



CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, June 23, 2005
Part A

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

CONTENTS

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

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 23, 2005

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a number of orders in council made recently by the government.

* * *

• (1005)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (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 20 petitions.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

TRANSPORT

Hon. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Transport.

HEALTH

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among all parties and I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following. I move that Report No. 13 of the Standing Committee on Health, presented in the House on Wednesday, June 1, 2005 requesting an extension of 30 sitting days to consider Bill C-420, be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

PETITIONS

MARRIAGE

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a series of petitions dealing with different subjects. The first three deal with the subject of marriage, a matter that is of great concern to constituents in my riding. The petitions come from Nanaimo and other areas in British Columbia, such as Lantzville, Parksville and Qualicum.

The petitioners are calling on Parliament to recognize that marriage is the best foundation for families and the raising of children, that the institution of marriage as between a man and a woman is being challenged, and that the House passed a motion in June 1999 that called for marriage to continue to be recognized as the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

They are calling on Parliament to ensure that marriage remains an institution between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

• (1010)

NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second series of petitions contain 2,500 signatures from people across the country who are concerned about Bill C-420. Most of the petitions are from British Columbia but there are others from Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Quebec on the subject of Bill C-420, the motion by the hon. member for Oshawa that was just denied.

Bill C-420 refers to natural health products and the way in which we regulate them. The petitioners call on the government to ensure that natural health products are regulated as food and not drugs and remain available as low cost and low risk options for Canadians to protect their own health.

AUTISM

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition containing about 30 signatures of petitioners who are concerned with helping people with autism spectrum disorder.

The petitioners are calling for support for applied behaviour analysis and for intensive behavioural intervention to help parents dealing with children with the very severe disability of autism.

S. O. 57

MARRIAGE

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to present two petitions. The first petition deals with an issue that has been brought many times before the House and that is the issue of marriage.

The petitioners are calling on Parliament to pass legislation to recognize the institution of marriage as being the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

CANADA POST

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have another series of petitions on an issue that is very important to many of the people in small towns in my riding and that is the issue of post offices and their desire to keep their local post office open.

The petitioners want to point out that Canada Post has closed a number of rural post offices already where it does not consider a community with less than 700 points of call to be a viable location, and whereas the closure of those post offices would hurt the communities, they are calling on Parliament to keep the post offices open and to retain a moratorium on post office closures.

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to present a petition signed by dozens of individuals, in addition to the hundreds of other signatories of the petition I presented last week.

This petition is asking the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to use his discretionary power to give permanent resident status to Mr. Sergio Orestes Loreto Garcia on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

This would allow Mr. Loreto to leave his sanctuary in Toronto and return to his family in Saint-Hubert.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Robert Vincent (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition on behalf of Canadian corrections officers. It has been signed by over 2,000 individuals.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (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 it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. John Williams: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think you will find there is unanimous consent to return to presenting reports from committees.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. John Williams (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 18th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts concerning Chapter 2, National Security in Canada, The 2001 Anti-terrorism Initiative: Air Transportation Security, Marine Security, and Emergency Preparedness, of the April 2005 report of the Auditor General of Canada. In accordance with Standing Order 109, your committee requests a government response within 120 days.

* * *

● (1015)

EXTENSION OF SITTING PERIOD

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to Government Business No. 17, I move:

That the debate be not further adjourned.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30 minute question period. Perhaps those hon. members who wish to ask questions could rise in their places so the Chair has some idea of how many there will be.

I think we will limit questions to about a minute or a minute and a half and then get an answer and go back to the next question. The answers of course will be about a minute long as well, so I think that will ensure as equitable a distribution as I can get in 30 minutes.

We will start the 30 minutes with the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question will not take a minute. It is pretty straightforward. I would ask the government House leader how he defends using closure to ram through his agenda in the dying days of this session, to extend the session for two pieces of legislation that ultimately will not come into effect for quite some time.

Bill C-48, as I explained at length yesterday, will not effectively be in force for at least a year until we see what level of so-called Liberal surplus we have, which, as I explained, Conservatives believe to be overtaxation.

Bill C-38 will ultimately be sitting in the Senate all summer. Why would the government force closure to ram through these two pieces of legislation when it is not going to make any consequential difference?

Hon. Tony Valeri: Mr. Speaker, first I would like to say that what I am doing is ensuring that Parliament has an opportunity to entertain questions and to make a decision on two pieces of legislation.

S. O. 57

The second point I would make is that it would be ultimately up to this Parliament to decide whether to accept this motion. We are in a minority Parliament. It is not the government that will alone be able to see the success of this motion, so it will be up to parliamentarians in the House to decide whether the extension of this sitting in order to deal with both the budget bill and Bill C-38 is in fact required and whether parliamentarians are willing to do that.

I would say to the hon. member that he should respect as I do, and I am sure he does, the outcome of any vote in this Parliament and that he will adhere to what Parliament decides, because ultimately we are here for debate. Debate is intended to try to change or assert at the end of the day where people's minds actually are on a particular issue and to decide on a question. That is the point of this: to decide on the question.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is what I would call a travesty of democracy. This has been my first term and we are coming to something so significant as to whether or not there is a basis to extend this Parliament. To limit debate on whether that motion should come to the floor on a basis like that is very fundamental, and to try to stop debate on that issue is remarkable, to say the least.

Mr. Speaker, you could only have a further sitting of this House if it were a matter of public interest. Public interest would demand something fairly significant and it would not be Bill C-38, because certainly the nation does not want that bill to pass. The government, under the pretense of trying to make it of public interest, has linked it to Bill C-48, when it had every opportunity to deal with that in this session. There is nothing in Bill C-48 that requires it to be dealt with at this time or requires this sitting of the House to be extended. There is absolutely nothing.

It is the arrogance of this government to try to ram through this House what the public does not want, what is not in the national interest and which has no public interest to it. I ask why the House leader, under these circumstances, would try to limit debate in a democracy that is free, in a democracy where opinion—

• (1020)

The Speaker: The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Tony Valeri: Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. member takes on the same attitude when we have the outcome of the vote on whether this motion should pass or fail. If we are going to have a test of democracy then in fact what should happen is that our parliamentarians in this House should be able to deal with the question and should be able to vote, and Parliament should ultimately be able to decide.

With respect to whether there has been debate or not, with respect to Bill C-38 there have been 28 hours and 20 minutes of debate. With respect to Bill C-48, I think we have seen over the last number of days that the only the party that has been putting up speakers has been the official opposition.

An hon. member: Wrong.

Hon. Tony Valeri: It has been putting up the majority of the speakers not because it wants to in fact add to the debate but because it wants to delay the question.

At the end of the day, I think what Parliament needs to do is not only debate issues but also have the opportunity to decide on a question. That in fact is what we have done. We have given the House the opportunity to decide on a question. Parliament will decide.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know what is happening over there. Canadians know what is happening over there. The government wants this extension brought in just because it does not want to extend Bill C-38 into the fall. The government knows that will be getting close to elections and the government does not represent the views of the majority of Canadians on Bill C-38.

The government wants to keep that distance from the time it discusses Bill C-38. It wants to ram it through this Parliament as far away from the elections as possible. That is the real reason the government wants Bill C-38 to come here: so that Canadians will forget about it during the summer. Is that not the real reason the government wants to extend this Parliament?

Hon. Tony Valeri: Mr. Speaker, on extending this Parliament, we are in fact asking this House to consider a motion to extend the sitting of this Parliament. Ultimately, as I said, it will be up to this House to do exactly that.

With respect to why we are doing that, it would be clear that Bill C-48 is of importance to many different parts of the country. There are premiers and mayors who are involved in budget making who want to know that this legislation will in fact move forward.

If the hon. members across the way want to voice their concern and their opposition to Bill C-48, they have certainly done so and we can hear from the comments that they will continue to do so. It does authorize \$4.5 billion in spending this year and next. It does advocate and provide dollars for the homeless, for students, for cities and for the environment. They are perfectly within their right to stand in their place to debate against it, as they have, and to ultimately decide on the question. What we are doing is providing the House with an opportunity to do exactly that.

With respect to Bill C-38, I could go on in terms of the amount of debate that has taken place, but I will not because I think it is very public and I do know that members have decided how they will vote in any one way.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to highlight the record of this government over 12 years. Over 80 times it has shut down debate in this House. Whether it was a majority or a minority Parliament, it did not matter. The government did not want to hear the voices of Canadians through duly elected opposition members of Parliament.

There are millions of Canadians out there who voted for Conservative members of Parliament like me and who expect us to fight bills like Bill C-38 right to the bitter end, yet the government wants to limit the voice of Canadians through us as duly elected members of Parliament. Why? Why does it want to shut down the voices of Canadians who voted for members of Parliament on this side of the House who oppose their legislation?

Hon. Tony Valeri: Again, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can stand in his place and lay out his position. He has done so numerous times.

S. O. 57

We can look at various editorials that are popping up across the country wondering why the Conservatives continue to take this approach to Parliament. In fact, once there has been opportunity—

An hon. member: It's our right and it's their right to do it.

Hon. Tony Valeri: We have seen it on Bill C-38. We can ask the opposition House leader. When we were at second reading debate on Bill C-38, I made it very clear that every member who wanted to speak to Bill C-38 would have an opportunity to do so. I believe they did. It went through committee. We have report stage and third reading. There will be a further opportunity further speak to Bill C-38. What the official opposition looks to do is not to have debate for the sake of debate in terms of an exchange of ideas, but to use debate to ultimately delay a vote in the House.

Parliament has an opportunity today to decide whether we should have extended sittings. If we do have extended sittings it will be because this Parliament voted for it, not because the government has just done it through a majority. It is a minority Parliament and ultimately parliamentarians will decide whether or not we sit next week. That question should be put and ultimately decided on later today.

•(1025)

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-43 has passed through this House and is in the Senate right now at the finance committee. The Conservative senators want to expedite the bill and get it through so the government can carry on with business. However, the Liberal senators have stalled the clause by clause on it. They are holding up the Bill C-43 royal assent passage, I suspect at the direction of the House leader or the Prime Minister.

I would ask the government House leader why he and his government are using Bill C-43 as a ransom to get Bill C-48 and Bill C-38 through. The Liberal senators have said that they will deal with Bill C-43 next week when Bills C-38 and C-48 have been passed. Why this sneaky, sleazy manoeuvring in the Senate, using their Liberal senators to hold up the 2005-06 Liberal budget just so they can get the others, and holding up the Atlantic accord as well? I would like the hon. government House leader to explain that.

Hon. Tony Valeri: Mr. Speaker, the only thing I can say is that I would hope the Conservative senators along the way would show the same cooperation with respect to Bill C-48 and Bill C-38 as they seem to be showing with respect to Bill C-43.

I am under no illusions. I would expect that once Bill C-48 and Bill C-38 leave this place, with Bill C-43 already in the Senate, the Senate will do everything possible to pass all of the legislation that has gone to the Senate in order to give Canadians what they are hoping for, what this Parliament deserves, and that is additional funding for transit, additional funding for the Atlantic provinces, more money for the environment and more money for post-secondary education.

I can only say this. I hope that while the hon. member is here with catcalls he would take the time to leave this place, pick up the phone and ask his Conservative senators to cooperate on Bill C-48 and Bill C-38 as he has indicated they are prepared to cooperate on Bill C-43.

Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the government House leader. It may not have directly to do with the present debate. I have seen the legislative calendar for the next couple of weeks, which he has issued. There is one bill on that legislative calendar, Bill C-38.

My office is getting calls from people whose homes have been damaged by flood waters. I am getting calls from farmers whose crops are under water, from truck drivers who are losing their businesses and from feedlot operators who cannot get by. I have grain farmers who are starving to death and businesses that are closing, yet the only agenda this government has is Bill C-38.

If the government is seriously worried about doing the business of the country, then it should damn well deal with the business that is bothering this country and get to it.

Hon. Tony Valeri: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what calendar the hon. member saw, but it also contained Bill C-48, which is the budget bill.

The second point I would make, as I have told House leaders, is that if there is legislation and if there are initiatives on which this Parliament can decide, I am certainly prepared to bring them forward at all stages and expedite them.

I believe that members of Parliament are working on a number of pieces of legislation on which they have found common cause and consensus, and they want to move them through the House. I am perfectly prepared to do that. I think we are here to reflect the interests of Canadians.

With respect to the issues of the hon. member, which I think are very important, frankly, and I have a lot of respect for him because he speaks very passionately about the issues that are important to him, if the hon. member can find consensus in the House in order to move forward on the initiatives that he has just described, I will certainly not be the obstacle to that.

•(1030)

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is happening in this Parliament is amazing. Bill C-38 is a very important bill but the fact is that the majority of Canadians across the nation have said that they do not want it and the government is trying to jam it through. The Liberals are making sure this happens.

The mandate of all members of Parliament is to listen to the people of Canada. What is happening this morning is abysmal. People in my riding of Kildonan—St. Paul do not want Bill C-38 passed. The members opposite should be listening to all people in Canada, as well as those in their own ridings.

Hon. Tony Valeri: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across the way should acknowledge that there was extensive debate on Bill C-38 in the House at second reading. Hearings have been conducted on Bill C-38. The justice committee held hearings back in 2002-03, although I understand a lot of members would not agree that had anything to do with Bill C-38.

S. O. 57

I think the committee heard some 75 witnesses on Bill C-38. The Order Paper contains a number of report stage amendments that should be debated and decided upon. A number of amendments were proposed and debated in committee and some were accepted and passed.

The hon. member has indicated that a number of people in the country are opposed to Bill C-38, which is true, but it is also true that a number of people are for it. However when we have a debate, part of that debate is deciding on a question and I think people in the House have decided how they will vote. The opportunity is now to decide on the question and that is what is being asked.

If the motion passes we will go to extended sittings in order to deal with the budget bill and Bill C-38.

Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was not very long ago that I came to the House and almost on a daily basis the government was introducing concurrence motions to use up time and filibuster their own agenda, which was very thin soup, to say the least. There really was nothing on the agenda and there was no Bill C-38. The NDP amendment bill was not here and the government was using up time on concurrence motions.

As we approach the summer recess, when MPs should be back in their ridings with their constituents, the government says that it is very important that we extend the sitting so we can deal with issues that it could have dealt with back then but refused to do. Now it is an urgent matter and it wants an extension. I find that to be sucking and blowing at the same time.

Would the House leader explain or justify why the government was wasting so much time on concurrence motions not very long ago and now it needs more time?

Hon. Tony Valeri: Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone in the country believes the Conservatives were doing anything but filibustering both on Bill C-48 and Bill C-38 in order to avoid getting to the question. It is certainly well within their rights to use every procedural tactic available to them in the Standing Orders to prevent something from happening.

However, ultimately I think Canadians look to a resolution to a question. While Canadians look for debate, and while the hon. members may argue that there has not been enough debate, I would submit that there has been debate in the House on Bill C-38 and Bill C-48.

What I am putting in front of the House this morning is an opportunity for Parliament to decide whether Parliament itself should have extended sittings. If that happens, I am saying that we would deal with Bill C-48 and Bill C-38 and ultimately Parliament will decide the outcome of those bills.

The members opposite may disagree with what I am looking to do but ultimately Parliament will decide whether what I am doing is acceptable to Parliament.

•(1035)

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the level of debate and discussion that is going on here amazes me. The other day I was talking with my daughter who was looking after a young girl of about five or six years old. All she could say to the Conservatives was “na, na, na, na, na, na”.

It is almost as if they have not realized that they have not lost the election yet. I hear them stand up and say that the majority of Canadians are against Bill C-38 and yet poll after poll shows different statistics all the time.

If the Conservatives believe they are right, when the vote on Bill C-38 comes up they can vote against it, if that is their choosing, and then, when an election is called, they can run on that platform. If they oppose Bill C-38 and if it passes through this House, they can tell Canadians that they would use the notwithstanding clause to eliminate a minority right. They have every right to say that to the Canadian people. The Conservatives do not have the courage to say that they would use the notwithstanding clause against Bill C-38.

Those are the same bunch of Conservatives whose leader says that it is okay to make a bribe but that it is not okay to accept one. No wonder they are dropping in the polls like a lead sinker.

Could the hon. House leader tell me what the Conservatives are afraid of?

Hon. Tony Valeri: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not speak for the Conservative Party but I would suggest that the Conservatives are afraid of having these questions come to the House in order to have the House resolve the question.

The Conservatives constantly stand in this House and use debate in order to delay, which is perfectly within their right, but they should also have the courage to stand in this House to vote and to show Canadians where they stand on these particular issues. The rest of Parliament seems to be prepared to do so.

If the Conservatives feel so strongly about their position, they should vote in this House and then spend the summer telling Canadians why they have the correct position. I would suggest that Canadians would disagree with the position that they have taken.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can understand why my NDP colleague is so upset with the comments about bribes because that party gave in to the bribe that the Liberals gave it.

The House leader is trying to do a very undemocratic thing by wrapping it up in the notion of democracy and the fact that we will have a vote on something that is undemocratic. The Liberal logic is that by voting democratically on something that is undemocratic makes it all democratic. That is bogus logic.

The Liberals spent months filibustering their own legislative agenda. Do Canadians remember the sled dog debate? The government introduced it and then right away voted to adjourn the debate. The Liberal member who introduced the bill said that she only ever speaks a few times, and that every time she does speak it is on something of great importance. Minutes after she said that, the Liberal government voted to adjourn its own debate.

I have one simple question for the government House leader. If we win the vote tonight not to extend sittings, will his government commit not to request a special call back from the Speaker after the House rises?

S. O. 57

Hon. Tony Valeri: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the preamble to the hon. member's question, every time a member across the way gets up and says something, with some exception, we hear nothing but hypocrisy.

The hon. member talks about wasting the time of this House moving concurrence motions and using all kinds of procedural dilatory tactics but that is what hon. members from his party have done for most of this session.

What is before the House is a motion that provides an opportunity to decide on a question. When the member talks about particular pieces of legislation, which it seems are of no importance to the Conservative Party, he is talking about investments in the environment, in affordable housing and in cities.

The hon. members are disagreeing with those types of investments and it is perfectly correct for them to do so.

However everything we are proposing are within the Standing Orders and within the rules of this House. Parliament can ultimately decide whether this motion should be accepted or not. I would only hope that the Conservatives will respect the outcome of the vote today.

•(1040)

Hon. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take all members back to election night. We had similar and different experiences in each of our ridings. I remember people congratulating me on being elected. I won fairly comfortably and I was pleased and relieved to be re-elected.

They then went on to say that they were glad it was a minority government because they needed some change of attitude. In my riding they said that they were glad that it was a Liberal minority government.

In the succeeding days, the people kept coming to me and saying how difficult it would be for the Liberals in a minority Parliament to form the government because we would not have the votes we would need in committee or in the House. They told me that we would need to negotiate and work with the other parties but in a different way.

I underestimated that until I came back and realized that it was a very difficult management situation. I also realized it would not be a normal year. I think the people elected us to make this thing work. They elected us to at least get a budget through. I did not expect it to be a normal year and I do not expect a normal vacation at the end of that year.

Hon. Tony Valeri: Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. colleague does reflect what Canadians said on election night, which is that they were looking for this Parliament to work. We have had successful discussions in different areas with various parties at different times, and that is what a minority Parliament is all about.

At times, some parties are not happy with the outcome of what may be a negotiation or a discussion, and that is perfectly acceptable, that is the way minority Parliaments work.

The hon. member across the way talked about respecting the vote. I would only say that if we have a successful vote today on this motion and we do come back next week, I would hope that we

would have constructive debate and ultimately decide on the question.

I would just go back to what is coming up in some of the editorials. In yesterday's *Globe and Mail*, in reference to Bill C-38, it stated:

There is nothing materially useful to add. It's time for Parliament to vote on the bill, and for all parties to let the Commons have its say.

Ultimately, we are here to ensure that the Commons has its say.

Mr. Barry Devolin (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the government House leader answered the question from my colleague from Regina—Qu'Appelle. It is very simple. The government House leader suggested that we all ought to respect the wishes and the votes of this Parliament and yet it has been widely reported this morning that if the government loses this vote today, the government House leader will go back to the Speaker and ask for the same thing, by different means, effectively ignoring what Parliament has asked for today, and ask that we be recalled next week.

I put the question back the same way. If the government House leader is challenging us to live by the results of today's vote, does he have any intention of doing the same thing?

Hon. Tony Valeri: Mr. Speaker, I would respond by saying that whatever I do, whether in this House or out of this House, I would do in the public interest.

Mr. Barry Devolin: I take that as a no.

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Fanshawe, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the government House leader tell us that there has been a very full and democratic debate on Bill C-38 but clearly the game here is to try to fast-track Bill C-38.

Does my colleague consider giving less than 24 hours' notice to witnesses to appear at a committee to be democratic and fair? I speak as a three time chair of the committee on national defence and veterans affairs. Does he consider having four witnesses at a time, meeting after meeting, to be sitting at a committee, which is unusual, to be a normal, democratic practice in this House?

Does he consider the imposition of an artificial June 14 deadline to report to this House normal and fair? I want him to answer that because if he does the Canadian people do not.

•(1045)

Hon. Tony Valeri: Mr. Speaker, it was a committee decision when to report and all parties agreed to the decision to report back on that day. The Conservative member who sat on that committee and who spoke very aggressively against this legislation agreed to report back on a certain day. It was the committee that decided when to report back the question.

With respect to the witnesses themselves, 75 witnesses have appeared with respect to Bill C-38, and there was 28 hours and 20 minutes of debate on Bill C-38.

I grant that not all members are happy with the process, and not all members are going to be happy at the end of the day with respect to the outcome. To suggest that there has not been enough debate on this issue is certainly a personal perspective and one that members are perfectly entitled to and should express on their own.

At the end of the day, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that you have a question here and a vote will be taken on whether we extend the sitting of the House. Parliament will decide that. If Parliament decides to extend the sitting, then we will deal with both Bill C-48 and Bill C-38.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has admitted now that Bill C-38 is its single issue. This is a single issue government. It wants to socially engineer Canada to bring it farther left than any other country in the world. We heard that in committee.

I sat on that committee and it was a sham. The committee was structured in a way that Canadians would not have an opportunity to give input. The number of witnesses who could appear was limited. The committee was stacked with only members who supported the government and they brought closure on that by manipulation. We heard from witnesses that religious freedoms in Canada would not be protected. We had amendments from all parties that the government refused. It called them out of order.

Will the government House leader not admit that there were special promises made to special interest groups? The government funded these special interest groups to come and support same sex marriage. What promises were made to these special interest groups?

Hon. Tony Valeri: Mr. Speaker, no promises were made to any special interest groups. That is a direct response to the hon. member.

When he talks about what the government has essentially done, I can point to the early learning initiative, the new deal for cities, the investments in affordable housing and post-secondary education, the reduction in income tax for lower income Canadians and investments in the auto sector. I can point to a number of different areas, all of which the official opposition disagrees with, and it is certainly within its right to do so. It is the opposition's right to disagree with what the government is doing.

I would just go back to the point that when and if the House is able to decide on whether the motion should pass or not, we will then deal with both the budget bill, Bill C-48, and ultimately Bill C-38.

The Speaker: It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

[Translation]

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

S. O. 57

And more than five members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1135)

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

(Division No. 140)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	Angus
Asselin	Augustine
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélangier	Bell
Bellavance	Bennett
Bergeron	Bevilacqua
Bigras	Blaikie
Blais	Blondin-Andrew
Boire	Boivin
Bonin	Bonsant
Boshcoff	Bouchard
Boudria	Boulianne
Bourgeois	Bradshaw
Brisson	Broadbent
Brown (Oakville)	Brunelle
Bulte	Cannis
Cardin	Carr
Carrier	Carroll
Catterall	Chamberlain
Chan	Christopherson
Clavet	Cleary
Coderre	Comartin
Comuzzi	Côté
Cotler	Crête
Crowder	Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cullen (Etobicoke North)	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies
Demers	Deschamps
Desjarlais	Desrochers
DeVillers	Dhalla
Dion	Dosanjh
Drouin	Dryden
Easter	Efford
Emerson	Eyking
Faille	Folco
Fontana	Frulla
Fry	Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain)	Gagnon (Jonquière—Alma)
Gaudet	Gauthier
Godbout	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond
Holland	Hubbard
Ianno	Jennings
Julian	Kadis
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Khan	Kotto
Laframboise	Lalonde
Lapierre (Outremont)	Lapierre (Lévis—Bellechasse)
Lastewka	Lavallée
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemay	Lessard
Lévesque	Longfield
Loubier	Macklin
Malhi	Maloney
Marceau	Marleau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Matthews	McCallum
McDonough	McGuinty
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McLellan	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy

Speaker's Ruling

Myers	Neville
Owen	Pacetti
Paquette	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Perron	Peterson
Pettigrew	Phinney
Picard (Drummond)	Pickard (Chatham-Kent—Essex)
Plamondon	Poirier-Rivard
Powers	Proulx
Ratansi	Redman
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rota
Roy	Russell
Saada	Sauvageau
Savage	Savoy
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sgro	Siksay
Silva	Simard (Beauport—Limoilou)
Simard (Saint Boniface)	Simms
Smith (Pontiac)	St-Hilaire
St. Amand	St. Denis
Stoffer	Stronach
Szabo	Telegdi
Temelkovski	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	Tonks
Torsney	Valeri
Valley	Vincent
Volpe	Wasylcia-Leis
Willfert	Wrzesnewskij
Zed— 195	

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Batters	Benoit
Bezan	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Carrie
Casey	Casson
Chong	Day
Devolin	Doyle
Duncan	Epp
Finley	Fitzpatrick
Fletcher	Forseth
Gallant	Goldring
Goodyear	Gouk
Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells)	Guergis
Hanger	Harris
Harrison	Hearn
Hiebert	Hill
Hinton	Jaffer
Jean	Johnston
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kilgour
Komarnicki	Lauzon
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mark	McTeague
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Mills
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	O'Brien
Nicholson	Obhrai
O'Connor	Pallister
Oda	Poilievre
Penson	Preston
Prentice	Reid
Rajotte	Richardson
Reynolds	Scheer
Ritz	Schmidt (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Schellenberger	Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul)
Skelton	Sorenson
Solberg	Stinson
Steckle	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Strahl	Toews
Tilson	Tweed
Trost	Van Loan
Ur	Warawa
Vellacott	

Watson
Yelich— 97
Williams

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[*English*]

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SYMBOL FOR THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I have an important statement to make to the House about the result of the vote taken yesterday evening on Motion No. 228, which was moved by the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

As hon. members know, the announced result was a tie, with 143 members recorded as having voted in favour and 143 members recorded as having voted against.

[*Translation*]

On hearing that the votes were equally divided on the motion, the Deputy Speaker correctly gave the casting vote in the negative on the procedural grounds that, since no further discussion on the motion was possible and the House could not reach a decision, it was not for the Chair to decide that the proposal would go forward.

Some minutes after the Deputy Speaker had cast the deciding vote, and after the House had moved on to other business, it was brought to the attention of the Table that a member had been erroneously counted as having voted nay. Further verifications were made to confirm that an error had in fact been made and it was discovered that at one point during the vote several members stood out of sequence and then sat down in quick succession when voting on the motion. In amongst that group of members was one member who had remained seated throughout and had not in fact voted, namely the member for Verchères—Les Patriotes. However, in the confusion, his name had been called and his vote counted with the nays.

[*English*]

Shortly afterward I was informed by the table officers that this had occurred. As hon. members will realize, if this nay vote had not been counted in error, events would have unfolded differently. No tie vote would have occurred, no casting vote would have been required and most significantly Motion No. 228 would have been agreed to by a vote of 143 to 142.

As your Speaker, I always strive to observe the highest ethical standards in the exercise of my duties. Thus, in the present circumstances I have concluded that the decision on Motion No. 228 recorded in yesterday's Journals cannot stand, given our knowledge that it rests on a single incorrectly recorded vote.

Accordingly, I am informing the House that Motion No. 228 has been agreed to by a vote of 143 yeas to 142 nays and I have directed the Table to correct the Journals of June 22, 2005 so that the true decision of the House may be properly reflected in our official records.

Speaker's Ruling

I thank hon. members for their attention during this rather unusual announcement.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean on a point of order.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have considerable respect for the extraordinary manner with which you carry out your weighty responsibilities. It is to your credit that you investigated this. However, you yourself said in your ruling that the vote was taken at a time of disorder so that at least one error occurred, perhaps more, because the members rose in an irregular fashion.

Under the circumstances, I think there is sufficient doubt and question about yesterday's vote to have it retaken in proper form by the House, rather than be changed 24 hours later.

I know that a vote in the House must be beyond all doubt—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Michel Gauthier: I wish the Liberal side would settle down. I am making a point of order. I am doing it properly and according to the rules. If some on the other side care to not play by the rules, two can play the game. The tone of things can change right now. I suggest my Liberal friends settle down. It would be much better. They could let me finish my question.

For a vote of the House of Commons to be respected, it must be beyond all doubt. In my opinion, despite my respect for you, we cannot, 24 hours later, reconsider a vote, state that at least one error has been discovered, perhaps more, and say the vote will be changed. I ask you to review your ruling and allow the vote to be taken again.

If this is the intention of the House of Commons, we will respect it. If the intention of the House of Commons is to reject the motion, you will respect it.

• (1140)

[*English*]

Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is private members' business and I understand the intervention by my hon. colleague. I would leave it strictly to you. The government is not opposed to having the vote again, if another vote is required. Given that it is private members' business, if another vote is required, we will leave it to your judgment to call it.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, with the utmost respect for the Chair and for your decision, I am not challenging the decision in that light. However, I want to support the comments made by the House leader of the Bloc Québécois insofar as whether members voted in the affirmative or the negative on this private member's legislation.

As the hon. House leader for the Bloc Québécois has suggested, it is important that the House very clearly state its opinion on any piece of legislation. Any vote should be above any debate as to whether it was an accurate reflection of the will of the House or not.

Therefore, I would suggest that we retake the vote at the earliest opportunity, even right now.

The Speaker: I do not think I need to hear more on the matter. With respect, I know the other House leader is rising on this matter.

[*Translation*]

The matter was raised by a member. The member indicated that he had not voted. We looked at the tapes and determined this to be the case.

[*English*]

Therefore, there is no question here of there being irregularities alleged throughout the voting process. There was one alleged irregularity. It was drawn to the attention of the table officers, an investigation was made and it was discovered that the member had indeed not voted based on the tapes. It was on that basis that I made the ruling I made a few minutes ago.

However, if the House wishes to have another vote on the matter and there is consent to do so, we can have it immediately. Everyone is here and there is no reason not to proceed with the vote if members wish.

It seems to me that it is not for the Speaker to order this. It is for the members to agree. If there is agreement, we will do it.

• (1145)

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is private members' business and our caucus was divided on the issue. Obviously the House is divided on the issue. We believe we should just get on with business. A vote was taken. You have made your ruling, Mr. Speaker. Let it stand.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, what I was suggesting earlier was to ensure that the House of Commons take votes that are always above reproach.

You even said in your decision—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Michel Gauthier: They will ask us to support the closure motions. They can wait for the next one.

Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I have no problem hearing the hon. member for Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean. Maybe there is too much noise in that corner of the House, but I can hear him just fine from here.

Mr. Michel Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, as long as you can hear me that is all that matters since I am speaking to you. Earlier, in your explanation, you told us you watched the video tapes.

I know that you are aware—and I am sure that you recall—that it is absolutely unacceptable and impossible to use the video tapes to quote what a member said, to discuss someone's attitude or to review any confrontation in this House. The video tapes are not considered official documents and cannot be used.

Government Orders

We cannot do so as MPs and, as the Speaker—you have the same rights as we do—you cannot do so either. Therefore, the only real solution is to retake the vote and we will accept the verdict.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since this is a question of my vote or non-vote, and since you have very clearly cited the confusion that reigned on this side of the House at the time of the vote, I think the only thing to do under the circumstances is indeed to retake the vote so that my vote can be expressed clearly this time without any confusion whatsoever.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is only one point I want to want. A member went to see the table officers in order to tell them that he had not voted. That is clear.

The member may now address the House, if he so chooses. However, it could set a precedent if a second vote were to be held as the result of some confusion in the House. The next time the House is divided 149 to 148, I could advise the Chair that there had been some confusion in the House and call for another vote.

Mr. Speaker, you have made your decision, and it should be upheld.

[English]

The Speaker: I think I have heard enough. There is clearly no agreement on having another vote at the moment. I would suggest that the House leaders have a little discussion about this and if they decide that another vote is in the best interests of the House, we are having votes this evening at 8 o'clock and it can all happen again then.

Therefore, I would suggest that in the meantime we let the House leaders have a discussion, perhaps with the whips, and see if the matter cannot be resolved. However, continuing debate on the matter here is unnecessary.

* * *

• (1150)

POINTS OF ORDER

REMARKS BY MEMBER FOR NEPEAN—CARLETON—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: Yesterday in question period the hon. member for Nepean—Carleton in a question to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services referred to a “Liberal lawbreaker”.

In a previous ruling involving the hon. member for Nepean—Carleton on a point of order raised by the hon. member for Mississauga South concerning remarks made in question periods on Friday, June 3 and Monday, June 6 by the same hon. member, I gave a ruling which indicated that certain matters should be respected by all hon. members in the House. I quote once again from Marleau and Montpetit the same passage I cited in my ruling on June 14 on this matter, which is about a week ago. The quote is as follows:

References to Senate debates and proceedings are discouraged and it is out of order to question a Senator's integrity, honesty or character. This “prevents fruitless arguments between Members of two distinct bodies who are unable to reply to each other, and guards against recrimination and offensive language in the absence of the other party.”

I thought and hoped that the hon. member for Nepean—Carleton would read my ruling if he had not heard it all at the time that I delivered it, and abide by it. I am concerned that his continued use of

intemperate language in respect of members of the other place is in breach of our practices and principles of behaviour in this House as set out in Marleau and Montpetit and as observed for some time in the House of Commons.

It does not behoove us to speak disrespectfully of the other place, as it does not behoove them to speak disrespectfully of this place. I therefore ask the hon. member for Nepean—Carleton to withdraw the words “Liberal lawbreaker” that he used in his question. I urge him to refrain from such conduct in future, or he will face more difficult penalties from the Chair.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, exclusively out of respect for the Speaker and for the rules of this place, I withdraw any language that may have referred to a member of the other place in a negative way.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1155)

[English]

EXTENSION OF SITTING PERIOD

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I gave notice to both the Deputy Speaker and to the Table yesterday that I intended to rise on a point of order regarding the amendment to the motion that was put yesterday by the hon. House leader of the official opposition.

The amendment that was moved yesterday by the hon. member was to amend the government motion in a way that would have the House come back only in September, albeit on a slightly different date than the one on which we would normally return. On the other hand, Motion No. 17 would have the House continue to sit, arguably after today and continuously until the particular program was adopted.

The point I am making to Your Honour is that the purpose of the amendment is the opposite of what the main motion does. Mr. Speaker, I draw to your attention citation 578(2) of Beauchesne at page 176, which states:

An amendment which would produce the same result as if the original motion were simply negatived is out of order.

That has been the rule since June 23, 1990 and it can be found at page 435 of the *Journals* for that day.

There is a further reference in citation 575 which says that a six month hoist or a reasoned amendment may only be applied against the reading of a bill, not against a motion. In other words, we cannot, by way of amending a motion, give an effect which is similar or identical to what we would have by producing a reasoned amendment. My argument is that this is exactly what the amendment does.

I now draw to your attention page 453 of Marleau and Montpetit where it says:

Government Orders

An amendment should be framed so that, if agreed to, it will leave the main motion intelligible and consistent with itself. An amendment is out of order if...it would produce the same result as the defeat of the main motion.

In intent, we have a motion before the House to sit now and presumably have a summer recess later. The amendment would produce a recess now and Parliament would come back in September. That is the exact opposite one of the other.

The argument of the House leader for the official opposition will be that it is marginally different in the sense that in coming back in September, we would come back on the 12th instead of on the 19th. That is still inconsequential to the main proposition.

The fact is that the motion moved by the hon. government House leader is to have us sit now to deal with legislation. The amendment produced is to delay that until the fall, which is the opposite of the main motion.

I would argue that should be examined before the vote is taken tonight to determine whether or not my allegation is correct; in other words, that the motion as amended would be out of order because it does the reverse of the main motion. By voting against the main motion, we would achieve almost 100% of the same result as voting for the amendment, which is another proposition raised in Marleau and Montpetit and in Erskine May in that regard.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would obviously argue that the hon. member is in error. In reality, the amendment does not do the opposite as he said.

I would refer the Speaker to page 453 of Marleau and Montpetit. I believe that an amendment must be relevant to the main motion. Clearly it states:

It must not stray from the main motion but aim to further refine its meaning and intent.

Page 175 of Beauchesne's states:

The object of an amendment may be either to modify a question in such a way as to increase its acceptability or to present to the House a different proposition as an alternative to the original question.

The main purpose of the main motion is to fix the date for the resumption of the House of Commons after its adjournment on June 23, today. That is what the motion is doing. It is to have Parliament and the House of Commons resume Monday, June 27. It says that right in the motion.

I would argue that it is not the opposite to suggest that it should resume on September 12. We are dealing with a difference in dates. The motion says that the House upon its adjournment tonight at midnight will resume on Monday, June 27. My amendment says that it should resume on September 12. That is hardly the opposite. It is just a difference in dates.

I contend that the amendment offers an alternative proposition. It offers the date of September 12 without conditions. It does not enlarge upon the main motion or introduce any foreign matter. Therefore, the amendment is in order.

An hon. member: It is the opposite.

Mr. Jay Hill: It is not the opposite. Look up the definition of "opposite".

●(1200)

The Speaker: I appreciate the argument raised by the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and the response of the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River. It is a very technical argument.

I look at Marleau and Montpetit at page 453, cited by both hon. members, where it says:

An amendment is out of order procedurally, if:—

—and I will quote one of the paragraphs—

—it is the direct negative of the main motion and would produce the same result as the defeat of the main motion;—

Were the main motion defeated, the House would adjourn today until September 19. The amendment would change the adjournment date to September 12 if we adjourn today. In my view it is a difference. It is not the same as defeat. It changes the return date of the House. Accordingly, I find the amendment in order.

When the House last debated this matter, the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River had made a lengthy speech and he now has 10 minutes available for those members who wish to ask questions or make comments on his address.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate our hon. House leader of the opposition who did a magnificent job yesterday in addressing the motion to extend the hours of the House. He touched on an incredible vast amount of points that were pertinent to what is happening in the House and what has been happening over the course of the last few months, especially leading up to the fact that we have to deal with such emotion in the dying hours of Parliament. I think that was his language, as well.

We could have been dealing with these bills earlier if the government had its vision together, if it knew what it was doing. I think the House leader clarified that during his brilliant address yesterday in the House.

The government argues that we have to pass the budget, we have to pass this legislation. In the end, the calendar was not as full, it could have been dealt with a few weeks earlier, but now we are extending Parliament and are costing Canadians a lot more in the end. If in fact we were following the normal schedule, we could have been back in our ridings doing the work that my colleague so adequately pointed out we should be doing under normal operations while functioning as members of Parliament. We could be spending time in our ridings serving our constituents and being at their events. Instead, we are dealing with a motion to take us even further away from our responsibilities in our constituencies when we all know full well in this House that it is a very important part of our jobs.

I would ask my colleague, the opposition House leader, where exactly are we going in the next while? Could he elaborate on the fact that if we had the opportunity to serve our constituents in our riding, would that not be of more value to Canadians?

Government Orders

He touched on that yesterday. I would like to hear a little bit more and maybe he could address the fact that we have already passed Bill C-43 and we are learning today that the Liberal majority in the Senate is holding up that particular bill. The government has argued so strongly that the bill had to pass. It wants to pass Bill C-48 and that is why there is an attempt to extend this sitting. Why is there this hypocrisy now in the Senate where the Liberals are holding it up? Does it not make this whole process irrelevant? I would like to hear his opinion on that.

● (1205)

Mr. Jay Hill: Madam Speaker, it is a bit humbling to hear such praise for my remarks yesterday, but I do appreciate it.

The member raises the relevant point, the central point of the debate yesterday and the debate that is being continued here today, about the extension of the sitting. He is quite right and I laid out yesterday, in defence of not only the members of Parliament from the Conservative Party of Canada but indeed the members of Parliament from the other three political parties, the importance of them returning to their ridings to meet their commitments.

I would suggest that probably all of us have made a commitment to our constituents to be accessible, to be present, to interact with them, and to participate in events in our constituencies. It is important in the whole democratic process that MPs make themselves accessible in their constituencies rather than always being confined here to this place.

One of the things that MPs from all parties struggle with is the constant conflict between constituency work and the work as a legislator in the House of Commons. That is compounded in the case of the whips of the political parties because it is incumbent upon them, indeed it is a big part of their job description, to ensure that members of Parliament in their particular parties are here when they are needed. They have to listen all the time when MPs are caught in that conflict between a commitment to their constituents and a commitment to their party, and their roles as legislators here in the House of Commons.

When we look at Motion No. 17, the government has now taken the extraordinary step of invoking closure today, it is shutting down debate. It is saying that this is paramount, that it is urgent. As I said yesterday, the reality is quite the opposite. There is no great urgency for the House of Commons to incur the costs associated with sitting next week, when our regular adjournment would be tonight at midnight. There is no logical reason why that has to happen, why members of Parliament from all parties have to cancel commitments they have made to their constituents for next week, fully anticipating that the House would be in recess.

As my colleague has indicated, the budget implementation act, Bill C-43, has been passed. The Conservative Party of Canada supported it on June 15. We supported it on May 19. We abstained on the original vote on a budget when the budget was introduced back in March. We took those extraordinary steps because, as I explained yesterday, this party deals with legislation based upon principle. We assess each piece of legislation on its own merits and determine our position.

Bill C-43 is now hung up at committee hearings in the Senate because the Liberals in the Senate will not allow it to proceed until

they get Bill C-48 in order to live up to a political commitment between the Prime Minister of the country and the leader of the New Democratic Party. That is why it is held up there.

That is why Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia are still waiting for their money to start flowing from the Atlantic accord agreement. That is why municipalities all across this country are still waiting for the money they desperately need to improve and repair their infrastructure. The bill is held up in the Senate, not because of the Conservative senators but because Liberal senators are holding it up for ransom until they get the NDP budget and the same-sex marriage legislation forced through this chamber.

● (1210)

I think that is despicable and dishonest. I think that the government should rightfully be condemned and held to account by Canadians for not only doing such a thing, but for trying to blame the official opposition for what is essentially its doing in holding up this important budget legislation on the erroneous charge that somehow we need to extend the sitting in order to force through Bill C-48 and Bill C-38.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a bit disingenuous for the Conservatives to suggest that they want to get back to their ridings and be with their constituents. In fact, I agree. I would like to get back to mine. I am going to have to cancel some very important events I would love to attend.

However, it was also the Conservatives who, during the debate on Bill C-43, used member after member to give the same speech. It was recorded in the *Debates* that they were using the exact same words on a number of occasions. I have no problem with having enough democratic time to debate any motion, but there has to be something added to the debate, some value added for the people of Canada and for the House, for the great expense that is being incurred.

The member suggested that the members opposite make their decisions based on principle, which is good. I appreciate and applaud that. However, in the debate on Bill C-43, the vast majority of Conservative members actually said that the elements covered in Bill C-43, urban transit, foreign aid, affordable housing and reducing money for student tuition, were admirable and in fact thought they were ultimately good objectives.

So, if the Conservatives make their decisions based on principle, why are they not voting for those good objectives that most of the Conservatives agree with?

Mr. Jay Hill: Madam Speaker, the New Democratic Party is trying to call Bill C-48, not Bill C-43, a better balanced budget, but it is really a blowing billions budget as one of my colleagues has said.

Government Orders

One of the reasons why, on principle, we are opposed to this bill, as I laid out very clearly yesterday in my two hour speech, is that not only are there no details, no plans as to how the Liberals are going to spend \$4.6 billion of taxpayer money but the process is a slap in the face to everybody who participated in the budget consultation process prior to the budget when this can be cooked up in a hotel room in Toronto overnight.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will start by indicating to those listening that the Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour of this motion to extend this sitting of the Parliament, provided of course that all stages of Bill C-38 are on the parliamentary agenda before the House adjourns.

We are engaged today in voting on an motion to extend the sitting of the House because this parliamentary session we have just been through has given rise to the worst possible abuses. In recent months there has been an incredible amount of time wasted here in this House.

For the first time in my parliamentary experience, I have seen a government boycotting its own parliamentary agenda. That happened on five separate occasions. For five days of this last session, the government itself has made use of stalling tactics to prevent this House from addressing legislative items submitted by itself. What a curious situation!

The session about to end has been improvised by the government. We would have had the time to pass many more legislative measures if there had been just a minimum of planning. We could have adopted all the legislative measures we wanted, but this very government, whether to save its own skin or out of fear that it was not in line with the thinking of the majority of members of this House, has attempted to distract us from the agenda, and that has created a precedent.

In short, despite our full cooperation, particularly in the final weeks of this session, we are obliged to extend the sitting. We will do so, because I want people to know that we were firmly resolved to support the government and to ensure that the legislative record is not too thin. We are going to accept an extension because of a major bill which the Bloc Québécois members wholeheartedly support. This is a bill to regularize the situation for parties to same sex marriage.

It is a matter of rights. I must say that we have respect for everyone who thinks differently. We understand that some people have difficulty with this reality because of their religious beliefs or certain social situations. But in this House of Commons, we have a responsibility not to let problems in society drag on but to deal with them. Even in difficult situations, we have a duty to say our piece, study the situation, analyze the arguments for and against, weigh everything, and finally draw our own conclusions.

There is a free vote on this bill and people can vote as their conscience dictates. I would remind the House, though, that refusing to pass Bill C-38 means refusing to recognize the decisions handed down by seven courts of law. They have ruled that, by virtue of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is in effect here in Canada, all citizens regardless of their sexual orientation have a right to choose and cannot be discriminated against on this basis. Seven

courts have ruled in this way. Today, the House of Commons must make the Civil Marriage Act consistent with these decisions.

A refusal to pass Bill C-38 would mean that the rights and freedoms of a large number of people here in Canada would have to be suspended.

•(1215)

Rights and freedoms would be suspended. These people would be told, "We know the Charter gives you the right to marry but you cannot do so because we are taking away your freedoms". Most of my colleagues in the Bloc and I do not want to be numbered among those who would suspend the rights and freedoms of a group of people in our society. There is no chance that we would do that.

That is why we not only hope but are eager to ensure that Bill C-38 passes by the end of the extended session. To this end, I asked for written guarantees from the government House leader. Not that our word is not enough, but in this case, in view of the importance of this matter, I simply had to obtain these guarantees in order to be absolutely certain that we would do our work to the end, that we were going to assume our responsibilities right to the end.

This is worth extending the session of Parliament a few days to do justice to our fellow citizens and end this debate that is pitting people in our society against one other. This debate is a matter of conscience for everyone.

I am saying it again: we respect the values, conscience and religious beliefs of all individuals. We have to draw the line somewhere. My colleagues and I will not be able, when the time comes, to suspend rights and freedoms and prevent people having access to a union to which they are currently entitled in most Canadian provinces.

That said, our requirements have been clear. This is our duty, and we will extend this sitting of the House.

There is also Bill C-48, which has a much worse image than Bill C-38. The government wants the House to consider and adopt Bill C-48 during the extended sitting. This bill is an addendum to the government's budget. There is \$4.5 billion in what is being called the NDP budget. However, I think that \$4.5 billion should be called the NDP's price for abandoning Canada's unemployed.

