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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, April 16, 1997

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

CONTENTS

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

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 16, 1997

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

The Speaker: As is our practice on Wednesdays, we will now sing O Canada. We will be led by the hon. member for Calgary North.

At the signing of a Canada-Saskatchewan social housing agreement, the minister stated that having a single level of government in charge of administering social housing would maximize the use of taxpayers' money by simplifying existing arrangements and encouraging the development of a single window concept.

When will we see powers transferred to the provinces in areas like forestry, tourism and mining? After three and a half years, it is time this government recognized that the Bloc Quebecois was right about the need to eliminate overlap.

* * *

• (1405)

[*English*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week is National Volunteer Week and communities across the country will pay tribute to their volunteers and the countless ways in which they help individuals, organizations and causes.

Volunteer week exemplifies the motivation and dedication of the millions of people across Canada whose efforts improve the quality of life for us all. Volunteers are a crucial component of every community.

This year's theme is "Volunteers, our greatest natural resource". I invite all members of Parliament to help make National Volunteer Week a success in their constituency by donating a few minutes of their time to a local organization or cause. In doing so, we are helping to ensure that volunteerism in Canada will continue to survive into the 21st century.

Congratulations and a huge thank you to all our volunteers.

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[*Translation*]

SOCIAL HOUSING

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation just woke up and realized that federal and provincial overlap is nothing but a waste of time and money.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, China is repeatedly jailing dissidents like Wei Jingsheng and student leader Wang Dan for speaking out on human rights. It has violated its joint declaration agreement on Hong Kong and its basic law by appointing its own legislative council, introducing laws on subversion and rolling back Hong Kong's bill of rights.

Our government's response is not to support the UN declaration condemning China for its human rights abuses, a complete flip-flop. China is a superpower but it can also be a great nation. China and Canada need to realize that a stable business environment is conditional on human rights, democratic principles, freedoms and the rule of law. To ignore this is to imperil not only people but economic stability. The government must stop its continued silence of the lambs and must speak out for human rights.

* * *

MILLER HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP): Mr. Speaker, most young people are law-abiding citizens concerned about the safety of others and who deplore crime and violence in any form. I have worked with many who excel and who are working within their communities to bring about changes for the better.

I want to congratulate one of these groups, the students of Miller High School of Regina who came to Ottawa this week with a petition to improve the Young Offenders Act. They have shown initiative by preparing recommendations that would make the act more effective and workable for offenders and their victims.

S. O. 31

In Regina crime is a serious concern. Most crimes of theft and break and enter are committed by repeat offenders who are already subject to the provisions of the Young Offenders Act because of past offences.

The Miller High School students recommend reducing the age in the Young Offenders Act to 16 years to correspond with the responsibilities youths take on when they obtain a driver's licence. They also recommend mandatory restitution to victims. The students suggest that young offenders work off their crimes with community improvement work.

These Miller High School students know it is time to get tough on crime and hope the Liberals get serious about it too. I applaud their initiative.

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NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Hillsborough said, this week is National Volunteer Week, an opportunity to celebrate the tremendous contributions of volunteers to our communities across Canada.

Millions of Canadians give freely of their time to support non-profit, voluntary and charitable organizations. Their generosity and participation builds and maintains the quality of life in our towns and neighbourhoods. Every year Canadians contribute over \$13 billion to charities and non-profit organizations. Approximately 13 million people volunteer their time each year in Canada. In my hometown of Hamilton, more than 100,000 volunteer their time and money every year.

[*Translation*]

On behalf of all my colleagues in the House of Commons, I want to thank all the volunteers for giving us some of their time.

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[*English*]

SENIORS BENEFIT

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for London—Middlesex I have received considerable input from my constituents about the new seniors benefit which begins in 2001. I also had the recent opportunity to meet with the London Council for Seniors to discuss this important new program.

Based on the input I have received, the vast majority of my constituents who are seniors support the new seniors benefit. They understand that it is fairer and that 75 per cent of Canadian seniors will receive the same or higher benefits.

One area of concern raised was a possible discrimination against married senior couples as compared to single seniors who cohabit.

Senior married couples want to know that the rules about combined incomes will be applied the same way in both cases.

I call on the government to review this concern carefully and to ensure a fair and just application of the new rules as they apply to the income of all seniors.

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SALMON FISHERY

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the agreement on the management of salmon issues to be signed today by the Prime Minister and the Premier of British Columbia vindicates former Prime Minister Lester Pearson's concept of co-operative federalism.

Intergovernmental relations in a federal system should be based not on confrontation and a rush to the law courts but on pragmatic accommodation and administrative partnership. Today most major issues transcend the problem-solving capacities of any one level of government and require a melding of decision making, not a fragmentation of power into watertight compartments of constitutional competence, federal or provincial.

We all have everything to gain by this highly pragmatic, empirically based approach to the regulation and conservation of a great national resource on the west coast.

• (1410)

It is to be achieved not by the frustrating processes of formal amendment of the Constitution, but by consensus of the respective heads of government, concretized in a legal agreement based on the constitutional principle of good faith and on mutual benefit.

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[*Translation*]

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, April 13 to 19 is National Volunteer Week, which has been celebrated since 1943.

Eleven million Canadians and Quebecers generously devote their time, energy and talents to helping others. These volunteers express their love and generosity through a wide range of actions.

I am proud to represent the riding of Bourassa, where dozens of community organizations are active. I want to praise the thousands of volunteers in my riding and everywhere, who generously work to enhance their fellow citizens' quality of life. I would like to draw special attention to the work of the Centre d'action bénévole de Montréal-Nord, Fondation La Visite, Coup de pouce Jeunesse, CAMÉE, Entre-Parents, Chez Frédéric and Ignace Bourget.

S. O. 31

Finally, I encourage all Canadians and Quebecers to show even greater support, generosity and dedication toward the most disadvantaged members of our society.

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[English]

PARKS CANADA

Mr. Cliff Bretkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this Liberal government has the power to improve the safety of Canadians. In criminal law the government chooses to do little or nothing to make our streets safer. But in Parks Canada the heavy hand of the government is shutting down the Jasper airstrip, for no good reason.

The Jasper airstrip does not cost taxpayers' money. There is not one incident in the airstrip's 70-year history of environmental damage or injury to animals. However, there are many instances of the airstrip being used for emergency landings by pilots.

While door knocking in Jasper, of the scores of people I talked to, all but one wanted the airstrip to remain open.

In the future when an emergency landing is needed in Jasper, will the heritage minister accept responsibility for any personal injuries or deaths? When will the government listen to the common sense of the common people to do what is right for Jasper residents and Canadians everywhere?

* * *

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today during National Volunteer Week to honour all volunteers but most particularly women volunteers.

Every day countless numbers of women give their time to work in our hospitals, schools and nursing homes, on boards and fund raising committees, with literacy programs, rape crisis centres and more. These women come from a wide cross section of society and bring a great range of skills and expertise to the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of the country. In fact our paid economy could not function without the unpaid work of volunteers.

As a nation we cannot afford to take our volunteers for granted. They are without a doubt the heart and soul of our country and on behalf of all of us I say thank you.

* * *

SPAR AEROSPACE

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a few days ago Prime Minister Chrétien announced that Spar Aerospace located in my riding of Bramalea—Gore—

Malton will develop the space shuttle's Canada Hand, thus creating at least 125 local jobs.

Everyone in the riding is pleased that our highly skilled local workforce has once again helped sustain and create local jobs. In fact, an even larger impact on local companies is expected due to the manufacturing and marketing of commercial spin-offs resulting from the Canada Hand robotic technology.

I want to thank the Prime Minister for his ongoing efforts to create as many jobs as possible, despite the current tough economic climate. Though the government cannot be satisfied with the current level of unemployment, its efforts to date are still commendable.

Having said that, I want to point out that I plan to pursue additional job creation until everyone—

The Speaker: I remind you gently, hon. colleagues, not to use our names but our titles or our ridings.

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[Translation]

MAYOR OF THETFORD MINES

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to pay tribute, here in this House, to the first magistrate of Thetford Mines, who is also the president of the asbestos economic development corporation, Mayor Henri Therrien who, last week, was named personality of the year for 1996 by the chamber of commerce of the asbestos region.

• (1415)

This honour follows a long list of achievements by Mayor Therrien, in the economic, cultural, sports and municipal areas, among others. For ten years now, the citizens of Thetford Mines have been proud to be able to rely on the dynamism and generosity of their mayor.

Congratulations Henri, and thank you.

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[English]

HIGH TECH INDUSTRY

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Reform Party I would like to recognize the tremendous accomplishment and entrepreneurial spirit of the high tech industry in the Ottawa-Lanark-Carleton region, better known as silicon valley north.

In just a few short years these pioneers of the 21st century have grown from an idea, to a dream, to a reality.

Last Wednesday our leader, Preston Manning, and the Reform candidate Darrel Reid held a breakfast meeting with the Canadian Advanced Technology Association to discuss the role of government in assisting in their success. Prominent industry leaders such as Denzell Doyle came to let Reformers know what they feel has to be done.

Oral Questions

Topics discussed included their hunger for highly skilled workers, the need for better high tech training, the damage taxes do to high tech ventures, and their number one priority, a reduction in the capital gains tax to encourage entrepreneurs and risk takers.

These are the leaders of tomorrow. Like the Edisons, Fords and Rockefellers who fashioned a world from concrete and steel, they will build a new one of fibre optics, copper wire and silicon chips.

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[Translation]

STUDENT DEBT

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, on behalf of my party, I moved a motion dealing with the Bankruptcy Act.

This motion asks the Liberal government to amend the new standards governing bankruptcies, so as to prevent the application of more stringent rules for discharge of a student loan debt than for other types of debt.

Our purpose is not to remove the responsibility of students, quite the contrary. We know that the vast majority of students pay back their loans. Rather, the motion seeks to make the government aware of the injustice being done to students who are overburdened with debt and not able to pay back their loans.

In its study on the issue of personal income tax reform, the Bloc Québécois recommended the introduction of a tax credit to help graduating students who must start paying off their loans.

Instead of going after students, the Liberal government should make a commitment to create jobs, which is the only concrete solution to the student debt problem.

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[English]

LEUKEMIA

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, too many of our children and adults of all ages and backgrounds continue to be devastated by the group of diseases known as leukemia.

Leukemia is still the most deadly disease for Canadian children. But there is hope. Canadian research scientists and research centres and hospitals across the country have made and continue to make great progress, particularly in the treatment and life expectancy of leukemia patients. More success has been achieved with leukemia than any other cancer.

The Leukemia Research Fund of Canada, a national volunteer organization, raises money to provide grants to Canadian researchers and to educate the public about the disease and its treatment.

I would ask my colleagues to show their support and consider in the very near future the formal recognition of the month of June as Leukemia Awareness Month across Canada, just as it has been known and practised for the last 40 years.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

LINGUISTIC SCHOOL BOARDS

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this week at the National Assembly, members of all parties voted unanimously in favour of a resolution asking the government to amend section 93 of the Canadian Constitution, in order to establish school boards in Quebec along linguistic lines.

The resolution comes after more than 30 years of debate—this goes back to the Parent report—and after more than a year of consultations held across Quebec, throughout the regions. Today, the federal government tells us this was not enough.

I want to ask the Prime Minister whether he realizes that he is preventing the passage of an amendment to section 93 before the next election and thus delaying the introduction of linguistic school boards in Quebec?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the resolution was passed last night. We received it this morning. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs explained the party's position to the press.

• (1420)

We will table a resolution in this House as soon as possible, I hope by the end of this week, but the government does not have full control over the rules of procedure of this House and the Upper House. We need the co-operation of all concerned. However, we will proceed as soon as possible, as I said yesterday.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knows perfectly well that creating a joint parliamentary committee will keep the amendment from being adopted before the next election. The government is aware of that. This is no accident.

And speaking of his Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, how could he say this morning that if Quebec had a federalist government, it would be less of a problem, when we know that all members of the National Assembly, both sovereignists and federalists, voted in favour of this resolution? How could he make such a statement?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know that the minority living in Quebec is not necessarily comfortable with certain situations—

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): —as is often the case with francophone minorities in other provinces.

The minister mentioned that fact, and there was a parliamentary committee in the Senate the last time, when we had a resolution from Newfoundland, and we believe there should be a parliamentary committee once again. And to speed things up, we have decided to have a joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons that will conduct hearings where people will be able to express their views. There is nothing wrong with that. However, the government intends to support the motion.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister wants to compare the position of language minorities in Quebec with that of language minorities across Canada, I warn him that the official opposition is willing to have an emergency debate on the subject here in the House, at any time.

The Prime Minister is saying that the federal government is the custodian of democracy in Quebec and that the democratic process in Quebec is flawed. The Prime Minister is applying the theory of Pierre Elliott Trudeau that federalism should be the bulwark of democracy in Quebec. Does he realize this is an affront to the democratic process in Quebec?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the government's responsibility to act as directed by the Canadian Constitution, and we intend to act on those responsibilities as we always have.

Perhaps the hon. member should read the book published a few days ago by one of his members, the hon. member for Québec-Est. People thought some of his comments were not very nice to the minority.

Personally, I am fighting for the French minority outside Quebec and the English minority in Quebec, because the Canadian government has a duty to defend minorities wherever they happen to be in this country.

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Denying the democratic legitimacy of the National Assembly in the matter of linguistic school boards, Ottawa will be launching public hearings, while all of the stakeholders in Quebec have long ago made their opinions known on this matter. Yesterday Quebec spoke in the National Assembly; now it is Ottawa's turn to listen.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his government is taking refuge behind the unelected Senate in order to preclude any possibility of this constitutional amendment being passed before the coming election? After the Supreme Court, now the senators, who are not elected, are the ones to set Quebec's education policy.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member is suggesting is contrary to both the spirit and the letter of the Constitution of Canada. The two parliaments, provincial and federal, must decide on this amendment. Both have to make up their minds.

• (1425)

The Canadian Parliament is also the Parliament of Quebecers. The elected representatives of Quebec also sit in the House of Commons. Canada in its entirety belongs to the people of Quebec.

Moreover, the federal government has specific responsibilities toward minorities. This does not mean that the provinces are not concerned about them, but it is our responsibility. Because we have required a consensus, which the opposition did not want to seek, we have protected minorities everywhere in the country. A government proposing a constitutional amendment under section 43 which affects its minority requires the support of that minority if it wants to get that amendment from the Parliament of Canada.

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, just having a school bag does not make a person smart.

When the Government of New Brunswick was calling for a constitutional amendment in 1993, Ottawa held no public hearings.

How can the Prime Minister justify his acting without any public hearings, in the case of New Brunswick, while he refuses to do the same in the case of Quebec?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the case of New Brunswick, the Government of New Brunswick had the decency to establish a parliamentary commission in that province in 1990.

Quebecers greatly respect democracy. They must not be very proud of the way their provincial government has handled the school board matter.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Dion: Absolutely. It is scandalous that groups were not even given the opportunity to express themselves. The Parliament of Canada will give them that opportunity, knowing that Quebecers greatly respect democracy.

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[English]

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the country desperately needs some new thinking on the future of federalism but look what we get.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister last year, the member for Sherbrooke last month and now Brian Mulroney are going back to distinct society entrenchment as the answer. These are empty words, hollow gestures, old ideas, all democratically rejected by Canadians in 1992 including Quebec.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Why does he still cling to this obsolete idea? Why does he have nothing fresh and new to offer Quebec and the rest of Canada on reforming federalism?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are reforming the federation.

In a few minutes I will sign an agreement with the Government of British Columbia to involve the province of British Columbia in fisheries management on the west coast. We are signing agreements with all provinces on manpower training.

In the speech from the throne a year and a few months ago we had a list of things that had to be done. We said that we did not want to have a grand meeting that produced nothing. We were to do it step by step, province by province.

As I said, the House of Commons has given a veto to all regions of Canada including Quebec. We voted for distinct society for Quebec. We are settling the question of manpower training with the provinces. Today we are settling the problem of fisheries with British Columbia.

We settled the duplication in forestry, in mining and in the environment. I could go on and on and on. The practical way is to give Canadians an answer to one problem at a time. It is the modern way.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the government is so void of new ideas that it has to go to the public in an election after 3.5 years. It has come up empty on national unity. The Prime Minister also has the worst string of unemployment records since the depression. He is right up there with R.B. Bennett.

The Prime Minister has nothing new to say to the 1.4 million unemployed. He has nothing new to say to unemployed young people. He has nothing new to say to the underemployed. He has nothing new to say to the one out of four workers afraid of losing their jobs. He has nothing new to say to the 75 per cent of Canadians who say he has done a bad job on jobs.

• (1430)

If jobs is the number one priority of the government, why is it that the Prime Minister has nothing new or innovative to say on the subject at all?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was in the House when we presented a budget that put \$350 million into jobs for young people. We have given an incentive reduction in the employment insurance premium. Em-

ployers hiring new people will not have to pay such high premiums. It will help them to hire more people.

The Canadian economy has given Canadians the lowest interest rates in 40 years. This will create jobs. Canadians had never seen a four-year period with such low inflation as we have managed to give them. We have increased our trade by 40 per cent in four years. This is also creating jobs.

We will carry on because the Canadian people know we have to stay the course. We will not try to buy the votes of Canadians by giving them across the board tax cuts until we have reduced the deficit to zero.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when the government came to power it also promised a new level of integrity and accountability.

Let us look at the record 3.5 years later: political interference in the Somalia inquiry, government stonewalling of the inquiry into tainted blood, the bungled Airbus project, the bungled Pearson airport project, the GST alive and well and bigger than ever before, and 73 per cent of Canadians saying that the government has done a bad job on keeping its promises.

Why does the Prime Minister have nothing new to offer Canadians on political accountability? What happened to the red book promise to restore integrity to the institutions of government?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand very proud with my party on that. During the four years we formed government not a single minister was obliged to resign because of a scandal.

There was a poll in *Macleans's* the other day which showed that four years ago about 15 per cent of Canadians had confidence in their national government. In the last poll, 55 per cent said it was the best of 20 nations.

I will meet the leader of the third party on the streets of Canada in the months to come. The people of Canada will tell him that we are not the party that is proposing to cut the taxes of banks by 10 per cent.

* * *

[Translation]

LINGUISTIC SCHOOL BOARDS

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this week the Prime Minister tried to use Quebec's bishops to delay implementation of linguistic school boards in Quebec, when in fact the bishops had said they were in favour of linguistic school boards several months ago.

Today, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs talks to us about insufficient consultation on the school boards issue when, and I repeat, we have been debating this issue, in general assemblies throughout Quebec, for over 30 years now.

Oral Questions

I ask the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs whether, with both federalists and sovereignists in the National Assembly unanimous, a consensus in Quebec requires, in his view, that Alliance Quebec and *The Gazette* also be in agreement?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, The answer is no, Mr. Speaker. The proof is that we support the measure. This is very good news. First of all, the official opposition should congratulate the Canadian government, which has just supported a measure that will be good for Quebecers.

• (1435)

Second, is should congratulate the Canadian government and say: "We will get the chance to have a parliamentary committee because we, as the opposition, believe that parliamentary committees are a good thing, and we stand behind the official opposition in the National Assembly, which also called for a parliamentary committee".

That is what they should be saying, if they were not blinded by their separatist ideology.

Mrs. Tremblay: Enrol in high school, Stéphane.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, you would think Pierre Elliott Trudeau had come back.

An hon. member: Yes, you would.

Mr. Duceppe: A Pierre Elliott Trudeau with a school bag.

The real reason, and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs should say so here in the House, is that, when all is said and done, he is afraid of the reaction of the rest of Canada, of English Canada on the eve of an election, and of the voters of the West Island. That is the real reason.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition can accuse me of many things, but fear is not one of them. When have you seen Stéphane Dion intimidated by anything? Get serious.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Dion: They have always said: "If Alliance Quebec is against it, Dion will not support it". I have always said that I would not give any group a veto. Alliance Quebec is opposed and Dion is in favour.

However, Dion, or the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, since we are in the House, would like to see Alliance Quebec support it. There will be a parliamentary committee to listen to their views and to see what can be done to include them in the consensus.

The opposition should be happy that there is a parliamentary committee. The opposition will have an opportunity to express its point of view, to hear from different groups according to a procedure that is well established in democracy.

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[English]

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it has been reported that the government has just settled with Pearson Development Corporation for \$60 million.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): We will see if the rest of it gets a standing ovation.

However this is only part of the deal, part of a sad story. Earlier the government gave the Pearson group \$185 million in rent relief and \$15 million in legal costs. This Liberal bungle has cost taxpayers \$260 million.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame.

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Why has the government wasted \$260 million of taxpayers money? Why?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is well known that the government has tried to settle the legal matter which led to the lawsuit. We tried by legislation and by negotiation. We tried by litigation. We wanted it settled from December 3, 1993.

The figures put forward by the hon. member are simply false. I might add that when we tried to get that same settlement figure through legislation his party refused to vote for it, preferring instead to leave the taxpayer on the hook. Nevertheless we will leave that aside.

The figure is \$45 million for the expenses of the consortium and \$15 million for other expenses that have taken place since and for legal fees. That is the cost of settling the lawsuit.

With respect to the legal fees the government had to spend, we had a \$663 million possible liability which they seem to be so enthusiastic about encouraging. Obviously we had to spend money to prevent that liability.

The third point is the \$185 million for specifically the construction and completion of the north-south runway, for the two firehalls at either end of the airport and for the new de-icing facility.

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the \$260 million liability the minister speaks about is because of their bungle. There is no other reason. It was their mistake. The huge profits that were supposed to have been in the original deal, which was a good deal, are now in the settlement.

Oral Questions

Not only have the Liberals wasted \$260 million on the settlement, but Canada's most important piece of infrastructure has continued to deteriorate for four years. The airport authority is now going to have to spend \$2 billion on renovations and this will mean airport user fees.

• (1440)

Why has the minister failed Canadians twice in wasting \$260 million, and we will now face airport user fees?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just do not know where that party comes from.

We have the one member of that party from Ontario who complains. Does he mention that in Vancouver we have made rent reduction of \$46 million, that in Edmonton the figure was \$127 million and in Calgary it was \$117 million? No, he focuses only on the \$185 million in Toronto.

It was part of a pattern across the country which included \$120 million to the airports of Montreal. It was a program to make sure our airports could benefit from the open skies agreement and position themselves as the leading gateways to both Europe and Asia.

* * *

[Translation]

PEARSON AIRPORT

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

The secret everybody knew has now become public: the federal government today announced that it has reached an agreement with the promoters who wanted to buy terminals 1 and 2 of the Pearson airport. Taxpayers will have to spend another \$60 million on top of the \$185 million the minister gave to the airport on March 25.

