nobody wants to talk about it. I guess it is not exciting. They simply are an easy target for a big government. That is exactly what the government has been doing. It has been consistent. Even some of the tax court judges on P.E.I. agree with my position.

It is wrong and it has to stop. I think it has to stop right here on the floor of the House of Commons by the minister standing up on her feet and saying that is enough.

• (1805)

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest for the question. It is a very important question for us in government because we want citizens, no matter what level of literacy they are at, to have the same rights as every other citizen. This is an important position that we have relayed.

I certainly do not disagree at all with the remarks of my hon. colleague from New Brunswick Southwest. Let me add that the large majority of individuals requesting EI benefits are honest. We know that. They are hardworking Canadians who need temporary income support while they are unemployed.

The department is responsible for ensuring that those who apply for employment insurance are eligible to receive benefits. I think everyone can understand that. Unfortunately, there are instances where some people wrongfully claim EI. That is why HRDC has the mandate to protect the integrity of the EI program by conducting investigations into all allegations of abuse. When the department receives allegations of abuse, it must investigate.

*Adjournment Debate*

HRDC investigations play a key role in safeguarding the integrity of the EI program by detecting, preventing and deterring abuse. We have several investigation programs that allow us to protect the integrity of the EI program. In 2000-01 for example, investigation and control activities resulted in total savings of \$573 million to the EI fund. This means that for every dollar spent on investigations, \$9.23 is returned.

However, in light of the details raised by the hon. member opposite, and I want to underline they are important details that we take seriously, the minister has asked her officials to review the way investigations are conducted to ensure that employees are working within the code of conduct that is respectful of individuals and the Privacy Act. All of our investigations are conducted within the authorities legislated by us in the EI Act. Employees are provided with ongoing training and refresher courses to ensure investigations are carried out in a responsible, lawful manner.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that HRDC investigators must adhere to a very strict code of professional conduct and carry out their duties in a professional manner. Investigators routinely inform individuals of their rights and obligations. They also inform claimants of their right to legal counsel in cases that are being considered for prosecution. When administrative penalties are considered, clients are advised of their right to appeal.

I will repeat how important this is to us. We are committed to protecting the integrity of the employment insurance program so that it continues to be there to support Canadians.

• (1810)

**Mr. Greg Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I hope that the department is sincere in a follow-up to this. The parliamentary secretary tells me that it is.

This is a pattern of abuse that has occurred over and over again. I have to emphasize that the people I am talking about are poor. They are not empowered as you and I are, Mr. Speaker. We have a place here. We can stand up and rant and take the government to task on these issues. They only have people like you and me and the other members in the House to defend them. That is what we are trying to do.

I think there should be a sense of fairness within the department. There has to be. I am encouraged by what the parliamentary secretary said this evening, but what we want are results.

This has occurred over and over again. We are looking for real results. I do not think we want a meanspirited government out on a witch hunt prosecuting or persecuting people who really need the help and incidentally, who paid into the plan that they now are attempting to get some benefit from.

**Ms. Raymonde Folco:** Mr. Speaker, I could not be more in accord with what my colleague from New Brunswick Southwest has said. It is the government's role to make sure that whatever EI benefits are provided to citizens are done according to their rights and within the Privacy Act as well.

We are looking into this affair. If what my parliamentary colleague has said is true, it is totally unacceptable to us. I can assure my colleague and the House that we will continue to investigate the

matter. As soon as the investigation is completed, we will report to him and the House as to what the conditions exactly are.

TERRORISM

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Carleton, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, my question this evening arises from a question I raised in the House on September 21 regarding the issue of a gentleman named Mr. Nabil Al-Marabh, who had been arrested on stabbing charges in Boston, had attempted to illegally enter the United States from Canada, had illegally re-entered Canada and was finally found to be carrying a forged passport, a forged citizenship card and a forged social insurance number and who may have been connected with terrorist organizations.

In raising this question, I was informed by the minister, who responded:

It is wrong to equate all failed refugee claimants with terrorism. That is clearly wrong.

We could all have figured that one out. She then went on to say:

We do not detain people on mere whispers. We do not detain on suspicion

In light of Bill C-36, that seems a bit ironic. Of course, the government can now detain without either whisper or suspicion, and moreover has the ability to arrest people who have the misfortune to simply have the same name as someone who is suspected of terrorism. They can find their assets seized, taken away permanently and find no compensation, even if they were completely innocent. That of course just puts the lie to everything she said.