We were in the midst of negotiations. With the NDP, the Bloc and the Conservative Party combined, we were in a position to obtain a major concession for a major overhaul of EI from the Prime Minister—if he wanted to remain Prime Minister. In the Bloc's view, it was a *sine qua non*, an essential condition. Some \$47 billion has been stolen from the unemployed in Canada over the past seven or eight years. The raiding of the fund continues more slowly, but just as blatantly, to the tune of several billion dollars per year.

Government Orders

These billions of dollars should be going to people who lose their jobs, people with families and who go three, four, sometimes even seven months without working. Today, as a result of successive cuts to EI, these people have been left high and dry and therefore unable to feed their families or survive as individuals.

We had the requisite condition, the *sine qua non*. With the NDP we had the necessary strength to force the government to yield on employment insurance. Unfortunately, the NDP members chose to attach an addendum to the budget, on housing and public transportation. Those are good things. We are not saying that this is not money well spent. However, we understand today that it cost the Prime Minister \$4.5 billion to tell the unemployed in Canada that they would not get their EI reform, they would not get their due, they would not get the \$47 billion and they would have to continue living in poverty, because the deal had been made with the NDP. That, the Bloc Québécois cannot accept. For these reasons we will vote against Bill C-48.

• (1220)

We owe this to the unemployed. The Bloc will never trade its demands on behalf of the unemployed for a mess of pottage.

We had in fact insisted on one point. We wanted at least some indication from the government that it intended to resolve the fiscal imbalance. It is costing the governments of the provinces and Quebec very dearly.

All the premiers, the ministers of finance, the political parties in the legislatures and the National Assembly in Quebec, all the parties in this House, except the Liberals, admit it. The experts, Liberal firms and academics admit it: there is a huge fiscal imbalance in Canada.

This imbalance means that the federal government occupies a tax field it does not need. When we tax more than we need, we create surpluses. When we free up a tax field, there are no more surpluses. The provinces, the Government of Quebec and the provincial governments can occupy this field and finally provide their people with the services they deserve.

We are in a difficult situation. As citizens of Quebec and Canada—this is true as well for the other provinces—we are forced to give more than half of our taxes to the federal government and a little less than half to the Government of Quebec. We require services from the Government of Quebec and some as well from the federal government, but fewer direct services such as health and education, which are two major budgetary items.

We want services from the Government of Quebec. It tells us that it cannot tax us any more because we are already taxed enough. However, we are already paying a lot of taxes because we send them to Ottawa. In the meanwhile, Ottawa accumulates surpluses, spending and injecting money into this and that. All is well. Life is beautiful. They announce a \$2 billion surplus but end up with \$10 billion at the end of the year, as if billions just grew on trees. They collect a billion dollars. Well, a billion dollars, those are the taxes of thousands of Canadian families. There are people who are killing themselves with work every day. They earn \$7 or \$8 an hour and pay a dollar a litre for gasoline. They pay a dollar for their gas to be able

to drive their car to work because they are giving so much in taxes to the federal government.

A billion dollars represents the taxes, the sweat and sacrifices of thousands of people in Canada. Here, in the federal government, they think that a billion dollars is good thing. They took in eight more than they forecast. So the government says, “Well, we will put it into the debt” or, “Maybe we will use a few to buy the NDP; maybe we will invest a little bit to help with public transit; maybe we will invest in housing”.

When they are spending money that comes from the sweat of working people, who struggle day after day to support governments, they should have the decency to say, “If I am collecting too much, I will quickly withdraw from the tax field. In so doing, I will only take from people what I need for the services I provide them”.

If another government that provides health or education services needs to go after the product of the sweat and the labour of all these working people, let it. If it does not need to do so, the people will benefit from lower taxes. That is the fiscal imbalance—when the government that needs the least taxes the most, and the government that needs the most does not have enough. This is what we have under this federal system.

We are sovereignists. Our solution is totally the opposite of the one being discussed here, but for the moment it strikes us as appropriate for the government to correct this fiscal imbalance.

When people are expressing their pleasure with the few billion dollars included in Bill C-48, they need to realize that what the federal government owes them is tens of billions, not just a few billion.

• (1225)

It is far more than the few hundred million they would get for public transit. If fiscal imbalance were remedied for good, this would simultaneously solve the problems of the governments that have to deliver services.

Bill C-48 is rather like the biblical story of trading away one's birthright for a mess of pottage. People are lulled into security with gifts, with a bit of money here, a little subsidy there, and then nothing is done about the real problems of the unemployed. Money is handed out left and right, but nothing is done about the real problem of the fiscal imbalance, despite the fact that every politician in Canada, with the exception of the Liberal Party of Canada, acknowledges its existence.

That is the reason we will be voting against Bill C-48. We will be voting against a bill that ought to have included a complete reform of employment insurance, in order to do justice to the poorest members of our society, those who have to bear the burden of job loss.

Government Orders

There should have also been some steps toward beginning to resolve the fiscal imbalance, which penalizes our friends and constituents who send money to government out of their own pockets every day; thousands of dollars more than the government needs to cover the services it must offer. This is what guarantees the government such huge surpluses and allows it then to blackmail the governments of Quebec and the provinces by imposing conditions, holding discussions and giving itself more powers than its own constitution allows. And we are supposed to like this system. We should get down on our knees and thank the federal government for giving back a small portion of the taxes we paid in excess. The government is too greedy because it did not want to cut taxes and did not want to limit itself to the only tax field it needs. Such is the reality.

We will support the motion to extend the sitting, but we will fight against Bill C-48 until the end. However, we will fight in favour of Bill C-38 to settle, once and for all, the terrible debate on same sex marriage that is tearing our society apart.

We will vote in favour of extending the sitting of the House. Since we do not want to waste the time of the House or the taxpayers' money, we hope to resolve these two matters in the next few days, possibly by Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. Then we can take a well-deserved vacation.

• (1230)

Hon. Robert Thibault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House leader of the Bloc Québécois. I am very happy to know that he will support this motion to extend the sitting period.

However, I want to ask him a question about Bill C-48. During the debate on this bill, he raised the issue of the fiscal imbalance. The argument could be made that it does in fact exist, since various provinces are experiencing major difficulties. Under Bill C-43, we reached agreements with two provinces. As for equalization, we have been able to help all the provinces and fix a number of problems.

There are two problems with the hon. member's suggestion. I would invite his comments.

First, not all the provinces are experiencing difficulties. There are two problems if tax fields are transferred from the federal government in order to balance budgets and eliminate surpluses. I will get to the third problem later.

The first problem is that the Government of Canada must pay down the debt. The tax burden and debt servicing costs are taking money away from hard-working Canadians. That is what happens when we increase services to the public instead of sending more money abroad to service the debt.

The other problem is that some provinces, such as Alberta, are recording huge surpluses. Should we transfer tax fields to these provinces? They should be the ones transferring tax room to the federal government, which is paying down a huge national debt, unlike these provinces. This is a major issue. Albertans should not pay higher taxes or give up what they have earned. That is the problem.

Also, the opposition is not, unfortunately, on this side; it is not the governing party. Perhaps, someday, another party will be in power and it will be recording deficits instead of surpluses due to economic and international issues. Would we then take back these tax fields from the provinces in order to eliminate a federal deficit? This creates a serious problem. The federal government, under Mr. Chrétien, already transferred tax points to the provinces.

That is my question for the member.

Mr. Michel Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, the member must know that the history of federal income tax goes back to a world war, the first world war, when the federal government needed resources for the war effort. That was done pursuant to an agreement. Previously, the federal government had no access to personal income tax fields. At the time, the provinces agreed to free up tax room to enable the federal government to carry on what was called the "war effort" and coordinate everything to meet the expenses of the times.

The federal government never returned one cent to the provinces. And that was that. It interfered in services. Then gradually over time, bit by bit, having the resources it had obtained for the war effort and never returned, the federal government found itself with a lot of money and started expanding its sphere of activity. It interfered in this and it interfered in that. Gradually, it kept the taxes and expanded its field of jurisdiction. That is what it is still doing today.

Nowadays, with its surpluses, it is not true that the federal government is just reducing Canada's debt. It is increasing its initiatives in Quebec's areas of jurisdiction, particularly day care and health. It is interfering more and more, when the money should be given back to the provincial governments or the federal government should simply withdraw so that the provinces can collect these taxes for their own needs.

The federal government is allocating money to health as if it came from Mars, when it is actually our own money that is being given back to us. Claiming that it is putting money into health, it tells us that it has to have some say in the matter; that it cannot just give the money to the provincial governments to spend as they please because it does the taxing. But that is the point, we do not want it to. We want it to withdraw from this tax field, recognize that we have problems with health and free up some tax room.

In regard to the wealth of Alberta and the richer provinces, there is an equalization system in Canada that does not have anything to do with the fiscal imbalance. It is a system that makes it possible to provide a certain amount of money. All the federal government has to do is work with the provinces to set up a decent equalization system, rather than fiddling with the system left and right, as it is doing. The government is destroying the equalization system in Canada now by dealing with issues on a piecemeal basis.

• (1235)

[*English*]

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure for me and for all members of Parliament to listen to the points of view of the Bloc Québécois House leader. He is a very passionate speaker and he has made a very passionate case for further reform of the employment insurance program in particular.

Government Orders

My concern is he expressed he could never support suspending the rights of some Canadian citizens. He referred to the whole issue of Bill C-38 and the fact that in his opinion we had to extend the sitting of this Parliament to ensure that Bill C-38, the same sex marriage legislation, was passed because somehow that might affect their rights.

I would point out to the hon. Bloc Québécois House leader that first, same sex marriage is allowed already in his province of Quebec. I am sure he is aware of that. Therefore, Bill C-38 will not affect the rights of gays and lesbians in the province of Quebec. Furthermore, in all likelihood Bill C-38 will sit in the Senate for the entire summer, regardless of whether we extend the sitting of this place. What about the rights of all those Canadians who are very concerned about the religious freedom of expression in our country? Is he not concerned about suspending their rights?

One of the reasons why we want to ensure that Bill C-38 does not progress any further than report stage is because we would still have the opportunity for Canadians to express their opinion on whether the amendments to Bill C-38 would have enough protection for the freedom of religious expression in our country. They could let their opinion be known to members of Parliament over the summer. If the bill were still at report stage come fall, there would be an opportunity for all parties to express their opinion and perhaps improve or further protect religious expression. What about those rights?

Finally, I am very concerned about the precedent we have seen set here today. I would think that the Bloc Québécois House leader would be concerned about the precedent his party has set by supporting closure. What about the rights of members of Parliament to speak in the House of Commons? I think it is the first time, and he can correct me if I am wrong, that the Bloc Québécois members supported the government to bring in closure and shut off debate. What about that awful precedent of suppressing rights?

• (1240)

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, the questions my colleague has raised are interesting ones.

As far as the rights of homosexuals and of those whose religious convictions oppose gay marriage are concerned, I will say that one person's religion must not become another person's law. Everyone agrees on that. We have the deepest respect for those whose religious convictions cause them to oppose same sex marriage. Nevertheless, it has never been our intention in any way to oblige any religion or religious belief to perform religious marriages. This is about civil marriage. No religious denomination must be pressured into having to perform same sex marriages. This decision is up to them, it is their right, and I agree with that.

Moreover, a motion on this has already been presented and supported by us. We would be open at any time to the addition to the bill of provisions stating that no religious denomination shall be pressured or in any way obliged to celebrate or authorize marriages between two persons of the same sex.

This is a civil matter. We respect all religious denominations and their members and we want their rights to be respected. We just do

not want their religion to become the law for others. It is as simple as that.

As far as our support for the closure motion is concerned, it is simple. It is our firm conviction that those who are watching us now, or have followed our actions throughout the year, are a bit impatient to see us pass the pieces of legislation we will be called upon to vote on. No one wants to see Parliament drag on needlessly until August at the cost of \$35,000 an hour. I think people want to see us settle these matters once and for all.

That is why we believe that, as an exception, it is acceptable for us to be able to vote on the bills after a regular debate. This is unusual, I know, but the intention is not to take away anyone's right to speak, only to limit the time of the debates that we are going to be engaged in here. Extension until the end of June seems to us reasonable and sufficient. That is all.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among all parties and believe you would find consent for the following. I move that the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Health, presented in the House on Wednesday, June 1, requesting an extension of 30 sitting days to consider Bill C-420, be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXTENSION OF SITTING PERIOD

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to rise in the House today to speak to the motion by the government House leader about extending the sitting of the House into next week.

I have been listening to the debate since it began yesterday. It strikes me that most Canadians are very used to the idea that when there is a piece of work to be done and it is urgent they are willing to put the time in to do it.

Government Orders

Certainly the issue before us today in terms of the process unfolding is unusual in that this motion clearly says that rather than adjourn the House tonight at midnight we will come back here and do more work. I think we have to examine that as to whether or not this is a legitimate question and whether or not it is a reasonable thing for us to do.

Clearly now we have three parties that are in agreement with this, because the NDP will be supporting this motion, and we have one party that is adamant it will not support coming back here next week to continue working on the two bills that are before us. Yesterday I heard the Conservative House leader talk about ramming it through. I really had to think about that. What does it mean that somehow we are ramming through this legislation?

The fact is that we now have been debating this legislation, both Bill C-48 and Bill C-38, for a period of time. What we are doing here today and what we will do tonight when we vote on this motion is agree that we will continue, in our usual process, to work on these two issues.

What is this question of ramming it through? It seems to me that Canadians understand that we are elected to do a job here and that our primary responsibility is to be in this Parliament, to make it work and to get things done. I think Canadians understand that this is where we should be, in this place.

I also heard the Conservative House leader say there is a misconception that when we leave this place we all go home and go on holiday. He was sort of bemoaning the fact that this is what is being said out there. I would agree with that. I would agree with the comment he made that members of Parliament work very hard in session and when we go back to our ridings we work very hard as well.

The reality is that the Conservative Party members have had a choice. They have had a choice all along. If they are so eager to get back to their ridings, then they have had the choice to deal with this legislation before the ending of the session tonight notwithstanding this motion before us. Clearly that was their choice. They decided not to do that. They decided for their own political agenda to keep dragging this out simply because they are opposed.

I would suggest that the constituents in our local ridings understand why we are here and what we are here to do in terms of passing critical legislation. What they do not understand are the tactics, the manoeuvring and the tactical war games by the Conservative Party members, who are doing anything to stop legislation from going through.

I would agree with others in this place who have said that at some point it becomes an absurd exercise. We know where each party stands on this issue. We know that within a party there are some members who are opposed to same sex marriage, to Bill C-38. We certainly know what the position of the Conservative Party is. The public knows the position of the Conservative Party.

Surely at the end of the day we have a responsibility to be here, to do our work and to make a decision. It is not just about debating something. It is about actually making a decision based on the public interest and based on the feedback we get.

I will respect the decision of Conservative members who want to vote against Bill C-48 and of the same members who want to vote against Bill C-38. I have total respect for the fact that they have a different point of view and they want to vote against those bills. So be it. That of course is their prerogative and it is what they have decided to do. Where I take issue with that fact is that they are apparently wanting to deny the ability of Parliament to keep working to ensure that we can make a decision on these two bills.

● (1245)

What are these two bills about? I believe that both of these bills have to do with the quality of life. I am very proud that we are debating Bill C-48 and that we will have a decision made on Bill C-48, because Bill C-48 produces a more progressive balanced budget. It is a better budget than we saw in the beginning from the Liberal government.

I am very proud of the fact that our leader, the member for Toronto—Danforth, and members of our caucus are supporting this bill. I am proud that we have an agreement with the Liberals to enhance and strengthen that budget and to deliver concrete things to Canadians that have to do with the quality of life.

What are we talking about? We are talking about the fundamentals of affordable housing. In my riding of Vancouver East, an inner city community, and in many other ridings across this country there are more than 1.7 million households struggling to be in affordable housing. They are struggling to pay the rent. They are struggling against eviction notices. Bill C-48 will actually deliver money into affordable housing so that those units can be built. I cannot think of anything more basic and fundamental than that in terms of the ability of all Canadians to have equality and access to quality of life. It is about affordable housing. I am very proud of the fact that Bill C-48 has that element.

Then we get on to the environment and \$900 million. As we have heard many times in this House, every mayor across this country is waiting for funds that will help to deal with the needs of public transit and with other infrastructure needs. This bill will deliver those funds for that priority to municipalities.

On access to education, there is \$1.5 billion. This is not something that we talk a lot about in this House. We can talk to any student across this country who is struggling under a debt load of \$25,000 on average, but sometimes of up to \$50,000 or \$60,000 in debts and loans. We can talk to any student or to a family trying to support that student and they will say this money is not enough, I will be the first one to say that, but this money is essential to ensuring that we provide accessibility to post-secondary education, that we deliver that money, work with the provinces and make sure it is there to reduce the debt load or reduce tuition for students.

Another element of Bill C-48 is our commitment as a wealthy nation to people who are living in poverty in poor nations. Even though we have poverty in this country and even though we have people who are homeless, overall we are a wealthy nation in the international community. Another element of this bill is to ensure that we deliver on our commitment as a wealthy nation to people who are living in poverty in poor nations.

Government Orders

Getting us closer to that goal of 0.7% for international aid and development is a very important step. We have heard criticism from the likes of Bob Geldof and others of the fact that the government has been dragging its feet on that commitment.

Here is a way to ensure that we move forward and that we actually increase Canada's capacity to provide a commitment to the goal of 0.7%. Those are all fundamental things dealing with the quality of life.

As for Bill C-38, there has been a lot of debate in this House about Bill C-38. Our caucus and I do consider it a matter of urgency, along with Bill C-48, to continue to work on that bill.

The justice committee in 2002 and 2003 held extensive hearings across this country on same sex marriage. We have had a legislative committee here in Parliament studying the bill. I understand that there are concerns about Bill C-38, but I think at a certain point there has to be a recognition and a validation that those concerns have been responded to. Bill C-38 for equal marriage does not in any way impinge upon religious freedom. We have had many characterizations of that, yet nowhere has there been real evidence that this bill will somehow destroy that freedom of expression or religious freedom.

In fact, I think the committee has gone to great lengths to ensure that there is protection for religious freedom. I know that there is an amendment likely to come back at report stage which will ensure that organizations having a charitable tax status will be guaranteed that it will continue and they will not somehow be vulnerable to it being taken away. I think the legislative committee and this House have gone to great lengths to respond to the concerns that have been put forward by the Conservative Party in its opposition to Bill C-38.

• (1250)

But at the end of the day I think we have to recognize that no matter what is said and no matter what is done they are unilaterally opposed to the bill. They are unilaterally opposed to extending equal marriage to gays and lesbians. I find that shameful and a completely contradictory policy or platform to hold, one that is contrary to our charter of rights in this country.

In fact, I would argue that one can be opposed to same sex marriage as an individual member of Parliament and still support the bill, because it is about providing equality. It is about providing people with choices. As I have said before, no one is forcing the leader of the Conservative Party to marry a man if he does not want to. The bill is about choice. It is about a choice that two individuals make, whether it is two men, two women or a man or a woman. If they choose to celebrate their love in a civil marriage, or in a religious marriage if they can find a religious institution to do that, that is their choice.

I do not believe that I have the right as an elected member of Parliament to deny the rights of other Canadians to make that choice. I happen to agree with the bill and with same sex marriage, but even if I did not, whether or not I agree with it personally, I do not believe that I have the right to withhold that choice from two consenting adults who want to celebrate their commitment to each other through a marriage or maybe through common law. Who am I and who is any other member here to make that decision?

I think that when we get to that fundamental premise of the bill, this is where we really part company. I can understand the concerns that have been laid out. I can understand how we have to go through that debate, how we actually have to examine what those concerns are about in terms of religious freedom and how we have to respond to those concerns, and I believe that has been done. We are now ready in this House to move on with that debate, to take it into report stage and hopefully into third reading and finally make a decision.

I find it reprehensible that the Conservative Party, for a very narrow partisan agenda, would do everything it can with all of the procedural manoeuvres and all of the concurrence motions to hold up that bill, because I think we are denying people equality.

Let me say that at the end of the day I was elected, like other members of our caucus and other members of the House, to make some tough decisions. We were elected to make some tough decisions. We were elected to work hard. We get paid well for what we do. I do respect the fact that members of Parliament work hard at what they do, but I think it is incumbent upon us and we have a responsibility to deal with the legislation, to not let it drag on and to recognize that the passage of Bill C-48 as a companion bill to Bill C-43 is a critical component of the budget.

The Conservatives can criticize it all they want. They can say that somehow the bill is on a different footing from other bills and that it talks about how the government "may" spend the money instead of "shall". We have gone through all of that. If we want to check the record of the finance committee or what the comptroller of Canada has said about the bill, we will see that he is saying that Bill C-48 is put forward on the same basis as any other appropriations bill. It contains the same kind of language. It is basically a permissive piece of legislation that allows the various departments and ministers to go ahead and make those expenditures in the areas that are detailed.

All of that bluster, argumentation and propaganda about how the bill somehow does not mean anything, or how it is not real, is completely hollow. These are completely politicized arguments to give people the illusion that somehow this is not real. It is real. The bill exists. It is based on a financial basis within the budget bill. It is based on a balanced budget.

I am very confident that the bill will pass and that those expenditures will be made by the various departments. Thank goodness that more Canadians will be better off and have an improved quality of life because they will have better access to education and better access to affordable housing units, and we will have a sense that we are meeting our obligations in the international community.

• (1255)

I have no qualms whatsoever, nor does anyone in the NDP, about voting for this motion tonight for us to be here next week. Yes, I would like to go home. I have a lot of work piled up in my riding, as does, I am sure, everyone else, but our party has a commitment to Bill C-48. We have a commitment for equality for Canadians to see passage of the bill. We are prepared to be here and to work. I also think a majority of the members of the House are willing to do that, even though we know the Bloc Québécois oppose Bill C-48.

Government Orders

We will be supporting the motion and we will be here next week. We will do our work. I hope it does not take too long but we are prepared to be here to do that work and to move forward on both of those bills.

• (1300)

Hon. Keith Martin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member's comments. I have not mentioned the bills that are before us right now, particularly Bill C-38. It might be interesting to address some of the misinformation that is out there.

I spoke the other day with a couple of individuals who are strong opponents of Bill C-38. I asked them a simple question. I asked them what would happen the day after if everyone in the House of Commons were to vote against Bill C-38. They said that same sex marriage would then be illegal in Canada. I told them that same sex marriage would be legal in seven provinces and one territory.

The point is that the bill would not change the country. The bill would merely bring into line the small part of the country that has not adopted what has become the status quo in most of Canada geographically. Some people may like it and some people may not, but for those who oppose the bill, the only rational debate, quite frankly, would be whether or not to use the notwithstanding clause. If those who oppose same sex marriage want to do something about it they would need to consider invoking the notwithstanding clause to override the courts.

The reality is that not a single party in the House has offered that solution. What that means is that a lot of what is going on now in the House is political posturing.

I think it is time for the people who oppose same sex marriage to acknowledge that Canadian society has moved on. The reality is that the horse left the barn a long time ago. Unless those who oppose it are willing to invoke the notwithstanding clause, I would submit that they should simply pass Bill C-38.

My question to the member is actually on international aid. Her party is a strong opponent of point seven. Canada puts a lot more money into aid that is not considered, including humanitarian and peacekeeping operations through our military, which amounted to \$950 million last year alone.

Would the member not agree that the military's humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, on which Canada spends money, should be considered as part of our official development assistance?

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, on the member's first point I would just say that there is no going back. Same sex couples are getting married every day. This is about passing legislation that would make it absolutely clear that same sex marriage is legal and it can be done right across the country. We have had eight court decisions in provinces and territories, as well as the Supreme Court ruling. This is about people's equality and saying to people that we understand the importance of this and we understand that legislation needs to be brought forward to ensure that same sex couples have the same rights to civil marriage as any other couple. It is that straightforward and that simple.

In terms of the member's other question, he should ask his colleagues and the ministers in his government that question. My

understanding has been that the money that is spent in a peacekeeping capacity is not considered part of point seven. We are talking about international aid and assistance. It is a well known fact that Canada has been criticized in the international community.

Bob Geldof has told the Prime Minister not to bother showing up in Toronto at the Live 8 concert because Canada is dragging its feet on its commitment. I believe that should be taken very seriously because Canada is very vulnerable and is at risk in terms of its credibility on this issue. Surely we should be leading the way.

I was very proud that our leader, the member for Toronto—Danforth, insisted that \$500 million for international assistance and aid be included as part of the agreement for Bill C-48, because it means we are moving forward on that file.

The hon. member should go talk to his own ministers, but the Canadian government has not met that commitment. The \$500 million will at least get us part of the way.

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is certainly no shortage of posturing on these issues and, as the member said, it is on their side in abundance.

The member says that Bill C-48 is important legislation. I call it the cobbled together NDP sell out bill as it came on board to prop up Liberal corruption. When the public had an opportunity to hold the Liberals to account, the NDP decided it had an opportunity to advance some of its political ideology that would give it a chance to survive but it basically made the NDP members accomplices.

The members of the NDP keep saying that the money in Bill C-48 will flow, as soon as it passes, to students, to the environment and to other areas of concern, but they seem to forget that the money is contingent on a surplus of some \$2 billion. What confidence do the NDP members have that the Liberals will deliver any of that money considering that they are holding up the main budget bill, Bill C-43, in an agreement to pass the main budget? Again, it is political posturing.

The second question comes from the member saying that we have had a lot of debate on Bill C-38. She talked about the justice committee and about the consultations it had with Canadians. Where is the report from that justice committee? The member knows that the committee was shut down before a report on what it had actually heard from Canadians could be tabled in this House.

The members opposite know that Canadians are not in agreement with the change in the definition of traditional marriage. By and large, a majority of Canadians support the traditional definition of marriage, with other accommodations for same sex couples, whether we call it a civil union or some other arrangement that is recognized.

She says that there is no evidence of a religious infringement. She says that it is not just about celebrating a marriage. I want to challenge the member. She is from British Columbia. Surely she has heard of the case of Chris Kempling, a school counsellor in Quesnel, B.C., who was suspended from his job without pay simply because he wrote a letter to the editor expressing his view based on a Christian world view. What about his section 2 charter rights of freedom of conscience and religion?

Government Orders

If members opposite want to wrap themselves in the charter and defend the charter then maybe they should be defending the rights of people like Chris Kempling to express their views on this issue. If they did that maybe we could have some confidence in expanding and understanding the charter. However when they do not respect clearly written charter rights, how can Canadians have confidence that this agenda will stop with this motion?

● (1305)

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, since when did affordable housing and access to post-secondary education and help for students become a suspect political ideology? We are talking about very basic issues here.

An hon. member: It will be 18 months before you deliver a penny of that.

Ms. Libby Davies: I am just picking up on what the member said. He said that it was political ideology.

If we strip that away, what are we talking about? We are talking about housing. We are talking about education. We are talking about foreign aid. We are talking about public transit. All of a sudden those things are suspect?

I would say that the member has to answer to his own local community as to why he would be opposed to additional funds going into those elements that people are really crying out for.

We should never mind the political ideology. What we are doing in this little corner is being very pragmatic. We want to make sure some things are accomplished in this minority Parliament. It is not about propping anybody up. It is not about condoning corruption. On the contrary, it is about getting something concrete done.

With regard to the gentleman in British Columbia, I totally support his right to freedom of expression and religious expression. How could one do otherwise? If that becomes the subject of some sort of challenge, that is what happens in a democratic society. When things get challenged they go through the courts, which is why we have the charter.

This is not about saying that one right is more important than another right but I think the hon. member is going down that road. We are saying that equality is a fundamental right for gays and lesbians and that freedom of religion is a fundamental right, and they are not mutually exclusive. I think it is a shame that the debate is so often presented in that way by the Conservative members.

Hon. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Motion No. 17 under government business.

What we seem to be losing in all of this is that if this motion is passed it will suspend Standing Order 28(2) which lays out the parliamentary calendar. We have to remember that this was a process adopted in 1982 to give adequate time to allow for Commons business and to balance it off with members' ability to structure their constituency time and their personal lives. This Standing Order provides for certainty in the parliamentary calendar and was adopted by the House after two committees studied it and recommended such a rule.

Members will know that Standing Orders can be changed or suspended by a simple majority vote but before doing so we should

ensure that the change is not imposed in a capricious or arbitrary fashion.

This proposed change to the Standing Orders, as put forward in this government motion, was last undertaken on June 13, 1988. At that time the then president of the Treasury Board, speaking for the then Conservative government, stated, at page 16379 of the *House of Commons Debates* dated June 13, 1988:

I think it fair to say that we especially appreciate that in following this course of action the Government must pay heed to the parliamentary calendar and not change same without having a very reasoned argument for doing so.

That was said in the course of the free trade debate and legislation in 1988 and it was very time sensitive that the House deal with it.

In this motion the government House leader recognizes that the motion before us is in no way a routine or simple motion. In fact, the first line of the motion itself states, "That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice...". This is clear evidence that this is not some limited, ordinary or trivial procedural device. This motion calls into question the general principles of the transaction of public business in an orderly and controlled fashion.

What is being proposed in this motion, in the words of the then member for Windsor West, now the right hon. Herb Gray, is an attempt "to legislate by exhaustion". Mr. Gray spoke out as a Liberal on June 9, 1988, at great length, in opposition to an identical motion to what we have before us. He noted, quoting again from page 16294 of the *House of Commons Debates* dated June 9, 1988:

This is certainly the wrong way to have proper debate and consideration in the House and the wrong way to have public input. I think the government hopes its legislation, to use the words of Bourinot, will slip through "on sudden impulse", and surely that is wrong.

In that same debate on June 9, 1988, the comments of the then member for Winnipeg—Birds Hill, who, ironically, is still in the House as the member for Elmwood—Transcona, were reported on page 16502 of the *House of Commons Debates* as follows:

I feel obliged to get on my feet on behalf of the members of those two reform committees that I belonged to, on behalf of Members now, and on behalf of future Members of Parliament, to say that if we sacrifice this parliamentary calendar to the Government's political agenda—and that is all it is, it is not as if there is any great emergency....

Two lines later he stated:

—I want to make the larger claim that what is at stake is the health of the parliamentary institution itself.

This is no emergency. There is no compelling reason to override Standing Order 28(2). What is contemplated, if this motion were to pass, using the same logic applied by Mr. Gray in 1988, is a dictatorship by the majority.

● (1310)

Let me quote the member for Winnipeg—Birds Hill, now the member for Elmwood—Transcona, from page 16302 of the *Commons Debates* of June 9, 1988:

All of us here, and future Parliaments, will come to rue the day we throw out the parliamentary calendar. We had it there with a little window where we had some sanity in this place. Some members are trying to chuck that out of the window and everyone will pay as long as Parliament continues to exist for the fact that the government put its own political agenda before the health of this institution.

Government Orders

The ultimate irony and tragedy of this motion is that it has as one of its objectives to force non-stop, sometimes 14 hours, daily debate on *inter alia* Bill C-38, a bill which purports to protect and uphold minority rights.

Is it not a tragedy that to protect minority rights, it calls upon the majority of this House to disrespect, to waive, and to do away with the rules which govern the orderly conduct of the business of this House and this country?

That which the government says it deplors, being the alleged suppression of minority rights, by this device, this motion, urges the majority to waive the rules of business and parliamentary law in order that it might likewise suppress what it hopes and trusts will be a minority opposed to its capricious and craven disregard for parliamentary order.

It is the duty of every member of this House to uphold and protect the traditions, the conventions and the rules of this place, as embodied in the Standing Orders. That code has evolved and has been adopted to ensure that the fundamental law of Parliament is upheld.

One can imagine the outcry from the righteous in this chamber if, for example, a majority changed the Standing Orders on quorum to decrease it to three members in the House, or simply change the Standing Orders and do away with question period. All of these things are possible. We could do it by a vote of a majority on a motion in this House, a vote to change the Standing Orders to reflect these types of objectives.

Finally, I want to comment on the wording of the motion itself, which was described to me by a journalist recently as incomprehensible. It contains the word "deemed" twice. It says "—the said motion immediately shall be deemed to have been adopted—". Later on it says "—the House shall be deemed to stand adjourned—".

In legislative drafting, the word deemed is to be avoided. *Black's Law Dictionary*, seventh edition, 1999, defines deem on page 425:

1. to treat (something) as if (1) it were really something else, or (2) it has qualities that it does not have, "although the document was not in fact signed until April 21, it explicitly states that it must be deemed to have been signed on April 14".

Black's Law Dictionary continues its definition, saying:

"Deem" has been traditionally considered to be a useful word when it is necessary to establish a legal fiction either positively by "deeming" something to be what it is not or negatively by "deeming" something not to be what it is...All other uses of the word should be avoided.

Surely, having regard to the lack of urgency around all of these matters, and having regard to the abundance of legal drafters in this place, members should avoid setting such a dangerous precedent which, I would point out, was opposed and decried by the NDP and the Liberal Party in 1988.

● (1315)

It is a precedent which attacks the foundations of the Standing Orders which were laid out and have evolved to give order to the business of this place and which were founded on the basic premises of the law of Parliament. We are doing all of this under the guise of a legal fiction. This I would submit would be adequate reason to vote against the motion.

● (1320)

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's stand on this motion as well as his stand on some of the other issues. Liberal backbenchers do occasionally oppose motions like this. Some of them actually oppose Bill C-38 and we applaud that. However, one of the things that concerns me about them is the fact that it really just amounts to rhetoric. When we really need them to stand up and help us out, they disappear on us.

Whenever there has been a confidence vote, those members have supported the government. We have tried to take this issue back to the people because we think that is a good place for it. That would allow those members to say they oppose the legislation, which would help them out at home apparently, but would also allow them to support the government so they do not have to do anything about that.

Is the member not just posturing unless he actually supports us on a confidence motion to bring the government down in order to bring a stop to Bill C-38? When will he step forward and do that, so that he can represent the majority of his constituents who want him to oppose Bill C-38?

Hon. Roger Gallaway: Mr. Speaker, the question is interesting, but I would point out to my friend opposite that I have been elected four times.

There seems to be some confusion as to what Bill C-38 actually is. Bill C-38 is not a confidence vote, and that is very clear. In opposing a motion which attacks the fundamentals of the Standing Orders, I fail to draw a line to the fiscal policy of the government. My colleague is putting forward an interesting connect the dots idea, but I am afraid I cannot connect the dots.

Conversely, one could ask him about those in his caucus who support the government on Bill C-38. What is happening within that caucus to do anything about that?

Again, I would point out that Bill C-38 is a contentious matter in the country, of that there can be no doubt. Bill C-38 is a matter on which there is no consensus in the House, of that there can be no doubt. In the end, the question I believe the member has asked is a total non sequitur because what has Bill C-38 got to do with Bill C-43, or indeed Bill C-48?

Mr. Barry Devolin (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think I heard the member opposite say that, on the basis of his argument, it would be sufficient grounds for voting against this motion which will come before us tonight. I am curious whether for him it will actually be sufficient grounds to vote against it?

Hon. Roger Gallaway: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to what the member said about not being able to connect the dots between Bill C-38, Bill C-43, and Bill C-48. There is a connection. The only way to stop Bill C-38 is to bring down the government.

Government Orders

Why does the member insist on speaking against some of these motions? He may vote against the one before us today. He knows it is going to pass. If he were to vote against Bill C-38, it would help him out at home. He knows, with the way the present situation sits, it is likely going to pass. Yet, when we actually need him to step forward and say it is important to stop the government with respect to Bill C-38 and Bill C-48, he does not appear.

He has that opportunity on Bill C-48. Tonight is not a confidence motion, but we certainly expect to see him. Hopefully, with him and enough of his other colleagues we could defeat that legislation and then we would not be faced with this foolishness that the government is trying to play on Canadians.

Hon. Roger Gallaway: Mr. Speaker, once again, my friend opposite is somehow tying Bill C-38, Bill C-43 and Bill C-48 together. This is a very simplistic view of the way this works. It is a very simplistic way and the notion of representation is more than just a notion, it is a constitutional obligation upon members of the House.

If one were to take the simplistic view of the member opposite that because someone is opposed to one thing, he or she is opposed to everything, I must ask him if that is indeed the case? How does he reconcile that there are a number of people in his caucus who are supporting the government on Bill C-38, but are opposing Bill C-43 and Bill C-48? How does he reconcile what he says is my inconsistency with the inconsistency which already exists in his caucus?

I find this a fascinating concept. He is saying that the position of his party is to oppose Bill C-38 and apparently that is true. But within their very own ranks, there are people who are supporting Bill C-38. Perhaps when the Conservatives resolve that issue within their own caucus, he could bring that question back again.

• (1325)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the Liberal member. He has many times, as he has today, spoken for his constituents and sometimes against the government.

I congratulate him for the great role he played as parliamentary secretary related to the democratic deficit. I refer all members to the first report on the action plan that was tabled yesterday in the House of Commons, and the tremendous progress the Prime Minister and that member and others have made on the democratic deficit.

The member opposite and the Conservatives now have far more democratic deficit problems than the Liberals. Quite often they have voted in a block against bills that would be good for Canadians, the member included.

The member will see in tonight's vote that the Conservatives will probably all vote against it, whereas the Liberals once again, with the new democracy that the Prime Minister has put in, will vote in different ways on the motion tonight.

The member was talking about saving the rights of the minority, which is great, but doing that in the wrong way by changing parliamentary procedures. Does the member not agree that it is totally within the rights and obligations of members of Parliament to set the rules of Parliament? We are continually amending and changing them. There are provisions, as there are for the vote

tonight, to have special consideration. There is consideration for the Speaker to extend the hours. These are all rules of Parliament. They are set by Parliament and they are changed by Parliament, so I do not see that as undemocratic and I would like the member to comment.

Hon. Roger Gallaway: Mr. Speaker, I never in any way suggested it was undemocratic. In fact, it was Speaker Fraser who ruled on June 13, 1988, that this could be done. I would point out that when one starts waiving or changing the law, in what I regard as a capricious fashion, one has to be careful because the law of Parliament is embodied in the Standing Orders. This is not all of the law of Parliament but much of the law of Parliament.

Of course, this chamber has enormous powers. We could waive a day for impaired driving, so if someone is convicted on that, it is a free day. No one is going to suggest that is going to happen. When there are laws as embodied as the laws of Parliament called the Standing Orders and when we start playing with those or carving exceptions into those laws, where is it all ending?

I refer to the *Debates* of June 9, 1998, when it was the Conservatives who were doing that, but were in fact doing it in a way that in my view had a greater sense of urgency than what we are having now. There will always be a time, when we wrap up for the summer, that legislation will be left sitting until the fall that many or a few would regard as urgent. The case could then be made that we should just keep sitting.

The motion that is before the House which is to be voted on is an open-ended question for members here. Do members want to sit for 95 days or do they think it is right and proper to give to a House leader the right and authority to stretch proceedings out from Monday through Thursday midnight. That is why I referred to that quotation. That is legislating by exhaustion. That is not the right and proper way to debate, to deliberate, and for members to exercise their representative and deliberative powers. I must object to this way of doing business.

• (1330)

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise and speak in this House, although the motion that we are debating today is not one that I am crazy about.

I have the pleasure to follow my colleague, the House leader for the opposition. We were all very thrilled with his performance yesterday in this House. He gave a very bountiful speech, if I may use that word. He was able to address a number of key topics pertaining to this motion that has been put forward by the government, but also a number of other strong issues that we have contention with, the bills that are leading to the extension of the sitting of the House. I speak of Bill C-48 and obviously Bill C-38.

I do not know that I can do as good a job as he did. He spent two hours talking about such pertinent issues and enlightening this place. I know we were all in awe with his ability. I will do my best to speak against Motion No. 17 that we are speaking to today.

My colleague from Sarnia—Lambton spoke in great detail of the precedent that this is setting and the precedents that have been set in the past.

Government Orders

I would not mind taking a moment just to read the motion into the record so that everyone who is following this debate is clear as to exactly what we are debating. The motion reads:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice, when the House adjourns on June 23, 2005, it shall stand adjourned until June 27, 2005; at any time on or after June 27, 2005, a Minister of the Crown may propose, without notice, a motion that, upon adjournment on the day on which the said motion is proposed, the House shall stand adjourned to a specified date not more than 95 days later; the said motion immediately shall be deemed to have been adopted, provided that, during the adjournment, for the purposes of any Standing Order, the House shall be deemed to stand adjourned pursuant to Standing Order 28; commencing June 27, 2005 and concluding on the day on which a motion that the House stand adjourned pursuant to this Order is adopted, the ordinary hour of daily adjournment on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays shall be 12:00 midnight;—

That sounds a little awkward. Obviously for those watching at home it is tough to follow that kind of a motion and really make sense of it. As we heard yesterday, my colleague the opposition House leader put forward an amendment to the motion. It says that according to normal practice, after tonight, the Standing Orders indicate that this House is to rise and be adjourned, and that we strike the rest of the motion that was a little bit confusing and just add that we will return to this place on September 12, which is closer to the current Standing Orders than obviously what the government is proposing.

As my colleague the member for Sarnia—Lambton said, this motion seems to be completely unnecessary, especially as it is changing the Standing Orders for political purposes.

The member for Sarnia—Lambton did indicate that we have seen this before. He rightfully pointed out it was the Conservatives who in fact did that in 1988. Unlike him, I was not in this place at that time, so I do not have the personal account that he was able to relay, but I do recall studying it. I was a student at that time here in Ottawa. I watched what was happening. I remember watching members such as the member for Sarnia—Lambton taking part in debate and being in awe as to what was happening.

I do recall that at that time there was a sense of urgency as to why the Standing Orders were being changed. The issue was free trade. There was some great concern about the timing of that particular bill going through the House and the effect it would have on our economy, and the effect it would have on millions of Canadians, and rightfully so. Clearly, there was a concern as to why the Standing Orders were changed.

We have to address the point that the member for Sarnia—Lambton made, that this attacks the fundamentals of our Standing Orders and the democracy of this particular chamber. The opposition House leader tried to address that point yesterday. Very clearly this is an attack in essence on the way this place functions.

It is frustrating to no end to see those sorts of changes being made by the government. My colleague from Sarnia—Lambton said how vehemently the Liberals opposed the changing of the Standing Orders in 1988 when the government of the day was trying to do it, even though the urgency was definitely there over the time that we have now.

• (1335)

The other thing he was clear to point out which I think we have to be concerned about is that the government is trying to legislate by

exhaustion. If one looks around the chamber there have been high emotions, especially with the issues we have been dealing with in the last few weeks. There have been a lot of different opinions. Many of our constituents are looking forward to the return of their MPs back home to do the business that they would be doing in their constituencies.

If we take a step back we see that we have passed Bill C-43. It is currently in the Senate but as we know, the Senate is holding that up and it is out of our control. There has been a sense of urgency with the budget. We supported it to get it through. There were some measures in it with which we could agree.

Now that it has passed this place, the urgency of passing the budget has been deflated. The fact is that with Bill C-48 and Bill C-38, there is no sense of urgency. We could follow the normal Standing Orders, return back home, hear from our constituents and deal with those two pieces of legislation when we returned as normal under the Standing Orders. Again, to use the language of the member for Sarnia—Lambton, changing the Standing Orders for political purposes is really unfortunate. The Liberals are undermining democracy in this place in doing that. The government says it is necessary.

This is to follow up on the reason we are dealing with this motion to extend the sitting. The government says it is necessary to pass the legislation to allow the budget to pass. As I just said, that in fact is false. It seems to me that the Liberal Party continues to play an absurd game with the very budget bill that the Liberals accused the Conservatives of blocking, Bill C-43.

The original budget implementation legislation which includes the Atlantic accord is now being held hostage by a Liberal dominated Senate, which is really beyond my belief. I do not understand what is going on. The government is obviously dominating the Senate. Why now after all that urgency is the Senate holding up Bill C-43? The Liberals I guess have never been really serious about passing the bill. If we could in fact get that bill through the Senate faster, and let us face it, the Conservative senators have said they would be willing to deal with it in one sitting, we could actually get the money for Atlantic Canada, and for the Canadian cities and municipalities that are waiting for it. It would be able to go through a lot faster and we could in fact have that money flowing before we returned in the fall.

It seems to me there is something going on. It seems the government is informing its senators to hold this legislation up. At the FCM convention which I attended recently with the Leader of the Opposition, I challenged the government. We could have dealt with the new deal for cities and municipalities and with the Atlantic accord if the Liberals were willing to remove that part out of the budget. I think they would have had consent from this House to move those pieces of the budget forward so quickly that the money could have been flowing today to those people who need it. But we are dealing with political games and we did not even hear why the Liberals would not remove that portion of the budget. They have added on this new NDP budget that they are saying is so urgent. Why could they not make that particular change to get the money to the people who need it the most?

Government Orders

It is not just my words or the words of my colleagues. We know how much the government House leader likes to quote from editorials. Let me quote from today's editorial in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* which deals with this very subject. It is very informative about the games that I think the Liberals are playing. It goes like this:

The Liberals delayed passing the Atlantic accord through the Senate on Wednesday, and the Tories say they're doing it in a cynical attempt to put pressure on Tory MPs. The Liberal House Leader in the Senate, Jack Austin, turned down an offer from Conservative Senate Leader Noel Kinsella to go to clause-by-clause consideration of the bill last night. If he had accepted the offer - a fairly common procedure - Bill C-43 would have passed today, the bill could have received royal assent this afternoon, and Nova Scotia and Newfoundland would have immediately received big cheques from offshore revenue deals reached with the Liberal government. The deals, reached after months of tough negotiations, are worth \$830 million to Nova Scotia and more than \$2 billion to Newfoundland, but the federal Finance Department can't cut the cheques until the budget bill is passed. The Liberals don't want the Senate to pass C-43 until the House passes C-48, the \$4.5-billion NDP budget amendment, Mr. Kinsella said.

• (1340)

"It's pretty bad that the Liberals would not accept putting through to royal assent their own budget bill". The Liberals added Bill C-48 to their budget to win NDP support, and the Tories are strongly opposed to the new social spending it contains. When it went to the House for second reading, the Speaker had to break the tie to get it passed and prevent the Liberal government from falling.

This is an editorial that was written today in the *Halifax* newspaper. It basically says what games the government is playing when in fact we could have this money flowing. It is still holding up the bill in the Senate. It does not make a lot of sense to us who are ready to get that money flowing, and we could actually get out of this place without changing the Standing Orders, the motion that we are debating today. It begs the question, what are the Liberals doing? They have a majority in the Senate. It is their budget. What are they afraid of?

It continues to be demonstrated to us and I think to Canadians that the only reason they keep playing these games is not because they are legitimately concerned about a lot of these issues that they say they are, but because they have a serious issue about hanging on to power. They want to cling to power. They are playing games to do that. They are cutting deals with people in order to save their own political skin.

We are dealing with this motion today, because they have actually neglected their responsibility over the last few weeks in getting this legislation through the House a lot faster.

Our party is strongly opposed to the two major bills, as mentioned by a number of our colleagues, what we call the dangerous and reckless spending in Bill C-48, but also the same sex marriage legislation.

As the official opposition we are not in the business of helping the government pass legislation that we do not think is in the best interests of the country. That is what our House leader said yesterday. We will vote against any extension of the agreed upon calendar so that the government can make up for its own mismanagement of the legislative schedule. We will have as many members as possible in the House to vote on these bills, including the confidence vote on Bill C-48.

I would like to talk for a few minutes on the spirit of Motion No. 17 and why this motion as it relates to Bill C-48 needs to be defeated.