Can the Minister of Transport today say that his government erred in the case of Toronto's airport, as it did in the case of Montreal's, and that the taxpayers will have to pay more than \$245 million to cover its blunders?

[English]

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I repeat for the hon. member, who apparently was not listening to the earlier question, that the settlement in the case of Pearson airport is \$45 million for the legitimate expenses which were determined by an outside firm of experts in this area, plus the \$15 million for legal fees and expenses since the time of the original contract. That is the cost of settling.

When this government entered power in 1993 we had a choice. We looked at the Pearson airport deal and we determined that it

was not in the public interest, and it is not today in the public interest. We had the choice of simply going along with the previous deal which was not in the public interest or terminating it. We knew there would be costs to terminating it. We were willing to bear those costs and we did. They are \$45 million plus \$15 million.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister has just acknowledged that all of the money he put into it represents a deal with the people to put an end to the Pearson airport scandal.

On March 25, the Minister of Transport announced \$185 million in financial assistance to the airport for projects that were over 85 per cent complete. Three weeks later, everything is resolved as if by magic, while the dispute had been going on for three and a half years, as if the gift of \$185 million had nothing to do with the \$60 million.

How does the minister explain all these coincidences on the eve of an election?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I should point out that the local airport authority, ADM in Montreal, received over \$100 million for special capital expenditures and another \$20 million for a special fund. ADM received \$120 million, and Montreal got \$185 million.

That is why it was clear that in Toronto they needed more funds to pay three things: the north-south runway, the de-icing area and the fire station. That is what we paid for with the \$185 million.

* * *

[English]

FISHERIES

Mr. John Cummins (Delta, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the premier of B.C. will sign a fisheries agreement within an hour. Everyone is asking what is in it for the politicians. The real question is what is in it for the fish.

• (1445)

Rules governing land, water and waste determine whether fish survive. These are under provincial control and the provincial record is abominable.

The agreement to be signed today appears designed more to improve the lot of Liberals in B.C. than to protect fish habitat.

Can the minister tell the House how this agreement will improve the province's deplorable record of protecting fish habitat?

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for recognizing this milestone in Canadian history.

Oral Questions

The hon. member asked who will benefit from this. The highlights of this are the following. There will be a B.C.-Canada council of ministers to co-ordinate the major salmon resource and habitat issues. There will be a Pacific fisheries resource conservation council like there is in Atlantic Canada. There will be a creation of a fisheries renewal advisory board which will include the stakeholders and community groups to improve co-ordination on habitat restoration and enhancement initiatives. There will be a funding of \$15 million for each government over three years for habitat restoration. There will be a commitment by both governments to work co-operatively to reduce overlap and duplication and to improve efficiency on the part of everybody. That benefits the fish and the fishermen.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this agreement is not a milestone, it is more a headstone for the fish in B.C.

During the construction of the Vancouver Island highway the province deviously avoided its own environmental assessment law. The minister of fisheries played the same game and avoided an environmental assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

Rather than attempting to promote the cause of Liberals in B.C. by jumping into bed with Glen Clark, why has the minister of fisheries not fulfilled his constitutional obligation and charged the province with fish habitat destruction by the Vancouver Island highway?

Hon. Fred Mifflin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find this very strange for a party that believes the federal government should get out of the environmental business altogether.

I would suggest that the only headstone in this agreement is the Reform Party.

* * *

[Translation]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

While the Minister of Foreign Affairs is desperately looking to the international community to justify proclaiming Canada a great place to live, the aboriginal peoples of Quebec and Canada are travelling across Europe denouncing some of the many red book promises that have been broken. After three and a half years of Liberal government, the aboriginal peoples still have record high rates of suicide, imprisonment, unemployment and infant mortality.

When will the government of the so-called best country in the world to live in finally acknowledge the report of the Erasmus-Dussault Royal Commission and seriously tackle the problems facing aboriginal peoples?

[English]

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is referring to Mr. Mercredi's trip to England. We have different styles.

While I was working on Manitoba treaty land entitlement, the Dog Rib claims in the Northwest Territories, the Makivik claims in Quebec, all significant, Mr. Mercredi was talking to the statue of Queen Victoria.

We have been here three and a half years. The RCAP report talks about relocations and we did them in Grise Fiord and Davis Inlet. For veterans we did scholarships. We did June 21st aboriginal recognition.

On governance, we did inherent right; the B.C. treaty process, the Manitoba dismantling, 13 land management agreements; Nunavut and Yukon.

On co-management we are doing it in Saskatchewan, B.C. and Alberta. On treaty land entitlement we are finishing with Saskatchewan and doing Manitoba.

I have 18 pages of bullets which I am prepared to table so the hon. member can read in bullet form 18 pages of progress.

• (1450)

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for the minister's information, England was not the only country they visited, and Ovide Mercredi was not travelling alone either. The chief of Quebec's First Nations and his delegation were with him. Together they visited several European countries. As for Queen Victoria's statue, it was no doubt more sensitive to aboriginal issues than the minister.

Since the report was tabled, the First Nations have repeatedly solicited a meeting with the Prime Minister.

Why does his government keep refusing to talk with the First Nations and to meet them before the next federal election?

[English]

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we went abroad we did it a lot more wisely than the AFN. We went to Greenland to negotiate economic agreements with aboriginal people. We went to New Zealand to negotiate economic agreements between our aboriginal people and their aboriginal people. We went to the United States to negotiate economic agreements on agriculture. We went to Mexico to negotiate a forestry agreement between the Meadow Lake Tribal

Oral Questions

Council and the people there. I could go on. I am glad the member has given me this opportunity.

While they were talking, we were moving over jurisdiction in gas and oil in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

We made amendments to the Indian Act which the hon. member opposed. It gave power to those people. No country has gone as far as Canada.

We said that these powers belonged to aboriginal people. They came from the creator. We are prepared as a federal government to say that education is theirs, health is theirs. Marriage, custody, culture and language are theirs. The hon. member would not support those things.

* * *

TAXATION

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian recipients of U.S. social security benefits are relieved that this government has taken steps to alleviate the U.S. tax grab on their monthly payments, but the solution depends on action by our Parliament and by the U.S. Senate.

Can the Minister of Finance tell the constituents of Windsor—St. Clair what exactly the government is prepared to do to help them recoup their losses in the event of a delay in the United States?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair is asking a question on behalf of her constituents. She has been very active in this file. It is a question which concerns a number of members in the House.

As the member knows, having worked on this file for some time, what is necessary is for us to set up a system by which we can provide the refunds as quickly as possible. It will take the co-operation of the United States because not all seniors file Canadian tax returns. We have to get that information and then we have to match it to our information.

Setting up the system will take some time, but the commitment I am prepared to make in the House is that if by the time the system is set up it has not been ratified by the U.S. Senate, we will proceed immediately to provide the refunds to Canadian recipients.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday during question period the justice minister denied that we need a victims bill of rights. He mocked the request of my colleague from Fraser Valley West for greater rights for victims by saying that the provinces have already taken steps to do exactly what is being asked for in the victims bill of rights, and yet the justice minister

has admitted that victims of crime need more rights, as shown by his request to the justice committee to study the bill.

Why then does he say that these rights are already covered by provincial legislation?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, yesterday I was not mocking victims bills of rights, I was mocking the hon. member for Fraser Valley West.

Second, the hon. member will know that the justice committee, at my request, is examining the entire matter of victims rights in this country. I wrote to the committee a year ago. It is examining the Statutes of Canada, the administration of justice in the provinces, and it is preparing proposals to improve the justice system to make it more sensitive to the rights of victims.

That is what I have asked the hon. member and his colleagues on the justice committee to do.

• (1455)

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the justice minister feels that mocking a legitimate question from the opposition is becoming, in particular on the eve of an election.

Murderer Karla Homolka has the right to a university education. Child killer Clifford Olson has the right to apply for early release. Criminals are demanding sex change operations, colour televisions and computers. And now a murderer in prison in New Brunswick is demanding the right to be transported to Nova Scotia every time he wants a conjugal visit with his wife who is imprisoned there for her part in the murder.

The government gives in to these demands while victims stand at the door begging. How can the minister deny victims reasonable rights while he continues to protect the rights of Clifford Olson and while doing nothing to stop rapists like Darren Ursel from walking free?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the system at present includes a statement of victims rights adopted by the federal government and the provinces in 1988. Since 1988 the federal government has conducted itself, drafted its legislation, selected its priorities and determined its policies in relation to that statement of principles. It is in essence a victims bill of rights.

However, there is room for improvement in any system, including the criminal justice system when it comes to victims. It is for that reason that I have asked the justice committee, of which the hon. member is a hardworking part, to work on the victims bill of rights to look at how it can be improved, how the system can be made more sensitive to the interests of victims.

I look forward to the report of that committee. This government will examine it with care and do the right thing.

[Translation]

HYUNDAI PLANT IN BROMONT

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

On several occasions, I have risen in this House to question the minister on the future of the Hyundai plant in Bromont. We have now learned that Hyundai has moved all its automobile assembly machinery out of the plant. More than 800 direct jobs in my region are at stake.

Can the minister say whether discussions have been initiated with his Quebec counterpart or any potential buyer who could take over this idle manufacturing plant and get it running again?

[English]

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asks an interesting question. It is a matter I will have to take up with the minister. We will take that question under advisement.

* * *

MINISTER OF CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the heritage minister talked about the receptions held to salute our Olympic athletes. I want to make it clear that the Reform Party and all Canadians are proud of those athletes.

I am not talking about the Canadian salute to our Olympic athletes and their cocktail party. I am talking about the federal government caviar cocktail party held for under 100 people at the CNN centre in Atlanta on July 22, 1996. It is time the heritage minister came clean on this. I know two people who took pictures at this event. These people have told us what it was like.

While Canadians are working harder and being taxed more, this minister is having a caviar cocktail party for \$65,000 for under 100 people. She should give an answer to the Canadian people

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is ironic. I thought that in light of the fact that the member and his colleagues have not hesitated from associating themselves with any reception he might have hung his head in shame.

He made a reference yesterday to so-called MP junkets. I took the time to do a bit of research. The member who decried that we had approximately 20 young wheelchair athletes aged 14 and 15 at this reception is the same member who took a trip to Cambridge,

Oral Questions

England, Oslo, Norway, Tromsø, Norway, Stockholm, Sweden, Copenhagen, Denmark.

I checked today on the business class ticket price, which is \$5,000.

* * *

• (1500)

HOUSING

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of aboriginal affairs and has to do with concerns expressed in northern Manitoba, particularly in the riding of Churchill, with respect to funding that was promised for housing. The minister knows this is a concern.

Could he tell the House and the people of northern Manitoba, particularly in the aboriginal communities, when that promised money will be forthcoming? Will there be an announcement in the next little while regarding how this funding will be forthcoming and how it will be received?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his interest in aboriginal peoples which has been consistent.

I do not have the exact details because it is based on formula, but I will get them after question period and give them to the hon. member.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the hon. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

The minister today tabled a 1996 annual report to Parliament on ministerial permits. Could the minister inform the House on how these numbers compare to those of previous years? What assurance could the minister give Canadians that these permits are being used responsibly?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year we issued fewer ministerial permits than the year before, fewer than ever before. There was a 27 per cent reduction.

We are achieving the goal of controlling the immigration program more efficiently. Ministerial permits allow people who would otherwise not be admissible to Canada to come in under specific circumstances or for specific reasons. Each case is looked at very seriously.

The safety and security of Canadians remain the priority in the final decision.

*Routine Proceedings***POINTS OF ORDER**

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of personal privilege. During question period the Deputy Prime Minister showed very poor taste in her comments.

If she were to check further she would find that the trip she mentioned was not paid for by the Canadian taxpayers in any way.

I could provide the House with that evidence at a later date.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 25 petitions.

* * *

• (1505)

DENE AND METIS LAND CLAIM

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 1994 and 1995-96 annual reports of the implementation committee on the Shatu Dene and Metis comprehensive land claim agreement.

* * *

[*English*]

GWITCH'IN LAND CLAIM AGREEMENT

Mr. Bernard Patry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 32(2) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 1994-95 and 1995-96 annual reports of the implementation committee on the Gwitch'in comprehensive land claim agreement.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Mrs. Bonnie Hickey (St. John's East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Health.

Pursuant to the order of reference dated November 5, 1996, the committee has adopted Bill C-47, an act respecting human reproductive technologies and commercial transactions relating to human reproduction, and amendments.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food which deals with Bill C-72, the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

I am proud to report the bill with several amendments.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present the 63rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding its order of reference from the House of Commons on Thursday, February 20, 1997, in relation to the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1998 with regard to vote 5 under Parliament, House of Commons. The committee reports the same.

* * *

PRIVACY ACT

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-405, an act to amend the Privacy Act.

She said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill which seeks to amend the Privacy Act to allow parents and legal guardians the right to contact the RCMP for disclosure of whether or not an individual in trust or authority has been convicted of a previous offence, including sexual interference and incest.

The legislation is introduced following a tragic situation in my riding of Guelph—Wellington where a child was molested by an individual who had a previous conviction. The child's mother was unable to obtain any information regarding the individual. Parents must have access to prior records to ensure that this kind of situation cannot happen again.

The legislation is about access that will give our children much needed protection. Society must do all it can to prevent incidents of child abuse. I hope that my private member's bill will be another important step in the protection of our children.

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

Routine Proceedings

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM

• (1510)

PETITIONS

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I beg the indulgence of the House. I have quite a few petitions which I have grouped into several categories.

I am overwhelmed by the show of public support for my parental rights Motion No. 300. In just a few months I have received 41 petitions with 940 signatures which I am pleased to present to the House today.

The petitioners draw attention to their concerns that the government has used the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to create legislation, programs and bureaucracy which undermine the fundamental rights and freedoms of parents.

These concerned Canadians request that Parliament support Motion No. 300 which would add parental rights and responsibilities to section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the next group of petitions I am pleased to rise today to present are signed by concerned citizens across Canada.

They oppose the inclusion of the phrase sexual orientation in the Canadian Human Rights Act. These Canadians believe that freedom from discrimination is already protected in the human rights act without this amendment.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the next group of petitions I rise to present are signed by Canadian citizens from the province of Saskatchewan.

They request that Parliament amend the Criminal Code to ensure that sentences given to anyone convicted of driving while impaired or causing injury or death while impaired reflect both the severity of the crime and zero tolerance by Canada toward the crime.

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the next group of petitions that it is my pleasure to present are three petitions representing 75 concerned citizens from Manitoba.

They wish Parliament to affirm the duty of parents to responsibly raise their children according to their own conscience and beliefs and therefore that section 33 of the Criminal Code be left as it is currently worded.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present another petition signed by Canadians concerned about our national highway system given that 38 per cent of national highways are substandard.

The petitioners request that Parliament urge the federal government to join with the provincial governments to upgrade our highways.

ABORTION

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am also pleased to rise today to present petitions signed by concerned Canadians who wish to draw to the attention of Parliament that over 100,000 therapeutic abortions are performed each year in Canada at a cost of over \$50 million per year.

The petitioners and all Canadians deserve to have a voice in how their health care dollars are spent and which health care procedures they consider essential.

They call on Parliament to support a binding national referendum to be held at the time of the next general election to determine whether or not Canadians are in favour of federal government funding for abortions on demand.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned Canadians.

They request that Parliament support the existing laws which will severely punish all violent criminals who use weapons in a crime, support new Criminal Code firearms control provisions which recognize the rights of law-abiding citizens to own and use their firearms, and will repeal and modify existing gun control laws that have not improved public safety or not proven to be cost effective or too complex.

EXCISE TAX

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I also wish to present petitions signed by Canadians concerned about the high percentage of taxes they are paying for a litre of gasoline at the pumps.

They request that Parliament not increase the federal excise tax on gasoline in the next federal budget.

AGE OF CONSENT

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I wish to present petitions signed by Canadians greatly concerned about recent court decisions that have declared the Criminal Code of Canada setting the age of consent for sexual intercourse with females at 14 years of age, and the age of consent for anal intercourse at 18 years of age is discriminatory on the basis of age.

Routine Proceedings

The majority of Canadians believe our laws should protect children from exploitation and abuse and that age of consent laws are designed to control adults who want to have sex with minors.

The petitioners urge Parliament to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to set the age of consent at 18 years of age except for husband and wife relationships to provide protection from exploitation and abuse.

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the privilege and honour of presenting two petitions.

In light of the fact that 38 per cent of the national highway system is substandard, a group of citizens in Thunder Bay—Atikokan have signed a petition asking that the federal government join with provincial governments to upgrade the national highway system.

RAILWAYS

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I also have a very significant petition signed by 8,600 citizens from Thunder Bay, Terrace Bay, Kakabeka Falls, Ignace, Dryden, Winnipeg, Dymont, Red Rock, Sundridge, Dorion, Kenora, Pearl, Nolalu, Marathon, Manitouwadge, Azilda, Heron Bay, Kaministiquia, South Gillies, Garson, Sioux Lookout, Geraldton, Atikokan and Pass Lake.

This is the first batch of many individuals who are acknowledging the fact that there is no CPR passenger service between the cities of Sudbury and Winnipeg.

• (1515)

Therefore the petitioners call on Parliament to ensure that the federal government, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and VIA Rail Canada Inc. co-operatively conduct a study to determine the feasibility of reintroducing VIA passenger service from Sudbury to Winnipeg and that VIA passenger service be revived on the CPR line from Sudbury to Winnipeg as soon as possible.

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wish to present a petition signed by 84 people in the Montreal area concerning the unity of Canada.

The petitioners ask Parliament to declare that Canada is indivisible within its boundaries, that the provinces, territories and territorial waters may be modified only by a free vote of all Canadians, including the amending formula stipulated by the Constitution.

HEALTH FOODS

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition signed by approximately

1,600 residents of my riding which calls on the federal government through the health protection branch to stop regulating herbal products as if they were drugs and to clearly recognize them as food.

In brief, the petitioners want the consumer to have choice and not give that discretion to the bureaucracy. I fully concur with their concerns.

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to present four petitions with signatures gathered from concerned citizens throughout Toronto.

The first petition calls on the federal government to join with the provinces to upgrade the national highway system.

TAXATION

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.): The second petition with over 200 signatures from the organization Don't Tax Reading Coalition requests that the GST not be applied to reading materials.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the second petition requests members of Parliament to support the immediate initiation and conclusion by the year 2000 of an international convention which will set out a binding timetable for the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

NUCLEAR REACTORS

Mr. Bill Graham (Rosedale, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the fourth petition I would like to present requests that members of Parliament cancel the sale of Candu reactors to China and withdraw all financial and technical assistance to China for nuclear reactor technology.

FUEL PRICES

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Chase, Adams Lake, China Valley, Pritchard, Monte Lake, Monte Creek, Pinantan, Paul Lake, Westwold and Duck Range.

These 11,000 petitioners are concerned about the high price of gasoline, diesel fuel and propane and are asking the federal government to consider regulating these commodities as a utility.

TAXATION

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): I wish to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Savona, Deadman's Creek, Cherry Creek, Logan Lake, Blackloam, Knutsford, Kamloops, Rose Hill, Louis Creek, Black Pines, Darfield and Squam Bay who are concerned about the GST as it is applied to reading material. They ask the federal government to back off from taxing people who like to read.

Routine Proceedings

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): Madam Speaker, I present a petition signed by 200 residents of the great city of Kamloops who are concerned about the need for funding for a national highway system. They ask that more money from the federal excise tax on gasoline go to a fund to upgrade our national highways.

AGE OF CONSENT

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have one petition to present on behalf of the constituents of Simcoe Centre.

The petition concerns age of consent laws. The petitioners ask that Parliament set the age of consent at 18 years to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wish to present two petitions on behalf of my constituents.

First, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to support the immediate initiation and conclusion by the year 2000 of an international convention which will set out a binding timetable for the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

The petitioners believe that the continuing existence of nuclear weapons poses a threat to the health and survival of human civilization in the global environment. On behalf of my constituents I would like to present this one which I support.

TAXATION

Mr. Tony Ianno (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): In the second petition, Madam Speaker, the petitioners and the Don't Tax Reading Coalition of Toronto call on the Government of Canada to remove the GST from books, magazines and newspapers.

The petitioners believe that applying the 7 per cent GST to reading material is unfair and wrong. They believe that literacy and reading are critical to Canada's future and that removing the GST from reading material will help promote literacy in Canada.

On behalf of my constituents I humbly submit these petitions with my full support.

Mr. Werner Schmidt (Okanagan Centre, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of my constituents who urge Parliament to remove the GST from books, magazines and newspapers.

They ask the Prime Minister to carry out his party's repeated promise to remove the federal sales tax from reading.

● (1520)

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have three petitions. The first petition is from Regina, Saskatchewan. It is with regard to police officers and firefighters lost in the line of duty.

The petitioners pray and call on Parliament to establish a public safety officers compensation fund to receive gifts or bequests for the benefit of families of police officers and firefighters who are killed in the line of duty.

TAXATION

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the second petition comes from Ottawa, Ontario. The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that managing the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession which has not been recognized for its value to our society.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to pursue initiatives to assist families who choose to provide care in the home for preschool children, the chronically ill, the aged or the disabled.

LABELLING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the final petition and the most important to me personally is from Petawawa, Ontario.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that the consumption of alcoholic beverages may cause health problems or impair one's ability and, specifically, that fetal alcohol syndrome or other alcohol related birth defects are 100 per cent preventable by avoiding alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to enact legislation to require health warning labels to be placed on the containers of alcoholic beverages to caution expectant mothers and others of the risks associated with alcohol consumption.

JUSTICE

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have petitions from my constituents. The first petition asks Parliament to remove the provocation defence.

HEALTH FOODS

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.): Madam Speaker, the second petition relates to health foods.

The petitioners request that Parliament stop the process whereby the health protection branch can arbitrarily remove those health foods from Canadian use.

Government Orders

[Translation]

TAX ON BOOKS

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I also have the honour of tabling two petitions, and I will do so now.

The first petition deals with the issue of taxing reading material.

[English]

It is from the Canadian coalition Don't Tax Reading. It is one I support.

It urges Parliament to remove forthwith the GST from books and all reading material. It is signed by 150 people from the Durham region.

DIVORCE ACT

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the second petition comes primarily from the Mississauga South area of this great country. It calls on Parliament to amend the Divorce Act to reflect the desire by families, in particular grandparents, to have access to their grandchildren.

HEALTH FOODS

Mr. Paul Steckle (Huron—Bruce, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by about 130 people from the southwestern region, largely from the Woodstock area.

These petitioners believe that Bill C-7, the proposed controlled drugs and substances act, to be unconstitutional. They believe it does not serve the interests of Canadian consumers and that amalgamating the Narcotics Control Act with parts of the existing Food and Drugs Act puts food plants and medicinal herbs in jeopardy.

