



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, May 1, 2008**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 1, 2008

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1005)

[*English*]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Sudbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates entitled “The Right Pay for Valuable Employees”.

Over the last few years, we have heard many stories of people who were not being paid on time or who were not receiving the amount that they were entitled to because of certain challenges within the pay system. I am happy to say that we have a unanimous report, with all members of different parties agreeing that, because these are our employees and they are so valuable, we have made certain recommendations. We ask that the government respond within 120 days.

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology in relation to the transfer of certain assets and operations from MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates Ltd. to Alliant Techsystems Inc.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### BROADCASTING ACT

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-540, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and the Telecommunications Act (broadcasting and telecommunications policies).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to be introducing a bill this morning that follows from the Parliament of Canada's recognition of the Quebec nation.

It is often said that a nation is defined by its language and culture. Since Quebec does not currently control all the levers that would allow it to promote all aspects of its culture, this bill would substantially amend the Telecommunications Act and the Broadcasting Act so as to give Quebec full authority over its telecommunications and broadcasting and allow it to create its own broadcasting commission.

I would like to thank the member for Ahuntsic for supporting this bill, and I invite all parliamentarians to support it as well.

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

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS ACT

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-541, An Act to amend the Hazardous Products Act (noise limit for children's products).

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to present this bill to the House and to recommend its adoption.

The intent of the legislation is to lower the permissible decibel levels in toys in order to save children from lifelong damage to their hearing. It would bring Canada in line with the World Health Organization's limit of 75 decibels. The Hazardous Products Act currently allows toys with a noise level of 100 decibels.

Some hearing impairment is preventable and we owe it to our children to keep them safe from unnecessary hazards. Hopefully, child safety is an area where we can agree to make minority government work.

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

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### PETITIONS

FRENCH AS THE LANGUAGE OF WORK

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today, May 1, is International Workers' Day, and I am extremely pleased to present a petition signed by more than 600 workers calling for the right to work in French in Quebec, as well as for the respect of Bill 101 by businesses in Quebec that fall under federal jurisdiction.

These more than 600 signatures will be added to the several thousand already presented here in this House.

*Government Orders*

•(1010)  
[English]

## INCOME TRUSTS

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present, yet again, another income trust broken promise petition submitted to me by a large number of Canadians, mostly from Calgary, Alberta.

The petitioners want to remind the Prime Minister that he promised never to tax income trusts but recklessly broke that promise by imposing a 31.5% tax, which permanently wiped out over \$25 billion of the hard-earned savings of over two million Canadians, particularly seniors.

The petitioners, therefore, call upon the Conservative minority government to: first, admit that the decision to tax income trusts was based on flawed methodology and incorrect assumptions, as was demonstrated in the finance committee of the House; second, apologize to those who were unfairly harmed by this broken promise; and finally, repeal the punitive 31.5% tax on income trusts.

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## QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the answer to Question No. 171 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 171—**Mr. Tony Martin:**

What is the total amount of government funding in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 to Batchewana First Nation and to Garden River First Nation in the constituency of Sault Ste. Marie, with each initiative and amount?

(Return tabled)

[English]

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1999**

The House resumed from April 28 consideration of Bill C-33, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of Motion No. 2.

**Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-33, a bill that gets to the

heart of environmental issues in Canada and to the heart of how we will regulate contents in gas.

I would like to broach out to a subject that is related to this and one that has received a lot of attention recently, and that is the food security issue which has a connection in terms of the biofuel industry.

Before I get into that I will give a slight overview of what is taking place in the world today. On the front pages of newspapers around the world are articles about the food crisis that is affecting virtually every country. Thankfully, our country has been somewhat immune from the situation because of our various efficiencies.

However, this does not belie the fact that one billion people around the world are living on less than \$1 a day. These people are living in extreme conditions. They are being forced to sell the roof over their head. They are pulling their children from school and they are depriving themselves of the basic nutrients they need to survive.

What are the implications, particularly on children, if they do not get these basic nutrients? If a malnourished child does not get the micro-nutrients and the caloric requirements they need, they will suffer lifelong cognitive, intellectual and physical disabilities. They will not be able to do the things that we take for granted. What happens to them in their early years will affect their learning ability, their working ability and their ability to function in society. That is why this food crisis has implications well beyond what we are seeing today.

What has caused that? The reality is that in our world today we have more than enough land to produce the food we need. However, price distorting subsidies, export tariffs, export quotas, mal-distribution problems and disturbing distribution mechanisms have all caused a problem that is part of a perfect storm.

The biofuel subsidies are part of the problem. The distribution mechanisms, the export quotas, the increased demand from India and China and weather patterns that are affected by virtue of climate change all make up this perfect storm that has created today's food crisis. No one solution will enable us to address this problem. A collection of solutions are required.

I put part of this problem on the shoulders of IFAD and the FAO. Those two UN organizations have the mandate to deal with world food security but they have failed miserably, in part because their executive is dysfunctional. Our government should be playing a leadership role in pursuing the changes that are required in those two organizations when it comes to world food security.

The government made a partially good decision on the food aid required by the World Food Programme, which is an excellent organization. I have to compliment the government on untying its aid 100%. However, I also need to criticize the government for only putting in the amount of moneys required to enable the World Food Programme to maintain the work it has been doing over the last year.

Yes, it is true that the government did put in more money.

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson:** More than what it asked for.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Keith Martin:** It put in \$50 million, but \$62 million was required in order to meet the difference in demand.

While the absolute amount was increased, which is good, prices have gone up so much that the amount put in by the government only enables the World Food Programme to basically do what it was already doing.

On the other hand, I have to compliment the government for untying the aid 100%, which was a good thing. I hope that pattern of practice will continue. We can only encourage the government to put in the extra money that is required to meet the acute demand of today.

We also need to have a more coherent approach to dealing with the international food security challenge and this must be done through CIDA. We would like to see an integrated approach across agriculture, across development, across environment and across industry to address this problem. We have not seen or heard anything like that from the government, and that is irresponsible.

• (1015)

We are one of the world's largest food producers. Canada can and should take a leadership role in enabling the world to have the food it requires. We can do that by working with other organizations and other countries. Canada's agricultural scientists are some of the top scientists in the world. They are developing remarkable seeds that enable higher productivity, more disease resistance and a higher quality of food and nutrition.

Some are criticizing this by presenting bills to prevent that from happening, but the reality is that if we did not have this, we would not have the output, the potential output and the quality of foods that we do have. We also would not have the resistance that those seeds require in order for us to see improved output.

For the small farmer, those 750 million small landholders in the world who live on a very small amount of money, there is a need to improve their productivity, but export quotas and trade-distorting patterns prevent them from being able to do so. That is absolutely criminal. While we enjoy the fruits of our labour here and are all well nourished, those people do not and are living hand to mouth.

The profound tragedy we see is this chasm between available resources and knowledge and the application of that knowledge and those resources for those who need it most. Many of us have been in those parts of the world where people eke out an existence. We have seen people who are living on foodstuffs that are far less than what is required for basic physical integrity. The tragedy is that while a lot of money is spent on the front end in terms of international development, only a trickle gets down to those who need it most.

The current government has not been responsible in trying to grasp this issue. The food crisis did not happen overnight. It was predicted more than a year and a half ago by the UN World Food Programme, which was raising the red flag and saying that we should beware, that a food crisis was coming down the pike. It said that it was our responsibility to work together to offset it.

The tragedy of this is that despite all the dire warnings of the World Food Programme, we never see the action that is required to prevent these problems from occurring. The sad thing is that these

problems are eminently preventable. They are entirely preventable and it is immoral that we are not preventing them.

This "silent tsunami" that has been spoken about will waft through the world. Unless we deal with this crisis today, it is not going to get better. It is only going to get worse.

Therefore, let me ask the following questions. Why does the government not take the initiative in trying to liberalize markets? Why does it not deal with the issue of a food system that is riddled with state intervention?

Why not deal with the quotas, subsidies and controls that dump all the imbalances on the international market? The victims who are subject to and do not have any control over this system are some of the poorest farmers in the world.

This is what we need to be doing. As one of the great nations of the world and one of the G-8 nations, we can do it. I have to say that we have seen this happen time and time again. The reality is that this situation of food insecurity will continue to happen over and over again.

As the international development critic for the opposition, let me say that what we are trying to do through the CIDA component is to convince the government to focus CIDA on one issue like this. CIDA can utilize and integrate the incredible resources in some of our universities and other post-secondary institutions in Canada. It can tap into those capabilities and share that expertise with those countries that are the least well off in the world.

If we enable those countries to have the food security they require, and indeed demand, we are also enhancing their security as well as global security. Not doing so will create insecurity. Insecurity breeds conflict. Conflict is something that affects all of us.

In closing, on behalf of the Liberal Party let me say that we are offering solutions. Many of the critics in our party have offered many good solutions to the government to deal with this crisis as it is happening and to prevent further food crises in the future.

• (1020)

We certainly hope that the government listens to and adopts the constructive solutions coming from our side of the House. To not do so is to be completely immoral and will ensure that the poorest people in the world will continue to be absent one of the basic needs of life: food.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments and also for his compliments to the government for the \$50 million. We have a very responsible government and certainly want to do our part on the world stage. We have been doing very well in that respect.

*Government Orders*

I have a few comments to which I would like the member opposite to respond. One of the quotes I want to talk about is by Dan Gustafson. When we are talking about the high prices for food, he is quoted as saying that “the high prices also provide an incentive for governments, hopefully in sub-Saharan Africa, to re-invest in agricultural production”. He said that “farming is now seen as a business opportunity, not simply an issue of food security”.

The article I am quoting from states:

For the first time in 25 years the World Bank is focusing on agriculture. Its 2008 World Development Report is subtitled Agriculture for Development. The report states that farming has been ignored for too long as a pathway to global development.

I have one other comment I would like to make that comes from this article:

A dynamic 'agriculture for development' agenda can benefit the estimated 900 million rural people in the developing world who live on less than \$1 a day, most of whom are engaged in agriculture.

Robert Zoellick, World Bank President, said in a news release, “We need to give agriculture more prominence across the board”.

Being the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, I think that agriculture can help a heck of a lot of these countries. I would like to hear the comments of the member opposite.

**Hon. Keith Martin:** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member wants to help the poor, then he will deal with Bill C-293, the private member's bill from my colleague from Scarborough—Guildwood, which deals with ensuring that CIDA's main focus is poverty reduction. I look forward to him supporting and getting his government to support the bill forthwith so that it can come through the House and become law.

On the issue of agriculture, our former colleague, Susan Whelan, who was the head of CIDA, made agriculture a priority. We were trying to do that, but unfortunately things changed. I do not know quite what the government's priorities are on agriculture with respect to CIDA, but I do not think that they are there.

On the issue of what Mr. Zoellick said as head of the World Bank, he is right, but what happens is that all of these international organizations produce a mountain of studies and reports and nobody implements them. That is the problem. If we do not take our subsidies and our reports and do something with them, as I keep telling people, we set countries up for failure.

What happens is that large international organizations develop very expensive studies, done by very expensive consultants, and hand them to developing countries. They then tell these countries to deal with them, but if they do not have the capacity to implement the studies, and they do not, then we are setting up developing countries for failure. That is what we do time and time again.

The greatest thing CIDA could do would be to build up capacity in developing countries so that when those countries receive the plans they have the capacity to implement those solutions. Can we do it? Absolutely. I developed a plan called the Canadian physicians overseas program, as part of a larger plan to get Canadian professional groups to go abroad and help build capacity in focused numbers of countries. That is a variant on the Canada Corps that our previous prime minister developed to give support overseas.

The current government should support that. If we were to take on that mantle of building capacity in developing countries, using Bill

C-293 to do it, we would do something that has not been done before.

We would enable developing countries to have the capacity to implement these plans so that we can have an effect on the ground and on the person who makes a dollar a day. It would result in them not making a dollar a day any more because they would be making a reasonable amount of money. They would be able to put their children in school. They would have enough food on the table. They would get education for their children. They would get access to health care. We would not see the deplorable, appalling, disgusting, unfathomable and immoral situations that we are now seeing in developing countries.

This is something the government should take on the mantle for and implement, and it should do it now.

• (1025)

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-33, which seeks to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and establish minimum levels of biofuel content in gasoline, diesel fuel and heating oil, to be implemented within three to five years.

This legislation is wide open and does not differentiate between biofuels. And yet we know that not all biofuels are equal.

My colleague from British Columbia Southern Interior proposed some wise amendments at committee that would have helped to make biofuel production safer and more sustainable, but unfortunately they were voted down by Liberals and Conservatives.

These were amendments such as preserving the biodiversity of lands used in biofuel production and prohibiting the importation of grains or oils for use in biofuel production, which would have helped prevent the kind of problem that my colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca just raised. There also was an amendment to establish criteria in relation to environmental sustainability of biofuel production and so on. As I said, these were voted down by Liberals and Conservatives.

However, at least his amendment strengthening the reporting requirements placed on government regarding how it is implementing the biofuels regime was approved at committee.

The amendment before us today, proposed by my colleague from Western Arctic, would ensure stronger oversight of the regulatory framework. Without proper safeguards such as this, we are giving the government a blank cheque to pursue a strategy that will not necessarily benefit rural communities in our country and could sacrifice millions of acres of productive crop land or grassland, all the while contributing to global warming.

Biofuels can be a first step toward a cleaner, greener, more affordable and more sustainable source of energy, as long as there exists a clear and comprehensive regulatory regime. That is what this amendment we are discussing today tries to get at.

*Government Orders*

Our amendments were intended to inject some sober second thought into a rush for alternative sources of fuel. They were intended to ensure that we do not forge ahead without a mechanism to determine if we are going down the right path or indeed creating other problems. As this legislation stands, it could cause more problems than it solves.

This enabling legislation does not differentiate or restrict to sustainable biofuels those which rely on waste products, for example, instead of food crops on agricultural lands for production. Even with so-called waste products, we must proceed carefully, because some of the suggested inedible agricultural products like corn husks or cornstalks can be used to replenish depleted soils in some countries or even in ours. On a life cycle basis, recycling and reuse are almost always a better conservation strategy, as they enable us to preserve, by recycling and reusing, a large portion of the energy used in converting raw materials into products in the first place.

Regardless of the problems with this legislation, I recognize that there is still an opportunity to ensure that we produce environmentally beneficial biofuels. For instance, innovative technology for treating sewage using human effluent in the production of biofuel to heat buildings and run vehicles is being examined as an approach to sewage treatment in my riding of Victoria. The food in this source of fuel would take an indirect route through our stomachs and through the toilets to a groundbreaking treatment plant. This is the only way that "food for fuel" makes sense.

Vancouver-based Paradigm Environmental Technologies Inc. piloted new technology that is 95% efficient in converting sludge waste to biogas, which is then converted into electricity and heat. These types of projects will generate environmental, social and economic benefits. I applaud the fact that Bill C-33 will enable them, but this kind of wide open legislation needs checks and balances because it also will enable many other projects that are not as sustainable.

●(1030)

At committee, a representative of the National Farmers Union stated that ethanol and biofuels were a costly misadventure and that the promoters of ethanol in Canada are mainly the big agribusiness corporations in this country. His concerns about corn-based or wheat-based ethanol and the significant amounts of energy required to produce it seem valid.

For corn-based ethanol to be a viable source of energy, it must be imported in even larger quantities than is currently bought from the United States and how would that benefit our farmers? We should be examining more sustainable methods of decreasing our fuel consumption and producing new renewable fuel sources rather than pursuing policies that will exacerbate the global food crisis and have little impact in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The focus of this legislation should not be to further enrich large corporate interests in the oil, agriculture or biotech industries. Worldwide investments in biofuel rose from \$5 billion in 2005 and is expected to top \$100 billion by 2010, thanks to investments from large multinationals like Cargill and others.

There are many concerns over food security and over the various causes of rising food prices. Oxfam and other agriculture groups say

that the surging demand for biofuels like ethanol are contributing to the rising food crisis by turning food crops into an energy commodity and this, in turn, is fueling wild speculation in the stock market.

However, without fearmongering, this bill does raise serious concerns regarding the sustainability of production practices and there is nothing within the bill to restrict them in any way or to address emerging issues. We cannot charge ahead without considering the impact on food security or the chain reaction in land use caused by the acceleration of biofuel demand.

Without the NDP amendment proposed and defeated in committee, nothing in this legislation prevents producers from importing corn, for example, to make ethanol, which will contribute to that chain reaction. What kind of sustainable energy policy is that?

●(1035)

[*Translation*]

Testimony before the committee and recent comments on Bill C-33 show that many people are worried about the Conservative government's approach to the development of biofuels, and specifically to the problem of climate change in general.

Climate change is this generation's greatest challenge. Biofuels are just part of the solution to climate change in Canada. If we use some of the technologies I just mentioned, we can jump straight into the next generation of biofuels.

However, the government has largely overlooked one of the most important tools for tackling the massive problem of climate change, which is the widespread use of conservation measures to help wean us off our reliance on heating oils and to reduce our consumption of all types of fuels. If fuel is wasted, it does not matter if it is clean or dirty, it is still a waste.

Policies that promote a reduction in fuel consumption are always the best and most important policies, since they create a sustainable fuel system.

Above all, the federal government must make a real effort to tackle climate change. Regulations requiring the use of renewable fuels are just part of what is needed to ensure a more accessible source of energy.

If the government truly plans on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, it must take a tougher approach. Climate change is our greatest challenge, and solutions to this problem must be sustainable.

Biofuels can be produced sustainably provided some conditions are met, for example a net decrease in greenhouse gases, minimal use of water, no competition with the production of food crops, and no detrimental effect on biodiversity. Once these criteria are met, the production of biofuels can be considered sustainable.

*Government Orders*

[English]

Our focus should be to provide opportunities for Canadian agriculture and rural communities by supporting small-scale regional renewable energy systems for multiple feedstock sources. Let us say indeed to biofuels, but let us apply some common sense reasoning, demonstrated by the amendments under consideration today.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague's comments. Unfortunately, I have to take exception with many of them. This whole food versus fuel debate is absolutely ridiculous. The facts show that Canada has more than enough agricultural production to meet our renewable fuel targets without affecting one iota of Canada's food supply.

The opponents of biofuels, like the NDP and the NFU, are completely disconnected from Canadian agriculture. One of the studies that the NDP used in committee to back its claims referred to much of the prairies as a semi-desert. The breadbasket of the world is a semi-desert according to the NFU and the NDP. It is absurd studies like this that opponents of biofuels use to justify their ridiculous claims.

I wonder if the NDP is not spending too much time in association with the Liberal Party because it seems to flip-flop on these issues. I would like to quote from the NDP's 2006 election platform. On page 17, it states:

Require a phased-in substitution of Canadian ethanol from local inputs for non-renewable fuel sources to 10% of motor vehicle fuel by 2010 and target increases in reliance on biodiesel fuel.

Could the member confirm that the NDP has, as the Liberals do, flip-flopped on this issue? I would be very interested in hearing that.

• (1040)

**Ms. Denise Savoie:** Mr. Speaker, I am not exactly sure who is associating with the Liberals because according to the *Toronto Star*, it states:

With the support of the Liberals and Bloc Québécois, [the Prime Minister's] government is expected to push Bill C-33 through the House of Commons this week.

Our support for biofuels is clear. What we are saying today is that this kind of wide open legislation is not the way to go.

The suggestion is entirely reasonable. It is worth making sure that we are not contributing to a global food crisis caused by this increasingly accelerated demand on biofuels. Many legitimate questions have been raised about these measures.

We are suggesting a sober second thought and that we take a look at how this can be done promoting the kinds of technologies I referred to that the Vancouver-based Paradigm Environmental Technologies proposes, such as using sewage effluent in a highly efficient way, 95%, compared to 55% to 60% in corn ethanol. It is worth looking at this and getting this right.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the report stage motion wants to add a further review item; that is, that the review required under this new section 140 would review the progress made in preparation and implementation of regulations referred to in subsection 140(1).

I want to ask the member, could she advise the House exactly what preparation of what regulations is being required here since there are none proposed in Bill C-33 for section 140, and whether these are not already covered by the general review required as to the environmental and economic aspects of biofuel production?

**Ms. Denise Savoie:** Mr. Speaker, indeed, what is suggested in this amendment is not already covered because the program would already be implemented. So, what is being suggested here is that because of all the real concerns that have been expressed, it would be important to have an oversight committee to review these regulations before they are implemented, before we start down a particular path. Any new legislation is followed by a set of regulations and this is what an oversight all party committee should be looking at to ensure that this legislation does not have unintended consequences.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are currently debating Bill C-33, but more specifically a report stage amendment affecting section 140 of the act. I would like to remind the House what the amendment requires.

The current wording in Bill C-33 is that under subsection 6, within one year after the subsection comes into force and every two years thereafter, a comprehensive review of the environmental and economic aspects of biofuel production in Canada should be undertaken, et cetera.

The proposed amendment which we are debating at report stage is that in addition to the general requirement to review the environmental and economic aspects of biofuel, it would also include a review of the progress made in the preparation and implementation of the regulations referred to in subsection 140(1).

The situation is that regulations can be made from time to time. At this point I am not aware of regulations being proposed in regard to biofuel production, or what current regulations may exist under the EPA for that matter, simply because that bill would have to be before us at the same time. That is a predicament we have as legislators. When we deal with bills, we do not have available to us at the time regulations that are required and prescribed to be prepared under the legislation. Those things come after a bill gets royal assent. Parliamentarians in both Houses do not get an opportunity to look at regulations. They may have an opportunity to ask the officials to give them a general idea of what might be proposed, but it is a circular argument because the officials may very well say that we cannot know what the problem of the member is, as he indicated in his speech, about what the act requires.

Regulations are enabled by the legislation; it is not the reverse. We have a situation here where I am not exactly sure whether it is just a hope that should there be additional regulations proposed, if they were relevant to the section, that a review would be done. It is not clear to me right now the basis for the change, unless one knows what is being contemplated in terms of the proposed regulations.



*Government Orders*

Before we vote on this, I want to be informed and maybe other members do as well, about what might be there. Certainly in terms of the preparation of any regulations, we are never going to know that, but in terms of the implementation, it would presume that there are existing regulations which have not been implemented for some reason, that they are waiting for further data or whatever, and it is pretty hard to review something that has not been implemented.

This whole section does require a review one year after the section comes into force and every two years thereafter, so it may come into play somewhere down the road.

Having dealt with the report stage issue, I want to follow the line of debate at report stage with some of the comments that members have expressed with regard to the world food crisis. Some have decided that the world food shortage crisis we are going to discuss is in Canada. There is not a food crisis in Canada and I think we understand that. The public is very concerned about the balance between the use of agricultural land to produce crops for biofuel purposes.

The most prevalent source right now is corn. Corn obviously is a major staple used in food production and even in exported products. When we look at how the costs of various aspects of producing food or fuel work through the economy, it is not a simple thing of whether that corn is being used to feed people or to produce fuel, and whether one is causing some distress on the other in terms of the objectives.

● (1045)

Obviously the science is still being worked on, but the results are fairly clear that the benefits of corn based ethanol with regard to greenhouse gas emissions are not great. There are other forms of producing ethanol, such as from straw and even from municipal waste, which calls out for research. There will have to be a lot of work done to make sure there is an efficient and appropriate use of the crops that we grow not only in Canada but around the world. Canada could be a leader on the research side to ensure that the land use is appropriate and that we get the significant benefits through the research.

Bill C-33 proposes that all fuel have 5% ethanol content by 2010. Others have proposed that it be 10%. The bill would involve spending some \$2.2 billion which would help ensure that farmers would be able to grow the crops that are applicable to their end use. It would also help build ethanol plants.

There are some interesting things going on in the area of biofuels, but we cannot ignore the food shortage problem. There are some arguments that maybe the current activity in Canada with regard to biofuels is affecting it, but the ethanol role with regard to food shortage actually is very small. We must take into account the rise in the cost of fuel. As the price per barrel of oil goes up and is at a record high, the cost of food goes up. All of a sudden the economics of food production and the impact on the whole food supply chain becomes very significant to the argument.

We cannot just say that growing a crop for biofuel purposes is causing a world food crisis. It is relevant and it depends on the magnitude, but there is such a large number of other factors that it is not a cause and effect. It is not black and white. It is not simple.

On top of that, we could probably make some arguments that if we do not deal with the greenhouse gas emissions problem and its impact on our environment, we will have more aberrant weather, more violent storms and more crops will be destroyed. It is almost a circular argument. It is very important to understand that this is not just a two variable equation.

In addition, I was doing a little research and found that the dietary habits in India and China are changing noticeably. In India and China more and more meat is being consumed. That line is going up, to the extent that if there is more consumption of meat, there is a need for more feed, which means that more crops need to be grown and more and more of the crops will be allocated to a significant population component of the world, being in India and China. The dietary habits in India and China will have more far-reaching implications on the demand for corn and other crops.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** We don't have control over that; we only have control of this.

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, yes, it is staggering.

To conclude my comments, it is apparent that all hon. members are very concerned about the world food crisis. It is a reality. We are also concerned about what Canada is doing to contribute to alleviating those problems. At the same time, we must promote appropriate research. As we address other priorities that we have not only for Canada, but for the world as a whole in addressing greenhouse gas emissions, that research will be a significant part of it in Canada, particularly with regard to alternatives to corn for producing ethanol, such as straw and municipal waste particularly, which I think is a very important source of ethanol production.

● (1050)

I am going to leave it at that. There clearly is a need for a balance here, but I have no doubt that the House would want to ensure that Canada is playing a substantive role in addressing the food crisis around the world.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague talked about not understanding why there would be regulations coming forward. Bill C-33 is an empty box that is going to be filled with the regulations that will guide the industry in the future. This is the case. There is nothing in this legislation that sets conditions or terms as to how the biofuel industry is going to develop in Canada.

Quite clearly, section 140 states:

The Governor in Council may, on the recommendation of the Minister, make regulations for carrying out the purposes of section 139...

Some portions of the act talk about the different types of regulations in the act, regulations made under sections 93 and 140, et cetera, quantities of released production capacity. The substance or the fuel source, interestingly enough, is not something that is going to be dealt with in the regulations. Under the regulations we are going to decide where the fuel is coming from. We are going to make a decision about whether biofuels are going to be a local product, a national product or an international product.

*Government Orders*

We are going to make those kinds of decisions in regulations rather than here in Parliament where those decisions should be made, such as the substance of the fuel's commercial destination, the substance of the fuel's physical and chemical properties, how much greenhouse gas emissions the fuel produces, the chemical properties.

Once again, through regulation later on, the government, rather than Parliament, is going to decide how our industry develops. That is why we put the oversight amendment forward, to provide parliamentarians with the opportunity to actually speak to the substance of this new industry. I would ask my hon. colleague, is that not a good enough reason to support having an oversight provision within this bill?

• (1055)

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, certainly some of the items the member cited are relevant. For the assessment required under the proposed clause in Bill C-33, which is an amendment to the Environmental Protection Act, we have to look at the whole act to see the implications.

The member will recall that I talked about the fact that these regulations will never be seen by this place before we have to pass the bill. Subsection 3.2 says specifically, "Regulations made under section 93, 140", section 140 being the relevant one to the report stage motion, "...may distinguish among any class of persons, works, undertakings, activities or substances, including fuels, that they may establish on the basis of any factor, including" and then it goes on to list quantities of releases, production capacity, technology, feedstocks used, the substance or fuel's source, et cetera.

The question I would ask is, why did the report stage amendment not also require that the word "may" be changed to "shall" or "must"? This is optional; this is not mandatory under Bill C-33. Maybe we have not done the job fully.

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, obviously the experience of the member opposite shows in his speech and his answers to some of the questions.

I wonder if he could shed any light on the NDP's flip-flop. I am tempted to say that he has a little experience in flip-flopping but I will not. Based on the comments I made earlier about 2006, the experienced member was here and was in the 2006 election, in its platform the NDP wanted 10% of motor vehicle fuel by 2010 to be biofuel.

I know the member opposite supports farmers. We on this side put farmers first and I am sure the member would, although he probably does not have a lot of farmers in his riding. I wonder if he could explain to me why a party which two years ago wanted 10% content now thinks it is a bad idea for farmers to make a decent living. What would change in two years? I wonder if he could shed some light on that for me, please.

• (1100)

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, that question would probably be better posed to and answered by the party to which the member is referring. I will not speak on its behalf.

However, I would use my remaining time to suggest to the entire House to recall that we have Bill C-293, which deals with developmental assistance, aid and poverty alleviation. That bill is coming back to the House as a result of a Senate report. I hope the government will support Bill C-293 so we have the proper definition and guidelines for developmental assistance and ensure we have the proper tools and are in the right direction to deal with poverty alleviation and food shortages.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-33 and specifically to the amendment proposed by the member for Western Arctic calling for a review of the progress made in the preparation and implementation of the regulations.

I appreciate the comments by my colleague from Mississauga around the need for this amendment. I am well aware that other committees have taken a proactive stance as this regulatory process has evolved. I commend the member for Western Arctic for inserting this amendment so the House can oversee what essentially would be a blank cheque.

It is important to have oversight considering some of the other legislation that has come before the House where I would suggest that perhaps the House did not do the due diligence that was required. I only need to point to the voter identification bill. New Democrats raised some very serious concerns around that legislation. Lo and behold, the government had to bring forward another bill to fix the problem in the original bill because it had effectively eliminated the ability of about a million voters in Canada to register to vote.

I understand there is continuing disenfranchisement in that voter identification bill. We know that homeless people and many first nations will have difficulty voting in the next federal election unless more fixes are put into place.

I would argue that New Democrats are doing the due diligence that other members in this House have chosen not to do by insisting on some oversight on this bill.

In case people think this is merely New Democrats talking, I want to point to an editorial in *The Star* today. It states:

But in their rush to biofuels, the politicians have overlooked the drawbacks of turning food into fuel.

Although biofuels do emit less greenhouse gas than regular gasoline, environmentalists point out that this comparison does not take into account the emissions coming from the farm machinery and fertilizer required to "grow" these new fuels and the trucks for transporting them.

It goes on to state:

Parliament should heed NDP Leader...and take more time to consider the implications of Bill C-33 before passing it.

David Suzuki, in September 2007, said:

Biofuels have many advantages, but we have to look at all our options and make sure we make the best choices to ensure a more sustainable future.

...attempting to save the planet by wholesale switching to biofuels like ethanol and biodiesel may unintentionally have the opposite effect.

The Pembina Institute stated:

*Government Orders*

Many concerns have been raised about the environmental and social impacts of un-controlled production of bio-fuels. Pembina believes strict criteria need to be in place to ensure these impacts are minimized.

The parliamentary secretary has stood a number of times today and said that New Democrats have flip-flopped since 2006. New Democrats have said that there is new and emerging information that requires this House to take a strong, hard look at this legislation. We have new information about what is happening in the world around rising food prices and new information around production and all those factors need to be considered.

In committee, the member for British Columbia Southern Interior proposed a number of amendments that, unfortunately, the Conservatives and the Liberals chose not to support. Some of those amendments would have dealt with some of these other emerging issues. I will not read all the amendments put forward by the member but I do want to touch on a couple of them because they are issues being raised in my riding of Nanaimo—Cowichan. I know other members are getting calls, letters and emails about them.

One of the amendments reads:

prohibiting the use of genetically modified grains, oilseeds or trees for biofuel production....

The next one reads:

prohibiting the use of lands protected by federal legislation and other sensitive biodiverse lands for biofuel production;

preserving the biodiversity of lands used in biofuel production;

prohibiting the importation of grains or oils for use in biofuel production;

establishing criteria in relation to the environmental sustainability of biofuel production to ensure compliance with internationally recognized best practices that promote the biodiversity and sustainability of land, air and water;

In British Columbia, fortunately under Dave Barrett and the provincial New Democrats, they instituted the agricultural land reserve in an effort to ensure our farmland was protected. I do have farms in my riding. My riding is a rural-urban community and there are a number of farms there.

• (1105)

What we have found over the years is that the ALR, the agricultural land reserve, that was put in place is being eroded. There has been no net loss of land but there has been a substitution of land that is less productive, less arable. The amendments proposed by the member for British Columbia Southern Interior were partly around the fact that we cannot generate new land. What we need to do is ensure the farmland that is available in Canada is put to the best possible use and, as well, that farmers can maintain a decent living from their farming efforts.

In British Columbia, most of the policies that are made in Canada for agriculture do not take into account the fact of life in British Columbia where many of our farm holdings are small farm holdings. I would encourage this as an opportunity to examine the diversity of farming activity in Canada and how we protect that.

As well, British Columbia is in a unique position where we, unfortunately, have material that is available for Cellulosic. In an article from CleanTechnica, which was written in Colorado but equally applies to British Columbia, it talks about what is being done to prevent catastrophic wildfire while taking advantage of a clean energy opportunity. The article talks about several stories that hit the

news wire this week about taking a collective hint at the growing conditions for a perfect storm for Cellulosic ethanol.

The virgin biofuel industry got a kick in the seat yesterday when a study in science confirmed that many environmentalists believe ethanol from corn and switchgrass could actually worsen climate change. The article goes on to state:

The cheapest, most logical, and most environmentally friendly way to make ethanol is to do so with waste...And thanks to the pine beetle epidemic, there is a wealth of small-diameter waste-wood in the Rocky Mountain West....

On April 1, 2008, in an article on The Tyee, it states, "Burn Trees to Light Homes". It is talking about the fact that the pine beetle wood kill is a way to take the value of dead wood and create a viable energy opportunity. The article talks about the fact that in British Columbia there currently is a substantial amount of export to Europe on wood pellets. The pine beetle wood kill is an opportunity to take some of that waste-wood and turn it into a product that could be used both in British Columbia and for export.