Bill C-48 outlines a host of new spending. I mentioned that in the earlier part of my speech. Canada could have more and better paying jobs, a much higher standard of living, but Ottawa taxes too much and spends too much. We have seen that from the amount of the surpluses over the past number of years. Since 1999-2000, program spending has gone from \$109.6 billion to \$158.1 billion, an increase of over 44%, a compound annual growth of 7.6%, when the economy itself managed to grow by only 31.6%, a compound annual rate of growth of 5.6%.

We cannot support this motion because it is the curse of the Liberal government that once the Liberals have our money, they cannot resist spending it even faster than the economy is growing. It is not surprising that there is so much waste within the government.

I would like to identify a couple of examples of waste which point out even stronger to a party like ours, the opposition, why we should not give a blank cheque to the government in Bill C-48. I do not have to remind the House and Canadians that the firearms registry is a perfect example of that. The government said it was going after the criminal use of firearms. In the end, we had a piece of legislation that was supposed to cost Canadians \$2 million. In fact there are estimates that it is reaching, if not exceeding, \$2 billion.

How can there be that kind of exaggerated cost unless there is not a plan in place to deal with it, not to mention the annual cost of that particular program. What sort of value has come back to Canadians on that? Can we actually say we have prevented crimes with guns, that we have actually gone after the criminals and not the duck hunters? I do not think we would find even very many members on the government side who can claim that it has been a successful program. That again came from wasteful spending and without having a clear plan as to how the government should spend the money. The government is asking us to give it that trust again in Bill C-48.

We also saw an unfortunate situation. We know what the problem was in Davis Inlet where we saw children high on gasoline and a lot of other social problems. What was the answer? It was to throw money again at that problem without a real plan.

• (1345)

Now the community has been moved not too far away from where it was originally located, at a cost of about \$400,000 per person and the problems have continued to follow. Unfortunately, we have not seen the improvements that we would have liked to see from this kind of social spending. Again, it is the lack of a plan and a knee-jerk reaction to spending.

Government Orders

All of us know how close we came in 1995 to losing the country because of a lack of vision from the current government. What was the solution? Let us throw money at Quebec and try to buy votes through the sponsorship program. What did we get as a result? A complete waste of taxpayer dollars.

We have what we all know as the sponsorship scandal and the continuous fiasco surrounding that with inquiries. We have seen the continuous corruption on the other side. It just proves the point further that it is difficult for the opposition to give free rein to a government which has demonstrated time and time again its inability to manage taxpayer dollars.

I have given the House a few examples here today. I think we could even point to more because more seem to be coming up on a daily basis. We have seen what has happened in Technology Partnerships Canada. My colleague from Edmonton—Leduc has been pressing for an audit to be done on that department. We have seen other examples of that sort of waste. Therefore, it becomes very difficult for us to say we can endorse Bill C-48.

In the years 2003-04 and 2004-05, the Liberals could not help themselves. Program spending rocketed by almost 12%. Per capita program spending by the federal government has reached its highest point in over a decade and it is scheduled to go even higher in the future.

Before we pass the motion and allow more time for Bill C-48 to be debated, perhaps we should look at the record when it comes to budgeting practices of the Liberals. I have talked about the spending, but their budgeting is not that much better.

In 1996-97 real federal program spending per capita was just over \$3,000. It will have risen to just over \$4,000 in 2005-06. That is an increase of about \$800 per capita in volume terms, or just over \$3,000 for a family of four. Current Liberal-NDP spending plans will take that spending to almost \$4,600 by 2009-10. That is a projected increase of almost \$1,200 per person.

Increases in government spending do not necessarily point to solving problems or even getting better results for Canadians through their services. I think most Canadians today would agree. If we look at our health care system and other areas of our social fabric, they have all been damaged by the way the government has managed its budgets as have the services that Canadians continue to get back. Yet they are taxed higher than ever.

It is incredible that the finance minister continuously gets up in this place and says that the government has delivered tax relief to Canadians. If we ask Canadians if they have seen any real tax relief over the time the Liberals have been in power, they will answer quite overwhelmingly that they have not seen anything realistic or substantial handed back to them. Clearly this is something that needs to be addressed. It continues to prove the point why it makes it so difficult for us to support Bill C-48.

We have always believed on this side of the House, especially when it comes to the surpluses, which my House leader spoke to yesterday, that a surplus is the result of the government taxing too heavily. Some of that money should be returned to Canadians, especially when the value for the services is not coming back to them the way it should.

We feel that \$1,000 more in the pocket of an average Canadian will go a lot further than in the hands of the government, which seems to misspend their tax dollars. A great example of that would be a \$1,000 of savings put into an RRSP, which would initially be worth \$1,160. After 30 years, at a rate of 5% return, \$1,000 a year invested in an RRSP would be worth nearly \$81,000. A \$1,000 invested outside of an RRSP at a 5% rate of return would be worth even more in 30 years.

Clearly, we know the government has lost sight of this in its wild attempt to tax, spend and often give very little value back to Canadians, as we have seen. We maintain that we should look at an option of taking the surpluses and looking at effective and meaningful ways to give that money back to Canadians. They are struggling on a daily basis. Many of them cannot make ends meet. Why not give that money back to Canadians so we can have a more productive economy, better paying jobs and Canadians can take care of themselves. We believe hard work should be rewarded. Unfortunately, we are not seeing that.

• (1350)

For the reasons I have identified, it is clear to us in the opposition that we cannot support the motion to extend the sitting of this session on the basis of the wild spending proposed in Bill C-48. It also is an attack of democracy in the House and on the Standing Orders, which we should all be respect and follow, as agreed to by all members in the House.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member covered a lot of ground. He mentioned game playing. I suspect we all have to admit that games have been played on all sides for some time now. It is probably reflective of what will go on as we move forward.

I would prefer to argue the matter of the calendar of the House. Back in 1984 Parliament decided to have a fixed calendar so real people, including MPs, could manage their lives and make plans because of the unique circumstances in which we found ourselves. In the cases where there were extended days, they were with regard to one item, not many items. Would the member care to comment on that?

Even though the motion says that we could have up to 95 extended days, we have many bills on which we could work. I guess the real question comes down to how we interpret public interest. I suggest to the member that public interest is applicable in everything that we do. That is public interest.

It has to be interpreted even further, to the extent that it makes a meaningful difference. It is not always to the benefit of all, but it may be the right thing to do. The law must be in place to take care of a situation.

Maybe it is time for a little penance. When we do our jobs here, the rules we apply should look to the history and intent of the changes made in the Standing Orders. I suggest that anything going on right now that is picked up after the resumption on September 19 would have no material impact on the ultimate effect or benefit of any of the legislation still pending.

Government Orders

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Mr. Speaker, we heard the intervention from the member for Sarnia—Lambton. He identified clearly in his speech, and I tend to agree with him, that there was a normal schedule under the Standing Orders for this place to sit. If there were an actual urgency with these bills, which is why the government has proposed the extend sitting, then maybe there would be a different reaction from a number of members in the House.

If we look back at the precedent that was set in 1998, and I talked briefly about it in my speech, we would have been able to say that if it were an issue that was threatening our nation and something needed to be determined at a particular point in time, then we should extend the hours. We have a responsibility in the interests of Canadians to deal with urgent legislation.

That is not to say that what we are dealing with is not important. What the government is proposing still needs to be discussed, but do not attack democracy in this place. That is the point. We have Standing Orders in place and we all follow those Standing Orders. We all work together in order to achieve the schedule has been presented. In trying to change those Standing Orders, without any real sense of urgency, is an attack on democracy in this place and on the ability for members of Parliament to do their jobs.

We do not quite understand why the government at this point in time is rushing to get legislation through. We can easily deal with as soon as we come back in the fall. We can get to the business in our constituencies, we can listen to Canadians and do the things we have to do in our ridings and not take on an added expense of extending the hours of this place just for political purposes for the government. That is something that astounds me, especially when we could come back and deal with a lot of these things in the fall.

• (1355)

Mrs. Bev Desjarlais (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify something for my colleague from the Conservatives, who is very upset with Bill C-48 that somehow will cost the Government of Canada so many additional dollars.

The Conservatives supported Bill C-43 when it had the corporate tax cuts of \$4.6 billion. They had no problem with that. Now he used outright the term that the Conservatives do not support social spending. Those were his words. It was okay to give \$4.6 billion in corporate tax cuts, but no dollars back to Canadians.

There is no question that all Canadians will benefit from the changes in Bill C-48. By improving dollars for affordable housing, there will be construction throughout the country. Small and medium size businesses throughout the country will benefit from the building of homes and improvements to homes. It is not as if it will just be the people who finally get to have some decent housing around them. It will be those small and medium size business in rural Saskatchewan, remote Manitoba, all over. Everybody will benefit. The dollars for education benefit everybody throughout Canada.

I know the budget is not supporting the people about whom the Conservatives seem to care. It is not supporting corporations. How can they possibly stand here and say to Canadians that they do not value them as much as they value corporations?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can twist my words any way she likes. If she wants to talk about hypocrisy, let us

see who voted against the first budget introduced in the House, by way of Bill C-43. I strictly remember the NDP members stood and asked what they would get out of it. They were not prepared to support the government until it gave them something, which it did in Bill C-48. They voted against Bill C-43 initially until they got their fair portion of whatever they thought was important.

Clearly, when it comes down to those issues that she raises, we have always maintained that it is important to have a responsible level of social spending. However, do I trust the government across the way to deliver those sorts of services? More and more Canadians are becoming cynical about the way the government spends money and the types of services it delivers back to Canadians.

The fact that the NDP members are now propping up a corrupt government that continues to maintain this spending, which often does not result in positive results for Canadians, is beyond me. It is beyond Canadians that they would be so irresponsible to do so. The only thing we have been proposing is responsible spending with responsible results.

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member hit the nail on the head. We have the NDP fudge-it budget, which is about an illusion. The member for Sarnia—Lambton talked about legal fiction, the use of the word “deemed” in the motion, about making something seem to be something it is not, creating an illusion.

The NDP will not receive any of that money. We know it is contingent spending. It is about creating an illusion and talking about all these things. It will not see any of that money before an election. It is the same thing with Bill C-38. The members cannot answer the protections for religious rights in there.

The member earlier said that there were 28 hours of debate in the House on changing an institution that has served this nation and others for thousands of years. What is the rush?

Could the member comment on how tax cuts, to which members over there are objecting, stimulate the economy, create productivity and competition, which makes our economy competitive worldwide, and allows us to have the jobs that keep their members happy?

Mr. Rahim Jaffer: Mr. Speaker, clearly one of the things that we have said consistently in the official opposition is there has to be a significant balance of tax relief to Canadians who are so overtaxed. Many of them are unable to make ends meet. We have always said that we would not only help Canadians but would help stimulate the economy as well. My colleague is correct. This is one of the reasons we are opposed to Bill C-48.

One thing is beyond me, and I identified that as an inconsistency in my speech, especially with regard to the government. It is the fact that it wants to try to rush Bill C-48 through the House. We have had extensive debate on Bill C-43 and we supported it. Now that the government has the opportunity to start delivering some of the money encompassed in Bill C-43 to Canadians, the Liberal-dominated Senate is holding up the legislation for no clear reasons.

Our Conservative senators have said that they want to get Bill C-43 through the Senate in one sitting. They want to build on what is in the bill to get the money to the communities and cities and to people who have been waiting for it in areas where Canadians have been struggling. Why are the Liberals holding that up?

Now the Liberals want to extend the sitting of this House to deal with Bill C-48 and Bill C-38, but they have no urgency to get Bill C-43 through the Senate.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[Translation]

NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to congratulate the Liberal government on its recent evaluation of the national child benefit. The report, entitled "Evaluation of the National Child Benefit Initiative", confirms that this measure is reducing both child poverty in Canada and its serious effects.

Since 1998, the Government of Canada has consistently increased benefits for children and the family. Between now and 2007-08, annual federal benefits for Canadian families with children—provided through the Canada child tax benefit and the national child benefit supplement—should reach \$10 billion.

Progress has been made in reducing child poverty, but the Liberal government recognizes that a permanent strategy and ongoing efforts are required in order to achieve the goal we have set. Clearly, children and their families are a priority for our government.

In closing, I take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day.

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[English]

SUMMER BARBECUE TOUR

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in his usual lame duck fashion, the Prime Minister gave our leader advice on attending barbecues, but I have some advice for the Liberal and NDP leaders as they run the barbecue gauntlet this summer.

Now that the mad as hell tour is history, the Prime Minister must begin the caught red-handed tour. He pledged to wait until Canadians knew all about ad scam before his last election call. Now that they know more than he wanted them to, he will have to come clean for the next election. He will certainly want to get

S. O. 31

himself in shape for that run. Luckily, a visit to his favourite private clinic will not take long; waiting lines are for suckers. And dieting should be easy: he can eat all the crow he wants, followed by servings of humble pie, washed down by a big can of whoop-ass.

The NDP leader must go on the sorry as hell tour. It is Canadian taxpayers who will be sorry as they remember the Liberal-NDP budget disasters of the early 1970s. His dilemma: should he peddle his assets on his bike or have his chauffeur polish his Kyoto-friendly Cadillac? And of course, should he eat his magic bean budget salad with his silver spoon?

* * *

VETERANS

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today a plaque will be unveiled at the Canadian War Museum to commemorate the contribution made by 300 West Indian men and women who joined Canada's armed forces to fight alongside Canadians during the second world war.

[Translation]

These men and women came from nine islands in the West Indies. After their military service in Canada, three became prime ministers of their native countries.

[English]

Also, I would like to pay special homage to Mr. Owen Rowe for his role in ensuring that Canada's new war museum officially recognizes the contribution made by these West Indian men and women. Unfortunately, Mr. Rowe passed away on April 16.

[Translation]

This plaque is the result of efforts by a number of veterans to obtain national and international recognition for West Indian veterans' service to Canada.

[English]

I am proud to be participating today in such an important historical event.

* * *

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on May 11, more than 350 dairy farmers delivered 28 bags of skim milk powder to the four ministers concerned with supply management and to the Prime Minister, to get Canada to use article XXVIII of the GATT in order to prevent unrestricted imports of several dairy ingredients.

S. O. 31

The Minister of International Trade should be aware of the risk these imports represent to supply management and should use article XXVIII of the GATT.

While the minister is telling us that now is not the time to institute new tariff quotas under article XXVIII, unrestricted imports of dairy ingredients are threatening our supply management system.

The minister must take action immediately to limit the imports of ingredients that are replacing domestic milk and to really strengthen the supply management system.

I also want to take this opportunity to wish Quebeckers a happy St. Jean Baptiste Day.

* * *

[English]

AIR-INDIA

Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's Prime Minister is in Ireland today to mark the 20th anniversary of the Air-India bombing.

In marking the tragic events of the Air-India bombing of 20 years ago, we must continue to ensure that we learn from the lessons of the past so they are not repeated in the future.

Numerous changes to our security measures have taken place, and the police continue their investigation. The government is seeking independent advice on outstanding questions related to the destruction of Air-India flight 182.

In doing so, the independent adviser to the government, Mr. Bob Rae, is consulting extensively with family members who lost relatives in the bombing. By listening to their concerns, Mr. Rae will aim to advise the government on what remains to be learned about this terrible tragedy.

We owe it to the 329 victims and their families to ensure that we draw on the important lessons of this terrorist event to punish those responsible and ensure such an event never happens again.

* * *

● (1405)

HISTORICA NATIONAL FAIR

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Historica National Fair is a truly national event, hosted each July by a different community in Canada. From July 11 to July 18 this summer, Saskatoon will have the honour of showcasing its historical treasures. The Bishop James Mahoney School in my constituency will serve as accommodations and headquarters for the week.

A total of 165 students between the ages of 10 and 15, representing all provinces and territories, will take part in a special week of sightseeing, historic tours, hands-on workshops and special events. The national fair is a unique opportunity for students to explore a part of the country they might otherwise never have a chance to visit. Also, this event inspires lasting memories, new friendships and experiences, and it creates and strengthens connections between young Canadians.

During the one day public exhibition, students proudly share their outstanding history projects with the general public and with each other. I therefore invite everyone to come and meet these young delegates from across Canada at the exhibition, which will take place on Friday, July 15 at the Saskatoon Field House.

I extend congratulations to all the delegates and many thanks to the organizing committee and the numerous volunteers. I invite them to have fun and enjoy their stay.

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[Translation]

BLAINVILLE LIONS CLUB

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to a founding member of the Blainville Lions Club. For the past 13 years, Lion Réjane Picard has been committed to humanitarian and social causes and her dedication is an inspiration to all Lions Club members in the lower Laurentians.

Recipient of a Melvin Jones fellowship award, Ms. Picard, who held various positions including first, second and third vice-president, president and treasurer, and then contributed her time to several committees and various fundraising campaigns, deserves our utmost respect.

The members of the Bloc Québécois join the members of the Blainville Lions Club in expressing admiration and congratulations for Lion Réjane Picard. I am especially proud to represent in the House of Commons the woman who sponsored me to the Blainville Lions Club.

* * *

[English]

AIR-INDIA

Mr. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate that we take this time to commemorate the lives lost 20 years ago today and remember the victims of flight 182.

As indicated by the Deputy Prime Minister, flags at all federal government sites are flying at half-mast today. The Prime Minister has named June 23 as a national day to remember victims of terrorism. The government is also committed to establishing a permanent commemorative site in Canada.

Each of these steps is an important recognition of a significant tragedy that took place in Canadian history. We must learn from this terrorist event to ensure it never happens again, but on a personal note as well, we must remember the victims.

* * *

ONTARIO PORK CONGRESS

Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize a very important event taking place this week in my riding of Perth—Wellington.

The 32nd Annual Ontario Pork Congress is under way and the always popular event is showcasing the pork industry with the theme "Strive to Thrive in 2005".

The pork congress is a festive event which profiles the future of the industry while celebrating the past. It is a great mix of tradition and innovation.

This past Saturday, I joined Ontario pork producers at their gala dinner in Stratford. I want to extend my best wishes to President John Crowley and all of the pork producers and suppliers attending this week's pork congress.

I ask members to please join me in recognizing Ontario's pork industry and the safe and delicious food it produces.

* * *

AIR-INDIA

Hon. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we reflect on the tragedy of the 329 lives lost on Air-India flight 182.

In the 20 years since the bombing, numerous inquiries, investigations and trials have led to many improvements in the safety and security of Canada's air transportation system.

• (1410)

[Translation]

We have completely modified our national security structure to focus on terrorism, as well as improving the collaboration between security and intelligence services such as the RCMP and CSIS.

[English]

To prevent terrorist attacks, the government has passed the Anti-terrorism Act and the Public Safety Act and has integrated numerous public safety strategies through the national security policy.

[Translation]

These initiatives show the government's commitment to vigilance in its efforts to protect Canadians. We have learned from the tragedy that occurred 20 years ago, and must continue to put into practice the knowledge we have acquired.

* * *

[English]

ZONOLITE INSULATION

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I inform the House that Zonolite insulation has claimed another life. Yesterday morning, my constituent Rebecca Bruce died of mesothelioma, a cancer caused by exposure to asbestos. She was only 47 and will be sadly missed by her husband Dennis and her two sons, Sidney and Shawn.

Rebecca's sister, Raven Thundersky, has struggled for years to have the health risks of asbestos-laden Zonolite addressed. They grew up on the Poplar River Indian Reserve in a house insulated with Zonolite, and now this Zonolite is killing them at an alarming rate. Rebecca is the fourth to die in a family of eight.

Today we honour the spirit of Rebecca Bruce, another aboriginal woman forced to live in substandard housing, another aboriginal woman murdered by the W.R. Grace Company, which sold Zonolite long after it knew it was contaminated with deadly tremolite asbestos.

S. O. 31

Tomorrow, in her memory, we pledge to fight for all asbestos victims and to continue the fight to protect Canadians from deadly Zonolite insulation.

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[Translation]

ST. JEAN BAPTISTE DAY

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, in accordance with tradition, Quebec will be celebrating St. Jean Baptiste Day.

The history of this celebration goes back to Gaul, where there was a tradition of lighting fires throughout the night of the summer solstice, that is, the longest night of the year. The tradition was carried on in France until the Revolution, and crossed the Atlantic to take root along the shores of the St. Lawrence.

Proclaimed the official holiday of Quebecers in 1834 by the St. Jean Baptiste Society, the day has held special meaning for all Quebecers ever since.

The Conservative Party caucus joins with me in wishing a happy St. Jean Baptiste Day to all Quebecers everywhere.

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QUEBECKERS' NATIONAL DAY

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this evening and all day tomorrow, Quebec will be swept by a tide of happiness, laughter and joy as people celebrate being Quebecers of all origins.

In the Magdalen Islands, Blanc-Sablon, Abitibi, Pointe-à-la-Croix, Quebec City, Montreal, Verchères, Sherbrooke, Trois-Rivières and Rivière-du-Nord, Quebecers throughout Quebec will celebrate their national day with pride.

This year, we are honouring the songs of Quebec and those who create and perform them. As we know, Quebec's history, culture and language are intimately connected.

For over 400 years, as we have moved toward affirming our national identity, our artists have lent their words, rhythm and voices in order to express who we are and reflect our emotions, both the highs and the lows, and our hopes as well.

Quebec is music to our eyes and ears. We will say it and we will sing it. Happy national day, Quebec.

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[English]

MULTICULTURALISM

Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are an increasingly diverse population. We can be and should be proud of our multicultural heritage. We have a tremendous amount to learn from each other and from how the diverse communities of our nation contribute to the building and strengthening of our nation.

Oral Questions

Diversity is one of our nation's greatest strengths. The powerful and peaceful combination of so many people with so many different traditions, languages and beliefs is truly an inspiration to the world. All Canadians have an integral role to play in this source of pride and a commitment to further strengthening it.

June 27 is Canada's Multiculturalism Day. Canada is the world's first official multicultural country. This important day is going to bring together Canadians to celebrate our shared values and to strengthen our atmosphere of tolerance, understanding and respect. I invite all Canadians to participate in this celebration on June 27.

* * *

• (1415)

AIR-INDIA

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, June 23, marks the 20th anniversary of the Air-India bombing. To date it remains Canada's worst terrorist attack and to date we still have no answers. Over 320 people are dead and no one has been brought to justice.

I rise not only for those who were killed, but for the families and loved ones who remain and whose lives were changed forever. In an instant children lost their parents. Husbands and wives were split. The magnitude of this tragedy is immeasurable and without words.

In 1999 I attended the memorial service in Ireland. This year the leader of the official opposition is attending the memorial in Ireland on behalf of the Conservative Party.

On behalf of my colleagues in the House, I extend our deeply felt sympathy to the families of the victims. The Conservative Party supports recognizing June 23 as a national day of mourning for victims of terrorism.

* * *

AIR-INDIA

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister said that the Government of Canada is committed to doing all it can to ensure that tragedies such as Air-India 182 never happen again and this is good. Bob Rae noted that the crime was planned and executed in Canada, something that our society cannot ignore.

Canadians are a diverse people coming from nearly every corner of the globe. In many parts of the world religious, ethnic and racial hatred and xenophobia date back centuries, even millennia.

If we are to build a safe, peaceful and respectful society, those old hatreds must be left behind. There must be zero tolerance for acts of violence and hatred. Governments at all levels, in partnership with civil society, must play a stronger role in promoting a tolerant multicultural society and ensuring social cohesion.

This is the best way to honour the lives of the 329 people who were murdered 20 years ago today.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE BUDGET

Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, clearly the Prime Minister was not serious when he said that it is time to put politics aside and pass the budget. The Liberal leader in the Senate is cynically playing politics with the government's own budget bill by holding up its passage. It proves again that the say anything, do anything, deceitful Prime Minister will do anything to cling to power.

The Prime Minister has his leader in the Senate deliberately slowing down the passage of the budget bill until the NDP add-on Bill C-48 passes. His mismanagement of the House has led to the impasse.

Why is he now punishing Atlantic Canadians to achieve his own partisan political gain?

Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members know, we do not speak for the other place. I would suggest to the hon. member that he call his hon. colleagues in the other place and perhaps get the same cooperation that he seems to be suggesting we are getting on Bill C-43. Perhaps he could ask for that same cooperation so that the Senate can deal expeditiously with Bills C-48 and C-38 when they both get to the Senate.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that a House leader would suggest that the Senate could deal with a bill that it does not have.

Conservative Senators proposed fast tracking Bill C-43, the original budget, so that it could be passed in one day. In fact, that would have meant that the offshore royalties to Atlantic Canada could begin flowing today. It is costing Newfoundland and Labrador \$132,000 a day and Nova Scotia \$55,000 a day in lost interest.

Why is the Prime Minister allowing his Liberal dominated Senate to punish Atlantic Canada by delaying the benefits of the Atlantic accord? Will the government pay the lost interest to those provinces due to his deliberate disingenuous dithering?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year the budget was presented in the latter part of March and the major budget legislation was indeed passed through all stages into law by about the middle of May.

Opposition members have had eight weeks to deal expeditiously with this legislation. They have stalled, filibustered and obfuscated at every point. It hardly lies in their mouths to accuse the government of any delay.

Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what unadulterated nonsense from the Minister of Finance, knowing his own party dithered on these bills.

Oral Questions

In the other place Liberals are deliberately delaying the passage of their own bill and the Atlantic accord to step up pressure to pass the NDP add-on, prop-up bill.

Let us be clear. The Liberal Party is now cutting deals with the separatists to appease the socialists to support its corrupt government. Again, the government is in bed with the Bloc and nuzzling the NDP.

Why is the government playing political footsies with its new friends, and partisan games with Atlantic Canada and the lives of Atlantic Canadians?

• (1420)

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us follow the opposition party's course on the budget legislation in the House.

First of all, the opposition members said that this was a budget that they could support. Then on the first vote they abstained from voting. Then when it came to that package on the crucial first confidence vote, they voted against the budget package. They voted to defeat the government, which would have effectively defeated the Atlantic accord. Then finally they came around to supporting Bill C-43 after months and months of delay. They could have had it passed in March.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I would like to have a little order. Perhaps things could calm down for a few moments. The hon. member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl now has the floor.

Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that minister is deliberately ensuring that the people of this country think that the Liberals are the heroes in this case.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Loyola Hearn: He is misleading the House—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl has the floor and the poor minister will want to be able to hear the question.

Mr. Loyola Hearn: Mr. Speaker, the minister is misleading the House because the budget bill was not brought in until late April. The government was afraid to bring it in for debate and the vote.

Because you could not manage your own house, why are you now—

The Speaker: Order, please. I am sure the hon. member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl was intending to address the Chair, but I think he is not complaining about management here. The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can fully understand why the hon. member is trying to cover his tracks. The fact of the matter is that the Atlantic accord in Bill C-43 has been before the House for weeks and weeks and it was that opposition party that refused to pass it.

It was that opposition party that in fact voted against the budget package which would have had the effect of putting the Atlantic accord entirely down the drain if that vote had prevailed. Fortunately, it did not and this side stood for Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a prominent Liberal well known to members of the House called a Newfoundland open line radio show today saying that Bill C-43, the bill containing the Atlantic accord, could not be put through the various legislative stages in the Senate all at once.

The government knows that is not true. All we need is for the Liberals to agree to speedy passage. Why are the Liberals holding up passage of the Atlantic accord when Conservatives have agreed to pass Bill C-43 and to give it royal assent immediately?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition is intending to convey exactly the wrong impression. These opposition members have had a hot, on again, off again, approach toward the budgetary policy of this country. Sometimes they are for it. Sometimes they abstain. Sometimes they vote against it. It is no wonder Canadians are confused.

They had the chance to pass this legislation weeks ago and they declined to do so. The responsibility lies entirely at their doorstep. The government has moved on the Atlantic accord.

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[*Translation*]

BROADCASTING

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in response to the CRTC decision on satellite radio, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has said she will wait for someone else to appeal during the 45 day appeal period. The minister can herself appeal the decision, which sets aside only 2.5% of stations for French language radio.

Why is the minister not acting? Why is she waiting for others in a matter of such importance for the francophone community?

• (1425)

Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I said this decision had a considerable impact on broadcasting as a whole. The CRTC took a year to reach its conclusion.

We are examining the situation. I have to say as well that we have made certain groups aware, and that the Quebec Liberal caucus is also very aware of this issue. I will proceed my own way and at my own discretion.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would not like to upset the good intentions of the minister, but on the other hand, I would like to save the francophone community. I would like to help francophones keep their radio stations. A quota of 2.5% is totally inadequate, indeed dangerous for the francophone community and Quebec culture.

The minister is a Quebecker. She has responsibilities. She has a maximum of 45 days to appeal the decision. She should do so; it is what is expected of her.

Oral Questions

Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Bloc has been lounging around for 14 years asking questions and taking no responsibility, we have done the following in 11 months, speaking of responsibility: the Copyright Act; the text of the convention on cultural diversity accepted by 127 countries; \$100 million for the Canadian television fund; governance of the CPF; a \$5 million investment in new media; a \$960 million fund in the budget you rejected. Do not talk to me about—

The Speaker: Once again, I encourage all hon. members to address their remarks to the Chair.

The hon. member for Saint-Lambert.

Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, calmly and with all due respect, I will say that I think the inaction of the Minister of Canadian Heritage with regard to satellite radio is cause for concern. She says she is waiting for groups to appeal the CRTC's decision, when she has the authority to act, but refuses to.

How can the minister defend her position to ADISQ or the Union des artistes, which are concerned, and rightfully so, about this CRTC decision that, once again, threatens the francophone community?

Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, people who want to defend the francophonie and francophone and Canadian culture do not vote against a budget allocating \$960 million over five years to arts and culture. Second, they do not vote against the Official Languages Act. They were the only ones to vote on Bill S-3, which is the Official Languages Act. People who want to protect the francophone community do not sit idly by asking questions. They assume their responsibilities.

Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as I said the other day, enough sophistry.

I have one thing to say. The proverb "silence is consent" means, according to the dictionary, that you agree if you raise no objections.

Are we to understand from the silence or inaction of the Minister of Canadian Heritage in this file that she agrees with the CRTC's decision? If so, let her say it.

Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they can say what they want, but the reality is otherwise. I repeat. People who want to defend the francophone community and culture need to walk the talk. In 11 months, here are all the measures we have taken, starting with copyright, the convention on cultural diversity, the \$100 million in the Canadian television fund. The only thing they had to do was stand and vote in favour of the budget and the \$960 million set aside for the arts and culture. We will assume our responsibilities and I—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have been asked to believe a lot of things in this chamber over the years but yesterday, when the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration wanted us to believe that 74 out of 76 temporary visas had nothing to do with partisan politics, that really took the cake.

When will the Liberal government take seriously the plight of those with foreign credentials who want to get domestic credentials? When will it put the same effort into enabling those people as it seems to put into enabling its friends?

• (1430)

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member will know that we have already begun that process. Some \$68 million will be put in place over the course of the next four years to coordinate those jurisdictions, provincial, professional and regulatory, so they can do the appropriate assessments, evaluations and accreditations and we can accommodate all of those we have invited into our country and integrate them into a professional environment. That is pretty progressive and it applies to everybody.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the minister for almost getting that out with a straight face.

My second question is for the Minister of National Defence. He will know that the people of Gagetown today are expressing their anger at his department for the way in which it has handled the agent orange issue over the years, particularly lately.

I want to ask the minister a question because I am sure he must wonder as well. Given the fact that this issue was first raised on the floor of the House of Commons by NDP MPs in January 1981, why is his department acting as if it only discovered this to be the case a few years ago? Why has it not done things over the years instead of visiting Gagetown—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of National Defence.

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak to decisions, to which the hon. member refers, that were taken over 20 years ago, but I can speak to the decisions that are taken today.

This government is determined that the individuals in the region will understand the facts, will know what took place there and will be able to judge for themselves what they should be searching for as a way to enable them to have their rights dealt with.

I can assure the hon. member that we will provide the information and we will provide a solution to this very difficult problem.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the ethics report showed that the Liberals abused trust and destroyed fairness in Canada's immigration system.

During the 2004 election, 97% of temporary residency permits issued at the request of members of Parliament went to Liberals.

Canadians deserve openness and transparency. The ethics report proved that a list of which MPs were issued TRPs on request does exist.

Why are the Liberals still hiding this information from Parliament and from the public?

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nobody is hiding anything. As I said, we present an annual report to Parliament and the facts and figures are all there.

The member is part of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. When she asks for information it is provided for her.

As for her manipulation of those numbers, she might have taken greater care to indicate that the figures she added were a very small number of the 13,000 permits that are issued as a result of a series of events that occur over any year.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows those numbers came from the ethics report. A *Sun* editorial today pointed out:

Finally it's clear that the Liberals have grossly abused the TRP program for partisan political purposes.

Canadians and those seeking to come to Canada deserve better. The Liberals have been caught and Parliament has a duty to clean up this mess.

As a start, will the government today make public the number of TRPs issued at the request of each individual member of Parliament since February 1, 2004?

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member will know, of course, that Parliament approves a particular range of permanent residents who will be accepted, integrated and settled in this country.

Last year we accepted some 236,000. We also had some 600,000 who came here as tourists. We had an additional 110,000 who came as international students. We had a further 70,000 who made application as temporary visitors with work permits. We had an additional 13,000 who came here as a result of special events.

• (1435)

Ms. Helena Guergis (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner has ruled that the former minister of citizenship and immigration was in conflict of interest, but then the Prime Minister knew that long ago.

Following last June's election, Ms. Katherine Abbott, an aide to the former minister, briefed the Prime Minister's director of communications about conflict of interest issues regarding several immigration files. Despite this, the Prime Minister put the member for York West into cabinet.

Oral Questions

Exactly when did the Prime Minister learn of the member's potential conflict of interest?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I actually have the report of the Ethics Commissioner here and I have taken the opportunity to read it. The Prime Minister's staff did not act in any way that was inappropriate.

The Ethics Commissioner is an independent officer of this House. The matter was referred to the Ethics Commissioner. In fact, many on this side asked that the Ethics Commissioner take up this matter. He did so. He has issued his report and has made findings of fact and conclusion.

The Prime Minister has reviewed the recommendations and he has asked the minister and the Privy Council Office to take up these recommendations and determine how we can move forward.

Ms. Helena Guergis (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the usual hear no evil, see no evil response.

Each member of Parliament must abide by the conflict of interest code and the former minister breached this code by issuing temporary residency permits to relatives of people associated with her election campaign.

The Prime Minister knew about this, and we know this because a former minister's staffer told the Prime Minister's office, and yet the Prime Minister still appointed her to cabinet.

Why did the Prime Minister not act when he first knew ethics had been breached?

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is following in the footsteps of others on that side of the House in making sweeping—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Anne McLellan: Let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, those people have nothing to be proud of in this regard.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister has the floor and everyone wants to hear the answer.

Hon. Anne McLellan: Mr. Speaker, it is an assertion of fact. If the hon. member had read the Ethics Commissioner's report she would have thought twice about what she said before uttering it on the floor of this House.

I apologize to all Canadians for the reckless disregard for people's reputations that—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Agriculture Canada and Health Canada have given the green light to a variety of genetically modified corn known as MON 863. Mice fed with this corn have developed kidney abnormalities and elevated white blood cell counts.

How can the government explain the approval of this product, when even an Agriculture Canada employee is quoted as saying the CFIA is aware of the Monsanto data but it hasn't changed their assessment.

[English]

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this particular material has been tested throughout the world, particularly in the G-8 countries. Many of those countries have had this particular substance approved.

After the results of these tests came to light, no jurisdiction, after the review, has actually dismissed this substance as useless.

Therefore I suggest to the hon. member that Health Canada has followed the appropriate procedure in maintaining the status quo.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister, would he be prepared to eat this type of corn tomorrow morning? A Greenpeace spokesperson has said it would be wise to suspend approval of this GM corn and to carry out another assessment.

Does the government intend to follow Greenpeace's recommendation and suspend approval, or will it continue to stick up for the huge multinational Monsanto?

• (1440)

[English]

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Health Canada was made aware of these results in 2004. Health Canada took into account its own review, in addition to the conclusions of the European Food Safety Authority and Food Standards Australia New Zealand which also reviewed the data in its consideration. None of those particular agencies have taken this off the market.

I choose my food carefully, as do all other Canadians, and I eat Canadian food.

* * *

[Translation]

TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the day after it was announced that the Huntingdon textile plants would close, the government made public an improvised plan that is not meeting its objectives because since that announcement over 4,000 more jobs have been lost.

Since it is becoming more apparent with each passing day that its plan is not working, does the government intend to use the plan of action proposed by the Bloc Québécois, which includes access by

our clothing and textiles to the U.S. market and aid in developing new market niches for the clothing industry? Will the government accept our good idea?

Hon. Jacques Saada (Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec and Minister responsible for the Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, long before the Huntingdon textile plants closed, my department was in contact with the local businesspeople. We sat on the Huntingdon revitalization committee. The companies did not accept our offers and the plants closed. We are following up on this matter jointly with the Government of Quebec in order to help the people of Huntingdon.

We will not solve these problems with attractive measures, but with effective measure. These will be forthcoming shortly.

Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, contrary to the government, which refuses to believe in the future of this industry in a Radio-Canada news story yesterday, Canadian and Quebec manufacturers said they still believe in their chances of surviving. They maintain that the government should be more attentive to the needs of the industry if we want to keep it.

Does the government intend to take the advice of the manufacturers and review its aid package for the textile industry instead standing idly by?

Hon. Jacques Saada (Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec and Minister responsible for the Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of our CANtex program was to help companies cope with this new competition by encouraging productivity, by investing in new equipment or offering training.

We have evidence that this is working. When we go to Stedfast in Granby and Empire Shirt in Louiseville, we see that this is working. There are examples throughout Quebec that this is working. Nonetheless, people have to take responsibility. We are there to help them.

* * *

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner's report provides a behind the scenes look at a desperate Liberal Party seeking re-election.

Katherine Abbott, the former minister's aide, told the Ethics Commissioner:

—we were reacting to the temperature in the outside world—

—there was a thought that we might not come back, there was more of a pressure of just...getting it done.

Why is it regular Liberal policy to help political supporters jump to the head of the queue?

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think if we read the Ethics Commissioner's report in its totality, we would have an opportunity to see that there is a process in place that takes everybody into consideration.

Oral Questions

What the Ethics Commissioner did not indicate of course is the cyclical recurring events that require decisions because they take place at a particular moment in time. One of those events is taking place this weekend. I hope to see some of the members opposite at that same convention which will see thousands of people coming from all over the world, some of whom had to get TRPs to enter.

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government makes legitimate immigrants jump through hoops to get into the country, but then lets its friends and supporters jump the queue.

During the last week of the campaign, the former minister authorized six permits for a gentleman described as “a great resource to the election campaign....He was able to provide volunteers, man hours, and labour”.

Will the government clean up its act, introduce transparency, and stop using TRPs for election purposes?

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we are talking about cleaning up acts, let me advise all members that those who come to the Government of Canada for assistance are not asked to put in deposits in order to ensure that they are rendered service. We do not need anybody to sign guarantee forms of \$1,000, \$5,000, \$50,000, or \$250,000. The work is provided because the Government of Canada, and the Liberal Party as well, provides the service as is due all those citizens who access government services.

• (1445)

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that minister should learn what is going on in his department because it surely is not moving to the effect that we would like it to be.

In responding to pressure from the Conservative Party last fall, the government claimed it shut down the stripper program. However, HRSD spokesperson, Sandy MacDonald said in today's *Globe and Mail* that the government has only taken a temporary hiatus in promoting the sex trade. I quote, “New applications from exotic dancers will once again be processed”.

Why is the department promising that it will start processing these applications when the government claimed it shut the program down?

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated before, we do not provide any temporary work visas to those on a basis of a blanket market assessment. They are only on a case by case basis. People have to make their case, employers and employees, potential or not. Unless those cases are proven, then there is no permit.

I do not know what the member is talking about. In fact, I could hardly recognize him. I am not sure it is his double.

Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise that the minister continues to defend dancers. He seems to be quite good at tap dancing around all the questions we give him.

The current HRSD minister was at one time concerned about the sexual exploitation of people coming into this country. Now as a

Liberal cabinet minister she is taking steps to reinstate a program that would import foreign workers into Canada's sex trade.

Did the minister knowingly sign off on a labour market opinion for these strippers, or did she simply reinstate this program that her government supposedly cancelled?

Hon. Belinda Stronach (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and Minister responsible for Democratic Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the program is still under review, and we will report back in a couple of weeks. We review each case on a case by case basis. No new applications have been approved since the review has been completed.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food.

Several months ago the government announced the closure of four science sites including the Kapuskasing Experimental Farm. I realize the government wants to ensure that money for science is spent on research and development and not on unnecessary maintenance and other overhead costs.

On May 17 at the agriculture committee the minister said he intends to conduct a broad review of how agricultural science is conducted and to look for possible partnerships with the provinces, universities, research centres, and others.

Could the minister update the House on this very important issue?

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will be conducting a national review, one which will ensure that we maintain our national and regional commitments to science, one which will make sure that we talk to and engage stakeholders. In the interim, we will be putting a moratorium on the closures that were announced in Kapuskasing, Nappan, St. John's and Winnipeg.

I would like to thank the member for Avalon, the member for Kings—Hants, and the member for Cumberland—Colchester for their input on this matter.

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TRANSPORT

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the port of Halifax generates an economic impact annually of 9,000 jobs and \$700 million. In a flurry of pre-election hype last May, \$423 million in federal dollars was announced for maritime and marine security improvements, yet when Halifax applied for a mere \$1.2 million for security upgrades, the Halifax Port Authority received only \$220,000 of the \$423 million.

Will the minister assure us today that in the second round of marine security funding, the \$2.9 million—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transport.

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously in the first round the port of Halifax did not get all the money it wanted, like every other port, but we have other measures and other rounds. We know that when it files the application and applies for the right things, the money will be there. The money is in the budget and will help all the ports that need security, and Halifax is one of them.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Halifax is Canada's third largest port and it is key to our regional and national economy. Some 525,000 containers pass through Halifax port annually, making security serious business. In round one of security improvements, with container traffic just over twice that of Halifax, Montreal and Vancouver received 15 and 40 times more funding respectively.

Will the minister give assurances today that in round two Halifax will receive its fair share of federal funding for training and technology security enhancements?

● (1450)

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course we are going to treat Halifax fairly, but it has to go with the applications and things that are allowed under the program. The money is there. If it applies for the right things, it gets the right amount of money.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Department of National Defence continues to downplay the effects of agent orange on our military personnel and completely dismisses the impact on surrounding communities and civilians. DND has already prejudged the outcome of any future investigations, suggesting nothing new will be found.

How can the minister claim any legitimacy on this file when his officials have already predetermined the outcome?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I totally reject the premise of the question. We have not predetermined anything. I have been very clear with the House. These are events that took place a long time ago. We do know for a fact that these events took place over three days in one year and four days in another year, 1966 and 1967. There were a limited number of acres that were sprayed with agent orange and agent purple.

We are working with the communities. We will work with all Canadians who risk having been affected by this. We do not minimize it. We recognize this is an important issue. We want to make sure that Canadians are dealt with properly in this and we will do so.

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TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIPS CANADA

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to questions about the Technology Partnerships Canada program, the industry minister stated the following:

All of the money that was paid to consultants who were helping clients obtain TPC money has been returned. All of it has been returned, every cent.

He also said:

The reality is the audit is not complete. The audits are very complex.

If the audit is not complete, how does the minister know that every cent has been returned?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Edmonton—Leduc is waiting very patiently for the answer. The minister has risen to answer and the member will want to hear it.

Hon. David Emerson (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is very funny. I think the hon. member knows that I was referring to the forensic audit. The forensic audit identified four situations where a contingency fee was paid and the contract explicitly prohibits a contingency fee.

The hon. member would be more responsible if he would congratulate Industry Canada on the good work it is doing in improving the administration of the program, in auditing so effectively and protecting taxpayers' money.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a unanimous Senate report on productivity tabled yesterday recommends that the government should immediately eliminate federal capital tax, slash corporate income tax rates and allow businesses to more aggressively write off capital investments. That would expand the economy so that we could fund social programs down the road.

Why did the Liberals trade away Canada's ability to fund future social programs so that they could cut a backroom deal with Buzz Hargrove and the NDP? How low will they go?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact we have taken action to improve capital cost allowances. We are proposing to eliminate the capital tax. We are going further and proposing to eliminate the surtax. We are also proposing to reduce income tax rates. All of this is to improve productivity and competitiveness.

At the same time, we also believe it is important to invest in education and skills training, to invest in housing, to invest in the environment and to invest in foreign aid. The government is proving that it is possible to do all of those things at the same time.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, funny they did not know that in February.

Look at the government's pathetic record. Canada right now is competing with Denmark as the least productive country in the western world. That is probably because we sent them Gagliano, who knows.

The fact is under the government, our productivity record is worse than those of Sweden, Japan, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Greece, United States, United Kingdom, France, Portugal, Australia, Finland and Ireland. That speaks volumes.

Oral Questions

Why does the government not just admit that it has sold us out, sold out our ability to fund future social programs, our ability to raise the standard of living, just so the Liberals could cut a deal with the NDP?

• (1455)

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what a shameful question.

The fact of the matter is that Canada's rate of productivity improvement over the last number of years is the second best in the G-7. We intend to become the best in the G-7. That is the purpose of our productivity agenda.

Let me refer the hon. gentleman to a great Canadian humorist, Rick Mercer, who today said, "Is there anything more pathetic than sitting indoors while the sun is shining reading a blog written by Monte Solberg?"

The Speaker: I am sure the Minister of Finance was referring to the popular member for Medicine Hat when he mentioned that name. He knows that even reading something that has a member's name in it, we have to be very careful in the House to use the member's constituency name or other title. I have to issue this admonition to the minister and would want him to comply with the rules in every respect the next time he answers a question from the hon. member for Medicine Hat.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

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JUSTICE

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in its May 2005 report, the UN committee against torture criticized Canada's lack of civil remedies to compensate victims of torture on foreign soil. Canadian courts had found, in fact, in the Bouzari case, that there is no recourse against a government guilty of acts of torture, in accordance with the State Immunity Act.

Does the Government of Canada intend to afford justice before Canadian courts to victims of torture in foreign countries, as the UN committee recommends?

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I respect commitment. Now, we are studying this matter, and I hope we will have a response in this regard.

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Zarah Kazemi is dead; William Sampson, Maher Arar, Houshang Bouzari and many more have suffered physically and mentally from torture on foreign soil.

Is the minister aware that Canada cannot not protect its citizens who have dual nationality against torture and cannot even give them the right, in Canada, to seek compensation from foreign governments responsible for torture?

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we are looking at ways to see how we can provide recourse.

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the health minister has claimed that private delivery of health care will rob the health care system of personnel, yet the defence department hired a private company to provide supplementary medical personnel at military facilities. The contract is worth almost half a billion dollars. The government says it is against private delivery, but then it contracts out to private providers.

Could the minister explain that contradiction?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have explained in the House on several occasions, the defence department, for reasons of operational needs of the defence department, is not subject to the Canada Health Act. When our troops are in Afghanistan or when they are in Bosnia, they do not check into a local provincial hospital. They need to have the services of medical care for themselves when they need it.

They are putting their lives on the line for their country. Let us support them rather than attacking them, as in this absolutely ridiculous way by the member.

• (1500)

Mr. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is ridiculous is the minister's answer. We are talking about Canadian soldiers on Canadian land, soldiers in this country.

The private company of which I speak uses doctors from the public system. Essentially, the government is using public personnel to provide a private service. If one follows the health minister's logic, this will deplete the public system of needed health practitioners. Why does the health minister speak out against private delivery when his own government contracts out medical services to private companies?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that the Canadian Forces have had a proud tradition of being able to make sure that they give the medical services necessary to our armed forces, our men and women in uniform, so that they can do their jobs.