The petitioners also believe Bill C-7 to be ambiguous and unclear in its wording, leaving room for the health protection branch to use it against free access to classic traditional herbal remedies. They feel that the wishes of consumers are not being considered by either the Minister of Health or the health protection branch, and that this bill is being passed arbitrarily without consulting the electorate.

The petitioners therefore call on Parliament and the parliamentary subcommittee to either drop the bill or to implement wording that would clearly protect the traditional use of classic herbs and the right of Canadians to the herbal remedies of their choice.

[Translation]

CREDIT CARDS

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have the honour of tabling a petition signed by about 40 residents of Trois-Pistoles, Pohénégamook and Dégelis, in my riding, who are asking Parliament to pass legislation that would impose a ceiling, based on the Bank of Canada rate, on the interest

rates applying to credit cards issued to consumers by banks and large retailers. In fact, this proposal has already led the banks to change their policies.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if Question No. 79 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 79—**Mr. Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean):**

Can the Minister of Human Resources Development give me a complete and up-to-date statement on Youth Service Canada including, for each province, (a) a description of the projects funded, (b) the names of the organizations concerned, (c) their addresses, (d) the amount of their grants and (e) the number of participants per project?

Return tabled.

[English]

Mr. Zed: Madam Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1525)

[English]

CANADA MARINE ACT

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (for Minister of Transport, Lib.) moved that Bill C-44, an act for making the system of Canadian ports competitive, efficient and commercially oriented, providing for the establishing of port authorities and the divesting of certain harbours and ports, for the commercialization of the St. Lawrence Seaway and ferry services and other matters related to maritime trade and transport and amending the Pilotage Act and amending and repealing other acts as a consequence, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, after two years and much work by many people, I have the privilege to speak to third reading of Bill C-44, the new Canada marine act.

This is important legislation for Canada's transportation system because it gives a new outlook and direction for many of our key marine institutions and facilities.

The core idea of the legislation is to make it easier for marine facilities of all sorts to operate according to business principles. That is why ports will have to work within market based decisions about when and how new investments will be made. That is why we will allow for the seaway to be managed under new commercial agreements. That is why we will ensure that pilotage authorities will have to achieve full cost recovery in their operations without any backstop through the public treasury.

The bill also takes important steps to make sure that key plans and decisions are taken much closer to the people who are most directly affected by the results, who include the users of the facilities, the adjacent communities and other interests.

That is why the nominations to port boards will have so much more local input. That is why ports will have a system of land use plans and substantial disclosure responsibilities regarding their operations. That is why the divestiture program for public ports is moving ahead so smoothly. That is why we have authority for Marine Atlantic to divest services where they can be local operators.

Even for a bill with all of these fine qualities, the standing committee was able to bring in a substantial number of improvements after listening to a wide range of comments from all parties concerned.

In his wisdom, the hon. member for Windsor West, our House leader, saw an opportunity to maximize the individual member's legislative authority here in the House. He moved quickly to transfer Bill C-44 to the Standing Committee on Transport so that members could engage their energies in the construction of legislation and improvements pursuant to testimony and consultation sought from and given by a broad and profound range of concerned citizens, both private and corporate.

Ordinary members from the Reform Party, the Bloc, the New Democratic Party and the government constructed Bill C-44. It is a members' bill. It is a good bill. I thank the hon. member for Windsor West and look forward to seeing more bills moved to committee from first reading. He would be proud to see that most members' initiatives appear in the bill without alteration, which is a testament to the diligence and insight of the committee.

The additional amendments made at report stage look like a lot of change. In reality, however, most of what we have done has been a fine tuning of two aspects of the new arrangements for port authorities.

At the standing committee it was requested that Transport Canada take a closer look at the treatment of subsidiaries under the

Government Orders

new arrangements for port authorities. This was done and a small group of amendments has been included to cover this area.

The government also took time to look carefully at what results would flow from the largest change introduced by the standing committee to give crown agent status to the new port authorities. Why was the amendment on agent status so important that all committee members supported it? There are several reasons.

The ports need to have more certainty that they will be protected from provincial and federal taxation.

With Bill C-44 we want to provide the right climate and conditions to allow the ports to operate more efficiently and, as a result, to be more competitive, especially with American ports which, as we all know, continue to receive substantial public subsidies.

Without agent status the ports would have to make either arrangements with municipalities for services or, if that is not acceptable to the municipalities, they could become subject to full taxation. Costly challenges for both ports and municipalities could be the result of this ambiguity.

● (1530)

Crown agent status gives port authorities a clear exemption from full property taxation and would enable them to be covered by the Municipal Grants Act. As such they will pay grants in lieu of taxes to those municipalities at the same levels as other federal facilities and installations around the country. This is the more acceptable option to both the ports and the municipalities as it provides certainty for both parties. For most of the ports that will become CPAs this represents a continuation of the status quo.

For the most part new obligations from agent status would come mainly to the federal government as principal and not to the agent. That is why we have amendments that clarify what restraints should exist for the agent. Part of this was to have agent status apply only to core responsibilities of the ports, not to other more peripheral or non-core activities which they might be able to undertake.

This is how we are able to protect the overall commercialization objective. We say in the new amendments that any borrowing by a port authority will not be done as a crown agent. That is consistent with the provision already in the bill that port debts could not be paid by the treasury and nor could loans be guaranteed.

Once this idea of a split was in place we also had to say how the split would be specified for all to see. Since the bill already contained the letters patent method for setting up the new port authorities, we only needed to clarify that this split would be set out in the letters patent. To make sure that outsiders would know when they are dealing with an agent, the amendments obliged the

Government Orders

port authority to make this declaration in all their non-agent dealings with third parties. Even before agent status was added we put measures into the bill to protect the crown from liabilities of the ports and to ensure that they are accountable.

Because of the new relationship created by agent status, we now have some additional points to deal with liability issues. Perhaps the most important accountability mechanism in the bill stems from the fact that the ports will have to raise their financing in the private sector. Port development aspirations will be subjected to assessments of commercial risk by commercial lenders.

The act would forbid the use of appropriations to make certain kinds of payments to port authorities or their wholly owned subsidiaries. This means they have to be more efficient than they are today and to a significant extent the government, the Canadian taxpayer, will not be on a hook for their liability.

Canada port authorities will have a high degree of transparency through rigorous disclosure to the public. Bill C-44 requires each port authority to provide public financing reports, public audits, a public land use plan, an annual general meeting open to the public at which directors and senior officers are available to answer any and all questions, complete disclosure of remuneration and expenses of board members and details of port operating expenses.

Ports are now covered under the Access to Information Act which further strengthens their accountability to all stakeholders. We have taken measures to ensure that ports must borrow in their own names and not in the name of the crown to emphasize to lenders that the crown does not stand behind these obligations.

In finishing its work before it reported the bill, the standing committee asked that an up to date schedule be placed at the end before it was put forward for second reading. This too has been done with the result that we are now looking at several additional ports.

I would be remiss to talk only about the future of port authorities under the bill. It has important features for public ports, the seaway, our pilotage authorities and the ferry services of Marine Atlantic Incorporated.

I will outline where we are in this bill regarding the seaway. I believe the key to the future viability of the seaway lies in achieving efficiencies, reducing costs and making the system more competitive. If the system has lower costs it can be viable at relatively low traffic levels. It is also well placed to attract additional traffic.

I am firmly of the view that commercialization of the seaway is the best way to achieve the efficiencies and cost savings which are vital to the future viability of the seaway system. Part III of the

Canada Marine Act enables the Minister of Transport to enter into agreements with a not for profit corporation to operate and maintain all or part of the seaway. Amendments made by the standing committee also allow for future operations to be transferred to any body that might be established through international agreement.

• (1535)

The St. Lawrence seaway authority is obliged to transfer at the direction of the minister any parts of its assets that are required for the new arrangement. The existing seaway authority would be dissolved at an appropriate date.

Any entity which has entered into an agreement with the minister to operate the seaway is obliged to have a high degree of transparency through annual public meetings and annual public financial statements. Special examinations of seaway operations and financial results will be carried at least once every five years.

The proposed legislation also prohibits unjust discrimination by the seaway operator that places any user of the seaway at a disadvantage. This ensures fair access to all users with no undue preference for those who take a role in the company that runs the seaway.

On July 15, 1996 the Minister of Transport signed a letter of intent with a group representing the major shippers and carriers on the seaway. The target is for these users to form a not for profit corporation to take on the operations of the seaway. The government would retain title to the seaway's fixed assets.

The goal of this commercialization is to give the operators strong incentives to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

We believe that the users group is best placed to take over the system, as users are highly motivated by a desire to minimize the seaway tolls they pay and to ensure the long term integrity of the system. The industries represented, particularly the steel industry in my hometown of Hamilton and the marine carriers, need the seaway for their long term survival. A deal with the users group would place the seaway well on the road the ongoing self sufficiency.

Let me assure all hon. members that I am confident of the future success of the seaway. It has been an essential component of our national transportation infrastructure in the past and we will do everything in our power to ensure that it remains as a revitalized national asset and becomes a more efficient and competitive link with our international trading partners.

We now have a balanced, well thought out piece of legislation, one that will move Canada's marine industries confidently into the new century. I urge all hon. members to support the amended bill.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak today at third reading of Bill C-44, which makes the system of Canadian ports competitive by rationalizing its administration, and affects a number of aspects of the Canadian maritime industry.

One might wonder initially why such a bill is necessary. I would like to reply with an anecdote. I settled in Gaspé in 1980. When I arrived there, I was amazed at the port infrastructure, its natural capacity and the fact that it was underutilized.

By that point, I was already a staunch sovereignist, but one more significant argument in favour of sovereignty was added when one after another of the local people explained to us that there had been a little bit of favouritism involved when the decision was made to give priority to Halifax, and that there had been no real investment in this port so it could continue to operate in future and contribute fully to the regional economy.

In fact, the only time the federal government wanted to make proper use of it was during the Second World War. They were only too pleased to make use of the port's natural basin to protect the Allied fleet from repeatedly being picked off by German submarines.

During that time, people in Canada became aware, not only in Gaspé but everywhere in Quebec and Canada, that one of the greatest failures of Canadian federalism is the management of Canada's ports. There has been, particularly in the past 30 years, a waning interest, a repeated absence of any efficient policy, because of a stubborn desire at all stages, at all points in all of these reforms, to keep control highly centralized and to avoid any decentralization.

I think that it is a good thing that the need for new legislation has been looked at, the need to establish new ground rules so that the system will be better defined and more efficient and make a greater contribution to the economic development of both Quebec and Canada.

• (1540)

Perhaps the Quebec sovereignists should take some of the blame; the whole area of transportation, which falls under federal jurisdiction, has long eluded us. Now we can see that we would really need to have full control over this area in order to be able to use it in support of the Quebec economy, and north-south development in particular.

True to our word, we have taken an active part in developing the best possible legislation in this Parliament, in spite of the fact that we believe the best solution for Quebec is to become sovereign. In terms of marine policy, we wanted to ensure as much as possible that the errors of the past were cast aside because the federal

jurisdiction in this area has always led to measures that were far from realistic.

Our port facilities were also seen as something of only local interest in the old days. For example, the river was ignored for many years because people had no idea of how important its development potential was, since those who owned it, that is to say the federal government, were not looking after it much, if at all, and the communities where the infrastructures were located did not feel responsible for them because they did not own them.

On both sides there were responsibilities that needed to be taken that were not because the fact that ports are identified as coming under federal jurisdiction in the Canadian Constitution no longer tallies with what maritime Canada is like today.

In addition, there was always the whole issue hint of patronage, which is still with us. Everyone in the Rivière-du-Loup area, in my riding, remembers all the campaigns where a great deal was made of the port of Cacouna. Before every election, the federal government would invariably decide to add something or at least promise to invest in the port of Cacouna. Sometimes the promise was kept in part, sometimes not at all.

One of the best examples of this is an excellent project, a \$50 million project, that had been developed toward the end of the Conservative government's mandate. In the end, \$3 million were allocated to widen the harbour entrance, which was one of the phases of the project. But two years after the announcement was made, and to this day, none of the other phases of the project have ever been implemented.

In this area as in many others in Canada, the problem is not with the plumbing but with the design. But, as long as we are part of Canada, we have to try to make the best possible legislation, and to make sure existing facilities are an asset, not a liability, for the economy.

The other important point regarding this legislation is that, in Canada, because the transportation sector is a shared jurisdiction, there is no integrated approach with the other transportation modes. The development of the marine, railway and highway sectors—the latter being a provincial jurisdiction—was always somewhat unstructured. There was no nationally integrated strategy in the transportation sector, and this is particularly obvious in the marine sector, as we will see in a moment.

There was also a need to do something about the fact that, in the past, port facilities in Canada were not subject to any performance standards.

Madam Speaker, I hope the hon. member is listening to my comments while she is talking, because it will make it easier for me.

Do we realize that, until now, the whole Canadian ports system was never really subject to any performance standards? Despite its very capable personnel, Transport Canada has no precise idea of the revenues and expenditures of each port facility. This says

Government Orders

something about the number of decisions made in the past that were not based on economic reality, on a solid development foundation, and we were able to see that when we travelled across the country.

The problem is this lack of obligation to perform, this somewhat old-fashioned tradition of associating ports with patronage. Indeed, let us not forget that, to this day—and, as I will mention later, the current bill does not really change the situation—the government can appoint a new harbour master right after an election; it can replace the person who has been holding that position for seven or eight years and start all over with a new incumbent. This is not to say the new harbour master is not competent, but it creates operational problems, as we experienced in Cacoua, for example. A very competent person had been appointed under the same process, several years earlier. That person knew the port and the captains who used it and was able to negotiate with them and with the longshoremen so that operations could be optimized.

• (1545)

Then, overnight, after the election, the Liberal government decided to put in somebody else, but it had nothing to do with this person's competence. They were perfectly competent. Someone else was appointed who is also competent, but who has had to go through the whole learning process.

So we can see the sort of situation that existed in the marine sector, the patronage side. Here as well there were important things to change.

The bill's approach to rectifying matters is to say that management must be rationalized. The best way to rationalize the management of Canada's ports is to transfer jurisdiction to the provinces. That is obviously the simplest solution, but with the Canadian Constitution, simple solutions do not often work.

So since the federal government is avoiding trying to change the Canadian Constitution because there is no viable amending formula that would not cause a major upheaval, it decided to come up with a bill that would allow commercialization, that would give greater responsibility for port facilities to the communities, without changing the responsibility provided for in the Constitution, which could, in the long term, still create problems. But an effort has been made in the bill to solve matters in this way, and we will look at what it says.

It is a very big undertaking, because the bill looks at the way in which Canada's national ports, such as Halifax, Montreal, Quebec City and Sept-Îles, as well as large ports like Trois-Rivières and those on the Saguenay, in addition to all regional ports, will be dealt with in the future.

When we looked into it, we found that 80 per cent of the activity in Canadian ports took place in 15 to 20 per cent of the ports. This could lead one to conclude that a number of facilities are seriously underutilized, but still generating operating costs that we can no longer really pay for as a society because we no longer have the means.

As the parliamentary secretary pointed out, this bill also raises the whole issue of the St. Lawrence Seaway. We will come back to that later, but there were many questions on what was the best choice for the future of the St. Lawrence Seaway, ranging from total privatization to the formation of a binational structure involving both the U.S. and Canada, with all manner of joint formulas thrown in for good measure. And I am not sure that we have found the ideal formula; we will look at it in a few minutes.

There is also another important element in this bill, the Pilotage Act. The study wanted to find out whether piloting in Canada was working properly, whether safety was being properly ensured, and whether it was competitive. You can see that there are two different aspects which are hard to balance out. On the one hand, you have the industry requirements; it wants to be competitive, able to offer a distribution system on the world market, a maritime circuit that is economically advantageous for those shipping by sea. On the other hand, there is a seaway, the entire St. Lawrence system, which is not easily navigable and has been made safe by the services of St. Lawrence pilots for hundreds of years.

In Quebec there is a very important tradition, one peculiar to the St. Lawrence, that piloting is virtually always done in French. This is important. A pilot on a ship needs to be able to communicate with other vessels, sometimes recreational and sometimes commercial, with all manner of vessels. Generally, the people on these vessels speak the language of the country, which means French, if along the St. Lawrence.

There has been a battle going on for some years now, as attempts have been made to restrict the protection of the French language for the pilots along the St. Lawrence, while at the same time trying to take away some of the advantages that have been earned by these pilots through having developed skills to ensure safe navigation of the river, in order to save some money.

• (1550)

But we have to determine what safety depends on. I think that in this respect, the work done by the Bloc Québécois in committee saved the day, and I will get back to this later on when we discuss the various amendments submitted during consideration in committee.

A lot of work was done on this bill, as the parliamentary secretary pointed out. The Keyes report, a report by the Standing Committee on Transport, did an overview of the situation, which

led to Bill C-44 in its initial form. At this stage, the ports were very independent. There was practically no Canadian system.

Today, I understand why the bill was amended. It was for the same reasons mentioned by people we met when the committee travelled across Canada. In Bill C-44, to show people what it would be like, structures like the ADM or Aéroports de Montréal were set up; in other words, there was a transfer of full responsibility for an economic sector depending on marine transportation, but without any government supervision.

This would have led to impossible situations in a few years' time. Institutions or companies that were responsible for the ports might have had objectives widely differing from those of the Quebec government or the Canadian government, and this would have been quite unacceptable. In fact, people kept telling us this as the committee travelled across Canada, and fortunately, their comments were heard. Amendments were proposed which remedied the situation to some extent.

Another aspect of the initial bill was that the future of the St. Lawrence Seaway was somewhat hazy. What the government had decided to do was not necessarily feasible and was in fact pretty risky. There was some discussion of this aspect, but I believe there has not been enough.

I referred to the pilotage situation earlier in my speech, and I want to get back to this. What happened in this respect is very interesting. Throughout consideration in committee, hardly any questions were raised. The bill restored the status quo, which satisfied the pilots' associations who saw this as a way to provide adequate safety levels on Canada's waterways.

In the initial bill, there was no problem on that score. However, the committee received a draft amendment—I do not know what lobby it came from or whether it was because of the way Canadian political parties are financed—that would take away from these pilots many of the resources they need to maintain adequate safety levels on the St. Lawrence.

The language of work on the St. Lawrence again became an issue, and some shipowners' associations that wanted to improve productivity had submitted a proposal and managed to put it on the table, although there had been no prior discussion in committee.

I met people on both sides a few weeks before, and the pilots said that Bill C-44 was excellent as far as the Pilotage Act was concerned. However, that evening when the amendment reached the committee from an unknown source, as I said earlier, the pilots panicked and asked us to do something. They said something was not working and wondered how it was that the government arrived at such an amendment, which bore no resemblance whatsoever to their submission or to their wishes. They said, for example, that the government wanted to impose the method of pilot selection and

Government Orders

decide which captains could become pilots. This process does not work they way they would like, and they would like it changed.

When they saw the amendment, the pilots called on the Bloc Québécois. The members of the Reform Party said this morning that they thought the Bloc was engaging in systematic obstruction. That is not so. The Bloc is not engaging in systematic obstruction. It is raising arguments in committee until it can convince people of the relevance of its arguments. That is what we tried to do.

● (1555)

We convinced the Liberal majority, because, when the committee report was tabled, we had the Liberals' agreement to withdraw this amendment and their changes to the rules of the game. I consider this a major victory for safety in Canada's shipping industry.

The initial bill contained the whole issue of regional ports in Quebec, like those in Baie-Comeau, Cacouna, Rimouski and Gaspé, and other medium sized ports throughout Canada, which are not identified as Canadian port authorities and which serve different functions.

These include ports with ferry docks and commercial ports. Initially, the bill concerned all ports indiscriminately and provided for their transfer to regional or provincial authorities, but without specific rules or concepts.

Through consultation and amendments in committee, we managed to establish a distinction between the concept of ferry port and that of commercial port. It is important to know that a ferry port has little revenue. It is essentially a road link. Cars are permitted to board a vessel in order to cross a waterway.

However, the income for the dock itself is not so important. What counts is the economic benefits. We have shown this to be the case in the Rivière-du-Loup region. A study, commissioned by the economic development corporations of Rivière-du-Loup and Saint-Siméon, showed that the operation of this ferry generated \$25 million per year in economic spinoffs, including \$3.5 million or \$4 million in tax revenue for each of the governments.

This is one argument used to convince the federal authorities that any subsidy given at the provincial level, for instance, to keep the ferry in operation nine months per year instead of only four or five months is money well spent because economic activity boosts government revenues. It would therefore not be in the Quebec government's interest to do away with this subsidy.

As far as the federal government is concerned, the repair costs, for the wharf in Rivière-du-Loup for example, may seem to be a throwback to the old days when governments handed out money to local communities. But that is not at all the case. The truth of the matter is that, if and when it finally agrees to divesting, the federal government will actually be helping increase its future tax reve-

Government Orders

nues because, with a decent port infrastructure, the ferry will go on bringing in nearly \$4 million in tax revenue every year.

At this rate, even if the federal government invested \$15 million or \$20 million in a port facility with a 30 year life cycle, within five years, this investment would be recovered, which is certainly worthwhile.

This is another aspect of Bill C-44, which required careful consideration and a great deal of work. Our consultations took us on a tour that proved to be very instructive, as it made us realize how diverse our maritimes structures are in Canada.

These consultations came about as a result of the report to which I referred earlier, and to which the hon. member for Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, made a very significant contribution, and the minority report which, among other things, sought to protect pilots. In this regard, we found, as I said earlier, a wide variety of port facilities in the country, and we heard a lot from port authorities. Port authorities are entities which are strangely similar to what the Canada port authorities will be under the new act, but they enjoy more leeway than will be provided in the act.

The directors of these port authorities told us: “Before granting private status to large Canadian ports under Bill C-44, take a look at how we operate, because we currently enjoy greater autonomy than is provided under the act”. We took their arguments into account and made sure that the port authority will have a structure closer to what it should be, even though we did not agree with all the arguments put forward by these stakeholders.

• (1600)

Before abolishing existing port authorities, the federal government should look at all the implications, so as to make the best possible decision. There are situations where it would be preferable to maintain port authority status, and thus protect the economic life of a region, through the best possible economic development tool.

During these consultations, the national ports made an attempt to be recognized as a federal agency. Let us be clear: in its original form, Bill C-44 gave a great deal of autonomy to ports, as I mentioned earlier, but without providing the guarantee enjoyed by a federal agency.

Such a remark might seem astonishing coming from a sovereignist, but our analysis shows that, if Quebec attains sovereignty in two or three years, it will be very important when federal statutes become Quebec statutes during the transition period that our national ports enjoy the status of national ports when they turn to

outside markets for loans or business. As long as we are part of Canada, I think it important that these ports enjoy this status.