Some science is required around the pine beetle waste-wood and some of the money that is being marked for renewable energy and sustainable energy strategies could be earmarked for research and development into the pine beetle waste-wood.

The sad comment is that in British Columbia our forestry sector is reeling. In the same Tyee article, it states that in the past year 34 sawmills in the province have closed permanently or indefinitely resulting in 10,000 job losses.

In my own riding of Nanaimo—Cowichan, we have had a number of companies in the last six months either lay off workers indefinitely or close permanently. Some have gone into receivership. I saw one of the grimmest sights that I have seen in recent memory in my riding last week. As I drove north on the highway, I saw a former sawmill operation site filled with forestry equipment that was being auctioned off because a logging company, which had been in business since the early 1900s manufacturing equipment for the forestry industry, had gone into receivership. Hundreds of pieces of equipment and vehicles on this lot were being auctioned off.

That is a grim reminder that in British Columbia we are seeing a massive transition in the forestry sector and we are simply not taking hold of that.

When we are talking about waste-wood as a Cellulosic ethanol, there is an opportunity to do something for forestry workers. Where is the money for a transition strategy for communities and workers?

We talked about this community trust money. I have talked to people in my riding and they have not seen one cent of it. We have workers today who are running out of employment insurance because my riding is in an area that is tagged on to another riding that has a very low unemployment rate and it is on the mainland. It is not like the workers in my riding can walk out their door and go next door to get a job. They are running out of their employment insurance. Where is the effort to actually ensure something happens?

*Government Orders*

•(1110)

The bill speaks to, in a variety of ways, an energy strategy. We should take a look at what has happened in British Columbia, with things like the pine beetle. We should talk about how we can help some of the workers make the transition into some other industry.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague, as she articulated some of her concerns regarding the biofuel initiatives.

One of the unfortunate things that too often happens in the House and at committees is we tend to polarize this issue. Some of the comments my colleague made indicated that polarization, for example, using phrases like “wholesale switching to biofuels”. The government is not recommending wholesale switching. It is a very measured response. It is an environmentally friendly response.

The biofuel initiatives of the government would reduce greenhouse gases by over four megatonnes per year. That is the equivalent of taking a million cars off the road. That is responsible environmental leadership.

On the issue of cellulose and using wood chips, is the member aware that the government has invested \$500 million in the future of biofuels like cellulose, which can turn wood chips and garbage into fuel?

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, if I said wholesale switching, I did not intend to say that, and I wish to withdraw that remark.

Yes, money is going into things like cellulose. The problem is it is not the only place the money is going. We are not opposed to biofuels, but with the new information emerging, we are simply asking the House to take a strong oversight role. We are asking it take some responsibility for the new information coming in, ensuring that we are doing the job people have sent us here to do and ensuring there are no unintended consequences and impact. With what we see happening in many parts of the world today, with new science emerging, it would seem that it would be a responsible stance for the House to take.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy listening to the member. She does her homework and knows what she is talking about, particularly on fetal alcohol syndrome, aboriginal issues and the list goes on.

Very briefly, there has been some research on the alternatives to corn based ethanol, being straws and municipal waste. It is really in its infancy. As I understand it, the process involves pelletizing and burning. I am not sure whether this is a near term or very long term approach, and I am curious about that.

Could the member provide a little insight as to whether she is proposing or suggesting that we back off the proven technologies of corn based ethanol production simply because of the pressures, and I would think most of them being public pressures with regard to food shortage issues? Is it more politically salable to abandon an ethanol strategy in terms of greenhouse gases? Is there not a balance? Maybe the member has some comments on that.

•(1115)

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, what I was suggesting with cellulosic ethanol was it was in its infancy. I was putting it in the

context of what was happening in British Columbia, with thousands and thousands of hectares of standing wood being killed by the pine beetle. I know there is a substantial amount of research currently being conducted at the University of British Columbia, in particular, for the use of this wood. I agree it is unlikely to come to market in the short term.

My understanding of Bill C-33 is there are some short term initiatives in it as well as some long term initiatives. That is where I am calling, again, through the member Western Arctic, for some oversight. Although there is some proven technology, much of the work going on right now in this area is new, emerging and experimental. We need the time and the oversight to ensure we have a good understanding of the impact.

Again, I am talking about the reasonable responsibility of members in the House, as I talked about in the voter identification bill, to not pass legislation that ends up as something with which cannot live.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise to speak to Bill C-33, the amendments to Canadian Environmental Protection Act. I will use my time to speak to a few of the issues.

When the bill was first envisioned, I do not think it was controversial. However, since then, a lot of ramifications have come in to play, in particular those outlined by the opposition critic for foreign aid. I will talk later about the effects on the world food supply and world food crisis, the interrelations with the bill and the tweaking of it.

For the public watching and hearing the different points of views and concerns, the first thing to remember is the bill would only change the regulatory framework. It would not in itself do anything other than that. It would set the stage and the legislative ability for the government to act, but it would not cause any action. Nothing would change until the power provided under the bill would be used.

Almost everyone in the House, with the exception of a few members, understands that the regulations then can be used most effectively when the results of current scientific and statistical studies show the best use of those regulations, the best allocation of funds, regulations and legislation related to biofuels, biodiesel, ethanol and various products.

The bill only would allow the government to make regulations related to the exporting and composition of fuels. I think most people would agree that it is good for the government to have the ability to control these items. However, then the debate will be over what the government does with that control.

*Government Orders*

Current debates are around the world food crisis, the impact ethanol and biodiesels have on that and the use of waste by the next generation. I think most members of the House, including the minister, because he set aside \$500 million for it, would prefer to have biodiesels produced not from items that could be food or food producing soils particularly, but from the waste products of those soils. The various alternative fuels, low emission fuels, can be produced from animal waste, plant waste and agricultural waste, such as straw, husks, wood waste from sawmills, switchgrass and cellulose waste. There is a great hydrogen plant in Ottawa.

I do not imagine too many people would disagree that there can be a great symbiotic relationship between agriculture and the use of waste products to ultimately produce a cleaner environment. Those waste products could be used for something productive and we would have much lower emissions. As we know the world is in a crisis in regard to greenhouse gas emissions. It affects my riding in the north more dramatically than anywhere else in the world. Species are becoming extinct. They are moving their ranges, which then threatens aboriginal peoples who depend on a certain species to be in a certain location at a certain time. It is causing havoc with the infrastructure. Therefore, we need bills such as this, initiatives that will reduce greenhouse gases.

Notwithstanding a lot of the scientific advisers have been cancelled by the government, we need to do a good scientific analysis on the actual effectiveness and efficiency of the various proposals to reduce greenhouse gases and other noxious elements in our air.

• (1120)

Everyone is quite aware that there is a world food crisis and it is the link to ethanol, which is part of the debate. However, I want to reiterate what many other speakers have said, which is we have another important bill before Parliament, Bill C-293. Hopefully everyone will support it and get it through quickly. It targets Canada's aid to the areas where it was originally intended to go. Our former agriculture minister, Susan Whelan, when she was the CIDA minister, worked in this direction to ensure that aid went to the right areas, and food would be one of those.

I want to talk about one area of the food crisis that has not been mentioned in the debate. It is a bit peripheral, but it is a very important crisis to a number of people in the world. That is the Burmese people in refugee camps on the Thailand border, where I visited in January. About 140,000 Burmese people are running from a horrendous dictatorship. All members of our Parliament have been very—

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not want to take away from the serious issue about which the member is talking, but we are at report stage and third reading of Bill C-33. Debate is supposed to be extremely focused on the issue at hand and these meandering type of comments in debates do not have any place at third reading.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member is speaking about what other people have spoken about at great length, but I would ask him to come back to the bill from time to time.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, there could not be more relevance in what I have said. I am talking about a world food

crisis. A number of people have said that the bill could make it worse. I am talking about a crisis in the world and different aspects of it. It is much more relevant than, for instance, what the previous government member said, pretending it was a myth with no facts. I will quote facts later on in my speech related to the substantiveness of that crisis.

I am sure the member would not want to put forward a bill that could be the cause of malnutrition and starvation of people. I am trying to be supportive of the bill and the initiative, but we have to look at these determinants of the bill.

Relevant to the bill is the food crisis in the Burmese refugee camps. Food prices have gone up three times. The Thai-Burma border control, which deals with those prices and supplies the food from Canadian aid, has a \$7 million shortfall right now. For the children, the elders and pregnant women, the rations will have to be cut from 2,000 calories a day to 1,000, or a cut from about seven food items to only rice and salt. I cannot believe any member of the House would want only rice and salt for every meal. Therefore, there is a crisis in food supply, and members cannot deny it is occurring.

Yesterday the government was generous with its aid for food, but this is another aspect. We need an additional \$1 million to be added to what the government has provided to this area.

Continuing with the matter of ethanol, the Canadian Renewable Fuels Association has made the point that although ethanol production has increased in the United States, so has corn production. In fact, it is at higher levels than ever. Therefore, more exports are going to the rest of the world. The problem is not necessarily in North America. Experts around the world have suggested there is a problem. Biofuel critics from as far away as Ethiopia, Mali, Philippines and Paraguay warn Canadian lawmakers that western thirst for green fuels is costing human lives. Indigenous peoples in northern Argentina are dying of malnutrition as they lose their land to agricultural expansion.

In conclusion, the bill does nothing in itself. All it does is give the government the ability to regulate. We can support that, but we support the submissions by the various opposition parties that it needs to be studied to determine exactly what direction those regulations go in so they do not deprive people food, but at the same time continue to make a cleaner environment as for which our leader has called.

• (1125)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague and my next-door neighbour from Yukon on his speech. We in the Northwest Territories and Yukon share a lot of interest in reducing energy costs.

When we talk about cellulosic ethanol, we are talking about a process which converts cellulosic material into ethanol at about a 40% energy efficiency conversion ratio. In other words, 40% of the energy within the cellulose is converted into ethanol.

*Government Orders*

Right now we have a very simple way of converting cellulose product at 100% efficiency in Canadian homes and businesses. We can put it into coal plants. It is called pelletization. Any cellulosic product can be pelletized, such as wood. Without the intense effort that we are going into, to produce cellulosic ethanol, we can replace natural gas in homes and coal in coal-fired plants. We can do a number of things, where thermal energy is required, with cellulosic product at a very low cost and at 100% efficiency.

By developing the cellulosic ethanol business, we are entering into a less efficient way of using a product that exists right across this country and could be used in every local community to heat our homes, to do a number of things, including Yukon where of course people right now are suffering with \$1.30 a litre cost of fuel oil. In the Northwest Territories right now, my government, which I am very proud of, is converting its buildings to use wood pellets because it is half the cost.

What we see here is a move toward an industry-based solution which does not really serve everyone across the country. To my hon. colleague, would it not make more sense to use the most efficient way of using our energy resources to produce the best result for Canadians?

• (1130)

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree and that is basically what I said in my speech. We have to use the most efficient method of cutting greenhouse gases. I would be very interested in any studies he has on wood pelletization, of which we do some in my riding, in comparison to the emissions and efficiency of cellulosic ethanol, which of course is much more efficient than the first ethanols developed.

I am delighted the member has gas at only \$1.30 a litre in his riding. This weekend I had to fill up and it was \$1.47 a litre. So I definitely think we have to use the most efficient method. Basically, the point the member made proves my point, that we have to get down to that scientific analysis. There are different good methods, such as solar; wind; pelletization, as he mentioned; biodiesel; biofuels; clean coal, which is connected to carbon sequestration; but some are better than others. If we are going to invest taxpayers' money, it cannot be a knee-jerk reaction.

We must do an analysis to ensure that we are investing in what will be the most efficient and the cleanest for the amount that we are putting in and that it will not harm the world food supply but will improve the environment. Our leader has been constantly saying that these are the types of fuels that we need to invest in to improve the environment and lower greenhouse gases.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member goes to the BIOCAP Canada site, there is a very clear and definitive analysis of greenhouse gas emissions from both pelletization and use of ethanol or any others, soya-based diesel, canola-based diesel, or a number of others. He will get a very clear picture of what is going on with the energy transfers with all these types of products.

As I say, the \$1.30 is for fuel oil in the Northwest Territories, which we use to heat our homes. We could certainly convert our homes to use wood pellets inasmuch as we wanted to do that.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that information. Certainly, in different areas of the country there will be

different solutions, depending on the geography. We cannot do for instance carbon sequestration in many parts of the country because there is not the right geology. We cannot use hydro in certain parts of the country because it is not available. In areas where we have 24 hours of daylight in the summer, solar can be very useful at certain times of the year. I think if we all have the same objective, which is to cut greenhouse gases, increase energy efficiency and cut pollutants, we will use the right solution in the right geographical area of the nation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question is on Motion No. 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** There has been a request that the vote be deferred until 3 p.m. this day.

\* \* \*

**CANADA CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY ACT**

The House resumed from April 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-52, An Act respecting the safety of consumer products, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are now moving from the world food crisis to something that I believe is equally important for the House to address, which is consumer product safety.

We all have a responsibility to protect and promote the health and well-being of all Canadians, but there are some circumstances where the system we have today has not met that need.

*Government Orders*

Bill C-52, if I may just highlight the summary, modernizes the regulatory regime for consumer products in Canada and creates prohibitions with respect to the manufacturing, importing, selling, advertising, packaging and labelling of consumer products, including those that are a danger to human health and safety. The bill will make it easier to identify whether a consumer product is a danger and more effectively prevents or addresses the danger.

The Liberals will be supporting the bill at second reading to go to committee. There are some very serious questions that need to be addressed, which cannot be fully handled at second reading because we do not have the opportunity to have the opinion of the expert, the stakeholder and a broad range of people. I suspect that the committee, should the bill pass at second reading, will have a very lively debate and hearings on the issues related to consumer product safety.

I reviewed the minister's speech when he introduced the bill. He noted that the vast majority of suppliers that make, import, distribute and sell consumer products take safety very seriously. He also noted that it is basically because these businesses value their reputations. I suspect that is a logical conclusion.

However, problems can and do occur, and Canadians will recall that there were a number of incidences. One which I even raised in the House with the minister at the time had to do with high levels of lead in the paints on children's toys. Those were, I believe, coming from China, if I recall the details.

The fact remains that there are problems that can and do occur, and there have been a number of them. The bill is timely and appropriate for Parliament to look at, particularly since the Hazardous Products Act has not been thoroughly reviewed in some 40 years.

Issues are changing. Technology is changing. We have a responsibility to ensure that the regulatory framework that we have is in a position to prevent and detect, so we can protect the health and safety of Canadians.

As I indicated, there will be some questions regarding the bill. One of those would be with regard to the issue of introducing the power to effect a recall of products. That does not exist right now under the current legislation. This is done on a voluntary basis.

Members and the public will know that there are numerous examples of where companies voluntarily recall their products because they have identified a problem through incidents that have occurred that have been brought to their attention and that indicate that there is a prevalence which is unacceptable. If they value their reputation, obviously there are companies which will want to remediate the problems quickly so that they do not have any other significant impact on their ability to provide goods, services or otherwise conduct their business.

• (1135)

The concern about the power to recall is that it may turn out that this would be used excessively by inspectors. That becomes a problem if there are complaints. Depending on the criteria and the assessment process, there may in fact be a situation where the pendulum swings very far to the other side, to the extent that there

are some unintended consequences to businesses, maybe some harm to a business simply because recalls are becoming more prevalent.

There is a significant move toward the American way, a litigious society. People are going to start going to the courts. There is the potential for lawsuits in the future rather than to negotiate a recall or action by the private sector that is currently done.

The point is whether or not there has to be some clarification about when the power can be used and some of the options we may want to consider. These are important areas that the committee would be able to explore with expert witnesses. The committee would be able to call specific witnesses to find out what is happening not only in other jurisdictions but in similar circumstances with other legislation with regard to remediating or dealing with a problem area.

The second area that would require some discussion at the health committee has to do with staffing requirements to deal with this new power of product recall. I have had an opportunity to look at Bill C-52, at least up to the section where it requires regulation, and I am going to speak about those in a moment.

The way the bill is currently structured, it will require the collaboration of border security agencies, Health Canada inspectors, as well as CFIA inspectors. Of these three groups, the one that is currently least able to deal with this on the inspection side is Health Canada. It has the lowest number of inspectors and the bill puts a lot of responsibility on Health Canada.

The first committee I was ever on was the health committee. I have had substantial involvement with Health Canada, whether it be on tobacco labelling, aboriginal health issues, or reproductive technologies. Bill C-13, the reproductive technologies bill, I think took about three years of our lives and, incidentally, the regulations that were required under Bill C-13 still have not been fully prepared, implemented and promulgated. The regulations in that bill on which we spent so much time still have not been fully implemented. I will speak a little more about regulations in a second.

There certainly is that issue of staff. Those are two of the items that should be dealt with regarding the committee consideration should this bill pass at second reading, which I believe it will.

It is easy to protect the health and well-being of Canadians and to ensure safety if we are prepared to go to the nth degree and establish all of the checks and balances and procedures using all of the tools that Parliament could authorize Health Canada to put into place. However, if we take it to its logical extreme, we get into a situation where the commercial activity has been impeded and all of a sudden a business cannot provide the goods and services it normally would because of the regulatory environment.

A very serious issue for parliamentarians to consider not only with this bill but with many others is whether or not there will be the unintended consequence of impeding economic activity by increasing a regulatory regime that is not justified by the issue we are trying to deal with. It is never black and white. It is never a matter of touching one thing to take care of another. We have to look beyond that and find out what the consequential implications may be.

*Government Orders*

●(1140)

The issue here is whether or not we are moving into a new regime of policing the commercial activity to the extent that it will impose a regulatory regime. We do not know what that is right now and we do not know the extent to which it is going to be used. As a matter of fact, we will not know that until after the bill goes through all stages and receives royal assent because that is the way things are happening.

However, committees can, as the health committee did with the reproductive technologies bill, say that no regulations shall be promulgated unless they are sent to the health committee for review and comment in advance. Unfortunately, in the case of the reproductive technologies bill, the committee had no authority specifically in the bill or from the minister to make any changes to the regulations. The committee could only review and comment, and that is a problem.

If regulations are enabled by the legislation, but the detail gives us something different that we did not understand to be the case, Parliament has no tools whatsoever to deal with what I would call, and maybe it is strong language, draconian regulations. There may be some unintended consequences, such as an impact on legitimate businesses by increasing the burden of the regulations, the responsibility of the businesses to know what those regulations are, to monitor them and to ensure that their businesses are compliant. It is a very significant cost to business to understand and to know the law.

We are dealing with an area which, from a lay perspective, Canadians will certainly want to ensure that Parliament and the Government of Canada have taken appropriate steps to provide for the safety of consumer products. There are certainly a number of areas in which there will be some concern by the stakeholders who will be impacted by this bill.

I did not have a copy of the bill readily available so I printed out a copy. The bill itself is at least 48 pages long, but I was scanning it and I came to the part dealing with regulations. This is something that I raised previously in the debate on Bill C-33. Under "Regulations", clause 38(1) of Bill C-52 says that the governor in council may make regulations for carrying out the purposes or provisions of the act. It does not say it will, or has to, or shall. It says may. I have always questioned that.

In this regard, because there is the potential that we are expanding the responsibilities of the border services agency, Health Canada and CFIA, all of a sudden the regulatory activity, and the cost and coordination of it, is going to create a significant demand of human resources and a significant risk in some respects to impeding or slowing down the current velocity of commercial activity, particularly with regard to imports.

●(1145)

There will also be differences in standards around the world. Certain products sold to Canadians have components made in various jurisdictions, but there is a final producer who puts them all together. Where the legal obligation and the rights and responsibilities lie also become very interesting questions to deal with.

It is important to remind members that the purpose of the bill is to protect the public by addressing and preventing dangers posed to human health and safety by consumer products that are circulated within Canada and those that are imported. As I indicated, we have products that are imported as finished products, but also components which go into other products. The bill covers everything that we should be concerned about in terms of public safety.

The current consumer product safety system functions on a voluntary basis, as I indicated. If a product is dangerous or poses a health risk, the corporation can issue a recall. This bill would prohibit the sale, import, manufacture, packaging, labelling, and advertising of consumer products that may pose a risk to consumers. While voluntary recalls would continue to happen, inspectors named under the act or by the minister would be able to order a recall of a consumer product.

I must admit that when I hear about a product recall in the media, I have often wondered how much it really costs. I have often wondered how much of that cost is effectively passed on to the consumer. Public safety is certainly an issue, but in terms of adding to the economic cost of a product increases more in recalls that may not be totally warranted and may be adding to the cost of the consumer product as well. Obviously due diligence should be used in exercising this extraordinary power.

The bill would also create a tracing mechanism. It would force corporations, manufacturers and importers to keep all documents containing information needed to identify the origin of the product and where it was distributed. This would ensure that when a recall was made, the products would be easily removed from the store shelves. Knowing the origin of the product would help to enforce the act and would prevent further occurrences. These provisions make some sense.

The bill would also substantially increase the fines and penalties, something that this House has dealt with significantly in a number of ministries not just through the amendments to the criminal justice act, but I can think of other ministries where fines or penalties are proposed.

Deterrence is an important aspect of the dialogue. At committee I am going to be looking for an assessment of whether or not the proposed increases in the fines and penalties when a product is deemed unsafe would have the intended effect based on the experience of other jurisdictions, other countries, or the experts who are proposing them, if there is not any research on that particular aspect.

The bill would also allow the minister to seek an injunction when an act is being committed or to prevent someone from committing an act that contravenes the bill. There is an enabling provision in the bill regarding the minister.

Inspectors would be given extraordinary powers to search and seize. They could effectively search any place they believe is involved in manufacturing, importing, packaging, storing, advertising, selling, labelling, testing or transporting consumer goods. A warrant would only be necessary in cases where an inspector wished to search the dwelling.



*Government Orders*

This is very serious. When there is that kind of list of broad-sweeping regulatory powers, we want to be absolutely sure it is not going a little too far.

• (1150)

This is a very difficult bill. It is a very long bill for us to assess and on which to give informed opinions on some of its aspects at second reading, but I will look very carefully, as I am sure all members will, to the proceedings at the health committee to find out what the facts are. Hopefully we will have better consumer protection for Canadians.

• (1155)

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the member's comments on Bill C-52, An Act respecting the safety of consumer products. One of the areas that I am concerned about, and I know from his remarks that he is as well, is the whole question of the safety of imports into Canada.

One of the problems that I see with Bill C-52 is that it lacks any comprehensive system to ensure that items are safe before they enter Canada. The system it contemplates targets high risk sources for higher surveillance, but it depends more on reacting to safety problems that are identified through use after the fact. It relies on identifying a problem once the product has already been distributed in Canada. This seems to be a major problem. It might be better to try to identify those problems before the product reaches consumers in Canada altogether.

I wonder if the member might comment on that. Does he think it might be better to have some kind of pre-entry testing system or some pre-distribution testing system for imports that might make Canadians safer overall? That would not make the Canadian consumer the testing ground for whether there is a problem with a product imported from outside of Canada.

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, it is an excellent question. As a matter of fact, when the minister was here to propose the bill, it was a question that I posed to him at that time. There were a number of examples, particularly coming out of China, for instance, where product safety issues were raised. In fact, I think I quoted from a letter from a constituent who asked me why we did not have these things, every one of them, checked before they got onto the shelves for Canadians.

I think I addressed it to some extent in my comments by saying that we could protect the safety of Canadians 100% by putting into place absolutely everything we can possibly think of, including rigorous testing on every product, but we do not do that now. The member asks a good question: why do we not do more or should we be doing more to protect the safety of Canadians with regard to consumer products?

However, we do establish guidelines and requirements for the materials that are used, for the content. The lead content would be an example that people would understand. Products coming in with leaded paint is one example. Those are proscribed. We have to understand that if somebody is importing that product, where does the liability lie? Where does the responsibility lie with regard to imported components or finished products for distribution and sale in Canada in ensuring compliance with Canadian law and Canadian standards? That is where it is.

I think the member probably would agree that if we have an indication that a certain distributor or certain kinds of products become clearly problematic, and that is where some of the issues have arisen, there may be some middle ground where in fact there is a monitoring process of those areas in which there have been examples of product safety violations, as it were, or risks to product safety or the health of Canadians from products.

However, the question still becomes whether or not we want to guarantee 100% protection. I can tell the House that in the case of the U.S. Army, its threshold is to look at and check about 1%, I believe, between 1% and 4%, of products it purchases. Of course, it is one of the major consumers within the United States in terms of product acquisition, and statistically that is as effective as checking 40%. It is kind of interesting. I do not know what the science is and all of these other things, but I think we have to be careful about imposing requirements that may in fact have some serious unintended consequences on the economic side and may not get significant benefit improvements in terms of the safety side.

• (1200)

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Mr. Speaker, it is great to have a supplementary question for the member. I appreciate his thoughtful response. My other question is around the resources that go toward actually enforcing this kind of legislation. In the past, we have had consumer protection legislation, but often there have not been the resources to actually enforce that legislation. I think there is some attempt in this legislation to improve the situation and to see a stronger approach to product safety, but without the resources to do the appropriate enforcement, that really does not make much difference at all.

I wonder if the member would support ensuring that there is something in the legislation that might hold the government responsible for maintaining an adequate inspection capacity, for instance, with adequate staff to process, investigate and respond to problems that do arise, and to make sure that the new reporting system contemplated by the legislation is actually effective.

Is there something we can do to make sure that the capacity is actually there to back up the legislation?

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, that is also a very good question. Coincidentally, we are facing that kind of situation in the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, which I chair. Right now, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner has a staff shortage. It has only about 70% of its authorized staff complement and has new responsibilities under the Federal Accountability Act. It has requested and is authorized to have another 20 employees. As it turns out, the privacy commission has had to rely on contracting people in because it cannot hire people quickly enough to fill some of these jobs.

In fact, we found the same thing in the Information Commissioner's office. From my work on the government operations and estimates committee, I have found that this is prevalent in a number of departmental areas where there simply is not the qualified and properly trained staff to discharge the responsibility.

*Government Orders*

In my conversations and directions to the Privacy Commissioner, I told her that she is asking for increased powers, more sweeping powers for the Privacy Commissioner to report more often and to initiate criminal investigations, et cetera, but she does not have the staff to do it. As a matter of fact, the backlogs in terms of investigations are so large that it is going to take her an awful long time to address them.

Therefore, the member raises a very important question. It is easy to add those powers, but can the responsibility be discharged in a responsible fashion? Can the job be done? There is no point in giving someone the responsibility unless there is the commitment not only of the dollars but of having the capacity in place to discharge those responsibilities. One makes those undertakings to the Canadian people that it is being put in place, and I think the member is quite correct, in that it has to be with the assumption that it can be delivered.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the bill gives the power to the government to enforce recalls, which I think on the surface appears very reasonable. One would think that we would want our government to recall dangerous products, but there are ramifications.

Now we have voluntary recalls. The government seems to have been able to convince industry to do this when necessary. However, I have a question. Once we put this in as a government authority, is it possible that with the increased litigiousness of our society it will become almost a requirement? An inspector will want it so that he is safe, so that government does not get sued on the slightest bit of questionable recalled products, to the extent there could be chaos in the markets and, if not, exceptional costs to industry and lack of competitiveness in Canada when it is not really necessary. I am wondering if there is any way of mitigating that or if the member thinks that might be a problem.

•(1205)

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, of course there is. The issue has to do with whether or not we abandon the current process, where there are negotiations and working with those industries to find a resolution. We negotiate resolutions. If we have the power of recall, the question becomes whether we are going to abandon the efforts on a bilateral basis to resolve issues. This is a question that will have to be dealt with by the health committee.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to speak at second reading on An Act respecting the safety of consumer products, the bill introduced by the Minister of Health. The first thing I would like to say is, “finally”. Finally, there will be legislation governing hazardous products. In a way, we do not have Parliament to thank for this bill, but the Auditor General of Canada, who sounded the alarm on this issue in November 2006 in a fairly substantial report.

However, there is no one in this House who has not heard about dangerous toys in the past several years, especially with the significant rise in imports from countries whose environmental standards are not necessarily as high as Quebec's or Canada's. This is the downside of globalization. There are some very positive aspects of globalization and market expansion. But although in the past we were concerned about protecting our domestic market, today we

have to make sure we are properly protected against products from other countries.

In the Auditor General's November 2006 report, one chapter, entitled “Allocating Funds to Regulatory Programs”, clearly indicated that product safety program managers cannot fulfill their mandate, for several reasons. Let us look at this report in a bit more detail.

First of all, consumer products such as cradles, tents and carpets are very concrete things that children and families use. Cosmetics, deodorants and soaps are also part of our daily lives. There are also workplace hazardous materials information systems, which provide information on corrosive materials, for example, and protection against radiation from chemicals and clinical and consumer products, such as X-rays, laser beams and sun lamps. Lastly, there are new substances such as fabric dyes and fuel additives. These are very concrete things that were not adequately covered, according to the Auditor General.

Moreover, product safety program managers, the officials responsible for running the program, believe that many of the activities related to regulation do not allow them to discharge their responsibilities adequately. These conclusions are based on an internal study of what is needed in terms of resources allocated to the program, documents concerning resource allocation and interviews conducted during the Auditor General's audit.

Clearly, an effort needed to be made. It is unfortunate that the government took so long to react, but at least we have this bill now. We hope that it will be passed quickly, but only after the committee has studied it, because the committee might improve it. At least the people will get the message that we want to provide adequate basic regulation.

We have already had several warnings, such as when some toys were found to have high lead levels. A week or two ago, a product that was in almost all water bottles that people bought to use while exercising or going about their daily activities was suddenly banned. There are more and more of these kinds of products in the things we use every day that are not subject to enough regulatory control. This bill should help fix that problem.

Currently, Canada does not require manufacturers of dangerous products—such as the cosmetics, cradles, tents and carpets mentioned earlier—that fall under its jurisdiction to test their products or prove that they are not a danger to consumer health and safety. Before this bill was introduced, the government had no way to intervene. As you can see, it is high time we moved forward on this.

*Government Orders*

Consumers do not have any real protection against incidents like the forced recall of thousands of toys made in China or the discovery of toxic, prohibited substances in tubes of toothpaste from South Africa. Those are very concrete examples. After the incident is over, after there are very negative and unfortunate consequences, including death, is not the time to monitor these operations. We must move as much as possible towards zero tolerance in this area, in order to minimize these incidents.

In our society, if we can afford to spend so much money on defence, for example, we should have the money for proper monitoring of these kinds of measures.

• (1210)

In our society, it is rather absurd that we have no legislation to monitor these substances, although we seem to find the money to take military action overseas, offensive action that, in my opinion, is unjustified and must end. Enough of that comparison, however. It is obvious that major improvements are needed.

Furthermore, in the summer of 2007, thousands of toys made in China were recalled by manufacturers because they contained lead. The Bloc Québécois urged the minister to take immediate action. It proposed tightening all hazardous products safety requirements in order to ban the production, promotion and marketing of any product that could present an unacceptable danger to health.

It only makes sense. That is what we were calling for. It took several months, nearly several years after the Auditor General's recommendations, before anything was done. And here we are today, considering this bill.

We also called on Ottawa to make manufacturers responsible for inspecting their products and proving that they pose no danger to the health and safety of consumers. Clearly, a manufacturer of products of this nature should ensure their quality and be accountable.

Last December, after four months of inaction, the government finally said it would introduce a bill—sometime in early 2008—to change its strategy for regulating product safety. That is the bill we have before us.

The Conservatives' inaction in this federal jurisdiction has caused growing concern among many Quebec and Canadian parents about health and safety issues when buying toys.

The bill is now before us. What will it do? The purpose of Bill C-52 is to tighten the safety requirements for dangerous products by creating prohibitions with respect to the manufacturing, importing, selling, advertising, packaging and labelling of consumer products, including those that are a danger to human health or safety.

Holding manufacturers and importers accountable is another very important aspect. The mechanism for tracing the person responsible in the chain of production has to be as clear as possible. Manufacturers and importers must ensure compliance of their products and report to the minister.

This problem seems to be more prevalent in the food industry, where wholesalers make large purchases from countries all around the world. It becomes very difficult to determine who was

responsible for importing a dangerous product that was not properly inspected. There needs to be proper monitoring to avoid mistakes.

Under the bill, the government will be able to require safety reports on all supply sources and all components of a product. These safety reports are like a traceability system to be used in the event of a product recall. Merchants must keep records of the purchase and sale of products and the minister must be informed within two days of an incident involving the product or country concerned. Clearly they were starting from scratch.

These important elements are currently missing. It is hard to understand how products ended up circulating freely in our consumer system without any monitoring, except that we had satisfactory domestic rules. Now that we are part of the global market, these rules need to be reinforced and the people who manufacture goods have to know there will be consequences if their products do not comply with standards.

In fact, the government could demand the withdrawal—or recall—of products that may prove harmful to consumers. At present, this occurs on a voluntary basis. There have been cases where manufacturers, acting voluntarily, took their time in providing replacements or decided that it was not urgent enough. Now, there is the possibility of imposing the recall of products and that is a step forward.

On conviction on indictment, the penalty would be a fine of not more than \$5 million and imprisonment for two years. On summary conviction, a first offence would result in a fine of not more than \$250,000 and imprisonment for a term of not more than six months. A subsequent offence would be punishable by a fine of not more than \$500,000 and imprisonment of not more than 18 months. We are sending a very clear message that the fun and games are over. We will no longer tolerate the type of behaviour exhibited in the past. We wish to ensure that there is adequate protection.