The forces have always been called upon to do that. In recognition of that, they are called upon to do it outside the normal procedures of the Canada Health Act. That is required by operational necessity. It is required for the well-being of our troops. It is required for the well-being of our country. I think everybody on this side of the House recognizes that.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in early 2006 a brigade HQ and an army task force will be deployed in Kandahar as an ongoing commitment to ISAF in Afghanistan. Given the ongoing grave security situation with regard to the Kandahar region, can the Minister of National Defence tell the House, within the constraints of operational security, what preparations are being taken in the way of equipment and training provision and for force protection for CF units due to be posted to Kandahar?

Tributes

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. He is extremely knowledgeable in military matters. He comes from a country in the region. He knows, and hon. members of the House know full well, that our members of the Canadian Forces have extraordinary experience in the country of Afghanistan.

I can assure him and other hon. members in the House that under the leadership of General Hillier, who was the ISAF commander in Afghanistan and is a recognized expert in the area, that our forces will be trained, they will be equipped and they will acquit themselves well in what will be a dangerous but ultimately successful mission for this country and for the development of peace in the world.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order adopted Tuesday, June 21, the House will now proceed to statements. I now call upon the hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

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AIR-INDIA FLIGHT 182

Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the loss of 329 people on Air-India flight 182, which was destroyed in a heinous act of terror 20 years ago.

Today many of their relatives have joined the Prime Minister, the leaders of the three opposition parties and the premier of British Columbia at a special commemorative service in Ireland. Others have joined us here this afternoon in Parliament.

[Translation]

I am honoured by their presence here today, and I thank them for coming. I too join with all of my colleagues in Parliament and all Canadians in offering our condolences.

[English]

When we lose loved ones, we often gather together as family and friends to share recollections about them. These stories help us to remember and, perhaps, to begin the healing process.

I have with me today a book that tells the stories of the people on Air-India flight 182, entitled *Love, Honour, Respect: The Memories of Our Loved Ones*. It was produced by some of their families to honour the wives, husbands, children and parents who were lost that day off the coast of Ireland. A copy of it was presented to the Prime Minister when he met with families on June 7 in Toronto.

When I met recently with family members, both in Toronto and in Vancouver, their personal words went beyond the stories in this book. No one could be untouched by the sense of loss, the pain, the hurt and, yes, the anger of those who lost loved ones. Family members helped me understand the many lives that were changed forever by this tragedy and the contributions that those who died might have made to our country and our world.

We cannot bring back these innocent victims, but we can honour their lives by ensuring that events such as the one that took them from us never happen again and that we do all we can to prevent terrorist acts around the world.

Above these chambers and across Canada today, we have lowered flags and have declared a national day of mourning to show that we remember those who were lost. It is in this same spirit of commemoration that the government will work with family members on how best to commemorate permanently the Air-India victims and the lives of their relatives.

Yesterday the Prime Minister announced that June 23 will be a national day for Canadians to remember the victims of terrorism. It is fitting that this day should be June 23, the day of the first mass terror attack in our history. In this way, we will ensure that Canadians will always remember the costs of such terror and the lives and loved ones lost.

The writing of the late Rabindranath Tagore, one of modern India's greatest poets, is found on several pages in the memorial book with me today. In one verse, he writes:

Let the dead have the immortality of fame, but the living the immortality of love

I hope that by our actions today and in the future we can offer compassion and support to the living, whose lives were changed forever by this event.

As the Prime Minister said this morning in a moving service of commemoration in Ireland:

—never forget that remembrance is in itself a timeless act of love. In so doing, we keep alive the memory of those who are missed. We feel them in our hearts. We mourn them, we celebrate them. And always, and forever, we remember.

• (1505)

Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on this national day of mourning, we remember the lives of those lost on flight 182, 20 years ago today. On behalf of the Conservative Party, I want to offer our sympathy, condolences and prayers for the families of the 329 victims of this horrific terror.

[Translation]

We offer our condolences to the families of the victims of this tragedy.

[English]

Neither the passing of years nor the machinery of state have provided answers to those whose lives who were changed forever on June 23, 1985.

Twenty years ago, families were ripped apart and forever altered by that deadly explosion over the cold North Atlantic waters off the coast of Ireland.

It was the worst terrorist act originating in Canada in our nation's history. An evil act of indiscriminate terror killed someone's child, someone's mother, someone's father, someone's family. Over 80 children were killed. Six parents lost all their children and over 20 complete families were killed.

An act of pure evil and indiscriminate terror still wounds the entire Canadian community. This assault on sensibility is an open wound with no answers still, and no justice for those whose family members or friends we remember at this time.

[Translation]

We share with the families in the memory of their lost loved ones.

Tributes

[*English*]

We do so in full frustration that many questions still remain unanswered. These questions deserve to be answered and all of us need to know that our government, our country, has done its all to find out what happened.

Most important, who committed this crime? Who caused this slaughter of innocents? Were there any failures by anyone in authority who might have altered this sad history?

[*Translation*]

In recent years, we have come to realize that not all matters of security can be examined in public, but they must be examined by competent and trustworthy individuals. Important questions have to be answered, and whenever possible, they must be answered publicly.

• (1510)

[*English*]

People in my home province of Nova Scotia, particularly around Peggy's Cove, were similarly confronted with a tragic disaster in 1998, which also resulted in a great loss of life. The Swissair crash forever changed the lives of families of victims but also of those who lived in surrounding areas.

Therefore, I want to remember and thank the people of Ireland, who cared for the remains of the victims of this murder and honour their memories still. They have for 20 years cared for the families of the victims. As they gathered with family, friends and officials, the people of Ireland demonstrated again at the service, as they have for over 20 years, their sympathy and support at a critical moment of remembrance. Today we thank them for their compassion and their humanity.

But above all, by remembering the victims murdered on Flight 182 on June 23, 1985, we accept our collective responsibility to them and to their families to see that difficult questions are asked and answered.

Today we honour the memory of their souls. We offer our compassion to those who have experienced enormous grief and heartbreaking losses yet have carried on with courage and conviction, determined to seek the truth and find justice, and ensure, as the Deputy Prime Minister has said, that a tragedy such as this never happens again.

I am reminded of a poignant expression which tells us that in order to lose someone we must first have had them, and so the magnitude of one's loss becomes the measure of life's gifts.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago today, 329 passengers on an Air India Boeing 747 died in intolerable circumstances. Among the victims were 278 Canadians.

This tragedy, the most devastating terrorist attack in Canadian history, is still wrapped in mystery and many questions remain. No one has yet been sentenced or held responsible for this unspeakable tragedy.

Only one thing is certain: this was a terrorist act. Although a pure accident can cause as much loss of human life and tremendous pain for the victims' loved ones, I think that when a tragedy like this is intentional, planned in full knowledge of the fact that the victims were innocent people who could not do anything about the situation that someone wanted corrected and were in no way responsible for it, the pain is even harder to bear. Our sympathy for the afflicted families is all the greater in that the pain we share is commingled with a tremendous sense of horror.

The terrorists' motives were apparently at least partly religious. But in all the great religions, the supreme being is believed to be infinitely good and infinitely just. Is it possible to believe such a being could approve of the summary execution of hundreds of innocent people? Is it possible to believe that the response to injustice is even more injustice? Is that one of the cornerstones of the new society we are trying to build, in which the most important rule, as in all the great religions, is to love one's neighbour? Do people not realize how greatly they discredit the cause they claim to advance in this way?

Unfortunately, there is an absurd belief that terrorist acts can be justified in today's world. Any one of us could be a victim of such acts. At this time, we can only express our deepest sympathy.

However, more must be done. We must try to comprehend the incomprehensible. And for that, we must first know everything that can be known. While the explosion of the Air India Boeing 747 was a terrible tragedy for everyone, nothing can compare with the suffering of the victims' families for the last 20 years and the permanent void left in their lives. Today we think of them. It is to them that we extend our heartfelt sympathy. It is because of them, the anger they still feel, their constant pain, that we ask the government to finally shed light, once and for all, on this tragic event.

Twenty years ago, 329 people died for being on the wrong flight at the wrong time, collateral damage in a crisis about which they could do nothing. We members of Parliament have the ability and therefore the responsibility to act and do all we can to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again.

To the families and friends, to those still affected by the events of June 23, 1985, I offer once again my most heartfelt sympathy on behalf of the Bloc Québécois and the people we represent.

• (1515)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the New Democratic Party of Canada, our leader, the member for Toronto—Danforth, and members of the caucus to join with our colleagues in the House of Commons in remembering the Canadian tragedy that took place 20 years ago today off the coast of Ireland.

Two decades have passed since that horrible night when 329 people died aboard Air-India flight 182, but time has not undone the heartache of entire families torn apart in a moment nor the pain of those left behind. Their loved ones were lost to terror and they are the living victims of its merciless consequences.

Government Orders

For too long in Canada many have looked upon the Air-India disaster as a foreign tragedy rather than what it was, the largest act of terror in our country's history, a Canadian tragedy which claimed Canadian lives and left Canadian victims.

[Translation]

Today, the leaders of the four political parties in the House are in Ireland to share the sorrow, memories and grief of the families affected. Unfortunately, their presence at this memorial will not erase two decades of neglect. However, it is a first step for the families who will finally be able to share their grief with a sympathetic nation, a comfort they were too long denied.

[English]

The greatest comfort that Canada can give to those families is answers to the questions that have haunted them for 20 years. It is time the government set right the legacy of neglect. It is time that answers were delivered where justice has not.

On behalf of the New Democratic Party of Canada, I offer our heartfelt condolences to all those who have suffered the agony of loss, and our hope that soon there will be understanding where for far too long there has been only tears and pain.

[Translation]

The Speaker: I thank all the hon. members who spoke today.

[English]

I now invite the House to rise to observe a moment of silence.

[A moment of silence observed]

* * *

• (1520)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under more normal circumstances, I suspect I would have risen on this, the last scheduled day for the spring 2005 session, to wish all members of Parliament a good summer in their constituencies and to inquire about the legislative calendar agenda of the government when the House was scheduled to resume on September 19.

However, since the government has decided to invoke closure on a motion to extend the sitting beyond today, I find myself in a difficult position because we do not yet know the outcome of the vote on the motion which will be held this evening.

I ask the government House leader what his intentions are with plan A and plan B? If we do adjourn for the summer, what are his intentions when the House reconvenes in the fall? If his motion on closure is successful to extend the sitting, what are his plans for next week's sitting and, by extension, does he intend to bring forward any more closure motions on legislation?

Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will continue with debate on the motion regarding the sittings of the House. When that is disposed of, we will proceed to Bill C-48, the budget legislation, and Bill C-38, the civil marriage bill.

While I will not speculate any further than that, I understand the vote this evening will take place at 8 o'clock. Subsequent to the vote,

we will see what legislation we would be looking at in the fall. Essentially I will deal with what we are speaking to after question period. Once the motion is disposed of later this evening, we would then proceed to Bill C-48 and subsequent to that, Bill C-38, the civil marriage bill.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXTENSION OF SITTING PERIOD

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

Hon. Raymond Simard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for Official Languages and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to the motion to extend the sitting of the House.

I would like to make it very clear that I will vote in favour of this motion. I am on record as early as Monday this week saying that I would be very interested in sitting to deal with the issues at hand, notably Bill C-48 and Bill C-38. I believe they are critical issues for our government to deal with and we should deal with them prior to the summer break.

I would like to begin with Bill C-48, which deals with an additional investment of \$4.5 billion, notably in four important sectors to Canadians: affordable housing, the environment, post-secondary education and international aid.

We will be investing \$1.6 billion additional in affordable housing. I always like to see how the decisions we make in the House impact our specific ridings. I would like to talk about some projects that are impacted by the new funds for affordable housing in my riding of Saint Boniface.

We have many opportunities, either during elections or between elections and also at various events during the year to meet with constituents. After health care, affordable housing is undoubtedly the most important issue to my constituents in Saint Boniface. They are elated that we have now dealt with health care to a certain extent. We have invested \$41 billion over five years in health care.

Mr. John Williams: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I thought we were dealing with Motion No. 17.

The member is on about affordable housing and the bills that will that will come forward if the motion passes. I would have thought he would have been dealing with the issue of should we or should we not support the motion. If that carries, then he will have all the time in the world to talk about the other bills. Relevance surely is an issue. The issue is Motion No. 17, not affordable housing.

Government Orders

•(1525)

The Speaker: I did not hear the last few sentences of the parliamentary secretary's speech.

The hon. member for Edmonton—St. Albert seems to have undermined his own argument, if he does not mind me saying so, by saying that the parliamentary secretary was listing all these things as reasons why we should support Motion No. 17. Then we would be doing all these things once the motion passed.

It seems to me that in considering whether to adopt a motion or not you might look to the future and see what could happen as a result of the passage of the motion. For the member to make a list perhaps of things he hopes will happen following adoption of the motion does not strike me as being irrelevant to consideration of the motion itself.

I am not inclined to rule the remarks as irrelevant on that basis. I am sure the hon. member for Edmonton—St. Albert will continue to be vigilant in respect of relevancy.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mr. Speaker, I could not agree with you more. I do believe that speaking to the urgency of these matters is precisely why we are here. If we do not think this is important, then perhaps we should go home for the summer.

I believe that discussing Bill C-48 and Bill C-38 are essential. I think we should deal with them before the summer break. This is why I am speaking to both of these issues.

I am sorry I have to repeat this for the hon. member, but in my riding health care was the number one issue by far. My constituents are thrilled that we have invested substantially in health care and that we have made some huge modifications.

If members speak to their constituents, I think they will find that affordable housing is at the top of their minds. In every riding members will find constituents who cannot afford to buy condos or pay the high end rental rates.

My riding is no different. St. Boniface is by all means not a poor riding. It is a middle class riding. Again, with the Manitoba economy heating up the way it is and rent going up by 30% or 40%, people are feeling very uncomfortable with whether they can stay in their current housing accommodations. I am one who believes it is critical that we invest more in affordable housing.

I also would like to speak to a specific project in the heart of my riding. St. Boniface is a well to do neighbourhood, but we have one project of 100 units. The project was dilapidated to the point where people had to leave, but they had no place to go.

Under the initiative of the federal government, we brought together the private sector and the two levels of government. We leveraged their dollars and renovated the 100 units. Residents could then stay in their units. Also rent rates were capped for 10 years so people then knew they could afford to stay.

The federal dollars were essential to leveraging other dollars to ensure people remained in an affordable area in their community.

Mr. John Williams: Mr. Speaker, I rise again on a point of order. We all have had a chance to listen to the member's speech. As I said, we are debating Motion No. 17 about whether we are going to

extend the hours beyond the normal adjournment of tonight. It seems that the member is trying to get his speech in on the issues to be debated next week, if we are still here, in case the motion is defeated.

The member has yet to mention Motion No. 17 about whether we should extend the hours. That is the debate that we are having. If the member is going to get there, I would hope he gets there quickly so I can listen to his arguments.

The Speaker: I hope the hon. parliamentary secretary will tie the description of the circumstances of his constituency to the motion being debated before the House. The member for Edmonton—St. Albert clearly is very interested in hearing how the possible debates next week might help his constituents.

•(1530)

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mr. Speaker, I will attempt to do that. I thought I was very clear that by talking about the urgency of debating Bill C-48 and Bill C-38 the member would understand why I will be supporting the motion to stay next week to debate them. I thought that my process here was extremely clear.

I would like to speak to a third project in my riding, a senior's village. This again speaks to volunteers and just normal citizens who would like to provide seniors with a continuum of care. Bill C-48 is essential because it would provide affordable housing dollars for these people. The tie for me is very obvious, and I do not know why the hon. member does not understand that.

There is some urgency to staying here and debating Bill C-48 and Bill C-38. I am making the point that Bill C-48 is urgent. These dollars are needed in our communities. I am using my community as an example, but I am sure it applies right across Canada. I support additional funding for affordable housing. There are several reasons why we have to act quickly on approving this additional funding.

Bill C-48 covers environment issues, which is the second item I would like to discuss. The bill would allocate \$900 million for the environment. Environmental issues are important to all of us.

Contrary to what my hon. colleagues on the other side of the House think, climate change is not a myth. It does exist and it is extremely important that we continue to invest in it. Canadians know that we have made some substantial investments in the Kyoto protocol and we will continue to do that.

The Kyoto protocol is also supported by many developing countries around the world. We understand the impact of global warming and of greenhouse gas emissions. We cannot underestimate their impact on Canadians and on people around the world. The impact of global warming on the north, for instance, is critical. My colleagues from Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon will tell us about the impact it is having on tundra for instance and on icebergs.

Government Orders

These are real problems for Canadians. Bill C-48 proposes to some extent investments in remedying some of these issues. Once again, the tie we are making to the importance of staying here is quite relevant.

We are also seeing some radical changes in weather patterns in Canada as a result of global warming. In my province of Manitoba, two or three weeks ago, we had floods like we had not seen in 100 years. Our colleagues in Alberta are now experiencing the same thing.

These are radical changes to weather patterns. I believe they are connected to global warming. Bill C-48 would invest a considerable amount of money, \$900 million to be exact, for climate change issues.

I would like to talk about some of the projects that the government has been funding. The tar ponds in Nova Scotia is a good example. This is one project where hundreds of millions of dollars are needed to resolve one problem. I would like to congratulate my colleagues from Nova Scotia who worked extremely hard to ensure that funding went toward cleaning up these polluted sites.

Mine sites in northern Canada are also totally polluted and need millions of dollars to be cleaned up. The government has been very aggressive in investing in the environment, but we could always do more, and we all believe that.

Bill C-48 would allow us to invest in public transit systems. The city of Winnipeg is discussing exactly that. Members from the province of Manitoba, particularly the city of Winnipeg, would know that almost every Winnipegger uses a car. Not many of them use buses because it is a city that is fairly easy to get around in. We would like to encourage those citizens to use buses and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That is certainly one of our objectives, and it is one of the objectives of Bill C-48. There is an urgency in getting these bills passed.

• (1535)

Bill C-48 will speak to reducing energy costs for consumers who renovate their homes because there is less heat loss and that kind of thing. I really feel that the investment that we will be making is worthwhile and urgent.

The third item in Bill C-48 that we will be investing in with an amount of \$1.5 billion is post-secondary education. In the past our government has invested substantially, up to \$5 billion a year, in post-secondary education but mostly in the field of research and development.

We realize that it is important to target lower income families to ensure that everyone in Canada has access to post-secondary education. That is certainly one of our objectives. This \$1.5 billion investment will certainly assist in attaining that objective.

In my riding I have a university, Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface. I get to speak to students on a regular basis. My nephews and nieces go to Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface. One of the challenges they have is that after a four year post-secondary degree the average debt is \$26,000 per student.

We can imagine when they go into a different level of education, to a master's degree or a Ph.D., they may end up with debts ranging from \$50,000 to \$80,000. I believe that we have a responsibility to alleviate some of that debt and invest in our post-secondary education facilities, institutions and in our students.

The fourth item is international aid. This is an area that I am particularly interested in. I used to be a member of the foreign affairs committee. I had a chance to travel to many Asian countries where people talked to us about Canada's role in the world, not only in terms of our prowess in industry and commerce but in terms of the leadership role that we should be taking when it comes to investing in international aid and the respect that we have worldwide.

For me this was an eye opener. It was my first year as a member of Parliament. I would like to say that I believe that Canada has a responsibility. I believe that we should invest this \$500 million in international aid. I am one who believes that we have to play a more aggressive role when it comes to international aid. Therefore, this \$500 million investment shows clearly that we are in fact taking our responsibilities seriously and following through on our commitments to playing a lead role on the world stage.

I feel that Bill C-48 is urgent and essential to the well-being of Canadians and I am prepared to extend the sitting hours to ensure we deliver on these commitments.

I would like to speak briefly as well to Bill C-38 because we are here I believe to discuss both bills. This is obviously a difficult issue. It has been a difficult issue over the past months that it has been debated in the House. In my three years as a member of Parliament it has been the most difficult decision that I have had to make. I have made my vote count on this issue. I have decided not to support Bill C-38 and in fact I was free to do just that.

However, I also participated in many debates in the House. I sat and listened to members from all parties discuss their opinions on these issues. It was done in a very respectful way on such a delicate and serious issue. I applaud all members of the House for having discussed it in this way because it is an issue that is very sensitive and very close to many people's hearts.

I feel that it was an issue that was debated very strongly in the House of Commons. Opinions were put forth on both sides of the issue. People had an opportunity to express their views on this issue. I feel members have in fact stated their positions.

After having voted several times on amendments and second reading of Bill C-38, I do not see a lot of movement by members. The justice committee has had an opportunity to travel across Canada. In fact, in Manitoba it came not only to Winnipeg but it ensured that it heard people from rural Manitoba. It visited two towns in Manitoba and it was important for rural people to get their points of view across as well because they may not have necessarily the same point of view as the urban community. I thought the justice committee did an excellent job, came back and reported to the House.

Government Orders

• (1540)

Lately a legislative committee had an opportunity to hear witnesses. I am not sure if it was 56 or 64 witnesses who came forward to testify before the committee and express their concerns. If I am not mistaken, an amendment was put forward that would ensure religious organizations had even stronger protection in Bill C-38, if there was ever an issue with that.

We have been debating Bill C-38 for months on end. The government House leader was talking about 200 hours or so of debate. I believe people know where they stand on this item. I am prepared to vote on it. Canadians want us to deal with it. I think we should sit next week and the week following that if we have to in order to continue debating these issues, but we should rectify these issues and deal with them before we leave for the summer break.

Mr. John Williams (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I reiterate my earlier points of order. That was a wonderful speech on Bill C-38 and Bill C-48, but it had absolutely no relevance to Motion No. 17 that we are currently debating.

That being said, the member talked about how people have stated their positions, their minds are pretty well made up and will not change. Yet the Liberals did a complete and absolute U-turn a month or so ago, kind of a conversion on the road to embracing socialism I think, when the NDP went to them and said it had a deal which could keep them in government if they would keep the NDP in money. All of a sudden the U-turn occurred and the Liberals were embracing Bill C-48 that had nothing whatsoever to do with the budget of the Minister of Finance.

The member for Saint Boniface talked about Bill C-48 being essential, that it was urgent, and the dollars were needed. I go back to the budget of the Minister of Finance which did not have a word about all this money for the environment, education or housing. There was not a word.

All of a sudden this conversion on the road to embracing socialism seems to be the new thing for the Liberal Party because it wants to stay in power. This is not about public policy. This is about the personal desire to stay in power. The NDP thinks it is now the tail that can wag the dog and, therefore, it is basking in the new found power. All members on that side of the House are having a wonderful time at the taxpayers' expense.

Bill C-48 will spend up to \$4.5 billion of taxpayers' money and is all of two pages in length. There is absolutely no substance to it. It talks about \$1.5 billion for education.

I have a question for the member for Saint Boniface, who I know is a new guy and is just coming up to his first anniversary. If the \$1.5 billion gets added to the millennium scholarship fund and will be spent over the next 20 odd years, is that going to be sufficient? Does he believe that will be an adequate way to spend this \$1.5 billion in the scholarship fund when no one has any idea on what basis it is going to be spent at this point in time? Perhaps he could enlighten us.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mr. Speaker, when Canadians elected a minority government, they expected it to consult with the parties and to make Parliament work. In fact, that is precisely what it is doing.

When there are minority governments in Europe, they build coalitions and alliances. That is what Canadians have asked us to do and that is exactly what we are trying to do. We built coalitions as the parties have tried to do with the Bloc Québécois on certain issues. That is just the way minority governments work. They are healthy for a period of time to a certain extent.

In terms of investing in post-secondary education, I believe we will establish a process to invest the funds in the best possible way, as we always do. The government has been the most successful government in 100 years in terms of managing dollars. I would expect the member to rely on the government's fiscal record to ensure that the dollars being invested in the post-secondary education field will be invested in a proper way.

• (1545)

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the member is voting to do is to overturn the Standing Orders. He is basically invoking a notwithstanding clause on the Standing Orders of the House.

I have only been here a short time and I know my colleague has only been here a short time, but there is a tremendous amount of precedence about the Standing Orders and the rules of the House. Both members' statements and question period fall under the Standing Orders.

What the member is proposing would be exactly the same as if the government said that it was too embarrassed by all the scandals. Every day there is another scandal of Liberal waste, corruption and mismanagement. If the Liberals said that since this was too damaging for their own party they would introduce a motion to cancel question period, they could have a very similarly worded motion saying that notwithstanding any Standing Order there will not be any question period until next fall, or something like that, to get rid of their own embarrassment.

What the member is proposing would establish a tremendous precedent and one that his party spoke vehemently against. Earlier today, my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton reminded the member of the right hon. Herb Gray speaking vociferously against such an attempt when a previous administration tried to extend the sitting of the House.

It is a bit like a hockey game. We play against the other team but we also play against the clock. Part of the legislative process is that we have a certain amount of time. Proposing to ignore the clock, in this case the parliamentary calendar, would be very similar to a hockey game where one side realizes that it is not winning so it makes a proposal to play an extra period because it wants a chance to win. I think that is very damaging.

Why does the hon. member think it is okay to bring in this type of notwithstanding clause that would roll over the tradition of democracy and the precedents of the House when his government spent months filibustering its own legislation? If this was such a priority, why did the Liberals not bring it up for debate back in May when they were bringing in all their own motions and then adjourning debate on their own motions? Why were they filibustering this very piece of legislation if now there is such a panic that we have to extend the sitting of the House?

Government Orders

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mr. Speaker, I will answer the second question first. The second question is with regard to the amount of work that has been done in the House over the last little while. The member should look at the bills that have been introduced and passed in this House. There has not been a minority government in the past that has reached this same level of work.

We are very proud of that accomplishment as a minority government and I believe all sides should be congratulated for that. Although some times were difficult and some committee work was extremely difficult, a great deal of work has been done in this minority government.

In terms of imposing closure, members from all sides have to be careful not to abuse their privileges and not to abuse the Standing Orders. We cannot—

Mr. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think the member is confused. My question was not about invoking closure because that has already been dealt with. I was talking about extending the sitting of the calendar.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for that clarification but that is not a point of order. However I am sure the hon. parliamentary secretary will get around to answering that too.

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mr. Speaker, the member is right. It is about extending the sitting hours. As I have said before, I am one of those who approves of us sitting here. We have a responsibility to Canadians. They elect us to do our work. If we have to stay here for two or three weeks longer, we should do that.

I believe it is important for members of Parliament not to abuse their parliamentary privileges in the House, such as filibustering bills when everything has been said on them basically. At one point Canadians expect us to deal with these issues and not just let them drag on forever.

I know these issue are very delicate and sensitive and that many members of Parliament on all sides have had to deal with Bill C-38 on a personal basis. I know I have and it has been extremely difficult. However I believe at some point, in order to deal with the issues, we need to impose certain conditions to do that.

• (1550)

Mr. Jim Prentice (Calgary Centre-North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I address the question of the time extension, I want Canadians and the residents of my riding of Calgary Centre-North to be clear on what is happening here.

We have had a motion of closure, which has been addressed, and a decision is now before us to extend the sitting hours of the House. The effect of the closure, coupled with this extension of the sitting time of the House, is to permit the Liberal government to ram through several pieces of legislation. I predict that this is the first in a series of closure motions that will happen beneath the umbrella of this time extension that Canadians will see over the course of the next seven days.

The underlying purpose of what the Liberal government is attempting to do is to override Standing Order 28(2), the Standing Orders that provide for the operation of this House, and to do so in

circumstances where there is no emergency. There is no emergency in this country and there is no necessity for this time extension.

What is being proposed is that the government sacrifice the parliamentary calendar, which is constructed into Standing Order 28 (2,) and to do so for its own political expediency and its own political purposes, rather than for any national purpose or national emergency, which is required.

At this time there are two controversial pieces of legislation before this House: Bill C-48, which I have referred to as the NDP budget bill; and Bill C-38, the marriage bill. Both of these are important pieces of legislation. I will turn to them in more detail as I proceed, but I think it would be fair to say on behalf of all members of the House that both of these pieces of legislation have attracted considerable attention and considerable controversy. They are bills in respect of which there are many differing opinions in this House and many parliamentarians who wish to speak on behalf of their constituents with respect to both of those issues.

The question that is before us this afternoon is why the government has found it necessary to invoke closure to force the extension of the sitting hours of the House of Commons to deal so quickly with these two pieces of legislation that have been before the House for some time.

As I begin, I note, parenthetically, that this is not the government's calendar which it seeks to change, it is the calendar of the House of Commons. It is the calendar that was arrived at and negotiated with considerable care on behalf of all Canadians. In fact there was a Standing Orders committee that grappled with the whole question of the parliamentary calendar. This parliamentary calendar that we have today was adopted after considerable thought. Two different committees at two different points in time studied this Standing Order, and the purpose of the Standing Order, frankly, was to bring some order to the calendar of the House of Commons and to ensure that we were able to balance the difficult schedules of members of Parliament with the business of the House of Commons.

The Standing Orders were arrived at, as I understand it, with an all party consensus, and they should not be changed lightly.

Earlier today the Liberal member for Sarnia—Lambton objected to what the government was attempting to do here, which is to railroad through these two pieces of legislation. He referred to it as “legislation by exhaustion”. I might add to that terminology, legislation by closure because the use of the closure motion is an essential part of the strategy that the government is pursuing.

I would like to discuss the hypocrisy of the government in proceeding in such an undemocratic way to deal with two pieces of legislation that are very controversial and in respect of which there are a wide range of opinions in this House. I think we can all agree that, by definition, the invocation of closure, coupled with the extension of the sitting hours, involves steps that are undemocratic because the House will not have adequate time to deal with the legislation that is before it.

• (1555)

One only has to examine a handful of documents to fully appreciate the duplicity and the hypocrisy of the Prime Minister and his government House leader.

Government Orders

I would like to take members, first, to the Prime Minister's swearing in. The Prime Minister was sworn in on December 12, 2003, and any analysis of failed expectations and hypocrisy must, by definition, begin on that date.

At that time the Prime Minister said, "We are going to change the way things work in Ottawa...to re-engage Canadians in the political process". He stated that this would be his number one priority or at least one of his many number one priorities.

Nothing was said at that time about invoking closure. Nothing was said at that time about ramming through legislation at the close of session under the cover of night. Nothing was said at that time about limiting the debate of the elected representatives of the Canadian people.

The only thing we heard was the hypocritical statement, which we now know was hypocritical because there was no intent to honour it, "We are going to change the way that things work in Ottawa".

We are certainly doing that but to no avail and not to the benefit of Canadians.

The throne speech followed shortly after that. If people want to understand what the government is doing with Bill C-48 and Bill C-38, they need only go back and look at the throne speech of February 2, 2004 where the government said:

We must re-engage citizens in Canada's political life. And this has to begin in the place where it should mean the most — in Parliament — by making Parliament work better.

Further on in the speech it states:

The Government of Canada is determined to return Parliament to the centre of national debate and decision making...

The speech contained references to more free votes and to enhanced roles for members of Parliament to shape laws. It then states:

Significantly enhancing the role of all MPs will make Parliament what it was intended to be — a place where Canadians can see and hear their views debated and their interests heard. In short, a place where they can have an influence on the policies that affect their lives.

Later in the same throne speech it states:

Canadians expect government to respect their tax dollars. They want to have the confidence that public money — their money — is wisely spent.

Is that not curious? There is nothing in the throne speech about invoking closure. There is nothing in the throne speech about closure coupled with extension of sitting times to ram through two pieces of legislation that Canadians consider to be important. There is nothing about closure, nothing about shortening debate and nothing about truncating public discussion.

Perhaps someone from that side of the House, someone with a shred of integrity, would be able to explain how to reconcile what the government promised in the throne speech in February 2004, with the conduct that we have seen from the government over the last several days.

However it gets better from there. On February 4, 2004, two days after the throne speech, the government put forward a document entitled "An Action Plan for Democratic Reform". The document talks about the three pillars of democracy that the Prime Minister

values. The second pillar is about restoring the representative and deliberative role of members of Parliament.

The report goes on to state that "Democratic reform will reconnect parliamentarians with Canadians by giving MPs greater freedom to voice the views and concerns of their constituents.

The document continues on to say:

What this means for individual Canadians is that the people they elect will be able to better reflect their views in the process of government. It also means increased responsibilities for individual Members of Parliament to ensure that these reforms result in real change.

The action plan for democratic reform says nothing about closure, nothing about the extension of time coupled with closure, nothing about eliminating the rights that the members of Parliament in this House have to participate in debate, and nothing about limiting the parliamentary freedom of our constituents by pushing forth two pieces of legislation without having a full and adequate opportunity in this House to carry on with the debate during the regular sitting of the House.

• (1600)

If one looks at the action plan for democratic reform itself, entitled "Ethics, Responsibility and Accountability", we see that in this document there is of course a letter from the Prime Minister himself, in which he states:

Parliament should be the centre of national debate on policy...Members [of Parliament] should have greater freedom to voice their views and those of their constituents, reinforcing the role of House Committees...

I do not see anything in the letter from the Prime Minister about what the government is attempting to do in this case with Bill C-48, which I will come to in a few moments. I see nothing about that in the letter from the Prime Minister or in the letter from the House leader that accompanies this same document, in which he says:

Secondly, we must restore Parliamentarians' role in generating authentic, thoughtful, and constructive debate.

If the government believes in this, if it has any sincerity in believing in this, why is it not prepared to take Bill C-48 in particular, bring it forward and continue with debate according to the parliamentary calendar? If this means that third reading of this bill is secured when the fall session resumes, then so be it. What is the urgency of proceeding with closure, coupled with an extension of time, to ram this piece of legislation through the House of Commons at this point in time?

If we carry on and read this document it is breathtaking to appreciate what this government has said and how it just does not measure up with its conduct in terms of democratic reform in this country.

On page 1 of the February 2004 document, "An Action Plan for Democratic Reform", we have the following statement:

Democratic institutions must constantly adapt and change in order to ensure that the process continues to work the way it was intended. Individuals, through their elected representatives, must have a strong voice in the great debates facing the nation. There needs to be real exchanges of opinion and constructive dialogue between Members of Parliament, reflecting the views of the people they represent.

In a statement of general principles that follows, we have item 3:

Parliament should be a national forum for debating and shaping national policies and legislation and for considering regional concerns and issues.

Government Orders

Principle 4 states:

Members of the House should have more opportunity to express their own views and those of their constituents.

Principle 5 states:

House Committees should have the resources and mechanisms necessary to become a central focus of debate, and to shape and modify legislation.

What is astounding is that none of these principles are being followed by this government in its conduct in dealing with Bill C-48, the NDP budget legislation.

Carrying forward from there, just this week we have had this government table in the House of Commons a document dated June 22, 2005, the first annual "Report on Democratic Reform". It has such a noble title, but it is a litany of hypocrisy to read because this is a government that is not committed to the implementation of the ideas and the concepts that are set out in this report on democratic reform.

Once again there is a letter from the Prime Minister. He says that "Parliament must have greater ability to hold the government to account. Responsibility for democratic renewal rests with all parliamentarians. Democratic renewal must be an ongoing process".

If the Prime Minister sincerely believes in that, why have they brought forward a closure motion coupled with an extension of time in an effort to ram through Bill C-48, the NDP-Liberal budget, which has flaws that we will talk about in a few moments and which should be carefully scrutinized by Parliament?

The government House leader, who has had the temerity to stand in this House and strong-arm the House with the closure motion, coupled with the motion which is currently before the House, has had the audacity, in the June 22, 2005 annual report, to author several invitations, saying that he looks forward to working with parliamentarians because, in his view, "enhancing the ability of Parliamentarians to represent their constituents and to shape public policy is essential in building public confidence in Canada's political institutions".

•(1605)

If he believes that, why is he not prepared to have a full, complete and fulsome debate on Bill C-48 in the fullness of time, according to the parliamentary calendar?

He said later in the letter that he looks forward to working with all of his colleagues. The government carries on. The importance of restoring the representative and deliberate role of members of Parliament is discussed, as are the key principles of democratic reform. It is all here, but there is nothing in this document that talks about closure. There is nothing in this document about democratic reform, which talks about abrogating the parliamentary calendar and forcing Parliament to deal with legislation on a shortened process, on what the member for Sarnia—Lambton has referred to as "legislation by exhaustion".

Paradoxically, there is nothing about that in any of the documents I have referred to, all of which come from the Prime Minister and the government, nothing which talks about that sort of a truncated parliamentary process that we are seeing from the government.

That brings me to Bill C-48, the so-called second budget bill, the NDP budget, which is one of the pieces of legislation which the government seeks to ram through under its current strategy.

I continue to believe that the bill is an abomination which violates the parliamentary expenditure process and which subjects Canadians to overtaxation and to expenditure without representation. I abhor it and I oppose this legislation.

It carries the rather hopeful title of "An Act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make certain payments". The certain payments total \$4.5 billion, and the net effect of this legislation is to create a fund of surplus taxes from which the Liberals have purchased 19 NDP votes in the House of Commons. This is a bill that is two pages in length, has no details whatsoever and authorizes the expenditure of \$4.5 billion of public money.

How can that possibly be reconciled with the first annual report on democratic reform from the Prime Minister, where he says that he wants to see a deliberative role for the House of Commons and he wishes to see the House of Commons more carefully scrutinize the public expenditure process?

This, in fact, is not a budget at all. It is nothing more than a vague set of promises made to the NDP with the hard-earned tax dollars of Canadians.

It is only within the context of this Liberal government that we could even have something like Bill C-48, because this is a government which confuses the money of Canadians with its own money. This is a government which is spending future surpluses.

Let us stop for a moment and consider that. The government would need to accumulate \$8.5 billion in surplus taxes—effectively overtaxation of \$8.5 billion—to drive the expenditures which are promised in Bill C-48. In effect, the bill creates a political slush fund which will be financed from surpluses in 2005-06 and 2006-07 and will be spent by the government.

On behalf of the citizens of my riding, I note that this is one of a number of very curious things which have been happening in the House. The bill contains no details as to how these moneys will be spent and what they will be spent on, other than in the vaguest of details.

Let us examine the bill. It is less than two pages in length. It is about 900 words in total, and it is \$4.5 billion, and the strategy that the government has embarked on is to limit the debate on this legislation.

Who then will be reviewing these expenditures on behalf of the citizens of Canada? Clearly the way the government is proceeding, it will not be this Parliament. The bill compromises the public finances of Canada. And since when did the citizens of Canada agree to be governed in this fashion? The legislation is entirely inconsistent with our traditional of fiscal responsibility. It is entirely inconsistent with the commitments that were made to Canadians in the last election.

Government Orders

• (1610)

No one, certainly no one in my riding, has ever consented to pay taxes at a level which would cover the cost of administering the Government of Canada and in addition to that the cost of creating a \$4.5 billion fund of surplus taxes which the Liberal government can spend on matters sought by the NDP.

This is fiscal irresponsibility. It is good governance stood on its head. It is tantamount to a legislative commitment to \$4.5 billion in overtaxation. It requires thorough debate and it requires debate according to the Parliamentary calendar. There is no reason to abrogate that calendar and rush this legislation through.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the speech of the member opposite. I have a great deal of respect for him. He actually got into some facts and figures on this topic and made it a very good debate.

However, of course I have to disagree with him on his conclusions related to the democratic deficit. It is timely, as he mentioned, that a report came out yesterday extolling all the accomplishments in that area, which is, as he said, one of the pillars of this Prime Minister's government. We have fleshed out the goals we are aiming for and we can see the results of that in the report, including the first ever independent Ethics Commissioner and the House of Commons' own conflict of interest code.

As well, more bills are referred to committee before second reading than ever before, so that members of Parliament can influence and shape legislation. Resources are being increased to committees, where so much is done. Also, the budget for the Library of Parliament's independent research on legislation to help MPs has increased.

Nominations for key positions like heads of crown corporations have gone for review. There is a new process for Supreme Court judges, whereby the justice minister appears before the justice committee to give their professional qualifications.

By far the biggest and most important reform is that government MPs are free to vote on a vast majority of items, as has occurred since the day the Prime Minister was elected, on virtually all things that are not confidence motions, of which there are very few. There has been a tremendous change in the chamber since the last Parliament because of this.

Indeed, as the member opposite will see, if there is a democratic deficit related to that aspect it is within his own party as opposed to the Liberal Party. If people watch the very important vote tonight on extending the sitting in order to pass legislation, I am sure they will see that the Liberals will be split on it whereas I imagine every member of his party will be voting in the same manner.

He said he was surprised that there was nothing in the bill about some of the rules in the House which allow for calling closure and limiting debate. The Prime Minister at the time was probably giving the benefit of the doubt to the opposition that we would not see such antics as we have seen on Bill C-48. I am amazed the member would bring this up when his party is so vulnerable due to the way it has constructed this particular debate, with the exception of his own intervention.

As he will remember, on Bill C-48 we heard speech after speech of the exact same words, which were put on record in the House. Yesterday during debate on Government Business No. 17, the whip for the official opposition would not let anyone speak and talked about all sorts of things not related to the bill. Is it any surprise that the other three parties would intervene to protect the taxpayers of this country when members were filibustering? It is a good job that this provision is there to stop the wasting of time by filibustering.

I will ask the member if he could justify his own party's actions if he wants it to be credible and for the democratic operation of the House.

Mr. Jim Prentice: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his kind words. I have respect for him as well. He did however say that the Liberal government would be protecting the taxpayers of the country. I am sure he believes that, but that is not a thought which should let anyone in the country sleep well at night. I just cannot see that happening.

However, let me come back to the question of how the House has functioned and conducted the business of Canadians. There is no doubt that the House has the capacity to move very quickly when there is an agreement. The difficulty we have is we have two pieces of legislation, in respect of which reasonable people disagree, which require full and complete debate in the House of Commons.

If there were a consensus in the House, as there was with respect to the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement of last week, the House could move very quickly. In that case, very significant legislation passed through the House, essentially in one hour. I was proud to support it and to work on it with my colleagues. However, behind that legislation was 23 years of work and a great deal of confidence in the quality of the legislation that had been brought forward. We have not reached that point in respect of other legislation which is necessarily in front of the House.

What is more important is we face no emergency. The point has been made very clear that Standing Order 28(2) has not been arrived at lightly. This was put in place after two separate, non-partisan parliamentary committees reviewed it and decided we needed a House calendar that would adequately balance all the duties members of Parliament have to their constituents.

As far as I am aware, that Standing Order has been abrogated only once in the context of the emergency free trade debate in 1988. What do we find in Bill C-48 that presents emergency circumstances? For heaven's sake, the surplus process that drives the legislation cannot even be determined until the end of the 2005-06 expenditure year, before the legislation even applies. What in heaven's name is the reason for declaring an emergency to rush it through the House?

There are many things we that do need to be reformed in the House. As a first time member of Parliament, I would say it is a 17th century anachronistic place. The real problem is the government has not had a legislative agenda. The government has had ample opportunity since last September to secure approval for its legislative agenda. It dithered, dodged, ducked and wove its way through the House, sometimes filibustering its own agenda.

Government Orders

That is the problem. That is why the government is short of time. It has nothing to do with any of the opposition parties in the House of Commons.

• (1615)

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as members have pointed out so well, there is no national agenda. That is not why we are talking about extending the hours.

I had a couple of thoughts, as I listened to the House leader this morning. It seemed to me there was hardly a discussion, out of the normal discussion we have in June about staying or going or whatever, until about a week ago. The House leader had newspapers interviews and committed himself to a couple of positions, which I do not think even the Prime Minister knew he was being committed to it. That included passing Bill C-48 and Bill C-38.

This was the first time any of us had heard that had to happen or else we would not be leaving this place. He probably was so far out on a limb that he did not see the branch off behind him. I would think this is one of the reasons we find ourselves in the situation we are in today.

The second reason we find ourselves debating Motion No. 17, which will allow the government to force Bill C-38 through, is the government does not want to take this home for the summer. The Liberals do not want to debate the issue over the summer. They feel if they go home with this issue, they will be hammered on it. I think they think, rather than allow us to come back in the fall and fully debate the issue, if they can ram it through as quickly as possible, then Canadians will forget about it. I would suggest Canadians will not forget about it.

To demonstrate that the government does not have a national agenda and that there is not an urgency in this, as it proclaims there is, in the other place the government has been delaying the implementation of Bill C-43. When the bill was in the House, at different times, particularly with the Atlantic accord, we tried get it accelerated so the government could begin disbursing money to Atlantic Canada.

On every occasion we tried to do that, the Liberal government stopped it from happening. Now that it is in the Senate, the government is once again trying to stop the passage of the bill. The Conservative senators have asked for this to be fast-tracked and they have offered to do that, but the Liberal government, which is in the business of blaming everyone else, has to take responsibility for this. It has refused to allow the bill to be fast-tracked.

I would like the member's comments on a couple of those observations?

• (1620)

Mr. Jim Prentice: Mr. Speaker, we have no urgency or emergency here that would justify the government invoking closure and an extension of the sitting hours, violating Standing Order 28(2). The reason this is being done is political expediency. The reason this is being done, as my hon. friend said, is so the government House leader can save face on a difficult position which he caught himself in last week.

The reason we have Standing Order 28(2) is to balance the interests of the government with that of the elected members of the

Canadian people so they can get about the business of government and also see their constituents over the course of the summer. That rule has never been abrogated other than in emergency circumstances in the country. What the government is doing is highly irregular and unnecessary. It shows complete disrespect for both Parliament and Canadians.

Mr. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am not sure if we have enough members in the House right now to listen to the fine speech the hon. member is about to give. I would like to know if you see quorum.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: There are 20 members in the House. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Davenport.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about Government Motion No. 17 to extend the sitting period. I want to thank the members who voted in favour of the closure motion to put an end to the debate on this motion.

The aim of the motion is simple. The official opposition is obstructing the adoption of important bills before the House.

[*English*]

The official opposition continues to refuse to support the motion. In fact, the opposition House leader moved an amendment to the motion to have the House adjourn today and resume in September without completing further government business. As a result, the government gave notice of closure yesterday to which the House has now agreed.

[*Translation*]

This week, the Premier of Quebec asked Parliament to support Bill C-48. Mayors across Canada are also insisting on the need to immediately adopt this bill so that they can begin planning effectively for the future, in the knowledge that these federal measures will be adopted and that they can go forward.

Bill C-48, which supplements the budget, sets aside \$4.5 billion in emergency funding for the environment, training and post-secondary education, affordable housing and international aid. This bill must be adopted without delay.

The opposition is also obstructing the adoption of Bill C-38 on civil marriage. The government recognizes that one of the purposes of the debate in the House is to help people make up their minds on the topic. However, all the members have done so. Debate should not be used to delay Parliament's decision. All hon. members know that the Standing Committee on Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness held Canada-wide hearings on civil marriage in 2002-03.

Furthermore, we had a long debate on Bill C-38 at second reading. In committee, we heard from witnesses on all aspects of the bill. A *Globe and Mail* editorial yesterday stated, "There is nothing materially useful to add. It's time for Parliament to vote on the bill, and for all parties to let the Commons have its say".

Government Orders

•(1625)

[English]

Canadians elected us to work together for their interests. The government has lived up to its commitment to try to make this minority Parliament work in the service of the interests of the people who elected us.

We do not agree with the official opposition that procedural tactics should be used simply to delay the House from voting on urgent matters. The consequence of these delays is that the House will have to return next week to complete urgent business.

I call on all members to support the motion to extend the sitting of the House so we can complete the work Canadians have elected us to do.

Mr. Ken Epp (Edmonton—Sherwood Park, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about using tactics to stop the work of Parliament. He talked about using procedural steps that would prevent Parliament from doing its work.

I would like to remind him and all other members present that the Liberals day after day in the latter part of May came in with motions to concur in committee reports, debating them endlessly to avoid carrying on with the business of Parliament. For him to somehow imply that others are doing that is really quite inaccurate. It was they who wasted so much time earlier this year that we are now in this position.