This is why, from the beginning, we supported national ports seeking a change in their status. The round of consultations also made us aware of the situation faced by remote ports.

Ports that are unable to keep up with the rules of market competition are unable to meet market objectives and requirements. We saw this in the far north. We saw it in northern Manitoba. I think the federal government should look at the possibility of giving this status to ports in the Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

The member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine made absolutely no representations in this regard but, as usual, he is rather out of touch with the concerns of the people of Îles-de-la-Madeleine. Having spent three years trying to deliver on a still unfulfilled promise regarding the purchase of a ferry, he has not had time to look into the status of the port at Cap-aux-Meules. I think the federal government could do something about this error during the coming weeks and months, in the list of remote ports, and see how this could be accomplished.

Other important matters were studied, including intermodality. In the transportation sector, where at least two levels of government are regularly involved, it has been very difficult to establish intermodal systems. Basically, intermodal means that what comes off a ship in Cacouna can be put on the train in a piggy back, and when the train reaches New York, Toronto or Boston, the freight can be shipped the rest of the way by truck.

This kind of interaction between transportation modes does not work under the Canadian system, where the federal government and the provincial government are both anxious to protect their jurisdictions and keep their budgets strictly separate.

A provincial government can take action with respect to highway transportation. In Quebec, since the federal government has divested itself of its responsibility for railway transportation, our highways are overloaded, due to the fact that the railway network has been under-utilized. And consider our waterways. Imagine how we could maximize our use of the St. Lawrence River.

The advent of free trade has made Quebecers very aware of this, and the same applies to Ontarians. Today, we have networks that are better integrated. For instance, the port of Montreal is connected with Canadian Pacific, the two St. Lawrence-Hudson railway lines which connect Montreal with the markets of Detroit and Chicago and also provide a connection with New England. There is a future in this sort of thing, but we were late off the mark. We have some catching up to do. Under the present system, until both governments have responsibilities that are distinct, I think it will be very difficult to get satisfactory results.

Government Orders

There is also the whole aspect of policing our ports. In this respect, the federal government is acting like a creature of habit. It failed to include the provinces in its planning, so that today, and particularly in Quebec, there is no attempt to co-ordinate police services in the ports to ensure that there is agreement on terms of reference and responsibilities. This is one of the aspects that remains to be resolved, and which is not dealt with satisfactorily in this bill.

• (1605)

The important work in committee went well. As far as pilotage is concerned, we got through the Liberals' box of amendment surprises all right. Where it came from nobody knows, but I would guess it was from the party's election fund, because of the longstanding dispute between the pilots and the shipowners. In fact, it was the pilots against the shipowners through the regional administrations. One problem has not been solved. It was, however, a good defensive fight.

However, safety on the St. Lawrence was not questioned. And the bill contained no clauses that would have been regretted two, three or five years down the road after a major shipping accident as can happen on the St. Lawrence. In addition to rowboats, there are oil tankers and ore carriers on the river. There is a lot of shipping that could have a major effect on the environment, in the event of an accident. It would have been a big mistake to amend things too quickly, under pressure and at the risk of safety. The pilots who spoke to me about it described the situation as it stands. The status quo is far more preferable to what was in the amendment.

Is there a happy medium? Perhaps. There should be one. We should have taken the time before passing the bill at third reading to look into the issue more, to resolve the problem and to record it correctly in the legislation. Formulas are provided in the bill. That means another battle in the coming weeks, months or years, but we must not sacrifice safety.

The ultimate solution must provide a level of safety that is watertight and avoid our regretting in five, ten or twenty years passing measures that put the future of the St. Lawrence at risk, such as in the case of the future Saguenay-St. Lawrence marine park, probably the most popular in the world, which will be established under federal and provincial legislation that we hope will be passed very soon. Unfortunately, it will be after the upcoming election, probably.

It would be totally absurd for the Canadian government put money into developing the park while, in failing to pass adequate safety regulations, ending up contributing to a marine disaster that would irretrievably damage the park. In this respect, there have accidents worldwide, which speak for themselves and are worthy of closer consideration.

In committee, the Bloc Québécois obtained not only that major ports be granted federal agency status for the purpose of appointing the boards of directors, but also that only individuals who have relevant knowledge in the field be appointed. The minister will still have some leeway. Perhaps some aspects of the bill should have been made tighter, more airtight. It is not totally satisfactory, but it is a step in the right direction. There is still a way to go, but we will now be able to judge the current minister and his successors on the consequences of their actions.

Aside from the point about the pilots, the finest victory the Bloc Québécois has won in this struggle in committee was having the ports of the Saguenay and Trois-Rivières recognized as Canadian port authorities, or CPAs. Had it not been for the pressure brought to bear by the hon. member for Trois-Rivières, who incidentally nagged me day in and day out to have the port of Trois-Rivières included in the bill, it would probably not have been included.

If members recall the statements made on air by the Prime Minister to a certain radio station in the Mauricie region, he himself was not too clear about what a Canadian port authority and a local port authority were. But the hon. member for Trois-Rivières was, and he made representations. We moved an amendment in this respect, which the government approved after hearing our supporting arguments.

In the case of the port of Saguenay, I remember more dramatic events, since it was the late hon. member for Jonquière who made representations. I remember meeting the administrator of the port of Saguenay, in Quebec City. She showed us very clearly that, even if the port of Saguenay is smaller than those in the rest of the country that come under the responsibility of Canadian port authorities, it still met all the criteria and should therefore get the same status.

• (1610)

So, the fact that two Quebec ports now come under the responsibility of Canadian port authorities, which was not the case under the original list, is a victory for the Bloc Québécois.

As regards divesting of regional wharfs, we asked time and again that the conditions of such divesting be included in the act, and that the \$125 million fund provided for these facilities be increased, so as to be sure that they can enjoy all the necessary benefits as quickly as possible.

We also scored a victory since an amendment was moved by a member from Newfoundland providing that services will be maintained until there is divesting, when a ferry service is provided at that facility. Under that amendment, if the province decides to maintain a ferry service, for example between Saint-Juste-du-Lac

Government Orders

and Notre-Dame-du-Lac, in the region of Témiscouata—located in the future riding I hope to represent in the next Parliament—the federal government is committed to not ending the service at these two facilities, as long as the province or local authority continues to provide a ferry service. This significant gain was the result of our representations and those of others.

Let us look at concrete examples of divesting. In my riding, there are at least four cases. There is a ferry wharf in Rivière-du-Loup. Earlier, I showed that renovating the port facility is a significant and appropriate investment for the federal government. I think this should be done in the next few years, at the same time as divesting is perhaps being carried out through the Government of Quebec. Trois-Pistoles also has a ferry.

Until now, it has been possible to patch up the wharf from election to election. Fortunately, there are referendums from time to time that help matters. It is grass roots politics in action, but some local authorities made some good connections and the result was that, by chance, they were able to obtain a nice little bonus, something like \$500,000 before the last referendum campaign. I think people were really pleased, because it is prolonging the life of the wharf. However, this approach is not necessarily feasible in the medium term. A way must be found of ensuring that facilities are developed without having to rely on the vagaries of political patronage.

There are other situations, such as the one at Cacouna. This is a port that is economically very attractive. It is making money and the community is prepared to take it over. It was mentioned by the minister, along with the port at Baie-Comeau, as a facility that the community had already expressed an interest in buying. This, by the way, is something I am proud of because, from the beginning, I passed on the information to all people in the area interested in ensuring the development of this port.

For many years now, even before my election to office, people have been saying that the port of Cacouna should have an independent marketing plan so as to be able to compete with other ports on the market, and that is how divesting came to be considered. If it could be taken over by the community under interesting conditions, it would also be possible to have a marketing plan that would allow this port to show, among other things, the advantage it has in its longshoremen. The longshoremen are highly competent and productive, and do not go around seeing problems where there are none. Since the beginning of the year, there has been a very significant increase in port use, which I find very interesting.

Personally, what I see as the most significant and most satisfying contribution is the Bloc Québécois amendment adopted yesterday at the report stage, aimed at altering the very objective of this bill. In the original text, the objective is stated as to “implement a

National Marine Policy that provides Canada with the marine infrastructure that it needs and that will promote and safeguard Canada’s competitiveness and trade objectives”.

I have had an amendment added, which received majority support, which now indicates that competitiveness is not the only concern, but that it must also be an effective tool for the achievement of local, regional and national social and economic objectives. Thus, every time the federal government decides the future of a port, if it respects the spirit of its legislation it will have to take into account what the economic and social impact of closing the facility will be.

● (1615)

In the coming years, we will judge the government on its compliance with this amendment. I am particularly happy that we managed to convince the government to accept it so that, even without a constitutional amendment I consider necessary, the legislation would at least improve the present situation. We will be able to assess the effectiveness of the current government in the coming years.

One problem that was not adequately addressed in the policy is its integration into the Quebec economy. The St. Lawrence is not seen as the asset it should be. The future of the St. Lawrence Seaway is not properly defined.

The link between rail transportation and trucking is not sufficiently clear. It is an economic tool that has long been and will continue to be underutilized without further amendment. Canada’s marine policy is also an economic tool that has a major impact in the regions, whether at Cacouna, Baie-Comeau, Sept-Îles, Gaspé or Cap-aux-Meules—all examples I gave initially.

Here are the reasons we will oppose this bill. First, in terms of management of harbour police, no agreement was reached with the provinces. In the problem with pilotage, safety comes first and foremost, and the Liberals’ amendments must be rejected. Follow-up in the future must be ensured. We could today even have gone further and come up with a real solution, but at least we took a defensive stance protecting the safety of our waterways.

In the bill, the issue of the St. Lawrence Seaway is not addressed clearly enough. It is not made clear enough whether it will be privatized or become a binational corporation.

How transparent will the divesting be? Would it not have been possible to include in the legislation some rules and procedures to ensure the process is free from the vagaries of politics, based on clear and specific economic choices and more sensitive to Quebec’s economic strategy? This would have required clarification of the cost recovery issue. For instance, will icebreaking costs ruin operations that people have taken over?

Government Orders

There are also concerns about encountering the same kind of difficulties encountered with airports. Nowhere in this bill is a vision regarding intermodal transportation expressed, and no tools are provided to deal with north-south demands in our trade relations with the U.S. I think this developing market have been overlooked in the bill. Finally, one last concern: they did not budge on the issue of casinos on cruise ships.

For all these reasons, while the bill is the result of a very meaningful and dynamic consultation process, there is still much that remains to be improved on. The government should have allowed time to go into more detail and resolve the problems. This way, the bill would have been truly satisfactory in addressing the needs of Canada's marine infrastructure as an economic tool that will have an impact not only tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, but also 10, 15 or 20 years down the road. For all these reasons, the Bloc Quebecois will vote against the bill at third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Ringuette-Maltais): Pursuant to Standing Order 38, it is my duty to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Davenport—transportation; the hon. member for Samia—Lambton—health.

[English]

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to add the Reform Party's contribution to the debate on Bill C-44. It is a wide ranging government bill that has a number of purposes: first, to streamline, consolidate and modernize the marine regulatory regime; second, to make Canadian ports more competitive, efficient and commercially oriented; third, to dismantle the bureaucratic and discredited Canada Ports Corporation resulting in the establishment of autonomous port authorities and the divestiture or closure of certain harbours and ports due to inefficiency and/or redundancy; fourth, to dismantle the ports police division of Canada Ports Corporation, shifting this responsibility to local and regional police forces; fifth, to commercialize the St. Lawrence Seaway through a joint venture with the U.S. seaway authorities; sixth, to commercialize various government ferry services and other infrastructure relating to maritime trade and transportation, including numerous Marine Atlantic operations; finally, seventh, to amend the federal Pilotage Act and amend and repeal other acts as a result in order to improve the cost effectiveness, efficiency and self-sufficiency of national pilotage services.

• (1620)

The Reform Party supports the general intent of Bill C-44. We believe that the independently run port authority concept strikes a good balance between the operation of ports as crown corporations or as purely private sector interests.

Marine user groups, port managers and chambers of commerce in the Pacific, Atlantic and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence regions of the country have all voiced their support for our party's stand on this issue. Reform is reasonably satisfied with the contents of Bill C-44 following the passage of various amendments by the Standing Committee on Transport. However, the bill remains imperfect and will continue to point out its ongoing shortcomings, as I will here at the third reading stage of the bill.

During the past summer the Reform's transport critic, the member for Kootenay West—Revelstoke, studied Bill C-44 and made notes on various concerns. He went on the road to discuss the bill with a wide range of marine stakeholders. Virtually every group consulted expressed similar or identical concerns, including the following.

Bill C-44 abolishes the Canada Ports Corporation which of course hires the Canada ports police and transfers these policing responsibilities over to the municipal police forces. At the request of many concerned city councils, Reform proposed an amendment allowing municipalities to be compensated for any extraordinary policing costs beyond the community norm, with the exact figures to be determined by the Canada Transportation Agency, which come about as a result of this transfer. The government refused to support this amendment.

Bill C-44 allows the federal government to levy an annual fee or stipend against each port authority as payment for certain services provided to the ports by Ottawa. Although Reform does not object to the concept of a fee per se, we strongly object to its calculation on the basis of ports gross revenues pre-tax, as such a policy could drive ports with low operating margins into the red. We believe any fees should be levied on net revenues post-tax, after tax, conforming to the standard accounting practices which should be enforced to ensure that ports cannot hide or wipe out profits that actually exist on their books.

That reminds me of Gracie Allen, of Burns and Allen. She had a way of figuring out taxes and the complicated tax nature of even the American system. She said: "If you end up owing \$5,000 to the government when you file your return, file it to show that you owe \$10,000. That means you have a \$5,000 overpayment and the government owes you \$5,000. If you owe the government \$5,000 and it owes you \$5,000, you are even and that is your tax return". I see a member opposite trying to figure that out and does it make any sense. I was trying to advise people on how to show the government that if you owe it \$5,000, actually it owes you \$5,000 and therefore you are even and so do not send money. I do not think Revenue Canada will like that.

Ms. Fry: A Reform calculation.

Mr. Silye: That is a joke. Did you miss that?

Government Orders

An hon. member: No.

Mr. Silye: I will do it again. If you owe the government \$5,000, fill in your return showing you owe it \$10,000, then you have an overpayment. You tell the government it owes you \$5,000, you owe the government \$5,000 and now you are even.

An hon. member: Simple.

Mr. Silye: Madam Speaker, back to the matter at hand.

Bill C-44 provides ports with federal agency status, allowing them to continue paying municipalities grants in lieu of property taxes after becoming independent port authorities. The result of this is stable taxation for ports that may suffer a difficult adjustment period as unsubsidized entities. However, harbour commissions which were paying no fees, grants or taxes before the passage of Bill C-44 will overnight be forced to pay grants to municipalities at the same rate as existing ports.

Reform put forward an amendment that would have allowed harbour commissions a five-year tax phase-in period as a financial buffer similar to that provided to the ports. The government shot down this proposal despite the fact that the parliamentary secretary is from the Hamilton area.

Bill C-44 stipulates that in determining the membership of a port authority's board of directors, one director shall be directly appointed by concerned municipalities, one by the province and one by the federal government, with the balance to be appointed by Ottawa in consultation with port users.

• (1625)

The minister has stated his intention to appoint user representatives from a list of candidates provided by those users. However, and this is subject to interpretation, but technically Bill C-44 does not oblige him to do so.

Reform simply wishes to ensure that the minister eliminates the possibility of undue patronage by agreeing to place in the bill, on paper, in writing what he has already stated before the transport committee which is his support for the list concept as advocated by user groups.

Bill C-44 in its current form does not provide for a dispute settlement mechanism for shipper fee charges similar to that contained in Bill C-101 or Bill C-14. Reform would like to see such a mechanism included in the final version of Bill C-44.

I have evaluated all the aspects of this 90-page bill. If there is a dispute it will be very difficult for somebody to come up with a resolution. Things could be tied up in the courts for a very long time.

On behalf of our transport critic who is in his constituency today, I have agreed to submit some of his personal comments and opinions on the bill, which of course I share as a Reform Party member. He tells a little bit of a different story than the parliamentary secretary to the transport minister told in his third reading intervention. The hon. member indicated that he really appreciated how so many people had spent two years and much work was done by many people to provide basically what he called a member's bill. We all know the dangers of writing laws by committee and allowing everybody to have a say on every bill. I am concerned that perhaps when there are some disputes it may not be as effective as it should be in solving those disputes.

Our transport critic believes that Bill C-44 is essentially good legislation. It has the general support of all affected groups in the transportation industry. When the bill was sent to the Standing Committee on Transport it was not with the intention of deciding if it was acceptable or should be rejected. The intention was to listen to those involved, that is, witnesses from the marine sector. These included port authorities, shippers, port tenants, municipal and provincial officials and others affected by this legislation.

In preparation for these hearings, the Department of Transport was to prepare a briefing book which would explain the impact and rationale of the legislation. Although the bill was sent to the committee before the spring recess in 1996, no briefing manual was provided over the entire duration of the summer. On return to Parliament that fall our transport critic asked what the delay was and when the document would be supplied. We were told that the briefing document was completed and had been sent out to all members, including the Reform transport critic. Obviously it had not. Only after several complaints to the committee was the document in question finally delivered.

The committee then proceeded with hearings across Canada and in Ottawa. As a result of the testimony of witnesses, many amendments were offered by all parties who are members of the committee. Some were passed, some were withdrawn and some were rejected. Among those which were withdrawn were four government amendments that were supportable in the opinion of our transport critic. They dealt with changes to the Pilotage Act which would have permitted lower costs for Canadian operators in the St. Lawrence seaway.

The Bloc Quebecois, for purely political purposes, staged a filibuster at committee to force the government to withdraw these amendments. The government did back down and withdrew four amendments which were designed to aid the control of cost of shipping in the St. Lawrence. The government members of the committee rationalized this as necessary to move the bill along quickly and suggested they would be able to reintroduce them at report stage.

The first part of their rationalization soon disappeared when the bill completed clause by clause examination and passed from the committee.

Government Orders

• (1630)

Over four months have gone by without the government bringing the bill to the House. What was the rush? Was it nothing more than a ploy to allow the Liberals to claim they had attempted to bring those amendments in but were unable to do so because of the opposition parties?

The second part of the government's rationalization also disappeared when it did not reintroduce its amendments at report stage in the House. In doing so the government was once again deceitful in its tactics. Reform was awaiting the submission of government report stage amendments to confirm that it was in fact reintroducing the four amendments dropped at committee in support of Bloc Quebecois tactics. We were told that the amendments were printed and that a copy had been sent to us. It had not been.

We complained and apologies were offered. We were told that a copy would be sent immediately. It was not. It was only when the Reform transport critic sought out the information from a bureaucrat that a copy was finally delivered on the afternoon of April 7. Lo and behold there were no amendments from the government.

As the hour was late and we had expected the government to bring Bill C-44 to the House on April 9, we had to scramble to table the missing amendments. It was not until the next day that we discovered that three of them had been tabled not by the government but by a government member acting on his own. It is nice to see there is some integrity left in its caucus, even if it only one or two members.

There were other controversial amendments. These were the amendments made by Reform in response to the testimony heard before the committee and in an effort to do exactly what the committee's intention was supposed to be: make the bill better.

One of the amendments involved the policing of the ports. Ports operating under the umbrella of the Canadian Ports Authority were policed by the Canada Ports Corporation Police. The bill will bring an end to the existence of the Canada Ports Corporation and none too soon. It was an absolute waste of money. However, with the end of the Canada Ports Corporation also came the end of the Canada ports police.

In typical Liberal fashion the government and government members on the committee gave no thought to the ramifications of the removal of the ports police. "Let the municipalities look after it" was their cry in committee.

Various cities and municipalities should look after basic policing, but the taxpayers of those communities should not be stuck with taxes for any additional policing that the ports may require.

The Reform amendment did not tie the hands of the government. It did not place any extraordinary costs on the ports. It had the support of most of the interveners who came before the committee.

In addition to the testimony heard at committee, the Reform transport critic met separately with members of various councils. Their position was that if they had to look after policing they were prepared to do so as long as they did not have to impose costs on the taxpayers of their communities for extraordinary policing requirements. That is what the Reform motion was all about.

It was a very simple and straightforward amendment but it was turned down by the Liberal majority. It would be bad enough if the government simply disagreed with the Reform amendment. As it turned out it would appear the government agreed but simply did not want it on record that it was Reform that recognized and corrected this deficiency in the bill.

For four months the bill sat with no action while the government tried to resolve the problems in other ways. In the end it did but it ended up doing exactly what the Reform motion would have done without all the costs and delays we have been subjected to by the Liberal government.

Another amendment that was treated in the same way involved the payment of municipal taxes by ports. At the current time ports under the Canada Ports Corporation pay full grants in lieu of taxes. Ports operating under the Harbour Commissions Act were not required to pay local taxes. However many negotiated some form of payment for services to local government.

The new legislation will establish many of the ports previously operating under the Harbour Commissions Act as Canadian port authorities. As such they will be required to pay full grants in lieu of taxes. The Reform Party has no problem with the payment of these taxes but there should be a phasing in period.

The Reform amendment provided for a five-year phasing in period. Ports which were already paying full grants in lieu of taxes would continue to do so. Ports which were not required to pay these grants would pay no less than what they have already been paying. No city or municipality would have received less than they had already been getting.

• (1635)

At the same time the phasing in period would have allowed time for the ports to prepare for the previously unbudgeted impact of these payments. The Liberals rejected this sensible amendment out of hand.

Once again it appears the government actually agreed with Reform but did not want to admit that it was Reform that had

Government Orders

identified and corrected this deficiency in the bill. Through closed door negotiations the government went about trying to do exactly what the Reform motion would have achieved so that it could take credit for correcting a mistake of its own making. This time it failed. As a result many small ports which will become Canadian port authorities under the legislation will be placed in financial risk. What a way to start a new program.

One amendment the government brought in that should be commented on is the one to continue the current status of Hamilton as a harbour commission. This was done for purely partisan political purposes by Liberal members from Hamilton. It is a betrayal of the committee's and the government's commitment to Hamilton Harbour Commission tenants and shippers. It is simply one more example of how the government looks after itself, no matter the cost to Canadian taxpayers.

There is some good in the bill. In fact there is quite a bit of good in it. However the objective of the committee, which was to examine the bill and with the input of concerned parties make it as good as possible, has not been met. The issues were clear. The solutions were clear but the Liberal government has failed miserably. It has failed not because of marine philosophy but because of political gamesmanship. It should not take pride in whatever accomplishments the bill might present. It should be ashamed of failing to provide what it could have been.