Naturally, there is a difference between passing a bill, allowing its entry into force and ensuring that there are sufficient resources to implement it. In the past, we did not get the job done.

• (1215)

This can be seen with the inspectors. It can also be seen in the field when inspections are carried out, when speaking to those who do inspections at customs. There was a great deal of criticism about the lack of regulations and legal tools, but there was also not enough money and too few inspectors to achieve the objective.

*Government Orders*

The bill clearly states that there is a need for the resources. We have seen the government estimates for the budget. However, we will have to quickly evaluate all components to determine if the amounts are sufficient. Otherwise, it could have the opposite effect of what was initially expected if we create a law, impose regulations with possible fines and then, in the end, no one is monitoring it. It would be a little bit like having a system for traffic fines but no one was ensuring that a driver who broke the speed limit was fined. The driver needs to know that there is a system and that there are adequate controls. For that, sufficient resources are needed.

Officials with the product safety program have asked for funding. Program managers have indicated that their inability to discharge their responsibilities could have repercussions on the health and safety of Canadians, such as exposing consumers to dangerous, non-compliant products. Unfortunately, we have already seen this happen.

There is also the possibility that the government could be held responsible for certain repercussions. The government is responsible for providing adequate regulation. We cannot just say that companies are responsible for regulating themselves. We can see that attitudes about this are changing. Years ago, it was about voluntary recalls, but now, the government can demand a mandatory recall. At the other end, we have to ensure that the government discharges its responsibilities.

In November 2006, the Auditor General's report revealed that the Government of Canada knew that consumers were exposed to risk because of lack of funding for the program. It took the government a long time to act on that, which makes us wonder about the government's level of interest and competence with respect to its own files. That gives people real cause for concern. We hope that passing this bill will help allay people's concerns. We need concrete examples to show that we are achieving results.

The government's repeated failure to act gives us good reason to be very vigilant about this. For example, on August 2, 2007, Fisher Price issued a voluntary recall of some of its products—including figurines and toys sold separately—manufactured by foreign suppliers between April 19 and July 6, 2007. The products listed may have been painted with paint containing too much lead. Lead is toxic when ingested by young children and can have undesirable effects on health.

This kind of thing does happen, and we want to prevent it from happening in the future. We are seeing an international movement toward doing something about this. The United States took steps that are very similar to what we are doing here in the federal Parliament. For example, 413 different products were recalled last year in the United States, and 231 of them, more than half, were toys. In the United States, 84% of toys sold are made in China. In Europe, the European Commission proposed making toys safer by prohibiting the use of carcinogens in manufacturing them and by increasing monitoring. That measure will not come into effect until the end of 2008. The entire western world seems to be moving forward with measures like these because we have had serious warnings. It is high time we took action with these measures.

Europe is planning to ban chemicals, carcinogens, mutagens and toxins that affect reproduction from toys made for children under the

age of 14. They are lowering allowable limits for other substances such as lead and mercury and have prohibited about forty allergenic perfumes. The EU wants to broaden the rules to prevent the risk of ingesting small parts and also wants to tackle toys contained in food—because of the danger of choking—and ban toys that could be ingested along with food.

The legislation in the United States, Europe and perhaps other countries in the world may have information or other elements that could be incorporated in the bill at committee stage. Based on the testimony we hear, we may be able to improve the principle of the bill, the general framework—which in and of itself is fine—through appropriate amendments to ensure its effectiveness. This is an area where we have no right to fail. It is essential that this legislation, which will surely be in place for many years, produce the desired results. Unfortunately, if in two, three or four years we still have cases of lead poisoning in children, or any other similar negative outcome, it will most likely be because we did not study this bill closely enough and give it enough teeth.

● (1220)

The committee will have to keep that in mind.

One new thing in the bill has to do with preparing and maintaining documents.

13. (1) Any person who manufactures, imports, advertises, sells or tests a consumer product for commercial purposes shall prepare and maintain:

(a) documents that indicate:

(i) in the case of a retailer, the name and address of the person from whom they obtained the product and the location where—and the period during which—they sold the product—

We often hear about additional documentation, about the paperwork required by governments, but it is clearly necessary sometimes.

Some people may rant about government requirements always being there to trip up businesses and create more restrictions. But in this case, experience calls on us to implement these things, and we must ensure that we have everything we need.

The bill warns that if things are not done right and documented properly, there could be a penalty. Requiring people to document a product's history makes it possible to quickly track down a product's origin as well as the stores that have the product in stock.

I already spoke about increasing fines. The bill's preamble has a definition that is very similar to the precautionary principle.

Whereas the Parliament of Canada recognizes that a lack of full scientific certainty is not to be used as a reason for postponing measures that prevent adverse effects on human health if those effects could be serious or irreversible;

*Government Orders*

According to this version of the bill, toy manufacturers cannot claim that there is no clear, certain, scientific evidence that the toy is dangerous. It will be possible to say that there is sufficient doubt to ban the product or require that appropriate corrective action be taken. This is a good thing. It would be useful to apply the precautionary principle in a number of bills in different sectors.

For this situation, it is important to give more power and money to inspectors so that they can do their jobs properly.

In conclusion, the government knew as far back as 2006 that the law did not adequately protect the public. Still, the government waited until now to introduce this bill. The Bloc Québécois has long called on the minister to tighten hazardous product safety requirements in order to ban the production, promotion and marketing of any product that could present an unacceptable danger to health. We will be extremely vigilant, to make sure the bill achieves that goal, not only in principle, but in practice.

We also demanded that Ottawa require manufacturers to inspect their own products and show that they do not pose a danger to consumer health and safety. The legislative approach in the bill answers the Bloc's requests. We will wait for the regulations and examine them to see whether they produce the desired results.

In my opinion, we owe the Auditor General our thanks for producing a report on this issue, because it helped move things forward more quickly. In fact, we heard from businesses and families that the Auditor General's report had spurred the government to finally take action.

Even though the bill requires that companies make sure their products are harmless, the government will have to ensure that there are enough inspectors to implement the legislation.

In conclusion, in our society, the federal government finds money to do many things and has invested in numerous areas that are not its responsibility. The government needs to make sure it invests enough money in this area to exercise adequate control.

The Bloc Québécois supports this bill and hopes that it will be amended and strengthened further. As I said in my introduction, "finally". I repeat, "finally". Let us hope that parents, children, families and consumers in general will feel safer about the products they purchase. It will be a challenge to continue to feel safe about new products, especially those coming from all the other countries of the world thanks to globalization.

• (1225)

[English]

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear that we have the support of the Bloc in principle on the nature of this bill. I think one of the primary obligations we have as parliamentarians is to ensure that the products Canadians buy are safe.

I want to point out that the overwhelming majority of the suppliers in this country do take seriously their responsibility and obligation to provide Canadians with safe products. However, we do know that some recent high profile cases have caused some concern about the safety of the products that are available on the market.

However, the problem is that this regime we are currently seeking to amend has been in place for over 40 years. It is time that it gets modernized and takes into account, not only the punitive approaches, but the preventive approaches that this bill encompasses. It also proposes requirements for suppliers to keep documentation on the source and destination of their consumer products. This is to aid in the tracing of the product should a recall or other measure be necessary. I agree with my colleague that it is inconceivable this was not already part of the system, that we should have been able to trace it.

I am a fairly recently elected member here having only been here about two years. How often in the past 15 years did the member and his party pressure the previous government to change this and bring it up to modern standards? Why does he think it took a Conservative government to finally take decisive action on this to ensure the safety of the products that Canadians purchase?

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question.

I agree with him that the vast majority of suppliers—the people who create, manufacture and sell toys—are honest, as are those who make other products. But the reality is that there is no room for error in this sector. Risk management is needed. We have to ensure that the percentage of dishonest people is reduced to a minimum. That is why I was talking about a near-zero tolerance.

In response to the second part of his question, it was not so long ago that we allowed Chinese products to enter the market. China became a member of the WTO three or four years ago and that resulted in a massive increase in imported products. I am not saying that Chinese products are not good, generally speaking, but we know that 80% of toys imported to the United States are from China. We see that people constantly seek to make a profit every step of the way, from the U.S. parent company that awards contracts or subcontracts, to the people who have to produce at a lower cost and pay meagre wages. We are all well aware of global competition.

There have been concrete examples and, in my opinion, public pressure, more than the Conservative government or any of the parties here, has prompted us to take action. There have been some appalling examples. When we buy a toy for a two or three year old child who puts that toy in his or her mouth and we are not sure whether the toy is safe, only to find out that there are unacceptable levels of lead in that product, that is what prompts us to react.

In an ideal world, when we opened up the markets across the planet, we would have considered not only the benefits of having more trade, but also the conditions under which this trade ought to take place. There is a message here.

*Government Orders*

I will close with that. I think we should apply this same type of reaction in a number of sectors when it comes to globalization. I am all for international trade, but it has to be well regulated and well monitored to avoid unacceptable extremes that produce results that may be the opposite of what is desired, namely, having a population that is healthy and well-protected in the purchases it makes and ensuring that it gets high-quality products.

● (1230)

[*English*]

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the middle of his remarks, my colleague from the Bloc made some points that warrant us revisiting and asking him to elaborate.

I think he was making the point that our consumer safety, to some extent, has been sacrificed on the altar of laissez-faire capitalism and the globalization of capital that has led to the free movement of goods and services but without the corresponding health and safety protections that we used to enjoy when more products were made in Canada.

The point we need to reinforce is that our vulnerability to the consumer threats that we face from some of these toxins is partly based on the fact that we lost control of what is on our store shelves when we lost our manufacturing sector. We need to remind people again that this is a predictable consequence that we warned people about. I have heard members from the Bloc warn Parliament about these predictable consequences, that as we let our manufacturing sector disappear and we allow everything that we use to be made offshore, we had better have very stringent controls because there are people in far away places who are not operating by the same standards.

I am a socialist, a trade unionist and a fiercely proud Canadian nationalist and I decry, I lament and deplore the fact that we cannot find anything anymore that says “made in Canada” on the bottom. It is to our great discredit that we have allowed that to happen.

The connection, I believe, is direct and undeniable. I would ask my colleague to expand on that if he believes that is one of the root causes of the vulnerability that we face today.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Mr. Speaker, I think our society has suffered, and in fact is still suffering, from the negative effects of neo-liberalism. People believed that simply opening up trade would solve all the problems. People thought poverty would disappear with open markets. People believed that products would suddenly be much better. We know that, in reality, that is not how it works. We have seen it in the past and we must remember that.

We have some concrete examples from before globalization. Here, at the beginning of the 20th century, workers, people who were worried about their own environment, fought hard battles just to obtain the slightest protection. They earned those things, which improved our quality of life.

I think it is important to learn from the current example of the toys. This is the obvious factor to consider: if a toy is dangerous for our children, we want to ban that kind of toy.

There is another, less obvious factor, which is not as much of a concern for us, because it affects us less. The person at the other end of the production line making those goods probably earns \$1 an hour and works in terrible conditions that might even pose a danger to his or her health.

In the months and years to come, we will have to develop the control mechanisms identified around the world to guarantee the quality of products. Quebec and Canadian businesses and workers are ready to compete against the entire world as long as the playing field is level. If not, the environment will suffer and we will be moving away from the desired results. We lower the bar when we allow people to manufacture goods with inadequate consideration for the environment and for inadequate wages. As a result, our citizens who fought for decent wages and decent working conditions are forced to accept unacceptable working conditions.

We have to try to reverse this trend. We have to find original approaches, such as this bill, for dealing with hazardous goods. But we must also give some consideration to labour relations and working conditions of people all over the world.

This affects our families and our daily lives. However, we have to have the same consideration for an individual who, thousands of kilometres away, is forced to work for wretched wages because in Canada we drink their coffee and eat bananas produced elsewhere because we want to pay as little as possible for these goods.

We will have to move from a free trade system to a fair market, and that should become the rule in international agreements. We have work to do on that front.

As the saying goes, you have to eat an elephant one bite at a time. We have taken a step in the area of hazardous goods. In the months and years to come, we should be open to the idea of additional legislation to protect our working conditions.

● (1235)

[*English*]

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak to Bill C-52, the Canadian consumer product safety act. I will touch on some points that others have briefly mentioned.

The bill would modernize consumer protection in Canada and deals with prohibitions related to manufacturing, importing, selling advertising, packaging and labelling consumer products, including those that are a danger to human health and safety. This would make it easier to identify safe products.

On the surface, everyone would agree with that particular philosophy. However, the devil is in the detail and we need to talk about the details of a fairly complex act. I look forward to hearing some of the government members who have not yet spoken to the bill.

This area has not been revised since 1969. However, as the previous member from the Bloc mentioned, a number of crises have occurred and the government needed to act.

*Government Orders*

Before I begin my remarks, I must disagree with a comment made by an NDP member when he said that he could not find products labelled “made in Canada”. Sometimes there is the opposite problem. In agriculture, in particular, we can buy a bottle of olives that says “product of Canada” but olives are not grown here. The big problem in the agricultural industry and other industries is that, depending on the number of components, it appears to Canadians that they are buying something that was fully produced in Canada when it was not. Separate from this initiative, we need to take a close look at labelling to ensure that Canadian agriculture and business are protected by labelling.

A number of problems with products have occurred recently in Canada that are good examples of the necessity for this act. We had the toothpaste from South Africa that contained substances that were a danger to human health. We also had Fisher-Price products containing materials that were dangerous and toxic to children. Mattel, the American toy manufacturer, had to recall several million toys in the U.S. that were made in China. Some of the toys contained too much lead, such as the Barbie dolls and Geo Tracks toys. Fortunately, all these products have been recalled because they were dangerous to children.

The Auditor General looked into this in 2006 and pointed out all the problems with Health Canada and its ability to control dangerous products. She said that many of the managers of the product safety program were unable to fill their mandate because they lacked the tools. She said that they did not have enough human resources, that the resources they had were not used very well, and that the legislation was not very effective in protecting Canadians. The government has known about this since 2006.

Obviously, there have been problems with a number of products in Canada, and later in my speech I will talk about some more products, but there is also the issue of human resources. A number of members in the committee have raised the concern that it is fine to put in all sorts of new regulations and have inspections at every level of the process but if there are no inspectors and no funds to do that it does not change anything. There will be a lot of questions asked as to how the government plans to implement this because it has not really provided that detail yet.

In relation to inspectors, we want to ensure they are not overridden because they caused a problem. In the case of nuclear safety, an inspector found there was something wrong and the government simply proposed legislation to overrule the chief inspector and, in fact, eventually fired her. Therefore, that regime would not work if that is the type of attitude the government would bring to this bill.

A lot of regulations are involved. I am not against regulations but the bill I was talking about earlier today, Bill C-33, would have allowed the government to legislate certain things by regulations.

● (1240)

I have a constituent in my riding, Tony, who often approaches me and says that Canada is very dangerous because it rules by regulations, unlike Europe where everything has to be done by law. Regulations of course can be done by governor in council. Fortunately, we do have a committee, chaired by a very able chair right now from Scarborough, on the scrutiny of regulations, that has parliamentary overview in that respect, but it does not make policy

decisions and regulations can be made out of public oversight as far as policies go.

That is why in relation to all the bills we are discussing today and any bills that have regulations, members would like to see what the government is planning, what the general plans are related to those regulations and when they are coming. If the whole bill, like the last one, depends on regulations, then once again nothing will happen if they are not coming forward. They can have such a dramatic effect, as we talked about in the last bill related to a world food shortage. Members of Parliament would really like to know what those regulations are.

In this particular bill there are a number of things that will be decided by regulation. Certainly in committee, I am sure the three opposition parties will be asking the minister and government officials more questions about that. This will give them a head's up to be prepared in committee to explain the implementation of this, because it is a fairly complex and lengthy bill, and has a number of resources attached to it but there is no outline in the plan. I think it is \$113 million, but there is no outlined plan on how those resources would be used.

Would it be deployed on inspection resources? As I was saying earlier, this certainly needs a number of new resources to allow this bill to have any effect. How much money is there for that? I am sure the officials will be able to give us more information on that.

This bill would also reverse the burden of proof and impose that on the manufacturers, and of course it should be the duty of manufacturers to make sure that what they produce is safe for Canadians. I do not think anyone would disagree with that and I look forward to the agriculture committee to hearing from the Canadian Manufacturers Association on these types of conditions.

The legislation will also force manufacturers and importers of consumer products to test the safety of products regularly, and most importantly to disclose the test results. Once again, if dealt with effectively and efficiently, this will increase consumer protection for Canadians while still allowing the products to be available.

It is a bit of a question or a concern though, and once again we will want to see how the plan will work. A positive aspect of the bill is that it deals with inspections through the entire chain of production: advertising, shipping, assembly, labelling, and putting the product out. There are all these different stages and they have to be traceable. They must be documented. Of course, I hope there is not too much bureaucracy there for the business, but all this has to be documented and it is good that these stages can be traced.

We will have to discuss this more at committee, but my question is, how will there be a level playing field between Canadian products and products from overseas?

*Government Orders*

This would not always be the case, and often is not the case, but if all the components of a particular product were made in Canada and all the stages occurred in Canada, then it would be much easier for us to inspect and regulate that process. However, in this internationally competitive world, where everything is crossing borders and components are crossing borders with just in time production, there are all sorts of components and processes that are not in Canada.

How does the government plan to ensure that those parts of the processes can be dealt with so that the products that are coming from overseas have the same type of scrutiny as the ones in Canada at the various levels? If that is not possible, because of individual sovereignties, would there be inspections coming into the country with an increased enhancement in that respect? I would like an outline of how that would all work.

• (1245)

Another item that the bill allows is increased fines. I do not think anyone would disagree with that. I think \$5,000 was the limit before and that could just be considered as a cost of doing business. Some huge manufacturers could accept that as just a cost of business, just a charge that they have to pay. Now the fines have been increased up to \$5 million and two years in jail. If they are putting lives of Canadians at risk, putting the health of Canadians or their children at risk, obviously we want severe penalties for that.

These types of deterrents in other countries are higher at this point, until the bill passes, if it is to pass. They are higher in many places other than Canada. Deterrents in the United States and the European Union are much tougher. In Europe the fines can be as high as 5% of the company's annual revenue. At this time the United States imposes fines that go as high as several million dollars.

There will also be safety reports regarding all supply sources and components of a product. The system has all the features of a traceability system. Once again, I think this is good and important as long as it does not get into the hands of overzealous officials who were to make it a huge impediment to the business surviving.

We want to be able to trace it. If a product is determined to be dangerous and the company were then to go out of business because it was a shady-type of company, maybe organized crime, a gang, or an organized type of operation, that brought in a whole bunch of cheap, dangerous products and then just vanished, then the government would have these traceability documents. It would be able to do the effective recall and find out where the products are. In fact, with the voluntary recalls that are occurring, how are we to know that everything has been recalled? If we have the traceability elements, then we know where the product is, so we know it has all been recalled.

I have just a couple of examples about the cost of making these conditions and why it has to be effective and efficient. We have an issue right now with fertilizer retailers in Canada. Fertilizers can be dangerous, they can be explosive. Fortunately, there are very good regulations, some that the industry is imposing on itself which is excellent, to ensure safety. Of course, to put in these provisions, these increase huge prices for farmers and retailers. We have a program in the Canadian ports to put those provisions in to help to pay for those. We could also have similar government provisions to

help put in the provisions to protect fertilizers and those types of chemicals. I encourage the government to review that issue.

Another example we have in my riding pertains to an international product coming in from the United States related to housing. It needs the Canadian safety standards approval, which is good. It should be done thoroughly, efficiently and effectively. In the north we only have a several month building season, and this is during a housing crisis where people are without homes. If it is not done in a timely fashion, if it is not done quickly and effectively, as I hope it will be in this particular case, this could result in people being left homeless for another year until construction could start.

Above all in our considerations, and I do not think anyone would disagree, we have to make absolutely sure that products are safe for our children. Some of the examples I will give later on are related to children. Children are not always underfoot of their parents, and they do things that adults would not necessarily do, like chewing everything under the sun, or putting everything in their mouths. We have to ensure that things are absolutely safe for children, and that this law will be used to that particular effect.

• (1250)

There are millions of products on the market produced in Canada or imported. In modern times the manufacturers would not want to produce anything that is dangerous. Nevertheless, products do slip through the cracks or there is the rare criminal element or a person who is not caring. Therefore, there are products that show a need for this bill.

Since 2005 there have been 34 products that contained lead risk, 26 products were a risk in terms of choking, 5 products led to head injuries, 5 that led to the risk of laceration, 3 that could have meant internal damage from magnets, 3 that put people at risk of being burned, 3 that put people at risk in terms of entrapment, 2 that put people in danger in terms of puncture or impalement, 2 that could have caused strangulations, 2 that led to bacterial risk, and 1 toxic chemical risk. That is why it is important that we put the bill in place and that it is done in a realistic and effective manner.

The bill is somewhat intertwined with Bill C-51 which we will be discussing next. I will be bringing comments forward in more detail when we get to Bill C-51, but we have given some feedback about the onerousness of the controls in these bills. That is something we will be looking at in committee.

A couple of my constituents have sent me emails that they think these bills are targetting at substantially reducing or putting huge barriers on natural health products; that they give almost police state-like powers to the government; that they have huge fines; that there can be seizing authority without warrant which is actually in Bill C-51; that the government wants to bypass Parliament approval, which is what I was talking about earlier with regard to regulation; that it can seize one's property, charge storing and shipping charges; and that it can do these things by entering one's property without warrant and so on.

I will be bringing forward those concerns from my constituents. They will be more related to Bill C-51 but these bills are connected.



*Government Orders*

Similarly, other feedback I have received is from a corporation called Truehope which has products related to people with mental illness. Once again, it wants to raise the alarm related to gross changes to the Food and Drugs Act as outlined in Bill C-51 and as referenced in Bill C-52. I will not go into all the details, but I have them available if someone would like to read them. These are things that should be discussed at committee.

I also want to give some input on the bill from the Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada. This organization is certainly in support of the bill but it wants it amended to remove the proposed statutory exemption for tobacco companies. It states:

The era of special deals for tobacco companies is I hope long behind us. Yet this bill proposes a unique concession for tobacco manufacturers, one which would not be extended to any other manufacturing sector.

The Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada certainly wants this amendment put in the bill and we hope it will be called as a witness and we can explore that particular item. I hope the members of the health committee will ask the government officials when they appear before the committee with the minister as to the purpose of that exemption.

In closing, I would like to summarize three of my issues that need to be dealt with. One is the type of inspection and the number of inspections. The second is how we are going to protect the various chain of processes for products that come from overseas. The last issue is that right now, with the system of voluntary recalls, the government negotiates and the products are voluntarily recalled, and that has never been a problem.

• (1255)

I do not have a problem with the government having this authority, in that it should be able to act quickly, but often when people have the power to do something and do not do it they will be taken to court and will be involved in all sorts of litigation. I would not want inspectors constantly doing recalls for protection.

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as always, the member for Yukon has made a thoughtful contribution to the debate today. I wonder if the member could comment on two important areas related to this particular legislation on the safety of consumer products.

First, in the past, Canada has been heavily dependent on the United States for initiating action around consumer product safety. In fact, about 40% of product recalls were a direct result of U.S. initiated action. I wonder if the member thinks this bill will do anything to strengthen an independent Canadian response to product safety issues. Does he think that is sufficiently covered in this legislation? Or is it even an issue that needs to be addressed?

Second, does my colleague believe there is too much discretion for inspectors in this legislation? They are given greater authority under the proposed legislation, but a lot of their actions are optional even if they believe that human health is at risk in the situations they are investigating.

Under the legislation, the government would not be required to inform consumers of safety issues that have been identified. I wonder if the member thinks that needs to be addressed as the bill

goes forward to committee and perhaps is strengthened before it comes back to the House.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Mr. Speaker, the member has raised excellent issues. I certainly think both of them should be explored further.

As for us and the United States, the member asked whether I think this bill provides Canadian authority. This bill certainly is all about providing independent Canadian authority to do things. The question there, I think, is whether the resources are going to be available to do things sufficiently in Canada. As I said in my speech, if we do not have the person power, then we will not be able to do those types of inspections in Canada.

I definitely think we should also develop communication links with all countries that are doing such inspections. There is no use reinventing the wheel; I do not care who finds out that a product is dangerous. I met with ministers of justice of the Americas at a meeting on Monday in Washington, where we shared information with respect to problems in other countries. It would be good if we could learn about problems in other countries and then add them to our own database, but we must make sure that we have sufficient resources to deal with that.

With regard to my colleague's second question about discretion, it can be a problem in two ways. One of the good things about discretion in the bill is that it would require the test results to be made public, and I think that is good. I agree with the member that if an inspector finds something that is obviously dangerous then it should be made public. However, discretion can be a problem in the opposite direction. If there is too much latitude, then an inspector could unnecessarily harass a particular company more so than another company.

We have to give the people who are knowledgeable and who are experts in the area enough discretion to make reasonable decisions, but there also has to be some type of oversight, some type of appeal process, and public information. We have to provide some type of appeal process if it is felt that inappropriate action was taken by an inspector. We also have to keep the public informed.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member's speech. It never ceases to amaze me how he can tie any particular subject that happens to be on his mind to bills under discussion.

That being said, the member did urge us to move quickly on this bill to get it in place, and that is good.

One of his main concerns was about the traceability of goods coming into Canada. As he knows, this bill proposes a requirement that suppliers keep documentation on the source and destination of the consumer product. My question is very simple. This has not been part of the regimen for over 40 years. Why did his government not take action in the past 15 years to address this glaring loophole, which should have been addressed long ago?

*Government Orders*

• (1300)

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Mr. Speaker, I would not answer such a silly, partisan question, but I will comment on the mistake the member made in saying that I could get anything that is on my mind into a discussion of a bill. Actually it is not anything that is on my mind: it is anything that is on my constituents' minds. They are very happy that even if it is not related to the bill and they have come to me I can put it into the discussion.

Some of the concerns I brought forward around this bill were actually emails from my constituents. I always try to put things forward for the people of Yukon, who I hope are listening, any time people approach me. In fact, I was here until 4 o'clock this morning trying to ask them to put more detail in their emails to me so that I could bring it up in debate today on the next bill we are going to be debating.

However, on the substantive point the member was talking about, here is what he should have been asking on the traceability. As I said, that is excellent, but I have a question. If we have a retailer in Canada that is bringing in a whole bunch of products from all over the world, we can trace a product to the person who sent it to that retailer from another country, but how do we then trace the components throughout that country and the rest of the whole chain?

It will be interesting to hear from the officials what their plans are in that area and how we might monitor that, because it might help us make sure that products are safe. That will be a more difficult challenge than looking for components that are all made in Canada.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is precisely the question I was going to ask the member. As he indicated, there is an obligation under the act for those who distribute or sell the product to track where that product came from. Of course, when they are part of a large chain or a manufacturer, there are ways to do that.

The problem I see, and which may have to be addressed, has to do with the condition of a small retailer that is not part of a large chain. If it is an independent or smaller operation, it may have similar products that it buys from a few places, but when it is selling from its business it might be difficult, as the member says, to track the product sold. These people may not be able to do it.

The concern here is that it may be very expensive relative to the operation, particularly for small retail outlets, the so-called mom and pop shops. Therefore, if this is fully implemented and fully applied, it may have a significant impact on the economic viability of small business in Canada as well. I wonder if the member shares that concern. Does he have any thoughts on how we might be able to address the unique circumstances of small operations?

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Mr. Speaker, the member raises a very good point that should be looked into more at committee. I really look forward to the comments of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business on this bill.

Liberals, and I am sure all members, believe that small business certainly is a major part of the backbone of our economy in Canada. Sometimes it is a mom and pop operation. Sometimes it is a single operator. They are scrambling to get products from all over the place to add a few cents to the margin or, if they are creating something, to

put out enough to feed the family. If we add onerous testing and evaluation of these various products, or if they have hundreds of products in their stores and a guy is trying to run the cash register yet has to trace the products and components all over the world, how will all of that work?

These are very important questions that we have to ask at committee. Of course, to keep Canadian companies competitive, we have to make sure that things are safe, the environment is clean and labour rules are followed here. Some other countries do not do that, so we have to put into the equation how we can do all of that and, as a member from the NDP said, keep Canadian businesses in business so that we are getting made in Canada products.

• (1305)

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this long overdue debate on Bill C-52 regarding the safety of consumer products.

I say it is long overdue because it is an issue that has been front and centre for many Canadians and for families right across the country. We have seen many high profile recalls of products in Canada. That has very much worried Canadians and they have been calling for government action.

Ninety consumer products, many used by children, were recalled just last year, and there are already 37 more this year. These are products that were on the market, that consumers were purchasing, such as toys, for example, that children were playing with. They were circulating in our economy, in our homes and within our families and had to be recalled after the fact.

Many of these products were not made in Canada. Many of them were imported. Certainly many were identified as originating in China, where increasingly our manufactured products are coming from.

The current Hazardous Products Act, which dates back all the way to 1969, certainly has not been effective in identifying and removing dangerous products from our homes and communities. In the majority of cases, it has left Canadians dependent on product alerts and recalls by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission instead of Health Canada.

In 2005-06 more than 40% of the recalls were U.S. initiated. In other words, they were alerts and recalls that were coming from south of the border rather than from our own government through our own regulations protecting Canadians here in Canada.

In fact, the recalls here in Canada have been company initiated recalls. It has been the companies themselves, based on incidents of harm to consumers, that have prompted those companies to recall their products. Of course, they would want to recall their products to protect themselves from legal action when they are actually harming the consumers who are using their product.

I think many consumers believe that the government is recalling products on their behalf, but that has not been the case. These have been manufacturers' recalls. The best that Health Canada has done is post these company initiated recalls on its website.

*Government Orders*

Consumers believe they are protected by laws in this country, that we are a developed country. We have had parliamentarians at all levels of government debating and passing laws for decades and for centuries. Consumers believe they are protected when they purchase food and consumer goods, yet the reality is that they are not necessarily protected.

That is particularly true with imported products, because there are certain standards for the manufacture of goods here in Canada. However, when goods are imported from Asia, Europe or wherever, there is no mechanism for ensuring that those goods meet the regulations and the standards that we have set here in Canada.

I will give a good example, which is that of lead. Lead has been banned from use in consumer products in Canada. One would like to think that if one is buying a toddler a toy at a neighbourhood store, the toddler will be protected from exposure to lead.

We no longer paint our houses with lead paint. We no longer make our toys with lead contaminated products. Yet products that are available for purchase in Canadian stores and have been imported from other countries have been found to be contaminated with lead.

●(1310)

My kids played with the Thomas the Tank Engine, a very popular children's figure. There are many toys made in the image of it, yet, Thomas the Tank Engine trains imported from China have been found to be contaminated with lead paint.

Clearly, consumers have not been protected and the laws designed to protect consumers have not been enforced when it comes to consumer products, especially, imported consumer products.

We have called for tougher regulations, tougher laws, when it comes to consumer products. In fact, I had a news conference in Ottawa not too long ago. I joined an Ottawa area family and we used lead testers to test the toys of the young children in that family. A toy we purchased, which is available in Canadian stores, was contaminated with lead paint, which was easily identifiable with the lead testing device we brought with us. I think for the reporters at the news conference, and through them Canadians at home, it was a very chilling experience to find a very commonly available toy, with which a toddler would quite easily play, could damage a child significantly because it was contaminated with lead.

First, my colleagues have called, very fundamentally, for the government to be empowered to order the recall of dangerous products. It seems like a very basic obligation on the part of the government. I think most Canadians believe their government is already empowered to do that, but it is not. We have also called for an increase in the authority of government to require information and action from manufacturers and importers. When goods are imported into Canada, because they are not manufactured here and they may not meet the standards required for domestically produced products, there should be an additional obligation on manufacturers to offer information about the content of those products. There should be mandatory reporting by manufacturers and importers of incidents involving death or injury from a product's use and violators should be heavily penalized.

While we will be examining Bill C-52 in more detail, it seems many of these goals have been addressed by the bill, and we see that

as a positive thing. However, other areas of the bill do concern us, and I will spend a couple of minutes going over them.

I want to return to the issue concerning the safety of imported goods. Sixty-five per cent of Canadian consumer goods are imported into Canada and Bill C-52 lacks a comprehensive system to ensure that these goods, when they are brought into Canada, are safe. It is not simply a question of allowing the goods into the community and waiting to see who gets sick or injured by these products. It is about putting some obligation on the manufacturers of these products, or at least the retailers of these products, to ensure that before these products reach consumers, they are safe. We need a better system for identifying risks. To react after the fact is to put too many Canadians at risk.

●(1315)

There is an approach used in occupational health and safety, which is control at the source. In other words, one wants to do the maximum to prevent injury, illness or death by controlling a hazard at the source rather than at the person or individual who could be affected. This is needed with respect to the importation of consumer goods.

We have seen many imported consumer goods with counterfeited CSA approved labels. It is another reason why we need to ensure that when goods are imported, they do not just have a counterfeited label but that they are CSA approved and that they pose no risk to consumers.

In Bill C-52 there is too much discretion for inspectors. While they have been empowered with a greater authority, many of their actions are optional, even when they believe human health to be at risk. The government is not required to inform consumers of safety issues that have been identified. This needs to be tightened up. Amendments need to be made to the bill to remove that discretion. If an inspector believes a consumer is risk, how can the inspector in good conscience allow the risk to continue?