Furthermore, I resent him implying that by I, my colleagues, others in opposition and members on the government side taking the time to debate motions is a waste of time. After all, what is this place supposed to be. It is Parliament. If I am not mistaken I believe the French word “parler” means to speak. I think the word “parliament” comes from the same root word. This is the speaking place.

I sometimes tell my grandchildren that I work in the word factory. We are using words here hopefully to put ideas back and forth. In our debates we should hopefully be able to adjust and amend our rules, laws and motions so they are best for the country. I firmly and strongly contend that the agenda the government is now proposing, to extend the time of sitting, reduces the time when we should be keeping the commitments we have made to our constituents and others around of the country. Instead, the government has said that we need to be here to debate Bill C-48 and Bill C-38.

As our daily prayers state, our work here in Parliament is to pass good laws and make wise decisions. In this instance, being able to stop that or at least slow it down is beneficial for Canadian voters, our taxpayers and our citizens. We will make better laws if we can engage in a debate. This motion needs to be stopped.

Mr. Mario Silva: Mr. Speaker, I believe all members come to the House with intentions to serve the public. I am still baffled. How will we serve the public by adjourning the House with such important matters at stake?

Bill C-48 has the support of many premiers. Mayors across the country are asking us to adopt this law before the recess for the summer. It is a bill that will provide \$4.5 billion in urgent funding for the environment, training, post-secondary education, affordable

housing and foreign aid. We are talking about that, and we are dealing with that in the motion.

The other important critical matter, Bill C-38, which I feel is fundamental as well for the country, is in keeping with our charter rights. It is a fundamental human rights issue to me and to many members of the government and we need to deal with it.

It is evident, unfortunately, that both Bill C-48 and Bill C-38 are not supported by the opposition. That is regrettable because I think they are very much supported by most Canadians.

•(1630)

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to point out a couple of errors in the member's statement and then I would like to ask him a question or get a commitment from him if I can.

First, he said Bill C-48 needs to be passed because it delivers urgent funding. I do not think he has read the bill because it cannot deliver the funding until next year when the government determines whether or not it has a surplus, a surplus of a particular amount. Not only that, there is no commitment within those four areas to spend anything. I hope he reads through the bill, so he will find the accurate information.

Second, Bill C-38 is not about human rights, as he said. It is about the redefinition of a traditional institution which the majority of Canadians still defend. He said we cannot possibly adjourn with such important legislation before us. I want to point out that this morning the House leader said that we are here for debate. That is actually true except he is cutting off debate. The government is trying to have it both ways and, as usual, it will blame other people for this.

I expect the government members, once they have been here for a couple of extra days, will get tired of being here. I would not be the least bit surprised if they played around with closure on these two bills.

Since the member said that we cannot adjourn with such important legislation before us, will he commit right now to refuse to go along with closure if it is brought in on both Bill C-48 and Bill C-38?

Mr. Mario Silva: Mr. Speaker, I would have to disagree with the hon. member. I see both bills as being critical and important for this country. I presume that the member has an issue with the mayors across this country and the premiers who are asking to adopt this bill as soon as possible. It is very important and critical that it does take place.

On the matter of Bill C-38, I also disagree with the member. It is an issue of human rights. It is an issue of the charter. Unfortunately, the hon. member does not support the particular view I share.

Government Orders

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member about the importance of the funds for municipalities in Bill C-48. The opposition member seemed to think it is only in Bill C-43. It is in Bill C-43. We would like to get the budget through. The new deal for cities has all sorts of things for municipalities. As the hon. member has correctly stated, the mayors would like us to adopt these bills as fast as possible if the opposition would not keep filibustering.

I would like the hon. member to talk about the importance of urban transit and the other items in our bills for municipalities, so that we can get these bills passed.

Mr. Mario Silva: Mr. Speaker, one of the most important milestones on which the government has delivered has been our cooperation with the cities. This has been very well received by all municipalities. Certainly the mayor of my city of Toronto has gone out of his way to congratulate our Prime Minister in his handling not only of putting more moneys into the cities but seeing the cities as partners in the negotiations that take place.

The Prime Minister went on to say that it is about political parties of all stripes working together, not just to simply build a Canada for today but a Canada for 10, 20 and 30 years from now. The future generation will look back and say "My God, they built well".

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we need to straighten something out. The members for Yukon and Davenport should apologize to Canadians for misleading them about the contents of Bill C-48.

I have the bill right here. It is a page and a half long. We have \$2.5 billion per page. It is probably the most expensive bill that has ever been brought into the House of Commons and there is absolutely nothing in here about mayors, urban transit or cities.

If members opposite want to talk about a bill, let us talk about Bill C-43, which does talk about mayors, urban transit, cities and the Atlantic accord. It is the government that is holding up the passing of Bill C-43. The government has held it up in the Senate. It refuses to let it go ahead. The Conservative Senators have offered to fast track that bill. The government refuses to do that.

These two members should stand up and apologize to Canadians for misleading them. I will let the member do that at this moment.

• (1635)

Mr. Mario Silva: Mr. Speaker, I believe there was a ruling by the Chair that we should not cast aspersions on the other place.

Mr. Ken Epp (Edmonton—Sherwood Park, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just cannot resist. I know that all hon. members have seen those ads on television from the Brick, "Don't pay until 2007". Well, that is exactly what is in this bill. Members should read it. The bill says that nothing will be paid until there is a declared surplus in 2006 at the end of the fiscal year. There will be no money there. I do not know why members cannot understand that. The bill is quite explicit.

Mr. Mario Silva: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will have all summer to explain to the mayors and premiers across this country why the bill did not go through.

From my reading and understanding, and speaking to many mayors across this country, they are very supportive of this bill. They want us to support it and move it forward as fast as possible.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Hamilton Centre.

I am happy to speak to this motion to extend the sitting in order for Parliament to pass legislation that has been held up and tied up in knots because of the antics, games and aggressive obstructionist tactics of the Conservatives.

It is unfortunate that we are in this position. It is unfortunate that we have to resort to this motion to get to this point, but that is exactly what is happening today.

I want to set the record straight in terms of what the member who just spoke from the Conservative side said about the bill and about the money and when it will be spent. The Conservatives, in a very crafty way, are deliberately distorting the purpose of the bill and the mechanisms to implement these budget provisions.

I have listened day in and day out to the Conservatives suggesting that this money will not be spent for another year or two, the budget will not come into effect right away, this budget is so big, and there are no details. I want to say hogwash and rubbish to each and every one of those claims.

I will start with the most obnoxious of those claims contending that the money will not flow for another year and therefore, what is the hurry? The members are wrong. The budget bill states very clearly that this money, \$4.6 billion divided over two fiscal years, the one we are in and the next one, will flow immediately upon the Minister of Finance determining the exact unanticipated surplus.

We know from past experience and from statements by the government that by early September the exact amount of unanticipated surplus will be known. It is not a question of waiting for another year to know that. The Minister of Finance will know just as we knew in the House when the government actually miscalculated and lowballed its surplus and the Conservatives made a big deal about the numbers.

The government said it was \$1.9 billion and we found out it was \$9.1 billion. Who screamed the loudest? The Conservatives because they said that was mischievous, dishonest and that the government should be straightforward and honest about the money and about what it knows.

This time that is exactly what is happening only we were out of the gate long before the Conservatives even woke up to this possibility. We negotiated a deal based on the fact that we knew the surplus was going to come in at a much higher rate than expected and listed in the fiscal framework of budget 2005.

I will put it in very clear terms. We are now talking about an anticipated surplus in each of the next three years to be \$8 billion. In this budget proposal we have recommended that the government set aside \$2 billion for the surplus contingency that would then flow and be put against the debt. That leaves \$6 billion.

We are simply saying that \$2.3 billion of that should be spent to meet some basic needs of Canadians, to meet the needs of people who want a decent roof over their head, who want to live in safe lodging, for students who want to go to university, for people who want to breathe clean air, for people who want to use public transit, and for good hearted Canadians who want to share a bit of the wealth of this nation with people who are living in poverty around the world.

That is what we are doing. We are setting \$2.3 billion aside for each of the next two years, leaving a huge surplus, more than the \$2 billion that we asked for. There will be more than was ever expected and anticipated.

The Conservatives should get it through their heads that the money ought to be spent to meet the needs of Canadians, create jobs and grow the economy. They should not be sitting here kvetching, yapping and griping over the fact that the New Democrats had some initiative, had some chutzpah, and had the gall to go to the Liberals and say, "Let's make a deal". Yes, it was a deal. It was a good deal for Canadians.

●(1640)

I suggest that the Conservatives stop the nonsense. We are dealing with a budget bill that is sound, fiscally responsible, based on good economics and not the wacky mathematics of the Conservatives. It meets the needs of Canadians. It is based on what Canadians from one end of this country to the other have told us through the prebudget consultations.

People have said to us, "We deserve a part of the surplus which came from us in the first place. It came from us because of the cutbacks that occurred over the years when the Liberal government started engineering its social cuts in 1993. It is money owed to us because all that happened under the Liberal government is that corporations and the wealthy got the tax breaks and we did not".

Canadians are saying it is their turn. We in the New Democratic Party have said yes, it is Canadians' turn. We are going to respond to that need and do whatever we can to make the government sensitive and responsive to the needs of Canadians.

The Conservatives are way off the mark when they suggest there are no details in the bill and there is no way the money can flow. The bill is more detailed than the provisions that the Conservatives supported in Bill C-43. The bill is more specific in terms of where the money will flow, how it will flow and who it will benefit than half of the provisions the Conservatives voted for in Bill C-43. The hypocrisy; that is why we say they are disingenuous. They are simply stalling and obstructing the work of this place for their own political agenda.

We are talking about a political party that is so desperate. It needs an issue. It put all of its eggs in the basket of forcing an election on the sponsorship scandal, only to find out that there will be an election on the scandal. There will be an election on corruption. Canadians wanted more from the Conservatives than simply a one issue program. They wanted some plans from the party. They wanted some insights in terms of what the Conservatives would do, but they found out there was nothing there.

Government Orders

All the Conservatives can do in the House is obstruct, play games and put on a big macho act. All we have heard in the last two days is big macho talk: "Who is going to hold up what; how are we going to stall this; how are we going to interrupt witnesses; who can be the most rude; who can be the most impolite?" That is what it has come down to. I reject and resent it and I think Canadians do as well.

This is a plan that Canadians want executed as quickly as possible. This is a budget that will make a huge difference in the lives of Canadians. This is a budget that will see money flow as early as this fall. It is imperative that we pass it now and not wait until the fall. We need to pass it now so that the plans are agreed upon, the programs are developed and all those who have access to this money have the chance to participate.

I want to emphasize that the money will flow this fall. The minister will know how much the surplus will be beyond what had been projected in the 2005 fiscal forecast and in the 2005 budget that we have all seen. It requires us to work in the next three months with members of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, with the mayors of the towns and cities of this land. It requires us to work now with aboriginal Canadians who will benefit from this money in terms of housing and education.

It is incumbent upon us to work with the provinces and the Canadian Federation of Students to develop plans to ensure that the money will actually make education more accessible. It is incumbent upon us to make sure that the work is done and the budget is passed so that the money will flow this year. If it does not flow, it will only be because the Conservatives delayed, stalled and prevented us from getting the job done. I say to them to stop the game playing. Let us get down to work to pass this budget bill as soon as possible so that Canadians can reap the benefits.

●(1645)

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the member opposite. She is from my city. I was a little reluctant to get up and ask a question, but I too can add, very well actually.

Bill C-43 was put together under the normal budget process, where one looks at the initiatives one wants to promote, collaborates with people in the field of expertise, and then looks at what can be done. It takes a certain length of time to accomplish this process. Bill C-48 on the other hand was much different. It was constructed in a hotel room in Toronto in a very short period of time. It was constructed with the NDP. The NDP, quite frankly, was not elected to this House of Commons. There are 19 members here—

An hon. member: Oh? Interesting.

Mrs. Joy Smith: As the governing body. The NDP is not the governing body. Nineteen members do not constitute a majority government. On this side, we are a very formidable opposition, but we are not in governance either.

It is the responsibility of the Liberal government at this point in time to make the budget, because the people of Canada elected the Liberals to it. They did not elect a Liberal-NDP government to rule this country.

Government Orders

Having said that, this is what we are talking about when we are talking about democracy. People on this side of the House had a lot of input into Bill C-43. With regard to Bill C-48, no one on this side of the House was consulted in any way, shape or form. Bill C-48 was simply the result of two parties getting together to shore up a corrupt government.

The member opposite in my view is a woman of integrity. I have personally looked up to her. With all due respect, how can the NDP shore up the corrupt Liberal government? How can it ignore the democratic process? Governments in power are supposed—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, that is the best case of sour grapes and NDP envy I have heard yet from the Conservative side.

I do not know about the member for Kildonan—St. Paul, but I came here to work as hard as I could for my constituents and the people of Canada. I came here to make a difference, not to sit on the sidelines and not to be a backseat driver, but to actually try to effect change.

Opposition members are not prevented from trying to influence things in this House and trying to make a difference and effect change. That is exactly what we did. It is not like the Conservatives who took a look at the February 2005 budget and said, “Oh, it is not bad. It is better than we thought,” and ran out and supported it as their leader did on February 23.

Instead, we said the budget was not what we expected. It did not reflect what we had heard in terms of the democratic process of prebudget consultations, in which I might add members of the Conservative Party were involved. They were part of the finance committee that heard from so many Canadians right across the country who said that something had to be done about education. There is a hodgepodge of programs. Students are not able to get access when they want higher education and then they are not able to repay their huge student loans.

If the member has not heard that from hundreds of constituents, I do not know what she is doing, because that is one of the number one issues we are hearing now. We heard it during the prebudget consultations.

It just so happened at that point the Liberal government did not respect the democratic process to ensure that there was something in the budget for education and housing. We reminded the Liberals. We used the power we had as 19 members, not the 99 members over there who did nothing. We have 19 members and we used our power to make a difference. We effected some change that will help students and homeowners. It will make a real difference to this country.

All I can ask the member is, is she prepared simply to see more money going to the profits of big corporations as opposed to lowering tuition, creating affordable housing and cleaning the environment?

• (1650)

The Deputy Speaker: The member is very popular. There are so many people who want to ask her questions, but we are out of time.

We will move now to the member for Hamilton Centre.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up where my colleague left off and point out that one of the reasons the Conservatives are having such difficulty was the original blunder they made when the budget was tabled in this place not that long ago.

What did we see? Before, underscore before, the finance minister was finished reading the budget, the leader of the official opposition stepped in front of the cameras and surrendered. He surrendered, and not only on the budget issue. As far as the NDP is concerned, the official opposition surrendered its responsibilities to provide loyal opposition in this place. We do not need an opposition to cave and fold and run up the white flag. Opposition is there under our parliamentary system to provide opposition. Those members did not do it. They caved.

What is driving the Conservatives crazy is that the NDP had sense enough and enough presence of mind to look at the budget and say, “We watched the Liberals in the last campaign. We listened carefully and in the final days of the campaign they sounded an awful lot like New Democrats”. They talked about all the things that we have consistently and historically fought tooth and nail for.

Canadians responded by allowing the Liberals to remain in office. They still get to ride around in their limos, but they do not have absolute control of this place. The message from Canadians was clear. They heard what the Liberals had to say. They liked what the Liberals had to say, but they sent a minority government to Ottawa to make sure there was some way to keep the Liberals honest and to hold them accountable and to make them actually govern the way they said they would in the campaign.

The official opposition surrendered right away and said, “We give. We give”. But right off the bat we in the NDP said that we were opposed to the budget because it did not fulfill the mandate that the Liberals in a minority situation were given by the Canadian people. We decided that if we had the opportunity we would use our 19 seats and leverage them in a minority situation with the sole purpose of forcing the Liberals to deliver on the issues Canadians expected them to implement.

What are we talking about? We are talking about affordable housing. My hometown of Hamilton desperately needs affordable housing. We need affordable housing in downtown Hamilton more than we need more corporate tax cuts which nobody ran on and nobody had a mandate for.

While I am on that, let me point out that the NDP made sure in Bill C-48 that we maintained the tax cuts that were there for small and medium size business because those are good investments. We all know that the job generators in this country are not the huge multinational corporations. The actual jobs are created by small and medium size business. That is why we made sure that those tax cuts stayed in there because they help Canadians.

Government Orders

The Conservatives were not interested in helping anybody beyond their corporate pals. Once their corporate pals were taken care of in the budget, there was nothing further for them to do because that is their constituency. That is fine. It would be nice if they were a little more up front about it and acknowledged it, but if they want to pretend that they care about other things, they can do so. They can make those arguments. Canadians understand. The white flag went up on that budget because of the billions of dollars that nobody had a mandate to give from the public treasury into the corporate profit bottom line. That is where the NDP drew the line.

• (1655)

As a result of the NDP better balanced budget, we will have a balanced budget. We will have tax cuts where they will do the most amount of good, small and medium size business. We will ensure there is repayment on the debt. We have the priorities of Canadians correct where the Conservatives in particular have it wrong. We have ensured that those billions that the Conservatives wanted to give the Stronachs of the world would go where it would make a difference.

I talked about my hometown of Hamilton needing affordable housing. Let me also underscore the absolute critical importance of public transit, infrastructure, roads and bridges. When I talk to the Chamber of Commerce in Hamilton, it is as concerned about the status of roads, bridges and sewers as anyone else, more than most, because it understands the importance to the local economy.

The money that is to be invested in cities is a benefit to virtually everyone who lives in Hamilton, except maybe any family members of the Stronachs who happen to live in Hamilton. They may not be so thrilled. For the most part, Hamiltonians are pleased. They want this budget.

Let us talk about money to clean up the environment. I do not need to tell my colleagues here the kind of challenges we face in Hamilton. It is not unlike many other cities and constituencies across the nation. Money invested in a Kyoto plan that works affects the lives of Hamiltonians just like it affects the lives of every other Canadian. We made that a priority. We thought that is more important than Frank Stronach getting an even bigger tax cut.

The bigger priority for us was our students. Again, we are blessed in Hamilton. We have McMaster University and Mohawk College. We have Redeemer University. We have a number of institutions of which we are very proud and which Hamiltonian students want to attend, but they need means. Unfortunately, under the Liberals for the last 12 years, the effects of the cuts to the post-secondary education system have meant that for many Hamiltonian youth going on to university, no matter how talented they are, or how smart they are, or how hard they are prepared to work, many of them are facing family circumstances where they will be unable to go on to university or college.

That is one of the secret geniuses of Canada. In addition to our ability to maintain and respect cultures from around the world, we also ensured that our young people historically over the past decades, no matter what the income of their family, if they had a desire to go to university or college, we ensured they had opportunity to do that. We have done quite well, but we are living off the dividends of that investment from decades gone by.

The Liberals cannot stand very proud I am afraid and talk about their investment in post-secondary education over the last 12 years. This new better balanced budget, Bill C-48, negotiated proudly by the NDP, will make a difference and will put money on the line to help Hamilton students and other students across the country achieve their fullest potential. Is that not the promise—

• (1700)

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is our understanding that the speeches are supposed to be relevant to the subject being discussed. It seems like the member is far off track. He does not seem to understand that we are not talking about Bill C-48 right now. We are talking about the motion.

If you could help him understand that, Mr. Speaker, it would be appreciated.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): I thank the hon. member for making his point of order. I understand the hon. member who had the floor had opened a bracket of parentheses and was getting back to the subject.

Mr. David Christopherson: Mr. Speaker, let me just say that my comments are very germane to the motion in front of us. It speaks to why the NDP is prepared to support extending this House, why we are prepared to shut down any shenanigans that get in the way of passing the bill and why we are ready to move heaven and earth to ensure Bill C-48 and the billions of dollars that are invested in this nation and in the families within this nation passes this House.

If it means we have to stand here all night long and force votes that ultimately brings about the enactment of that bill, then dammit, the NDP is prepared to do that. We are here to make a difference for Canadians, to help Canadians and pass legislation that will be meaningful for Canadians. That is exactly what Bill C-48 is about and it is exactly why the NDP will support the motion on the floor now.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that even though he sits quite far away from the Chair, his microphone is still working and we can all hear him fine.

His colleague, the current longest continuous serving member in the House of Commons, went through this debate before about extending sittings. I want to ask him if he agrees with the comments of the member for Elmwood—Transcona? The last time a similar motion was debated he said:

I feel obliged to get on my feet on behalf of the members of those two reform committees that I belonged to, on behalf of Members now, and on behalf of future Members of Parliament, to say that if we sacrifice this parliamentary calendar to the Government's political agenda—and that is all it is—it is not as if there is any great emergency;

The member stood in 1988 and he foresaw situations such as this. He spoke against the practice of changing Standing Orders just to suit the government's political agenda. We have heard a great deal about that. This can be a dictatorship by a majority. We can overrule any Standing Order we want to if the government feels that way.

Royal Assent

Imagine if the Liberals became sick and tired of the daily scandals of its own corruption and criminality and said that question period was too embarrassing for them, so they decided to get rid of question period and they brought in a motion to that effect. The opposition would not have an opportunity to question the ministers. That could happen if we allow things such as this to happen.

The parliamentary calendar is just as important a Standing Order as is question period, as is members' statements, as is all our routine proceedings and Standing Orders that we abide by. Changing those orders, like changing the rules in the middle of a hockey game, is undemocratic. It is unparliamentary. Imagine in a hockey game if one team was down and decided to play a couple of extra periods until it scored a few more goals. Once it was ahead, then it would end the game. That is exactly what we are talking about today. It is unparliamentary and undemocratic. His own member spoke against these types of tactics.

Does he agree with his colleague from Elmwood—Transcona that these kinds of parliamentary tactics are unparliamentary and undemocratic?

Mr. David Christopherson: Mr. Speaker, the member neglected to mention that my colleague is all of those things. He is the Dean of the House and also a former House leader. He has all of the qualifications. Do I agree with my colleague, the former NDP House leader? Absolutely. What is his position on this motion? He is in favour of it. What is his position on Bill C-48? He is in favour of it. He is a proud member of this caucus. He wants to see the budget bill pass too.

Let me also comment on the loudness. Some might use my loudness to leave the chamber when I speak, but I am not so sure. I think they could find others. However, I was elected to come here and ensure Hamilton had a voice, and it is bloody well will be heard whether the hon. member likes it or not.

• (1705)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I ask a very short question, I want to ensure that everyone who is watching and members of Parliament and their staff know a very important event has just started in the Senate lobby. It is a celebration of which every member of the House is proud, and that is the Labrador Inuit land claim. Anyone who can get there should, and of course I have an Inukshuk on my tie to celebrate that.

I have a hard time understanding the reasons that the other two parties are against this motion. The Conservatives in particular are asking for more time. Could the member outline the rational, reasonable and logical arguments the Conservatives have, given in the excessive time they have had so far to debate Bill C-48? If the member thinks they need more time, what more logical, rational, objective arguments might they come up with?

Mr. David Christopherson: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear any members of the official opposition say that they were opposed to affordable housing, or public transit, or to money going into infrastructure for cities. I did not hear members of the official opposition say that they were opposed to cleaning up the environment or ensuring that our students have access to post-secondary education.

They did not talk about the content of the bill being problematic. They talked about everything around it. That is usually a good clue that they are nervous about their position vis-à-vis the content of the bill and the substantive matters before the House. One of the parliamentary tricks one uses in that circumstance is to start talking about procedure.

The hon. member asked me if I thought the official opposition needed more time. I think Canadians know that the official opposition is in a bind. The popularity of that party's leader is going through the basement. A few months ago it looked like the Conservatives were about to roll into power. Now they are on the way to rolling out maybe into oblivion, but I doubt that is going to happen.

That is a glum group over there compared to what they were a few short weeks ago. The Conservatives are desperate to find something so they want to take a stand and fight Bill C-48 because it is an NDP thing and that cannot be good. Therefore, they talk about procedures.

The reality is I have not heard members of the official opposition say that they do not think these are good investments or that they are investments that they do not want. I have not heard them say that this is not something that should be a priority for the country as a nation, in terms of taking care of our people and putting us on a strong footing for the future.

The fact that they are talking about procedure, I take it to mean they are desperately floundering around trying to show they stand for something when in reality all they are doing is standing in the way.

Mr. James Lunney: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to ask for unanimous consent to extend the time for questions and comments for that member. I am sure a lot of members would like to interact with him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): Is there unanimous consent to extend the period for questions and comments?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

ROYAL ASSENT

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): Order, please. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows: Rideau Hall

Ottawa

June 23, 2005

Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bills listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 23rd day of June, 2005, at 4:10 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Curtis Barlow

Deputy Secretary, Policy, Program and Protocol

The schedule indicates the bills assented to were Bill C-9, an act to establish the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec—Chapter 26; Bill C-56, an act to give effect to the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement and the Labrador Inuit Tax Treatment Agreement—Chapter 27; Bill C-58, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2006—Chapter 28; and Bill C-3, an act to amend the Canada Shipping Act, the Canada Shipping Act, 2001, the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act and the Oceans Act—Chapter 29.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1710)

[English]

EXTENSION OF SITTING PERIOD

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we look at the Standing Orders presently, there is no question that the calendar of this House is a fairly significant event that is agreed to, according to the Standing Orders, by the House leaders.

According to the Standing Orders, during the adjourned period when members of Parliament are in their constituencies, the House does not get called back unless there is need for royal assent on something that is of some urgency. If that is the case, the House can be called back for a short period.

The Standing Order 28(4) reads:

The House shall meet at the specified time for those purposes only; and immediately thereafter the Speaker shall adjourn the House to the time to which it had formerly been adjourned.

When we have a calendar it ought to be respected and, if it needs to be interrupted, then after the particular business is done the House needs to go back into adjournment. There needs to be a reason for the House to reconvene that is of substance.

This House could probably be guided by Standing Order 28(3) which talks about the Speaker utilizing his or her discretion to recall the House. It states:

Whenever the House stands adjourned, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Government, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time, the Speaker may give notice that being so satisfied the House shall meet....

Therefore there needs to be some evidence that would satisfy the Speaker. There has to be some public interest that requires an interruption of the House calendar.

I would think this House would at least have to satisfy those same principles before this House could put forward a motion that would require this House to extend itself for a further period. What is the public interest?

We have heard discussion about Bill C-48. It does not get implemented until next year. In fact, when we look at the budget implementation portion of it, it talks about the moneys actually being

Government Orders

requisitioned or looked at in the next year. What is the urgency? This is not in the public interest. This could be debated in the fall sitting. In fact one could argue that perhaps there is something to Bill C-43 passing.

Bill C-43 has cleared this particular House and is now in the Senate chamber for approval. We have a senator saying that the Conservative senators were prepared to expedite the passage of Bill C-43, the budget legislation bill, which includes the Atlantic accord, but that the Liberal senators were refusing to pass it. He also said that they agreed to waive certain procedural steps in order to speed the passage of Bill C-43.

He goes on to say:

Two other government bills are receiving clause-by-clause consideration immediately following testimony by witnesses in Senate Committees today. The Liberal government will not permit the same procedure to be followed for Bill C-43, thus putting the bill at risk should Bill C-48, the NDP budget bill, be defeated in the House of Commons in the next few days.

We just received notice that those two bills are here for royal assent.

How is it that the Liberal government, on one hand, says that it wants the bill to go forward so the funds can start rolling on that particular bill, but on the other hand, refuses to have it passed expeditiously, as it could have? I think it is playing games with this House.

Let us look at the marriage bill, Bill C-38. Is there a public interest to have it passed or at least a public interest sufficient to call the House back to order when it ought to be adjourned? What is the public interest in that bill? In fact, a large percentage of the Canadian public do not want that bill to pass. Therefore it is definitely not in the public interest to call Parliament back for that purpose and that purpose alone.

• (1715)

What has the government done? It has attempted to lump and link Bill C-48 with Bill C-38, the marriage bill, in an attempt to justify, on some kind of national basis, that it is in the public interest to reconvene the House. However this is not in the public interest. It is all subterfuge. It is all playing with the rules to get their ends.

The House leader stated earlier in the press that he was prepared to not have Bill C-38 pass if Bill C-48 passed, but then he changed his mind, dug in his heels and decided to connect the two and call Parliament back for that purpose.

What is the rush? Bill C-38 is fundamentally changing the definition of marriage. It is fundamentally changing society as we know it. It deserves the time that is needed to discuss it and the public need an opportunity to participate. What we had at report stage was a sham.

Government Orders

During question period today the member for London—Fanshawe asked whether limiting the witnesses at the committee was really doing the job it ought to be doing. Is it appropriate to give witnesses 24 hours or 48 hours notice to appear? Is changing members of the committee appropriate? Is setting up a separate committee to ram through the committee hearings appropriate? Those hearings should have been the widest possible hearings across the country in every city with every member of the public having an opportunity to address the government before that bill completed report stage.

However the Liberals are ramming it through, despite the concerns of Canadians, despite public interest and despite our nation's interest, because they want to. They have confused national agenda and public interest with their own interest. They have confused the House of Commons calendar, which should not be interfered with easily, with their own ends and their own desires.

I think it is appalling. It is appalling to democracy and it is appalling to this institution for the government to go further and put a motion in the House that would limit debate on whether the hours and sittings of this House should be extended. How can it be in this free and democratic country that we cannot have every member in the House speak to whether the preconditions exist for the House to be extended?

We have to justify the pre-conditions of the House. That is why the Standing Order is there. That is why there are safeguards. We cannot, just on a notion, say that we will pass a motion that will change the Standing Orders and call the House back because we want to. There must be some basis for that and that basis is the public interest, because that is the basis, Mr. Speaker, that you might have to contend with.

The Liberals chose not to allow every member in the House to speak. Since when does a government decide that closure is the way to go on an issue so important as whether or not this House should sit in the summer to deal with the marriage bill, Bill C-38.

This is not a national crisis. This is not a national public interest that requires us to do it. The Prime Minister and the government confuse their own interests with the interests of the nation.

When the Prime Minister appeared on television I thought he was going to speak to something that was of national interest or of some national crisis, or even perhaps proroguing Parliament or calling an election.

What was the purpose of that particular television address? At great expense to this nation and every taxpayer of Canada, the purpose of that television appearance was to protect the hide of the Prime Minister and his government because they were on the ropes of losing in a possible election. He used the media and the resources of government to bolster public opinion and that is shameful.

Even the NDP leader acknowledged that. In question period he said, "First, let me add my voice to those who are concerned about the televised address this evening. This is a Liberal crisis; it is definitely not a national crisis." The government is confusing its own interests with those of the nation.

● (1720)

In the next question, the hon. leader went fishing to see if he could change the government's budget. He said, "Putting aside the issue of corruption, let me see if I can be bought". How could he do that? He was speaking about the sponsorship scandal and the things that have happened. People were paid for doing little or nothing with Canadian taxpayer dollars for which many people worked very hard to put in the coffers of the government. Some people work 12 hours a day, six days a week, only to lose half of their money to the government to spend on projects and programs.

However we find the government using and abusing those funds to pay ad agencies for little or no work and then having some of that money filter back to the party to fund an election. It was buying votes at \$250 million per member to get another party's support to cling to power and giving people positions to cross the floor. Those are the kinds of things that should not happen in the House but it gets worse than that.

The House raised a motion of confidence, if not directly, certainly indirectly. At that point, constitutionally, the Prime Minister and his government had an obligation to Canadians and to the House to raise the issue of confidence themselves and they did not have confidence. They did not have confidence for a week.

The House should have been closed shut. There should not have been one order of business happening until that issue of confidence was settled. For that week we were without a government because it should not have been exercising the powers of government, the levers of government, the position of government to advance its own interests.

However all the while we had ministers and the Prime Minister travelling across Canada signing deals, committing money, spending money, campaigning at public expense and doing the kinds of things that would be shameful in a third world country that is run by a dictatorship.

We should have closed the House down and went to the wall to prevent that from happening because it was an injustice. It was illegitimately trying to legitimize government. It waited until it had the numbers and then it put forward an issue of confidence, and that is wrong.

What is wrong with the government is that it confuses its own interests with the interests of Canada.

We expect far better. We expect to have a government with vision. We expect to have a government that is prepared to take a loss, prepared to sacrifice on behalf of the country and one that puts the country's interest above its own, above its own greed and its own temptations, not a government that tries to shove a bill through the House when the public of Canada does not want it.

We need a government with backbone and a government with the courage to lose if it has to. An election should have been called and that confidence vote should have been respected. The public would have made a decision on Bill C-38.

Now the Liberals are trying to ram it through. It would not surprise me if they would put closure on Bill C-38 and Bill C-48 to get their will, despite the will of the people of Canada. That is wrong and the people of Canada will pass judgment. Believe me, it will not end in this session and it will not end in the summer.

I am prepared to stay here in July, all of August and into September to preserve the democratic right of the people of the country to express their views through members of Parliament on Bill C-38 because what is happening here is wrong.

One could ask whether I was looking at this objectively. I would like to make reference to an article in the *Toronto Sun*. Chantal Hébert said, "One thing we have learned from the tape affair is that precious little stands between the Prime Minister and a repeat of the sponsorship scandal. It is a culture that's wrong. It is what permeates government that's wrong. It is the thing that says the end justifies the means. It doesn't matter how we get there, it just matters that we get there. Our objective is to stay in power and we'll do whatever we have to, twist and bend every rule we have to stay in power".

Supply day motions happen once a week every week and it was during that time that a confidence motion could have been put by any one of the parties, including our party. The Liberals took those supply days away and the ability to make a confidence motion until the end of May.

• (1725)

Why was that? To me, that was something I expected to happen every week. It was tradition. It was something the House had as a constitutional kind of arrangement that happened week after week. The Liberals took it away for the sole purpose of preventing confidence because they knew they would lose. They then put them at the end of May. Why? So any election would take place in the middle of summer.

They wanted to have the opportunity to continue to buy, pay, promise, and get to the position where they could win and then call it. There is something fundamentally wrong with that. There is something very wrong with that. That is why the country is going astray. It needs some direction. It needs some commitment. It needs someone with some backbone who says there is a right, there is a wrong, that this is right and we will do it, regardless of whether it costs us or not, and not what we see here.

An hon. member: That is called principled.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: We need a principled government that raises the principle above itself. Subjecting oneself to principle shows good leadership. It shows good leadership because one is prepared, at personal sacrifice, to see the good of the country, and that is what is lacking here. It is the good of the party and clinging to power that is more important over there.

Chantal Hébert said there was one thing that Gomery could not do in his report and that was to make up for the poor quality of the moral fibre of a government. When the moral fibre of the government is gone, our nation is gone too. Only one thing will cure that and that is the replacement of the government. We will see to it and so will the people of Canada in due course.

She went on to say:

Private Members' Business

Given the lengths to which [the Prime Minister] and his team have gone just to prolong the life of their minority government for a few more months, one has to wonder how many more ethical niceties they would dispense with if, like Jean Chrétien, they, too, were faced with the implosion of the Canadian federation.

What if there was a real crisis? What if there was a real test? What if there was a real cost? What would they do? Would they stand in the face of that?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): The hon. member has one minute.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Do I not have 20 minutes, Mr. Speaker? One minute? Okay. I want to look at temporary resident permits. There were 72 of 74 granted to Liberal MPs in the last weeks of the campaign. What is that?

Chantal Hébert said:

Having listened to [the Minister of Health's] overtures to [the member for Newton—North Delta], would anyone vouch that the health minister is made of more principled material than Alfonso Gagliano? Or that he and his colleagues are operating under a stricter moral code than members of past cabinets? Having heard [the Prime Minister's] chief-of-staff Tim Murphy nod and wink and dress up the Liberal window with future government considerations, can anyone doubt that this is an administration that is just as likely to live and die by the rule that the end justifies the means?

That is the problem with the government. That is the problem with where we are going. There should not be closure on debate when something so fundamental as whether or not the moral fibre of this nation should be changed by a bill that will probably be subject to, and suffer, closure as well. We are living in a democratic country. Our system intends members to speak and debate, and make their point of view known and to represent their constituents and not to be short changed on that.

How is it that the government was prepared to filibuster its own legislation, put material that was irrelevant before the House to prevent a confidence motion, and waste days and days on end in May and now says we cannot debate a motion past 8 o'clock today? How can that be in this country? How can that be that we are prevented from debating in this House? I fail to understand that.

• (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): I wish to advise the hon. member that when we resume at 6:30 he will enjoy a period of 10 minutes for questions and comments, if he is in the House.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

TREATIES ACT

The House resumed from May 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-260, an act respecting the negotiation, approval, tabling and publication of treaties, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to speak to Bill C-260, which, as you know, is a bill the Bloc Québécois has been bringing back to this House for many years.

This bill was first introduced by our colleague at the National Assembly, Daniel Turp, the member for Mercier. It was then re-introduced by the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île, who as you know is our foreign affairs critic. Now the torch has been passed on not only to the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île, but also the hon. member for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia. I want to commend him on this private members' bill.

Bill C-260 requires major treaties signed by the Government of Canada to be discussed by MPs and not just the executive branch of the government. In that sense, it is a bill that reflects the major advances of modern democracy. People will no longer accept treaties being negotiated, ratified and signed in secret behind closed doors. We are living in an age when, in addition to conventional treaties, a great number of trade and environmental treaties are being signed, for example, the convention on cultural diversity and other treaties related to culture.

It is to be hoped that in future, the international community will also be more effective at adopting rules having to do with social issues and labour standards than what we see today.

This is therefore a bill that really looks to the future. At the same time, though, it is rooted in the great battles that democrats have waged the world over and that the Bloc Québécois wages in this House. Once again, I would like to congratulate the member for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia on this initiative.

As I was saying, the purpose of the bill is to submit major international treaties to a vote of the House before ratification by the existing government. When we say major treaties, we mean treaties requiring legislative changes. I will return to this in a moment.

This would make it possible, first, to have greater transparency. As you know, Canada is bound by nearly 3,000 bilateral and multilateral treaties. Unfortunately, most of these treaties are tabled sporadically or sometimes not at all. What this bill proposes is that treaties signed by the Canadian government, by Canada, should be tabled and published regularly.

This is also a bill that institutes not only transparency but also a democratic process that should be automatic. The members of the House should consider major treaties and, after a debate, there should be a vote on these treaties. I just mentioned how these treaties could be defined. This would also make it possible to use the consultation mechanisms we have in Parliament. For example, the parliamentary committees concerned by the treaty in question would not only study the treaty but could also be asked to contribute during the negotiations. I think that is extremely important.

For example, we are currently discussing an international policy statement tabled by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I am giving the example of one committee, but it could pertain to others as well. Several experts told us that the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade does not play an important enough role, with the result that Canada's foreign policy is a party policy. At the present time, it is the Liberal Party of Canada that is in power—for a few weeks still, a few months at most—and it is therefore this

party that decides on policy. After their upcoming defeat, the new government will have another foreign policy that could be the exact opposite of what we have now.

If the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade were allowed to play a greater advisory role—in both the negotiation and the ratification of treaties—foreign policy would be much less partisan than it is. It would be shared by all of the parties in this House and all members, thus ensuring not only consistency but continuity in foreign affairs. I give this as an example, but it is true as well in the case of the environment, fisheries, culture and so on.

• (1735)

By giving the parliamentary committee and members of this House not only the privilege but the obligation to examine treaties in detail, debate them and pass them, or not, the government would vastly improve democratic life in this House and in all of Canadian and Quebec society.

It would mesh perfectly with what the current Prime Minister promised when he was running for the leadership of the Liberal Party of Canada and when he was campaigning in the 2004 election, namely to reduce the democratic deficit.

Everyone can see that the fact that the executive alone has the privilege of negotiating and ratifying treaties creates huge problems in terms of transparency and democracy.

You will say, Mr. Speaker—and you will be right—that, in the case of Kyoto, the House voted. That is a fact, because the Prime Minister agreed to have the House debate this treaty. So, the House does not have a right. In fact, depending on how the Prime Minister sees things at the time, he can permit or refuse debate of a treaty in this House.

Take, for instance, the war in Iraq. We would have liked to have seen a vote here but there never was one, because this government did not want one. Fortunately, the decision reached was in keeping with the opinion of the majority of the people of Canada and Quebec. At least it was in line with the position of the Bloc Québécois.

If Bill C-260 were passed, that would also make it possible to respect provincial jurisdictions, which is extremely important. When the Canadian government, Canada, negotiates on services or agriculture with the World Trade Organization, it is negotiating in areas under either joint jurisdiction or solely provincial jurisdiction. Thus the commitments by the Government of Canada on behalf of Canadians and Quebecers commit the provinces.

This is so much the case that, in the new GATT agreement signed in 1994, the so-called superior level of government—which term, we all agree, has no connection with reality—is obliged to use the means available to it to ensure that the local, or inferior levels comply with the agreements signed by the central government. So what we were told is no longer true.

It is correct as far as NAFTA is concerned. A province that is unwilling to apply certain of the measures in NAFTA within areas under its jurisdiction is entitled to do this, since there are provisions for this in the agreement. However, with GATT, now the World Trade Organization, and the new agreement signed in 1994 there is a responsibility.

In fact, it may very well happen that, at the end of the day, the Government of Canada could sign a treaty and one of the provinces or Quebec might not respect it because it fell under their jurisdiction.

Taking the WTO as an example, there might be repercussions from other countries. They would tell us, "Come on now, you people have signed a treaty and now you are not able to get your so-called inferior governments to comply with it." That terminology does not, of course, reflect in any way the realities of our respective governments.

It would therefore be advisable for the provinces to be involved in the negotiating process, so as not to end up with inconsistencies like the examples I have given.

Consider this in terms of the negotiations on the Free Trade Area of the Americas, when that was going on. It is going nowhere now, but at the time, there was an education committee. The Canadian government represented Canada, although the provinces have exclusive jurisdiction in this area. It was a bit strange to see the Canadian government sitting at the table and negotiating with the governments of 34 other countries in the Americas—well, 33 other countries, because Cuba was not party to the negotiations—when education is outside its jurisdiction.

This bill would allow us to adapt current practices of ratifying treaties to the modern day reality in the rest of the world.

• (1740)

Some people say that the executive branch's privilege is tied to British tradition. This is probably true. However, even Great Britain has changed its approach. Now, in the case of many treaties, the British Parliament has the duty to engage in debate and then vote.

There should be a consensus in the House on Bill C-260, and the bill should be adopted as rapidly as possible so that we can further improve our democratic life.

[*English*]

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this debate on Bill C-260.

Further to the intervention from the hon. member for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, I would like to ask the following questions of colleagues in the House.

Is Canada's mechanism to conclude treaties as flawed as has been suggested?

Does that process need to be radically overhauled, as is being proposed?

Does the current practice prevent us from playing a role in defending the interests of Canadians on the international scene?

I think the answer to each of those questions is no.

Private Members' Business

Our current practice, with its flexibility and capacity to respond to change, already enables us to meet foreign policy objectives while recognizing the essential role of Parliament and the provinces in implementing treaty obligations in accordance with the distribution of powers established by our Constitution.

Bill C-260 affects constitutional order in a number of ways and raises serious concerns.

The careful balance which has been in place for decades would be altered should Parliament accept the proposal in the bill to give it the right to approve treaties prior to their ratification. This could seriously impact our ability to conclude treaties and ensure binding international commitments. This would be detrimental to Canada's foreign policy, a policy which first and foremost serves all Canadians.

As many people have already noted, Bill C-260 ignores the current role of Parliament, essential in the treaty process. Not only is Parliament actively involved now in the implementation of treaties, but consultations on many important treaties now take place before parliamentary committees prior to the government taking binding action.

The provisions of Bill C-260 also suggest that the respective roles of the federal and provincial governments in the area of treaty making require clarification and that negotiated agreements providing for federal-provincial consultations in matters related to the negotiation and conclusion of treaties are required to improve Canadian practice.

This suggestion, I believe, is erroneous on both counts and does not reflect the reality of Canadian success in international affairs.

Bill C-260 would require the Government of Canada to negotiate within six months of the coming into force of the act an agreement with each provincial government concerning the manner in which that province would be consulted in the negotiation and conclusion of treaties in the areas of provincial or shared jurisdiction.

Is this bill needed to guarantee consultations with the provinces on treaties and areas of provincial jurisdiction?

The answer to the question has to be no.

Such consultations have taken place since 1937 and the Government of Canada takes these consultations seriously. Consultations usually take place throughout the negotiation of a treaty and sometimes last for years. The consultations have to take place and they do take place. There is no need to reinvent the wheel.

Bill C-260 creates nothing new in this area, but it imposes, arguably, a straightjacket on the federal government for consulting its provincial partners.

The obligation on the federal government to negotiate individual agreements with each province under the pressure of an artificial deadline is not only unnecessary but could be dauntingly expensive and could have unpredictable results. Potentially, it could mean replacing what is an effective system for something less responsive, creating uncertainty where now none exists.

Private Members' Business

Bill C-260 raises another major constitutional concern, and that is that the bill's provisions would limit the treaty making power of Canada in the absence of consultations with the provinces to areas within exclusive federal jurisdiction.

It is recognized in Canadian constitutional law that the power to negotiate and conclude treaties rests exclusively with the federal executive. This power is fundamental to Canada's ability to speak with one voice internationally.

Beyond this, among the proposals put forward by the hon. member for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia in Bill C-260 is one that refers to a so-called royal prerogative in right of a province with respect to negotiation and conclusion of treaties in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

• (1745)

It must be emphasized that no such provincial prerogative exists.

As I have already noted, the prerogative with respect to the negotiation and signing of any international treaty lies exclusively with the Canadian federal executive. In this respect, Bill C-260 would violate the constitutionally determined division of powers. It bears repeating that the power of the provinces to negotiate and conclude treaties simply does not exist.

A change of this scale to the Canadian constitutional model requires far more than merely a debate in this House and one simple statutory change: it implies important, lasting, fundamental changes to our Constitution. Canada's current treaty making system, with its proven adaptability and its respect for constitutional order, best meets the interests of Canadians, so I cannot support Bill C-260.

One aspect of the bill involves a resolution of a longstanding issue, that is, it is an invitation for Parliament to involve itself as a ratifier of treaties before the treaties take effect. This proposed process, as contained in this bill, would allow or even force or require the House to be the final rubber stamp in a ratification process.

In other forms of governments, in other constitutions around the world, there may in fact be legislative ratification processes. In Canada and in other constitutional democracies, the normal procedure, one that exists now and has served us awfully well for the last many years, is that the executive of the government negotiates and enters into treaties, with or without consultations beforehand. In most cases where consultations are needed, they are entered into, in particular in Canada with the provinces.

Where there is follow-up legislation needed to implement the treaty, Parliament is involved in that. Where Parliament has a role in consultations prior to entering into the treaty, the executive of government, through its ministers, consults with Parliament.

Adding into the system now a parliamentary based ratification process would seriously undermine the current integrity of the Canadian treaty making process and undermine the credibility that Canada now has abroad.

When our government, our executive, whatever political stripe it happens to be, enters into a treaty, the international community knows that Canada is good in its negotiations and is not going to do

a bait and switch game, which some countries do. In that game, the executive will negotiate a treaty, then go back home and have the legislature in that country pull back from ratification. That is a kind of two-handed, sleight of hand, bait and switch way of doing international business.

Canada does not negotiate treaties that way. When they are negotiated, we do it with total sincerity. When we sign on the line, when the government is ready to make that treaty, the treaty is entered into.

Of course, underlying all of that, and it is very important for Canadians to know that, the government that negotiates a treaty, the executive that enters into that treaty, must continue to have the full authority and support of the House. Our governments always must have that. To the extent they do not, those governments go down. That is certainly an issue around here these days in a minority Parliament.