I did not sit in on the committee hearings, but our transport critic shared his information with me and has asked me to make an intervention on his behalf. When people are asked for input to help design a bill by consensus and by using the best ideas, why would members of the standing committee wish to play partisan games? Why ignore the ports police and put them out of work? Why ignore a period of adjustment? Often government members say that a phase in period is needed yet they did not allow one here.

Some of them were common sense amendments and common sense suggestions but the government refused to take them. As a member of Parliament I sat here last night voting on the 125 amendments to the bill. Could there not have been an initial draft by a cabinet minister and the Department of Transport for which I have a lot of respect? The department has done one heck of a good job during the 3.5 years of Liberal government. I will give it full marks for how it has run things. In this one area it came up with a marines port bill. Could there not have been a rough draft rather than 125 amendments? We sat here last night voting on 65 different votes on the 125 amendments.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Silye: I just heard an intervention by a Liberal member. Are the Liberals listening while I am making this point? My point is the exact opposite. They are not listening. They ignored two or three

common sense suggestions which would improve the bill. They are playing political partisanship games, hoping to come up with a bill and take all the credit for it after asking all stakeholders to participate. The parliamentary secretary thanked everyone who participated, even members of the opposition.

In the legislation I see danger down the road. There is no comprehensive dispute settlement mechanism. That is the same thing that is wrong with NAFTA. The government seems to shy away from making things simple and clear in the future. It wants to continue to confuse matters so that people have to hire lawyers to settle their problems.

• (1640)

This is a sign of an incompetent minister who does not take the time to review the bill before it is sent off to committee for debate where many amendments have to be made to make it better. It is the same as what the Minister of Justice did lately by trying to tag on to the Reform notion of victims rights. He tried to claim it as his own and tried to take credit for it. Lately he has been saying that he has made amendments to section 745 to make things better for citizens but has failed to address the real problem.

The last two justice bills we have debated were just admissions of failure. The Minister of Justice should be trained to read every clause and go through it clause by clause. When people are trained as lawyers they become much better at it than individuals like myself who are businessmen. We rely on lawyers to do this for us. We rely on them to look at.

There was supposed to be an immediate impact statement but in comes another bill that defers the impact statement to the year 2012. It is the same individual and the same department. That is incompetence.

I am not talking about the quality or the intent of the bill. Its intent is good but the quality of work comes under criticism which I am trying to do in a constructive fashion. We waste everybody's time when we play political partisanship, when we do not listen to the people we asked for input, and when we come up with garbage that has to be rewritten five different ways.

I am not talking about dotting an *i* or crossing a *t*. I am talking about common sense amendments which should be obvious. If they want a bill that states immediate impact statements should be allowed, why do they put in an amendment that states they are not allowed until the year 2012? What is the message being sent? If they make an amendment respecting the ports police that will put people out of work, some consideration should be given to them and they are ignored. That is not competent work.

With all the amendments put forward a better job of debating them could have been done in committee. It did not need to come back to the House. I do not think many MPs knew what they were voting on in all the votes we took. I sat here and relied on our critic

Government Orders

or others who had looked into the matter on my behalf to say that it fit with our party policy and is something we can support.

That is a disservice to the members of the House. We do not have the time to listen to stuff like this coming back from committees with 65 amendments and try to get our heads around them. We are making it harder for MPs to do their job better.

The Liberals presented the bill. During debate and in the intervention of the parliamentary secretary for the transport minister, the member from Hamilton indicated that he liked the port authority and the way a crown corporation could be co-ordinated with the private sector because, he said, "taxpayers will not be on the hook". I agree with that intent. I fully endorse that objective.

Let us look at the Department of Transport. Did it apply the same philosophy when it looked at Pearson airport and cancelled the contract? That can be called an airport authority. We are moving toward airport authorities. There is an airport authority there now. We set up a marine port authority. We now have an airport authority that will have directors. It will be not for profit. It will reinvest money and improve things there.

Was the department's decision on Pearson done with the idea that taxpayers would not be on the hook? That is what was said at first and a lot of taxpayers believed it. In fact a lot of people voted for the government because they felt privatization of the airport would lead to huge profits for the private sector.

I did not have a clue. I would not have known whether or not that was true. Somebody seemed to know. The current Prime Minister was in opposition then. He must have had some information when he said private developers were greedy sons-of-guns that would sock it to us and charge us hundreds of millions of dollars. Therefore he could not let the deal go through. What happened? It was cancelled. They sued for damages, which the government was willing to give. Then they sued for profits. They cannot sue for profits. How can they tell what the profits are? That was dumb.

• (1645)

The Department of Transport fought them a bit too much. Then what happened? A year went by and we found out when they got to the discovery stage and everybody was filing their information that the government's defence was that it could not be sued for profits because it had looked into the deal and those guys would have lost money on it. Which is it? It cancels the deal because they would have made too much money and then defends itself by saying they would have lost money.

Guess what it cost taxpayers. The parliamentary secretary used the Marine Port Authority as an endorsement on how good the bill is. Taxpayers were not be on the hook. We might be because of the ambiguity in terms of the disputes in the bill. Let us say they are

not as serious or will not cost as much as the Pearson airport. Who knows?

Pearson airport cost \$60 million off the top for withdrawing the lawsuit. Somehow or another somebody got enough money. I would like to know how the airport authority will come up with \$700 million, how that money will be granted and how much of it will be a loan from the federal government somewhere down the line. We do not know the details. Pearson airport has already cost taxpayers about \$200 million. Am I right?

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): Well, \$185 million in rent concessions and \$15 million in legal.

Mr. Silye: It has already cost us \$185 million in rent concessions, over \$15 million in legal and the \$60 million dismissal fee.

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre): That is \$260 million.

Mr. Silye: Yes, That is \$260 million. That is a lot of money.

The same government has representatives who say that taxpayers will not be on the hook. I am here to remind them that they were already on the hook and dished out a quarter of a billion dollars on Pearson airport.

I have to keep on the same vein because Liberal opposition members are listening to my intervention and hanging on to every word. They want to know how know the Pearson airport has cost taxpayers \$260 million.

Why are they not doing something about it? Why are they not apologizing? Why are they not admitting they fumbled it, made a mistake? In that event they might do better if there is an election call in the next week or two.

The Reform Party supports Bill C-44 respecting the Marine Port Authority. We will vote in favour of it. I appreciate the opportunity to point out some of the flaws that are still inherent in the bill.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the previous speaker from the Reform Party had not made the analogy of Gracie and George Burns and how to solve income tax problems, I would have listened with interest to all the other items he raised like Pearson airport. With that analogy he made every other financial and arithmetic calculation suspect. Perhaps we should rethink the numbers.

I thank my colleagues for allowing my amendments on Bill C-44 respecting the marine act and how it affects future transportation.

The act concerns ports and harbours, pilotage, the seaway and the Great Lakes. There is no question that the most critical aspect of the legislation is the restructuring of Canadian ports. The previous structure of the ports was not efficient and had some errors. Above all else the ports had to be restructured. The

Government Orders

legislation adequately addresses that point. I will talk about the harbours in a moment.

• (1650)

We could have done a little better with pilotage. Although we addressed some of the issues with respect to pilotage, I do not agree with the remarks of the Bloc Québécois member in the transportation committee.

It was not an accommodation. It was an interest on the government side to make sure fundamental issues with respect to marine transportation would pass in this session. I am sure pilotage, as it particularly affects the Laurentian Pilotage Authority and pilotage on the Great Lakes, will be up for consideration as soon as we return to the House.

There is a debate on whether the seaway and the Great Lakes system should be exclusively with users or exclusively with a binational panel. Some of our recommendations concerned a combination of both. The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway system is made up of 15 locks that raise and lower ships. We must consider the physical mechanics of running locks adequately, especially in Canada with our diverse and severe weather conditions starting some time in early March and lasting usually until December 31. A binational panel could administer the locks and bring forward economies of scale that are necessary to keep our transportation modes competitive in Canada.

I want to discuss the harbour commissions in Canada. Unfortunately because of the legislation the harbour commissions have become a casualty. The harbour commissions have been a success story in the marine transportation history of Canada. All of them, from 1964 when the Harbour Commissions Act, the Toronto Harbour Commission Act and the Harbour Commissions Act of Hamilton were passed, were success stories in Canada.

I take this opportunity to thank all commissioners who have ever served on any harbour commission in Canada for their wonderful work, dedication and volunteerism. They ensured that their harbour commissions operated successfully and were to the benefit of all Canadians.

Harbour commissions will cease to be operative with the passage of this bill. The following harbour commissions will become port authorities: Fraser River Harbour Commission, the North Fraser River Harbour Commission, the Nanaimo Harbour Commission, the Oshawa Harbour Commission, the Port Alberni Harbour Commission, the Windsor Harbour Commission and the Thunder Bay Harbour Commission. I know the members of that commission today and its past members, all of whom have done a tremendous job.

My colleague from Broadview—Greenwood will speak to the Toronto Harbour Commission and how the legislation will help that

commission unravel the log jam it has found itself in for many years. We expect great benefits for the Toronto Harbour Commission.

As one of my colleagues mentioned, unfortunately the Hamilton Harbour Commission chose not to participate in the legislation. Hopefully in the future it will see the wisdom of becoming a port in Canada with port structure and all its benefits. We encourage that commission to move quickly so that all ports will be under one administration, one regulatory control, with a common set of goals.

• (1655)

It is fundamental that most of us in the House are nation builders. We should be building a strong Canada. We should be building a unified Canada. We should be building an indivisible Canada. We do so through the legislation we debate in the House on a daily basis.

Sometimes it is important for all members to set aside our parochial interests to look at Canada as a whole. In this instance I hope all people involved in marine transportation would consider the importance of having one unified regulated system so that we can build the best marine transportation ever.

The goal of the transport ministry and the transport committee is to ensure that transportation costs are efficient and cost effective. If we achieve that goal the agricultural community, farmers and those who manufacture goods, have the ability to deliver products to customers in the United States, England or hopefully the emerging South American countries. By doing so they become more competitive than they were in past. That is good for all Canadians.

I yield the rest of my time to my colleague from Broadview—Greenwood.

Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's well thought out speech. Could he inform us on what has happened with the Laurentian Pilotage Authority? Is it being looked at under the bill or has it been scrapped?

Mr. Comuzzi: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. According to the act, in September of this year there will be a complete review of all pilotage authorities in Canada.

To go one step further, I hope we have the opportunity in that review to bring the technology and the expertise we have gained in the Canadian marine transportation industry into the 21st century; to use global positioning if it is necessary; and to use the new innovations that are so helpful.

We must consider global positioning, whether pilotage is necessary and whether pilots and captains can navigate ships without the aid of pilotage. We must consider everything to lessen the cost of the transportation of our goods in Canada.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I acknowledged the work of my colleague from Thunder Bay-Nipigon not just in the last four years of government but over the last nine years we have served together in the Parliament of Canada.

He has worked passionately, diligently and carefully. He has listened to everybody who has come to him from coast to coast, from every region of the country. We are on the eve of an election and we never know. The people have to decide whether or not we come back. However I will always look back on the last nine years with my colleague from Thunder Bay-Nipigon as a positive constructive experience.

I want to build on a very important theme the member for Thunder Bay-Nipigon touched upon, the whole notion that the Chamber is about building Canada. It is about building a national infrastructure. It is about building national standards. It is about advantaged regions in the country looking out for disadvantaged regions.

• (1700)

That was what inspired me to work in this community. Some 18 years ago I had the privilege and the pleasure of working on the staff of the Right Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau. To this day I admire his vision and his passion for ensuring that we look at Canada from coast to coast. Those regions that have must look out for those that have not. We must ensure that this Chamber never forgets that we are here for that reason. Even though the member represents Thunder Bay—Nipigon and I represent downtown Toronto, we have to care about every part of the country. That is our responsibility in this Chamber.

We are here today to celebrate the commitment of the Government of Canada in ensuring that its presence in the port of Toronto is enshrined.

I want to thank the Minister of Transport and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport for listening to the Toronto caucus and the Toronto community and ensuring that Toronto had a port authority designation.

There is a bit of an emotional tie to this legislation in Toronto because the very first act encapsulating the port of Toronto was signed by Charles Parmalae. Today a press release was issued by the current chairman of the Toronto harbour commissioners: "This legislation reflects the Government of Canada's faith in the future of Toronto's port and Toronto's city centre airport operations as key business infrastructure for economic renewal of the Toronto area".

Charles Parmalae is the great-grandson of the Charles Parmalae who signed the original foundation legislation in the House many years ago. I salute the leadership of Charles Parmalae and his team member from the Toronto board of trade who has done so much over the last few years to ensure that the range of interests was covered. He and others are now saying it is time for us to head into

Government Orders

the 21st century with a renewed thrust, with a renewed invigoration.

It is important before we enter this era of renewal, placing special emphasis on job creation, to acknowledge some of the things the Toronto Harbour Commission has done. I would like to mention three specific things which have happened over the last while.

The Toronto Harbour Commission has expanded waterfront lands by more than 2,000 acres by dredging and land reclamation. This includes 644 acres of the eastern port lands, 600 acres of the Toronto islands, nearly 200 acres of western Beaches and other reclaimed land along the shoreline between the Humber River and the foot of Bathurst Street. It includes 150 acres for the metropolitan Toronto and region conservation authority at Ashbridges Bay, Bluffer's Park and elsewhere in the eastern Beaches, and the 430 acres at the Leslie Street spit, the Tommy Thompson Park.

There are close to 15,000 people who live on the Toronto Harbour Commission lands. There is employment on these lands. There are recreational facilities on these lands, and on it goes.

We salute the Toronto Harbour Commission. We hope with this new legislation, which continues to ensure that the city of Toronto has a board member, that the province of Ontario and the users are all present. They are the people who create jobs. This port will be run in a business like manner. This port will be transparent.

• (1705)

A few hours ago in Toronto a certain member of council said: "This is a Government of Canada land grab that is greater than anything in Canadian history. It is bigger than when the white man came from eastern Europe and took over Canada". That statement is false. These lands are Government of Canada lands. It is not selling these lands. It is the Government of Canada presence being reinvigorated in the city of Toronto. It is not the Government of Canada on the eve of an election selling lands, terminals and other things. It is the reverse of that. It is the Government of Canada saying it is there to be a full partner in the economic renewal of the city of Toronto.

There are some people who would ask what capacity does the Toronto port authority have in the area of port responsibility. I think it is very important for people to realize that currently there are four overseas shipping lines calling at the port. The port is also linked to both CN and CP. There are actually many other ports in the marine act which do not have that capacity. The port is directly linked to two major freeways. The port handles bulk, break bulk and project cargo, and the port has the best heavy lift capacity of all the Great Lakes.

We are here today to celebrate a commitment that the government and the Prime Minister made almost four years ago. In his first visit to Toronto after we won the election the Prime Minister

Government Orders

said Toronto will be given support on economic renewal, support and attention the likes of which it has never seen.

Here we are on the eve of an election. We are saying in symbolism, and local employers have said, it is a fabulous thing for economic renewal. Many members beyond the local job creators and people who understand the notion of tourism infrastructure are saying it is great that the Government of Canada has taken an active role in setting up this port in a totally transparent way.

Again I want to say that this was done with the great co-operation of the Toronto Harbour Commission, the officials of the Department of Transport and the parliamentary secretary. As a measure of hope to get that economic engine of Toronto going again at full throttle, we think it is a great step in that direction.

Mr. Zed: Mr. Speaker, if the House would indulge me I have two very small matters to bring forward.

I believe you will find unanimous consent to revert to presenting reports under Routine Proceedings.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour on behalf of the finance committee to table our 12th report dealing with Bill C-93.

As I have in the past, I thank all members of all parties for their wonderful co-operation.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find consent among the parties for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, immediately after Private Members' Business is completed on this day, the House shall consider Bill C-84 at the second reading stage, in committee of the whole, at the report stage and at the third reading stage;

The amendments may be proposed to the bill during the committee stage of the said bill;

That no dilatory motions or quorum shall be received;

That the House shall adjourn immediately after completion and adoption of all the said stages of the bill.

• (1710)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Does the parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

CANADA MARINE ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and pleasure that I rise at third reading to address Bill C-44, which deals with the implementation of the Canadian marine policy, and which is called an act for making the system of Canadian ports competitive, efficient and commercially oriented, providing for the establishing of port authorities and the divesting of certain harbours and ports.

It is as the member representing the riding of Trois-Rivières that I am proud to take the floor today. As you know, Trois-Rivières is not only a port city, but also a maritime location where, for two years now, the Festival de Trois-Rivières has been expanding so as to better reflect that reality. I am also proud to salute Commodore Phil Goyette for his excellent work—in co-operation with the SDAC of the Trois-Rivières centre town—in staging a wonderful event that keeps growing every year.

I would also like to congratulate the hon. member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup for his excellent work on this issue. My colleague moved many amendments designed to improve the bill and better protect the public interest. I thank him particularly because of his zeal, vigilance and hard work, and also his ability to listen.

As the member for Trois-Rivières, I would like to thank him, because when I say “ability to listen” it is because he listened to the representations I constantly made to him, as he himself was saying earlier, on behalf of the community of Trois-Rivières. I represented the views of that city which, having made up its mind on this issue, wanted very much to see the port of Trois-Rivières granted the status of Canadian port authority, as Quebec City, Montreal and Sept-Îles had been by the first bill. Saguenay and Trois-Rivières having been granted this status following representations by the Bloc Québécois, in particular the member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, the community of Trois-Rivières owes him a big thank you.

Government Orders

Yes, there was a consensus on this issue in Trois-Rivières, but it did not come about easily. It is perhaps a good idea, on the eve of an election, to give a brief historical overview to refresh people's memories.

There was the scheming of the member for Saint-Maurice, the present Prime Minister, who was a party to the whole thing, in league with a tiny group of four, five or six Liberals who had their eye on the port at Trois-Rivières, and whose great distinction was to be known to be Liberals. Coincidentally as well, they had the backing of the Prime Minister, which he blurted out at some point, in their vague wish to eventually take over the port at Trois-Rivières.

Fortunately, the community apparently reacted, and the necessary representations were made. We were heard in fact by the government on February 12, 1997, after the member for Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup moved Motion No. 127, which reads as follows:

That Bill C-44, in the Schedule, be amended by adding in alphabetical order the following: "Trois-Rivières Port Authority".

• (1715)

This was, therefore, a victory by the community which had brought the necessary pressures to bear on the federal government, and I am proud to have played a role in this local victory.

In the same vein, where there is the possibility of action that may or may not be desirable, sometimes prompted by motives that may or may not be praiseworthy themselves, I have concerns about the minister's discretionary power over the board of directors of the Trois-Rivières port authority. I have philosophical concerns, because we all have first hand knowledge of what the Liberals are like. You know them, too. We know that the Liberals have their own way of looking at the federal government, as their property. This is a view that is very much peculiar to the Liberals. We have had an example of this just recently, late last week in fact. A delegation of Liberals was literally besieging the Canadian Parliament for partisan activities on the eve of the announcement of an election campaign.

Imagine a similar thing happening in Quebec, with the members of the Parti Québécois holding meetings within the Quebec legislature. That would make the headlines everywhere, in all of the newspapers and all of the broadcast media as well, decrying the attitude of the leaders of the Parti Québécois government, if ever such a thing were to happen. Yet we have just seen it here, a few days ago. And again when the returning officers for the next electoral campaign were recently appointed. This causes us to fear—knowing as we do the Liberals and their style, their glibness, their intellectual laziness—the possible, perhaps too systematic appointment of people whose greatest attribute, rather than their ability, is their membership in the Liberal Party of Canada.

Further to the introduction of this bill, I would like to draw your attention to the ill-defined mandates given out to manage one thing or another. This is a situation in which the government is divesting itself of assets, including harbours and small ports, and Canada's marine policy, as far as Quebec is concerned, involves the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa River.

My attention has been drawn to the fact that the small docks and the ports along the Saint-Maurice River in my region are not covered. No one knows who to approach, who has jurisdiction. Is it the Department of Transport or Fisheries and Oceans? It is not easy. I have made the appropriate representations to the Department of Transport, which accorded me considerable time, confiding that it was an administrative mishmash. If they have a hard time figuring things out in the minister's office, think about the ordinary citizen and the mayor, often a community volunteer, working part time.

This leads me to speak of the introduction into our beautiful Quebec of the Canadian coast guard, which now has control over the St. Lawrence Seaway and which wants to charge its users. It will soon be involved in the management of lakes and rivers as it may issue permits for pedal boat and rowboat owners.

Nothing says that the Canadian Coast Guard, whose mandate it is to work from coast to coast, will not be the one interfering with the operation of the largest seaway in the world, a complex inland seaway. The task of marine pilots is a complex one, and I want to commend the work done by the St. Lawrence River pilots' association, whose members saw their jobs threatened by government pressure.

Here again, we must thank the Bloc Québécois, and our colleague from Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, who made sure that common sense prevails, given the safety risks involved, the fact that the river is used by huge oil tankers and ore-carrying ships, and the difficulty of manoeuvring on the St. Lawrence River, with a narrow and sometimes shallow channel.

• (1720)

I think this was an irresponsible attempt on the part of the government. I do hope the St. Lawrence River pilots' association will continue to prevail and survive, to ensure the protection of the public and the riparian community. Although technology can be very useful, it must never replace humans, as was the intention in this case.

I would have liked to say more. I thought I would have more time. That is unfortunate, because coast guard activities is a very important issue. Just yesterday, I was attending a meeting of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. The committee just tabled a disgraceful report with obvious methodology problems. The committee had a very narrow mandate, and no effort was made to try and take a close look at the concerns expressed and

Government Orders

allegations made by users of the St. Lawrence, even though they are quite reasonable.

I am thinking in particular of the SODES and Mr. Gaudreault, who gave an excellent presentation yesterday, showing the very serious threat facing Quebec's economy if the Government of Canada does not turn around and make an effort to get to the bottom of this and see the light.

In closing, since a criticism of this recent report shows that, under the new policy, the Quebec Cartier Mining company may have to shut down its operations two and a half years earlier, I think further consideration is required.

[English]

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Madam Speaker, as you know I am the Atlantic issues critic for our caucus. This means that I bring forward issues that are of particular interest and importance to Atlantic Canada. This will go on for a month or so until we elect members for Reform from Atlantic Canada.

Bill C-44 impacts on Atlantic Canadian interests. It impacts on a wonderful new opportunity for the port of Halifax to develop into a post-Panamax port.

The post-Panamax opportunity has come about because ships are getting so big that they can no longer get through the Panama canal. Ships with goods from all over the world need a port on the eastern seaboard large enough to land these goods for distribution across North America and into South America. A port needs to be developed to allow these huge ships to offload the containers for trans-shipment across Canada and the United States.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the port of Halifax because it has a lot of natural advantages that the big ports in the U.S., in particular New York and Boston, do not have. A lot of land is available. This port does not have to be dredged to accommodate these huge ships, as Boston and New York would.