My colleague from Winnipeg North, who is the NDP health critic, is very eloquent in speaking against a buyer beware approach when it comes to our health. She advocates, instead, a do no harm principle. We believe Canadians elect their government to ensure that when it comes to their health and safety, that we do no harm. This should certainly govern the approach of the inspectors who are implementing the rules for our safety.

Also, more resources are needed to enforce the bill. If we look at the inspection process, more resources need to be made available to ensure the inspection and enforcement process is not just something written on paper, but that we have the resources to make the enforcement a reality. It does take resources. It takes people and people power to carry out the inspections. We need to ensure we are not just reacting, but that we are preventing problems before they occur.

*Government Orders*

We know certain hazards have a disproportionate impact on women. Bisphenol A for example, the plastic baby bottle material, is a hormone disrupter affecting reproduction later in life. There are health implications, primarily for women, and other safety differentials of products based on gender. This is not mentioned in the bill and it needs to be considered. Women are disproportionately impacted by the health effects of not only consumer products, but health products as well. This has been an issue of debate and discussion under another government bill, Bill C-51.

Another aspect not addressed at all are the issues of product origin and manufacturing jobs. The government has ignored the manufacturing crisis across Canada. It is especially devastating in the province of Ontario, my home province. Hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs are going out the door. As I said earlier, there has been a flood of imported products. We have seen a growing number of product recalls, a growing danger to public safety and a growing disregard for the public welfare of Canadians.

• (1320)

Canadians should really think about the cost benefit analysis of allowing much of our production to go offshore to other countries and then face the growing risk of unsafe consumer products here in Canada. Is the cost benefit analysis a risk benefit analysis that we are prepared to accept? Does it not make more sense to support and help our manufacturing sector through the crisis it is currently experiencing and to do our best to ensure we continue to manufacture products in Canada rather than throwing open our market to the world, increasing the likelihood that products will be imported into Canada that pose health and safety risks?

Just this week a plant closed in Listowel, Ontario. The Campbell Soup company has, for decades, processed what Canadians do so well, which is create food. This was yet another example of raw agricultural materials, which have been produced in Canada very effectively, that through the manufacturing process added value. We were able to use those manufactured products to supply our own market and export abroad. Now, with the closure of that plant, we will have to find a source for the processing of those agricultural products elsewhere. Again, there is always the danger that with imported products, we are courting a greater public risk.

We cannot have enough inspectors to inspect every product that is or could be imported into our country. Therefore, we abandon our manufacturing sector at our peril as consumers and at the peril of our children because we do not have control over the quality of those products, whether it is consumer goods, toys, food, or whatever.

The manufacturing process is not something that happens elsewhere, something that other people do and that has no impact on our daily lives. It is about the products we use, the food we eat, the pharmaceutical products we use in our health care system and it has a great effect on our daily lives.

While I appreciate the bill is a response to the public outcry about the lack of government action and the hazardous products that have been recalled voluntarily by manufacturers, it is one small step and it certainly is not the answer to the crisis we face because of the loss of our manufacturing sector.

I know there have been other initiatives, such as private members' bills, and attempts by other members of Parliament over the last several years, prior to my being elected as a member of Parliament, to try to bring in legislation to tighten up the laws around consumer products. All have failed and we have been left with archaic legislation dating from 1969. Canadians believe action is long overdue.

I have received a letter from Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, which has raised with me the issue of the exemption of tobacco manufacturers and cigarettes under this law. Its belief is that all products should be covered under the bill, should it become law. That is another aspect that we need to look at.

The government has prided itself on getting tough on crime. I know there are many vulnerable people in my community in Toronto who are disproportionately negatively affected with some of that tough talk, but I would like to see the government get tough on the crime of losing our manufacturing jobs, allowing Canadians to be subjected to hazardous products, and to back up that tough talk with tough action.

• (1325)

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member made a statement that effectively, Canadians who purchase goods from abroad do so at their own peril, because those products do not have inspections, so it would be better for everyone just to buy Canadian produced products and there would not be a problem. I am not sure if that is a solid hypothesis. It is good for Canada in many ways to buy Canadian products, but there are some products that we cannot and do not produce, whatever they might be.

I do not think this bill is calling for 100% inspection of everything that comes in. It is taken to the logical extreme. When I delivered my speech, I indicated we could have 100% safety by doing everything 100%, but we would basically close down business and industry because of the onerous regulatory costs. We do have to look for a balance.

In the absence of having a government member to answer a question, I will pose one to the member and it has to do with the power of recall that this bill would provide. Right now it is on a voluntary basis, which seems to have worked reasonably well. The concern may very well be that if Health Canada gets into the business of having the power of recall, it opens up the possibility of significant lawsuits if due diligence is not done prior to issuing a recall notice and a recall is implemented. There could be substantial risks by not having rigorous criteria, rules and due diligence in terms of exercising that authority.

*Government Orders*

I do not know whether the member shares that concern but I would appreciate her comments.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that Canadians elect their parliamentarians to act in their best interests.

Of course, we cannot produce everything we need right here in Canada. We are a trading nation. We always have been. We always will be. We have worked hard over the last century to move from a strictly commodity based economy to a more value added economy. We have been very successful in doing that. That success in recent times has been undermined by a hands-off attitude toward our basic economic fundamentals and a lack of decisiveness in ensuring that the key value added sectors of our economy are doing well during a time of high commodity prices and open markets.

While I have never said that everything produced here in Canada is absolutely fine, and I would never say that, I do believe that many of the recalled products in fact were imported. If the hon. member checks the record, I think he will find that as well.

Canadians elect us to act on their behalf. I think they believe they are already protected from many of the hazards that we have been discussing here, but in fact they are not. Canadians expect that their officials in the Ministry of Health should be able to act on their behalf to ensure that if hazardous products are circulating through our stores and in our homes, those products ought to be recalled and consumers ought to be protected.

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague from Parkdale—High Park could expand on two of the points she touched on in her debate on the consumer product safety legislation.

I was glad that she talked about how the loss of manufacturing jobs in Canada relates to product safety. I think all Canadians would appreciate that a product made here is made to our standards and is made by Canadians who want products that attain a high standard of quality and safety. This is very important. The record right now is that 55,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost just in this year alone. This is so very serious. It threatens not only the living standard of Canadians but also product safety in Canada. I wonder if she might expand on that a little.

I wonder if she might also talk about how trade deals with other countries need to include protection for consumers and need to include product safety standards. We have talked about toxic trade deals and toxic products. I wonder if she might expand on that a little as well.

● (1330)

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague probes an area that is very important. As he said, 55,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost this year and not coincidentally, there have been 37 product recalls this year. When it comes to product safety, most Canadians expect that their welfare is assured by their governments. To just say it is buyer beware, how could someone possibly have the capacity to check for lead content in products and to check the components of a plastic, and check the scientific research? They expect governments to do that for them and to provide that basic protection.

When we engage in trade deals, surely we cannot just be guided by the lowest price. There has to be more. There has to be fairness in

trading arrangements. Rock-bottom prices cannot be subsidized by poor environmental standards, by lack of human rights and by lack of consumer protection. These are fundamental issues. If we are trading with a country that does not have strong consumer protection laws, that should signal to us that perhaps the products we are importing from that country may potentially pose a hazard to Canadians. Our trade negotiators need to be much more conscious of these concerns in order to protect Canadians.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member brought up a good point about enforcement requirements. I think there is \$113 million to deal with the implementation of the bill. I wonder if the member has any further details on that. Is she convinced there are sufficient resources for the enforcement and inspectors and such things as training? The Auditor General raised this as a concern in 2006. Is the member concerned about that and will she be asking her party's representative on the committee to delve into that further?

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, I did not have time to delve into that important question as much as I would have liked, but my colleague from Winnipeg North, our party's health critic, certainly will be raising the lack of resources for inspection because the 2008 budget provided \$113 million over two years for both food and drug, and product safety as well as \$33 million to regulate natural health products.

There are two bills before the House, Bill C-52 which we are presently debating, as well as Bill C-51. Concerns have been raised by those who are fearful that perhaps they will no longer be able to get access to many natural health products they currently are enjoying. That is an area we will want to investigate. There is real concern that the \$500 million over the next five years that is being put toward the enforcement of both these pieces of legislation is simply not going to be adequate to provide the kind of consumer protection that Canadians need for their consumer products and for their pharmaceutical and natural health products. That is something we will be probing into further at the health committee. My colleague from Winnipeg North will be asking many questions about that.

● (1335)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to join the debate today on Bill C-52. As you are no doubt aware, I had the pleasure of serving on the Standing Committee on Health for some time and this subject has been on the committee's agenda for a very long time. Quebeckers, like Canadians, are very concerned about the products that come into the country and are consumed by residents of Quebec and Canada without any assurance that these products are not harmful and that they will not cause health problems.

*Government Orders*

We have seen in the past three or four years that Health Canada has recalled many products. Unfortunately, very often that is done very late because Health Canada did not have enough inspectors or enough laboratories to conduct the necessary testing, as the Auditor General has reported. As a result, many products were not subject to testing and wound up on the shelves of various stores, either food markets, superstores or shops where one finds toys, other objects and even products such as toothpaste. These products have been identified as being very dangerous to health. We have also seen products for babies that are very dangerous. They could even harm their reproductive capacity in the future. With the declining birthrate that we are experiencing, we certainly should ensure that our children are also able to have children. We must ensure that the products used to bathe children and make them beautiful are not dangerous or toxic.

The Bloc Québécois believes it is important that this bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Health so that the different measures can be examined in depth. For a long time, we have been asking the government to strengthen the requirements, to conduct more thorough and more stringent testing to ensure that the products we consume are quality products. There are still serious gaps in the bill. That is why we agree that the bill must be referred to committee so those shortcomings, at least, can be corrected.

It is very unusual for a bill to give special status to some company, manufacturer or particular product. Bill C-52, though, gives special status to manufacturers of tobacco products. They have had special status for a very long time, even though the costs of tobacco consumption are very well known, especially for the young people in our society, who are smoking more and more. We know too that the manufacturers have developed roundabout ways of attracting young people to tobacco. They sell individually packaged cigarillos tasting of banana, oranges, vanilla and chocolate. We have a real problem on our hands when tobacco products are being individually packaged to develop a dependency in young people.

A number of provinces have put a stop to smoking in public places, restaurants, parliaments, schools, school grounds, and hospitals. Smoking is being stamped out everywhere because it is a danger to human health. Tobacco is one of the products that cause the most deaths per year. I know very well because I myself am an inveterate smoker who is having a hard time quitting.

● (1340)

I know how addictive tobacco is and how hard it is to stop. But the bill before us exempts tobacco. Tobacco will not be regulated under it and will not be affected. How is that possible? If we really want to protect the health of Quebeckers and Canadians and take a hard look at the harmful effects of various products on our health, we should also legislate against tobacco products. How can we possibly not do it? This is one of the things we are most concerned about in this bill.

It is not the only one though. As my colleague said just a little while ago, we do not have enough inspectors to meet the increased needs under the bill to ensure that all consumer products imported into Canada are checked. There will not be enough inspectors, even if the bill says that companies will now have to keep a record of all the consumer complaints they receive and the problems found with

products, as well as all the times that products have to be recalled. We will therefore have more information about products.

People who manufacture, import, sell or test products will now be required to have documents that will give us detailed information about the retailer so we can know the person from whom they obtained the product and the location where, and the period during which, they sold the product. Those persons will also have to have the prescribed documents, and keep the documents at their place of business in Canada or at any other prescribed place and, on written request, provide the Minister with those documents. The Minister could, subject to any terms and conditions that the Minister may specify, exempt a person from the requirement to keep those documents if the Minister considers it unnecessary or impractical for the person to keep them. We are probably talking about genuinely important bundles of documents.

The requirement that documents about the history of a product be kept will certainly allow for better traceability in respect of the various products that may be harmful to consumers here. We agree with this. There are several other aspects of this bill that we agree with, but as I said, we will have to study several points very carefully. The general public did not feel that they were involved in the development of this bill, either in the drafting or in the way consultations were conducted before it was prepared.

People are sending us letters and memos to let us know they are not satisfied with the way the consultations were held because there was no consultation, properly speaking. This summer a number of toys containing lead were recalled, as were several products that were harmful to health.

Recently, we saw what happened with bisphenol A. I am very sorry about this because a number of businesses have come right to the Hill here and given us these lovely clear plastic bottles we could use to carry our water, without knowing that those bottles might contain bisphenol A. Companies do not procure products because they are not operating out of goodwill, they do it from lack of knowledge and information. Health Canada should be capable of providing that information.

● (1345)

The only way we can be sure that we have a bill that truly meets the needs of Quebeckers and Canadians is by making sure that all of the people affected by the issues that this bill is meant to address, and not merely a few people, are consulted.

We will certainly be making sure that we do our work in committee responsibly, as always, and that we ask the Minister and his representatives the necessary questions so we can be satisfied that the bill will contain everything that is needed to respond to our concerns.

And we will certainly also be putting the subject of tobacco back on the table to see whether there is not something that can be done to include that substance, like any other toxic product, in the products that we want to see better identified and against which we want to be better protected. We know that if we do nothing to ensure that tobacco products are strictly regulated, there are people who may still be harmed by those products.

My main concern is for children, who were affected so much by recalls last summer and fall and this past winter and will continue to be affected, because recalls are still being made. These recalls involve mainly products from foreign companies we know little about and have not assessed. As the Auditor General put it so well, there were not enough Health Canada inspectors to do the work they had to do.

Mattel had to recall thousands upon thousands of toys. This is very disturbing, and it is very worrisome for parents, who buy Christmas gifts for their children or gifts for babies to make them as comfortable as possible, when they do not know whether they can have confidence that the product will not make their child sick, because unfortunately Health Canada has not assessed these products.

Certainly, when the bill goes to the Standing Committee on Health, our representatives on that committee—including the member for Québec, who is doing an excellent job—who know a great deal about the situation, will do whatever they can to amend the bill so that it really does what the public wants it to do.

For example, the heavier fines provided for in the bill are a good idea. It is important that companies pay much heavier fines when they fail to comply with the standards in effect. The precautionary principle the government wants to include in the bill is also very important. Compliance with the bill, which contains a statement about the precautionary principle in its preamble, will be very positive for all consumers.

The bill also gives more power and more tools to inspectors. More inspectors with more power will ensure that consumer products are healthier and less harmful. We will also ask a number of groups to testify and tell us what they would like to see in the bill.

• (1350)

[English]

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member raised the tobacco issue again in her comments. I was curious as to whether she has any idea why the exemption is there. However, that is not my main question.

As the member knows, Bills C-51 and C-52 are linked and we have had input from people relating to both bills.

The member talked about stronger enforcement, with which I generally agree, but I wonder if she has had concerns raised by her constituents about the enforcements in these bills being overbearing.

It seems to me that the people who produce natural health food products are worried that 70% of their products would be removed in an almost police state type of environment, which were the words they used. Police could go on private property without a warrant,

### *Government Orders*

dispose of people's property without reimbursement for their losses and seize their bank accounts.

Those were some of the concerns my constituents were raising and I was wondering if the member's constituents were putting forward similar concerns.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Mr. Speaker, my constituents have also contacted me, of course, to express their concerns about this bill. It is not right to pass judgment on people who take vitamins, whether vitamin A, B, C, D or E. I have been taking these vitamins for years. And I continue to take them on the advice of my oncologist. She told me quite openly that my vitamin consumption probably helped me beat the cancer I suffered from eight years ago, from which I have made a full recovery.

Something else worries me even more. The Bloc Québécois introduced a bill to include therapeutic and natural products in a completely different, separate bill. Certain products, such as essential oils, can indeed prove dangerous for certain people, like seniors. I do not want to see a free market for all these products, but I would like to see them monitored better and I would like them to be generally accessible to the people who use them. These products are commonly found in drug stores, and pharmacists are very familiar with the contents of the products they sell on their store shelves. I do not believe they would want their business to sell anything that is harmful to our health.

We must be careful about what we want to restrict. On the other hand, we must also make sure that the products we do not restrict are properly monitored in order to ensure they are not harmful to our health. I am referring to essential oils that can be very strong because they are very concentrated. Some seniors have had very serious problems because of unregulated essential oils.

Thus, I am in favour of a more open market for these natural products. I think that medicine and alternative medicine must come together. However, we must also ensure that not all products are blindly accepted.

[English]

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Mr. Speaker, I have a question concerning the government's new ability to do recalls. I do not think anyone would argue that that is an important power for the government to have. However, I was wondering if it needs to be fine-tuned in light of a concern raised by the official opposition critic.

People are suing all the time and, in particular, they are suing governments because they know governments have big pockets. If the government were to have the power to do inspections any time there was a sniff of anything wrong, and a recall would be a huge expensive process, does the member think there would be any chance that inspectors, under threat of litigation, would do a lot more recalls just to be sure they had not made a mistake and the Government of Canada would not end up getting sued if something suddenly came up?

*Statements by Members*

I wonder if the member thinks that is something the committee should look at when it looks at this bill in detail.

• (1355)

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Mr. Speaker, that is a rather difficult question to answer. I like to give public servants the benefit of the doubt and assume they do their jobs responsibly and correctly. The problem has not been that public servants did not know what to inspect, but that there were not enough people to do the inspections. There were not enough inspectors. We must also ensure that these people receive extensive training, so that they have the right information and can properly inspect products.

It is true that more and more people are calling on the government to be more diligent. That is fine. It is true that more and more people want to sue the government over products that were recalled too late. If inspectors are more careful and have more resources, I think that we will be in a position to recall defective products much more quickly. If that is the case, we will not have to worry as much about people suing the government.

But I am not sure. I am not yet familiar enough with the bill to know whether it is tough enough to allow for products to be properly evaluated. I hope that it will be tough enough and that inspectors will have the necessary information to do their jobs.

[English]

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague.

One of the issues this bill, which deals with the safety of consumer products, does not address effectively or thoroughly is the whole question of product safety and consumer protection in international trade deals. This is something that I think is very important to Canadians.

When we enter into agreements with other countries about trade, why would consumer protection, environmental protection, labour standards and those kinds of things not be a serious part of those agreements? I wonder if the member might address that. Does she think this is something that might be included in this kind of legislation to improve consumer safety in Canada?

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for asking the question.

That is one of the questions that committee members will have to discuss when they deal with this bill after it is referred to the Standing Committee on Health.

It is true that nowadays, we have a lot of trade with countries that we never used to trade with. These days, many of the products we consume are imported from countries whose manufacturing quality and ability we do not know much about, just as we do not know much about the products they use in manufacturing.

Obviously, we need very clear, specific rules for importing these products to ensure that they can be put on store shelves when they get here and that the consumers who buy them do not have to worry about using them.

[English]

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Mr. Speaker, does the member think that committees should get more information on the regulations and the plan to put them in, because they will have a major effect?

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Mr. Speaker, I am very sorry, but I did not hear my colleague's question because my earpiece was turned off. Would he be kind enough to repeat the question?

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Andrew Scheer):** It is time for statements by members so perhaps the hon. member for Yukon could ask the question after question period.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### MILT HARRADENCE

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, western Canada lost one of its vivid characters this year when Milt Harradence, famed lawyer, respected judge, fighter pilot and barnstorming politician, succumbed to cancer at the age of 85. Milt was a hero and a friend to many Albertans, including me. He was a larger than life figure both loved and loathed, though not quite in equal measure.

Milt lived the way we all should, with a flair and resolve that squeezed every ounce of opportunity from the life God gave him. That zeal explains why he was bounced from the Air Force as a young pilot after an impromptu air show over a farmer's field failed to impress his commanding officer. It also explains why, more than 50 years later, he was still at the controls and doing barrel rolls in a jet fighter, this time as the honorary colonel of a Canadian Forces flight squadron. A successful career as a criminal lawyer, later elevated to Appeals Court judge, was already behind him.

Though his family experienced tragedy, Milt always picked himself up. He aimed high and he hit his mark. I tip my hat to this great Canadian.

\* \* \*

• (1400)

[Translation]

### JOHN THERIEN

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to congratulate Jean-Rock "John" Therien for 40 successful years as an athlete and businessman.



*Statements by Members*

On April 1, 1968, John opened his first studio in Ottawa and now, Therien Jiu-jitsu and Kickboxing operates seven schools in the national capital region. Because of his tenacity and talent, John has become one of the most respected martial arts teachers.

Kyoshi Therien has earned many accolades over the years including 8th degree black belt and the Canadian government award for achievement in Jiu-Jitsu. He was named Man of the Decade (1980's) by the Professional Karate Association. And we should not forget that he was the manager of 23 time world kickboxing champion, Jean-Yves Thériault.

He has now been elected president of the Vanier Business Improvement Area board of directors, where he will use his talents, energy, creativity and enthusiasm to serve of his community.

Congratulations, John. We thank him for sharing his passion with the young and not so young all these years.

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**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK**

**Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the theme of Quebec's volunteer week this year, from April 27, to May 3, is about helping, uniting and building.

Celebrated since 1974, the week honours those whose actions make the world a better place. There are thousands of such people in Quebec. They have a strong sense of social justice and community and take time out of their personal lives to contribute through their efforts to doing good for as many people as possible.

Volunteerism benefits many sectors of our society, whether it be in sports, leisure, defending collective rights, health, social services, protecting the environment or even political involvement.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois, I want to pay tribute to all the volunteers who are helping, uniting and building a better Quebec.

I want to wish everyone a wonderful volunteer week.

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**INTERNATIONAL WORKER'S DAY**

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today, May 1, we are celebrating International Workers' Day. We commemorate the great triumphs of workers in Quebec, Canada and around the world.

Quebec's labour movement, since its beginnings in Montreal at the start of the 19th century, throughout the struggles of the 1950s and the Quiet Revolution and finally through union-sponsored investment funds, has put workers at the heart of sustainable economic and social development.

However, there is still much to be done: creating a federal anti-strikebreaker law, extending pay equity throughout Canada, defending the manufacturing and forestry sectors, promoting international union rights and guaranteeing quality public services.

And it is with the latter in mind that this year we are adding our voices to those of the Coalition du 1er mai, composed of unions and

student, feminist, community and university organizations, in support of a quality, public, universal and free health care system .

\* \* \*

[English]

**HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY**

**Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today we will take part in an act of solemn remembrance for the millions of victims who perished at the hands of the Nazi regime.

*Kristallnacht*, the “Night of Broken Glass”, took place on November 9, 1938. This act of destruction gave official sanction to persecution, humiliation, deprivation and eventually the systemic and organized murder of nearly six million Jewish people.

While the Nazi machine geared up, the nations of the world gathered in Evian, France to consider what actions might be taken.

Tragically, the conference took on its own measure of infamy in that it broke up early with no resolve to act at all. Hitler's spies returned to say, “You can do what you want with the Jews, no one wants them”.

That is precisely why we must gather and stand with our Jewish friends and survivors in the spirit of *zakar*, remembrance, and reaffirm our commitment to fight racism and hatred wherever it is found.

As the Prime Minister wrote after his recent visit to Auschwitz:

We are witness here to the vestiges of unspeakable cruelty, horror and death. Let us never forget these things and work always to prevent their repetition.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

[Translation]

**HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY**

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to underscore Holocaust Memorial Day, Yom Ha' Shoah.

[English]

It reminds us of the Holocaust's unique evil, a genocidal singularity in which biology determined destiny.

[Translation]

It was a war against the Jews. Not all victims were Jews, but all Jews were victims.

[English]

This unprecedented horror will always have universal resonance and the terrible truths must be affirmed against those who would deny or distort them.

*Statements by Members*

Accordingly, we must pledge and act so that never again will we indifferent to incitement and hate; never again will we be silent in the face of evil; never again will we indulge racism and anti-Semitism; never again will we ignore the plight of the vulnerable; and never again will we be indifferent in the face of mass atrocity and impunity.

We will remember always the victims who perished and the survivors still with us. We will commit ourselves to plant the seeds of a better future amidst the soil of a horrific past and reaffirm our common aspiration for international peace and justice.

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**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK**

**Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week, we thank 12 million volunteers who help make our communities better.

[*Translation*]

Volunteers play a major role in the delivery of all the services provided in our communities: health care, heritage, education and youth.

[*English*]

They work in many other areas: arts and culture, churches, schools and libraries and, of course, skating rinks and soccer fields.

Last night, volunteers in all these domains and more were officially recognized in a special ceremony dedicated to them, the heavy lifters of Ottawa—Orléans.

[*Translation*]

The fabric of our country is stronger thanks to the contributions of our volunteers.

On the occasion of National Volunteer Week, I take great pleasure in recognizing all our volunteers and especially those who work so hard in Ottawa-Orléans.

[*English*]

They truly have a heart of gold.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**SECURITY AND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP OF NORTH AMERICA**

**Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the summit of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, which was held in New Orleans last April 21 and 22, did nothing to lift the veil surrounding these discussions. There is nothing in the joint statement of April 22 to indicate what exactly came of the discussions on energy, security, health, immigration, regulations and the militarization of North America.

The discussions included compatible fuel efficiency regimes and safety standards to protect human health and the environment, efforts to protect inventors, authors, performers and other innovators through an intellectual property action strategy, and discussions on making our product and food safety standards more compatible.

There is nothing to indicate how these standards and strategies will be implemented, and most importantly, nothing about water being excluded from NAFTA. In short, there is nothing to indicate that Quebec's interests will be protected, especially when it comes to drinking water.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when Canadians think of higher taxes, big government and a leader who would be risky on the economy, they think of the Liberal Party and its leader.

Liberals like big spending. What they forget is that it is not their money. It belongs to the taxpayers.

Liberals are talking, as a matter of fact, about spending another \$62 billion. Liberals also like high taxes. They constantly muse about raising the GST and now they are talking about a new gasoline tax for Canadians.

Our government delivered on our promise to reduce the GST by two points. We also reduced the personal and business taxes by over \$200 billion.

The unemployment rate is at a 33 year low. Over three-quarters of a million jobs have been created since the government took office. In times of economic uncertainty, Canadians know who they can trust and that is the Conservative Party of Canada.

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**HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY**

**Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to remember the millions of innocent victims, survivors and their families on National Holocaust Memorial Day.

The Holocaust is one of the darkest chapters in human history and its horrific crimes against humanity shook the very foundations of modern civilization. We must never forget that every victim had a name.

The Holocaust taught us, painfully, that we cannot remain silent in the face of hate, anti-Semitism and racism. We must speak out and take action against increasing anti-Semitism in Canada.

Last month, a housing development in Vaughan, in my area, was vandalized with anti-Semitic slurs. It is, therefore, imperative that we take a united stance against hate in all its forms and Canada must take a stronger leadership role in the international community to stand firmly against the genocide in Darfur and the egregious threats of Iran's regime.

Today we honour the victims of the Holocaust and strengthen our resolve to not allow any sanctuary for hate in the world.

*Statements by Members*

•(1410)

*[Translation]***BIOFUELS**

**Mr. Luc Harvey (Louis-Hébert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has a consistent green strategy when it comes to biofuels.

The Conservative government's objective for biofuels is equivalent to taking one million vehicles off the road.

In addition to having a positive impact on the environment, biofuel production helps the economy of our regions and gives farming families a source of income.

Contrary to what some people have recently suggested, biofuel production in Canada has no adverse effect on food production. After all, even when we achieve our targets for biofuel production, 95% of Canadian farmland will continue to produce food.

Above and beyond current biofuel production, Canada must become a leader in producing the next generation of biofuels. That is why the Conservative government invested more than \$500 million in the development of these new technologies. That is far more than the Bloc Québécois will ever do.

I encourage my Bloc Québécois colleagues to be consistent for once and support Bill C-33, since, after all—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst.

\* \* \*

**PETROLEUM MONITORING**

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, less than 10 years ago, Canadians were paying 55.7¢ a litre for gasoline, on average. Oil companies' profits have gone up 1,376% in the past 10 years. Today, people in Acadie—Bathurst and the rest of the country are paying about \$1.30 a litre.

Have salaries gone up 1,376% in the past 10 years? No, Mr. Speaker.

Has the cost of living gone up because of higher oil prices? Yes, Mr. Speaker.

While Canadians are being taken advantage of, the Conservative government is continuing to encourage the oil companies by doing nothing to justify or defend price increases. Instead, the government is giving them tax breaks.

It is time Canada had a monitoring agency, which the NDP has been calling for, so that the oil companies can be held to account before they drain us dry.

\* \* \*

*[English]***CBC RADIO**

**Mr. Glen Pearson (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the city of London, I am pleased to stand in support of the proposed expansion of the CBC Radio network in London to serve as the full regional station in southwestern Ontario.

As Canada's 10th largest centre, London is a dynamic community on the move with a solid direction for the future. We are the hub of southwestern Ontario in terms of the economy, education, health care, research and the arts.

Londoners are very fortunate to have the current CBC presence in town as a key component in generating public awareness of local and regional issues, yet there is so much more potential for CBC and our community to work together.

We look forward to the opportunity to serve as home to a full regional CBC station. We would embrace and support the many resulting benefits including economic stimulation, advocacy for the arts, educational partnerships, community dialogue and strengthened emergency planning.

I look forward to more discussion here in Parliament and in committee on this subject in the coming weeks.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***INTERNATIONAL WORKER'S DAY**

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is May 1, International Workers' Day, and I would like to point out that there are two categories of workers in Quebec.

Workers in the first category work in French in an environment that respects Bill 101. Workers in the second category are subject to the Canada Labour Code and their employers do not respect the Charter of the French Language. They work in ports, airports, telecommunications companies, interprovincial transportation, railway transportation, banks, etc. There are more than 200,000 of these workers in Quebec.

All too often, they must work in both official languages, or even solely in English. They receive documents in English and get called into meetings held in English when at least one of their colleagues is a unilingual anglophone.

Yet Quebec is a nation. Parliament recognized this. The member for Drummond introduced Bill C-482 to amend the Canada Labour Code to apply the Charter of the French Language to businesses under federal jurisdiction, so that the workers of Quebec can work in French.

\* \* \*

**FLOODS IN NEW BRUNSWICK**

**Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week New Brunswick has been hit by the most serious flooding it has experienced in more than 30 years, with warnings of high water levels in areas all along the Saint John River.

The spring rains and snow melt runoff have endangered more than 1,300 homes. The forecast looks the worst for the city of Fredericton.

*[English]*

Rising waters threaten to swamp bridges and force closure of dozens of roads. The Red Cross, EMO, fire departments and police forces are all working hard to warn and assist residents.

*Oral Questions*

Many remember the floods of 1973 and 2005 with horror. The good news is that the rain is supposed to ease off today with clear skies for Friday.

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

I know that I speak on behalf of all the members of the House when I offer my sincerest sympathy to all those in need right now.

[*English*]

I say to New Brunswickers to face this challenge head on with the true maritime strength and determination that they are known for, take care of each other, and know that April showers are almost behind them.

\* \* \*

**TACKLING VIOLENT CRIME ACT**

**Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as a member of the legislative committee on the Tackling Violent Crime Act, I was able to see firsthand this government's commitment to the safety of Canadians.

As a former officer I am proud to announce that this Conservative government has provided our people in uniform with three new critical tools at their disposal. Beginning today, Canadians will see better protection for youth from adult sexual predators by increasing the age of protection from 14 years to 16 years, tough new mandatory jail time for serious gun crimes, and new bail provisions which require those accused of serious gun crimes to show why they should not be kept in jail while awaiting trial.

Dangerous criminals who use guns to commit crimes, and sexual predators who prey on youth will get the penalties they deserve.

The people of Prince Edward—Hastings said they wanted the era of lenient penalties to end and it has. Criminals will not be coddled under this government. They will be dealt with according to law. Finally, victims will have a voice and justice will be served.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[*English*]

**COMMUNICATIONS VETTING POLICY**

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General of Canada has been forced to defend her independence from the government's attempt to vet her communications with Canadians.

Why is the Conservative government at war with Canada's democratic institutions?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is in fact not at all the case. The policy in question applies to government departments, not to the independent agents of Parliament, regardless of what those independent agents may conclude. This government has no intention of requiring those independent agents of Parliament to vet their communications through the government in any way.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, why then was the Auditor General forced to raise that question before a parliamentary committee? We have to be sure this is the case.

Will the government table the communication plan in question in the House?

[*English*]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think I indicated quite clearly that the policy in question ensuring that taxpayers' dollars are respected and that money is not spent wastefully is one that applies to government departments. It does not apply to independent officers of Parliament. There is no need for the Auditor General or any other independent officer of Parliament to fear this.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is why we want the government to table the communications policy. Why would the Auditor General go so far as to mention it in a committee of the House? Why would she mention that the auditor watchdogs had the same concern if this concern did not exist at the outset?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think I said quite clearly it does not apply, so there is no concern.

But there is something that is concerning Canadians, and that is the hidden agenda of the Liberal leader who has committed \$62.5 billion in debt spending, deficit spending, and then there is a raft of dozens of uncosted promises that he will not tell Canadians the cost of. Why will he not come clean and table the costing of his commitments in this House or elsewhere to Canadians? Why will he not tell them his tax and spend plans?

\* \* \*

**ELECTIONS CANADA**

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Elections Canada is an institution that has earned the respect and confidence of the entire world. It has provided electoral assistance in 100 countries. It has organized missions in over 100 countries, including recent elections in Afghanistan and Haiti. But on Tuesday, we learned that there is one government, this government, that no longer has confidence in Elections Canada.

How can the government possibly explain that to Canadians and to the world?

• (1420)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed important that Elections Canada be seen as a neutral authority respected by all political parties, and recent events have made that difficult.