In any event I will close on that by saying that the current system appears to serve Canadians very well. Coming from the sovereignist perspective, this particular bill, if it were to be adopted, would not serve Canadians, Canada, Parliament or our Constitution well.

• (1750)

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to make a few comments this evening on the private member's bill that is before us, Bill C-260, an act respecting the negotiation, approval, tabling and publication of treaties.

While my colleagues and I have some difficulties with some provisions of the bill, I want to say at the outset that I very much applaud the intention behind the bill. I think there are some solid intentions here, which we need to figure out how to address.

As I understand it, this is the third time over a period of five or six years that the Bloc has introduced such a bill; they have not been identical but I think they were very similar. In the member for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia introducing this bill, I think he is reflecting a certain frustration that is felt by a lot of Canadians, and not just within Quebec either.

I think a lot of Canadians across the country are frustrated at the realization that there is very limited input, and in fact no requirement necessarily that there be any input, from this Parliament, let alone more broadly from Canadians, in relation to the signing by this government or any other government of international treaties.

I think that it is incumbent upon us to recognize that this bill is at least in part inspired by this, although I guess only the member who introduced it can really account for the inspiration. It seems to me that it is reasonable that the aspiration, and not necessarily the inspiration, for such legislation does have to do with wanting the treaty process to be somewhat more transparent, for there to be some democratic process surrounding the signing on to international treaties and that in the process there be greater accountability.

Private Members' Business

Let me say that I think the first of the stated purposes of the bill is something we ought to be considering. I want to make it clear at the beginning that my colleagues and I have some major reservations and recognize that there could in fact be some quite severe problems created if this bill were ever to be adopted unamended in its current form.

The first of the purposes stated I think does accurately reflect a feeling that the signing on to international treaties is a very important thing and that there is a concern about the fact that in many ways our ability to really act in the national interest can in fact be compromised by some of the treaties to which we become signatories.

On the other hand, I think the second stated purpose of the bill is one about which we have to be extremely careful and extremely concerned. At the end of the day, we have to be sure that we have preserved the ability of the federal government, the Parliament of Canada, to act in the national interest. If we create a process of consultation with provincial governments that is cumbersome and impractical and that in fact can make it almost impossible for the government to act in the national interest, then we have not created a solution. We have created yet another problem.

I do think that there is reason to pursue this topic. For that reason, I am inclined to suggest that we should pass this bill on second reading, with reservation, so that it can become the subject matter of a real discussion at committee about how we find a way to ensure both that there is a requirement for consultation to take place and that we recognize Canadians are concerned about the erosion of democratic accountability that can happen if there is not even a requirement. I think I am correct in saying that at the moment there is not even the requirement that a treaty be tabled in the House of Commons.

● (1755)

Canadians are concerned about the issue of democratic accountability. The Prime Minister went out on the campaign trail running for the leadership and presented himself as the man who would solve the democratic deficit. He said that there are excessive powers in the executive branch and in the hands of the prime minister and that we need to find some ways to put in some checks and balances.

We have to recognize that we are not doing a very good job in solving that problem. It would not hurt one bit to acknowledge that there are some serious shortcomings. There could be some very dangerous problems created in making it impossible for the government to act in the national interest with the bill in its current form. The subject matter needs to be discussed. We need to find some ways to ensure that there is a consultative process and a way to involve not just parliamentarians, but Canadians to provide input into the treaty making process.

If we do not do that, we are going to see the democratic deficit rise. When there is intense opposition to treaties into which Canada has entered without adequate consultation, we are going to see a great deal of disillusionment and that is not in the interests of a more democratic, accountable and transparent federal government.

● (1800)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in today's debate on Bill C-260. After listening to the speech by the hon. member for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, I have the following question. Is the Canadian practice with respect to treaties as bad as the hon. member suggests? Of course not. Does it necessitate the radical overhaul he is proposing? Not at all. Does our current practice prevent us from playing our role and defending the interests of Canadians on the international scene? Absolutely not.

I am having a hard time understanding the purpose of this bill. I am not one to advocate sovereignty, like the member opposite who calls himself a separatist. If Quebec were indeed to separate one day, are we to assume that within this sovereign or separate Quebec, international responsibilities would be shared with the municipalities, or with a sub-national state? Get real. We know full well that is not how it works.

What the hon. member is saying is not even something he would want for himself in his goal of separating, something I do not subscribe to in any way. So, I have a hard time understanding why anyone would want a bill like this.

Of course, I hope it would never happen, but the day could come when, through bad luck, someone pointed to his bill and asked him if that was what he still wanted. The answer would probably be no.

Current practice here, because of its flexibility and adaptability, already allows Canada to meet its international policy objectives while still recognizing the vital role of Parliament and the provinces in implementing treaty obligations according to the division of powers set out in the Constitution of Canada.

There too, a second look is needed. Once again, the same members tell us from time to time—they are rarely right—that the Government of Canada tends to take over certain provincial powers. If this is a bad thing, as they claim, how is it that the opposite is good? They say we must honour the Constitution, but it is a one way street.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Don Boudria: It is true, they say it all the time. Mr. Speaker, you who are totally objective, neutral and non partisan, you have heard these stories from the Bloc members in this House just as often as I have. They say the government is not respecting jurisdictions and refuse to give up anything they consider to be a provincial matter. They say so, from time to time, rarely correctly, but they say so just the same.

In this case, however, the matter is entirely within the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada, as determined by the Supreme Court in 1937. It can be redefined, if necessary. What do the Bloc members have to say? They say it changes nothing. Even if it is a federal matter, they want it to be provincial, even if it contravenes the Constitution.

“Do as I say, not as I do”. That is what the Bloc members are saying today.

Private Members' Business

As many have already noted as well, Bill C-260 ignores the role currently played by Parliament, a fundamental role in treaty practices. Not only is Parliament actively involved in treaty implementation, but consultations are currently taking place in committee on a number of our major treaties, before the government acts. Of course, the government, not Parliament, takes binding action. Nevertheless, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade plays a very active and important role.

We saw proof of that this week when various bills gave rise to controversy.

● (1805)

The bill was put on the back burner, we might say, and the committee will discuss the subject or issue. This proves that the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade is fulfilling the role I just described in this instance, since this falls under the legislative branch.

However, this does not mean we can go beyond the constitutional authority, which belongs to the governor in council—the government—and allow the provinces to act in its stead.

The provisions of Bill C-260 suggest that the roles of each of the federal and provincial governments in treaty ratification need to be clarified and that negotiated agreements providing for federal-provincial consultation on treaty negotiation and ratification are required in order to improve Canadian practice. This suggestion is clearly erroneous on both levels. It fails to consider the reality of our success in international affairs.

We need to take a moment to point out the important international role that Canada plays and the great respect that other countries have for us.

An hon. member: That is true.

Hon. Don Boudria: It is very true. The parliamentary secretary just supported what I said, making it all the more true, if I may say so.

Consequently the role we played, for instance at the Ottawa conference on landmines—I made a personal commitment to get that through the House at the time I was House leader—is a major initiative for the whole world. Then there is Canada's longstanding role in all the peacekeeping missions and the important role it played by choosing to take a different position on the war in Iraq than our immediate, and extremely powerful, neighbour, the United States. I could go on and on with examples of how Canada has distinguished itself internationally.

There is, of course, an executive role in all these treaties. They sometimes include legislative measures required for implementation. But this is not the same, in fact it is quite different. When it comes to implementation measures, this involves a bill in this House, generally a government bill, since treaties are signed by the government. Moreover, often these are measures requiring royal recommendation. Consequently, the role of the government is not just desirable, but necessary, when royal recommendations are involved.

I have some serious concerns of a constitutional nature. The bill's provisions would limit the government's power to conclude treaties in areas of federal jurisdiction without consultation with the provinces. Canadian constitutional law has provided for over 60 years that the power to negotiate and conclude treaties lies exclusively with the federal executive, to the governor in council. This power is essential to Canada's speaking with a single voice internationally, as it must.

Moreover, among the things the hon. member proposes in this bill is one relating to the royal prerogative of the provincial governments when it comes to negotiating and concluding treaties in areas under provincial authority.

For all those reasons, and a few more I could add, I do not intend to support the bill introduced by the hon. member opposite.

● (1810)

[*English*]

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate on Bill C-260 sponsored by the hon. member for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

It is a source of great pride for Canadians that Canada plays an important role on the international stage. Canada's initiatives in such diverse fields as human security, peacekeeping, international development and other areas are too numerous to mention and have earned this country a reputation that is second to none. For example, in recent years Canada played a leading role in the negotiation and ratification of the Rome statute of the International Criminal Court.

A key factor in Canada's ability to play this important role is the effectiveness of Canada's national government's treaty-making practices. The negotiation and conclusion of treaties, both multi-lateral and bilateral, lie at the heart of international cooperation and conduct of foreign affairs. We Canadians are proud of the role that the federal government has played in these multilateral and bilateral agreements that have helped many countries in the developing world.

The modern era of international relations is marked by the ongoing effort to create legal frameworks in the form of treaties that bind states and provide a structure for the international legal order.

In this context, a good treaty-making system is essential if Canada is to conduct its foreign policy effectively to the benefit of all Canadians. When one reads Bill C-260, one is led to believe that there is some doubt about Canadian practices with regard to the conclusion of treaties, but this is not the case. Our current practices, with their flexibility and capacity to respond to change, already enable us to meet our objectives while recognizing the essential role of Parliament in implementing treaty obligations.

Private Members' Business

While Canadian constitutional law clearly establishes that the negotiation of a treaty and signatory of a treaty are strictly in the purview of the federal executive, it is essential to remember that the legislative branch plays a considerable role in our treaty process. Indeed, only Parliament can change the current laws or enact new ones which allow for implementation of treaties.

In the absence of such participation, Canada would not be able to meet its international obligations. Not only is Parliament actively involved in the implementation of treaties but consultation on our most important treaties now takes place before committees and prior to the government taking binding action.

In fact, our current practices strike a careful balance between the constitutional power of the executive to make treaties and the crucial role of Parliament in implementing them. Our practice provides for flexibility and efficiency. As a general rule, the federal government would not be in a position to ratify a treaty if it were not reasonably sure that the obligations imposed by the treaty would be implemented by Canada.

For this reason, when Canada wants to ratify a treaty involving obligations within provincial jurisdictions, the federal executive consults the provinces and territories. It should be underlined that the federal government has been consulting provinces for almost 70 years on treaties.

Moreover, it should also be noted that the representatives of provinces and territories often join Canadian delegations participating in negotiations on treaties involving matters within provincial and territorial jurisdictions to reflect provincial and territorial views and interests.

• (1815)

In today's challenging international environment Canada must have a treaty-making process that allows it to achieve its foreign policy objectives and to deal quickly with changing and urgent situations. Canada's current practices in this area, with their flexibility that I referred to earlier, meet these imperatives.

Apart from its other flaws, Bill C-260 provides for an overly complex and inefficient procedure for federal-provincial consultations to replace a treaty-making process that for many years has served Canada and all Canadians well.

Canada's effectiveness on the international stage offers ample proof that the current constitutional balance in treaty-making measures and treaty implementation, and the well established practices are best suited to the needs of Canada and work to the benefit of all Canadians. Hence, I would not support Bill C-260.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for the opportunity to wade into the debate on treaties and the jurisdiction associated with entering into them. I have been listening to the debate and feel that I understand the motivation of the member who put the bill forward.

Many of us have said openly and clearly that we wish as parliamentarians that we had more input into the treaty-making process, the executive right to enter into bilateral treaties, not only in the ratification process but the development stages as well. Many of us feel that the most influential treaties of our time would have

benefited greatly had there been more parliamentary oversight and more input prior to putting pen on paper.

I am mindful of the fact that there are complications dealing with federal-provincial jurisdictions. There are sensitive areas associated with this particular bill which we should be very cautious about. In our interest in having more input and more say as parliamentarians, we do not welcome opening the door to interfering with the rights and the authorities of the federal government to act in the public interest. We do not want self-interest to get in the way of the common interest of the nation state of Canada.

We understand that treaties are international relationships. One that has been top of mind for me in recent years has been the Boundary Waters Treaty between Canada and the United States. It is one of the earliest treaties on record between our two countries and one of the most necessary.

We are all aware that throughout history downstream water rights have been fundamental and critically important in developing and maintaining the relationship between Canada and the United States. As long ago in history as the Magna Carta there was reference to downstream water rights. It is critical. Good neighbours have to be mindful of the rights and the interests of those downstream.

We have seen treaties develop. We have seen trade agreements develop in more recent years without very much input from parliamentarians. Even with the ratification process, many people feel that we would benefit from more involvement and more input of elected officials and not just the executive branch of government.

It is incumbent on the nation state of Canada to ensure that its provinces are in compliance with international treaties. It is as critical that the United States keep a tight rein on its individual states so they stay in compliance with the treaty relationship.

With respect to the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, we are seeing one rogue state, North Dakota, threatening to violate it by diverting water from Devils Lake into the Sheyenne River into the Red River, and ultimately into Lake Winnipeg. That is not only contrary to the laws of nature in that the interbasin transfer of water is surely a violation of the normal scheme of things and a dangerous precedent, but it is also a violation of our national sovereignty.

This interference with our downstream water rights is devastating to our well-being. It is also a violation of Mother Nature. It is a catastrophic environmental idea because of the invasive species and biota that may be introduced into a whole other ecosystem, an ecosystem that has been separated since the last ice age, where unique individual species have developed in these two watersheds.

• (1820)

I cannot overstate how catastrophic this could be. Aggressive, invasive species, once they are into Lake Winnipeg and the watershed that flows into Hudson Bay, could also work their way back across Saskatchewan, across Alberta, because this watershed, this basin is one of the largest in the world.

Private Members' Business

The catchment area that flows into all of the Hudson Bay region could be affected by the biota, by the parasites that we know to exist in Devils Lake that exist nowhere else. They are parasites that sucker themselves onto the gills of fish. They are parasites that could wipe out the largest freshwater fishery in all of North America. The largest freshwater fishery in North America is in Lake Winnipeg. It is at risk. There are real environmental consequences and real economic consequences for the province of Manitoba should this Boundary Waters Treaty be violated.

No one province should have too much control over a national treaty. This is where I find fault with the bill we are debating. There are good reasons that no one rogue province and no one rogue state should be able to unilaterally alter or compromise international treaties that exist between nation-states. There is only one nation-state that we are dealing with in the Parliament of Canada. It is the nation-state of Canada. That is all there is. I do not want to encourage or lend succour or support in any way to anyone who envisions some other nation-state within these hallowed chambers.

When we contemplate treaties, we contemplate treaties between the nation-state of Canada and the nation-state, in the case of the Boundary Waters Treaty, of the United States. Perhaps the best graphic illustration of why there should not be provincial jurisdiction over national treaties is what is happening in North Dakota today.

Here is an example. This is happening to us because one rogue state is not listening to its nation-state in the United States. In the state of North Dakota, the governor is stubbornly refusing to comply with a treaty that his national government, that he should respect, entered into in 1909.

The issue of treaties is all about respect in the truest sense. If we respect our neighbours, we make treaty with them. This is how aboriginal people talk about it, making treaty. A treaty is not just a piece of paper; making treaty is a compact. It goes beyond the written word.

The physical manifestation of the treaty is the least of the treaty. It is the smallest part of the treaty. The real component of a treaty is the trust relationship that one is entering into that goes beyond. It is up to the federal government to enter into that treaty on behalf of all of its component parts, the individual provinces. It is up to the nation of the United States on behalf of all of its component elements in a federal state.

That is why federal states are the most difficult to hold together. I suppose there is good reason that there are less than 20 federal states, federal countries in the world. Federalism is difficult at the best of times. There are diverse views being cobbled together with a loosely knit coalition. That is what federalism is.

In recent memory, of those 20 federalist states, three have blown themselves apart: Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Canada have come very, very close. Federations are precious entities. They are the realization of a collective will to build something that is greater than the sum of its parts. It is a precious thing for which we should all have respect. Treaties should be respected nation to nation and not be allowed to be diminished or undermined by any one rogue province or rogue state.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): The mover of the motion now has the floor for five minutes to reply and end the debate.

The hon. member for Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot to say since I am truly under the impression that the members of the government and some of the members of the New Democratic Party did not read the bill. I just want to read clause 3 of Bill C-260, which completely contradicts the position of the governing party and the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre when he praises the federal government:

The Government of Canada may, without consulting the government of each province—

I repeat:

The Government of Canada may, without consulting the government of each province, negotiate and enter into a treaty in a sector within the exclusive legislative authority of Parliament that does not affect an area under the legislative authority of the legislatures of the provinces.

We have never claimed in this bill, contrary to what I have been hearing for the past hour, that we want to prevent the federal government from negotiating and entering into treaties under its authority. What we are saying is that when it is a question of an exclusive authority of a province under the Constitution—note, under the Constitution—that province or those provinces should get a say in the matter.

I will give a very clear example. Let us talk about education. Who is responsible for education under the Constitution and who is responsible for culture under the Constitution, if not the provinces?

The provinces are asked to give the federal government the power to negotiate treaties on education, culture, health and other areas under provincial jurisdiction. It is obvious that this bill has been completely misunderstood. Therefore, I am asking everyone to re-read the bill in an intelligent and non partisan manner. That way, we will be able to see, in the text of the bill itself, what I have just said and quoted.

We have no pretensions of preventing the federal government from signing treaties in areas under its authority. What we want are public consultations and real democracy. I do not know what planet some MPs live on but they have to face the fact that, in this world today, it is impossible to negotiate treaties in secret and without consulting the public.

I can give some recent examples. The Maastricht Treaty and the recent events in France in relation to the EU Constitution are two. Was the public consulted? Yes, it was. The No vote in France and the Netherlands is only justice and democracy. That is what it is.

Since I have only five minutes, I want to conclude with this. Everything I have heard from opposition members—I mean, government members, since obviously I am a member of the opposition.

Mr. Pierre Paquette: The future members of the opposition.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Yes, the future members of the opposition, I should say. I thank my colleague from Joliette.

So all I have heard from the government members is that democracy is too onerous; that it is very difficult to consult and, in good Québécois, that it could interfere with the federal government's culture of secrecy. That is what I have heard. However, is this not a democracy? Does the public not have the right to be consulted? Would it not be reasonable, in matters of health, education and public interest that they be consulted? It seems to me that that is what democracy is about and that is what the bill before us calls on us to do. It seems to me that—

An hon. member: It is an absolute monarchy.

Mr. Jean-Yves Roy: Indeed, it resembles an absolute monarchy. It is secrecy. The executive decides, negotiates and, in the end, imposes its decision on everyone.

I will give you another example in the minute I have left. In the 1980s, I remind members opposite, the Conservative government signed a free trade agreement. An election was held on this agreement. Was that not popular consultation? It was indeed.

Today, I am not hoping that we have election campaigns on the treaties to be signed, but at least consultation or even a referendum when the treaties involve the public as a whole.

• (1830)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): The time allocated for debate has expired.

Private Members' Business

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Le président suppléant (M. Marcel Proulx): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, September 21, 2005, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[For continuation of proceedings see Part B]

CONTENTS

Thursday, June 23, 2005

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Order in council Appointments	
Mr. LeBlanc	7687
Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. LeBlanc	7687
Committees of the House	
Transport	
Mr. Gallaway	7687
Health	
Mr. Carrie	7687
Petitions	
Marriage	
Mr. Lunney	7687
Natural Health Products	
Mr. Lunney	7687
Autism	
Mr. Lunney	7687
Marriage	
Mr. Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	7688
Canada Post	
Mr. Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	7688
Immigration	
Mrs. Lavallée	7688
Correctional Service of Canada	
Mr. Vincent	7688
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. LeBlanc	7688
Committees of the House	
Public Accounts	
Mr. Williams	7688
Extension of Sitting Period	
Motion that debate be not further adjourned	
Mr. Valeri	7688
Motion	7688
Mr. Hill	7688
Mr. Komarnicki	7689
Mr. Obhrai	7689
Mr. Watson	7689
Mr. Harris	7690
Mr. Casson	7690
Mrs. Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul)	7690
Mr. Fitzpatrick	7691
Mr. Stoffer	7691
Mr. Scheer	7691
Mr. Adams	7692
Mr. Devolin	7692
Mr. O'Brien	7692
Mr. Warawa	7693
Motion agreed to	7694

Private Members' Business

Symbol for the House of Commons—Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker	7694
Mr. Gauthier	7695
Mr. Valeri	7695
Mr. Hill	7695
Ms. Davies	7695
Mr. Bergeron	7696
Mr. Godin	7696

Points of Order

Remarks by Member for Nepean—Carleton—Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker	7696
Mr. Poilievre	7696

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Extension of Sitting Period

Motion	7696
Mr. Boudria	7696
Mr. Hill	7697
Mr. Jaffer	7697
Mr. Bagnell	7698
Mr. Gauthier	7699
Mr. Thibault (West Nova)	7701
Mr. Hill	7701

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Committees of the House

Health	
Mr. Carrie	7702
Motion for concurrence	7702
(Motion agreed to)	7702

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Extension of Sitting Period

Motion	7702
Ms. Davies	7702
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	7705
Mr. Lunney	7705
Mr. Gallaway	7706
Mr. Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	7707
Mr. Devolin	7707
Mr. Bagnell	7708
Mr. Jaffer	7708
Mr. Szabo	7711
Mrs. Desjarlais	7712
Mr. Lunney	7712

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

National Child Benefit

Ms. Boivin	7713
------------------	------

Summer Barbecue Tour	
Mr. Ritz	7713
Veterans	
Mrs. Jennings	7713
Agriculture	
Mr. Paquette	7713
Air-India	
Mr. Malhi	7714
Historica National Fair	
Mr. Vellacott	7714
Blainville Lions Club	
Ms. Bourgeois	7714
Air-India	
Mr. Bains	7714
Ontario Pork Congress	
Mr. Schellenberger	7714
Air-India	
Mr. Cullen (Etobicoke North)	7715
Zonolite Insulation	
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	7715
St. Jean Baptiste Day	
Mr. Lauzon	7715
Quebeckers' National Day	
Ms. Guay	7715
Multiculturalism	
Ms. Dhalla	7715
Air-India	
Mr. Obhrai	7716
Air-India	
Ms. Fry	7716

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

The Budget	
Mr. MacKay	7716
Mr. Valeri	7716
Mr. MacKay	7716
Mr. Goodale	7716
Mr. MacKay	7716
Mr. Goodale	7717
Mr. Hearn	7717
Mr. Goodale	7717
Mr. Doyle	7717
Mr. Goodale	7717
Broadcasting	
Mr. Gauthier	7717
Ms. Frulla	7717
Mr. Gauthier	7717
Ms. Frulla	7718
Mr. Kotto	7718
Ms. Frulla	7718
Mr. Kotto	7718

Ms. Frulla	7718
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mr. Blaikie	7718
Mr. Volpe	7718
Veterans Affairs	
Mr. Blaikie	7718
Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre)	7718
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mrs. Ablonczy	7719
Mr. Volpe	7719
Mrs. Ablonczy	7719
Mr. Volpe	7719
Ms. Guergis	7719
Ms. McLellan	7719
Ms. Guergis	7719
Ms. McLellan	7719
Agriculture	
Mr. Bigras	7720
Mr. Dosanjh	7720
Mr. Bigras	7720
Mr. Dosanjh	7720
Textile Industry	
Mr. Crête	7720
Mr. Saada	7720
Mr. Crête	7720
Mr. Saada	7720
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mrs. Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells)	7720
Mr. Volpe	7720
Mrs. Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells)	7721
Mr. Volpe	7721
Mr. Jaffer	7721
Mr. Volpe	7721
Mr. Jaffer	7721
Ms. Stronach	7721
Agriculture	
Mr. St. Denis	7721
Mr. Mitchell	7721
Transport	
Ms. McDonough	7721
Mr. Lapierre (Outremont)	7722
Ms. McDonough	7722
Mr. Lapierre (Outremont)	7722
Veterans Affairs	
Mr. Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	7722
Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre)	7722
Technology Partnerships Canada	
Mr. Rajotte	7722
Mr. Emerson	7722
The Economy	
Mr. Solberg	7722
Mr. Goodale	7722
Mr. Solberg	7722

Mr. Goodale	7723
Justice	
Ms. Lalonde	7723
Mr. Cotler	7723
Ms. Lalonde	7723
Mr. Cotler	7723
Health	
Mr. Fletcher	7723
Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre)	7723
Mr. Fletcher	7723
Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre)	7723
National Defence	
Mr. Khan	7723
Mr. Graham (Toronto Centre)	7724
Air-India Flight 182	
Ms. McLellan	7724
Mr. MacKay	7724
Mr. Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	7725
Mr. Julian	7725
Business of the House	
Mr. Hill	7726
Mr. Valeri	7726

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Extension of Sitting Period	
Motion	7726
Mr. Simard (Saint Boniface)	7726
Mr. Williams	7729
Mr. Scheer	7729
Mr. Prentice	7730
Mr. Bagnell	7733

Mr. Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	7734
Mr. Silva	7734
Mr. Epp	7735
Mr. Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	7735
Mr. Bagnell	7736
Mr. Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)	7736
Mr. Epp	7736
Ms. Wasylycia-Leis	7736
Mrs. Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul)	7737
Mr. Christopherson	7738
Mr. Scheer	7739
Mr. Bagnell	7740

ROYAL ASSENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Proulx)	7740
---------------------------------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Extension of Sitting Period	
Motion	7741
Mr. Komarnicki	7741

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Treaties Act	
Bill C-260. Second reading	7744
Mr. Paquette	7744
Mr. Lee	7745
Ms. McDonough	7746
Mr. Boudria	7747
Ms. Ratansi	7748
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	7749
Mr. Roy	7750
Division on motion deferred	7751

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, June 23, 2005
Part B

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

CONTENTS

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

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 23, 2005

[Continuation of proceedings from Part A]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXTENSION OF SITTING PERIOD

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): The hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain still had the period for questions and comments remaining.

• (1830)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was delighted that the member put some philosophy into his speech. I would like to paraphrase one of the philosophical statements he made. He basically suggested that when an opposition party works in its own interest, when it has no vision and no plan, then there really is no opposition.

In a way, I think many people feel that is the way it has been for the past six months in this House, at least until a couple of weeks ago. There has not been an opposition on that side of the House that has asked any questions on the various departments and crown corporations. There has been nothing on foreign affairs, veterans, miners, employment insurance, national defence, farmers, the national debt, tax cuts for the poor, regional development, the homelessness program, transit, the environment, Canada's peace-keeping role, greenhouse gases, corrections, softwood lumber, culture, the budget, taxes, fisheries, the handicapped, Darfur, troops in Afghanistan, foreign aid, or aboriginal people.

If it is so important to have a vision or a plan, why in the last six months did the official opposition not talk about the things that would be in a Conservative plan or vision? Why did the official opposition not talk about things that are important to Canadians, so that one day there would once again be an opposition on that side of the House?

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where that member has been. If he had been listening, a number of suggestions have come from this party that make good sense.

First, a good fiscal and prudent government has a plan, knows where it is going and is not throwing money around recklessly. An hon. member from this party suggested yesterday that if they throw

more money at it, they have a bigger heart than somebody else but they do not care where it goes.

Let me ask one question. The farmers in Saskatchewan are going through one of the greatest crises. Despite what the government has failed to do, they have done reasonably well. They are staying alive by working two jobs. The wife works, the husband works and the children work. That is the only way they can survive because the government has neglected them.

Our party has said we would put together a program that would look after our farmers. Where were farmers in Bill C-43? There was hardly a passing mention. When they were in a crisis with the BSE and the border was closed, they were looking for some direction from the government. What did the government do? It hoped against hope that the border would open, somehow magically on its own, without any steps on its part.

The government cooked up this deal with the NDP, for one purpose and one purpose only, and that was to stay in power. There is no foresight or vision in Bill C-48. The Liberals asked the NDP members what it would take to buy their votes. The cost per vote was \$250 million. Is that called vision? Is that called policy? No. Where was the agricultural crisis when that deal was being made? Where does the NDP stand with respect to the farmers of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba? Are their concerns not important?

The government is not governed by philosophy or principle. It is governed by what it takes to stay in power, to cling to power, and that is the end. Whatever the means might be, whatever the money may be, it will use it. Those who do it in the cover of darkness will be charged criminally. Here, what the government is doing is in the openness of day, in the presence of the House, using great sums of money to stay in power.

The farmers of Saskatchewan could have done better. There were 46 auction sales in March of this year in my constituency. Farmers are going out of business. A fifth generation farmer who has five daughters has sold his farm. He has not passed it on to his children because of the losses he suffered in his cattle business over the last two years, \$100,000 a year.

The government does not have the fortitude to stand up for them, to say that it will be with the farmers because this crisis is not of their own doing. This crisis is of a doing that is bigger than Saskatchewan and bigger than Manitoba. Where was the government? It was cooking up a deal with the NDP to preserve its own hide while the farmers of Saskatchewan were working 12 hours a day. Everyone in the family had to work in order to survive.

Government Orders

We would do things differently. We would ensure they were protected. They would be backstopped. In fact, when the BSE crisis was going on, where was the government? It should have been making some motions before the United States department of agriculture, saying scientifically that there was no reason for the border to be closed. Why was the government not presenting that evidence to the USDA? Why did the minister not insist that the USDA put those reasons in its decision? Because of the lack of those reasons and due diligence of the government, the judge in Montana was able to make the decision he did. There was nothing to prevent an injunction from being granted.

That group was playing politics when it should have been doing due diligence and doing its homework to ensure the border was open. If it failed to do that, it should have put some money into the secondary industry, in slaughterhouses and in marketing and processing. We would do that and we would see that it was done. Two years have passed. I would ask the member to come to my constituency to see whether anything is going forward, whether any money has been placed in it. There is nothing. That would change under our party.

We talk about housing and homelessness. A report states that there are more homeless today on the streets than there were when that government took office. It spent \$1 billion and it did not build one affordable housing unit with that \$1 billion. According to the minister, it went to protective care, nothing on which one could put their finger. How many more houses are there since it started?

• (1835)

We would take some dollars and put them into something we could see, something that is not wasteful. What money it has put in is \$60,000 to \$80,000 a unit, when it should be far less.

When the minister was asked for instance about the housing budget, he was prepared to spend the \$2.6 billion without regard to the fact that this was a provincial responsibility. Whether the provinces went ahead or not, he was going to do it anyway. He had not spent yet the \$700 million that was in the coffers from previous budgets. We think at least he would have that money properly spent before he would be ready to spend this. Anybody can spend money.

If we give someone \$2.5 billion and tell them to spend it, they will. Will they achieve a proper balance? Will they achieve what is necessary with those funds? That is another question.

• (1840)

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I listen to the member opposite, what I hear is Conservative revisionism.

When he questions where we were. Where were the Conservatives when they originally agreed to the budget? Where were they when the Leader of the Opposition left this room, met the press and was extremely optimistic? He liked the budget.

What he really liked about the budget and what he continuously talked about was the corporate tax cut. Where were the Conservatives? They were cutting their deals with corporate Canada. What has really upset them is that this \$4.5 billion corporate—

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask that you ask the member to be relevant in his speeches. I

understand the Liberals have not been speaking on this subject all afternoon. Probably they are unaware that we are dealing with Motion No. 17, not with Bill C-43 which is already—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): I thank the hon. member for reminding the House. However, my understanding is that the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre was just getting to the point of Motion No. 17.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was correct. I just arrived here. However, I am responding to what the previous member was talking about and the repetition of the phrase, “Where were we as a government?”

My question to him is, where were they? This is Conservative revisionism. Obviously, the concern has just arisen. As a consequence to a blip in the polls, they changed their position and abandoned their corporate bedfellows.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Mr. Speaker, I was speaking about farmers and what you have done for farmers or failed to do for farmers. You were prepared to pay—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): Order, please. The hon. member will remember that he addresses the Chair.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite spent \$250 million per vote to stay in power, to cling to power. It is nothing more or less than that.

As far as the corporate portion of it, I will refer to his own finance minister when Bill C-43 was before the House. This is not what we are debating today. We are debating a motion that is closing debate upon whether we should extend this House or not, which is a slap in the face for democracy. There is nothing that urgent or is of the public interest to the degree where we should try to ram through the two bills, Bill C-48 and Bill C-38, when there is absolutely no reason for it.

Bill C-48 will not be implemented until August 2006. Where is the urgency in that? The only urgency is that the Liberals are trying to tie that bill into somehow justifying a public interest, when they really want to ram through Bill C-38, the same sex marriage bill, which nobody in Canada wants in particular. They simply want to live up to their deal with the NDP, a deal cooked up in the middle of the night to stay in power.

Let me read the response that was made by the finance minister. He said, “You can't do anything to this budget”, when the NDP leader went fishing. The NDP leader then asked if he would change his mind. The finance minister replied that he would make technical changes but nothing substantive.

The NDP went fishing a little further and asked the finance minister if he would consider doing something further. They talked about the corporate tax break that would create jobs and allow for investment.

Here is what the finance minister said:

Mr. Speaker, that is really like asking whether I would be prepared to buy a pig in a poke. Quite frankly, no minister of finance, acting responsibly, would answer that type of question.

Government Orders

If the hon. gentleman has a serious proposition, please bring it forward and I will give it the consideration it deserves. I would point out to him, however, that the changes in corporate taxation are intended to ensure that jobs, jobs, jobs stay in Canada.

What do they have against jobs? No one has anything against jobs, jobs, jobs.

• (1845)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank members for their congratulations on my engagement to Melissa Craig of Yukon. Unfortunately, that is probably the last time members will clap for me tonight.

First, I want to answer a couple of questions the last member raised. One of the question was on affordable housing. He suggested we were do nothing on that file. However, we have invested \$1.9 billion a year to support 640,000 families in existing social housing units.

In 2001 we added \$680 million over five years to help increase the supply of affordable rental housing. I would not say that is nothing. It was so successful that in 2003 that we added another \$320 million. We also put \$128 million into renovations programs, which I know are very popular in my riding. We have been active since 2000, with almost \$3 billion, in affordable housing.

The other point he made was related to farming. I am glad he raised that. Opposition members a number of times have gone off topic when we have talked about farming. I am sure a number of them come from farming territory. They should understand the programs that the Government of Canada has available for farmers.

However, some of those members have suggested that there are absolutely no programs. The member of Ontario suggested that. I do not know if they were not here the day that we announced \$1 billion, shortly after the budget, for the farm community in the member's riding of Ontario.

In 2005 we made a farm income payment of \$144 million. In 2004 we had the transitional industry support of \$137 million. In 2003-04 we had the agricultural application program of \$192 million in production insurance. In 2004 we expected \$45 million to go to producers. In 2004 we had the spring credit advance payments of \$236 million in interest free advances. March 2 and 3 this year producers had funds in CAIS above the third deposit and were able to withdraw money. We assume that is another \$160 million for farmers. We put \$53.6 million in the tobacco assistance program.

On April 1, the environmental stewardship activities was announced in the amount of \$57 million. The annual research in agriculture was \$70 million. We just announced another \$9.4 million in sciences innovation in five years over the APF program. That is just for one province. They also have access nationally to Canada's \$488 million repositioning strategy and also \$50 million to the Canadian Cattlemen's Association.

If they want to be viewed as credible, they should at least acknowledge what is there for their constituents and ensure they can access them. Then they can start on that base to criticize and suggest improvements.

We are here to debate Motion No. 17 which extends the sitting of the House so we can carry on its business. It does not specify which motions, but it means we will be back next week, if it passes, sitting until midnight every night, as we have been this week, to get important work done.

The House leader and our whip have made it quite clear that two of our priorities are Bill C-38 and Bill C-48. We have had much discussion about that this afternoon and before.

I just want to make a brief comment on the results of passing the motion tonight. As opposed to going home, and I know all of us would like to be in our constituency where we have important things to do—

An hon. member: Especially you.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Yes, especially me. However, we have important things to do here. I will be speaking in favour of this, in spite of the fact I would like to be at home with my fiancée.

• (1850)

It was suggested by the opposition that there is no public interest, that it is not urgent that we stay here. It depends on how one sees Bill C-38. I do not think there is anyone in the House who would deny that same sex marriage is a passionately debated issue in the country. There are very strong feelings on both sides of this issue. I do not think there are any members of Parliament who would suggest that they do not have constituents on both sides of this issue and constituents who feel very passionately about this.

We have had a lengthy debate in the House. We have all received a great deal of correspondence and discussion over the last year from our constituents. In fact, the Conservatives and the independent member on the other side explained this afternoon the huge number of witnesses we have had and the lengthy debate in committee.

Now that we have had all this, I do not think there is any member of Parliament who would really want to maintain the nation in this state of divisiveness. Everyone has had input. Members have talked to the people they want to and they can now make a decision. We should set the country at rest and allow everyone to vote with their conscience on what they have gleaned from the debate.

The second reason why I do not think we should wait is that court decisions have led to a situation where there are certain people in the nation who are not treated equally. We have a situation that this bill would remedy, where all the people in Canada would be treated the same.

Government Orders

It may not be important to persons that it does not apply to, but it is to persons who have been caught up by the court decisions and feel that they are not equal. I think it is a very important principle in this country. I cannot believe that the opposition would not agree with me that all Canadians should be treated equally and to be in that position as quickly as possible. We have had an exhaustive debate, we are ready to vote, and we should go ahead with it.

I suggest that I am not the only person saying this. In today's *Ottawa Citizen* it states:

Tories are only hurting themselves. Are they nuts? The Conservatives should be clamouring to dispense with same-sex marriage legislation quickly, the better to hit the barbecues pronto and put this albatross issue at the greatest possible distance from an election call. They should shut up and state their political opposition in classic democratic form—by defiantly voting against the bill at the earliest opportunity.

I would like to turn now to Bill C-48. This is probably the first bill that Motion No. 17 would lead us to in the House. In fact, when we finish this debate, we will be going back to Bill C-48.

I want to ensure that the public has no illusion that we have not had exhaustive discussion about this particular bill. There are four items in the bill including extra money for urban transit. The Liberals, as the House knows, have always contributed toward urban transit, foreign aid, housing and post-secondary education. More money will be added which is only 1% of the budget. It is a small percentage of the budget.

We have had an exhaustive debate on this. We should not let the public think that we have not and that we should bring this to a conclusion. We have had a lot of debate. I would suggest that any similar four lines in any of our budgets, and the budget that the Conservatives voted on already, Bill C-43, would not exceed 1%. I think the hours of debate we have had are as much as there has ever been over 1% of a budget.

The biggest loser in this, and I think this is a bit sad, and I am not sure of the reason for it, is the Bloc Québécois. How can the Bloc members vote against things that they used to be in favour of? How can they join the Conservatives and say they cannot spend on things that they used to spend on?

How can they campaign in the next election and go from house to house saying that there is going to be more smog? How can they say to people that they have to take an old bus and pay higher rates because Ottawa had some money for transit in Quebec but they wanted Ottawa to keep it? How can they not vote for it? How can they say to people that they were very generous during the Tsunami, but now the Bloc does not want to give foreign aid from the Canadian government? How can they join with the Conservatives and not spend this kind of money on foreign aid?

What about when Bloc members are in a shelter or a rental apartment and a family wants to get a home of their own? How can they tell that family that Ottawa wanted to give more money to affordable housing, but, sorry, they had to vote with the Conservatives, and they cannot have that money in Quebec.

• (1855)

When they go to another house and there are a couple of teenagers there who want to go to college, the Bloc members will say that the fees could have been lower. They will say that the government

offered to provide more money for that in Bill C-48 and lower tuition fees, but they could not support that. They had to vote with the Conservatives not to spend money on post-secondary education.

Wisely, during the debate on Bill C-48 so far, the Bloc members have not tried to defend why they are voting against those items. They have left the Conservatives at the shooting gallery, but today its House leader, for whom I have great respect and who is a great orator, one of the best if not the best speaker in the House, was squirming. He was trying to come up with johnny-come-lately reasons as to why the Bloc was voting against these measures.

The Conservatives and the NDP had at least tried to make agreements or vote with our party to get a budget through, but the Bloc johnny-come-latelies had no influence on it and they tried to make up reasons at the eleventh hour as to why they might vote against these measures.

I encourage the Bloc to go back to the principles for which many Quebecers voted for them and were at one time proud of them. I say again, it is not just me saying this. The premier of Quebec and many mayors in Quebec have asked the Bloc Québécois to vote for Bill C-48 for what it would do for Quebec.

I would like to read from a Quebec newspaper. Montreal's *The Gazette* stated:

Bloc opposes bill giving money to Quebec - why? The problem is that the Bloc Québécois has joined with the Conservative Party to oppose part of this funding. It's bizarre: Cash-strapped Quebec desperately needs this money, and yet a party whose exclusive reason for being is to serve Quebecers' interests is resisting the funding tooth and nail. Yet, if the Bloc's Gilles Duceppe has his way, this extra funding would not materialize. The Bloc's logic escapes me. If passed, C-48 would give money to many causes that the Bloc supports besides public transit - among them affordable housing and foreign aid. Yet the Bloc opposes the bill. A call to Duceppe's office—

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member has been here long enough and knows he cannot do that. He is using Gilles Duceppe's name.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker.

A call to [the leader's] office for enlightenment produced none.

Just so the Conservatives do not feel left out, this author also briefly mentioned them:

The Conservatives' logic is also noteworthy. There is nothing in C-48 that would help Montreal or any other city in Canada. The claim is preposterous.

I want to talk about Bill C-48 in general. The member for Calgary Centre suggested earlier it was an expenditure without representation. We are having a vote tonight in the House about whether or not we go on and debate it further. I do not understand how members can suggest there is any lack of representation because these are votes in Parliament.

Government Orders

I want to talk about how Bill C-48 came about. As everyone knows, we are in a minority Parliament. The people of Canada told the Liberals that we could govern in partnership with any other party for everything we wanted to do. They did not give us the right to do things on our own; we had to convince another party. That is how we are operating.

Originally, the Conservatives voted for Bill C-43. There are a lot of things in it. With their 99 members, they had great influence and their party chose to use that great influence. Then for some reason they abandoned their support, so we had to find another party that would agree. I can understand how they are a little bit upset that with their 99 votes they lost to a party with only 19 members. We had to find some way to pass the bill because the people of Canada said we needed the agreement of two parties.

The original Liberal budget had flowed from a plan and we extended expenditures in some areas of priority. This was not an overnight plan. It started when the present Prime Minister first became leader of the party. He outlined his priorities in social foundations, lifelong learning, Canada's place in the world and in the cities agenda. He carried that through to the throne speech with great integrity.

The member for Calgary Centre-North asked earlier today how this compared with the throne speech. These items were all in the throne speech. It is all part of our philosophy. With great integrity, the Prime Minister carried those promises into the budget.

To the great credit of the NDP, we were encouraged to accelerate the spending in those areas in that particular plan. Once again, those items total only 1% of the budget. They are priorities and we are happy that we have the fiscal ability to support them more than we had originally planned and still have a surplus, and still pay down the debt.

It is a two page budget, as members opposite mentioned. The opposition members suggest fiscal irresponsibility, but they can hardly do that, considering the fiscal record of the government. We inherited a huge debt and reversed the debt. We have the best standing in the G-7.

I do not have to go through the fact that we lead the world in fiscal responsibility, but I will speak to one item which has not been mentioned before. Certain Conservatives suggested that program spending was out of control. Program spending now and in our projected budgets is very close to 12% of the GDP. In the years of Conservative governance it was 15% at the lowest and 18% at the highest. Our spending is lower and far more in control than any Conservative budget in history.

• (1900)

One of the comments we hear a lot is that the budget is only two pages long. I would like to make two points about that. First, as I said, for this particular small amount, 1% of a budget, our previous budget, which the Conservatives voted for, or any Conservative budget and that amount of the budget, perhaps two pages is enough for the opposition to read.

The member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands was up a few minutes ago waving Bill C-48 around, suggesting that there was nothing in it about transit and saying that there were only two pages. He asked me

and he asked another Liberal member who had been speaking to apologize for bringing up transit. Let me just quote from Bill C-48 and paragraph 2(1)(a): “including for public transit”.

In the minute or so I have left I would like to talk about the other reasons the Conservatives feel we should not vote for Bill C-48 right now. It was suggested that the world would collapse because there were so many expenditures in the bill. Some members said it would be fiscally irresponsible.

Then the member for Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, as well as the member for Winnipeg North, confirmed that it was only 1% of the budget. After saying that all the expenditures in Bill C-48 would cause a fiscal collapse, the Conservatives turned around and said on the other hand that the money would not flow to any of the items.

To their credit, virtually none of the Conservatives have spoken against the items in the bill: public transit, foreign aid, housing and post-secondary education. Perhaps the best thing for the nation and for the Conservative Party, but the worst thing for the Liberals, would be for them to actually vote for Bill C-48. It would show that the opposition believes in the general things that Canadians do: clean air, foreign aid, housing and post-secondary education. That would then leave the Bloc isolated in voting against these items.

It would give new life to the Conservatives, which would be bad for us, but it would give new life to Canadians and it would also take the Conservatives out of their alliance with the separatists, which I think a vast majority of people in the House would agree with.

For all these reasons, I implore members opposite to search their souls, consider their principles and consider voting for the important elements in this budget.

• (1905)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Yukon for his enlightening words. I must say that it is always a pleasure to listen to such a cultivated individual as my colleague from the Yukon as he shares his views in such an eloquent fashion.

I would like his views on one aspect of what is known as the NDP's better balanced budget deal, an aspect that is not raised as frequently as it should be. It is the element that I am perhaps most proud of and is something that is not found so much in Bill C-48 as it is in Bill C-55: the wage protection fund.

The workers' wage protection fund was part of the negotiations between the NDP and the Liberals. It is a special fund whereby in the event of bankruptcy workers would not have to wait their turn with the other unsecured creditors when the trustee is discharging the proceeds from the assets of the bankrupt company.

Government Orders

This is important because there are many commercial bankruptcies in Canada in which the employees are owed back wages, holiday pay or pension contributions. I think it was an incredibly compassionate move on the part of the two principal parties who negotiated this deal to include these unemployed workers who may be owed back wages, et cetera. This will find itself in Bill C-55.

I would ask my colleague from Yukon if he could enlighten me as to how a party that used to call itself the grassroots party could turn its back on unemployed, grassroots, individual workers who were victims of a bankruptcy and who would not get their back wages. Now they will. I wonder if he could enlighten me on how any party that professes to stand up for working people could vote against a wage protection fund on behalf of working people.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, the member's question is a very important contribution. He is correct in that I do not remember anyone from any party mentioning that aspect of it in the lengthy debate we have had on Bill C-48.

I am particularly moved about pensions in particular. When I was on the transport committee we had the situation of airlines in trouble. There was a big problem with pensions and the fact that the workers might lose their pensions. It was inconceivable to me that people have worked their entire life but somehow in Canada we have set up a system where pensions are not protected. To me it was like pensions were cast in stone; they would just be there. I think this aspect of protecting workers is very important. It is very humanitarian and I am sure that all parties that support workers would be in support of this.

I do want to also comment on the remark about what was once a grassroots party. I have been particularly amazed at the transformation of the opposition over the last couple of years.

In particular, it came about in relation to entering the war with Iraq. Canadians were massively against that. Members might remember that I asked the Leader of the Opposition, in the House, why those members would continue to stand for it when they knew their constituents were against it. They had taken on a whole new philosophy. They said it took leadership, that it did not matter what the constituents said, that it required leadership. It would not surprise me coming from another party, but that party is the one that always says it is at the grassroots where the decisions should be made.

The second example is in missile defence, where Canadians were massively against it and the once grassroots party started speaking in favour of it.