The potential advantage to the Atlantic provinces is enormous. The potential income from this kind of economic activity, shipping activity, trade activity is huge. Reports have estimated it would be about \$2 billion per year. This is not small change for a province like Nova Scotia.

However, this bill would make it difficult, if not impossible, for the port of Halifax, the businesses and the province to take advantage of this opportunity for three reasons. The port would be unable to raise the capital necessary to go ahead with this development. To develop the port properly, to have the facilities to offload these huge ships and to trans-ship the containers and the goods would take about \$.5 billion.

This cannot be done with the strictures being put on the port and the port authority by this bill. The port would not be able to borrow money. It could perhaps borrow money on cash flow which would

amount to about \$40 million to \$50 million maximum. Investors could not be given equity shares in the enterprise. Here is a wonderful opportunity and the bill puts a regime into place which absolutely forecloses that opportunity from ever being given to the Atlantic provinces. I have met with a number of people interested in the matter of developing the port of Halifax. They are very concerned.

• (1725)

Unfortunately my time has been shortened due to some arrangements in the House today. I would like to go on record as saying that as far as the port of Halifax is concerned, the people of Nova Scotia, Atlantic Canada and the whole of Canada, have some real concerns that this bill limits important economic opportunities. I would urge the government to look at this matter very carefully before something is put in place that stifles development in a very critical part of our country, namely, the Atlantic provinces.

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

An hon. member: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: 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 more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: The division on the motion is deferred until 5.30 p.m.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from April 15 consideration of the motion that Bill C-55, an act to amend the Criminal Code (high risk offenders), the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Criminal Records Act, the Prisons and Reformatories Act and the Department of the Solicitor General Act, be read the third time and passed.

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

Government Orders

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: 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 yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: The deputy whip has requested that we defer the vote for three minutes.

Ms. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, shall we call it 5.30 p.m.?

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to move the clock ahead three minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

* * *

• (1755)

CANADA MARINE ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-44, an act for making the system of Canadian ports competitive, efficient and commercially oriented, providing for the establishing of port authorities and the divesting of certain harbours and ports, for the commercialization of the St. Lawrence Seaway and ferry services and other matters related to maritime trade and transport and amending the Pilotage Act and amending and repealing other acts as a consequence, be read the third time and passed.

After the taking of the count:

Mr. Cummins: Mr. Speaker, if I inadvertently voted in favour of the bill I would like to have my vote recorded as a no.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to change his vote?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(Division No. 325)

YEAS

Members

- | | |
|---|--|
| Alcock | Assad |
| Augustine | Bakopanos |
| Bélair | Benoit |
| Bertrand | Bethel |
| Bevilacqua | Bodnar |
| Bonin | Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville) |
| Brown (Oakville—Milton) | Brushett |
| Caccia | Calder |
| Campbell | Cannis |
| Catterall | Chamberlain |
| Clancy | Cohen |
| Collenette | Collins |
| Comuzzi | Copps |
| Cowling | Crawford |
| Cullen | DeVillers |
| Dion | Discepolo |
| Dromisky | Duhamel |
| Duncan | Dupuy |
| Easter | Epp |
| Fewchuk | Finlay |
| Fiis | Fry |
| Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine) | Galloway |
| Godfrey | Goodale |
| Graham | Gray (Windsor West/Ouest) |
| Grubel | Guarnieri |
| Hanrahan | Harb |
| Harper (Simcoe Centre) | Harvard |
| Hickey | Hill (MacLeod) |
| Hopkins | Hubbard |
| Ianno | Irwin |
| Jackson | Johnston |
| Keyes | Kilger (Stormont—Dundas) |
| Kirkby | Knutson |
| Kraft Sloan | Lastewka |
| LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso) | Lee |
| Lincoln | Loney |
| MacAulay | Malhi |
| Marleau | Martin (LaSalle—Émard) |
| McCormick | McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest) |
| McTeague | McWhinney |
| Milliken | Mills (Broadview—Greenwood) |
| Minna | Mitchell |
| Murphy | Murray |
| Nault | O'Brien (Labrador) |
| O'Reilly | Pagtakhan |
| Patry | Penson |
| Peters | Peterson |
| Pettigrew | Pickard (Essex—Kent) |
| Proud | Ramsay |
| Reed | Regan |
| Richardson | Rideout |
| Ringma | Robillard |
| Schmidt | Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury) |
| Serré | Sheridan |
| Silye | Simmons |
| Speaker | St. Denis |
| Steckle | Stewart (Northumberland) |
| Szabo | Telegdi |
| Torsney | Ur |
| Valeri | Vanclief |
| Verran | Volpe |
| Wappel | Wells |
| Whelan | White (North Vancouver) |
| Williams | Zed —128 |

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Althouse
Bachand	Bélisle
Bellehumeur	Canuel
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Crête
Cummins	de Savoye
Debien	Dumas
Fillion	Frazier
Gagnon (Québec)	Gauthier
Godin	Guay
Guimond	Hoepfner
Lalonde	Landry
Langlois	Laurin
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)	Ménard
Mercier	Meredith
Nunez	Picard (Drummond)
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Riis	Rocheleau
Scott (Skeena)	Solomon
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Venne—39	

PAIRED MEMBERS

Adams	Asselin
Bakopanos	Barnes
Bergeron	Bernier (Gaspé)
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Boudria
Brien	Cauchon
Chan	Dalphond-Guiral
Daviault	Deshaies
Dubé	Duceppe
Eggleton	Finestone
Gaffney	Gagliano
Gerrard	Grose
Harper (Churchill)	Lebel
Lefebvre	Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loubier	Paré
Pinney	Pillitteri
Sauvageau	Wood

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from April 15 consideration of the motion that Bill C-55, an act to amend the Criminal Code (high risk offenders), the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Criminal Records Act, the Prisons and Reformatories Act and the Department of the Solicitor General Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Kilger: Mr. Speaker, you will find unanimous consent that the members who voted on the previous motion, and I would add the name of the hon. member for Brent, be recorded as having voted on the motion now before the House, with Liberal members voting yea.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Laurin: Mr. Speaker, since you did not mention it, I would ask you to confirm that we are indeed dealing with Bill C-55. Bloc Québécois members will vote yea on this motion.

[English]

Mr. Frazer: Mr. Speaker, Reform Party members present will vote no, except for those who have been instructed otherwise by their constituents.

Mr. Solomon: Mr. Speaker, NDP members in the House will vote no on this motion.

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

(Division No. 326)

YEAS

Members

Alcock	Assad
Augustine	Bachand
Bakopanos	Bélair
Bélisle	Bellehumeur
Bertrand	Bethel
Bevilacqua	Bodnar
Bonin	Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Brushett	Caccia
Calder	Campbell
Cannis	Canuel
Catterall	Chamberlain
Chrétien (Frontenac)	Clancy
Cohen	Collenette
Collins	Comuzzi
Copps	Cowling
Crawford	Crête
Cullen	de Savoye
Debien	DeVillers
Dion	Discepola
Dromisky	Duhamel
Dumas	Dupuy
Easter	Fewchuk
Fillion	Finlay
Fis	Fry
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	Gagnon (Québec)
Galloway	Gauthier
Godfrey	Godin
Goodale	Graham
Gray (Windsor West/Ouest)	Guarnieri
Guay	Guimond
Harb	Harvard
Hickey	Hopkins
Hubbard	Ianno
Irwin	Jackson
Keyes	Kilger (Stormont—Dundas)
Kirkby	Knutson
Kraft Sloan	Lalonde
Landry	Langlois
Lastewka	Laurin
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)	Lee
Lincoln	Loney
MacAulay	Malhi
Marleau	Martin (LaSalle—Énard)
McCormick	McLellan (Edmonton Northwest/Nord-Ouest)
McTeague	McWhinney
Ménard	Mercier
Milliken	Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)
Minna	Mitchell
Murphy	Murray
Nault	Nunez
O'Brien (Labrador)	O'Reilly
Pagtakhan	Patry
Peters	Peterson
Pettigrew	Picard (Drummond)
Pickard (Essex—Kent)	Plamondon
Pomerleau	Proud
Reed	Regan
Richardson	Rideout
Robillard	Rocheleau
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)	Serré

Sheridan
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Torsney
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Valeri
Venne
Volpe
Wells
Zed—141

Simmons
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Telegdi
Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)
Ur
Vancielief
Verran
Wappel
Whelan

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Benoit
Cummins
Epp
Grubel
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hoeppner
McClelland (Edmonton Southwest/Sud-Ouest)
Penson
Riis
Schmidt
Silye
Speaker
Williams—27

Althouse
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Duncan
Frazer
Hanrahan
Hill (MacLeod)
Johnston
Meredith
Ramsay
Ringma
Scott (Skeena)
Solomon
White (North Vancouver)

PAIRED MEMBERS

Adams
Bakopanos
Bergeron
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Brien
Chan
Daviault
Dubé
Eggleton
Gaffney
Gerrard
Harper (Churchill)
Lefebvre
Loubier
Phinney
Sauvageau

Asselin
Barnes
Bernier (Gaspé)
Boudria
Cauchon
Dalphond-Guiral
Deshaies
Duceppe
Finestone
Gagliano
Grose
Lebel
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Paré
Pillitteri
Wood

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed.)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1800)

[English]

CANADA WATER EXPORT PROHIBITION ACT

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP) moved that Bill C-232, an act to prohibit the export of water by interbasin transfers, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate my appreciation to the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden for seconding Bill C-232.

Private Members' Business

I appreciate this has been an issue of major concern of his for many years. We have worked on this initiative together for the last three years and we do hope that time will permit passage of this legislation in the House as well as the other place.

I also want to acknowledge my colleague from Peace River who also indicated an interest in seconding the legislation. I want to say how much I appreciate his support on this initiative, and also that he has been steadfast in his support over the last number of years on this very important issue.

I want to indicate what was behind the initiative to introduce the bill. In my previous life I was a professional geographer and today I am also a governor of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. I have studied the issue of water transfers and water sales for nigh on to 35 years. My interest and concern today is as much as it was at the time the infamous North American water and power alliance proposal, often referred to as NAWAPA, was receiving a great deal of public attention.

This was a major project initiated by the Ralph M. Parsons' Engineering Company of California to divert all the rivers of northwestern Canada, including parts of Alaska, into the Rocky Mountain trench and other river basins for eventual sale to the American southwest and northern Mexico.

That issue, interesting enough, has not gone away. I noted with some interest that Mr. Dale, who at one time was the United States ambassador to Canada, two years ago was providing interviews to *Western Report* magazine about the renewed interest by southern California in revitalizing the concept of the NAWAPA plan to divert large amounts of water from Canada to the greater Sacramento basin which consequently would be a great business proposal.

This has many of us very concerned. I was concerned in a professional way as a geographer and in my capacity as member of Parliament for Kamloops by a recent initiative taken by entrepreneurs in western Canada and the western United states to divert 50 per cent of the flow of the North Thompson River during the freshet period for eventual sale in the Los Angeles and San Diego areas. The preliminary drawings had been put together. It certainly was economically, environmentally and engineeringly feasible in the traditional approach of evaluating projects. It was receiving a great deal of attention until people of the North Thompson River realized what was up and decided to take some steps against diverting one of the major tributaries of the Fraser River for eventual sale in the Los Angeles and San Diego areas.

I have a personal involvement as the member of Parliament representing that area. I also think it fair to say we have seen a number of initiatives in the last while, beginning with the free trade agreement with the United States and ending with the North

Private Members' Business

American Free Trade Agreement and more recently with the multilateral agreement on investment.

• (1805)

These three agreements would facilitate the sale of fresh water from Canada to the United States and Mexico. In particular, the free trade agreement and the North America Free Trade Agreement have identified water as a good or commodity. Once water is identified as a good or commodity, it comes under the purview of the North America Free Trade Agreement which makes it virtually impossible for even a national government, let alone a provincial or any kind of local government, to take any serious steps to stop the eventual sale of that product or that good into the United States or into Mexico.

I suspect that people might wonder if that is the case. I suppose we should see these trade agreements and more recently the multilateral agreement on investment in some context.

Canada is one of the few countries in the world with no water policy stated in any formal way. There is no legislation that would indicate water policy. This is appalling considering that Canada is the second largest country geographically in the world. A tremendous amount of the world's fresh water exists within our national boundaries. Yet we have no water policy.

In the absence of water policy, the free trade agreement with the United States, NAFTA, and now eventually if we sign this the multilateral agreement on investment will take priority in terms of the rules and regulations that will govern the eventual sale of water to the United States and northern Mexico.

I want to reiterate that the North America Free Trade Agreement includes water as a good under the terms of the agreement for essentially the same reason, as I stated, than does the free trade agreement with the United States. The purpose of the free trade agreement as set forth in article 102 is to eliminate barriers to trade in goods and services between the territories of the parties, to facilitate conditions of fair competition within the free trade area, to liberalize significantly conditions for investment within the free trade area, to establish effective procedures for the joint administration of this agreement and a resolution of disputes and to lay the foundation for further bilateral or multilateral co-operation to expand and enhance the benefits of this agreement.

I want to go on to quote from article 102 under NAFTA. It sets forth the objectives which include to eliminate barriers to trade in and facilitate the cross-border movement of goods and services between the territories of the parties, to establish substantially investment opportunities in the territories of the parties, and to establish a framework for further trilateral, regional and multilateral co-operation to expand and enhance the benefits of this agreement.

When we consider that the point of these two trade agreements to which we are a signatory is to eliminate barriers in trade for goods, is water a good under these trade agreements? Article 201.1 of the FTA states that goods of a party mean the domestic products as these are understood in the general agreement on tariffs and trade.

Similarly, goods of a party are defined in article 201 of NAFTA as products, as these are understood by the general agreement on tariffs and trade. This means that any good covered by a GATT trade heading is subject to the provisions of the agreements themselves unless explicitly excluded in their respective text.

Raw logs were exempt, cultural industries were exempt, some beer was exempt and some fish products were exempt. What was noticeably absent from the exempt list was water.

Therefore to understand the basis for inclusion of water in the trade agreements one must first look to the relevant sections of the harmonized commodity coding system of GATT. I know most members are familiar with this coding system, and 22.01 states that waters, including natural or artificial mineral waters and aerated waters not containing added sugar or other sweetening matters, are included.

To provide further clarification in case there is any confusion at all, the GATT harmonized commodity description and coding system explanatory notes were adopted by the GATT signatories in 1986. The explanatory note for heading 22.01 which represents the only GATT sanctioned elaboration of the text is as follows: "This heading covers ordinary natural water of all kinds other than sea water. Such water remains in this heading whether or not it is clarified or purified".

I could go on in some detail but I think this is sufficient to indicate that however we look at this, however we interpret it, water is a good, and goods are part of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

• (1810)

I panic when I consider what our country is now involved in, the multilateral agreement on investment. My guess is that 99.99 per cent of Canadians do not know what I am speaking about at this point because the negotiations for the multilateral agreement on investment have been taking place in secret, behind closed doors. They are high level negotiations that no one has been informed about. Provincial governments have not been alerted to this. Most members of Parliament and senators have not been alerted to the fact that the negotiations are taking place let alone any of the items being discussed.

The MAI's definition of investment is very broad. In the MAI investment means "every kind of asset owned or controlled by an investor". It extends to "rights under contracts" and "rights conferred pursuant to law or contract such as concessions, licences,

authorizations and permits". By implication the definition even extends to real estate or other property, tangible or intangible, acquired in the expectation of or used for the purpose of economic benefit or other business purposes. It seems quite clear that this definition of investment would open the door to international investors mounting direct challenges against governments for water exports.

Some people sometimes define water as a special commodity, a special good or a special product, that it is technically owned by all the people, that the government owns those water resources or products until they are sold or licensed off and so on. I do not think we can take much comfort in this. When we consider that government is the owner, often no one takes serious claim of that ownership. I point out the gas and oil industry, how that too belonged to the people and how it has been essentially sold off to the highest bidder wherever and whenever it is found. This is to say nothing about my own province where the timber resources theoretically belonged to the people but have now been allocated to the last branch to one of the major forest companies for its exclusive use.

We are now being confronted with a most serious issue. The only product in Canada the United States does not have access to right now is water. Until recently there was some indication that parts of our cultural industry were protected from American inclusion. In the last number of days the Minister for International Trade has made it clear that will be impossible to protect in the future. Even culture, the one industry that was named in the free trade agreements to receive some protection, is now being abandoned and put on the sacred altar of the free market. We are now down to one item, water.

We have to ask ourselves why the Government of Canada is reluctant to introduce a clear water policy for Canada and why the House of Commons, through the government initiative, is not prepared to introduce legislation to prohibit the interbasin transfer of water for export.

Two jurisdictions have taken steps. British Columbia has recently taken some steps to prohibit the interbasin transfer of water for export and the province of Ontario under previous administration introduced strong legislation to prohibit the interbasin transfer of water for export sales. Saskatchewan has done this too. When we consider that some provincial governments have taken strong steps, why is the federal government silent on this issue? Why does it refuse to take any initiative at all? Why does it refuse to even discuss it? Why does it refuse to even have the most simplistic water policy concerning the importance of water in the second largest country in the world? These are questions that must be asked.

As we speak there are all sorts of people who are quite anxious to sell our water to the Americans. Americans are anxious but many

Private Members' Business

Canadians are too. I refer first to the American Society of Civil Engineers which recently published a handbook that points out all the benefits of diverting water from Canada to the United States, of selling Canadian water to the United States. It points out that we already have 54 interbasin transfer systems within Canada. This is nothing new to our country. The export of course is.

• (1815)

Even if the federal government were to pass legislation, even if provincial governments were to pass legislation, we must us acknowledge that as a result of international law, trade agreements take priority over national, state or regional legislation.

We can imagine if the state of Montana passed legislation that went against the general trust of the North American Free Trade Agreement. It would be laughed right out of the international court. So too would provincial, national or state governments.

At the moment we are locked in. If we agree to eventually sign the multilateral agreement on investment, we will lock those decisions in for a 20-year period. For 20 years a decision under that agreement cannot be reversed once a trade or business initiative is taken.

We have serious problems. I reluctantly say that in my own province the Fraser Institute is an enthusiastic booster, a cheerleader for the whole idea of selling Canadian water to whomever. Whether it is the United States or Mexico it is anxious to see water designated as a commodity. Recently one of its publications articulated its position very clearly. Not only are Americans anxious to purchase Canadian water. Some Canadians are very anxious to sell it.

We do not have to look very far. The person who negotiated the trade agreement with the United States, NAFTA, was Simon Reisman. He was one of the main proponents of the interbasin transfers of water to the United States. The thesis topic of Manitoba's Gary Filmon when he was studying at the University of Manitoba was an investigation of the diversion of northern Manitoba waters into Lake Manitoba. The major objective of the study was an assessment of the possible future scope of water developed in western Canada and the feasibility of water exports to the United States.

Not only are entrepreneurs and industrial and business leaders often anxious to sell Canadian water to others, particularly the United States and Mexico, but some of our political leaders are on record as feeling similarly.

The lack of any initiative by the government, let alone the previous government which we assume would have sold us out to the United States, raises suspect whether the government is tacitly

Private Members' Business

approving the notion of selling Canadian fresh water to United States and Mexico.

An hon. member: The Prime Minister and President Clinton were golfing and talking about giving away water.

Mr. Riis: They were talking during their golf game about various matters. I could go on at some length but I want to hear what my colleagues have to say about this important initiative.

Maybe Canadians are wondering how significant the issue is. When someone goes into a store to buy a litre of water or a litre of oil, often the litre of water is actually more expensive than the litre of oil. We know to what extent the United States will go to ensure its secure oil supplies. We can all agree that water is even much more valuable than oil. We can imagine the extent to which Americans will go to eventually have access to our fresh water.

It is important that we take whatever steps we can as a country to indicate that Canadian water is not for sale. Canadian water is the lifeblood of our country and is not to be treated in the same spirit as we treat cod, copper or timber.

Mr. John Godfrey (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is good reason to applaud the initiative of the hon. member for Kamloops in introducing the bill. The government supports the objective of sustaining Canada's water resources and Bill C-232 proposes one way in which we could do it.

I am concerned, however, that the prohibition of water export by interbasin transfers may be too narrow an approach to a complex issue. Access to adequate clean water supplies is critical to our health, to our quality of life and to Canada's competitive position. Much of our economy and jobs are tied directly or indirectly to our supplies in water from farming, forestry and industrial development to tourism and recreational sectors.

Growth in these areas will depend on sustaining the benefits of adequate and clean water resources.

• (1820)

To put it another way, water is an essential part of all ecosystems, from the functions and life support provided by lakes and streams to the role of the global hydrological cycle in sustaining water in all its forms.

Our drainage systems do not conform to political boundaries but continue to unite different parts of our country through travel and commerce and through co-operative efforts to conserve and protect these waterways and their ecosystems.

The Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River connect most of eastern Canada, as the north and south Saskatchewan Rivers link the prairie provinces; the Fraser, most of British Columbia; and the Mackenzie River and its tributaries, much of the north.

Current initiatives such as the Great Lakes, Fraser River and St. Lawrence action plans are excellent examples of all levels of government working together and with industry and non-government organizations to address health and sustainable development within these aquatic ecosystems.

It is essential that our decisions reflect a comprehensive approach to sustaining water resources. On the question of water export, we must ask ourselves at what point water removal may result in damage to an ecosystem. It is clear that interbasin transfers have the potential to cause the most significant social, economic and environmental impacts.

What about other means of withdrawal of water for export purposes such as the use of supertankers taking water from coastal lakes and streams, the mining of groundwater reserves or the cumulative impacts of a series of small scale withdrawals from the same source?

Without doubt Bill C-232 is consistent with the federal water policy which explicitly opposes water export by interbasin transfer.

I have to take issue with the hon. member in his interpretation of the NAFTA when it talks about water as a good and refers to it as bottled beverages. It does not refer to the large scale exports of water to which he alluded.

Interest in water export has shifted away from proposals for the construction of megaprojects, despite the obvious vested interest of civil engineers, which would result in large scale interbasin transfers of water, the focus of Bill C-232. Large scale exports through massive engineering work such as the Grand Canal proposal are not considered viable under current market conditions. The costs associated with the delivery of water would greatly exceed the prices that users would be willing to pay for water. That is not to say that future water shortages could not result in prices that might meet the costs of such export proposals.

The current focus of water export proposals, however, is by tankership using water from coastal lakes and streams or by tanker trucks or pipelines carrying water from surface to groundwater sources.

Not only have the economics of water export clearly changed in terms of capital investment needs but our understanding of the scope and extent of potential environmental, social and long term economic impacts. Water is possibly the most basic and unifying element in ecosystems.