*Oral Questions*

We recall just last summer when the leader of the Liberal Party spoke out against the interpretation of the Chief Electoral Officer on the question of people showing their faces when they were voting in the byelections. After he challenged that ruling of the Chief Electoral Officer, he was actually joined by the leaders of all the political parties, and after that, a unanimous resolution of a committee of this House of Commons criticizing the interpretation of the Chief Electoral Officer on a law they just passed. It is an example of the problem he is speaking of.

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government obviously does not understand the distinction between questioning a judgment of Elections Canada and expressing confidence in the institution.

[*Translation*]

We know that this government does not respect Elections Canada. I want a clear answer to this question: why has this government lost its confidence in Elections Canada?

[*English*]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have the exact same problem with Elections Canada that the Liberal member for Toronto Centre had that caused him to take Elections Canada to court over an interpretation the Chief Electoral Officer had applied, with which he disagreed and with which he succeeded. There is that issue. There is the previous issue and there have been numerous other similar challenges.

Our concern is the same: a changing interpretation of Elections Canada, an unfair, unequal application of it to one party only. That is why we took it to court and the response, an issue where we see Elections Canada violating its own manuals, its own rules, its own guidelines—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

#### ELECTION EXPENSES

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party claims to have shared advertising costs with candidates. For that to be legal, all the party's candidates would have had to participate. However, participants in this scheme were selected based on the room to manoeuvre within their spending limits and not on the benefits they would draw from the advertising. This scheme was implemented when the Conservative Party realized it had gone beyond its spending allowance.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his party violated the Canada Elections Act?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Bloc is the father of in and out. He came up with this term as a way of explaining to Bloc candidates the need to take part in such a scheme to boost their Elections Canada rebates.

In the last election, the Bloc transferred more than \$700,000 to its local candidates and then sent them invoices totalling more than

\$800,000. The leader of the Bloc is not only the father of in and out, but also the expert at in and out.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with experts at lying and hypocrisy. The Bloc has never been under investigation and still is not, while they have been under investigation a number of times and still are.

Their scheme worked so well that they even went looking for candidates in ridings where there were none, like the riding of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, while the candidate in Westmount—Ville-Marie was not asked to participate in the scheme because they knew she would refuse. There were some candidates who wanted to respect the act while the Prime Minister and his associates did not.

Is this not another example that the Prime Minister's party violated the Canada Elections Act by lying?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc candidates were not allowed to refuse because the leader of the Bloc forced them to participate in his in and out scheme.

In May 2004, the Bloc sent \$17,000 in invoices to the candidate for Québec, who is now a member. A few weeks later, the hon. member for Québec sent a cheque to the Bloc for those invoices. Two days later, the Bloc wrote a cheque for roughly \$17,000. And who deposited that cheque? The hon. member for Québec did. I imagine the leader of the Bloc has had an opportunity to talk about this with the hon. member.

\* \* \*

#### ELECTIONS CANADA

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board told Radio-Canada how the Conservatives would approach the next election: “We will be keeping a close eye on Elections Canada to ensure that it follows the rules—” That is crazy. The independent agency in charge of monitoring political parties will be monitored by the Conservatives. It seems we have quite the democracy.

How can the Conservatives attack the agency that ensures that elections are—

● (1425)

**The Speaker:** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is no use getting worked up about this.

In May 2004, the Bloc sent about \$30,000 worth of invoices to the candidate who is now the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue. A few months later, the Bloc wrote a cheque for about \$30,000 to the member. And guess what? Ten days later, the member wrote a cheque for more than \$30,000 to the Bloc.

It is clear why the Bloc does not want the committee to take a close look at its election spending.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I asked the parliamentary secretary about the comment he made yesterday, but instead of an answer, all we got was twaddle.

The Prime Minister had this to say about a lawsuit with Elections Canada concerning the 2005 Conservative convention: “All of the laws were obeyed”. Six months later, the Conservative Party admitted that it had failed to disclose several hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Chief Electoral Officer.

Does the Prime Minister understand that Elections Canada is the people's only guarantee that the Conservatives will obey the law?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is also the media.

In December 2003, the *National Post's* Andrew McIntosh said, and I quote, “Bloc brass then advised all Bloc candidates, organizers and volunteers to use a system called 'La Methode In & Out' to inflate campaign spending to meet targets.”

That is why the Bloc leader is known as the father of the in and out method.

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today's families are worried about the onset of difficult times. For example, 55,000 jobs have been lost in the manufacturing sector since the start of the year. Experts have shown that there is an economic downturn in Canada. All signs point to a recession. Today, the census has proven what the NDP has been saying: inequality is on the rise and the middle class is under increasing pressure.

When will the Prime Minister choose the real world rather than his Bay Street and oil company friends?

[*English*]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the statistics the member is citing from Statistics Canada come from the previous government.

We recognize the need to help the middle class and all Canadians economically and that is why we moved quickly with reductions in the GST from 7% to 6% to 5% that benefited every single Canadian. That is why we introduced the workers income tax benefit to help working Canadians. That is why we had the universal child care benefit that lifted 25,000 low income families above the poverty line and helped all families with children. We raised the basic personal exemption that helped all families.

We are going to continue—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, here is how effective the policies that have just been listed off have been.

On Tuesday we learned the magnitude of the jobs crisis in this country. Yesterday we learned that the Canadian economy is now in official decline. Today's census report shows that there is a growing

gap between those who have and those who are being left behind, and the middle class is having to work longer and harder, and having a tougher time of it.

The fact is the economic agenda of the government is unbalanced, unsustainable and it is leaving working families behind. Why will the Prime Minister not stop giving billions of dollars to his corporate friends and start helping the people of this country?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** On the contrary, Mr. Speaker. We are actually helping working families. As a result of our policies, there are now more Canadians with jobs than ever in Canadian history. In fact, since we formed government, there are now over 750,000 new jobs in this country.

We are delivering for all Canadians because the best social security policy is one that offers hope and opportunity to Canadians, and that is the promise of a job. We have given that to over 750,000 Canadians.

\* \* \*

● (1430)

**GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is often compared to George Bush. His role model, however, may be a different Republican.

Just like Richard Nixon, it is very clear that the Prime Minister has an enemies list: MPs who oppose him are kicked out, non-partisan organizations have their funding cut, hard-working loyal public servants are fired, journalists who irritate him do not make the A list, parliamentary committees are shut down, financial incentives are offered to candidates, anyone who challenges him gets sued, opposition is not tolerated, and opinions are not welcomed.

This is just like the Nixon White House. What is next? Secret tape recordings in the PMO?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will tell the member who we are standing up for and speaking for. We are speaking for ordinary Canadians, the Canadians who welcomed a reduction in the GST, the Canadians who welcomed the cut in their income taxes, and the Canadian families who welcomed \$100 a month for each child.

Those members may speak for the elite and for big government. They may want more government spending. That is why their leader spent last week travelling around the country talking about his plan to help Canadians. What was it? It was punishingly high increases in gas taxes. That is how their leader wants to help Canadians. The only Canadians he wants to help are big government and big spending.

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, he sounds like Spiro Agnew.

*Oral Questions*

Here is an example of the enemies list of the Prime Minister: Bernard Shapiro, gone; Jean-Pierre Kingsley, gone; John Reid, gone; Jean-Guy Fleury, gone; Yves Côté, gone; Art Carty, gone; Linda Keen, gone; Adrian Measner, gone; Johanne Gélinas, gone; Mark Warner and Brent Barr, Conservative candidates, fired. The enemies list now includes Elections Canada.

We know the Prime Minister loves power. Can he tell us why he hates government so much?

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I do not know whether the government House leader could hear the question, I could not. We will have a little order. I want to be able to hear the response.

The hon. government House leader now has the floor. We will have a little order.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the things that are gone after that party left office are dishonesty in government and unaccountability in government. That is what is gone.

Let us just take the first item on the Liberals' list. The hon. member got up and disparaged the reputation of Bernard Shapiro by saying he was fired as ethics commissioner. Guess what? His position was actually extended by this government until he retired.

Is it not unfair for them to besmirch his reputation like that? They do not care. That is what they do every day in this House, besmirch the reputation of—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ELECTION EXPENSES**

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, every day another former Conservative candidate comes out of the shadows.

Louise O'Sullivan, who ran in the riding of Westmount—Ville-Marie, has said that Conservative organizers never approached her, because she would have immediately seen right through the in and out scheme.

More and more Canadians and Conservative candidates are seeing that this scheme was reprehensible, so why will this government not acknowledge it?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, according to the member, we did not ask a candidate to participate in our transfer program. I do not see a problem there.

[English]

Conservative candidates have spent Conservative funds on Conservative ads. They got financial assistance from the national

party to do so. Elections Canada found out about it because we told Elections Canada. Why would we not? It is legal and all parties do it.

Elections Canada singled us out. We took it to court. Elections Canada representatives showed up one day, before it was to be questioned, at our office with a Liberal cameraman. Elections Canada is the one with questions to answer.

• (1435)

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 10% of the candidates listed in the search warrant have now wisely peeled off and are pointing their fingers at the Prime Minister. In turn, that parliamentary secretary says they are not real Conservatives. This scheme was forced on these candidates so that his party goons could run additional ads to win marginal ridings they barely won in 2004, like Nepean—Carleton.

How is it legal for 67 candidates to be forced to commit fraud so that that parliamentary secretary could win his riding?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I regret that she referred to my constituents as marginal. In fact, I did only squeak by with a 20,000 vote margin in the last election.

Conservative candidates did in fact spend Conservative funds on Conservative ads. They got financial assistance from the national party to do so. Elections Canada found out about it because we told Elections Canada. Why not? After all, it is legal and all parties do it.

Elections Canada singled us out, so we took it to court. One day, before Elections Canada was to be questioned, Elections Canada representatives marched in with Liberal cameramen following them.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**MANUFACTURING SECTOR**

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the manufacturing sector is in dire straits. Perrin Beatty, president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and a former Conservative minister, has said that the situation has deteriorated to the point that other tools must be considered in order to do more for this sector. Last fall, the Bloc Québécois presented a robust plan to resolve the crisis. However, the Conservatives preferred to indulge their obsession with the debt to the detriment of manufacturing jobs.

Will the Minister of Finance undertake to take concrete action quickly to deal with the crisis?

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we disagree. Yesterday, I looked at the report by Mr. Drummond of the Toronto-Dominion Bank. This government has created more than 300,000 new jobs in Canada over the past 12 months. And the province with the best results is Quebec.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, besides Mr. Beatty, Mr. Myers, President of the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, has brought to the attention of the Conservatives on several occasions, and to no avail, that tax cuts are of no help to companies that are losing money and that therefore do not pay taxes.

*Oral Questions*

What are the Conservatives waiting for to implement the Bloc's plan that would provide refundable tax credits for research and development? Manufacturers are in dire need of such credits right now.

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have to look at Quebec's economy. It is a very strong economy. We disagree with the Bloc. Industry in Quebec is solid, very solid. We have listened to the representatives of the manufacturing sector. This government has obtained results, unlike the Bloc, which can do nothing.

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**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, the minister responsible admitted that \$54 billion was diverted from the employment insurance fund and used for other purposes. When he was in opposition, his party joined the Bloc Québécois in calling for that money to be put back into the fund.

What is the minister waiting for to propose a repayment plan to the House, to start paying back the \$54 billion to the fund, as the Conservatives had promised?

[*English*]

**Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is true that the previous government took over \$50 billion and used it for things that had absolutely nothing to do with ensuring benefits for workers.

We put an end to that with the new CEIFB, the independent financing board. We will ensure that no government in the future will ever have the chance again to take money from workers and use it for something other than benefits, including giving money to their friends, like the Liberals did in the sponsorship scandal.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservatives will not honour their commitment. In his presentation to the committee, the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development revealed that all the funds managed by that office would be "held and invested until they are used to reduce premium rates in subsequent years".

Are we to understand from the minister's statement that, despite the obvious flaws in the system, he has given up on any future improvements to the EI program?

• (1440)

[*English*]

**Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has improved benefits for workers when it has been necessary. We have done that a number of different times.

We pointed out that we had a different philosophy from the Bloc. The Bloc members believed in the past that they should vote for every proposal the Liberals proposed to use that \$50 billion and to spend it in other ways. We see it very differently.

[*Translation*]

We cannot address today's problems.

[*English*]

We do not believe we could approach problems in the past in the same way as we can today. This is a new economy. We are providing training and helping workers. The Bloc is not supporting us, but we are getting things done.

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**AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance, not the Minister of Industry.

This week the GM plant in Oshawa laid off another 900 workers, bringing the total up to 2,000 workers in just four months. The job losses are just down the street from the minister's office, but he does not bother to lift a finger to help. He is too busy giving his cronies untended contracts.

Canadians deserve a minister who is responsive to their needs, not a minister who is missing in action. When will the minister at least act like he cares?

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since the government has come to office, we have created the strongest public finances in the G-7.

With respect to the auto industry, we are dealing with the issues that the former Liberal government never addressed in terms of making this industry competitive.

We have faith in the manufacturing industry. We have faith in the auto sector, unlike the Liberals, who continue to criticize the industry and who continue to advocate higher taxes and higher gas prices. That is not the way for the Canadian industry to succeed. We will get the job done.

**Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are walking with their pink slips past the office of the Minister of Finance, so it is disappointing but not surprising that he is letting the minister from Calgary answer that question.

The Minister of Finance ran a \$5.6 billion deficit in Ontario. It was that minister who said Ontario was the last place in which to invest. It was that minister who is bringing Canada to the brink of deficit. He obviously cares more about the job of Hugh MacPhie than his constituents.

How many more pink slips will it take before the Minister of Finance takes real action?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is pretty obvious that the Liberal member from the city of Toronto does not understand much about the car business. It will not help the car business when the Leader of the Opposition's proposal goes forward to have a massive increase in the cost of gasoline in Canada. That will not help the manufacturer of pickup trucks at General Motors in Oshawa, but then again, I do not expect the member from Toronto to understand that.



### ETHICS

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, actually he is from Mississauga.

The finance minister offers a veritable smorgasbord of ethical clouds: an illegal contract now under investigation by the Ethics Commissioner; an uneconomic train chugging through his riding; millions of taxpayer dollars wending their way to an organization extremely close to his wife.

Could he at least guarantee to the House that today is the end of his ethical breaches, or can Canadians expect an expanded—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. the hon. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that question is defamatory. The member should apologize.

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** The fact that he did not answer my question about future ethical clouds is an incriminating non-answer, Mr. Speaker.

When a Liberal cabinet minister was waiting to be cleared by the Ethics Commissioner, and was cleared, a Conservative MP said the following, “why should we wait for her report from the Ethics Commissioner? Should she not be gone?” That was the Prime Minister in 2004.

Will the Prime Minister show the same integrity he professed as opposition and ask his finance minister to step aside, pending the investigation into his ethics?

• (1445)

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite probably knows, although he may not know, any time a complaint is made by a member about another member to the Ethics Commissioner, there is a statutory obligation on the Ethics Commissioner to conduct an investigation. Surely the member knows that. It has nothing to do with whether there is any merit—

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** The Prime Minister did not know that?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty:** The member for Wascana day after day barks on the other side. Relax for a minute and let me answer the question. He will make a great mayor in Regina some day.

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### JUSTICE

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today is a banner day in the fight against crime in our country. After two long years of delay and obstruction by the Liberals, in both this House and the Senate, three provisions of our tackling violent crime act are finally coming into force.

Could the Minister of Justice tell the House what today means for Canadians and their families?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would be delighted to tell the House. First, finally 14 and 15 year olds will be adequately protected from adult sexual predators. Those accused of serious gun crimes will have to show now why they should be let out on the street. Finally, those convicted of serious gun crimes will get what they have asked for, time in a federal penitentiary.

### Oral Questions

This is a bad day for criminals, but it is a great day for law-abiding Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the damning report by the forensic auditor in the Kanesatake affair says that not only was there never any valid authorization to finance the botched raid, but the government is still concealing documents.

The RCMP had said no, the SQ had said no. Yet an official in Ottawa decided that James had to remain as chief.

But who at the top gave the green light? What is the Minister of Public Safety waiting for to order a full public inquiry into the scandal of the raid in Kanesatake?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this happened under the former Liberal government. When I received the news of some very disturbing events, I immediately called for an inquiry. I received the results of the inquiry two days ago, and we are going to look at them. Some of the things that happened were not good, and we want to have a system where we can correct problems such as the ones that occurred under the Liberals.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, to help the minister decide on the advisability of holding a full public inquiry, I would like to draw his attention to section 6.2.2, which clearly indicates that Indian Affairs was aware of the scope of the police operation that was to take place on January 12, 2004, but did not inform the public safety department.

Will we ever know everything that happened? Who pulled the strings at Indian Affairs to keep James in place? What Liberal interests were protected? Only a public inquiry can answer these questions.

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we share my colleague's concerns. I agree with him that there were things involved. The Liberals were in control at the time. We want answers to some very disturbing questions, and we want to know whether people exerted political pressure. As I said, this happened under the Liberals, but now it is our responsibility, and we will find the answers.

*Oral Questions*

● (1450)

[English]

**AFGHANISTAN**

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. As he will know, the UN representative for Afghanistan was before the committee today. He will also have seen today's report in the *Globe and Mail* on alleged discussions between members of the Canadian military and others with respect to the Taliban.

My question is a foreign affairs question. It speaks directly to the political strategy of the government. Would the minister be good enough to tell us what the strategy of the Government of Canada is with respect to discussions of this kind?

[Translation]

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our position is very clear and the Canadian public knows it, but I will repeat it for my colleague. It is very simple. With respect to national reconciliation in Afghanistan and what will come after the Taliban, the Afghan government will be in power, as everyone knows.

This is important. President Karzai said that there would be negotiations if people respect the Afghan constitution and renounce violence. That is the position of the Afghan government, and we support that position.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the UN representative also confirmed that there would be elections in Afghanistan in 2009 and 2010. As we know, Elections Canada played an important role in the 2004 Afghan elections.

Could the minister tell me whether Elections Canada still has the confidence of the government and the minister to do the necessary work in Afghanistan?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is very simple. We are abiding by the resolution adopted in this House to undertake a mission in Afghanistan that respects democracy and the rule of law. We want Afghanistan to have a stable government. We are fighting against corruption in favour of good governance, and if it asks, we will assist the Afghan government during the election process.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CLUSTER BOMBS**

**Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the foreign affairs minister failed to explain why he will be missing in action next week when the international community meets in Dublin on the banning of cluster bombs.

Why will he give this issue no priority? Is it because he is afraid of offending Washington, which does oppose the ban?

[Translation]

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I answered that question yesterday in the House, but I will answer my colleague again today.

I made it clear that our country signed the Wellington declaration, and I am proud of that. We will work with the international community to implement it. As I said yesterday, senior officials from my department will be attending the conference.

[English]

**Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the minister chose his words very carefully. He said that Canada only wanted to reduce the impact of certain types of cluster bombs. He avoided saying that Canada seeks an international ban on the production and the use of cluster bombs.

Will he now go on the record and say whether his government supports a ban on cluster bombs, yes or no?

[Translation]

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has never used cluster bombs. We are in the process of destroying any cluster bombs that we might have here in Canada

We are with the international community. In light of the impact of cluster bombs on human beings, it is important to us to reduce the harmful effect of certain types of cluster bombs.

\* \* \*

**INTERNATIONAL AID**

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the aid announced by the Conservative government is not nearly enough to deal with a food crisis of this magnitude. The truth is that this crisis is affecting the development of entire countries. Canada is currently far from doing its part because it has allocated just 0.28% of its GDP to international aid.

In the coming days, will the government be tabling its plan to meet the UN's objective of 0.7% of GDP allocated to international aid to fight poverty and hunger in the world?

● (1455)

[English]

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate, and it has been recognized by the World Food Bank, that Canada, of all the countries in the world, is the second highest donor to the World Food Programme.

I also want to reiterate that, unlike the previous government, when we make commitments we fulfill those commitments.

Our government said that it would double aid to Africa and we will do that. We will also double our international assistance. We will also ensure we fulfill our food aid commitments.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois presented a motion that would force the government to ensure that if Bill C-33 passes, the implementation of the regulations would not increase the proportion of Canada's corn production currently dedicated to ethanol production.

Will the government act responsibly on the issue of the current food crisis and support this motion?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Secretary of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question. It gives me the opportunity to clarify some things.

When the regulations are followed, that is, 5% ethanol in gasoline and biodiesel, no more than 5% of Canadian farmland will be used for ethanol production. As for the other 95%, that will be more than enough to meet the demand and allow for ample exports around the world.

\* \* \*

[English]

**HUMAN RESOURCES AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development was asked to update the House on child care spaces in Manitoba. The minister then proceeded to mislead the House on the government's role in a provincial announcement to create 6,500 child care spaces in that province. The fact is that there was absolutely no federal support.

Minister Mackintosh actually said:

Despite this year's loss of a strong federal commitment to child care, we must now regain momentum.

Will the minister do the right thing and stand up and apologize for misleading the House?

**Hon. Monte Solberg (Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that in budget 2007, we announced an increase of \$250 million in support for the creation of regulated child care spaces, bringing the total to \$1.1 billion a year. Since that time, including the announcement in Manitoba, the provinces and territories, along with the federal government, have their intention to create over 60,000 spaces.

I would remind the member that it was the former deputy leader of the Liberal Party who said that under their regime, their plan created zero new spaces.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**TV5**

**Mr. Denis Lebel (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a few months ago, the President of France announced proposed changes to TV5. Given the importance of this television network to the francophone community in Canada, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages has

gone to great lengths to ensure that our concerns are taken into consideration.

Could the minister tell us what progress she and her international partners have made?

**Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his excellent question.

Naturally, as chair of the conference of ministers responsible for TV5, I am pleased to announce that discussions among senior officials of the governmental partners have led to the development of a draft agreement preserving the multilateral and pluralistic nature of TV5 Monde.

This draft agreement recognizes the independence of TV5 Monde, particularly by separating the roles of president and director general and by giving broadcasting experts from all partner countries the opportunity to apply for key positions in the network. This will make TV5 Monde stronger and—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Vancouver Island North.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Catherine Bell (Vancouver Island North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, hard-working people on Vancouver Island are struggling to get by. Forestry is in crisis. TimberWest is closing the Elk Falls sawmill in Campbell River and putting 275 workers out of jobs. Catalyst is slashing 145 workers from the pulp mill right next door. At Western Forest Products another 800 jobs on the B.C. coast are gone, yet more families without a pay cheque by the end of this week.

Five months ago the government promised that help would be coming for working families. Why is there no direct help from the government in the face of this crisis?

● (1500)

**Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the member calls \$1 billion. Our Prime Minister announced \$1 billion to help affected workers through the community development trust. This was given to the province to deliver these programs. We are working.

We understand what happens when workers lose these jobs.

We are very proud to say that since our government has come into office we have created more than three-quarters of a million net new jobs in this country and our economy is strong. Unlike the Liberals, who, if they were to ever possibly get control, would raise taxes and drive us back into deficit and debt with one promise after another that is unaccountable—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, under the Prime Minister's watch, 1,000 forestry jobs have disappeared in Nanaimo—Cowichan in just the last six months. Forestry workers who lost their jobs only five short months ago are already running out of EI benefits.

*Government Orders*

As family income in forestry communities continues to drop on the west coast, the government is offering tax breaks to Canada's largest corporations, even those moving jobs offshore.

Why does the government reward those who ship jobs out of Canada and abandon the workers left behind?

**Hon. Gary Lunn (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we know what happened in British Columbia when the NDP was in power. It went from first place to last place and became a have not province.

The economy is now booming in British Columbia because of the finance policies of this government. Working with our provincial partners, we are bringing in incentives for the forestry workers. We understand they are struggling but we are very proud that the economy in British Columbia is one of the hottest economies in the entire country.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the recipients of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards. I will read the list.

[English]

For lifetime artistic achievement in the performing arts: Anton Kuerti, Eugene Levy, Brian MacDonald, John Murrell, Alanis Obomsawin and Michel Pagliaro.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** The Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for voluntarism in the performing arts: Eric Charman.

The National Arts Centre Award goes to a group from Kingston and the Islands, The Tragically Hip, which includes Rob Baker, Gordon Downie, Johnny Fay, Paul Langlois and Gord Sinclair.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** I invite all hon. members to meet the recipients at a reception in room 216 following the upcoming vote.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1999**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-33, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of Motion No. 2.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:05 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at report stage of Bill C-33. The question is on Motion No. 2.

Call in the members.

• (1510)

(The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 94)

**YEAS**

Members

Angus	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bachand
Barbot	Bell (Vancouver Island North)
Bellavance	Bevington
Black	Blaikie
Bonsant	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brunelle
Cardin	Carrier
Charlton	Chow
Comartin	Crête
Crowder	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Demers
Deschamps	Dewar
Duceppe	Faille
Gagnon	Gaudet
Gravel	Guimond
Laforest	Laframboise
Lalonde	Lavallée
Layton	Lessard
Lévesque	Lussier
Malo	Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Mathysen	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Mourani
Mulcair	Paquette
Perron	Picard
Plamondon	Priddy
Roy	Savoie
Siksay	St-Cyr
Stoffer	Wasylycia-Leis — 60

**NAYS**

Members

Abbott	Albrecht
Alghabra	Allen
Allison	Anders
Anderson	Arthur
Bagnell	Bains
Baird	Barnes
Beaumier	Bélanger
Bell (North Vancouver)	Bennett
Benoit	Bernier
Bevilacqua	Bezan
Blackburn	Blaney
Boshcoff	Boucher
Breitkreuz	Brison
Brown (Oakville)	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)	Brunoogoe
Calkins	Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Cannon (Pontiac)	Carrie
Casey	Casson
Chan	Chong
Clarke	Coderre
Comuzzi	Cotler
Cummins	Cuzner
Davidson	Day
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dhaliwal	Dion
Doyle	Dryden
Easter	Emerson
Epp	Eyking
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
Fletcher	Fry
Galipeau	Gallant
Godfrey	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guarnieri	Guergis
Hall Findlay	Hanger
Harris	Harvey
Hawn	Hearn
Hiebert	Hill
Holland	Hubbard
Jean	Jennings
Kadis	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)

Karetak-Lindell  
 Keeper  
 Khan  
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)  
 Lauzon  
 Lee  
 Lukiwski  
 Lunney  
 MacKay (Central Nova)  
 Malhi  
 Manning  
 McCallum  
 McGuire  
 Menzies  
 Miller  
 Minna  
 Moore (Fundy Royal)  
 Murphy (Charlottetown)  
 Neville  
 Norlock  
 Obhrai  
 Paradis  
 Pearson  
 Poilievre  
 Preston  
 Rae  
 Ratansi  
 Reid  
 Ritz  
 Rota  
 Savage  
 Scheer  
 Sgro  
 Silva  
 Skelton  
 Solberg  
 St. Amand  
 Stanton  
 Sweet  
 Telegdi  
 Thibault (West Nova)  
 Tilson  
 Tonks  
 Tweed  
 Van Loan  
 Volpe  
 Warawa  
 Watson  
 Williams  
 Yelich — 185

Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)  
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
 Komarnicki  
 Lake  
 Lebel  
 Lemieux  
 Lunn  
 MacAulay  
 MacKenzie  
 Maloney  
 Mayes  
 McGuinty  
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)  
 Merrifield  
 Mills  
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)  
 Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)  
 Murray  
 Nicholson  
 O'Connor  
 Oda  
 Patry  
 Petit  
 Prentice  
 Proulx  
 Rajotte  
 Redman  
 Richardson  
 Rodriguez  
 Russell  
 Scarpaleggia  
 Schellenberger  
 Shipley  
 Simard  
 Smith  
 Sorenson  
 St. Denis  
 Storseth  
 Szabo  
 Temelkovski  
 Thompson (Wild Rose)  
 Toews  
 Trost  
 Van Kesteren  
 Verner  
 Wallace  
 Warkentin  
 Wilfert  
 Wrzesneskiy

**PAIRED**

Members

Ablonczy  
 André  
 Clement  
 Freeman  
 Hinton  
 Lemay  
 Pallister  
 Thi Lac  
 Ambrose  
 Batters  
 Dykstra  
 Guay  
 Jaffer  
 Nadeau  
 St-Hilaire  
 Vincent — 16

**The Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 2 lost.

[Translation]

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC)** moved that the bill be concurred in at report stage.

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

[English]

The hon. chief government whip is rising on a point of order.

**Hon. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, I would hope, if you were to seek it, that you would find unanimous consent to apply the results of the

*Government Orders*

vote just taken to the motion presently before the House, with Conservative members present voting in favour.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this way?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** The hon. whip for the official opposition.

**Hon. Karen Redman:** Mr. Speaker, Liberals will be voting in favour of this motion.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour of this motion.

[English]

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Mr. Speaker, the members of the NDP will be voting against this motion.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Arthur:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to vote in favour of this motion.

[English]

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Mr. Speaker, I will be voting in favour.

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 95)*

**YEAS**

Members

Abbott	Albrecht
Alghabra	Allen
Allison	Anders
Anderson	Arthur
Asselin	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Baird	Barbot
Barnes	Beaumier
Bélanger	Bell (North Vancouver)
Bellavance	Bennett
Benoit	Bernier
Bevilacqua	Bezan
Blackburn	Blaney
Bonsant	Boshcoff
Bouchard	Boucher
Bourgeois	Breitkreuz
Brison	Brown (Oakville)
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Brunelle
Calkins	Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Cannon (Pontiac)	Cardin
Carrie	Carrier
Casey	Casson
Chan	Chong
Clarke	Coderre
Comuzzi	Cotler
Crête	Cummins
Cuzner	Davidson
Day	DeBellefeuille
Del Mastro	Demers
Deschamps	Devolin
Dhaliwal	Dion
Doyle	Dryden
Duceppe	Easter
Emerson	Epp
Eyking	Faille
Fast	Finley
Fitzpatrick	Flaherty
Fletcher	Fry
Gagnon	Galipeau

*Points of Order*

Gallant	Gaudet
Godfrey	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Gravel
Grewal	Guarnieri
Guergis	Guimond
Hall Findlay	Hanger
Harris	Harvey
Hawn	Hearn
Hiebert	Hill
Holland	Hubbard
Jean	Jennings
Kadis	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Karetak-Lindell	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Keeper	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Khan	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Laforest
Laframboise	Lake
Lalonde	Lauzon
Lavallée	Lebel
Lee	Lemieux
Lessard	Lévesque
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	Lussier
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Malhi
Malo	Maloney
Manning	Mayes
McCallum	McGuinty
McGuire	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Ménard (Hochelaga)	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Mills
Minna	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Mourani
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Murray	Neville
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Obhrai
Oda	Paquette
Paradis	Patry
Pearson	Perron
Petit	Picard
Plamondon	Poilievre
Prentice	Preston
Proulx	Rae
Rajotte	Ratansi
Redman	Reid
Richardson	Ritz
Rodriguez	Rota
Roy	Russell
Savage	Scarpaleggia
Scheer	Schellenberger
Sgro	Shipley
Silva	Simard
Skelton	Smith
Solberg	Sorenson
St-Cyr	St. Amand
St. Denis	Stanton
Storseth	Sweet
Szabo	Telegdi
Temelkovski	Thibault (West Nova)
Thompson (Wild Rose)	Tilson
Toews	Tonks
Trost	Tweed
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Verner	Volpe
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Wilfert	Williams
Wrzesnewskyj	Yelich — 222

**NAYS**

## Members

Angus	Atamanenko
Bell (Vancouver Island North)	Bevington
Black	Blaikie
Charlton	Chow
Comartin	Crowder
Davies	Dewar
Layton	Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)

Mathysen	Mulcair
Priddy	Savoie
Siksay	Stoffer
Wasylycia-Leis — 23	

**PAIRED**

## Members

Ablonczy	Ambrose
André	Batters
Clement	Dykstra
Freeman	Guay
Hinton	Jaffer
Lemay	Nadeau
Pallister	St-Hilaire
Thi Lac	Vincent — 16

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

\* \* \*

[English]

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## ORAL QUESTIONS

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order that I would like to raise with the government House leader.

I do not normally take exception to things that are said in the House, but the government House leader did completely misrepresent my views and also my actions with respect to Elections Canada, and I would like to make it clear what they are.

The government House leader said in a response to a question that the position of the Conservative Party with respect to Elections Canada was exactly the same as my position as the member for Toronto Centre. I want to set the facts on the record because I have not had an opportunity to do so, even though they have been referred to on many occasions by members of the government.

The simple fact is this. I took exception to a decision that was made by Elections Canada. I then asked for a judicial review of that decision. The Federal Court of Canada said that I was right in this particular instance. I want to make it very clear that at no time have I or any member of my party ever expressed non-confidence in Elections Canada, which is the extraordinary position that has been taken—

● (1515)

**The Speaker:** I am afraid I do not think the rules of the House have gotten us into any difficulty on this thing, and we are getting into a debate, as has been happening a lot lately on these matters that arise in question period.

I think we will go to the Thursday question. The hon. opposition House leader has a question to ask, as he does on Thursdays.

*Business of the House***BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the government House leader to outline the business that he intends to call for the balance of this week and next week. In the information that he has provided so far in an informal way, the agenda seems to end at the end of the day next Tuesday, so I would be interested to know what he has in mind for the whole week following this one.

I also would ask him specifically if he is in a position today to agree to concurrence by unanimous consent in the Senate amendments that have been made to Bill C-293. That bill is done in the Senate. It has been reported back to the House with some technical amendments, amendments that were in fact proposed by the Conservative Party. All other parties are prepared to accept those amendments and agree to that bill proceeding to conclusion now by unanimous consent, so I would ask the government House leader if he is prepared to agree to his own amendments.