The problem we face with Mr. Al-Marabh is that he is part of an enormous problem in which we do not have control of our borders. Having failed to assert control of our borders for a number of years, we now find a situation in which we are flooded with a large number of refugee claimants, many of whom are bogus and a small number of whom may potentially be terrorists.

If I can refer to reports of October 30, 2001, it was reported that confidential immigration documents stated that the number of foreigners claiming refugee status in Canada was expected to reach 41,250 by the end of this year. That represented a 37% increase over last year and was the biggest 12 month leap ever. That is the kind of problem we face.

I note that in the face of this the government has no adequate response. I would like to quote from the auditor general's report to make this point. The auditor general writes:

In our 1997 chapter, we concluded that a thorough review of the refugee determination process was needed. The process did not quickly grant Canada's protection to claimants who genuinely needed it, and it did not discourage those who did not need or deserve Canada's protection from claiming refugee status.

The report, which came out a few days ago, further states:

Citizenship and Immigration Canada could not provide information on removals of failed refugee claimants from the country that would indicate whether (the department's) processes were more effective.

More effective meaning more effective than they had been four years ago.

*Adjournment Debate*

My question for the minister is simply this. Is the minister prepared today in the House to provide the information the auditor general has been seeking with regard to the effectiveness of determining whether or not people are genuine refugees, deserving of our protection, or not?

•(1815)

**Mr. Mark Assad (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that Canada's privacy legislation prohibits the government from discussing details of specific cases like the one he raised. The government would not jeopardize the integrity of its own intelligence or that of our neighbour, the United States.

What I can tell the member is that the existing act already contains some of the toughest provisions to deny admission to or deport terrorists regardless of the accusations we have heard in the House. At present we can and do detain whenever we believe someone is a flight risk or a threat to Canadians. If anyone poses a security risk to Canada we detain and argue for continued detention.

Front end security screening coupled with the new enforcement measures of Bill C-11 which was recently passed by parliament would provide immigration officers the tools they need to do their job. They are powerful tools compared to those of the past. They would automatically deny access to our refugee determination system to anyone found to be a security threat. Bill C-11 gave us the tools to deal with security threats more quickly.

We will not let terrorists strike at our core values. These values include a commitment to the charter, which we must always keep in mind; due process, in which we take great pride in the House; tolerance, which I hope is in the heart of every member of the House; and diversity in our immigration and refugee protection program which is seen as a model everywhere in the world.

We will not allow terrorists to push us off course. Canadians want security but they want us to respect our values and traditions. We are committed to the rule of law. This is why we cannot remove persons from Canada after due process has been served. Our system works on the basis of evidence. It consists of checks and balances and due process.

The Government of Canada will not allow persons to take advantage of our generosity by engaging in any kind of terrorism. We are acting to ensure Canada will never be a safe haven for terrorists. We are doing this in ways that are grounded in the rule of law which is the basis of our democracy.

•(1820)

**Mr. Scott Reid:** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary was reading from prepared notes. This is unfortunate because he wound up answering a question I did not ask.

I asked him a question specifically in regard to a point the auditor general had raised. She said Citizenship and Immigration Canada had failed to provide information about the removal of failed refugee claimants, not about the process for admitting people to the country in the first place.

There were serious inaccuracies in the parliamentary secretary's commentary. First, he said Canada is a model admired by the rest of the world. That is not so. I used to live in Australia. I was an immigrant in Australia. They laugh at our system as well they should.

Second, with regard to implementing and following through on laws, the auditor general says we have failed to follow through on the provisions of existing laws. When the government does not follow through on existing laws how can we trust it when it says it will implement new laws? The problem is the government's failure to implement and act on existing laws.

**Mr. Mark Assad:** Mr. Speaker, I have prepared notes and we have checked anything we raise in the House. I wish the opposition would do the same. What we have seen here are bogus charges and all kinds of statements that do not stand up to the test of the facts.

If the hon. member has any information he should give it to us. He obviously does not. He must remember we are in a democratic system where we believe in the rule of law. Regardless of all his statements they will not stand up to the test of the facts.

The hon. member mentioned the auditor general's report. Obviously with the new bills we have brought before the House we will improve in this regard. Nonetheless Canada has a great reputation as a doorway for immigrants from all over the world. We do not want to lose that great advantage.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.22 p.m.)



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