• (1910)

Mr. John Williams (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to congratulate the member on his engagement to Melissa Craig of Yukon. I noted that while he was supporting Bill C-38, which is the same sex marriage bill, he is opting for the more traditional form of marriage, so we would like to congratulate him on that as well.

New love is always something to behold. I say new, not young, because the member for Yukon is past the teenybopper stage, but I would just like to ask him this question since he is supporting the motion to stay here in Ottawa for a few more weeks, perhaps, rather than returning to Yukon. He is obviously more committed to the

Liberal Party than to his new-found love. How is he going to be able to explain all this when he goes back home?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I will be quick so the Bloc gets a chance to ask a question. My new-found love will be delighted that he asked that question because one of the most important things for my new-found love, Melissa Craig, is that the same sex marriage bill gets passed. She has been lobbying me incessantly to make sure it gets passed. I guess it is because I am so old that she would rather have me here working on it than back in the Yukon. I thank the member very much for asking that question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec's national holiday starts at midnight tonight. Before I address my colleague, I would like to express my best wishes to all Quebecers on this occasion.

Continuing tonight until midnight and debating a bill when we all know the outcome already since it has already been voted on is, in my opinion, an insult to the people of Quebec, one of the two founding peoples of this country. It shows a flagrant lack of respect for Quebecers not to have adjourned at least by 6:00 p.m.

It is a sad thing to see: the NDP, Conservatives and Liberals all joining forces to boycott Quebec's celebrations this evening.

Preventing the elected representatives of Quebec from being able to get to official flag ceremonies, makes parliamentarians look bad, particularly the Quebec Liberal members, who have not spoken up about this.

[*English*]

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, what is very sad is that the Bloc Québécois is speaking against the people in western Canada. It is 4:15 p.m. in Yukon and that is totally disrespectful to my constituents for the Bloc to suggest that they should lose the time from four o'clock in the afternoon because some phantom officials cannot go. Why can the officials not go?

Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day is tomorrow. It is a very important day for me personally. I celebrate it every year. I have been to celebrations with the Association franco-yukonnaise in Yukon, which I was once a member of. It is a very dynamic association. Its members are a very important part of our culture in the Yukon. They are 3% of our population. Quebecers have a very dynamic culture and add to song and dance in Canada. It is that cultural diversity that is so important.

I would hope that the members of the Bloc Québécois, because I note that no other people in Quebec have complained to us, would have an appreciation for the other cultures in Canada and for the other time zones in Canada. All of us who like to celebrate the great and exciting culture of Quebec also have respect for western Canada as well.

Government Orders

●(1915)

Mr. John Williams (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to the member from the Bloc, let me point out that it was not the Conservative Party that proposed this motion. Motion No. 17 came from the government side. The government is asking that we sit until midnight every night, including tonight. I agree with the member that the celebrations of St. Jean Baptiste should have a lot more importance than sitting here talking about a motion to sit until midnight every night next week.

One of the things in Motion No. 17 being proposed by the government side, which makes one wonder exactly where the Liberals are coming from, is that Parliament would not come back potentially for 95 days after we recessed. If we are here all next week until June 30, July has 31 days, August has 31 days and September has 30 days. That would still leave another three days in October. The Standing Orders say we are supposed to be back here on September 19.

Does the government have something up its sleeve for not wanting us back here until October? If we sit another couple of weeks, it means we will not be back until after Thanksgiving. I think the government owes us an explanation about the 95 days. It is amazing how the Liberals have put these little quirks in the motion and we do not know what they mean.

The motion is also an amendment to the Standing Orders. I would have thought that when the Standing Orders are amended, we would have a right to send them to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs for debate so it could be examined from every aspect. Every party could put their points forward. The committee could then bring a report to the House saying whether it agrees or does not agree. But no, the government just rides roughshod over Parliament and democracy. It brings in a motion with its new-found friends in the NDP and thinks it is going to ram it through. That is not democracy.

It is interesting that today we received the first annual report on democratic reform. The very day the government is running roughshod over democracy is the day that it brought out the very first report. The report does not say very much. It is only 16 pages long, including a foreword and a few blank pages. The first paragraph of the introduction states:

When the government was sworn into office on December 12, 2003, the Prime Minister made democratic reform a priority, saying, "We are going to change the way things work in Ottawa in order to re-engage Canadians in the political process and achieve demonstrable progress in our priorities".

The report closes by stating:

Finally, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons will continue to oversee the parliamentary component of the Action Plan for Democratic Reform and work with all parliamentarians to ensure that Members of the House of Commons can effectively represent their constituents and continue to play their role in holding the Government accountable.

That report came out the very day that closure was introduced in the House of Commons. Can anyone square that circle? I cannot. The very day that this report has come out, we have had closure foisted upon us, and the report says, "to ensure that members of the House of Commons can effectively represent their constituents". I am sorry but I find it rather disappointing that the government would present this report and closure on the same day.

●(1920)

We have talked about the introduction in the report. One of the headings is "Ethics and Integrity". There is one page on ethics and integrity. Of course, this is on the day after the Ethics Commissioner released a damning report on the former minister of immigration. The Ethics Commissioner refused to look into the Prime Minister and his chief of staff and so on, but we have a page here on ethics and integrity saying that the government is going to do a great job on ethics and integrity. Well, I do not believe that.

There is another page or two on the restoration of the representative and deliberative roles of MPs. Now there is a big handle, but it means nothing on the day the government introduced closure. It is the hypocrisy that gets to us when we read these things. There is one on the expanded role of committees to shape and influence legislation, and here we have the procedure and House affairs committee being bypassed, ignored by the fact that this motion should have gone there and it has not. I could go on, but is there really any point?

Another one concerns the role of ministers and parliamentary secretaries. Last year, it was rather an unusual situation. As members know, I chair the public accounts committee and a year ago the public accounts committee was investigating the sponsorship scandal. It was rather interesting that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works during question period stand on that side of the House answering questions and defending the government. After that, we went down the hall, the committee resumed after question period and he was supposed to be investigating on behalf of Parliament. Within the space of a few minutes he would be there defending the government, answering questions from the opposition and then he would go to the committee to do the "investigation". That is the role of parliamentary secretaries.

Anyway, I think we will just leave that report alone. It really does not say an awful lot because the democratic deficit, I think, is getting bigger and bigger. It is getting a lot bigger, not smaller. Therein is the problem. I would hope that we can deal with that soon so that we can have an election and move those guys from over there to over here, and we can really get some democratic reform in the House.

The reason we are having all of this foisted upon us is of course Bill C-48, all two pages of it. It is going to spend up to \$4.5 billion with no plan. Not only is it going to spend \$4.5 billion but it is going to be spent fast. It is going to be spent this year and next year. We have 18 months because we are well through the first part of fiscal year 2005-06. From April 1, 2005, we are already three months into the quarter. By the time the bill passes, gets through the Senate, we bring the Governor General back—I am sure she is going somewhere—and get her to sign this into legislation, then we start spending this \$4.5 billion. We only have 18 months to do it. That is a pile of cash going out the door, but where is the money going to go?

Earlier today there was a member from Assiniboine who was talking about how Bill C-48 was essential, how it was urgent and how the dollars were required. I took a look at this document which is called "Budget Plan 2005". It has several hundred pages, 420 pages. It is the budget plan presented in the House by the Minister of Finance on behalf of the Liberal Party.

Government Orders

How long did you say I had to speak, Madam Speaker, only one minute? There must be more than one minute. It was a 20 minute speech. I am just getting warmed up. I thought it was 20 minutes, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Geoff Regan: It just seemed like 20 minutes.

Mr. John Williams: No, I am just getting warmed up.

The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine): Your speech is a 20 minute speech. According to my monitor you were on for 10 minutes, but we will add the 10 minutes.

● (1925)

Mr. John Williams: Madam Speaker, in any event, budget plan 2005 does not even mention anything that is in Bill C-48. This just appeared magically, all of a sudden.

Bill C-48 does talk about putting \$900 million into the environment. The government says this is important, but let us take a look back to the springtime when the government tabled the budget. It was going to put \$5 billion into the environment over the next five years, \$1 billion for the innovative clean air fund, \$225 million to expand the successful EnerGuide for houses retrofit incentive program, \$200 million for this and \$200 million for that. That was a budget that the Conservative Party supported.

All of a sudden the government said, "We want to bring in the NDP as our friends and we are going to spend another \$900 million on the environment just to buy their love". Bill C-48 is not urgent. It is not dollars that are needed. Bill C-48 is for the Liberal Party. This is not for the people of Canada.

Then we go on to things like education and support for training. What does the big document say? Education, investment in Canadian capabilities, investing in people, \$5 billion over five years to start building a framework for learning, and \$120 million over five years for first nations children, \$398 million for integration, supported by the Conservative Party no less. That is not enough for the NDP members. They need more.

What about housing? The Minister of Finance is going to deal with first nations housing. He is going to deal with development assistance abroad. On page 206 there is an increase of \$3.4 billion over the next five years so we can meet our international obligations for the poor in Africa and the poor elsewhere around the world. That is important. The NDP wants to squeeze another \$500 million out of the Canadian taxpayer, even though we as the Conservative Party supported this budget of \$3.4 billion in extra foreign aid. This is generous. Now there is another \$500 million to buy the support of the NDP. This is not about public policy. This is not about helping Canadians. This is about helping the Liberals stay in power with the support of the NDP.

There are only 308 members in the House, half on that side and half on this side. The House is evenly divided as everyone knows. We have had too many tied votes around here recently.

That is the price of buying the NDP, \$4.5 billion, out of the pockets of Canadian taxpayers. It is rather unfortunate.

Then we have Bill C-38, the same sex marriage bill. The Supreme Court brought down its reference response last December, as I recall.

That is more than six months ago. All of a sudden there is a great urgency to get this bill out of the way. Two weeks ago the Prime Minister gave the indication that we could deal with this in the fall, but he has had a change of heart. He wants it done now. We wonder why he wants it done now and he wants to keep us around here to get it done, even though many Canadians, perhaps even a majority of Canadians have said, "We don't want this legislation".

Everyone acknowledges and has agreed and given to same sex couples the same benefits that any other couple enjoys. But the word "marriage" is a hallowed name, a word that has come to us down through the centuries. The government is going to change the definition of every dictionary in the land and even around the world because it wants to capitulate and give the definition of marriage to same sex couples.

● (1930)

We disagree with that and half of people in the country, or more, disagree with that.

I think the Liberals have found out that the polls are moving against them on this issue. On that basis, they wanted to get this issue out of the way so that in the summertime it would not fester. They wanted to have smooth sailing, hopefully, into the next election. Well, it will not be smooth sailing into the next election because we will ensure that the people who are opposed to this will show up at on polling day and register their concern and their absolute disgust at what the government has done.

I was talking to a friend of mine who is in the polling business and he told me that this was intergenerational, that the younger people tend to support same sex marriage and the older generation say "no way". It is interesting that the people who say "yes, there is nothing wrong with same sex marriage" when they are young, tend to change their mind when their children arrive. Their children, of course, come from a heterosexual relationship and no other kind of relationship that I am aware of. When their children arrive they are the ones changing diapers, raising them and doing everything that parents do. I know this as I am also a proud parent. However we realize that perhaps the heterosexual relationship is not only the normal way but the right way and the way that has to be endorsed by society and that is what marriage is all about.

The question we have to ask is why the big rush.

An hon. member: What's the hidden agenda Paul?

Mr. John Williams: Hidden agenda? There are hidden agendas here and there. The Liberals are going to keep us here to get Bill C-48 through, which is the NDP budget, the tail wagging the dog.

I see nothing about Bill C-48 in budget plan 2005. I can go through all the documents. I can go through the budget speech by the Minister of Finance. I can do a full review of the budget and move toward a green economy in the budget. I can move on to securing our social foundations in the budget. I can see achieving a productive and sustainable economy in the budget. I see a new deal for Canadian communities in the budget. I can see meeting our global responsibilities, the budget in brief, in the budget. However I do not see a word about Bill C-48.

Government Orders

How did this conversion on the road to socialism become all of a sudden such a big deal, this two page budget spending \$4.5 billion with no programming whatsoever? The Liberals are just saying that we should spend the cash, blow it out the door without having a program by which to deliver it.

They talk about more money for housing. We do not disagree with more money for housing but all it says is:

for affordable housing, including housing for aboriginal Canadians, an amount not exceeding \$1.6 billion;

In the province of Alberta and right across this country we are going to build more than 200,000 housing units this year. For the fourth year in a row we are now going to exceed 200,000. The building industry is going flat out. Construction workers are working at the maximum. I am thinking about putting an addition on my house and I cannot even get people to do it because they are all working so hard. How are we going to be able to put another \$1.6 billion into housing, apart from just creating an inflationary environment in the housing market? The Liberals do not think about that. They just say that if this is what it takes to get the NDP, that is what it takes.

It also talks about the energy efficient retrofit program for low income housing. We have a program for retrofit of energy inefficient houses. We are building the industry. We cannot just expand it in an explosive way overnight because that does not work. I am surprised the members of the NDP agreed to this but I am not surprised that the Liberals promised them anything.

However this budget will not work. A year from now the Auditor General will be saying that things are falling off the rails.

• (1935)

I am opposed to Motion No. 17 that would allow us to continue to debate Bill C-48 and Bill C-38 because both of those bills should have been in the trash can. If that were to happen then we could get on with doing the real business of Canada.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Edmonton—St. Albert for highlighting various aspects of the budget. We are proud of the fact that we have kept our promises on a number of social files. Yes, the budget is a great budget in the fact that it talks about a green economy, about housing and about the doubling of foreign aid to Africa. It also addresses issues of concern when it comes to post-secondary education.

However what is fascinating is that members opposite have only recently converted to the importance of these social files. In fact, when the budget was first presented the Leader of the Opposition rushed out, gushing to reporters about corporate tax cuts.

What the opposition was gushing about was the corporate cuts for its Conservative corporate clients. What is fascinating is that as soon as there was a bump-up in the polls, the Conservatives went back on their word. They pulled their support for this budget that this member opposite is now gushing about and talking about the importance of these social files.

If they are so concerned about these social files and not their corporate clients, why would they not be concerned about the 900

million additional dollars going into the budget? There is the Alberta energy lobby.

Why are they not concerned about an additional \$1.6 billion for housing? Their corporate clients are not very concerned about people out on the streets.

Why are they not concerned about \$500 million for foreign aid? There are not a lot of Conservative voters in developing countries.

I would just like to find out why the recent conversion. Is it not a matter of hypocrisy and is there real concern that there is \$4.6 billion that, instead of going to their corporate clients, is going to students, to foreign aid to housing and into taking care of the environment?

Mr. John Williams: Madam Speaker, yes, we did support the budget. It did contain a tax cut, which the Liberals took away and threw away because they had to pay for the NDP votes that they bought.

I think back to October 2000 when we were presented with a mini budget the week before an election was called. It was presented at the time by the then minister of finance, who is now the Prime Minister, and it contained \$100 billion in tax cuts. He was so proud of that and then they went off and won the election on the tax cuts that they promised because Canadians want tax cuts.

I have already explained why we cannot absorb \$1.6 billion in the housing industry. It is because it is going flat out. The way he trashes the province of Alberta, he must not realize that the Deputy Prime Minister is on a knife edge. She is my neighbour in the city of Edmonton, in the province of Alberta, and if he keeps talking that way he can kiss her goodbye because she will be gone.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Madam Speaker, I commend my hon. colleague for a very thorough presentation.

I want to address the issue of these corporate tax cuts for just a moment. Members on the government side of the House and, of course, their coalition of corruption partners over there in the New Democratic Party, seem to be portraying this as something for just the rich who donate to our campaigns or something like that.

Let me begin with some of the news from today: indefinite layoffs announced by General Motors of Canada; rumours that Ford's Essex engine plant in Windsor may be closing down; loss of a third shift possibility at a Windsor assembly plant. The government just heard a presentation of money for DaimlerChrysler in its cabinet this week. The industry needs some help but the government wants to get rid of corporate tax cuts that could help them.

Does my colleague not believe that it is a benefit to the average working Canadian, the communities and this government, through tax revenues from these high paying auto jobs, to keep them here? Is that not the real reason that tax cuts are important in this country?

Government Orders

● (1940)

Mr. John Williams: Madam Speaker, of course the Liberals and the NDP will soak anybody for a tax dollar if they get the chance, including the auto workers who support the NDP.

It is interesting that our finance critic has been challenging the Minister of Finance these last few days about the tax on the tax on the gasoline that is now costing 90¢ a litre and our auto industry is in deep trouble because although people like to drive SUVs they cannot afford to keep them on the road anymore because of the tax on the GST, and the excise tax and the provincial Liberal taxes on the price of gasoline. Had these taxes not been there, gas would be affordable for Canadians and they could drive the car that they wanted. However this tax, tax, tax until people squeak is the way the government has survived so far.

It is interesting in Bill C-48 that any money the government has over and above a \$2 billion surplus is to be spent. Let us just blow the wad. There is no concept that this is taxpayers' money in trust and if it is not needed it should be given back. No, no. Just blow the wad. The Liberals and the NDP are now cozying up to support each other at the expense of Canadians, not for Canadians.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have to call the member opposite on something. He mentioned again the collaboration between the NDP and the Liberals on this budget and he referred to the auto workers. His finance critic today got up in the House of Commons, referred to that collaboration and referred to Mr. Buzz Hargrove and the auto workers.

He asked the Liberals how low they could go. Shame on the Conservatives who would denigrate and call low labour unionism in this country. Labour unions built this country throughout the 20th century. Shame on them. If that is their view of Canadian society reflected by their finance critic, and the hon. member has just referred to that now, that is an excellent political relationship and it will continue to serve Canadians well. I know the members opposite have trouble with big numbers. They do not like the fact that we have a trillion dollar economy. Maybe they cannot understand it.

Amidst all of the good news, the great financial record of this economy, and I know he has heard all of this before, there has not been a deficit for eight years. We have been reducing taxes for five years and for eight years we have been reducing payroll taxes on EI. It is down from \$3.05 to \$1.95. We have paid over \$50 billion on the debt. The national debt is now under \$500 billion and less than 50% of the GDP.

What else is there out there that he could possibly find to criticize about the economic management of this country and why is he not supporting both these bills. Let us get our budget passed. Why does he not?

Mr. John Williams: Madam Speaker, I am glad he did ask about how low can they go because I am not sure we have found out how low they actually can go. Let us talk about the EI surplus which is at \$40 billion. That is theft out of the pockets of the working people. The auto workers who voted for the NDP and the Liberals have been squeezed to support the cash hungry Liberal Party that thinks it deserves to be in power by taking the \$40 billion out of the pockets of working Canadians.

That is how low the Liberals and NDP go. Canadians will see the light and, when they do, they will be gone.

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be, I suppose, the final speaker to speak to this motion that our government House leader was forced to put to the House because of the lack of cooperation of the hon. members across.

It is always unfortunate of course when a minister has to move either closure under Standing Order 57 or time allocation under Standing Order 78 but the responsibility of the government is to provide good governance for the nation, which our Liberal government wants to do.

● (1945)

[*Translation*]

Today the House has continued debating a motion to extend the sitting period beyond the planned adjournment date of June 23, that is beyond today. This motion is, of course, within precedent, and we know that.

The opposition's intent is simple. The official opposition is hindering the passage of urgent bills that are before the House at this time. If there happens to be anyone who does not believe that statement, he or she just needs to look at what the opposition, the Conservatives in particular, have been doing these last few days.

[*English*]

Day after day we have witnessed Conservative MPs rising in their places and moving concurrence in committee reports instead of proceeding with the orders of the day in order to deal with the business at hand. Why did they do this? They did this to delay everything that the government needed to pass before adjourning.

Yesterday we had the sad spectacle of the opposition House leader saying to the House that the government was wrong to extend the session because the opposition tried to delay the House from doing its work. Obviously if the opposition—

An hon. member: The House had lots of time.

Hon. Don Boudria: I am glad the hon. member across said that the House had lots of time. I sat on the legislative committee dealing with Bill C-38. It is a legislative committee and that committee of course was supposed to deal with technical witnesses. The hon. member for Provencher and others across the way insisted that we hear some 62 witnesses on a bill that has about four clauses.

Why did they do that? It is obvious. They wanted to delay the passage of the bill. They did not want to vote against the bill. They wanted to delay its passage. They did not want to vote at all.

That is not the way it works. The government has a duty, a constitutional responsibility to this nation, and that is exactly what it is going to do. It is going to proceed and get its legislative programs through because that is why governments are there: to get things done. That is quite normal.

If the opposition delays, and I am not saying this of everybody, but if the Conservative opposition delays the government in completing its work, then obviously the government has only one or two choices. It can either curtail debate, that is, move time allocation on individual bills, or it can extend the sitting in order to get the legislation through, or possibly both, which the government may well have to do now.

That is not because the government House leader and the government were not totally efficient in their way of doing their business. That is because the opposition does not know what it is doing.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Hon. Don Boudria: The opposition thought that it could just delay and there would be no consequences. It does not work that way. I would ask the hon. member who is heckling across the way to listen to this. He might learn something, but then again maybe not.

Let us listen to what the opposition House leader said yesterday afternoon at roughly 15:45. He said:

—I think that I am not just speaking for the Conservative Party of Canada and our 98 members of Parliament. I think I could speak for all 308 members. I am sure they have events planned to which they have committed. Some might have been committed to some months ahead of time, expecting, before this extremely abnormal request on the part of the government, that the House would rise on schedule tomorrow night at midnight. That is not going to happen.

There are a whole bunch of things wrong with that, of course. First of all, if the opposition House leader knew for months, as he said, that there were a number of things for him to do after June 23, then why did he delay the legislation which would cause a delay in the adjournment of the House? Obviously he did not think those things through. He got to thinking about them seriously only when he figured out that he would not be going home on the day that he originally thought he would.

Here, we can see, there is a bit of mea culpa necessary on the part of the Conservatives for not having acted properly, for having misbehaved. That is what the Conservatives did. They misbehaved and now they do not want to pay the price. When you and I were children, Madam Speaker, and I know that in your case that was not long ago because you are so young, but when we were children and we misbehaved, we had to pay the price for it.

● (1950)

Members across the way have behaved for the last number of weeks in a totally irresponsible and childish manner and now they have to pay the price. They cannot go outside and play at recess. They cannot go home and play with their marbles. They will have to continue to work until the work is done, until the homework is complete, because those are the rules. The Conservatives have refused to play by the rules.

Let me continue. I am quoting the speech of the hon. opposition House leader. He said:

It might come as a bit of a surprise not only to yourself, Mr. Speaker, but to the viewing public, that in the almost 12 years I have been here the parties that I have represented have supported more government legislation than they have opposed, even though they have been opposition parties and that continues today.

Government Orders

If the hon. member is telling us that he used to be cooperative and he has ceased to be, that is not a redeeming value. That is a further admission of the guilt on the part of the official opposition. That is all it is. The Conservatives do not want us to pass Bill C-48. I just heard an hon. member—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Don Boudria: They are applauding that. I want the record to show that the Conservatives are applauding that they do not want to have more foreign aid and they do not want to have more money for housing. That is what the Conservatives are applauding. They are applauding the fact that they do not want to give more benefits to Canadians. That is what the Conservatives are applauding. Let them applaud that, if that is what Conservatives want to do. That is not what I want to do.

Here is what a Conservative member from Alberta said a little while ago in the House. We cannot help people with social housing because the housing industry is overheated, said he, and therefore there would not be anyone left to build houses. That was the answer of the member across the way. If that is a problem anywhere, it is not in my riding.

I ask my colleagues from Cape Breton, is there a terrible shortage of labour in their area so that they could not possibly build an additional house? I do not think so. What about my colleague from P.E.I.? I do not think it is a problem there either.

I will ask myself and gladly respond that there is room to build more houses in Hawkesbury in my riding. There are people who need additional housing in Hawkesbury, in St. Isidore, in Sarsfield and all those other villages that I could enumerate in the constituency I represent.

Let us think of this as a matter of social conscience. The member said that they cannot build social housing because there is a shortage of labour in his riding. That is quite a way of looking out for the greater good of the nation, is it not? That is, "I am doing all right, Charlie, so for...". I do not want to use the words, but the message is clear that the rest of the country does not matter providing he is all right.

That may be the Conservative way of looking at things, but it is not the way that Liberals look at things. It is not the way, I say on this bill, that the New Democrats look at things. We are looking here—

Mr. Maurice Vellacott: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member has been around a long time and is finishing up not so stellar a way these days, but he knows that he cannot address other members by the name Charlie. He has to refer to their constituencies. I would appreciate it if you would brief him on that.

● (1955)

The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine): I thank the member for the intervention, but I think it is common parlance when the name Charlie is used. I somehow did not think it was referring to a member. The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Government Orders

Hon. Don Boudria: Madam Speaker, I definitely was not calling the hon. member opposite who just rose by that name, nor was I calling you by that name, Madam Speaker. Let us make the record clear that I was calling neither the member nor you "Charlie".

In any case, let me continue. There is the issue of Bill C-38, which the hon. members across say they do not want to vote on. Maybe I should remind members of something that appeared in today's *Quorum*, I believe, and definitely in a number of newspapers. It is an article written by columnist Don Martin, who gave some advice to the hon. members across about that issue. He said that for their own political good maybe what they should consider is getting the vote over with before they embarrass themselves even further, not only on that issue but on many others.

I say for the hon. members across that whether they agree or disagree with the content of the bill, this issue has been in the public domain for three years. Sixty-two witnesses have been listened to by the legislative committee. The bill has about four clauses. The members across have all spoken at second reading, every single one of them who wanted to, and every single one of them on the amendment as well, and on the subamendment and so on.

We have listened to what they had to say. It is not a matter of the House needing more pearls of wisdom in that regard. In any case, if I listen to what the opposition House leader says, it is not that they want more time. It is that they do not want to do that particular work at all because they do not like it.

I know that Madam Speaker is a teacher by training. Do people have a choice in doing their homework based on whether or not they like it? That is not the criteria.

Let us hear what the opposition House leader said today, June 23, after question period in the foyer of the House of Commons:

We've been consistent in saying right from the beginning that we are strongly opposed to these two bills.

That is all right. They can vote against them. He stated further:

There's not a Canadian left out there in the real world that doesn't understand that.

Of course: they have all spoken two or three times each so every one of us understands what their position is. It does not need to be clarified much further.

I will continue to quote the opposition House leader:

We have no intention and it's not our role, frankly, to make things easy for the government to pass bills that we're opposed to.

There we are. They do not like Bill C-38. They do not like Bill C-48. They do not like the fact that we are going to give more money to social housing. They do not like more money going to the Canadian International Development Agency to help the world's poor.

What is their solution? Is it to vote against that which they do not like? No, it is to not want to do the work. Not wanting to work is the way in which they solve their problems.

Now, not wanting to work just does not cut it with Canadians. Their constituents and mine will not put up with that. They sent us here to do the work.

Let us do the work. The hon. members say they want to go home. Of course they do. Their House leader said that on their behalf and their House leader always says it the way it is, or generally. In any case, if their House leader says they want to go home, I am not opposed to that.

We are going to vote on this motion tonight. We have from now until midnight. Let us vote on the two bills and go home. Canadians will say, "You did your work, Mr. or Ms. MP". We will all have done our work and we can go home to do all the things that the opposition House leader said we should be doing.

I agree with him that we should be going home, but we should do our work first because when we do not do our work we have to stay in class at recess or after hours to get the work done. We are supposed to do the work before we go away. Those are the rules.

I say this in the presence of a teacher, namely our Acting Speaker, because I know she used to teach for a living and she will know these things in the truly objective manner in which I am sure she sees these matters.

● (2000)

I ask all my colleagues to join together and vote for this motion. After the motion, let us join together again and vote for the bills. Let us get the work done and then we can go home, in that order. That is the way it should be done.

The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine): It being 8:00 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine): The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine): Call in the members.

● (2035)

[Translation]

(The House divided on the amendment which was negated on the following division:)

*(Division No. 141)***YEAS**

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Batters	Benoit
Bezan	Bonin
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Carrie	Casey
Casson	Chong
Day	Devolin
Doyle	Duncan
Epp	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Fletcher
Forseth	Gallant
Goldring	Goodyear
Gouk	Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells)
Guergis	Hanger
Harper	Harris
Harrison	Hearn
Hiebert	Hill
Hinton	Hubbard
Jaffer	Jean
Johnston	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kilgour
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacAulay	Mackay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Mark
McTeague	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Mills	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
O'Brien	O'Connor
Obhrai	Oda
Pallister	Penson
Pollievre	Prentice
Preston	Rajotte
Reid	Reynolds
Richardson	Ritz
Scheer	Schellenberger
Schmidt (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Skelton
Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul)	Solberg
Sorenson	Steckle
Stinson	Strahl
Szabo	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Tilson	Toews
Trost	Tweed
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wappel	Warawa
Watson	Williams
Yelich — 101	

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	André
Angus	Asselin
Augustine	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélangier
Bell	Bellavance
Bennett	Bergeron
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Blaikie	Blais
Blondin-Andrew	Boire
Boivin	Bonsant
Boshcoff	Bouchard
Boudria	Boulianne

Government Orders

Bourgeois	Bradshaw
Brison	Broadbent
Brown (Oakville)	Brunelle
Bulte	Byrne
Cannis	Cardin
Carr	Carrier
Carroll	Catterall
Chamberlain	Chan
Christopherson	Clavet
Cleary	Coderre
Comartin	Comuzzi
Côté	Cotler
Crête	Crowder
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	Cullen (Etobicoke North)
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davies	Demers
Deschamps	Desjarlais
Desrochers	DeVillers
Dhalla	Dion
Dosanjh	Drouin
Dryden	Duceppe
Easter	Efford
Emerson	Eyking
Faille	Folco
Fontana	Frulla
Fry	Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain)	Gagnon (Jonquière—Alma)
Gaudet	Gauthier
Godbout	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond
Holland	Ianno
Jennings	Julian
Kadis	Karak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Khan
Kotto	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lapierre (Outremont)
Lapierre (Lévis—Bellechasse)	Lastewka
Lavallée	Layton
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemay	Lessard
Lévesque	Longfield
Loubier	Macklin
Malhi	Maloney
Marceau	Marleau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Masse	Matthews
McCallum	McDonough
McGuinty	McGuire
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLellan
Ménard (Hochelaga)	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Myers
Neville	Owen
Pacetti	Paquette
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Perron
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Pickard (Chatham-Kent—Essex)	Plamondon
Poirier-Rivard	Powers
Proulx	Ratansi
Redman	Regan
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rota	Roy
Russell	Saada
Sauvageau	Savage
Savoy	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sgro
Siksay	Silva
Simard (Beauport—Limoilou)	Simard (Saint Boniface)
Simms	Smith (Pontiac)
St-Hilaire	St. Amand
St. Denis	Stoffer
Stronach	Telegdi
Temelkovski	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	Tonks
Torsney	Valeri
Valley	Vincent
Volpe	Wasylcia-Leis
Wilfert	Wrzesniewskyj

Government Orders

Zed— 197

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

[*English*]

The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said 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:

• (2045)

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 142)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	André
Angus	Asselin
Augustine	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Bakopanos	Barnes
Bélanger	Bell
Bellavance	Bennett
Bergeron	Bevilacqua
Bigras	Blaikie
Blais	Blondin-Andrew
Boire	Boivin
Bonsant	Boshcoff
Bouchard	Boudria
Boulianne	Bourgeois
Bradshaw	Brisson
Broadbent	Brown (Oakville)
Brunelle	Bulte
Cannis	Cardin
Carr	Carrier
Carroll	Catterall
Chamberlain	Chan
Christopherson	Clavet
Cleary	Coderre
Comartin	Comuzzi
Côté	Cotler
Crête	Crowder
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	Cullen (Etobicoke North)
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davies	Demers
Deschamps	Desjarlais
Desrochers	DeVillers
Dhalla	Dion
Dosanjh	Drouin
Dryden	Duceppe
Easter	Efford
Emerson	Eyking
Faillie	Folco

Fontana	Frulla
Fry	Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain)	Gagnon (Jonquière—Alma)
Gaudet	Gauthier
Godbout	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond
Holland	Ianno
Jennings	Julian
Kadis	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Khan
Kotto	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lapierre (Outremont)
Lapierre (Lévis—Bellechasse)	Lastewka
Lavallée	Layton
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemay	Lessard
Lévesque	Loubier
Macklin	Malhi
Maloney	Marceau
Marleau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Matthews	McCallum
McDonough	McGuinty
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McLellan	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Minna
Mitchell	Murphy
Myers	Neville
Owen	Paquette
Paradis	Parrish
Patry	Perron
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Picard (Drummond)
Pickard (Chatham-Kent—Essex)	Plamondon
Poirier-Rivard	Powers
Proulx	Ratansi
Redman	Regan
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rota	Roy
Russell	Saada
Sauvageau	Savage
Savoy	Scott
Sgro	Siksay
Silva	Simard (Beauport—Limoilou)
Simard (Saint Boniface)	Simms
Smith (Pontiac)	St-Hilaire
St. Amand	St. Denis
Stoffer	Stronach
Telegdi	Temelkovski
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	
Thibault (West Nova)	
Torsney	Valeri
Valley	Vincent
Volpe	Wasylycia-Leis
Wilfert	Wrzesnewskyj

Zed— 191

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Ambrose
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Beaumier
Bezan
Breitkreuz
Carrie
Casson
Day
Doyle
Epp
Fitzpatrick
Forsyth
Galloway
Goodyear
Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells)
Hanger
Harris
Hearn
Hill

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

Hinton	Hubbard
Jaffer	Jean
Johnston	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kilgour
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon	Longfield
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mark	McTeague
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Mills
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	O'Brien
O'Connor	Obhrai
Oda	Pacetti
Pallister	Penson
Poillievre	Prentice
Preston	Rajotte
Reid	Reynolds
Richardson	Ritz
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schellenberger	Schmidt (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Skelton	Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul)
Solberg	Sorenson
Steckle	Stinson
Strahl	Szabo
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Tilson
Toews	Tonks
Trost	Tweed
Ur	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wappel
Warawa	Watson
Williams	Yelich— 108

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

DEVILS LAKE DIVERSION PROJECT

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Discussions have taken place between all parties. I believe that you would find consent for me to move, with three seconders, the following motion concerning the Devils Lake diversion. I move:

That this House unanimously request the United States to immediately agree to undertake an independent, time-limited, binational scientific assessment of North Dakota's proposed Devils Lake diversion in a manner that is consistent with the Boundary Waters Treaty and the role of the International Joint Commission and that, pending completion of this assessment and implementation of measures to mitigate risks of invasive species and to water quality, the outlet would not operate.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Order, please. Does the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.
(Motion agreed to)

● (2050)

[*English*]

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE MINISTER OF FINANCE TO MAKE CERTAIN PAYMENTS

The House resumed from June 22 consideration of the motion that Bill C-48, an act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make certain payments, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think this is the fourth or fifth time that I have spoken on this bill. Apparently the message is not getting through.

The merits of this bill are self-evident. This bill anticipates the spending of something in the order of \$4.5 billion in four key areas previously identified by the government where investments of great significance have already been made, namely, affordable housing, post-secondary education, foreign aid and the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I know of your interest in all of these areas, particularly affordable housing. That is an area of investment that currently receives in the order of \$1.9 billion on an annual basis. That investment houses something in the order of 640,000 families who are given shelter by virtue of the investment by the Government of Canada on an annual basis of \$1.9 billion. This bill proposes to add an additional \$1.6 billion to that base funding of \$1.9 billion, which in and of itself should contribute to housing many more families.

I know members opposite criticized this bill on account of the fact that it does not specify which house, city or community the money is supposed to go to. I point out to members opposite and those who may be listening that this money is allocated in the same fashion as would any other moneys in any other budget document. I suggest that the level of detail proposed by motions that have been put forward on the floor previously generally do not get incorporated into a budget or a budget implementation bill.

It is rather interesting because in the area of affordable housing once the government turned the ship of state around and broke the back of the deficit, one of the first investments by the government was in the area of affordable housing. I know the area of homelessness was of great interest in particular to those of us in urban ridings. In my case, the riding of Scarborough—Guildwood is at the eastern most part of Toronto. At one point it was the entranceway to Toronto until Highway 401 was built. As a consequence, there are quite a number of motels along Kingston Road. Along the same road, we were sheltering a number of families in housing which frankly was unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the House that I will be splitting my time with the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

Government Orders

The moneys that were allocated through the supporting communities partnership initiative, otherwise known as SCPI, have been extremely important to my riding and indeed I know to quite a number of other ridings. They have in fact addressed the issue of affordable housing for homeless people or people who are near homeless. That has resulted in 1,400 homeless people in my riding being reduced to 75 over the course of a number of years, which means now only about 75 people are seeking shelter on a night by night basis as opposed to 1,400. Bill C-48 builds on initiatives such as that.

● (2055)

I know as well, Mr. Speaker, that you are interested in post-secondary education. It is near and dear to your heart because you come from Kingston, which of course is home to the university from which you and I graduated, namely Queen's University. These moneys, the \$1.5 billion contemplated in Bill C-48, will be addressed to making that university, along with all of the other great universities in Canada, more accessible to students, so that students may enjoy the benefits of higher education.

As members know, the life and well-being of people who actually seek and obtain higher education is greatly enhanced by post-secondary education and training. I anticipate that these moneys, the \$1.5 billion, will be added to the \$15.5 billion that the Government of Canada currently puts into post-secondary education and other social grants and programs.

That money is roughly divided evenly between cash and tax points. This will be a significant infusion of cash into that field. As I say, those students at Queen's and other universities around our country will enjoy the benefits of this significant investment, building on the previous investments of the Government of Canada.

I know as well, as do all members, that the environment is something that Canadians probably rank if not first now, certainly second, vis-à-vis health care. Health care and the environment are linked, as the hon. member for Peterborough indicated. We cannot really separate the two. We cannot have good health unless we have a good environment, so I would anticipate that again, members opposite would be very supportive of \$900 million that is contemplated as an investment in Bill C-48.

We anticipate that this will build upon the \$1 billion over five years in the clean air fund, the \$250 million that is in the partnership fund, the \$225 million over five years which will quadruple the number of homes retrofitted under the EnerGuide program, the \$200 million for the windpower initiatives, \$300 million contemplated in Bill C-43 for the green municipal fund, and an equivalent of \$5 billion over five years out of the federal gas tax revenues.

All of those are initiatives that have been taken in Bill C-43, the original budget, along with previous budgets have been put forward by the government, voted upon by the House, and have been found by Canadians to be a very acceptable and useful way in which to deploy tax dollars.

The other area where an investment is contemplated is foreign aid. Bill C-48 anticipates something in the order of an additional investment of \$500 million in international assistance. Canada's recently released international policy statement put out by the

Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for CIDA sets out a vision for Canada and its role in the world. This new international policy framework delivers on the government's commitment to invest in the international role which builds our presence around the world.

We had increased international assistance by \$3.4 billion over the next five years and we anticipate that we will be doubling levels from 2001-02 through to 2010-11. We anticipate that we will be doubling the aid to Africa from its level in 2003-04 by 2008-09.

This reflects the government's commitment to alleviate the poverty that is in Africa. It reflects the commitment by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance to address those problems in an effective way.

● (2100)

I anticipate that this bill will receive a great deal of favour from members opposite. I cannot imagine why members opposite would vote against investing in foreign affairs, in affordable housing, in the environment and in post-secondary education. I urge all members to support Bill C-48.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that right now there is very little to distinguish the rhetoric, although maybe there never has been and maybe I just noted it more now than before, of the Liberal members on that side of the House between the rhetoric the NDP members, the socialists, on the left. The rhetoric seems to be identical from both of those particular parties. I have been listening to it all afternoon and it does not really seem to change.

The issue of socialism runs rampant in those parties. I guess that is mantra coming from the parliamentary secretary.

The member talks about affordable housing initiatives but basically that is all directed to provincial affairs and it always has been. The governing party wants to look after people from cradle to grave. The dominant theme of everything the Liberals do and say it seems is to take private initiative away. Instead of concentrating on the economy and ensuring jobs are created and there is not that dependency on state, they want to look after people in every way, shape and form.

I can go back into another life when I was a police officer. When I joined the Calgary City Police way back when, the issue of affordable housing was even on the agenda at that time but it had taken a completely different stance.

Today I see ministers and parliamentary secretaries on that side of the House running helter-skelter all over the country with cheques in hand for various municipalities and provincial governments all to do with so-called affordable housing projects. I have seen mausoleums being built with this money. Does it really benefit the community overall? I have that question in mind every time I see a new structure going up that makes it affordable for those who are maybe less fortunate.

Government Orders

Instead of helping the less fortunate people out of their situation, they create this dependency. However there is really nothing they can put on their own agenda to say that they own a piece of property. It is not that way at all. It is some wonderful structure that the Liberals have designed as their answer to poverty, when they should be looking at creating jobs and helping people out of that situation.

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, I am sure there was a question there but I am not sure what it was.

First, I have been described as a lot of things in this life, particularly in my political life, but generally socialist is not one of them. Some of the people who know me would probably find that very difficult to believe when thinking about me.

The hon. member complains about intrusion into provincial affairs. I want to point out to the hon. member that this is kind of a false dichotomy. The Government of Canada contributes significantly to the issue of affordable housing and has had, for instance, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for years and years, about which virtually no one complains because it is a mix of private and public.

I will give an example in my riding. He is worried about taking away initiatives from the private sector. In my riding, CMHC is contributing to buying down the costs of mortgages so that people who want to get out of rental situations can get into ownership situations. Actually, it is a very good example of a mix of public and private initiative that gets people into the very situations in which the hon. member wishes to them to be.

I cannot imagine what is so objectionable about trying to put up a further significant sum of money that goes toward the very initiative to which the hon. member wishes it to go.

As to the intrusion into provincial jurisdiction on the environment, frankly, the environment respects no jurisdiction. When the Ottawa River is flowing down here, is it an Ontario river, a Quebec river or a national river, or does it just need to be cleaned up? We live in the great nation of Canada and in fact we live in an area of mixed jurisdiction.

• (2105)

Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-48, a bill that deals with several very important issues.

As hon. members know, the bill contains a commitment to pay down at least \$2 billion of debt on an annual basis. With the additional money we will investment in affordable housing, in transit, in foreign aid and in post-secondary education.

The bill has had a lot of debate and discussion and there have been different perspectives on it. However I think all of these areas, it is fair to say, are coherent, complementary and follow the same theme to what was presented in Bill C-43 and preceding budgets, which are investments built on sound fiscal strategy. We can go back to budget 2003 and to budget 2002.

The bill also reflects the priorities of Canadians. When we look at the examples that are in this bill in terms of the types of investments that are made, we look at the investment in affordable housing. Over the past number of budgets the government has put significant sums

of money into affordable housing. We think of the significance of the \$1.6 billion that will be invested in affordable housing and the fact that in this particular case it is not attached to matching funds and that it also includes aboriginal housing.

We can look at some of the previous funding that has been made with respect to affordable housing. We had a program in place where we had matching funds from the provinces and other entities. Therefore the investment that we are making in Bill C-48 to affordable housing is on top of the previous investments that the government has made in affordable housing. It is very important to ensure that Canadians have an opportunity to have a household and prosper in this great country. It also builds upon the \$2 billion that has already been put toward homelessness and affordable housing over the last number of years.

The investments made do a couple of things. They certainly look to address a specific number of challenges and problems that may be faced by people in our society. We think of the additional funds that the bill proposes to put toward an increase in accessibility to post-secondary education, the \$1.5 billion, which again builds upon a whole other set of initiatives that have been put in place.

We can think back to previous budgets, budgets that have been called education budgets where there were all types of different incentives and investments for Canadians to receive additional training and to gain further access into post-secondary education and to assist with the cost of that further education. We know that with training and education we can further improve our economy and people have an opportunity to further prosper in this country.

We can think of the \$900 million that is being proposed to be invested in public transit and energy retrofit. Again, when we look back to previous budgets, Bill C-48 builds upon Bill C-43 with a number of different initiatives.

Finally, we can look at how the bill contemplates the additional investment of \$500 million in international assistance, again a priority of the government and certainly a continued priority and a future priority of the government.

These investments, along with those made in Bill C-43, were made possible not only because of the performance of the economy but also because of the financial management provided by the Minister of Finance in ensuring that we do have the ability to pay down debt and we do run balanced budgets, which is the cornerstone of budget-making, in that the government takes the approach that we need to pay our way.

Like Canadians in their own households who earn money and try to live within their means, governments need to live within their means. It was in the decades previous to 1993 when governments were living beyond their means and saddling citizens of this country with debt, debt interest and debt payments.

Government Orders

The cornerstones of the budgets that the government has put forward going back to 1993 are certainly balanced budgets and looking at continuing to make debt repayment, not because debt repayment is the goal but because debt repayment frees up additional money and reduces the burden on future generations. It frees up additional money to make smart investments to ensure our country can continue to prosper in the future, to ensure Canadians have an opportunity to participate in this economy and to ensure the country can lead the G-7.

• (2110)

As the Minister of Finance said earlier today in question period, while we lead the G-7 in terms of our balanced budgets and our budget making, we need to now focus on leading the G-7 in terms of the productivity of our country. The Minister of Finance has taken some steps and articulated that in his speeches.

I know in the future, in working and speaking with Canadians and working in the House, there will be an opportunity to exchange ideas and focus on initiatives and programs that deal with the productivity question. At the end of the day, it is about ensuring Canadians the opportunity to participate in the economy, to prosper and to create wealth. With that opportunity, we think the country will be a better place.

Providing opportunity for all Canadians at all different socio-economic levels is important. That is why government makes investments in different areas to ensure there are opportunities for people. It is not only an ideology that might exist with certain parties in the House. It also is an approach that benefits Canadians. Canadians need an active government, a government that will support them and enable them to participate in areas of the economy, where they, their children and their children's children can benefit.

I would hope hon. members in the House reflect upon what the bill is looking to accomplish. I hope they know that the bill is in the interests of Canadians and that it will advance those interests.

When members get the opportunity to vote on the bill, I hope they support it. Then they can spend the summer in different parts of the country talking to Canadians about what has been accomplished in passing the bill. They can talk about the investments we have made.

In closing, an agreement has been reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(2) with respect to the third reading stage of Bill C-48, an act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make certain payments. I move:

That in relation to Bill C-48, an act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make certain payments, not more than one further hour shall be allotted to the consideration of the third reading stage of the said bill and, at the expiry of the time provided for in this order for the consideration of the third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage shall be put and disposed of forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

• (2115)

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. 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.