Second, there are still three opposition days that need to be designated in this sitting before the House adjourns in June. I wonder if the government House leader could tell us if he intends to designate opposition days in the period between now and May 16 and, if so, which days those would be.

Finally, in the business of supply, it is the prerogative of the official opposition to select two government departments to bring before the House and the committee of the whole for examination of their estimates in that forum. It is then the government's responsibility to designate the two dates upon which those estimates will be heard in the committee of the whole.

The official opposition has in fact now designated the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to appear before the committee of the whole. I wonder if the government House leader could designate on which two dates those two ministers will appear to defend their estimates in the committee of the whole.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our week devoted to action on the environment and health of Canadians is proving to be a success. We just passed Bill C-33 at report stage with the support of two of the other three parties. This is our bill requiring that by 2010 5% of gasoline and by 2012 2% of diesel fuel and home heating oil be comprised of renewable fuels. It represents an important part of our plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020. Debate of this bill at third reading will now be able to commence tomorrow.

[Translation]

We have also started to debate two bills to improve the safety of food, consumer products and medical products in Canada.

On Monday we debated Bill C-52, to create the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act and yesterday we debated Bill C-51, to modernize the Food and Drugs Act.

We also introduced Bill C-54, to promote safety and security with respect to human pathogens and toxins. We will continue to debate these bills today and tomorrow.

● (1520)

[English]

During these uncertain economic times to the south, our government has led the way on the economy by taking decisive and early action over the past six months to pay down debt, reduce taxes to stimulate the economy and create jobs, and provide targeted support to key industries. In keeping with our strong leadership on the economy, next week will be maintaining a competitive economy week.

[Translation]

We plan to debate the following bills intended to enhance the competitiveness of certain sectors of the Canadian economy: our Bill C-23, at third reading stage, to amend the Canada Marine Act; our Bill C-5, at report stage, on liability in case of a nuclear incident; and our Bill C-14, at second reading stage, to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act.

[English]

We will also debate at second reading Bill C-32, which modernizes the Fisheries Act, Bill C-43, which amends the Customs Act, and Bill C-39, which amends the Canada Grain Act. We will also begin to debate Bill C-46. This is our bill to free western barley producers from the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly by giving them the freedom to market their own products. We will debate at third reading our bill to amend the Aeronautics Act, Bill C-7.

My friend, the member for Wascana, the Liberal House leader, said that government business and the doing of business in the House of Commons appeared to end on Tuesday. That is because next Wednesday and Thursday will be opposition days, and I would like to allot them as such at this time.

In terms of the question he raised with regard to Bill C-293, which is a private member's bill, I understand it is scheduled to come before the House in early May. At that time the House will have an opportunity to deal with the matter.

In terms of estimates and witnesses appearing before committee of the whole, the government does have to designate those to occur before May 31. Late last night I finally received notice of which two departments were identified and we will soon be advising the House of the dates that will be scheduled for consideration of those matters in committee of the whole.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CANADA CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-52, An Act respecting the safety of consumer products, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 10 minutes.

Prior to the question period, the honourable member for Laval had the floor to respond to questions and comments following her remarks. She has one minute remaining.

*Business of the House*

[English]

The hon. member for Yukon has a question, I believe, or a comment.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just before oral questions I was asking the member about making sure that at committee the plan for the regulations, which would have a big effect, comes out, as well as the plan on the resources to pay for the inspectors and the human resources required.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am certain that my colleagues for Québec and for Verchères—Les Patriotes will ensure that those two points will be given careful consideration when the bill is reviewed in committee.

[English]

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to Bill C-52, which proposes changes to the regulatory regime for consumer products in Canada.

This bill is long overdue. I say that because of the very high number of product recalls in Canada, so much so that Canadian families no longer know about the safety of the products they are buying. What should be at the forefront of public policy is the safety of Canadians, not the corporate financial bottom line, which has too long been the case. There are trade deals which Canada has signed with other countries which afford no protection for consumers. Not only is there no protection, but protection is being traded for rock bottom prices. We have paid a high price for that.

Recently, the member for Winnipeg North eloquently expressed the years of unsuccessful efforts by members of Parliament to bring real change that would give Canadian consumers confidence in the products they buy. Years of scientific studies have shown that there are many products on the market today that pose unnecessary risks to the health and well-being of our children. Today in the race toward market deregulation, greater access to cheap goods has come at a high price.

I am reminded of the Thomas the Tank Engine wooden railway toys my grandson has been playing with for a number of years. As a young toddler he put them in his mouth and was unnecessarily exposed to a toy contaminated with lead. There are more than 1.5 million of these toys in the United States alone and another 325,000 in other parts of the world, including Canada. I mention these toys to demonstrate that there is currently no uniformity in product standards. By consequence there is no assurance that all these products are safe for use. Although Bill C-52 is a step forward, it does not address the issue of standards in these products.

The risk management approach may target the high risk sources for higher surveillance, but overall, the system depends on reacting to safety problems identified through use after the fact. Some have suggested a stated ban on products containing toxic substances enforced through a pre-entry testing system financed through a service, for example, applied at the border.

I am hoping that at committee we will have the opportunity to invite some researchers and scientists to speak to the real gaps that exist in laboratory testing by many companies. We are going to be looking for an amendment to improve the testing system to improve

it. While inspectors have been empowered with greater authority, many of their actions remain optional, even when they believe human health is at risk. We believe this should change.

It is simply not enough for the federal government to say that it will deal decisively with these products that prove toxic and bring forward legislation that states the government may act. There must be both the will and the resources to do so. It is not clear that the Conservative government which preaches deregulation and a hands-off approach to government would put up the resources when it is necessary.

What has been presented in the budget is inadequate to do that job. Any attempt to create legislation around this issue must ensure that we have adequate standards in place and that we are ready to enforce them. Anything less will do very little, if anything, to improve the situation.

● (1525)

Like my colleague from Winnipeg North, I am concerned that the interests of large manufacturers and other companies that may be affected by the legislation are being weighted far more heavily than the health and needs of people around the country.

What is required is a proactive approach from the government and this approach must be both people centred and principled. It seems often to many Canadians that Health Canada has become the handmaiden of industry. In some respects it is losing its reputation as the protector of Canadian health. We must do more to bring about greater scrutiny of imported products as well as greater accountability.

It is the responsibility of the federal government to ensure that hazardous materials are not used in the manufacture of products destined for the use of people in our country and to ensure that products are properly tested before they reach the markets.

Bisphenol A, or BPA, is a prime example of a substance that has been in use for many years. It is found in plastic bottles, cans and so on. A recent finding has shown it to have a detrimental effect on health, especially that of babies and children. Polybrominated diphenyl ethers are other substances that are ubiquitous in our environment. They are found in common household items and they are known to be toxic to our health and well-being. They have not been regulated by the government. Canadians would expect the government to ensure the safety of these products.

It is alarming that we continue to hear frequent reports of products that contain these and other chemicals that are noxious to our health. I question very seriously whether Bill C-52 has the teeth to seek a ban of products containing chemicals such as those I mentioned.

● (1530)

[Translation]

Bill C-52 certainly represents a step forward but it needs amendment. We cannot fail in our duty to protect the health of Canadians simply to ensure that there are fewer impediments to trade, or because the government is not inclined to introduce new “trade irritants”, as it calls them.



*Business of the House*

Canadians must be able to count on their government to properly examine and regulate the products that find their way into our stores. For instance, how could we ask parents to ensure that the toys they buy for their children do not contain lead or other toxic substances?

[English]

Unfortunately, I do not see anything in this bill that would allow the government to take rapid and decisive action to ban such products that are found to be dangerous. It is even more unfortunate that this lack of commitment on the part of the federal government may mean that more Canadians will suffer as a result of substandards.

[Translation]

We have an opportunity today to act resolutely to reduce the contamination and injuries caused by chemical products in the manufacture of such diverse items as household goods, children's toys and other consumer products.

In committee, we will be proposing amendments to ensure the safety of products intended for family use. To do that, we need an absolute commitment from the federal government. The government must be ready to take all necessary measures to protect Canadians.

It remains to be seen whether this bill will really regulate the consumer products we see in Canada every day.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Bloc Québécois to Bill C-52, An Act respecting the safety of consumer products. As we know, our societies are changing. In Quebec, our fondest hope is that families will be able to rear their children in a safe environment.

In 2008, as we are talking here, a year after a major toy recall that I will explain in my presentation, we cannot offer those families any guarantee that the toys and other consumer products made available for children do not contain certain contaminants. This is particularly difficult to understand when it is ultimately a direct effect of globalization.

Our toys and other consumer products intended for children are no longer manufactured in Quebec or Canada. Obviously, that is a choice. With the Conservatives, we see the well-known free market syndrome. That is the Conservative philosophy. Leave things alone. Ultimately, the strong will prevail over the weak in the manufacturing industry.

With globalization, it is no longer the strong in Quebec or Canada who are prevailing over the weak in Quebec or Canada, it is the international giants winning out over our own businesses. How do they manage to win this manufacturing war? Simple: they have their products made in countries where there are no environmental standards, and thus we have the sad fact that today we are having to talk about a bill, Bill C-52, dealing with the safety of consumer products.

It is simple because consumer products are no longer being manufactured and produced in Canada. It is the laissez-faire attitude of the Conservatives, among others, that is largely responsible for this and is the reason why we are having discussions about this bill.

I would like to review a little of the historical context of this problem. As I explained, we have the laissez-faire approach widely adopted by the Conservatives. But there is another side of the coin: there are no constraints when we talk about what is required of manufacturers of products that could be dangerous who fall under federal jurisdiction. We are talking about cosmetics, baby cribs, tents, rugs, and, among other things, toys. There are no rules requiring that they test the products and demonstrate that they are not a threat to the health and safety of consumers. The companies are not required to test the products.

Now, since we do not manufacture them here any more, the products on sale often come from distributors. The manufacturer is no longer here in Canada or Quebec. The distributors sell a product they did not manufacture. There is no rule that requires companies that bring in a product manufactured outside Canada to follow any procedure to verify the content in terms of harmful or dangerous products that might be present in the goods sold.

As long as this law is not in force, consumers have no real protection against the incidents that forced the recall of thousands of toys manufactured in China, for example. There is also the case where banned toxic substances were found in tubes of toothpaste coming from South Africa.

These are recent examples. That is what is surprising, what floors me and surely also floored the Quebecers who are listening to us, and Canadians, because we should have expected something else. We have gone beyond the year 2000. We should at least be capable of providing the public with a guarantee that what is sold on the store shelves does not contain toxic substances.

● (1535)

To the contrary, in the summer of 2007, thousands of toys made in China were recalled by their manufacturers because they contained lead. We are all very familiar with how Quebec, and Canada as well, fought over lead. At the time, the Bloc Québécois wanted the minister to act without delay. It wanted the safety requirements for dangerous products tightened in order to eliminate the production, promotion and marketing of dangerous products. The Bloc wanted Ottawa to place the onus on manufacturers for inspecting their products and demonstrating that they were not dangerous to consumer health or safety.

That was very clear. There was a huge recall last summer and the media started talking about it. That was in the summer of 2007. It is almost the summer of 2008 now and we certainly felt over the winter that it would still take a while. Once again, the government has shown its apathy. Finally it decided in early 2008 to introduce this bill and try to regulate product safety.

The Conservatives have a stupefying way of doing things. When they see something, they do not act right away, probably so as not to hurt the lobby and their distributor friends. The Conservatives have fewer and fewer friends in manufacturing, of course, because they are being wiped out as 2,000 to 3,000 jobs disappear every week. They have lots of friends, though, among distributors. Just look at their reaction to companies when it comes time to help them.

*Business of the House*

We saw what happened with summer jobs. The minister in charge was scandalous. The summer jobs in his riding were at Wal-Mart. That is what he wanted. But that is not what happened in Quebec where we had Bloc members. We helped the companies that really needed it. In short, that was his Conservative way of helping business create jobs.

When the manufacturers have finally been wiped out in our ridings, as the Conservatives have done, there will be nothing left but distributors. So what do they do? Once again, the biggest eat the smallest. It is the law of the market, as established by the Conservatives. So there are still Wal-Marts left, and if the minister wanted to help business create summer jobs, it had to be at Wal-Mart. That was his choice.

This is probably what prompted the government not to react in the summer of 2007 when the toys were being recalled.

When there is a recall, product is withdrawn from the shelves of retailers, which are now the Wal-Marts of this world and the big department stores. So they lose money. They had a problem with that. They probably could have been compensated, but they had a problem with taking product off the shelves and returning it. The government decided, therefore, not to act immediately. It decided to give the companies time to do the recall themselves and not impose any standards. So the companies did the recalls. They acted in good faith and without supervision. The government had not established any procedure to follow in anticipation of this problem, even though it could be seen coming.

When manufacturers abandon Canada to set up abroad, especially in developing countries where they do not have to comply with environmental or other standards regarding the products they use in making their consumer goods, it is clear that some day they will be selling items at reduced prices in industrialized countries that are not produced there. Why? Because the materials used are not permitted in many manufacturing sectors in developed countries. Thus, countries such as China, South Africa and others can sell us products that do not comply with the quality standards for consumer products.

That is disturbing. We are trying to help young families. In Quebec, we have established, for example, a network of child care centres. We are trying to establish a balanced concept of work and family that will encourage our young people to have children. Yet, alongside this system of support to families, we allow businesses to distribute products that are dangerous to health. It is completely ridiculous.

● (1540)

We put in place a fine structure that meets people's needs and, in parallel, we torpedo the whole thing because, in the end, someone decided that the free market does not have to guarantee health or safety. That is the reality. Our consumer goods are manufactured in developing countries, where we know very well there is no respect for environmental or quality standards in the materials that go into the products for sale.

Clearly, the products they sell to us wind up causing problems. That is what happened in the summer of 2007: there were recalls. I do not want to name names, but some large retailers buy and sell at

discount prices. I have time to mention some examples of the toy recalls. Among others, Mattel had nine toys in its Barbie line that were defective. I have never played with those toys, but there are many young people who do. My daughter enjoyed those toys a lot. Today, as a potential grandfather in a few years, I am concerned.

We did not have these problems at the time my daughter played with those toys because they were made in Canada. However, these goods are now made in developing countries—strictly for economic reasons. I will not be able to even suggest to my grandchildren that they play with the same toys that I bought for my daughter because I will no longer be sure they are not dangerous to their health.

I do not understand why the Conservative Party waited so long. The problems occurred in July. They should have rushed to adopt this bill. There should be a campaign, with lots of publicity, against any sale of these products.

Think of it: in 2008, there is no inspection service for imported goods that our children play with. We are in a process of self-destruction because, for economic reasons, we have decided not to assist our Quebec and Canadian manufacturers and we have given free reign to the free market.

I explained all that earlier and it is important to repeat it for the men and women listening to us. In a free market, the big swallow the little. This was certainly how it was in our communities in Quebec and surely in the rest of Canada too, where larger companies buy up smaller ones.

Now that we have globalization, though, it is international companies that buy up names. We saw it with Crocs, a Quebec idea that was bought up by the Americans, who finally decided two weeks ago to end production in Quebec because they wanted to transfer their operations to emerging countries where they could make more money.

They are not even trying to save a company that is losing money. These are companies that are already making a profit but want to double it because they are listed on the stock exchange and want to give their shareholders more money. All that the chairmen of these companies want is a bigger bonus at the end of the year. Ultimately, they could not care less about the health of the people who buy their products.

I am very happy not to be a Conservative. That is how these people think. I am worried that the Quebec members of the Conservative Party think like that as well. It is totally absurd, but that is how it is when people are illogical.

If the Conservatives were logical, they would have wanted to introduce this bill back in July 2007 and would have immediately required all imported products to be inspected, at least those intended for children.

Even if we members of Parliament are willing to consume products that are life threatening, I would not wish that on the citizens who elected us and we should at least protect the lives and health of our children. At least we would be doing that for future generations.

The Conservative approach, though, is to emphasize profit at all cost, regardless of what happens. They want that dividend in their pockets every three months, and who cares if the rest of the world around them is starving.

• (1545)

I have a very hard time with this. That is why I was anxious to speak to Bill C-52. Is it a good bill that deserves attention? It is a step in the right direction. The Bloc Québécois definitely wants it discussed in committee to ensure that the Conservatives do not just set up a monitoring and inspection system. If they do not provide the money and personnel needed to do the job, not much will change. There will be a law, but no one will be there to enforce it because the Conservatives decided not to provide the necessary budget.

Once again, they want to protect their distributor friends like the Wal-Marts of this world. We have to watch out for that. It is a danger. It is not enough just to pass legislation: we have to make sure that the budget follows.

This is disturbing. It happened in July 2007, less than a year ago. They waited until January 2008. The Americans, and particularly the Republicans, who are like the Conservatives and leave the free market alone, responded faster than the Conservatives. The world must have gone crazy. It is probably the urge to make a profit at all cost for their pals that made them not respond quickly. That is why, for one thing, the Bloc Québécois and the other opposition parties are making sure that we do not just enact Bill C-52, but that a whole range of services is put in place, including mandatory inspection of all products sold. This has to be done.

It is not enough to say in a bill that products must not contain contaminants like lead and so on. We can certainly list them, but with all the products arriving in Vancouver by boat, we need to set up a monitoring system. As we have seen, billions of dollars are being invested in the infrastructure project to build the Asia-Pacific gateway, but nothing will be spent on the St. Lawrence—Great Lakes corridor gateway. I am in a good position to talk about this because I sit on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

We are well aware that this is because all of the products come from Asia and the emerging countries. The doors are wide open to them. We have to rebuild all of the port infrastructures and build new rail lines to bring the goods in. The only thing we are forgetting is that what we are bringing in and what we are putting on the shelves, particularly when it is intended for children, has been produced with contaminants. This makes no sense.

The Conservatives at least have to be consistent. It is not enough to import products because our distributors are demanding them and the Wal-Marts of this world want stock to sell. We have to be able to make sure that the things intended for our children do not threaten their health and do not contain products we have already banned here.

We will vote for this bill. The Bloc Québécois will be extremely vigilant, to make sure that a whole system is set up to implement the provisions of this bill, including the inspection system. This system will require manufacturers in other countries to guarantee that their products are compliant and send product samples before the products

are shipped here, so that we can ensure that they do not contain any contaminants. Then, when the products arrive en masse, inspections will have to be carried out, because manufacturers could send us product samples and then ship other types of products. They may have had products manufactured in two or three different locations, have a distribution centre in an emerging country or have products that come from all over. That is how things work.

We have to be logical. We know that products are no longer made here, so we have to monitor the whole system and conduct random inspections. Inspectors can go to the port, open the boxes and analyze the product. We need to do something for ourselves once in a while and stop thinking about our wallets and who contributed to the Conservative campaign fund. We need to think of ourselves, our children and future generations. We should be proud to stand up in this House and vote for a bill like Bill C-52. That is my message for the Conservatives, because they have no choice.

• (1550)

They know that the Republicans in the United States acted faster than they did. We need to make sure in committee that the Conservatives support the amendments the Bloc Québécois will make, so that we have the money needed for a comprehensive inspection system. One day, our children will thank us for voting for Bill C-52 in this House.

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciated my colleague's speech. I would like to ask him a question.

We know that in Canada alone there are approximately 5 million people who smoke cigarettes. We also know that 35,000 deaths a year are caused by cigarettes or by the indirect effects of cigarette smoke, and that these deaths could be prevented if we imposed more restrictions on tobacco producers. We know that tobacco is banned in a number of provinces and in many public places.

However, contrary to all of the other restricted products that are covered by regulation, Bill C-52 would make tobacco the only product exempted by a section of the act itself. All other exemptions are by regulation.

Does the member not find it a bit odd that in Bill C-52, the Conservative government thought to add a clause exempting tobacco, thus allowing manufacturers of tobacco products to continue to produce those products without worry, even though the government knows that health care costs will continue to mount if we do not pay more attention to these products? Think about the new cigarillos that are on the market and that will carry no health warning for another six years.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Laval for her question.

What she says is very important because it concerns the whole principle of adopting the bill so that it can be sent to committee for improvement. At that point, the minister clearly would have to answer this question: why have tobacco products been excluded?

*Business of the House*

Surely, no one will be surprised that a party such as the Bloc Québécois is calling for tobacco products to be included in this legislation. Increasingly, products containing imported materials are found on store shelves. It is no secret. Tobacco manufacturing has practically disappeared—in Quebec at any rate. There are a few remnants, but not much.

That means that while more tobacco products are being sold, the contents are not produced here. The material comes from somewhere else. What does it contain? Once again, the Conservatives probably know, and that is why they decided to exclude it from the legislation. However, this is the kind of thing that we must be able to improve. We have to make sure that they answer our questions and that the Conservatives do not delay.

I agree with my colleague. If the standards are the same for all the companies that manufacture these tobacco products or all the suppliers, I would hope the companies would be more comfortable in saying the products have been inspected; that what they buy comes from abroad, that their products have passed every test and the products they sell are what they are supposed to be.

Tobacco products will always be harmful to health—I do not need to belabour the point. I have never smoked in my life, so perhaps I have a chance. Some people who smoke have great difficulty in quitting. I wish them a great deal of strength to stop. If there were no more tobacco products at all; if there were no more buyers; none would be sold any more. Once again, we understand that it is difficult for some people. We want to offer our moral support.

At least, we must be able to guarantee that what is sold on our shelves does not contain unknown dangerous material. We know that there are recognized dangerous substances in cigarettes; but there are questions about other things that were used in their manufacture because, after all, tobacco production is no longer a significant activity in Quebec.

• (1555)

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**An hon. member:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**An hon. member:** Nay.

**An hon. member:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Health.

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

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**MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE**

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following public bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-219, An Act to amend the Public Service Employment Act (elimination of bureaucratic patronage and establishment of national area of selection).

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FOOD AND DRUGS ACT**

The House resumed from April 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-51, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak this afternoon to Bill C-51.

As always, the Liberal Party aims to improve the safety and health of Canadians.

We support measures that strengthen the regulatory process so that Canadians can have access to the safest and best foods and therapeutic products.

The drugs on the market are not a great risk for the health and safety of Canadians.

[English]

That being said, we see this bill and the other bill as a huge missed opportunity. As often happens with the government, it is what is not in the bill that is remarkable, including just taking out the whole section of the bill on the pride of Canadian health policy, which is the interdiction against directed consumer advertising.

We look again to a government that seems to be more interested in business than in patients. Although we believe there is a need for the minister to have the ability to take unsafe health and consumer products off the market if the companies are unwilling to do so, the powers given to the minister in this bill are unbelievably unreasonable. It is not putting in place the kind of scientific advice that would be very important in terms of a minister being able to administer the Food and Drugs Act based on evidence in science and not ideology, and the way the government's friends in business are behaving on just about everything else.

It is important that the Food and Drugs Act be updated. Up until now, as everyone knows, the product safety system has functioned purely on a voluntary basis. If a product is dangerous or poses a health risk, corporations can issue a recall.

*Business of the House*

This bill would grant the minister the power to enforce the recalls rather than depend on the voluntary system. Certainly, those of us in the health committee have heard this from many witnesses, including the department itself, that these are powers that the minister must have in the event of a recalcitrant company.

The bill would also grant the minister the power to seek an injunction, to enforce regulatory compliance through the Federal Court. This is a faster avenue for enforcement rather than the current system which fills up the courts by addressing each non-compliance matter at trial.

As well, the bill would improve the surveillance of therapeutic products both before and after they reach the market. This could have the effect of helping critical drugs, such as cancer therapies, get to the market quicker and yet remove them just as quickly if significant adverse reactions or incidents are reported. This has been very much the wish of a number of the groups, from cancer to HIV-AIDS, to both the providers as well as the patients.

As we have heard in committee many times, people are very concerned about hurrying and having less safeguards because we are now going to commit to doing a much better job post-market. We need to be very clear and it is the reason for the kind of scrutiny this bill would require, to make sure there is absolutely no less safe drugs coming on to the market because of this hurry up approach that is important in these very special drugs.

Because of the substantial regulatory powers the minister would have, it is obviously going to be important to study these powers to ensure transparency, effectiveness and accountability. We will see, in some aspects of this, that it seems a bit remarkable that the minister would be able to stop a clinical trial midway through without having information from the very people running the trial. There are things that just do not make a great deal of sense unless we in committee find out exactly how the government expects to carry this out.

The idea is that the Minister of Health can suspend a clinical trial authorization or the terms and conditions other than a prescribed term or condition or the suspension to prevent injury after giving the holder of the authorization an opportunity to make representation, and to suspend a clinical trial authorization if the minister is of the opinion that an immediate suspension is necessary.

● (1600)

My experience is that this only comes to the minister from the people supervising the trial, who are scientists. I hope we will hear in committee exactly how the minister is planning to carry this out.

It is interesting that time and time again these powers to the minister do not seem to have any provisions within the act to find out what science or which scientists the minister would be relying on in order to exercise these substantial new powers as given to him in the bill.

From licences to the discontinuing of clinical trials, to the disclosure of personal information to a person or government that carries out functions related to the protection or promotion of human health without the consent of the individual to whom the personal information relates, if the disclosure is necessary, is worrying. We will need to know from both privacy experts and from many other witnesses, particularly, I would hope, patient groups, what they think

of that, as well as what they think about disclosing confidential business information to a government or to the following persons without the consent of persons to whose business or affairs the information relates without notifying that person. This is something the committee will have to look at very seriously.

Even in clause 24, it says that the minister can recall a therapeutic product or cosmetic. It also says that the minister may authorize a person to sell a therapeutic product or cosmetic even if the minister has directed a person to recall it. This will somehow need a great deal of explanation at the committee. I look forward to that.

We are prepared to allow the bill to go to the committee, but it is extraordinarily important, yet again, that the stakeholder reaction to the bill is very much around the elimination of the prohibition on direct to consumer advertising.

Barbara Mintzes, the health policy expert and professor at UBC Centre for Health Services and Policy Research, has stated clearly on the website, [straight.com](http://straight.com), that the amendment would introduce a loophole that could allow pharmaceutical companies to directly advertise drugs to consumers, a practice that is currently illegal in Canada. The proposed new wording of the bill tabled in Parliament on April 8 says:

No person shall advertise a prescription therapeutic product to a person other than a practitioner unless they are authorized by the regulations to do so.

In the bill there is a general prohibition that covers direct to consumer advertising for drugs. That prohibition is now gone, which means the barrier of introduction of direct to consumer advertising through the regulations, because there is a sort of general prohibition in the bill, is gone, according to Barbara Mintzes.

Direct to consumer advertising and that prohibition has set Canada apart from our neighbours to the south in a very proud way. I am not sure why the minister is now trying to turn this around. Anyone who accidentally watches American television sees that barrage of advertising. It means people go to their doctors thinking that a certain drug will have a certain benefit, and we know that this increases the likelihood of harm as we learned the hard way with the Vioxx case.

Vioxx was brought on to the market for a very special group of patients, patients who had arthritis, but also had serious problems with their stomachs. The drug was to be just a boutique drug to deal with the patients with serious arthritis, but also for whom those drugs were too hard on their gastrointestinal tract. Instead, the drug was marketed widely to the whole population and people with arthritis thought they should be on that drug. That is when we found the drug had serious cardiac effects.

● (1605)

This would be a risk that one would take based on perhaps an equally serious gastrointestinal side effect for people whose ability to function would be improved by Vioxx. However, this was not the intent of the drug when it was put on the market in the first place. Now because of the serious increased risk of heart attack and stroke, it ended up causing much concern in terms of both life and disability.

*Business of the House*

It is so clear that the newer, better drug can have an effect on patients when there are cheaper, older drugs that are better, safer and have the same effect. From antibiotics to antidepressants to the kinds of drugs that are used around cholesterol, we want to ensure that physicians and patients have a real conversation about what really is the best and are not unduly influenced by television advertising. This is evidence based practice. Yet, again, we are finding the government preferring ideology and business over evidence. The evidence is that direct to consumer advertising is wrong and bad for patients. The bill would eliminate this serious prohibition on the evidence based policy and evidence based practice.

It is important therefore that we look to what other structures need to be placed around these powers to the minister. We need to look very seriously at the kind of advice the minister gets in order to do his best job. I have long been a believer in the fact that ministerial advisory committees need to give transparent advice to the minister. Whether it is the scientists that list endangered species, it is very important that politicians do the politics, scientists do the science and that the transmission of information from the scientists to the politician must be done in a transparent way such as the citizens of Canada can understand.

I believe people can understand why a minister might not list all 11 species on an endangered species list or species at risk list because of the politics, the economy and the reality in a certain community. However, politicians have to do their job and explain why they have made that decision when the scientists have said X and the politician or the minister has decided to do a version of X or even Y.

It is really important that we look to the models like NICE, the National Institute of Clinical Excellence in Britain, and the way in which it has involved citizens in the decisions. The bill very definitely needs resources to explain how the minister will do this.

As a family physician who did obstetrics, I quite often was at the hospital waiting for a baby to arrive during the national news. It would be quite clear that a drug would be recalled while I was not watching the news. The patients would arrive the next morning and tell me they were on whatever drug had just been recalled. I would have no information about it. A letter would arrive from Health Canada three days later telling me the drug had been recalled.

We have to get into the 21st century. If the minister is to have the powers to recall a drug or product, then the minister has to be able to communicate with the people who prescribe the drugs, not three days later after someone has lost his or her life because in that 72 hour window the doctor accidentally prescribed the recalled drug.

It will be extraordinarily important that the databases and the kind of two way communication between provinces and the federal government exist. Who actually is in charge of speaking to the doctors of the country about these products at risk? How do we get in touch with them? Until we have the resources for the infrastructure, how will we get the minister and the ministry into this century to communicate with the people who count on him for timely advice on things as important as this?

●(1610)

It will be extremely important for the government to look at what the federal drug agency does in the United States and why that is a free-standing agency. The health protection of our country is half the people at Health Canada now. We have to decide whether we want to put a science based and a real structure in place for the drug evaluation post-market surveillance, working toward a common formulary.

Our national pharmaceutical strategy is in disarray. There are a few working groups, but there is really very little action toward the part of the 10 year commitment for health, which was in a national pharmaceutical strategy in the 2004 accord with the provinces.

The health minister has cancelled the next meeting of his counterparts supposedly for June. I do not know how we can do any of these things unless the provinces, territories and their health ministers feel they have a partner with the federal government. It will be extraordinarily important that we look at this, like we did in the very sensitive bill on reproductive technology, to ensure that any regulation must come back to the health committee so we understand the nuances and the decisions taken in the regulations, which can be so important to people's lives. It must come back the committee that has studied the bill and has now done this important study.

It is a bit rich, in the middle of a study on post-market surveillance, that the government has decided to table the bill without the information, without the recommendations of the very committee that has studied this. It was a bit shocking to hear that even the working group on the national pharmaceutical strategy, the working group on real world drug safety, was not even consulted in what should be in the bill. Yet again we have this top-down, "father knows best, take it or leave it, trust us you will like it" approach from the government. It is extraordinary that when all of the witnesses came, when all the provinces and territories and working groups existed, that the government would not take counsel from these people who study this and who know it.

Also, almost every member of Parliament over these last weeks, since the bill was tabled, have been inundated by calls to their constituency offices on the natural health product risk. People using these products are worried again that their products are not understood because of the issue around health claims. We need to seriously look again at what the minister is considering in terms of natural health products and how we regulate these things. Some products have been used for thousands of years, but without a clinical trial. It is not evidence based, but Canadians have the right to be wrong on these things. They also have the right to be right in terms of the products that work for them. In studying the bill we want to ensure people have patient and client freedom.

These changes are just not good enough. Canada needs a national food policy. At the same time as we get this tinkering around the edges, we have from melamine in dog food, to re-labelled snap peas from China, to mushrooms from China called “product of Canada” because they have been sliced here. We have orange juice called “product of Canada” because Canadian water was added to it.

• (1615)

The government needs to sit down with all government departments that deal with food in this country, such as agriculture, fisheries, industry and international trade, and with the producers and the food security people.

We need a national food policy. We cannot even tinker with things in this bill unless we can actually have a commitment from the government to get on with it and protect the health and safety of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I really enjoyed my colleague's presentation.

However—I hope she will agree with the Bloc Québécois—it is important for us that this bill be sent to committee so that we can call in as many experts as possible to fully explore this. I know that the member has experience in the health field, and so I would like to ask her a question.

Just replacing “drugs” by “therapeutic products” and adding to the terms “therapeutic products”, “drugs, devices, cells, tissues, organs” and so on, will probably result in a debate.

Is the member comfortable with the proposed definition for “therapeutic products”, or does it warrant a debate in committee?

• (1620)

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. Semantics are very important. The words “therapeutic products” are possibly clearer. I appreciate your suggestion, and I will share it with the committee.

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise again in this House to discuss another health bill. Health is a very important subject to me. I am particularly interested in it because I know just how important and necessary health is to living with dignity.

Although Bill C-51 is very important and long overdue, although we have been calling on the government to review the whole issue of medicines, drugs and therapeutic devices for a long time, and although we have called on the government to do so a number of times, we will vote to send this bill to committee to be thoroughly examined. As my colleague said earlier, and as our other colleague who worked on the health file a long time said, this is much too important to let a few people decide the fate of thousands of human beings, Canadians and Quebeckers, who will rely on our decisions to keep them in good health.

A few things in this bill, or at least the draft we received, worry me. I am almost positive that some things worry a number of my colleagues as well. For example, the bill states that the Minister of Health would have the authority to pre-approve health products that

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have not yet received final approval. That worries me. It gives a lot of power to a minister, to one individual.