As I have already stated, water export must be viewed from an ecosystem approach. Concerns relating to all forms of water export which were not considered in the 1960s now must be factored in. These include the effects of climate change for which recent predictions suggest losses of water availability of about 20 per cent for some of the settled regions of the country; the potential biotic

transfer and contamination resulting from the discharges of ballast supertankers withdrawing water from coastal streams and lakes; the fragility of our ecosystems, particularly northern ecosystems, to disturbance; the concerns of First Nations whose ways of life are intimately tied to the cycles of abundance of water; the displacement of communities or depletion of water resources available to downstream communities; and the loss of recreational and commercial benefits.

The measures we propose to address the water export issue must reflect both the current and future focus of export proposals and the broad environmental, social and long term economic impact of such proposals. Bill C-32 fails to do.

This leads to a second concern. We should take action to address the broad range of concerns facing fresh water in a comprehensive way rather than limit ourselves to the one concern of water export. The need for such an approach is based on the growing recognition of the importance of water, the diverse and complex jurisdictional responsibilities associated with sustainably managing water, and the pressures on governments to continue to manage these responsibilities effectively in the current climate of financial restraint.

• (1825)

All Canadians have stewardship responsibilities for water. It is important that we consult with them in developing a comprehensive approach to water export and to the many other freshwater issues currently facing us.

Over the past 10 years the government has consulted Canadians on a wide variety of water issues, most recently through a series of workshops held across Canada to identify water priorities and directions for the next century. Contrary to the suggestion of the hon. member we are not silent. We are taking action. We are currently conducting a review of our programs and legislation relating to sustaining Canada's water resources. It is through this review that a comprehensive approach to water can be developed, including legislative measures to address water export.

I will conclude by reiterating that, first, it is imperative we address the full range of water export options to ensure the sustainability of Canada's water resources and the continued health of our ecosystems. We must adopt measures whether in legislation or by other means which provide a clear approach to resolving the issue and which reflect the concerns of all Canadians.

Second, we must not limit our actions to the single issue of water export in addressing the challenges facing fresh water. Taking a piecemeal approach to the broad range of fresh water issues reflects the ways of the past. We need an integrated and comprehensive solution to sustaining environmental, social and economic health, which depend on water.

Private Members' Business

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great interest that I rise today to speak to the bill introduced by my colleague in the New Democratic Party, an act to prohibit the export of water by interbasin transfers.

Our colleague was undoubtedly motivated to introduce this bill because of the fear that one morning he would see Canadian water basins emptying into American ones. We would see these basins drained or greatly reduced without being able to do anything about it. In light of the present water shortages and climatic fluctuations caused by greenhouse gases, this fear seems entirely legitimate to me and certainly justifies our giving this whole issue serious consideration.

We must ask ourselves whether our water resources are in fact threatened in the short, medium and long term. It is clear to me that water will be an increasingly precious resource in the future and that people, industries and countries will therefore want to lay claim to it by any means possible.

In the era of free trade and globalization of markets, it should come as no surprise that fresh water is becoming a rare, not to say very rare, commodity. We in Quebec and in Canada are lucky enough to have large quantities of this precious commodity and could therefore export it.

The main question we must ask ourselves is this: Can we keep this resource, which is so abundant in this country, for ourselves while other people on the same continent as us are suffering shortages with very serious consequences? Can we not share this resource intelligently for the benefit of everyone?

Moreover, can we leave this resource unprotected, at the mercy of anyone who wants to appropriate it, which may have a disastrous impact on the resource?

The bill standing in the name of the hon. member for Kamloops is intended to deal with interbasin transfers, which means transfers of huge quantities of water. According to the hon. member, it is up to Canada to protect this natural resource, since NAFTA contains no measures to protect or prohibit the export of this resource. According to the hon. member, we need legislation to prohibit massive exports by interbasin transfers.

I agree there are a number of situations that must not be allowed to arise. For instance, the harnessing or diversion of rivers without a licence or without authorization from the appropriate authorities. We must of course prohibit anything that would have harmful consequences for our resource, but is a total ban really necessary?

Since the beginning of this century we have considerably modified our river systems. By using various technologies we have

Private Members' Business

substantially altered the natural course of our lakes, rivers and streams. Immense reservoirs like James Bay in Quebec, built to produce electricity, and the reservoirs created for the pulp and paper industry are good examples of the impact we have had on our waterways.

● (1830)

Today, few waterways are without a dam, a dike or at least some control mechanism. It is clear that all these changes have had are on a vast territory. Gradually, these changes will have consequences on a huge scale. I think we should consider the impact these changes have had and recognize our responsibility.

We must find out whether these artificial changes in our systems have not had a harmful impact outside Canada. And if so, should we not try to remedy the situation using intelligent strategies that respect the resource?

In fact, in addition to these artificial changes, we have actually changed quality of the water. Throughout the world we have been remiss in the way we treated surface water by polluting it. The consequences are reflected in the exorbitant costs of making water safe to drink, and, even worse, in the dwindling supply of fresh, potable water.

In fact, surface water that is potable without being treated is practically non-existent. It is found exclusively below ground at varying depths, and we are now pumping this water in huge quantities to sell it as bottled water. This is another phenomenon which disturbs me and which we will have to look at seriously without delay.

The picture is pretty clear: in Canada we have a lot of water that we use exclusively for our own benefit. In recent years, we have contained and dammed it by various means. Should we today open the gates to the south, to the United States for instance, which sees us as a huge body of water that it may endlessly dip into? Our neighbour to the south feels that we are wasting water because we are not using the huge reserves in the north. But when it comes to waste, we certainly do not have anything to learn from our neighbours south of the border.

Another aspect of the bill introduced by my colleague from the New Democratic Party to which we should give our attention is once again the whole issue of jurisdiction. Even though the federal government has jurisdiction over international trade, is it desirable for it to legislate the export of water? Imagine the situation where Quebec decides to export water from its large reservoirs to the United States, without any significant impact on Quebec's system. Should the federal government block this export if it has no negative impact? The federal government again?

The federal government is certainly no guarantee that the environment will be protected these days. Its disengagement is obvious and very disturbing. I wonder therefore whether we can

trust it when it comes to the management of water and the related analyses and evaluations.

Whether it be for personal consumption, irrigation or other purposes, I do not think we should systematically prohibit interbasin transfers. Of course we should conserve, protect and clean up our resource, but we can also share it.

I think there should be a broad public debate of this issue. I also think we must continue to keep water a public resource. It would be a much greater threat to water as a resource to leave it to the private sector. The prospect of making a large profit quickly could empty all of Canada's basins. The public nature of the resource therefore constitutes a good guarantee, a sort of safeguard against possible exploitation.

I think we should also look into this issue of export with an eye to all the possibilities for agreements with future foreign markets that would respect the resource itself and that would be based on complete and transparent impact studies. We must also develop policies with the long term in mind, based on sustainable management of the resource.

I cannot support the bill at this stage in the debate. However, I am considering it and I continue to weigh all the factors. This is a major issue that deserves an open-minded approach and greater study.

● (1835)

[English]

Mr. Stan Dromisky (Thunder Bay—Atikokan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the issue of fresh water export has troubled Canadians for at least three decades. There are new dimensions in the 1990s, however, which were not part of the debate in the 1960s.

Public concern has been heightened, for example, by aboriginal resistance to export proposals threatening their traditional areas and by recent predictions that global warming could result in losses of water availability of about 20 per cent for some of the settled regions of the country.

At the same time, we should be aware that there is, as of this date, no significant export of water resources from Canada, only a little trade in beverages and some small exchanges of treated supplies between neighbouring border communities. No lakes or rivers in Canada have been diverted out of their natural courses to flow south of the border. No supertankers have departed Canadian shores under contract to deliver bulk water supplies to overseas destinations. That is the reality of our present situation.

There have been, and there will continue to be, of course, proposals for water export which range from the use of pipelines and tanker trucks to draw on groundwater reserves, to marine transport from coastal streams, to the more grandiose schemes involving large scale diversions of rivers. All of these proposals

Private Members' Business

have the potential to affect the social, environmental and economic benefits Canadians derive from their water resources.

For this reason it is of paramount importance that the issue of water export be considered in its entirety, that we do not develop solutions to one problem at a time at the expense of a more comprehensive approach to this whole issue.

Over the last 30 years, concern about exports of Canada's water resources has risen primarily as a result of proposals to divert massive amounts of water to the United States to deal with water shortages or to allow for increased agricultural, industrial and urban development in areas in the United States with limited supplies. Concern has also focused on the possibility that once these taps are turned on, it would be very difficult to turn them off.

Several of these megaprojects are worth mentioning. One of the best known is the North American water and power alliance project of the 1960s. It involved the diversion of water from Alaska, northwestern Canada and watersheds surrounding Hudson Bay and James Bay to the dry, arid areas of the western United States, the prairie provinces and northern Mexico.

Another megaproject was the grand recycling and northern development grand canal project which would have transferred James Bay into a freshwater lake by building a dike at its northern end and impounding the rivers that empty into the bay. The flows of rivers would have been reversed to deliver water to the Great Lakes and from there to other destinations in North America.

These megaprojects, while having the potential to create jobs and investment in Canada in the short term, would not benefit Canadian society in the long term.

With 9 per cent of the world's renewable fresh water resources, it is easy for us to assume that Canada has an abundance of water and can support limited export of its water resources. This perception is not well founded. The idea that if we do not use all the water, it is somehow wasted fails to recognize that there is no surplus of water in an ecosystem. All the water serves a purpose in sustaining the dynamics and functions of that ecosystem.

Thus, although Canada would seem to possess substantial water resources there are regions in Canada in which scarcities exist or will exist. These areas include the river basins of the Okanagan, Milk, South Saskatchewan and the Red-Assiniboine Rivers, as well as nearly all of the smaller river basins of southern Ontario.

Within this context it is worth considering whether we would be better served by addressing all means of water export and not limiting discussion to interbasin transfers. Bill C-232 also mentions a need for policy, research and consultations among federal, provincial and territorial governments on the subject of interbasin water transfers within Canada. It provides no guidance, however, in this area.

• (1840)

That is unfortunate because Canadians have a great deal of experience with interbasin transfer projects. In fact, the volume of water transferred across drainage basin boundaries in Canada is several times greater than in any other country in the world. Virtually all of the larger existing interbasin diversion projects support hydroelectric power generation with smaller volumes used for irrigation, municipal supply and flood control.

Members of the House will be interested to know that the largest of these projects was constructed in the 1970s and 1980s. Since then construction and expansion of such megaprojects have been shelved in all regions of the country: the Kemano Alcan project in British Columbia; the Nelson River program in Manitoba, expansion of the James Bay hydro project in Quebec.

Energy demands have fallen and it is less costly to promote efficiencies on the part of the users of energy and water, rather than to continue to develop the new supplies.

The federal water policy addresses Canada's experience with interbasin transfer projects, but advocating caution in considering their needs, and by endorsing other less destructive alternatives such as demand management and water conservation.

There are no plans under consideration to proceed with any further interbasin transfers at this time anywhere in this country. That tells us two things of importance.

First, not only do Canadians oppose the large scale diversion of our lakes and rivers across the international boundary, they have learned from experience that interbasin diversions carry a high price for their own regional economies and environments.

Second, it would be shortsighted to pursue this issue in isolation of the larger context which considers changing public values, competing in complementary water use relationships and governmental priorities.

Federal programs and legislation related to the sustainability of Canada's water resources are currently being reviewed and the issues of export and interbasin transfers should be addressed in that larger context.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in the debate on the bill introduced by my colleague from Kamloops. I know he has a very deep concern on this issue of water exports.

I share that concern, although I believe we are adequately protected. However, it is not as crystal clear as it could be. Therefore, it is important that we take whatever steps necessary to

Private Members' Business

make sure that Canada does not get into a situation where it is required to export water by any means such as interbasin transfer.

Water is a very important resource and will be even more important in the future. In my riding of Peace River we have a lot of oil and gas development. Oil and gas companies have consistently tried to use potable ground water for flooding their oil zones when salt water is available at a not much larger cost. I believe we should continue to resist this misuse of potable water because it is going to be a very serious problem in the future.

I support the bill introduced by the member for Kamloops and I will state my reasons for supporting it.

Reform policy dating back to 1993, prior to the last election and prior to the passage of NAFTA, makes a specific statement on water. It states that the exclusive and unrestricted control of water in all its forms should be maintained by and for Canada and that both free trade agreements should be amended to reflect this.

I admit it is a little late to be talking about amending NAFTA. Furthermore, there have been assurances from all sides that water in lakes, streams and basins can in no way be considered a commodity. Therefore, water in its raw format is not covered by NAFTA. Consequently, there is nothing in NAFTA that could force us to transfer water to the United States. Prior to signing the NAFTA the three governments issued a joint statement to this effect. It stated that the governments of Canada, the United States and Mexico in order to correct false interpretations issued a joint public statement such as the parties in the North American Free Trade Agreement.

• (1845)

The NAFTA creates no rights to the natural water resources of any party to the agreement. Unless water in any form has entered into commerce and become a good or product, it is not covered in the provisions of the trade agreement under the NAFTA.

Nothing in the NAFTA would oblige the NAFTA partners to exploit water for commercial use or to begin to export water in any form. Water in its natural state in rivers, lakes, reservoirs, aquifers, water basins and the like is not a good or product. It is not traded and therefore is not and never has been subject to any terms of the agreement.

Just the fact that we are having to clarify it makes people wonder whether it was missed in the free trade agreement. I restate that we want to make sure we tie it down and not allow any possibility of it happening.

From this statement it would seem we are safe as long as water does not enter into commerce, but I do have that concern. Canada already has a policy of prohibiting interbasin water transfers, but policy is not law. New governments can bring in new policies. Why not take the advice of the member for Kamloops and back this policy with legislation? I agree that we should do it.

Back in 1988 similar legislation was introduced but it died on the Order Paper and was never resurrected. Off and on over the past decades the United States has faced significant water problems. Despite occasional droughts Americans have an extremely high water consumption rate per capita. This is partly due to irrigation practices of the agriculture industry and the fact that Americans persist in growing water intensive crops.

To deal with this recurring problem various American and Canadian interests dreamed up massive water diversion proposals in the mid-fifties and early sixties. There was the North American Water and Power Alliance, PRIME and the Grand Canal scheme. They used different methods like tunnels, canals, pipelines and dams to divert water from B.C., Alberta and Quebec south of the border. That was their dream.

Although the public uproar against such projects pretty much killed them, occasionally there is still talk about scaled down versions. Why have Canadians become so concerned? The fact is that Canadians have less clean fresh water than one would think. Many of southern lakes and rivers are polluted with industrial waste and sewage, and most of our rivers of course flow north away from our major centres. We cannot really afford to squander the fresh water that remains. Commercial interests that want to use fresh groundwater have put it under great pressure in some areas of the country. Water will be a very important issue in the future and we need to maintain it.

A further problem has to do with the environment. Sending our water south can have massive ecological repercussions. Interbasin transfers can introduce parasites and other organisms into new environments where they can have devastating effects. A recent example is the introduction of zebra mussels into the Great Lakes.

There could also be detrimental effects on fish and bird species where fresh water flows are introduced into estuaries affecting the salinity of the water. Massive water diversions can change climatic conditions and introduce mercury and other contaminants into the food chain.

In conclusion, the House should support the bill. The Reform Party has always insisted that Canada maintain control of its natural water. It would have been preferable to include water rights under the NAFTA. We failed to do that. They should be included in legislation. We should have a policy that restricts interbasin transfer that might make water exports possible. We support our colleague from Kamloops.

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Kamloops deserves to be complimented for bringing the bill before us. It allows us to discuss the question of water policy.

Under a Liberal government in 1983 a study was commissioned on water which resulted in the Pearse report entitled "Currents of Change", an inquiry on federal water policy which saw the light of

day in 1986. Chapter 12 of the report contained a thorough analysis of water exports as one of the many components of water policy.

• (1850)

The Pearse report has been languishing since then. Its main recommendations are waiting either to be implemented in their original form or modified. In this sense Bill C-232 is extremely helpful because it reminds us that the whole question of water needs to be visited urgently.

The bill relates to the export of water. I concur with the main thrust of the private member's bill. However I cannot find, as he does, any reference in the NAFTA that would commit the Government of Canada to export water. My recollection is that there is only a reference to mineral water, as the parliamentary secretary indicated in his intervention. Nevertheless, if the member for Kamloops has a section of the NAFTA that specifically implies Canada's commitment to export water, I would be grateful if he were to bring it to our attention.

We are talking about the role of the International Joint Commission which needs to be revisited to determine whether it is timely and effective and, if not, whether it has to be recast in a new role.

We are also talking about whether our water research facilities, particularly with respect to fresh water, are adequate; whether we are using water in Canada in an efficient manner; whether the quality of water at the municipal level is adequate; and whether there are ways of improving it.

As the member for Laurentides indicated, we need to look at the trends in groundwater. If the trends are downward, as she and some hydrologists indicated, we need to look at the predictions for the long term so we can ensure the use of water is sustainable and future generations, the grandchildren of our grandchildren, will have access to groundwater in the same manner as we do despite the predicted increase in population.

The member for Kamloops said there was tacit approval for the sale of water to U.S. and Mexico. He seems to be stretching it a bit beyond belief. I do not see any evidence of that. The strong point of the bill is that it draws our attention to the fact that whenever there is an interbasin transfer of water there is an impact on the ecosystem. There is an impact on plants, animals and even sometimes on the micro climate.

Therefore interbasin transfers should be a thing of the past and ought never to be considered again, if at all possible, as was the case with the not lamented disappearance of the Grand Canal proposal. That proposal received under the Conservative regime of 1984 to 1994 a grant to facilitate its fulfilment. It was one of the greatest misuses of public money I can remember.

Private Members' Business

I welcomed the parliamentary secretary indicating that a review of water policy was currently taking place. That was the best kept secret in town. Nevertheless it is a good one. We welcome that fact. We all look forward to the phase when the review will become open, which will then allow parliamentarians, the public, interested parties and so on to participate.

• (1855)

In discussing the management of water and how humans relate to it, one cannot help but make a brief reference to dam construction as the member for Thunder Bay did so eloquently in his intervention. We all hope the construction of dams remains a thing of the past. It has had its phase but we must learn to operate and function in relation to water within the means made available to us without interfering and damaging nature in the way we have done so far.

In this respect I can only think of the horrendous damage to the native economy that has been caused by the construction of the Great Whale Dam in northern Quebec and the proposal which fortunately was suspended thereafter because of strong opposition to it.

The times of megaprojects are over. At least I hope they are over and we can manage our requirements for water in a more thoughtful and careful manner, being aware of the ecological impact.

We need to examine the pricing, quality and management of water; the international questions including the question of water export; and the role of the institutions we have established over time to manage better the waters we share with our neighbours.

In conclusion, I cannot stress too strongly the necessity of the Pearse report finally being made the object of a thorough review and a policy being announced that will implement the recommendations contained therein.

I would ask that the member for Oakville—Milton be allowed to speak for 10 minutes.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Davenport has proposed that there be unanimous consent to permit the member to speak for 10 minutes. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville—Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the private member's bill put forward by the member for Kamloops. It seems appropriate that a bill to oppose water export has been introduced in the House by the member from British Columbia. No other province has figured as prominently over the past three decades in proposals to export fresh water from this country. He is justifiably concerned about this state of affairs, which I would like to review briefly.

Private Members' Business

In the 1960s the most publicized of all the mega schemes to redistribute continental water resources was the North American Water and Power Alliance, sometimes called NAWAPA, designed by the Ralph Parsons engineering firm of Los Angeles. It was premised on the capture of headwaters of the Yukon, Skeena, Peace, Columbia and Fraser Rivers and their storage in the huge Rocky Mountain trench of British Columbia before diversion elsewhere.

• (1900)

Geologists questioned the capacity of the trench to bear the weight of such a massive reservoir without increasing earthquake and slide hazards. In a mountainous province where habitable lowland is at a premium, planners were reluctant to take the risks that such a mega scheme implied. Agricultural acreage, wildlife habitat and communities as large as Prince George could be flooded out. West-east rail and road links between B.C. and the rest of Canada could be disrupted by this creation of such a huge reservoir. At the time, British Columbians were already experiencing enough valley floods in projects serving the Columbia River treaty and Peace River power projects and so the NAWAPA scheme was rejected.

In the mid-1980s, however, the provincial government in Victoria decided to entertain another form of fresh water export, inviting applications for marine transport from streams in its coastal region. When drought struck, American southwest communities like Santa Barbara looked north for supplemental supplies and B.C. entrepreneurs were quick to respond with supertanker proposals. Just as the first contract was about to be signed 1991, however, the province was forced by public controversy to declare a moratorium on this development. Problems included aboriginal land claims and a proliferation of applications by various proponents to draw fresh water from the same source region. As well there were concerns about navigation hazards and fisheries protection. This moratorium was replaced in 1995 by provincial legislation banning bulk water export of any kind.

This 1995 legislation effectively scuttled another interbasin transfer scheme. Multinational Water and Power Incorporated planned to divert 1 million acre-feet of flow from the North Thompson River to the Columbia River where it would flow across the international boundary and then be sent by pipeline to the Shasta reservoir in California. This was the proposal which motivated the hon. member for Kamloops to rally his constituency and neighbouring communities in opposition and to table well over 100,000 signatures in this House toward that end. Had the proposal not fallen flat among British Columbians, it might well have had a difficult time anyway passing existing federal hurdles, namely the approvals required under the International River Improvements Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act and the Fisheries Act.

Meanwhile smaller exports of water have proceeded in several forms. Treated water from greater Vancouver regional district

pipelines serves the community of Point Roberts in Washington. Ground water supplies in the northern Okanagan Valley are trucked in bulk to bottling plants south of the border. And of course bottled water is exported. These represent negligible volumes at present compared with available resources.

There is no conflict between the B.C. legislation and the federal water policy which was tabled in this House in 1987. The policy opposes large scale water export, as by diversion of lakes or rivers, but allows for consideration of small scale exports under provincial licensing, providing that federal interests such as navigation, fisheries, aboriginal rights and external trade and treaties are taken into account.

The Government of Canada therefore supports B.C.'s decision to prohibit the large scale or bulk export of fresh water from the provinces. The province's legislative initiative will encourage a growing water bottling industry and at the same time protect its salmon fishery and other public values.

As the hon. member for Kamloops suggested, the last chapter of the water export story has not been written. Further proposals will appear in response to international crisis or opportunities. If British Columbia has passed legislation specifically to address the water export issue to its own satisfaction, the federal government and other provinces have not taken the same path.

The issue and its many dimensions continue to evolve. It is more than likely that the British Columbia approach, which simply prohibits bulk water export, will not be the solution chosen by all other jurisdictions in Canada. Newfoundland, for example, has decided to take advantage of the latitude allowed by the federal water policy to explore small scale trade opportunities from supertanker exports.