• (2200)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 143*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	André
Angus	Asselin
Augustine	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Bakopanos	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bell	Bellavance
Bennett	Bergeron
Bevilacqua	Bigras
Blaikie	Blais
Blondin-Andrew	Boire
Boivin	Bonin
Bonsant	Boshoff
Bouchard	Boudria
Boulianne	Bourgeois
Bradshaw	Brison
Broadbent	Brown (Oakville)
Brunelle	Bulte
Byrne	Cannis
Cardin	Carr
Carrier	Carroll
Catterall	Chamberlain
Chan	Christopherson
Clavet	Cleary
Coderre	Comartin
Comuzzi	Côté
Cotler	Crête
Crowder	Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cullen (Etobicoke North)	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies
Demers	Deschamps
Desjarlais	Desrochers
DeVillers	Dhalla
Dion	Dosanjh
Drouin	Dryden
Duceppe	Easter
Efford	Emerson
Eyking	Faille
Folco	Fontana
Frulla	Fry
Gagnon (Québec)	Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain)
Gagnon (Jonquière—Alma)	Galloway
Gaudet	Gauthier
Godbout	Godfrey
Godin	Goodale
Graham	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond
Holland	Hubbard
Ianno	Jennings
Julian	Kadis
Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Khan	Kotto

Government Orders

Laframboise
Lapierre (Outremont)
Lastewka
Layton
Lee
Lessard
Longfield
MacAulay
Malhi
Marceau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Masse
McCallum
McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Ménard (Hochelega)
Minna
Murphy
Neville
Pacetti
Paradis
Patry
Peterson
Phinney
Pickard (Chatham-Kent—Essex)
Poirier-Rivard
Proulx
Redman
Robillard
Rota
Russell
Sauvageau
Savoy
Scott
Siksay
Simard (Beauport—Limoilou)
Simms
St-Hilaire
St. Denis
Stoffer
Szabo
Temelkovski
Basques)
Thibault (West Nova)
Torsney
Valeri
Vincent
Wappel
Wilfert
Zed — 205

Lalonde
Lapierre (Lévis—Bellechasse)
Lavallée
LeBlanc
Lemay
Lévesque
Loubier
Macklin
Maloney
Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Matthews
McDonough
McGuire
McLellan
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Mitchell
Myers
Owen
Paquette
Parrish
Perron
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon
Powers
Ratansi
Regan
Rodríguez
Roy
Saada
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Sgro
Silva
Simard (Saint Boniface)
Smith (Pontiac)
St. Amand
Steckle
Stronach
Telegdi
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Tonks
Ur
Valley
Volpe
Wasylcyia-Leis
Wrzesnewskyj

Prentice
Rajotte
Richardson
Scheer
Skelton
Solberg
Strahl
Tilson
Trost
Van Loan
Warawa
Yelich — 77

Preston
Reid
Ritz
Schmidt (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul)
Sorenson
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews
Tweed
Vellacott
Watson

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

THIRD READING

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-48, an Act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make certain payments, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to share my time with the author of this document, the NDP budget.

● (2205)

[English]

Mr. Jim Abbott: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

As I understand it, there will be no Conservative speakers on this bill tonight. As a consequence, the only party that is opposed to this motion, the only party that is opposed to Bill C-48, will be denied the right to speak and will be shut down. That is—

The Speaker: I am afraid the hon. member may have raised a point of debate, but it is the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster who has the floor.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to speak about this important document because the NDP's balanced budget document brings hope to Canadians.

Over the past 10 years the number of homeless has been growing in the cities across the country. We have seen the growing number of poor children. We know that the NDP's balanced budget document is going to start addressing these issues by allocating \$1.6 billion to housing to help poor families.

I am proud to stand for this document because we know that \$1.5 billion will be allocated to post-secondary education. We know that over the past number of years it has become a crisis in this country. We need to lower tuition fees. We need to provide affordable education to our youth and young adults. The NDP's balanced budget document does just that.

I am pleased to speak for this document, Bill C-48, because it also addresses the environmental crisis that we are living through. There is \$900 million that will go to start addressing the problems that we see across the country, the increasing smog, greenhouse gases and all of those issues. As a result of the NDP's balanced budget document \$900 million will now be allocated to that.

NAYS

Members

Abbott
Ambrose
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Benoit
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Casey
Day
Epp
Fitzpatrick
Forseth
Goldring
Gouk
Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells)
Hanger
Harris
Hearn
Hill
Jaffer
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Lukiwski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Menzies
Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
O'Connor
Pallister

Allison
Anders
Batters
Bezan
Carrie
Casson
Devolin
Finley
Fletcher
Gallant
Goodyear
Grewal (Newton—North Delta)
Guergis
Harper
Harrison
Hiebert
Hinton
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Lauzon
Lunn
MacKenzie
Merrifield
Mills
O'Brien
Oblrai
Poilievre

Government Orders

We live in an unstable world. There is more and more violence and more instability. We know, and I think it is the shame of members in all four corners of the House, that today 29,000 children will die of hunger and preventable diseases in the world. Tomorrow 29,000 more will die and another 29,000 the day after that.

The NDP's balanced budget document allocates half a billion dollars in foreign aid so that we are finally going to start working around the world to supply fresh water, food and medicine, and health care to people, to start to address that instability. We know full well it is not by providing more guns and weapons that we have more stability on this planet. It is by having safe water, food and housing, education and health for all the world's people.

I am also proud to speak to this document because for too long workers have been at the bottom of the list when a company goes bankrupt. In many cases we have seen people lose their life savings. The NDP's better balanced document finally provides \$100 million to protect those workers in the event of bankruptcy.

I am very proud to speak to this document because it addresses a whole series of issues that the NDP in this corner of the House have felt for years need to be addressed in this country. Tonight if we adopt this budget, we will be bringing hope to Canadians across the country from coast to coast to coast. In the main streets Canadians see the need for more funding for education. Canadians see the need for more housing to address poverty and the increasing number of poor children. Canadians see the need to address environmental issues. Canadians see the need to provide some stability in the world through governmental funds. The NDP's balanced budget document is addressing all of these critical issues.

[*Translation*]

It must be said too that this document, which gives Canadians hope, also meets the needs of Quebeckers. This is extremely important. Since the NDP moved passage of this budget, organizations across Quebec have been telling us that it is vital C-48 be passed. FRAPRU and other organizations fighting poverty are calling on Bloc members to pass this budget. Organizations for persons with a disability are telling the Bloc it has to pass this budget. Municipalities in Quebec and environmental organizations are saying yes to the NDP budget. It is extremely important.

Given that organizations and Quebeckers are calling on the four parties in this House to adopt the NDP budget, we hope it will have the support of the Quebec members.

● (2210)

We know there are extremely important matters addressed in this document. However, we also know that the NDP will continue to work on other tasks. We are very concerned about saving our public health care system in Canada.

[*English*]

We saw of course a few weeks ago an indictment, tragically, of Liberal health care policies. It is important to mention that the Supreme Court judgment is not a call for privatization. It is an indictment of the Liberals' policy on health care, I am sorry to say.

We need more action provided to public health care to support public health care. We need to start to address the effectiveness of the

system. Members in this corner of the House have called for a more effective system of health care. We have called for the saving money on things like evergreening, where we are simply providing money to pharmaceutical companies, the most profitable industrial sector in North America. We believe we can save money by having a more sane evergreening policy that would allow us to save money, divert it from the pharmaceutical companies to patient care and bring down waiting list times.

We would also continue to work on bringing in a home care policy, because we know that every dollar invested in home care saves \$2 in health care costs elsewhere in the system. We are going to continue to work for that in this corner of the House.

We are also going to continue to work to make sure that we build quality jobs for Canadians. Canadians have seen over the past decade continued diminishment in the quality of jobs that are offered. We saw that in the Statistics Canada study that came out in January. Most jobs in Canada now are temporary or part time in nature. Most jobs in Canada now do not have access to pensions. Most jobs in Canada now do not have basic benefits. Because of that, because we have seen that decline in the quality of jobs, we also know that the average Canadian worker is earning 60¢ an hour less than he or she was earning a decade ago. Because of all those facts, we in this corner of the House are going to continue fighting for a jobs policy that makes sense, that makes good quality jobs for Canadians and for Canadian families across the country. We will continue to work on that.

We are pleased to see tonight the opportunity to finally adopt the budget that the member for Toronto—Danforth authored, brought forward and built to improve the lives of Canadians.

There is hope in this country tonight. If we adopt this budget, we can move on to deal with other serious issues that Canadians want us to deal with. They want a better quality of life. They want better health care. They want better education. They want to see homelessness go down and housing go up. They want to see access to education go up and tuition fees go down. They want to see international aid go up and the poverty numbers and the shocking numbers of children who die every day on this planet go down. They want to see all those things. From tonight onward we will be working on these other issues.

We are hoping that tonight this House will adopt the NDP's better balanced budget at third reading and give hope to Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

● (2215)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to implore members to think about this important bill as we are getting very close to the vote. I implore them to think about public transit, clean air, foreign aid for poor children overseas, housing for families that cannot afford it, and post-secondary education for our youth.

Government Orders

I would like to implore all the members across the way, the Bloc and the Conservatives, to think individually about their constituents and also about what they would like to have on their record, on their principles. I implore them to vote for it and then hopefully they can sleep well.

Before I ask the question of the member, I would like to make sure that people remember how long this plan has been in place. When the Prime Minister first became leader of the party he put in his vision for the country, his vision of foreign policy, Canada's place in the world, rebuilding Canada's social foundations, lifelong learning and a new deal for cities. He has carried this on with integrity through the throne speech and into the various budgets. Then, in this agreement with the NDP, Bill C-48, we have added another 1% to Bill C-43 to extend the funding for those elements.

Here is what I would like to ask the hon. member about. If we lose this vote, which will of course cause us to go to an election, how does he think the Bloc and the Conservative candidates would feel going door to door telling people that they caused an election by voting against clean air, foreign aid for children overseas, housing for people who cannot afford it and lower tuition fees for our children going to universities?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, we will not really know. I do not think the Conservative members even know what the public says. As we know, a few weeks ago the leader of the Conservatives would not let the members of his party talk about what the public reaction was in their ridings to a possible election. It is just shameful that this public input, that responsibility of members of Parliament to do the door to door, to do the phone calls, to speak with individuals in their ridings, was cut off from the kind of caucus debate that should have taken place.

I do not know what the reaction of Conservative constituents will be, but we can certainly see in the polls that the Conservatives have been going down and down. They are now in third place in Ontario. They are now in third place in Nova Scotia. In many other parts of the country, their support is crumbling.

I would certainly hope that members of the Conservative Party would be reflecting on the message that their constituents are sending them through those polls, which is that they do not want to see an election right now. What they want to see is the NDP's better balanced budget.

[*Translation*]

I should add too that it is extremely clear to me that investing in housing and education is important to Quebeckers. Individuals and organizations from throughout Quebec have said this over and over in e-mails, letters and telephone calls to us. Quebeckers have also made it clear that, ultimately, they want investments in key sectors. So, I hope that the members of the Bloc Québécois will support the NDP's balanced budget.

[*English*]

Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member stands up and says things like the Conservatives do not support homes for the homeless, which is completely false and misleading to the House. What the Conservative Party has had a concern with is the continual promises made and promises broken.

I would like to ask the hon. member two questions, please. First, the last time the Liberal government gave out billions of dollars for homes for the homeless and less fortunate, it did not amount to that many beds. I would like to ask the hon. member, with \$1.6 billion, exactly how many beds are going to be produced? I suggest that it is not a good bang for the taxpayers' bucks.

Second, calculated invocation of closure tonight shut down the voices of my riding. My riding is not allowed to speak tonight in this supposedly democratic forum. How does he feel about that? That is what I would like to ask the hon. member.

• (2220)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just gave his voice to the House of Commons. I think there is a bit of a contradiction there.

I think it is important to note the past irresponsibility of the Conservatives and the fiscal record we saw under Mulroney. We saw the social deficit under the Liberals and that is what the NDP is trying to correct, but under Mulroney we saw record financial deficits at the federal level.

Last year we saw the most expensive political platform in Canadian history at \$86 billion. That was before the Conservatives threw in the aircraft carrier, the HMS *Mulroney*. They threw that in with no idea of how to pay for it. There were all those assorted promises.

We definitely have a different approach than the Conservatives. We believe in a balanced budget and we believe in addressing the social deficit. That is what we are doing tonight with Bill C-48.

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to stand and speak on this improved budget bill this evening and to share a few thoughts about it.

First, I want to thank all of my caucus colleagues for the work they have put forward over the last number of months since the election in order to be able to advance the propositions that we have put forward in Bill C-48. I particularly want to single out our House leader, our finance critic, our whip and our deputy leader, who have been intimately involved in this entire project.

There is something more that needs to be said in terms of thanks. Actually, the propositions in Bill C-48 do not really come from any particular individual or even a political party, I would say. They have emerged from Canadians.

Let us take a look, for example, at education. The student organizations across the country, the professors and teachers across the country, those involved in trying to help us understand that education and training are vital for the 21st century economy but who have by and large not been heard for the last number of years across this country, they need to be thanked, because this budget is in response to what they have been calling for.

Those in the labour movement who have been emphasizing the importance of training so the training is available for Canadian workers to take on the jobs of the 21st century, they need to be thanked, because that is are why we are dealing with this budget today.

Government Orders

When we look at the expenditure on housing, I certainly think back to Eugene Upper, who lost his life one block from my house when he froze to death. It was a statement of shame that Canada was not providing housing to its citizens. Since that time, groups across the country have formed and have urged all of us in all parties to take action and to get back to building affordable housing again.

It was a great tragedy when the best affordable housing program in the world, as recognized by the United Nations, was cancelled in the mid-1990s and we saw homelessness grow. Now we are seeing a turnaround. We are seeing an investment that brings federal dollars to the construction of affordable housing.

[*Translation*]

We must thank organizations such as FRAPRU that have long demanded investments in social housing. We now have funding that in no way requires matching funds. So this is important.

[*English*]

Organizations like the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, all of these organizations, have pressed us to take this kind of action.

We could say the same thing about the gas tax. I recall meeting with the Prime Minister years ago when he was the finance minister and debates were under way about this going way back. Through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, mayors, heads of transit commissions and environmental groups were calling for us to invest in the solutions that would help us address the rising pollution that is killing our citizens. In this budget we finally have that investment coming forward.

All those people and groups need to be thanked, because in the end our action is in response to what the citizens are calling on us to do. I think this budget really reflects that. My thanks go out to all those organizations.

There is the initiative to start retrofitting low income housing so that we can create jobs, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants and provide more affordable housing, all at the same time. Organizations like Green Communities and the Better Buildings Partnership, along with the building trades, have all been pushing us in this direction.

This is only a start. There is so much more that we can do and need to do if we are to achieve our Kyoto commitment, but there is no question that this bill, if it passes here tonight, as I hope it will, will take us a further step down that road.

Let me turn finally to the whole question of foreign aid, which is very much in our minds at the present time. We are facing a G-8 meeting. We are facing an unprecedented mobilization around the world in the Make Poverty History campaign. I think all of us are looking for Canada to play a leadership role, and in the context of the balanced budget framework, this bill adds some additional funds.

In the end it will not be enough to have Canada meet its commitment to the world, which Prime Minister Trudeau signed and which Prime Minister Pearson defined. It is a commitment that Canadians have made. We are in the process now of finding reasons why we, one of the most affluent countries in the world, will

somehow try to explain to the world that we will not meet our commitment to the most needy.

I think there is where we are moving away from Canadians' views. I think Canadians want us to meet that goal. Do they know it will be painful? Do they know it will mean something from their pockets at the end of the day? We are talking about their tax dollars here, dollars they worked hard to earn, and they want us to use them wisely.

I can tell members that we saw Canadians respond to the tsunami with unprecedented generosity. They wanted us here to join with them in that effort. They want to be contributors to the ending of poverty, globally and here in Canada.

Once again Canadians are pushing us. I think the half a billion dollars in Bill C-48 is a response to that fundamental moral impetus that comes from Canadians and the privilege they feel they have been given and want to give back. They understand that these things represent opportunities for us to aid and assist around the world.

This is a budget that was crafted carefully. This proposal suggested that a tax cut to the large corporations, which was never discussed in the election but emerged in the first version of the budget, bringing on support from the Conservatives, was something we could not afford if we were to make the investments we needed to make, responding to what Canadians have called upon us to do. We proposed to the Prime Minister a carefully calibrated replacement of that tax cut to the largest corporations with, instead, a group of investments, also including a wage protection package for workers who find themselves in a bankruptcy situation through no fault of their own.

Those elements were proposed. I do thank the Prime Minister for having taken the time to discuss with me the possibility of such an amendment to the budget and for having decided to move forward. I think that kind of working together on a project such as this represents what Canadians would like to see the House of Commons do from time to time, maybe all the time, although that might be too much to ask, but certainly more than we were seeing.

● (2225)

If we remember the context here, when the first version of the budget emerged, it was supported by the Conservatives, or at least not opposed. It was welcomed because of the large corporate tax cut that was awarded. Then the government began to become involved in political games back and forth with the removal of opposition days and challenging the democratic procedures here. That provoked a reaction.

We came forward with a strategy to help this Parliament to continue to work toward some positive objectives before we deal with the election that will be inevitably coming based on the findings of the Gomery commission and all of the other issues that are emerging.

Government Orders

We in the New Democratic Party have attempted to do our job here, thinking about what people wanted us to do when they voted for us across the country. They wanted us to produce some results, initiatives that responded to their needs, and that would actually have an impact on the lives of their families. Canadians want us to use their tax dollars that they work hard for to create a better society instead of for those who had already had so much.

It is with some element of humility that we are here. We are not the largest group in the House quite clearly, but we looked for the way in which we could have the most positive impact. I am very pleased that we have been able to bring it to this point and that there will be funds flowing to public transit, education and training to deal with the debts and costs of students, et cetera, and to build some affordable housing.

If there is some affordable housing built, and I have no doubt there will be as a result of Bill C-48, the New Democrats will sleep well at night knowing that we came here to do a job, not on behalf of ourselves but on behalf of Canadians by using their funds to produce the consequences, the results, and the kind of society that Canadians believe in, dream of, work for, and count on us to deliver.

• (2230)

[*Translation*]

In conclusion, I want to say that this is an important budget bill, which allocates funding in accordance with people's needs. We hope it will be adopted this evening.

[*English*]

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been a member of Parliament for 12 years and I have worked very hard to represent my constituents in those 12 years. Today is the saddest day that I have ever experienced in the House of Commons. One hour of debate will be allowed for a bill worth \$4.5 billion of my children's money and other people's children's hard earned money.

That is important, but what is most important about Bill C-48 and the third reading vote that we are about to take is that if the bill is not defeated then Bill C-38, the same sex bill, will certainly pass in this House.

We have had 30 members of the Liberal Party who have said they would do everything they could to defeat Bill C-38, the marriage bill. They are the member for Scarborough—Guildwood, the member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, the member for Mississauga South, the member for Huron—Bruce, and the member for Pickering—Scarborough East. They are 30 in total—

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We have been debating Bill C-48 for a week and that is what we are on now. We are not on Bill C-38.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): I thank the hon. member for reminding us of that, but the hon. member is coming around to discussing exactly that.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member had connected it to Bill C-48 already. Liberals do not want to hear about this, but they are going to hear about this.

These 30 Liberal MPs will not, because they do not have the courage, vote against Bill C-48 and defeat the government, so we can go to an election and through an election decide the outcome of the marriage bill. Because they do not have the courage, Bill C-38 will certainly pass. Many members of the government will not even have a free vote on the issue. There are 30 MPs who will not take a stand for their constituents. They will be responsible for same sex marriage coming into place in this country in spite of them saying exactly the opposite.

Then we have the whole two front rows in the government who do not have a free vote. They are not allowed to represent their constituents. For these reasons, Bill C-38 will pass. It is on their heads.

Hon. Jack Layton: Mr. Speaker, either the hon. member agrees with everything I had to say, as he really had no question, or he is choosing to speak on another matter that is not before us.

When it comes to the whole issue of people's tax dollars, it was interesting to note that the Conservative Party chose, without the debate having even begun, to support a very large tax cut to the corporate sector.

We had a view regarding these hard earned tax dollars. People spend a certain amount of each hour of their working day to produce taxes. Rather than give them away to the largest corporations that have done very well in the last little while, as profits are at an all-time high as a percentage of our economic activity and we are below the taxation levels in the United States, we felt, to build for the 21st century economy and to respond to people's needs right in their communities, that it made more sense to invest those hard earned dollars in the priorities of education, housing, the environment, foreign aid and protection in case of bankruptcy.

• (2235)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the way that the bill is constructed, there is a portion for an education reduction in tuition. In Ontario, for example, we have a clawback. The result of this clawback is that if a high need, low income student were in a situation and this discount were to come into play, then because of the tax credits not being realized, this student would end up with less money than if there had not been this budget at all. Conversely, an affluent student would end up further ahead.

How does the NDP justify this? We, the Conservative Party of Canada, the champions of the poor, want to know how the NDP can justify this?

Hon. Jack Layton: Mr. Speaker, the whole concept of clawing back was developed by the Conservative Government of Ontario. Actually, I have never heard the phrase "champions of the poor" associated with the Conservative Party. Certainly not in recent decades. It is a bit of a puzzle, given that all of the evidence suggests that the policies advocated by the Conservative Party and implemented by the Conservative Party have increased poverty and made life easier for those who already have a great deal. The question, frankly, is a bit of a puzzle and therefore, I am going to stick with my support for Bill C-48 which is where most Canadians are.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak this evening to Bill C-48, which proposes further investments from unplanned surplus funds.

Not so long ago, less than a year ago, the citizens of Canada asked us to work together here in Parliament. They asked us to make sure that Parliament worked and to make sure that we did a good job.

I want to mention that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Etobicoke North in a few minutes.

As I was saying, we have been working the way the public asked us to. They told us to work together, in partnership, and that is precisely what we have done. We have worked on making sure that the people of this country can receive excellent services. We have also worked on ensuring that their quality of life can improve.

Canada's social foundations are key to our Canadian identity. The Government of Canada has invested heavily in these social priorities in past budgets.

This bill is a natural extension of those initiatives. Nonetheless, before addressing the measures in this bill, I want to briefly explain how the government is able to make these important investments today.

As you know, Canada reported its eighth consecutive surplus in 2004-05, the first time this ever happened since Confederation. I think it is very important to point that out. The members opposite often forget that they put us into a deficit position lasting many years and that it was our government that reinstated surpluses for the Government of Canada. Who did we do that for? The people of Canada.

Canada was the only country in the G7 to show a surplus, considering all administrations, during this fiscal year. The net improvement in the Government of Canada's financial situation allowed the government to invest heavily in the priorities of Canadians.

However, our financial outlook was not always so encouraging.

When we came to power in 1993, as I just mentioned, we had to deal with an annual deficit of over \$40 billion. I am not talking about a \$40 billion debt. I mean that, in one fiscal year, the then government was in the hole to the tune of \$40 billion. This is unacceptable. This mortgaged not only my generation's future but also the future of generations to come, including the generation to which my new daughter belongs and that of millions of other Canadians. We must do whatever it takes to ensure we never generate another deficit. In addition to this, the unemployment rate was high, economic growth was weak and consumer and business confidence was low.

We realized that we needed to act in order to protect the future of generations to follow. And we acted. The government adopted a number of measures reducing spending and restoring fiscal order. As a result, we eliminated the deficit in 1997-98.

Obviously, as athletes know, success takes work. We worked hard. Canadians worked hard. They made sacrifices to help the

government improve its fiscal situation. Everyone's hard work paid off big time.

Canada's financial recovery is quite simply remarkable, and the countries that point to us as an example of what to do have clearly noted how we achieved this.

Thanks to these sacrifices by Canadians, consumer and business confidence has been restored, economic growth has picked up and, better still, so has job creation in this vast and beautiful country of ours.

With its finances in order, the government gave more money to individuals and families by introducing the biggest federal tax cuts in Canadian history. It also made major investments in the priorities identified by Canadians, such as health care. As we know, our government has invested \$41 billion in order to improve health care for Canadians. Also, we have done work in education, infrastructure, research and innovation, national security and the environment.

The bill we are introducing and ultimately want adopted today, builds on these investments in a number of key areas that are priorities for Canadians. The government shares these priorities.

● (2240)

More specifically, Bill C-48 creates a framework for new investment in important sectors, such as social housing, post-secondary education, the environment and foreign aid.

I can assure you, however, that these measures will not eliminate the old budget deficit rut.

When the government makes decisions, they must be solid and fair. The government must have a financial framework to prevent a return to a deficit, as has been the case for many years in this country.

We also have to pay down the debt, because each dollar of debt we have costs us in interest. Each dollar of interest we pay costs the public in terms of reduced services.

The government has promised to invest \$4.6 billion in these areas. These investments will come from the surplus in excess of \$2 billion in 2005-06 and 2006-07. According to the estimates, we will also have the means to continue, as I mentioned earlier, repaying our national debt to make sure we can deliver the best possible services to future generations.

I would now like to summarize the investments I mentioned previously that we are proposing for the Canada of tomorrow.

First, for affordable housing, which is social housing, there is \$1.6 billion of new money.

Government Orders

I have a very hard time imagining the people on the other side of the House coming to my riding, when we have made very important announcements on affordable housing, and telling the people of Madawaska—Restigouche and the rest of Canada, that it is not important for families to have housing. It is very hard to imagine that there are members in this place, and, worse yet, parties, that think people do not deserve affordable housing.

We, as a responsible government, are working to make sure that as many Canadians as possible get services and housing in keeping with their ability to better manage their personal finances.

Second, as mentioned earlier, the government recognizes that Canadian communities are the social and economic foundation of this country. Be they vast metropolitan areas, cities or hamlets, the communities Canadians choose as their home have a considerable effect on their quality of life and the opportunities for socio-economic success available to them.

The reality, however, is that at the heart and in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods of many cities, poverty creates a demand for affordable housing.

In recent years the government has made a number of investments totalling \$2 billion in the area of affordable housing and homelessness. These programs are still being rolled out and in most cases the funding will continue to ramp up over the next year.

We have done the following. In 1999 the government launched a three year national homelessness initiative. A key element of that was the supporting communities partnership initiative, which provided \$305 million for local community groups to offer supportive services and facilities for the homeless. Budget 2003 provided a further three year extension to the SCPI initiative at \$135 million per year.

Furthermore, budget 2001 announced \$680 million over five years for the affordable housing initiative to help stimulate the creation of more affordable housing. Bilateral cost sharing agreements were subsequently signed with all 13 provincial and territorial governments.

I do not have very much time left, so I will now say a few words about post-secondary education.

I graduated from university in 1997. I continue to pursue my studies to ensure the best possible future for myself in terms of training.

To help young people and the not so young in our society, we implement systems, better places to study, facilities to allow young people—not the wealthiest—to get the help they need the most.

• (2245)

Bill C-48 will provide \$1.5 billion more for post-secondary education.

In closing, I call on all the members of this House to vote in favour of Bill C-48, which is in the best interest of our constituents and will improve their quality of life.

[English]

Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is an opportune time to do a quick review on what got us to this very dismal state of affairs tonight, a true case of foreign affairs I might add.

What is taking place tonight is actually foreign to most Canadians. What the Liberals and the NDP are counting on is that people will not understand the travesty that is taking place before our eyes tonight. They know there is no session tomorrow. There may be one on Monday, although we will wait and see, and then it will be summertime. The chances are that the government will be able to gloss this over.

We need to remember that the government brought forward a budget called Bill C-43. At the time, we looked at it and found that a host of issues, for which we had advocated, were actually in that budget, such as the gas tax that goes back to municipalities. For that reason we gave Bill C-43, which was the main budget bill, tacit approval. We felt that was the responsible thing to do.

At the same time, however, the government was dropping like a stone in the polls. The Liberals had gone into the last election with great predictions that they would sweep the election and come up with something like over 200 seats. However they barely survived because of the good job done by the leader of this party and all of the candidates across the country.

As the Liberals watched themselves drop like a stone in the polls, the Gomery inquiry every day backing up what the Auditor General had said, that this was the worst and most corrupt government in the history of Canada, they were faced with a real difficulty and that was surviving a confidence vote here in the House.

What did the Liberals do? In the middle of some night they crept down the House and told the NDP members at the end that the bedroom door was open if they wanted to crawl and then asked them what would be their price. The price was \$4.6 billion to buy 19 votes.

The \$350 million scandal in Quebec—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (2250)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): Order, please. I would like to listen to the entire question.

Mr. Stockwell Day: The Liberals realized that a confidence vote at that point in time was imminent and that they would not in fact survive. They spent \$4.6 billion of taxpayer money without asking the taxpayers to buy 19 votes to bring them to this present state of affairs.

We have less than one hour to talk about \$4.6 billion of unplanned spending, the very type of spending in the Trudeau years that plunged the country into deficit depth, the likes of which we had never seen, which the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard managed to deflect by reducing the amount of the Canada health and social transfer by 34% overnight in 1994 and starved provinces in the health and education transfers.

Government Orders

A person 250 years ago, who worked on the very foundations of building democracy and the principles of democracy, and those members need to remember this, made the prediction that one day democracy could collapse under the weight of its constituent demands.

That is what we risk, not the total collapse of democracy. We have seen a democratic deficit. Democracy will survive in Canada because no regime lasts forever. The people of Canada will remember this. They will not be forgetful. They will be reminded of how this bill was rammed through and how the marriage bill was rammed through. They will be reminded. Democracy will reign in this country. This corrupt regime will be thrown out because the people will remember.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Mr. Speaker, let us talk democracy. On June 28, 2004, the people of Canada voted for a minority government, for a Parliament that would operate in a minority context. That is exactly the democracy that the people of Canada asked for, not just of the present Liberal government, but of all of the members. They have asked us to work so as to make sure the country advanced. Democracy has spoken. That same democracy is what I believe we should bear in mind in continuing to work together.

They say the government is corrupt. So why, I wonder, have the hon. member and the members of his party voted in favour of Bill C-43? If the government was so corrupt, why was Bill C-43 so great?

If we look at the environment, we are investing \$300 million in the green municipal fund, which ties in with the gas tax rebate this party accepts. Yet it does not accept improvements for our municipalities. That is hard to grasp.

[*English*]

Hon. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to enter the third reading debate on Bill C-48. I congratulate my colleague from Madawaska—Restigouche for making some very salient points. He took many of the points that I was going to make and he made them very strongly. I will try to recover from that and comment on some features of this budget. I think I should start by laying out some of the things that we do know, some of the background to this budget.

First, we know that Canadians do not want an election right now. Second, we know they do not want the Conservative Party in power. Third, we know the Conservative Party members at one point in time were supporting the federal budget, Bill C-43 but then suddenly they saw the polls and heard the daily testimony at the Gomery inquiry and tried to bring that to the floor of the House of Commons. They thought that maybe they should not support the budget bill after all because it might be a great opportunity to try and force an election.

However, knowing that Canadians did not want an election, the government went to the NDP to see if we could form some consensus around building a better budget and how we could get this Parliament to work. Canadians want this Parliament to work notwithstanding the antics of Conservative members opposite.

What was accomplished? What was accomplished was very important. With the support of the NDP and against the coalition of the Conservative Party and the separatists, we were able to pass Bill C-43 and now we are now debating third reading of the second prong of that legislation, Bill C-48.

Members opposite talk about the government moving forward and how that will eat into all the surpluses. They seem to forget that the government has demonstrated that it can generate surpluses each and every year. This will be our eighth consecutive surplus.

The fact that parties opposite have failed to recognize is that we have turned the economics of this country upside down. We have made the sound financial circumstances that allow us to build on some of the initiatives that we have already started in terms of the environment, affordable housing, foreign aid, training and post-secondary education.

Those were not initiatives that we pulled out of the air, as members opposite would have Canadians believe. Bill C-48 builds on the very initiatives of the government. I am very proud that we are able to do that. We are able to do that because our economy is strong and the government's fiscal capacity is intact after many years of under-performance and of deficits and a deplorable fiscal situation that the Conservative Party created after its eight years in power.

If I could indulge the House, it might be useful to talk about some of the backdrop to this budget. For example, I talked about this being the eighth consecutive budgetary surplus. Within the OECD countries, Canada is considered an economic miracle. As a country, we have consistently performed at about 3% gross. We have unemployment around 6.8%, which is the lowest level in about four or five years. Of course we can do better and we will do better, but 6.8% is pretty sound stuff.

We have low interest rates because of a sound monetary policy of the Bank of Canada that is creating the environment for low interest rates. What does that mean? It means that average Canadians can buy a home and take on a mortgage. We all see that, if we are honest, in our own ridings. People are getting out of rental units and going out and buying a home for the first time. That is what the Canadian dream is all about, and that is possible because the government took the action that was necessary to turn this nation's finances around.

● (2255)

What else has the government done? I will lay out another fact. Because of the budgetary surpluses, we have been able to pay down in excess of \$55 billion against the national debt. Is that an end in itself? Of course not. What does that mean? It means that each and every year into the future, not just today, we are saving over \$3 billion a year in money that has been used to service our debt. We are going to do even better than that. Our government has set a debt to GDP target of 25%. In fact we are now at around 40%. We came from a position of roughly 75%.

That is what this government has done. While Canadians have set the economic climate, we have set the policies in motion to create the environment for sound economic growth, sound fiscal and monetary policy.

The debt to GDP is the amount of debt in relation to the size of our economy and it is a very relevant figure. In a nutshell, the country has demonstrated strong, sound fiscal and economic performance. The government is committed to moving in that direction. That is why we are able to deal with Bill C-48. It was not hatched in a hotel room on a napkin. It is based on building upon initiatives to which the government is committed.

Let me start with just one of those, affordable housing. The government has committed itself to spending money to help people with their housing needs.

In my riding of Etobicoke North, I visit people in high-rise apartments. They tell me that they spend 30% to 40%, sometimes 50%, of their income on rent for an apartment in a building that is not properly maintained. We have to do something and we are doing something. We also are doing something about the homeless. That is all part of the continuing program already in place and we are building upon that with Bill C-48.

We have many projects as a result of the Canada-Ontario affordable housing agreement in my province and city. We have a number of projects underway that will help with affordable housing for seniors and for people with low and modest incomes.

Then we have the environment. This is not a new concept for this government. Our government has consistently built a program to deal with our environmental performance. Bill C-48, does exactly that. It puts about \$900 million to help with public transit and clean air.

I represent the city of Toronto. We have urban sprawl. We need to get higher living densities around public transit. We need to clean our air, reduce the smog and deal with the greenhouse gases.

All we have to do is pick up the newspaper every day and read about the impact of climate change. It is hurting our farmers and a number of people. It is hurting people in the north. We have to deal with that. We cannot put our head in the sand any longer. We have to deal with greenhouse gases.

The budget puts \$1.5 billion into training programs and post-secondary education. However, this is not a new concept for the government. We have recognized for a long time that this is a new economy, it is a high tech economy. We have to build the skill sets and knowledge for the people of Canada to participate in our economy.

Finally, this budget puts another \$500 million into foreign aid to help those who need our help, particularly in places like Africa. We will continue to do that.

We are committed to help countries around the world, those that are committed to good governance. We will help them show the world that they offer good governance. If they do that, Canada will be there to support them, to help them build their states and nations.

● (2300)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): It being 23:04 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty, to interrupt the

Government Orders

proceedings and to put forthwith every question required to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

● (2305)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): The question is on the subamendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the subamendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): All those in favour of the subamendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx): Call in the members.

● (2335)

[Translation]

(The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 144)

YEAS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Batters	Benoit
Bezan	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Carrie
Casey	Casson
Chong	Day
Devolin	Doyle
Duncan	Epp
Finley	Fitzpatrick
Fletcher	Forseth
Gallant	Goldring
Goodyear	Gouk
Grewal (Newton—North Delta)	Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells)
Guergis	Hanger
Harper	Harris
Harrison	Hearn
Hiebert	Hill
Hinton	Jaffer
Jean	Johnston
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kilgour	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lauson
Lukivski	Lunn
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Mark
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Mills
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	O'Brien
O'Connor	Obhrai
Pallister	Penson

Government Orders

Poilievre
Preston
Reid
Richardson
Scheer
Schmidt (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul)
Sorenson
Strahl
Tilson
Trost
Van Loan
Warawa
Yelich — 93

Prentice
Rajotte
Reynolds
Ritz
Schellenberger
Skelton
Solberg
Stinson
Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews
Tweed
Vellacott
Watson

Masse
McCallum
McGuinity
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McTeague
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Mitchell
Myers
Owen
Paquette
Parrish
Perron
Pettigrew
Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon
Powers
Ratansi
Regan
Rodriguez
Roy
Saada
Savage
Scarpaleggia
Sgro
Silva
Simard (Saint Boniface)
Smith (Pontiac)
St. Amand
Steckle
Stronach
Telegdi
Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)
Thibault (West Nova)
Tonks
Ur
Valley
Volpe
Wasylcyia-Leis
Wrzesnewskyj

Matthews
McDonough
McGuire
McLellan
Ménard (Hochelaga)
Minna
Murphy
Neville
Pacetti
Paradis
Patry
Peterson
Phinney
Pickard (Chatham-Kent—Essex)
Poirier-Rivard
Proulx
Redman
Robillard
Rota
Russell
Sauvageau
Savoy
Scott
Siksay
Simard (Beauport—Limoilou)
Simms
St-Hilaire
St. Denis
Stoffer
Szabo
Temelkovski
Torsney
Valeri
Vincent
Wappel
Wilfert
Zed- — 206

NAYS

Members

Adams
Anderson (Victoria)
Angus
Augustine
Bagnell
Bakopanos
Beaumier
Bell
Bennett
Bevilacqua
Blaikie
Blondin-Andrew
Boivin
Bonsant
Bouchard
Boulianne
Bradshaw
Broadbent
Brunelle
Byrne
Cardin
Carrier
Catterall
Chan
Clavet
Coderre
Comuzzi
Cotler
Crowder
Cullen (Etobicoke North)
D'Amours
Demers
Desjarlais
DeVillers
Dion
Drouin
Duceppe
Efford
Eyking
Folco
Frulla
Gagnon (Québec)
Gagnon (Jonquière—Alma)
Gaudet
Godbout
Godin
Graham
Guay
Holland
Ianno
Julian
Karetak-Lindell
Khan
Laframboise
Lapierre (Outremont)
Lastewka
Layton
Lee
Lessard
Longfield
MacAulay
Malhi
Marceau
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)

Alcock
André
Asselin
Bachand
Bains
Barnes
Bélangier
Bellavance
Bergeron
Bigras
Blais
Boire
Bonin
Boshcoff
Boudria
Bourgeois
Brisson
Brown (Oakville)
Bulte
Cannis
Carr
Carroll
Chamberlain
Christopherson
Cleary
Comartin
Côté
Crête
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)
Cuzner
Davies
Deschamps
Desrochers
Dhalla
Dosanjh
Dryden
Easter
Emerson
Faille
Fontana
Fry
Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain)
Galloway
Gauthier
Godfrey
Goodale
Guarnieri
Guimond
Hubbard
Jennings
Kadis
Karygiannis
Kotto
Lalonde
Lapierre (Lévis—Bellechasse)
Lavallée
LeBlanc
Lemay
Lévesque
Loubier
Macklin
Maloney
Marleau
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)

Nil

PAIRED

The Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.
[*English*]

The next question is on the amendment.

Hon. Karen Redman: Mr. Speaker, conversations have taken place among all the parties and I believe you would find unanimous consent to apply the results of the vote just taken to the question now before the House.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this manner?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 145*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Allison
Anders
Batters
Bezan
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Casey
Chong
Devolin
Duncan
Finley
Fletcher
Gallant
Goodyear

Ablonezy
Ambrose
Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
Benoit
Breitkreuz
Carrie
Casson
Day
Doyle
Epp
Fitzpatrick
Forsyth
Goldring
Gouk

Government Orders

Grewal (Newton—North Delta)	Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells)	Godin	Goodale
Guergis	Hanger	Graham	Guarnieri
Harper	Harris	Guay	Guimond
Harrison	Hearn	Holland	Hubbard
Hiebert	Hill	Ianno	Jennings
Hinton	Jaffier	Julian	Kadis
Jean	Johnston	Karetak-Lindell	Karygiannis
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Khan	Kotto
Kilgour	Komarnicki	Laframboise	Lalonde
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lauzon	Lapierre (Outremont)	Lapierre (Lévis—Bellechasse)
Lukiwski	Lunn	Lastewka	Lavallée
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)	Layton	LeBlanc
MacKenzie	Mark	Lee	Lemay
Menzies	Merrifield	Lessard	Lévesque
Miller	Mills	Longfield	Loubier
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)		MacAulay	Macklin
Moore (Fundy Royal)		Malhi	Maloney
Nicholson	O'Brien	Marceau	Marleau
O'Connor	Obhrai	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Pallister	Penson	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Poillievre	Prentice	Masse	Mathews
Preston	Rajotte	McCallum	McDonough
Reid	Reynolds	McGuinty	McGuire
Richardson	Ritz	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLellan
Scheer	Schellenberger	McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Schmidt (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Skelton	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Minna
Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul)	Solberg	Mitchell	Murphy
Sorenson	Solberg	Myers	Neville
Strahl	Stinson	Owen	Pacetti
Tilson	Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)	Paquette	Paradis
Trost	Toews	Parrish	Patry
Van Loan	Tweed	Perron	Peterson
Warawa	Vellacott	Pettigrew	Phinney
Yelich — 93	Watson	Picard (Drummond)	Pickard (Chatham-Kent—Essex)

NAYS

Members

Adams	Alcock	Regan	Robillard
Anderson (Victoria)	André	Rodriguez	Rota
Angus	Asselin	Roy	Russell
Augustine	Bachand	Saada	Sauvageau
Bagnell	Bains	Savage	Savoy
Bakopanos	Barnes	Scarpaleggia	Scott
Beaumier	Bélangier	Sgro	Siksay
Bell	Bellavance	Silva	Simard (Beauport—Limoilou)
Bennett	Bergeron	Simard (Saint Boniface)	Simms
Bevilacqua	Bigras	Smith (Pontiac)	St-Hilaire
Blaikie	Blais	St. Amand	St. Denis
Blondin-Andrew	Boire	Steckle	Stoffer
Boivin	Bonin	Stronach	Szabo
Bonsant	Boshcoff	Telegdi	Temelkovski
Bouchard	Boudria	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	
Boulianne	Bourgeois	Thibault (West Nova)	
Bradshaw	Brisson	Tonks	Torsney
Broadbent	Brown (Oakville)	Ur	Valeri
Brunelle	Bulte	Valley	Vincent
Byrne	Cannis	Volpe	Wappel
Cardin	Carr	Wasylycia-Leis	Wilfert
Carrier	Carroll	Wrzesnewskyj	Zed — 206
Catterall	Chamberlain		
Chan	Christopherson		
Clavet	Cleary		
Coderre	Comartin		
Comuzzi	Côté		
Cotler	Crête		
Crowder	Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)		
Cullen (Etobicoke North)	Cuzner		
D'Amours	Davies		
Demers	Deschamps		
Desjarlais	Desrochers		
DeVillers	Dhalla		
Dion	Dosanjh		
Drouin	Dryden		
Duceppe	Easter		
Efford	Emerson		
Eyking	Faille		
Folco	Fontana		
Frulla	Fry		
Gagnon (Québec)	Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain)		
Gagnon (Jonquière—Alma)	Galloway		
Gaudet	Gauthier		
Godbout	Godfrey		

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

The next question is on the main motion. 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.

Government Orders

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

● (2350)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 146*)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Alcock
Anderson (Victoria)	Angus
Augustine	Bagnell
Bains	Bakopanos
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélangier	Bell
Bennett	Bevilacqua
Blaikie	Blondin-Andrew
Boivin	Bonin
Boshcoff	Boudria
Bradshaw	Brison
Broadbent	Brown (Oakville)
Bulte	Byrne
Cannis	Carr
Carroll	Catterall
Chamberlain	Chan
Christopherson	Coderre
Comartin	Comuzzi
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley)	Cullen (Etobicoke North)
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davies	Desjarlais
DeVillers	Dhalla
Dion	Dosanjh
Drouin	Dryden
Easter	Efford
Emerson	Eyking
Folco	Fontana
Frulla	Fry
Galloway	Godbout
Godfrey	Godin
Goodale	Graham
Guarnieri	Holland
Hubbard	Ianno
Jennings	Julian
Kadis	Karetak-Lindell
Karygiannis	Khan
Lapierre (Outremont)	Lastewka
Layton	LeBlanc
Lee	Longfield
MacAulay	Macklin
Malhi	Maloney
Marleau	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Matthews	McCallum
McDonough	McGuinty
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McLellan	McTeague
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Myers
Neville	Owen
Pacetti	Paradis
Parrish	Patry
Peterson	Pettigrew
Phinney	Pickard (Chatham-Kent—Essex)
Powers	Proulx
Ratansi	Redman
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rota
Russell	Saada
Savage	Savoy
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sgro	Siksay
Silva	Simard (Saint Boniface)
Simms	Smith (Pontiac)

St. Amand
Steckle
Stronach
Telegdi
Thibault (West Nova)
Torsney
Valeri
Volpe
Wasylycia-Leis
Wrzesnewskij

St. Denis
Stoffer
Szabo
Temelkovski
Tonks
Ur
Valley
Wappel
Wilfert
Zed— 152

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands)
André	Asselin
Bachand	Batters
Bellavance	Benoit
Bergeron	Bezan
Bigras	Blais
Boire	Bonsant
Bouchard	Boulianne
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brunelle
Cardin	Carrie
Carrier	Casey
Casson	Chong
Clavet	Cleary
Côté	Crête
Day	Demers
Deschamps	Desrochers
Devolin	Doyle
Duceppe	Duncan
Epp	Faile
Finley	Fitzpatrick
Fletcher	Forseth
Gagnon (Québec)	Gagnon (Saint-Maurice—Champlain)
Gagnon (Jonquière—Alma)	Gallant
Gaudet	Gauthier
Goldring	Goodyear
Gouk	Grewal (Newton—North Delta)
Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells)	Guay
Guergis	Guimond
Hanger	Harper
Harris	Harrison
Hearn	Hiebert
Hill	Hinton
Jaffer	Jean
Johnston	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kilgour
Komarnicki	Kotto
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lapierre (Lévis—Bellechasse)
Lauzon	Lavallée
Lemay	Lessard
Lévesque	Loubier
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Marceau
Mark	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Mills	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
O'Brien	O'Connor
Obhrai	Pallister
Paquette	Penson
Perron	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Poivievre
Poirier-Rivard	Prentice
Preston	Rajotte
Reid	Reynolds
Richardson	Ritz
Roy	Sauvageau
Scheer	Schellenberger
Schmidt (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Simard (Beauport—Limoilou)
Skelton	Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul)
Solberg	Sorenson
St-Hilaire	Stinson
Strahl	Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
Basques)	

Government Orders

Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest)
Toews
Tweed
Vellacott
Warawa
Yelich — 147

Tilson
Trost
Van Loan
Vincent
Watson

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

[English]

Hon. Karen Redman: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it you would find unanimous consent to see the clock as midnight.

The Speaker: Is it agreed to see the clock as midnight?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: It being midnight, this House stands adjourned until Monday, June 27 at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1) and pursuant to the special order made on Thursday, June 23.

(The House adjourned at 11:51 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, June 23, 2005

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Extension of Sitting Period

Motion	7753
Mr. Bagnell	7753
Mr. Komarnicki	7753
Mr. Wrzesnewskyj	7754
Mr. Bagnell	7755
Mr. Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	7757
Mr. Williams	7758
Mr. Plamondon	7758
Mr. Williams	7759
Mr. Wrzesnewskyj	7761
Mr. Watson	7761
Mr. Lee	7762
Mr. Boudria	7762
Amendment negatived	7766
Motion agreed to	7767

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Devils Lake Diversion Project

Mr. Blaikie	7767
Motion	7767
(Motion agreed to)	7767

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

An Act to Authorize the Minister of Finance to make Certain Payments

Bill C-48. Third reading	7767
Mr. McKay	7767
Mr. Hanger	7768
Mr. Valeri	7769
Motion	7770
Motion agreed to	7771
Third Reading	
Mr. Julian	7771
Mr. Bagnell	7772
Mr. Goodyear	7773
Mr. Layton	7773
Mr. Benoit	7775
Mrs. Gallant	7775
Mr. D'Amours	7776
Mr. Day	7777
Mr. Cullen (Etobicoke North)	7778
Amendment to the amendment negatived	7780
Amendment negatived	7781
Motion agreed to	7783
(Bill read the third time and passed)	7783

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