Bill C-28, which was passed a few years ago, had the same provisions for other products, such as pesticides. I do not know what became of that act, if the Minister of Health has had the opportunity to grant special permission to companies to put pesticides on the market before they should be. However, recently, pesticides have been found to be very hazardous to our health, to the health of our children and young people, whom we thought were safe playing outside during the summer. We thought that Health Canada had taken all the precautions to ensure the products were healthy, safe, and harmless.

If we are going to give the Minister of Health that much power, we have to make sure that we provide a strong framework for exercising that power in this bill. We have been hearing about amending the terms. These days, with so many advances in biotechnology and life sciences, we agree that we need to ensure that our health and health products legislation reflects these new realities. People with specific needs, such as those with HIV, might benefit from new experimental drugs. These drugs should be made available to them as quickly as possible, because in many cases, it is a matter of life or death.

Although we recognize the importance of reviewing the entire Food and Drugs Act, we want to be absolutely sure that the act contains provisions to ensure that the health of our fellow citizens will be taken into account responsibly.

There are some other things about this bill that bother me, and once again, I am sure that my colleagues from Québec and Verchères—Les Patriotes will see to it that these things are considered and debated by the Standing Committee on Health and that the people who have something to say about it will be invited to testify before the committee.

• (1625)

There is more to this than inviting experts in pharmaceuticals, doctors, parliamentarians, and departmental officials to debate this bill. The people this will affect—groups representing patients, hospitals and pharmacists—must be involved and consulted to develop the most comprehensive bill possible for health and therapeutic products.

There is something else in this bill that I am worried about. As my colleague said earlier, “therapeutic product” means

(a) a drug,

(b) a device,

(c) cells, tissues or organs that are distributed or represented for use in

(i) the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention of a disease, disorder or abnormal physical state, or its symptoms, in human beings or animals, or

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(ii) restoring, correcting or modifying the body structure of human beings or animals or the functioning of parts of the bodies of human beings or animals, or

(d) a combination of two or more of the things referred to in paragraphs (a) to (c);

A few years ago, there was an epic battle over breast implants. At the time, breast implants fell into the category of specialized medical devices. Now they are in with therapeutic products. It was already very complicated and we did not have much information on the ingredients and the safety of breast implants. Now they are being put in with all therapeutic products or devices.

When they talk about cells, are they talking about stem cells? What are they talking about? When they talk about tissue, are they talking about the new grafts that can be made with one's own tissue? There clearly need to be a lot of very apposite, very transparent rules on this.

I think that the health minister would have far too much power. The bill says that the health minister would have the power to modify the regulations. That is saying a lot because all the definitions in this bill are basically regulations. The health minister would have the ability, therefore, to change the regulations without coming before Parliament. That is very serious and we should be very worried about it.

There are also things that the minister could change not just in the regulations but also in regard to product labelling, purity standards, the way in which clinical trials are conducted, and the exemption of various products from the legislation.

I think that this means giving a tremendous amount of power to the man or woman holding the position of health minister. It means giving an awful lot of power to someone when we know we do not presently have a health minister who is very far to the left or very suited to making such decisions. After all, what is at stake here are the lives of our fellow citizens.

I am very concerned when I see a Minister of Health rise to vote against a motion asking Canada to recognize and abide by its commitment, as it has always done, to people sentenced to death in other countries. I am still very concerned about that. I thought that health ministers were supposed to be worried about the health of people and their survival.

• (1630)

It makes me wonder when I see that and then see a bill giving these people so much power. As a citizen, first of all, and as a user of medications and therapeutic products, I have a right and duty to wonder about these things. Do we really want to give one person the authority to approve a medication that has not been proven so that it can be marketed more quickly because it supposedly has more benefits than adverse side effects?

We saw this with Celebrex. It is still on the market because it supposedly has a greater upside than downside. However, people died of it before we knew why. We often see that. We did not use to see any advertising for drugs in Quebec and Canada. Under this legislation, though, there are some grey areas, some aspects that are incredibly hazy, and we could see more and more advertising. I am also very concerned about that.

To relax, we probably all watch television in the evening when we get home. In the course of the evening—in the space of maybe two hours—we will see at least two or three ads for Viagra or Cialis. That is what we see. To my way of thinking, these are drugs. Why is it that we see these ads when they are supposed to be prohibited? Various television stations agree to run them because Health Canada does not do any monitoring to determine whether various companies' and pharmaceutical firms' ads meet the criteria, which are, or were, clearly set out.

Now, with this new bill, the criteria would be much less clear. Pharmaceutical firms would have much more freedom and latitude to promote their products. This worries me. Many people are influenced by advertising messages. Our Conservative friends keep telling us that we are wrong, we are crazy, we are not listening, we do not understand, we will never accomplish anything, we are impotent. They know that repeating a message drives it home. In the same way, people who watch television are influenced by repeated messages: "Cialis will make you happy", "Alesse will make you happy", "This will make you happy". We come to believe these statements and we ask our doctor for a prescription, even if we do not need the drug. We ask for the drug because it looks so wonderful to be able to skip down the street singing and arrive home to be greeted by our smiling wife. We want the same treatment.

We will have to be very careful about the decisions we make regarding this bill. While we agree that it should be referred to committee, I can assure the House that we will do our duty responsibly and make every effort to amend the clauses that could result in harm to the health of Quebeckers and Canadians.

• (1635)

[English]

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Bloc member's analysis of the bill. One of the concerns she spoke to is the fact that the regulations, which will allow for advertisements, also in my mind could open another door, and that is for lobbying of the cabinet. It is around the cabinet table where these decisions may well be made and that is a cause for grave concern about the kind of negative influence that could happen in regard to our government.

We all know what it has been like on the Hill for a number of years with regard to lobbying, and we all know how the government of the day has come in with the promise of accountability and being very straightforward. It strikes me as strange that we now have this bill which would allow those who are around the cabinet table to make such a serious decision. Would the member concur with that idea?

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying earlier, we absolutely must make sure there is as little advertising as possible about drugs and their derivatives.



Again, young girls have acquired a certain drug, a birth control pill, because they saw reports and ads on a product, Diane-35, which is extremely harmful and has contributed to the death of a number of people in Europe. This product has been banned in Europe and is no longer sold there. However, it is not banned here and is still available for sale. Despite all the precautions we should be taking, it is still available here.

This product is advertised in bus shelters, at bus stops and in all the magazines. They are reminder ads, since that is allowed, as is advertising the price, the quantity and the name of the product. Nonetheless, when both types of ads are put together a few days apart—or weeks in the case of magazines—people are smart enough to make the connection quite quickly and easily.

It has been proven that the drugs advertised the most on television are the most requested at the doctor's office. Doctors prescribe more of those drugs. There is an immediate cause and effect relationship that is very easy to see. Our government must not allow this indulgent and negligent approach. Rules absolutely must be established to stop this from happening.

**Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague for her analysis of the bill. This afternoon, I received a letter from one of my constituents in Vaudreuil-Soulanges talking about the need to make sure that products entering Quebec and Canada meet standards that are similar to the ones that are applied here in Canada.

I have a question for my colleague concerning the need for transparency in relation to products. Consumer protection associations have told us that at present, the registry used to record complaints would only be for health care institutions and the public could not contribute to it and have their complaints addressed. As well, we are concerned about the Minister's power to change the bill as he pleases without having to go through the House.

Consumers' associations in Quebec and Canada are also asking for clarification regarding the confidential business information aspect.

I would like my colleague to remind us once again how important it is to be transparent when it comes to labelling and product content, and how important it is to give consumers an opportunity to file complaints.

• (1640)

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

In fact, that is a subject I did not address: the subject of confidentiality and everything relating to drugs that are approved, not approved and awaiting approval. There again, there are major roadblocks for ordinary consumers and people who want to know what they are consuming, who want to know how and why they consume it, and most importantly, if it is a drug, a therapeutic device or a surgical device, whether it is harmless or not.

Some day, and I hope that day comes soon, we are going to have to adopt some clear rules. There is a lot of talk about transparency, but we are going to have to get beyond talking and have some actual transparency.

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We have been talking about transparency since I first came to this House, but everything is just as opaque everywhere, in all fields, as if no one had ever talked about transparency. People have to know, they have to be aware, they have to be sufficiently educated and informed about all the drugs and products they may take so they can make informed choices.

It is exactly the same thing with GMOs and therapeutic products. I referred earlier to essential oils in relation to Bill C-52. It is the same thing. Consumers have a right to know. Consumers seem to be very wise, because it is letters from consumers that are telling us to be careful and not let a minister do the work by himself and make decisions about a bill by himself.

This may not relate directly to the bill itself, but rather to the direction taken in the bill. If the minister can change the direction taken by a bill once it has been agreed to and passed, what point is there in sitting in this House, doing the essential work and drafting a bill like this to ensure that our fellow citizens, and consumers, have access to quality drugs and that their health is not in danger?

What point is there in doing all these studies and all this research, in bringing thousands of witnesses here, if the Minister of Health can ultimately get up one fine morning and say he no longer agrees with the direction taken in the bill and decide to change it? I think my colleague is right to be worried.

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, Ethics; the hon. member for Davenport, Arts and Culture.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Victoria.

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to Bill C-51, which is being presented in tandem with Bill C-52, which I spoke to earlier.

Bill C-51 seeks to amend the Food and Drugs Act. It has some positive aspects. A bill to better protect consumers is long overdue. Canadians have suffered harm from recalled products and death from drugs that were approved for sale too quickly.

The Food and Drugs Act has been eroded over long years of the former government. Canadians, it seems to me, have lost confidence in the government's ability to protect their health. Perhaps it has to do with the former government's big love affair with large pharmaceutical firms, but whatever the cause, Canadians feel that their health is not being protected, and this is what we must address.

In its present form, the bill is hugely inadequate and there is much that is worrisome about it. I have received literally hundreds of emails and letters about the bill. I would like to read some of them because they provide some interesting insights on how Canadians feel right now.

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The official intent of Bill C-51 is to fill in gaps in health protection and to ensure the safety of Canadians. To that end, the bill proposes to implement sweeping changes in how Health Canada will regulate drug products.

As I have said, there are fundamental aspects that are problematic and that will keep the bill from doing what it purports to do, which is protecting Canadians. Instead, some of what is in the bill could likely have an adverse effect on Canadians' health.

I would like to touch on a few subjects that the bill addresses. The first one relates to advertising. In the modification that the bill proposes, it would likely have the effect of providing an opportunity for drug manufacturers to bypass the advertising bans by applying for exemptions. This simple change is disturbing in that it would render the government vulnerable to lobby pressure by large pharmaceutical multinationals.

It is important for Canadians to have clear information about the health product they take. We should not reasonably expect companies to advertise their products and expect that they will do so to educate Canadians.

I want to refer to some testimony that was given at committee by an independent drug policy researcher from my city of Victoria. I stress "independent" because often when presentations are made at committee they are made by people who either have ties to pharmaceutical companies or push for policies that improve the profits of the companies. It is important to mention that this researcher, whose name is Alan Cassels, is an independent researcher. He made the following comments at committee recently:

The pharmaceutical industry spokespeople will tell you that they should be involved in the education of consumers about drugs, but let me show you how they choose to educate consumers. This "toe tag" ad appeared in many magazines and major newspapers across Canada. This one came from the National Post of February 20, 2004. It shows a toe tag hanging off a corpse with the headline, "What would you rather have, a cholesterol test or a final exam?" Here's another example, from Maclean's magazine, of the same ad.

• (1645)

These ads are probably the most egregious example of disease-mongering that this country has ever seen. The ads, which ran in both France and Canada, were the subject of a letter from the World Health Organization to the medical journal *The Lancet*, complaining that this kind of advertising is undoubtedly driving the inappropriate use of cholesterol-lowering drugs around the world.

This proposed policy would be a policy basically on disease-mongering. It is important to maintain our current ban on direct to consumer advertising of pharmaceuticals but we need to go further than that. We actually need more strict control on the advertising of diseases. The industry might call it disease awareness but it may be closer to the truth to call it disease-mongering.

One place to start would be to ask Health Canada some hard questions. What is our policy around this so-called industry advertising? Do we collect data if this kind of advertising is driving the inappropriate use of pharmaceuticals? What research into this kind of approach has been commissioned? What other steps is Health Canada taking to control it? Instead of trying to deal with patients who may be dying from prescription drugs, how can we stop people from taking drugs they do not need in the first place?

The last question, a question that Mr. Cassels raised in committee, is very important. This is an aspect of proactive health, which we just

do not do in Canada, that is inadequately funded and has not received enough resources, energy and thought.

We should not be allowing any shortcuts to advertising. Instead, we should be providing better information for patients. There is a dire need for Canadians to receive approved and regulated information provided by an independent, objective source that is free from profit driven industries that sell drugs. This bill would not do that.

At committee, the NDP will be seeking to ensure that there is no direct to consumer advertising and that it will be completely removed from the bill. We cannot allow that to happen.

Another aspect of the bill that is of concern is that it takes a radically different expedited approach to the drug approval process, which the government calls progressive licensing. Progressive licensing would have the effect of speeding up the process of new drugs to the Canadian marketplace. It sets up an ongoing life cycle approach without any new improvement to the pre-market testing of new drugs.

This is the first time a bill of this sort codifies the trade agreements, like NAFTA, for grounds for refusing to release information about safety and efficacy that companies submit in order to get their products approved. This clause is absolutely objectionable and needs to be removed and replaced by making transparency the default option.

If we want Canadians to take responsibility for their health, they must be able to make better informed decisions and that comes about with more awareness about what particular drugs do and having some choices in the drugs they are allowed to take.

• (1650)

One needs to ask whether this new provision would prevent similar recalls as occurred under Vioxx. Will it prevent another Vioxx type of recall? It appears highly unlikely. Therefore, my colleagues and I will be looking for dramatic changes on this aspect at committee as well.

Bill C-51 also raises the question about the speed with which drugs will be moved through the approval process. This really relates to parliamentary oversight and the kind of parliamentary oversight we should be requiring. The provisions in the bill would make it possible to grant conditional approvals, thereby getting new drugs to market faster than is possible under the current regulations. Pre-market safety requirements may be less stringent or even be bypassed all together according to the stipulations of the bill.

There also is no commitment in the bill to making the results of post-marketing studies public, which is another concern.

Another troubling aspect of the bill is that it would provide the Minister of Health and Health Canada with considerable discretionary authority that falls outside the purview of Parliament. In other words, Bill C-51 could effectively remove democratic oversight, bypassing elected officials in favour of allowing bureaucrats to enforce regulations that fall short of the standards Canadians deserve.

I spoke a little about the kind of information that is really important for Canadians to access in order to make crucial health decisions on the safety of the products they are taking. Perhaps the most onerous change that is being proposed in the bill relating to the Food and Drugs Act involves the provisions regarding natural health products. Many Canadians prefer to look for complementary strategies to stay healthy. I myself benefit from such products and it does help me to stay much healthier.

The provisions in the bill are worrisome because among the modifications proposed by the bill are radical changes to key terminology, for example, replacing the word “drug” with “therapeutic products” throughout the bill and therefore bringing the natural health industry under the scope of the Food and Drugs Act and Health Canada. This far-reaching change would give the Minister of Health broad powers to regulate all natural health and plant derived products and, in the process, restrict access to these products for Canadians.

Up to 60% of the natural health products currently on the market would be outlawed as a direct result of the enactment of Bill C-51. This would remove a lot of choices for Canadians.

From some of the many letters I have received, there is one from a medical doctor who says, “I’m a medical doctor and a doctor of Chinese medicine living and working in Victoria. I’m becoming concerned that the new Bill C-51 introduced by the health minister might affect the public’s and my patients’ access to natural health products in Canada”.

Indeed, the clauses in this bill would have a serious limiting effect.

• (1655)

It is not by succumbing to the big pharma lobby that we will achieve balance in better regulating natural health products. That is an important piece: we must have a better balance. Perhaps we can do it by creating a third category. This something that the natural health industry has been calling for. Instead of buckling under to the big pharmaceutical lobby, it would simply have its own category, by itself, and regulations that do achieve that balance.

Another comment I have received which has concerned me is the following: “I and my family are opposed to Bill C-51 as it will restrict access and increase prices of natural health products we use regularly”. I think we are all aware that right now Canadians are having a more difficult time. Our economy is in decline. Many people are struggling to make ends meet and are using natural health products to stay healthy. Increasing the prices at this time would certainly not be helpful.

Another comment from one of my constituents states: “Regulations of natural health products should be separate from pharmaceuticals”. This is something that I think we will be asking the committee to look at.

Another comment that has been made is in regard to concern about how quickly this bill is being pushed through the process, disregarding recommendations made by many consumer public forums, health coalitions, and so on.

For the many people who suffer from chronic illnesses of various kinds, I think access to natural health products really keeps them

functioning and protects their quality of life. This is what they are asking us to do. I will be asking members of the committee to look at this aspect of the bill very seriously to see if the draconian measures being proposed really warrant what is being asked. Merely selling garlic to someone would make it a drug product under this new definition. Does that make any sense? There are many other examples like that.

I see that I am running out of time, so I will conclude simply by saying that Canadians want to be able to use natural products to keep their families in good health as one of the many ways used to maintain health. Being forced to use a pharmaceutical option is not the way to go. That is something I am going to oppose.

I hope the committee will look at making these much needed amendments while protecting the overall purpose of the bill, which is to ensure that products sold to Canadians are safe.

• (1700)

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for delivering such an eloquent speech on Bill C-51.

She explained very clearly a number of problems that are found in this legislation. I wonder if she could tell us more on the issue of drug advertising which, under the bill, would be authorized to a much greater extent than is currently the case. The fact is that this already creates a problem.

I would also like her to tell us a bit about the fact that the minister would really have a great deal of latitude to decide by himself whether he wants to change the thrust of the bill, or whether he is prepared to keep it as reviewed and probably amended by the Standing Committee on Health.

I wonder if the hon. member could give us her thoughts on this.

**Ms. Denise Savoie:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her questions. The two issues she raised are indeed of great concern to me.

First, there is the issue of advertising. We can already see some television ads. Under the current legislation, the reasons behind such ads cannot be discussed. Under Bill C-51, however, exemptions or special permission may be sought.

Earlier, I gave the example of an absolutely appalling ad promoting a certain drug whose name escapes me, but the ad basically gives you a choice between keeping your cholesterol in check with that drug or dying. That is so far-fetched that it makes no sense.

What Canadians need is more awareness-raising, real information provided in a transparent fashion.

Currently, our physicians across the country are provided information by the pharmaceutical companies. Where does the government stand on protecting the health of Canadians? Do doctors have the time to look after that? We are all aware of the shortage of doctors. They are already rushed. Will they have the time to read up on all these new drugs, each new one being advertised as better than the last? Do they have enough time for that?

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The proposed amendments should really include an objective way to provide this kind of information first to our doctors, and then to the general public.

As for the second question, I really have not looked into the matter much. Nonetheless, it is important that Parliament, this House, the elected representatives maintain authority over that aspect. From the moment that we forfeit the responsibility we have been given by the people of Canada, we limit the information the minister will take into consideration. So, it is important that, as elected representatives, we continue to ensure that this responsibility is maintained.

• (1705)

[English]

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a very brief question. I am sure the member has received a number of communications from constituents and from health network organizations. In my experience, from what I have seen and received so far, there seems to be a vibrant skepticism about the bill, both about what it does and about the process.

It will be helpful to the whole process if that skepticism is addressed frontally. In fact, this bill should pass at second reading and go to committee so that we can have public hearings and get the assurances and the explanations for all of the questions people have, because there are some allegations out there about what the bill does or does not do. It is not helpful when people have a misunderstanding.

I wonder if that has been the member's experience. Would she concur that we should ensure there are vibrant committee hearings on the bill to make sure we hear from the experts as well as the representatives of the users of natural health care products?

**Ms. Denise Savoie:** Mr. Speaker, I think debate is always important. Accurate information is as well. I have indicated my concerns about this bill, but it is important to have all the information about it and important that it be debated openly, as I said, with information from independent researchers as well, not necessarily information or advice from large pharmaceutical companies.

I would like to hear from the Canadian Health Coalition and from drug regulatory experts such as Barbara Mintzes and Alan Cassels, whom I cited earlier. Many of these other experts could come before the standing committee. We could hear from them about what the bill would actually do.

I have heard from literally hundreds of constituents, but many of them seem to be fairly well informed about the bill. Some of the information, I have to say, comes from medical doctors who practice holistic medicine and are interested in achieving and ensuring a proper balance between so-called prescription drugs and so-called natural health products, which is not the case at the moment under what is being proposed here.

• (1710)

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska has the floor for a brief question.

**Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will be brief, particularly since I am the next speaker. I will save some of my time.

I just wanted to put a question to the hon. member. There seems to be a consensus that this bill should move forward to committee, but a lot of questions are raised.

Does the hon. member feel that this bill makes reference to what is happening with advertising on the Internet? We are increasingly swamped with this form of advertising. Then, there is also the advertising found in American magazines that are available here.

We are getting drug advertising through all sorts of media, and I wonder if the bill addresses this issue. If not, then should we not do it in committee?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. member for Victoria has one minute to respond.

**Ms. Denise Savoie:** This is an excellent question and one that, in my opinion, should be raised in committee. Indeed, a lot of the advertising that reaches us comes from the United States. There is advertising in magazines, but when it comes to the Internet, it is an altogether different issue. There are already draconian regulations in every area, but even more so in this one. Therefore, it would be worth our while to review this issue, or at least to raise it.

**Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate on Bill C-51, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

My hon. colleagues from Laval and Victoria, who spoke earlier, focused on the health aspect and on advertising. Other aspects of this bill also drew my attention. In an effort to keep our viewers at home from losing interest—although the members' presentations were far from boring—I will change the subject somewhat. I will branch off and address the new powers that will be given to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Since I am the agriculture critic for my party, I know it is something that concerns us deeply. People from the Union des producteurs agricoles have also stated their position on the matter.

As we were saying earlier, we in the Bloc Québécois feel it is important that this bill move forward through the legislative process to the committee. This bill raises a number of questions. We have tried to touch on many aspects, but we must ensure that everything is done correctly. That is why we will be very vigilant in committee. I am convinced that my colleague from Laval, as well as my colleague from Québec, who takes care of the health file, will be able to give this bill, if it ever passes, a thorough analysis that will address the concerns of most people.

This bill was introduced at the same time as Bill C-52, which I also spoke to here in this House. We had the opportunity to talk about it earlier this week.

*Business of the House*

These two bills have to do with health, but they also touch on the agrifood aspect. While Bill C-52 has to do with the safety of consumer products, Bill C-51 could introduce certain measures that I will describe here. During my presentation, I will also explain the traceability system and the recall management system. We are talking about a framework to eliminate damaging effects on health, as well as other areas, but I will focus primarily on those aspects of Bill C-51.

The bill deals with the advertising of drugs, their marketing, approval and traceability. Since we have already had an opportunity to hear about advertising, I will concentrate on traceability, as well as the new powers assigned to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency under the provisions of this bill, which was announced some time ago, at the same time Bill C-52 was announced.

According to a spokesperson for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, that agency could intervene as soon as a potential health risk became known concerning food imported into Canada. The CFIA could obtain a more precise evaluation of the risk from the country concerned. It could also ask that country for additional evidence of inspection, and standards equivalent to those imposed on our own manufacturers or producers, and of course, not more stringent because of international agreements. We cannot require other countries to impose standards that are more severe than those we apply to our own producers or manufacturers for the very simple reason that we would be contravening the laws and regulations of the World Trade Organization.

However, it is very important that people should know that at present there are still no reciprocal standards. We have said that for a long time and I will have more to say in that regard.

Therefore, unfortunately, under the rules, there are still some products or foods that come into Canada, for example, fruit and vegetables that may come from China—we are always talking about that country—or from India, but also from the United States, on which pesticides, insecticides or certain chemical fertilizers that are forbidden in Canada and in Quebec have been used. In fact, those products are allowed in those countries. It is their choice. I do not necessarily dispute that. They have the right to use the pesticides they want.

Nevertheless, one thing certain is that, here in Canada, there is a very large and well-developed awareness of food safety. We want to use fewer of these products, even though, sometimes, we do not really have a choice. However, we must ensure that where fruit and vegetables are treated in other countries with products that are forbidden in Canada, they cannot cross our border and be sold on the shelves of our grocery stores.

I am very anxious to see that in the application of the law. Undoubtedly, we will look at that issue in committee. Bill C-51 should correct a weakness that we have pointed out many times here in the House, in debate or through questions.

• (1715)

Every time that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency comes to speak to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, we discuss this. It would be great news if we were able to make these improvements to the inspections.

According to Canadian Food Inspection Agency spokesperson Robert Charlebois—not to be confused with the singer—who was quoted in the April 24 edition of *La Terre de chez nous*, the Agency will even be able to test products believed to be at risk before they clear customs. That would be a solution to the problem I mentioned earlier. If that were the case, it would be very good.

The Agency currently intervenes when a problem arises, but not before. A number of foods have been recalled from store shelves. When the Agency knows, it does a good job. It issues the recall and the product is removed from the shelves. Nevertheless, there is always room for improvement.

We cannot wait until someone gets sick to take action, although it must be done, since bad things can happen. However, if the Agency had the power, the possibility or the means to intervene before the product even hits the shelves, imagine how many illnesses we could prevent. Cross your fingers. We have not had any deaths, as they have in other countries when a person ingests some of these products, but it happens. We cannot kid ourselves; it happens. There are people in poor health who may ingest foods contaminated with salmonella or what have you, and can die.

It is important to do everything we can to ban these products and ensure that they will not be sold before they hit the shelves, and certainly before they end up on our tables and in our mouths.

The Bloc Québécois is calling on the government to intervene if products enter Quebec and Canada that do not meet our health standards. We have been demanding this for a long time and we will continue to do so.

We also denounced this lack of control over food and other imported goods, and we demanded that the government clean up its legislation in order to eliminate shortcomings that subject the health of Canadians to the goodwill of importers. In this regard, I recently read an article in the April 2 edition of the newspaper *Le Soleil*. It is very short but nonetheless very revealing. It says:

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) admits that unsafe food from other countries may be made available to consumers, which is a concern for the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

The article is referring to the Quebec minister. It continues:

In the past three years, Canada has had to recall dozens of foods that may have been contaminated.

Michel Labrosse, the Agency's national import operations manager, remarks that people have the impression that the government controls everything, but that is not the case. He noted that unlike meat and eggs, which have a good tracing system, vegetables or processed goods may only have a seal of goodwill from importers and their business partners.

Safety is left primarily up to the importers who, according to Mr. Labrosse, act in good faith 98% of the time.

I do not know whether this is a statistic that Mr. Labrosse truly obtained from the department or if that was his approximation. Nonetheless, if 2% of importers are not doing their job, whether intentionally or not—naturally we hope that it is not intentional but the thought of the money may result in goods not suitable for consumption being put on the market—that is 2% too much.

I will continue with the article from *Le Soleil*:

*Business of the House*

Marion Nestlé, a professor at the University of New York, believes that there are holes in the food systems of Canada and the United States that may let in bacteria and other harmful substances. Two years ago, three Americans died and almost 200 others became ill after eating spinach contaminated with *E. coli*.

I was talking about this earlier. You will remember that American spinach was also removed from our grocery stores.

According to Michel Labrosse, perfectly shaped and blemish free products sought after by consumers have a greater risk of having pesticide or herbicide residues.

• (1720)

I believe that consumers increasingly want good quality products. Regarding appearance, if people notice that a product's appearance is perhaps less shiny because no pesticides or herbicides were used, they may well choose that fruit or vegetable that does not look as great as the bright, shiny ones next to it. They will wonder whether the better looking product was sprayed with all sorts of substances. Consumers are increasingly aware of that kind of thing and they make informed decisions concerning their health and that of their families.

In my speech on Bill C-52 this week, I gave examples of such tainted products: cantaloupe, spinach, which was just mentioned, melamine-tainted pork, pear juice, and carrot juice, all in recent months alone. As we can imagine, there have been many recalls over the past few years. That is why I also called for enhanced inspection powers and, more importantly, the hiring of additional inspectors at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

We should make it clear that it is not up to farm producers to pay for the increased inspections and inspection staff. I think that the government's budget can handle the cost of developing an appropriate inspection system. I also pointed out earlier this week that the government had lacked judgment, which prompted a reaction from the Minister of Labour. Perhaps what I meant to say was that the government had been remiss. Considering how long it has been aware of the problem, it should have acted much sooner. I am not going back on what I said, far from it. It is never too late to do the right thing.

All those who were made sick by food they ate that should never have passed inspection here must be telling themselves that they might have been spared the inconvenience had there been more inspections and more inspectors. I think that any parent who has seen his or her child get sick after eating something knows what I am talking about.

So the existing law has to be modernized to reflect new approaches when it comes to safety and traceability. We are told that this is what Bill C-51 does. We intend to send this bill to committee so we can be sure that this will actually be the case. For example, we are told that all importers will have to have a licence. Today, that is only required for importers of meat and fish. The requirement will be expanded to have licences for all food importers, and that is a good thing.

This brings me to the importance of traceability. In Quebec, Agri-Traçabilité Québec was set up in 2001. The mission of Agri-Traçabilité Québec is to contribute to improving food safety and the competitive capacity of Quebec producers. That institution is responsible for developing, implementing and operating a permanent identification system for agricultural product traceability, and covers

both animal and plant products. This is what is called the tracking principle, from field to table.

Quebec is well ahead of many countries and also the other provinces, and I am not saying that to pat ourselves on the back. That is what we must be aiming for. It is a good thing that it was developed in Quebec. We are very proud of it, and now it has to serve as an example for the rest of Canada. Whether we like it or not, interprovincial trade means that we are obviously going to be getting food that also comes from the other provinces, and this has to be expanded to other countries as well.

Agricultural producers in Quebec are the first in America to have access to such a highly developed traceability system. It allows for accurate identification of the source of a problem and makes it possible to contain it in order to avoid it becoming endemic or spreading throughout the processing and distribution chain all the way to consumers.

Consumers therefore have greater confidence in our products, in an era when we are affected by irreparable harms, when we think about what happened during the mad cow crisis or the avian flu. We think it does not affect us, but in British Columbia there were poultry destroyed because of a pandemic.

So we are not immune to it. I am also thinking about foot and mouth disease. But I will not list every disease and problem that might arise in cattle, poultry or other livestock. Clearly food safety is a matter of great concern.

• (1725)

Consumers, producers and the entire agri-food industry cannot help but rejoice in the idea that stricter measures and additional resources to enforce them will soon be in place. We will ensure that this happens. And that is what Food & Consumer Products of Canada said in their announcement about Bills C-51 and C-52 in a press release on April 8, from which I will quote a few lines.

The legislation's focus on risk-based inspection, accountability for importers and strengthening recall provisions for quick intervention when problems arise, would significantly improve Canada's ability to detect contaminated food and consumer products...Focusing on imported goods from countries or companies with a history of problems just makes sense. Increasing our ability to scrutinize and oversee imports based on risk greatly enhances our ability to detect threats to public health without crippling commerce or violating our trade commitments.

That shows that there are positives to consider in this bill. That is what my colleague from Québec, health critic for the Bloc Québécois, and I conveyed in this House on April 1 when we questioned the government about food inspections. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency's failure to monitor imported products is resulting in a lower level of compliance for foodstuffs, thereby threatening food safety for consumers. We demanded food security measures, and we have no intention of letting up simply because this bill has been introduced.

We have already mentioned that the Quebec government and a number of experts have denounced the failure to monitor imported food. This situation not only threatens consumers, but also producers because the imported products do not meet the same standards as local products, as Christian Lacasse, president of UPA, said.

I think that I have gone into enough detail about this issue over the past few minutes for the people to understand how important it is to us that there be reciprocity with respect to standards for pesticides, insecticides and herbicides in the countries with which we trade. It is unacceptable that chemical products banned here, such as pesticides, insecticides, herbicides and some fertilizers, can be used on foods produced in other countries that end up on our grocery store shelves.

I look forward to seeing if Bill C-51 will bring about any real changes to this state of affairs. It is time for the government to demand trade reciprocity. That is why the committee will be especially vigilant in its work to ensure that the necessary resources to enforce the new rules are clearly provided for in the bill.

I see the time, and I get the feeling that I do not have much left, but I want to say that some of the objectives in this bill need to be emphasized, such as avoiding problems by instituting broader targets for potentially unsafe food imports, increasing the government's power to prevent problems by requiring the industry to implement monitoring for unsafe foods, and expressly forbidding the modification of foods. We also want to improve targeted monitoring by increasing the government's power to verify food safety at all points along the supply chain, including before they are imported into Canada.

I have often said that it is important to go to the source to see exactly how foods are grown. We need to know that. We need to do that. If foods are not produced in accordance with our environmental standards, even if it is just a problem with the water used to grow the food, we should simply tell those countries that their products cannot come here.

In conclusion, we also want to support rapid intervention by creating a new power that requires those modifying foods to keep files, by improving access to the information needed to follow up efficiently on problems that arise, and by modernizing and simplifying inspection systems. If we achieve that, it will be a step in the right direction.

• (1730)

[English]

**Mr. Lui Temelkovski (Oak Ridges—Markham, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after listening to the hon. member, I would like to ask him a number of questions.

My constituency office has received letters from the natural food products industry. I am wondering if the hon. member's office has also received letters from that industry. What is his party's policy on this issue?

Could he speak to the issue of whether or not advertising by drug manufacturers will be affected by the bill? Will drug manufacturers be able to advertise directly to the public?

*Business of the House*

[Translation]

**Mr. André Bellavance:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his two questions, which do not necessarily deal with the same issue.

My speech dealt primarily with food. As the hon. member may know, I am the Bloc Québécois critic on agriculture and agri-food. However, I will be pleased to answer his question on drug advertising.

As for the first question, unfortunately, I cannot answer it. I would have liked him to ask me the question that was put to him. If he wants to send me the questions that he received from the industry and to which he referred in the context of Bill C-51, I will be pleased to look at them. As for me, I have not yet received any correspondence on this bill and on the concerns that it may raise.

As for advertising, it is clear that it is not something that is prohibited. However, when it comes to drugs, the situation is totally different than with cars or clothes. Even that type of advertising must be regulated. Some things that were tolerated many years ago can no longer be done. The hon. members for Laval and Victoria provided examples of companies that used totally unacceptable forms of advertisement. Under current rules, companies cannot necessarily promote their product the way they would like to, by explaining exactly what it is. So what these companies do is they promote it in a way that is sometimes almost funny. However, the underlying message is very important, and this is where we have to be very careful.

The hon. member for Victoria mentioned the advertisement of a drug to control cholesterol. It shows a person dying of that condition on television. This is like telling people that they must take that drug or die. That is basically the message conveyed.

Some things are unacceptable and cannot be done. We must regulate this, while also allowing merchants to survive.

In conclusion, we can have advertising, but it must be very closely regulated to ensure that it is not disturbing to people, and also that it is not pernicious.

• (1735)

[English]

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I raised earlier with another member in the House the fact that the changes to the bill regarding advertisements would move it to a regulatory level. The concern I have is that there would be the potential for an order in council which would allow for the PMO or the cabinet to decide what appropriate advertisements would be allowed. My concern, and perhaps the member shares this concern, is that would open the door to lobbyists one more time in a different way. That is a very unfortunate aspect. Perhaps when the bill makes it to committee, that would be one of the areas we could address.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Bellavance:** Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what I suggest the member do: make the necessary changes and ask good questions at committee. I am convinced that the members from all the parties represented in this place can do that.

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I agree with him. When the minister's discretionary power is too broad, that does open the door to all kind of lobbying, especially from big firms seeking to influence the minister's decision. And pharmaceutical companies are no small potatoes.

Unfortunately for me and for the hon. member, there will always be lobbyists; we just have to learn to live with them. One thing is for sure, though: making the nature of future regulations governing drug advertising very clear in the bill will ensure that the minister will not necessarily be able to do as he pleases when he pleases and, more importantly, he will not have pressure put on him or take orders from lobbies which might be richer or more influential.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** There are two minutes left to the debate. If the hon. parliamentary secretary takes two minutes to put his question, the hon. member will have to wait until debate resumes later to answer.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the excellent work of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. I hope that my hon. colleague will work closely with all the parties on this issues.

My question is simple. Will my hon. colleague, who is here in this House, support this excellent bill?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska will be interrupted at 5:40 p.m., but he will have two minutes left to speak later.

**Mr. André Bellavance:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot say that I have been shouting myself hoarse, because this is not a subject which makes me excited, but I have just spent 20 minutes stating the views I wanted to convey. The Bloc Québécois supports this bill in principle. We want to see it referred to committee. During these 20 minutes, I also mentioned some very interesting elements in the bill, especially about the powers delegated to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. If the member had listened, he would have heard the answer to his question.

Obviously, it will be important for us to refer the bill to a committee. Even if the member sees this bill as excellent, bills are never excellent to start with. They are never perfect. This bill will certainly need to be improved. That is why democracy and Parliament exist. Parties all represent different people. Opinions and comments from the people we represent can be used to improve bills. That is our job. If there were 308 Conservatives in this House, it would be a dictatorship, and bills would not be excellent. Luckily, the opposition exists.

• (1740)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** It being 5:40 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper. When we return to the study of bill C-51, there will be two minutes remaining for questions and comments for the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**HERITAGE LIGHTHOUSE PROTECTION ACT**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-215, An Act to protect heritage lighthouses, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed without debate to putting the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC)** moved that Bill S-215, as amended, be concurred in.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave now?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Larry Miller** moved that the bill be read a third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise in the House today to debate third reading of Bill S-215, an act to protect heritage lighthouses. But before I go any further, I would like to personally thank my seconder, the member for South Shore—St. Margaret's, for all his hard work on this, and also for the very strong support from the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl.

I would be remiss if I did not mention some of the history of this bill which some may or may not know. This initiative was initiated seven or eight years ago by the late Senator Forrestall. After his unfortunate passing, it was carried on by Senators Carney and Murray. We have had some great support from people all over the country which I will be talking about a little further here.

There is a book called *Alone in the Night*. It is a collection of stories about the lighthouses of Georgian Bay, where I happen to live, the Manitoulin Islands and the North Channel in Ontario. It speaks about what our Canadian lighthouses really are when the authors wrote:

Lighthouses capture the imagination. There is an obvious appeal in the romantic image of lights as beacons of strength and protection, but the fascination goes beyond that. Pass one of the silent towers and an eerie presence beckons—of untold stories and forgotten memories.

By most standards, we are still a very young country. Lighthouses are a critical and important part of our early history and our development as a nation. From Newfoundland and Labrador to British Columbia, they have shaped our destiny. Let me offer but a few selected samples.



The Cape Pine light tower, which is a national historic site, was built in 1851 on Newfoundland's southernmost point to guide transatlantic navigation. It was the first of a series of cast iron structures that substituted for fire-prone timber structures. On a personal note, I had the privilege of being at that site last July and it is truly something to see. Its contribution continues today. In recent years it has operated as a pollution research station.

In the Maritimes, we have Sambro Island, just outside the entrance to Halifax Harbour. It is 250 years old this year and the oldest operating lighthouse in all of the Americas. Along the St. Lawrence, L'Isle-Verte and Cap-des-Rosiers lighthouses were built almost 200 and 150 years ago respectively, and both are designated national historic sites. In British Columbia, Race Rocks and Fisgard light stations will be 150 in 2010.

All members know of the important role that lighthouses have played in our development as a nation. With many lighthouses celebrating important anniversaries this year, and I have mentioned just a couple of them, I can think of no better way to honour their importance than for this House to pass Bill S-215.

The fact that this bill has arrived at third reading speaks to the tremendous amount of thought that this House and the Senate have put into protecting our heritage lighthouses. In fact, it is the seventh time that Parliament has considered a bill to protect heritage lighthouses, and I sincerely hope we will be seventh time lucky. Going back to my Irish roots, maybe the luck of the Irish will be upon us here.

There is broad support for this bill in this House, in the Senate, and certainly among Canadians. To date we have spent a considerable amount of time on this bill, with many hours in committee listening to Canadians voice their support for protecting heritage lighthouses. We heard from the Senate, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Parks Canada, and from academia and community stakeholders on both coasts, in central Canada and Quebec. We have heard the voices of people across this country urging us to pass this legislation and I agree with them.

I can tell members that in my riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, there are a number of lighthouses, including some of the six historic imperial lighthouses that were constructed between 1855 and 1859, but the condition of some of those majestic properties has deteriorated. I would like to see this bill passed to spare a similar fate to the one on Griffith Island in Georgian Bay, which is in my riding.

Just this past Saturday night I had the pleasure of being on the Chi-Cheemaun, a local Ontario Northlands ferry, where a fundraiser was held, and part of the tour that we had passed by Griffith Island.

• (1745)

While it was very nice to see it at dusk, the light tower standing there with the light is great, but some of the outbuildings have deteriorated. This bill will keep that from happening and hopefully as well to some other important lighthouses in the country.

Why should we pass this bill? Mr. Robert Square, the chair of the Cove Island Lightstation Heritage Association, which is another lighthouse in my riding, said it best:

### *Private Members' Business*

I believe that the preservation of lighthouses, Bill S-215, is a shared responsibility, shared between the government and our groups, the non-profits. There's a wonderful opportunity here to do some really good work in preserving our lighthouses.

These sentiments were echoed by Mr. David Bradley, chair of the Association of Heritage Industries of Newfoundland and Labrador. In his testimony, he said:

Canada's cultural heritage is vital to our identity and sense of place. The built heritage is the most vivid physical representation of that cultural heritage—

He also told the committee:

As with railway stations, lighthouses have a special significance to Canadians. They are iconic structures. Many have significant architecture. But their importance stems more from their role in Canadian history. Often standing in relative isolation on islands or headlands, they have been the first evidence of Canadian culture encountered by generations of immigrants to this country.

Natalie Bull also appeared before the committee as executive director of the Heritage Canada Foundation. She noted that lighthouses are used extensively in promoting tourism and that many are, as she put it, significant destinations in and of themselves. Peggy's Cove, I think, is one that truly represents that.

Mr. Barry MacDonald, who has worked tirelessly to advance this initiative, spoke to the committee of the bonds that maritime communities have with the lighthouses that served them and their forebearers. He is the president of the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society and he also noted how volunteer groups are benefiting their community by keeping these bonds intact. He said:

A pioneering effort began in Prince Edward Island in 1984 with the lease of the West Point lighthouse. A well-organized development plan saw ten rooms, a full-menu restaurant, and a gift shop in place by 1987. A real success story, this lighthouse has consistently employed 25 local people and is a major tourism destination on Prince Edward Island.

Casting an eye to New Brunswick, Mr. MacDonald pointed out that the interpretive centre at the Cape Enrage lightstation welcomes more than 40,000 visitors per year to the rugged Fundy shore. The non-profit group that developed it and operates it generates annual revenues of \$350,000 and employs about 20 students. This group has been in business since 1993 and has not looked back.

The committee heard time and again of the tremendous benefits to transferring lighthouses to communities. It allows those closest to these heritage sites, those with the greatest stake in their preservation, a chance to have a hand in their future. Non-government groups have more flexibility in fundraising than does a government organization.

The executive director of Heritage B.C., Mr. Rick Goodacre, also appeared before the committee. He noted the contribution of the many volunteers who are adopting and will adopt lighthouses for alternate use. He stressed that the sustainability of lighthouses is dependent on the will to conserve them. He said of Bill S-215:

I think that's why, in this case, special legislation is valuable and necessary. I don't believe the general blanket of federal policy for heritage buildings is sufficient to deal with our historic lighthouses.

I say amen to that.

Mr. Goodacre told the committee that if Bill S-215 is passed, his organization will strive to help implement it in his province and realize its goal of protecting heritage lighthouses. To quote him: "We'll do whatever we can to make this work".

*Private Members' Business*

The witnesses who came before the committee clearly gave Bill S-215 a lot of thought. They recognized that while perhaps not every lighthouse can be saved, they are willing to work with the Government of Canada on this. They ask that we pass this bill so they can continue to be part of the process. They want to ensure that local communities are included and can assist in ensuring the future of their lighthouses.

Speaking on behalf of the heritage community on the east coast, Mr. Bradley, who again, is the chair of the Association of Heritage Industries of Newfoundland and Labrador, said:

—the heritage community recognizes that the compromises made along the way were a necessary part of that process, and we are happy with this bill.

• (1750)

Barry MacDonald, whom I mentioned earlier, was one of those people who helped make this bill work with compromises and I truly thank him for that.

I agree with Mr. Bradley when he added, “It is time to move ahead”.

Returning to Mr. MacDonald of Nova Scotia, he urged passage of the bill to, as he put it:

—recognize and protect the rich architecture that is present in our lighthouses across this country,—

From the grand beacons that rise along our coastlines to the small, wooden pepperpot styles that are unique to Canada, few nations can boast such a varied and treasured collection of lighthouse architecture. Put simply, these heritage sites are worth protecting.

This initiative has been around the block several times and it has always received strong support. Unfortunately, those attempts suffered the fate of many private members' bills, the parliamentary clock simply ran out. However, opportunity has knocked a seventh time.

The fact that this bill is here again speaks volumes to the importance of this proposed legislation to many Canadians who are determined to protect these unique symbols of our past.

There is wide support for this bill in the community and in government. The government sought changes and we in committee, through collaboration and compromise, made them. What we have before us today is quite simply a better bill, a workable solution.

Essentially, the bill requires that a designated heritage lighthouse be reasonably maintained. It facilitates ongoing protection and ensures use for a public purpose when heritage lighthouses are transferred from federal ownership.

We have also addressed the issue of access structures. To better define the scope of the act, we changed the terminology from “related structures” to “related buildings”. These measures will improve protection for heritage lighthouses, whether they stay in federal hands or are transferred to the community.

Thanks again to the input of many stakeholders, Bill S-215 offers a statutory mechanism to identify lighthouses worthy of heritage protection. It puts in place a process to recognize, protect and maintain them. It is a bill that would allow community members to

have a say and take a hand in the future of their lighthouses, as well they should.

I call on members of this House to realize the dream of the late Senator Forrestall, who first brought this issue into the spotlight, and pass this bill.

Once again, I would like to thank Senator Carney and Senator Murray for all their hard work. I wish to thank Barry MacDonald and everyone else across this country who have helped to bring this bill to the point that it is. I thank them for their tireless support.

I urge everyone in the House to support this bill.

• (1755)

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and to the Minister of International Trade, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to be very brief. My colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound mentioned everybody in the country and they all deserve a lot of credit, but he forgot to give himself some credit for this bill. He did a lot of hard work and steered it through the House. If it had not been for him, we would not be here today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** I was having trouble recognizing the hon. member because my glasses get foggy when he is not in his seat.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Malpeque, who is in his seat.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can understand that. There is often quite a lot of fog on the other side in any event, so it is understandable that you could not see him.

I will admit the bill on maintaining heritage lighthouses is a light in the wilderness of conservatism at the moment. The member did a positive thing with his good work.

This is an issue that has been on the go for quite a while. I too want to recognize many of the people who have been involved in this over time, and they were named. One senator, whom I had the opportunity to work with, has passed away and this bill was a passion of his, and I think we have to recognize that.

These heritage lighthouses are part of our history, there is no question about it. The bill is a step in the right direction. I congratulate both members for their initiative in the House in bringing it forward.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a lot of love in the chamber today. I also join in the throng and the chorus of congratulations. The late Senator Forrestall was a gentleman who was very active on this issue, and he deserves great recognition. The passing of the bill would certainly pay tribute to his efforts, as well as the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound and the member for South Shore—St. Margaret's who brought this forward in the last Parliament.

It is an important bill. When going through the research on it, it is astounding that we are the only country out of the G-8 that does not have legislation in place for lighthouses. We can look south of the border down through the New England states. Almost 70% of the lighthouses are protected under some type of heritage legislation.

*Private Members' Business*

We have over 500 lighthouses in Canada. It is imperative that the time has finally come and, hopefully, we will be able to respond to this.

I also take this opportunity to commend the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society. It is a great group. I believe the province of Nova Scotia has more lighthouses than any other province in the country and this group has done so much with advancing and keeping this issue to the fore. Hopefully this will culminate in some success in the next number of months. We will continue to work on that because it is a concern.

Only 3% of Canadian lighthouses now have genuine heritage protection and only 12% have some type of partial protection, and that is a concern.

As I had said, the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society is very active. It has reason to be because of the numbers. When we look at properties like Sambro, it is almost 250 years old. The member for Malpeque told me that the current Minister of Fisheries was there at the official opening of the Sambro lighthouse, although I cannot say that is a fact. The lighthouse at Sambro is a huge tourist draw. When people come to Nova Scotia and spend their summers in there, they tour the coastal communities. They want to see Sambro and experience that trip back in history.

There are a great number of lighthouses in my riding, but the technology has changed. Where we had manned lighthouses, now the technology is on our ships. If we walk into the house of a fishing vessel now, it is like walking into an high-tech IT office, with computers, keyboards, monitors, GPS and screens all over the place. With what they have available to them now, we do not see as many lighthouses. Some have become redundant, as far as their actual function and necessity, because of the navigational aids. Others have become de-staffed and automated, but still provide a very important service to mariners and fishermen alike.

In my riding, Cape George, Cheticamp, Port Hood, Scatari Island and Flint Island all have lighthouses. I will talk about a couple in particular. We have been very fortunate in that some community groups recognize the cultural and historical importance of these lighthouses and have come forward, rolled up their sleeves and taken control over them.

• (1800)

I want to touch on a couple where the community has realized some success. The lighthouse in Mabou Harbour was built in 1884 and protected the coastal steamers. The west side of Cape Breton Island was the only protected harbour. That light was a beacon for safety, a safe harbour for anybody who worked and plied their trade on the west coast of Cape Breton. It was very active as was Mabou Harbour. There is a lobster cannery, which my wife's grandfather, Herb Hopkins, operated before he took the trade down to Port Morien and Glace Bay.

In 1998 a group from that community got involved and took charge of the lighthouse project. There has even been a great resurgence of interest in the property. We invested some money in the harbour authority and upgraded it four years ago. It has really taken on some energy and the community has rallied around it. It has become more of a destination and a spot for tourists to stop as they

go through the Mabou area to the Red Shoe and Strathsby Place and all those great tourist opportunities on the west side of the island.

I know everybody in the House is familiar with Fortress of Louisbourg. The first lighthouse in Canada was built in Louisbourg in 1734. The current lighthouse was reconstructed in 1923, but the old light lens can be seen at the Louisbourg Marine Museum. There is a very active lighthouse society. In fact, the lighthouse is an incredible spot to visit. I encourage anybody, when they come to Cape Breton, to go past Havenside to the lighthouse on the point facing Louisbourg. Looking out over the historic property of Louisbourg fortress is spectacular. It is something of which every Canadian should be proud. One of the best vantage points is from that lighthouse.

A group has developed a whole trail system along that coast. Ernie Parsons, Rick McCready, Jimmy DeVries and Susan Burke are some of the people who have been involved in this project. It is a spectacular experience to go out to the lighthouse, to view the coastal waters and to hike along the trail. It is a great experience.

The station in Queensport in Guysborough county was established in 1882. The current lighthouse was built in 1937. In 1991 the Department of Transportation identified that it would be finished with it, but the municipality of Guysborough stepped up. It has kept it painted and restored. There is a local foundation there now, Keepers of the Beacon, which continues to do good work on the Queensport lighthouse.

Not all these assets have had great success. There was a lighthouse just outside of Mulgrave in Eddy Point. It was on the eastern side of the Canso Strait, the strait that separates Cape Breton from the mainland. A community group was very interested in taking over operation of the lighthouse, ensuring that the lighthouse was restored and properly maintained. However, the Coast Guard came in 2003 or 2004 and said that it did not have the ability because the legislation was not in place. It was its responsibility to ensure liability was not undertaken by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Coast Guard. That lighthouse was dismantled, which was a true tragedy.

I am sure the legislation will prevent those types of losses from our inventory of coastal lighthouses.

Because of the historical importance, the cultural importance and the impact they have on the tourist industry in coastal communities, it is important we continue to be vigilant with lighthouses. Therefore, we will be supporting the legislation.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak to bill S-215, in the name of the Bloc Québécois. We will not join the Liberal and Conservative harmonies, although we would like to have a real policy for the enhancement of heritage lighthouses.

*Private Members' Business*

In our view, the problem when a bill comes from the Senate or is a private member's bill is that there is no budget attached to it. That is the drama in this case. Even though a bill could be adopted to designate heritage lighthouses, if no money is allocated for the enhancement of lighthouses before offering them to groups who could preserve them, there is a problem. The federal government has probably been the worst property owner in Canada. One just has to look at the West Block to understand that the government has not maintained it as it should have.

In my riding, along the Ottawa River, we have the Carillon Canal and the Grenville Canal, two military canals. The Grenville Canal was handed over to the municipality 25 years ago. It would need an investment of \$2 million because it is about to collapse. No money is available for that. The canal was returned to the community. Ask the mayor of Grenville if he wants it. He is trying by all means to find the money and he is stuck with a historical canal, a military monument.

In the study done by the Auditor General, she recommended that half the Carillon Canal—one of the two military canals—be buried instead of being maintained. That is obviously what Heritage Canada did. As it did not have the money to maintain the canal, it decided to fill it up with soil so that only the nice part would be visible. The part that needed to be redone was simply buried.

Along with my colleagues, I would like to support this bill. But for us, it is clear that if the necessary funds are not provided, it is impossible. It is that simple. Many of these canals have been damaged by adverse weather, by the wind and by nature. Sometimes, there has been vandalism, as the member said earlier. Because of new technologies, no one lives in these lighthouses any more. As a result, they are in a poor state and the federal government has simply not maintained them. If we wanted to preserve them for heritage reasons, we would first require the necessary sums of money to restore them. Afterward, it might be possible to offer them to organizations, along with the necessary funds to ensure their proper maintenance in the future.

Once again, it is a pleasure for me to represent Quebec because when the Government of Quebec decides to look after its heritage it provides the necessary money, which the federal government has not done. I would have liked to have heard my colleagues, both Conservatives and Liberals, say that they want to provide the funds required for restoration. Otherwise, I will think they know about it and they are a little embarrassed to have taken part in that.

In fact, over the past 100 years, the Liberals and Conservatives have been in power in Canada and they have not provided the money necessary for maintaining our heritage. It is a shame, because these lighthouses really should be preserved. The necessary money really should be provided. We are not able to provide the money to restore them but we are deciding to adopt a bill that creates a process for assigning that task to either organizations or municipalities.

That does create a problem. Many municipalities have refused to accept that responsibility because some lighthouses have been contaminated by the old technology that produced spills. As a result there is contaminated material near the lighthouses.

No municipality would want to take ownership of a lighthouse that was suspected of being on contaminated ground. There must be a restoration program with the necessary funding to decontaminate the soil, where required, and to restore lighthouses that have been damaged by bad weather or vandalism or, quite simply, because the federal government did not look after them.

If this whole principle had been implemented, the Bloc Québécois would have been happy to support the bill. Clearly, we will not fight a huge battle in this regard. We would like the Liberals and the Conservatives to take note of the fact that they have not maintained their heritage lighthouses, in particular, much less other aspects of their heritage.

I repeat: the best example is just two steps away and that is the West Block. It was not until stones started falling off that anyone realized there was a problem. That is the reality.

•(1810)

That is how the Conservatives and the Liberals have taken care of their assets over the past 100 years. Clearly, we cannot talk about Bill S-215 here today and say that everything is fine and that we can transfer and protect the equipment and the lighthouses.

When this equipment is in bad shape, either because a new technology is now used, because people go there less, or because no one takes care of it anymore, we must act responsibly and say that we will implement measures for heritage lighthouses, that a budget will be allocated and that all the equipment will be restored before handing it over to community organizations, municipalities, and the like.

The bill is sponsored by a Conservative member and that is just great. He could have made sure the necessary funding was in place in order to make a nice announcement today that this legislation will indeed be implemented to protect heritage lighthouses, that there will be a budget of so many millions of dollars to restore them and that a procedure and everything needed to restore and protect them thereafter will be established to ensure they remain part of our heritage. We need to make sure that the organizations that take over the lighthouses have the necessary resources to maintain them and do better than the federal government has done in many cases since those lighthouses were built.

It is clear to us that a restoration program is important. Heritage lighthouses must be protected, but this legislation has to come with a program and the necessary funding to restore the lighthouses. When we read this bill and the comments about this legislative measure, it is as though the communities had let them deteriorate. They were the federal government's property. It was up to the federal government to maintain them. Then they would not have deteriorated the way they have. They are isolated and the government abandoned them and did not take care of them.

I was listening to the hon. Liberal member tell us that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has demolished a lighthouse because of concerns. I understand, they did not maintain it and did not want anyone in the community to take it over. If there had been any accidents or injuries, the government or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans would have been sued. I understand them. That is what it has come to with much of this equipment that is in a rather advanced state of disrepair. Some is located near contaminated soil. Nothing has ever been done to remedy these situations.

Again, we hope that one day the necessary budgets will be adopted and that the Conservatives, like the Liberals, will understand that it is all well and good to say in a bill that they will protect heritage lighthouses, but that the necessary funding needs to be in place to restore them before they are turned over to the community to be taken care.

• (1815)

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** If there is no other debate, I will recognize the hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound for his right of reply. The hon. member has the floor.

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as a member across the way said, there seems to be a lot of love in the House tonight. On the serious side, it speaks to the fact that this bill is supported right across the country. It is not controversial. This should be done and needs to be done. One thing I want to point out is that there is support from every part of the country, from one side to the other, from every province in the Maritimes, through Quebec, in Ontario where I am from, around the Great Lakes, and right out to the west coast.

There is one thing that I know will make the Bloc member happy, because he talked about the funding aspect of this bill. I have to point out to him that it has been addressed for the first time in I am not sure how long; I will not say for the first time in history but I will say that it is a long time. The minister got money in the budget this year to deal with the issue. We can all debate about whether it is enough, but there is money and I think that is a very positive thing. I thank everyone for their support.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*Translation*]

### ETHICS

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I asked for this adjournment debate in order to obtain an answer to a question I posed during question period on March 5 about the so-called Cadman affair.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

For the benefit of those listening to us, here is a summary. Chuck Cadman was a former independent MP. He is deceased. Chuck Cadman's wife, Dona, said that two Conservative Party representatives visited her husband to offer him a \$1 million insurance policy in exchange for his support in defeating the budget on May 19, 2005.

Chuck Cadman's wife, daughter and son-in-law are adamant about this and even told an author who wrote Chuck Cadman's biography.

At the time, the Prime Minister himself made a statement on tape to the effect that it was just to compensate him for financial losses he could incur if an election were held. The Prime Minister himself spoke of the financial considerations offered.

The current Prime Minister was the leader of the opposition at the time. According to the rules of this Parliament, I cannot name him, but I am certain that everyone knows who I am talking about. Tom Flanagan and Doug Finley, two special advisors from the office of the leader of the opposition—the person I cannot name—went to see Chuck Cadman on the day of the vote and made him offers. Today, they claim that the most they offered him was to win the Conservative nomination again, but their testimony is contradicted by Mr. Cadman's family.

I do not want to spend any more time going over the facts, because they are known. What is at stake is section 119 of the Criminal Code. The stakes are huge. This section makes it illegal to offer a member a financial consideration in order to influence his or her vote. The Criminal Code is very clear on this.

The stakes were that important, and I am not talking about the political stakes, because they are also known. We know that this government blithely engages in censorship, political interference and favouritism. There have even been raids on the party's headquarters. And now, it has brought the work of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to a standstill.

In fact, since April 1, when the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights indicated that they wanted to look into the Cadman affair and hear witnesses, the work of this committee has ground to a halt. The committee is no longer sitting. This is holding up several bills that this committee should have been studying.

Not only is the Conservative government willing to do anything it can to prevent the committee from looking into the Cadman affair, but it is also willing to prevent the members of this House from studying other bills. The work of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights has been stalled since April 1, one month ago today.

I asked a question about this in March, but did not get a satisfactory answer. I said that “instead of dodging the issue, the Prime Minister should admit, as he already has in a recorded interview, that the Conservative Party made financial offers to Chuck Cadman” and face the consequences with honesty.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

• (1820)

**Mr. James Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, nobody offered Mr. Cadman \$1 million. That is a false accusation.

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée:** Mr. Speaker, that kind of answer is pure arrogance. Frankly, I am here to participate in an adjournment debate in all honesty and good faith. These adjournment debates are held in accordance with the Standing Orders of this House. I am here in good faith to ask the government for an explanation, and the parliamentary secretary rises to say five words to me.

That is in addition to this government's censorship, lack of transparency, disavowal of public institutions, such as Elections Canada, and rotten tricks here in Parliament. Not to mention countless contracts awarded to friends and political interference.

Even Justice Gomery said he was very disappointed. He said that the Conservatives were quite happy that the commission—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics.

**Mr. James Moore:** Mr. Speaker, it is not a matter of arrogance. It is important that the Bloc Québécois understand the facts. The simple and clear fact that everyone needs to understand is that there was no such offer. The Bloc and Liberal accusation is completely false.

[English]

## ARTS AND CULTURE

**Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the great writer George Bernard Shaw once said, "Without art, the crudeness of reality would make the world unbearable". This is a statement that members across the floor on the government benches would do well to ponder.

In his gleeful statement about his virtually unfettered access to the upper echelons of the Conservative government, the unregistered lobbyist, Mr. Charles McVety, all but jumps with excitement in proclaiming that his campaign against the arts community had found an audience within the current government.

The arts do matter. They add character and meaning to our lives. They take us beyond the utilitarian nature of life and they cause us to question, to learn and to grow as human beings and as a society.

In his recent critique of Bill C-10, the commentator John Moore wrote the following in the *National Post*:

The reason the arts matter is because the day man first drew a picture of a bison on a cave wall was the day life became more than a grim struggle for survival.

This is the point which the current government must come to understand. The arts are not some commodity to be contained and restrained using the power of the public purse. They are supposed to challenge our belief system and they are supposed to do so in ways that are provocative and visionary.

What the government is proposing is quite simply more appropriate in a period 200 years ago than it is today. Modern

societies are enriched by the arts and by artists and do not benefit from those who would seek to limit their work.

I am sure that almost all members of the House are familiar with the writer Oscar Wilde, whose work was heavily criticized by some during his lifetime. I would defy anyone here today to name the judge who imprisoned him. We remember Oscar Wilde because his work endured; it was provocative and had meaning. We do not recall those who persecuted him because they worked to limit the human imagination rather than free it. His artistic work is timeless. Their names are long forgotten.

In my city of Toronto, the arts are an important part of our community. The arts employ 8% of Toronto's workforce. There are 21,000 resident artists in Toronto. There are hundreds of arts organizations and festivals, ranging from small venues to globally known events such as the Toronto International Film Festival.

In my riding of Davenport, there are many outstanding artists and arts organizations, such as the Clay and Paper Theatre, that are invaluable to our community's life and spirit.

Although the arts generate considerable revenue for the city of Toronto and for communities across our country, their value is measured far beyond the revenue they generate.

It is vital to ensure that the arts prosper in Canada and we can only do this by encouraging innovative, thought-provoking and visionary artistic expression. Bill C-10 has the potential to rob all of us of such opportunities to experience and to question the great ideals of human existence.

Will the government recognize the need to promote artistic freedom by withdrawing the ill-conceived and unnecessary Bill C-10, which threatens the arts community across Canada?

• (1825)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in order to assess whether the bill was really ill-conceived, as was suggested by the Liberal member, we must ask ourselves who conceived it. In fact, it was the former Liberal deputy prime minister, Sheila Copps, who wrote the bill when she served in the previous Chrétien cabinet.

The reason she wrote the bill and the reason the Liberal Party unanimously supported it was that it was aimed at preventing murderers, like Karla Homolka, from profiting from their crimes. It was rumoured at that time that Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo would create films to glorify what they had done and that they would be entitled to public funds to finance those films. That was the concern of the previous Liberal government.

At that time, the Liberals introduced the bill and for many years it has circulated throughout the House with unanimous support in all parties. When the current government put together Bill C-10, which is, by and large, a housekeeping bill on tax law, it was natural for us to include in the bill a piece of draft legislation that had already been written and had broad support but had just never made it through the House of Commons and Senate for procedural reasons and because of elections and other interruptions.

When we introduced the bill in the House of Commons, we had unanimous support. Indeed, the member for Davenport, wisely, was a strong supporter of Bill C-10, as was the entire Liberal caucus. Today he has changed his position and now opposes the bill that he supported, and I am not quite sure why. The bill simply states that taxpayer dollars should not be used to fund pornography, extreme violence or hatred against identifiable groups.

Most Canadians would agree that there should be an unlimited freedom of expression for artists who want to create any kind of film they want but, given that there are scarce resources in the public treasury, we should direct those resources to non-pornographic films and to films that do not glorify violence for its own sake.

I would like to distinguish for a moment between incidental nudity and pornography. I take a movie like *Shindler's List*, which had both violence and nudity incidental to the story of the Holocaust. In other words, one could not have the movie without both of those elements included. It is a very challenging and difficult movie to watch but one of the most important we have seen in decades.

That kind of film, though it is not Canadian nor is it applying for this tax credit, would not be made ineligible by the contents of Bill C-10. However, movies that are made explicitly for pornographic reasons, where the nudity exists for its own sake and not for the sake of telling a broader story, need not be financed by the public. Censorship would be to ban them but they are still legal but they cannot rely on public funds to finance them.

I will close by saying that one man's freedom of expression does not entitle him to stick his hand in the pocket of another.

• (1830)

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Mr. Speaker, all the well-rehearsed statements about its support for Bill C-10 does not hide the fact that the government's proposed legislation threatens artistic freedom.

As has been noted by several observers, Bill C-10 is cunning in its method of censorship and its aim to limit artistic freedom. The

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

funding for projects is threatened only after they are completed. The result is limitation and censorship up front simply because funding will be withheld after the completion of projects that are deemed unacceptable.

I join with the chorus of artist groups, civic organizations and Canadians across the country in calling upon the government to recognize the vitally important concept of artistic freedom of expression. We need to honour our cultural and artistic heritage, not restrict its growth and innovative expression.

Will the government come to its senses and encourage the artistic community, not try to control it?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to encourage the artistic community with what is a very lavish and generous tax credit program that helps artists flourish in the country.

We will continue to support the Liberal draft legislation, which is in Bill C-10, that deals with the tax credit. We also will continue to thank the Liberal member for Davenport for his support of that bill and the support of the entire Liberal caucus as that bill sailed right through the House of Commons without any objection whatsoever.

I think it would be appropriate for him to take a moment and call his former Liberal deputy prime minister, Sheila Copps, not known to be an extreme right wing censor, and congratulate her for having drafted this fine piece of legislation. He could tell her that he plans to continue to support it, just as he has done from the outset.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[*English*]

Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:32 p.m.)





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