• (1905)

Ontario realizes that protection of its Great Lakes advantages depends less on unilateral declarations against exports than on forming a common bond with neighbouring state governments in this international drainage system.

It is clear that the hon. member's bill is too narrow to resolve the longstanding water export issue. It addresses one prominent threat to Canada's water heritage, proposals for the diversion of lakes and rivers to flow to the United States. But it ignores other means by which water can be exported and it does not offer a framework of national applicability suitable for adoption by the Government of Canada.

I suggest that it is not necessary to rush Bill C-232 into law in order to save Canada's water resources from being lost to foreign markets. There is enough time for the federal government to consult with provinces and public interests about a more comprehensive approach that would apply across the country, one which is sensitive to the various water resources of our various provinces

and territories and one which will sustain Canada's regional and national advantages over the long term.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP ACT

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.) moved that Bill C-84, an act to amend the Citizenship Act and the Immigration Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in this House to support what I feel to be an important and necessary piece of legislation.

Recently, it became apparent that we needed to strengthen the provisions of the *Citizenship and Immigration Acts*. The Federal Court identified this problem and brought it to the attention of the Government. Now we intend to fix it. That is what good government is all about: continually seeking to improve the institutions that serve the public and the legislation that governs society.

The issue addressed by Bill C-84 is a technical one which potentially affects only a very small number of people. Nevertheless, it is vital that we address it now, as it concerns two things which are of supreme importance to the people of Canada: national security and our citizenship.

It is clear to me that Canadians of all backgrounds and all parts of the country value their citizenship. This is a distinction which is very precious. Being a Canadian means belonging to a very special home. It means holding a passport which is respected and honoured around the world. And it means sharing a colourful national history and a beautiful and diverse country.

Being a Canadian citizen is a special right which we share. Every year, many immigrants come to this country with the hope of one day becoming Canadians themselves. We are happy to share our citizenship with those who want it and work hard to deserve it.

But there is always a small number of people who do not deserve this distinction. There are a few individuals whose actions threaten to tarnish and diminish the value of our citizenship. And there are those who would use Canadian citizenship as a shield for their

Government Orders

subversive activity. Why should we allow them to become citizens, or even permanent residents? No, we should not. I am sure we are all in agreement about that.

But the reality of the situation is that we might have no choice in certain circumstances.

• (1910)

I know that this sounds surprising. But given the problem in the law the courts have identified, there are situations in which we might not be able to prevent men and women who are security risks from becoming permanent residents or citizens.

Citizenship would be granted under the existing legislation despite the best judgment of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the Government and the people of Canada.

That is why I am standing before you today, and why I feel that the House must support this Bill. Our citizenship is precious, and we must strive to protect it.

[English]

One of the primary roles of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service is to protect the national security of Canada. This is an important organization which serves this country very well. But in a democratic and free country like ours it is important to have checks and balances in place to ensure that our law enforcement agencies conduct themselves in a just and fair manner. We impose safeguards to protect the rights and freedoms of all our citizens.

One important safeguard is the Security Intelligence Review Committee. It monitors CSIS activities on behalf of Parliament and the public. Over the years its members have performed their functions professionally and admirably. Routine security checks are an important part of the approval process in the granting of both citizenship and permanent resident status. There are provisions in both the Citizenship Act and Immigration Act to deny citizenship and permanent resident status if in the opinion of both the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the Solicitor General of Canada there are reasonable grounds to believe that an applicant is linked to organized crime, poses a security threat or was a senior member of a government that engaged in terrorism, flagrant human rights violations, war crimes or crimes against humanity.

In such instances they may make a report to the Security Intelligence Review Committee and ask for a review of the case. An individual can be declared a threat only if the committee agrees. This system works well. It achieves a fair balance between the rights of the individuals concerned and the need to protect the Canadian public from potential harm.

There are occasions when the committee may be unable to execute its duties. There are exceptional cases where members of the committee may find themselves in conflict of interest situations or somehow open to a perception of bias. Under the current system

Government Orders

there are no provisions to deal with this eventuality. The result can be very disturbing.

If, for instance, the committee is unable to render a decision in a citizenship case because of the perception of bias the minister would have no choice but to grant citizenship to a person who could compromise our country's national security. This is clearly unacceptable.

The purpose of Bill C-84 is to deal with this potential situation. While the cases we are discussing are rare, we cannot simply ignore them. When we are talking about security issues we must be vigilant and act decisively. We want to put in place an alternative solution that would serve to replace the Security Intelligence Review Committee when that body believes itself to be incapable of performing its duties.

The bill proposes to give the governor in council the power to appoint a retired judge to perform the review committee's duties when this occurs. This judge will have the same powers and obligations that are accorded to the review committee.

• (1915)

It is that simple. We need to have a mechanism in place to deal with relatively rare but potentially very serious situations. This will not affect the existing criteria for refusing people entry into Canada. This legislation will not diminish the powers of the CSIS or the review committee in any way.

What we are proposing to do today is simply correct potential procedural irregularities. It is a small step, but an important one.

[*Translation*]

We have found a problem and are taking steps to fix it. This bill is an efficient and necessary measure. I am told that opposition parties will be introducing amendments to improve the bill. We will be pleased to support improvements in the interest of all Canadians.

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on Bill C-84, an act to amend the Citizenship Act and the Immigration Act.

This bill was introduced on February 20 by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and will be passed today, with our consent, on second and third reading. The minister has just expressed her thanks to the official opposition for its co-operation. You have already seen in the past four years that the Bloc Quebecois is a responsible party.

We are a sovereignist party, and Quebecers have entrusted us with the role of official opposition. We have fulfilled our mandate with a great deal of ability and a serious attitude, which is why

today we are co-operating in the passage of this bill, which we feel is an important one. We also agree to this bill being fast tracked.

The amendments to the legislation mainly address the possibility for a retired judge appointed by the Governor in Council to replace, and therefore perform the duties of, the security intelligence review committee, or SIRC, when the latter is of the opinion that it cannot fulfil its duties, because of apparent lack of impartiality, conflict of interest, or any other reason deemed necessary.

The government has just told us that these legislative changes are intended to ensure the security of the country. Should a situation arise in which an individual constitutes a threat to the security of Canada, SIRC carries out an investigation in accordance with section 19 of the Citizenship Act. The committee then reports to the Governor in Council, who decides whether citizenship is to be granted or not. In the case of an application for permanent residence, the process is the same, except that the decision comes from the Federal Court.

Bill C-84 is presented as an alternative solution, when SIRC cannot perform its duties, for instance by reason of lack of impartiality. Under Bill C-84, the governor in council may appoint a retired judge for a term of three to five years to perform the duties of the review committee set out in the Citizenship Act and the Immigration Act.

The bill can be retroactive. It includes transitional provisions aimed at recognition of a legal decision rendered with respect to the jurisdiction of SIRC before the coming into force of the bill. The decision must, however, be definitive and without appeal.

According to section 19 of the Citizenship Act, the Minister may make a report to the Review Committee, when of the opinion that a person should not be granted citizenship, administered the oath of citizenship, or issued a certificate of renunciation.

• (1920)

In such cases there must be reasonable grounds to believe that the person concerned will engage in activity that constitutes a threat to the security of Canada or that is part of a pattern of criminal activity planned and organized by a number of persons acting in concert in furtherance of the commission of any offence that may be punishable under any Act of Parliament by way of indictment.

The minister shall, within ten days after a report is made by CSIS, send a notice informing the person concerned of the report. The review committee shall investigate the grounds on which the report is based. The review committee shall, as soon as practicable after a report is made to it, send to the person with respect to whom the report is made a statement summarizing such information available to it. The review committee shall, on completion of an investigation, make a report to the minister and provide the complainant with the conclusion of the report.

Government Orders

Bill C-84 follows on the heels of the Zundel case. Zundel, a German citizen, applied for Canadian citizenship in 1993. On the basis of information obtained by CSIS, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration sent a report to the Security Intelligence Review Committee stating there were reasonable grounds to believe that Zundel constituted a threat to the security of Canada.

Zundel was advised that the SIRC had been ordered to investigate him. If the report was confirmed, his application for citizenship might be turned down, which was the case. Zundel is a person with extreme rightwing views who denies the existence of the Holocaust. He is a member of so-called hate organizations and is therefore a threat to the security of Canada. These conclusions can be found in a report on the Heritage Front. And as you know, that particular case attracted the attention of the media.

Zundel therefore asked the Federal Court to prohibit the SIRC from conducting an investigation on the grounds of a reasonable apprehension of bias.

Zundel's counsel then filed an application for judicial review on the grounds of this apprehension of bias on the part of the SIRC. The federal court judge issued an order prohibiting the SIRC from continuing its investigation, on the grounds of bias. The federal court therefore upheld the appeal by Zundel's counsel. Furthermore, the judge suggested how the legislation could be amended to deal with such situations.

So far, the minister was not in a position to reject Ernst Zundel's application for citizenship. He might be forced to grant him his citizenship, even if this individual might be a threat to national security.

The Bloc Quebecois agrees with the bill but obtained the consent of the government party for moving two amendments. The first one concerns the appointment of a retired judge and reads as follows: "After consultation by the Prime Minister of Canada with the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons and the leader in the House of Commons, of each party having at least twelve members in that House, the Governor in Council may".

With this amendment we want to avoid any hint of patronage with respect to appointments made by this government, as has happened in the case of commissioners appointed to the IRRB.

We also agree with the amendment moved by the Reform Party.

The second amendment by the Bloc Quebecois reads as follows: "The person appointed under subsection 39.1(1) must, not later than September 30 in each fiscal year, submit to the Solicitor General of Canada a report of the activities of the person during the preceding fiscal year and the Solicitor General of Canada must cause the report to be laid before each House of Parliament on any

of the first fifteen days on which that House is sitting after the day the Solicitor General of Canada receives it."

• (1925)

I agree with the points made earlier by the minister. This individual denies the existence of the Holocaust in which more than six million Jews were exterminated by the Nazis during the second world war. I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Jewish community for its exceptional contribution to Canada and Quebec. I visited the Museum of the Holocaust recently in Washington, and I again realized of why we must not let this happen again today.

For all these reasons, I support Bill C-84.

[*English*]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on Bill C-84. Although the bill is very simple and straightforward, it concerns the Citizenship Act and the Immigration Act.

The bill would allow a retired judge to review cases where SIRC is deemed incapable of fulfilling its responsibilities. While the bill is very straightforward its history is not. Before landed immigrants obtain Canadian citizenship their backgrounds are reviewed. Some individuals applying for a Canadian citizenship have involved themselves in activities that can be deemed to be a threat to the security of Canada. Therefore, there is a process in place to prevent these individuals from becoming Canadian citizens, as there should be.

Sections 19 and 20 of the Citizenship Act define the procedure that is to be followed. These procedures are: If the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the applicant for Canadian citizenship will engage in activities that will constitute a threat to the security of Canada, the minister may make a report to this effect to the Security Intelligence Review Committee or SIRC as it is more commonly known. Within 10 days of making this report to SIRC, the minister shall notify the applicant of the report. SIRC is then required to conduct an investigation. The applicant is sent a statement of circumstances that sets out the grounds that give rise to the minister's report.

Following its investigation, SIRC then reports the results to the governor in council. The governor in council may then make a declaration that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the applicant will engage in activity that constitutes a threat to the security of Canada.

Such a declaration precludes the applicant from being granted Canadian citizenship but only for a two-year period. The applicant can then make another application. What constitutes a threat to the

Government Orders

security of Canada and how SIRC conducts its investigation is all laid out in the Canadian Security Intelligence Services Act.

Section 48(2) of the CSIS act states that during the course of the SIRC investigation, the applicant, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and CSIS may all present evidence and make representation either personally or by counsel.

I would like to refer to the Zündel case. This case which has inspired C-34 concerns the application of Ernst Zündel. Mr. Zündel has obtained enough notoriety that I do not believe that it is essential to repeat his claims to infamy.

Suffice it to say that Mr. Zündel immigrated to Canada on September 2, 1958. On October 24, 1993 he applied for Canadian citizenship. On August 5, 1995 he was notified by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration at that time that the minister had made a report to SIRC pursuant to subsection 19(2) of the Citizenship Act. The letter informed Mr. Zündel that there were reasonable grounds to believe that he would engage in activity that constitutes a threat to the security of Canada. The letter also stated that the minister made his determination based on information and advice provided by CSIS.

On August 31, 1995 the executive director of SIRC, Maurice Archdeacon wrote to Mr. Zündel advising him that SIRC had received the minister's report concerning his application for citizenship. The letter also advised that SIRC would send Mr. Zündel a summary of information available to SIRC to permit him to be as fully informed as possible of the circumstances giving rise to the minister's report.

On October 30, 1995 SIRC sent a letter to Mr. Zündel advising him that a review committee was conducting an investigation and included a statement of circumstances that gave rise to the minister's report. The letter advised that the activities which CSIS believed he would engage in were those described in paragraph 2(c) of the CSIS act which defines threat to the security of Canada to mean "activities within or relating to Canada directed toward or in support of the threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or property for the purpose of achieving a political objective within Canada or a foreign state".

On November 22, 1995 counsel for SIRC and others met with Mr. Zündel and his lawyer to explain the investigative process and answer any questions.

• (1930)

In a letter dated December 11, 1995 Mr. Archdeacon wrote to Mr. Zündel's counsel to advise him that SIRC was prepared to proceed with the hearing part of the investigation. A number of adjournments postponed the hearing phase of SIRC's investigation, but then in a letter of February 26, 1996 Mr. Zündel's counsel requested another adjournment so he could file an application for

judicial review on the grounds of a reasonable apprehension of bias on the part of SIRC.

The basis of Mr. Zündel's allegation of bias was a report written by SIRC entitled "The Heritage Front Affair". In a letter dated February 28 Mr. Archdeacon refused the request. On March 21 a motion was brought before the Federal Court of Canada seeking a stay of proceedings concerning the SIRC hearing that was scheduled for March 25 and an order for an expedited hearing of Mr. Zündel's application for judicial review.

Madam Justice McGillis refused to grant the stay of proceedings but she granted the motion for an expedited hearing. On June 10 and 11 the application for judicial review was heard before Justice Heald of the federal court in Ottawa.

After dealing with a number of procedural motions the court got down to the narrow issue of the case to decide if SIRC should be prohibited from carrying out the proceedings mandated by section 19 of the Citizenship Act. First the court had to determine what test for bias was applicable to the case while acknowledging that all administrative boards owe a duty of fairness to those whose interests they must determine. The courts have recognized that the duty of fairness varies depending on the nature and function of the particular board.

For example, a board that performs policy formation should not be susceptible to a charge of bias just because it expresses opinions prior to its hearings. On the other hand, administrative boards that are primarily adjudicative in their functions are expected to comply with the standard applicable to the courts. In arguments before the courts counsel for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration argued that SIRC's role is closer to a policy formation board, while Mr. Zündel's counsel argued that it was primarily adjudicative and therefore attracted the higher standard of impartiality mandated by the informed bystander test.

In determining where on this broad spectrum SIRC's function fell, the judge reviewed SIRC's mandate under section 19 of the Citizenship Act, which in the words of SIRC's executive director was to conduct an investigation to determine whether there were reasonable grounds to believe that Zündel would engage in activities that constituted a threat to the security of Canada.

The judge noted that while the applicant, the minister and CSIS could make representation, SIRC's investigation would be conducted in private. Once SIRC completed its investigation it would make a report to the governor in council. It is the governor in council that upon SIRC's report decides whether or not to declare there are reasonable grounds to believe that Mr. Zündel would engage in activity considered a threat to the security of Canada.

The court pointed out that while it is not disputed it was the role of the governor in council and not SIRC to make the final decision,

SIRC's role could not be understated. It is SIRC that conducts the hearing at which it assesses the witnesses and weighs their evidence. It is SIRC that receives the submissions of the interested parties. It is SIRC that takes all the available information and issues the report.

Since Mr. Zundel could not make representation before the governor in council, the only opportunity for him to challenge the allegations against him was in front of SIRC. The court determined that while SIRC was not the ultimate decision maker as to whether there were reasonable grounds to believe that Mr. Zundel would engage in activity that constituted a threat to the security of Canada, SIRC played a vital and paramount role in that determination.

In the judge's view the function of SIRC at least in relation to section 19 of the Citizenship Act came closer to the adjudicative end of the function. Thus it attracted the standard of impartiality that was required by the informed bystander test. Once the federal court came to this conclusion it was then faced with the process of applying the informed bystander test for bias to the Zundel case.

Mr. Zundel claimed that the view of SIRC in the Heritage Front report gave rise to reasonable apprehension of bias against him. While the court ruled that the accuracy of the content of the Heritage Front report was irrelevant to the issues, it was important to note that SIRC offered the report and made the statements contained therein. In other words the court did not have to decide whether SIRC's findings in the Heritage Front report were valid. What was important to this case was the fact that SIRC made those findings.

Having been involved for over 19 months in the study of the Heritage Front report, it was very evident to me that SIRC had made statements about Mr. Zundel which were very biased in their nature. The court quickly found that the statements of SIRC in the Heritage Front report were extremely similar to those used by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in another incident. It is not terribly surprising because CSIS is a source of information both for the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and SIRC. It was evident that the conclusions in the evidence given by SIRC from the information received from CSIS led to the bias in the report that was reported.

● (1935)

The Reform Party believes some individuals have landed immigrant status in Canada who should be denied Canadian citizenship. Bill C-84 is an attempt by the government to undo the difficulties created by the Security Intelligence Review Committee overstating in the report and being too political in its discussions and deliberations. It has placed the government in the position where it has to protect Canadians and Canadian citizenship by tightening the rules and regulations to allow a retired judge to take the job that SIRC should have been able to do on its own.

Government Orders

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Kilgour in the chair.)

(Clause 1 agreed to.)

[*Translation*]

On clause 2

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ) moved:

That Bill C-84, in Clause 2, be amended by replacing line 21 on page 1 with the following:

"19.1 (1) After consultation by the Prime Minister of Canada with the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons and the leader in the House of Commons of each party having at least twelve members in that House, the Governor in Council may"

(Amendment agreed to.)

[*English*]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.) moved:

That Bill C-84, in Clause 2, be amended by replacing line 6 on page 2 with the following:

Remuneration
and expenses

"(3) The appointed person shall be paid, for each day that the person performs duties under this Act, such"

(Amendment agreed to.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ) moved:

That Bill C-84, in Clause 2, be amended by adding after line 22 on page 2 the following:

"19.3 The person appointed under subsection 19.1(1) must, not later than September 30 in each fiscal year, submit to the Solicitor General of Canada a report of the activities of the person during the preceding fiscal year and the Solicitor General of Canada must cause the report to be laid before each House of Parliament on any of the first fifteen days on which that House is sitting after the day the Solicitor General of Canada receives it."

(Amendment agreed to.)

(Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.)

[*English*]

(Clauses 3 and 4 agreed to.)

Government Orders

● (1940)

[*Translation*]

On Clause 5

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ) moved:

That Bill C-84, in Clause 5, be amended by replacing line 17 on page 3 with the following:

“39.1 (1) After consultation by the Prime Minister of Canada with the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons and the leader in the House of Commons of each party having at least twelve members in that House, the Governor in Council may”

(Amendment agreed to.)

[*English*]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.) moved:

That Bill C-84, in Clause 5, be amended by replacing line 27 on page 3 with the following: Remuneration and expenses

“(3) The appointed person shall be paid, for each day that the person performs duties under this Act as, such”

Amendment agreed to.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ) moved:

That Bill C-84, in Clause 5, be amended by adding the following after line 10 on page 4:

“Annual Reports

39.3 The person appointed under subsection 39.1(1) must, not later than September 30 in each fiscal year, submit to the Solicitor General of Canada a report of the activities of the person during the preceding fiscal year and the Solicitor General of Canada must cause the report to be laid before each House of Parliament on any of the fifteen first days on which that House is sitting after the day the Solicitor General of Canada receives it.”

(Amendment agreed to.)

(Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.)

(Clauses 6 and 7 agreed to.)

On Clause 8

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ) moved:

That Bill C-84, in Clause 8, be amended by replacing line 1 on page 5 with the following:

“1.1 (1) After consultation by the Prime Minister of Canada with the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons and the leader in the House of Commons of each party having at least twelve members in that House, the Governor in Council may”

(Amendment agreed to.)

[*English*]

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.) moved:

That Bill C-84, in Clause 8, be amended by replacing line 11 on page 5 with the following: Remuneration and expenses

“(3) The appointed person shall be paid, for each day that the person performs duties under this Act as, such”

Amendment agreed to.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ) moved:

That Bill C-84, in Clause 8, be amended by adding the following after line 27 on page 5:

“Annual Reports

81.3 The person appointed under subsection 81.1(1) must, not later than September 30 in each fiscal year, submit to the Solicitor General of Canada a report of the activities of the person during the preceding fiscal year and the Solicitor General of Canada must cause the report to be laid before each House of Parliament on any of the fifteen first days on which that House is sitting after the day the Solicitor General of Canada receives it.”

(Amendment agreed to.)

(Clause 8, as amended, agreed to.)

(Clauses 9 to 12 inclusive agreed to.)

(Title agreed to.)

(Bill, as amended, agreed to.)

(Bill reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed.)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 7.45 p.m., the House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

(The House adjourned at 7.45 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, April 16, 1997

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

National Volunteer Week	
Mr. Proud	9793
Social Housing	
Mr. Fillion	9793
Human Rights	
Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	9793
Miller High School	
Mr. Solomon	9793
National Volunteer Week	
Ms. Phinney	9794
Seniors Benefit	
Mr. O'Brien (London—Middlesex)	9794
Salmon Fishery	
Mr. McWhinney	9794
National volunteer week	
Mr. Nunez	9794
Parks Canada	
Mr. Breitreuz (Yellowhead)	9795
National Volunteer Week	
Ms. Clancy	9795
Spar Aerospace	
Mr. Malhi	9795
Mayor of Thetford Mines	
Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac)	9795
High Tech Industry	
Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge)	9795
Student Debt	
Mr. Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)	9796
Leukemia	
Mr. Lee	9796
ORAL QUESTION PERIOD	
Linguistic School Boards	
Mr. Duceppe	9796
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	9796
Mr. Duceppe	9796
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	9796
Mr. Duceppe	9797
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	9797
Mrs. Venne	9797
Mr. Dion	9797
Mrs. Venne	9797
Mr. Dion	9797
Government of Canada	
Mr. Manning	9797
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	9798
Mr. Manning	9798

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	9798
Mr. Manning	9798
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	9798
Linguistic School Boards	
Mr. Duceppe	9798
Mr. Dion	9799
Mr. Duceppe	9799
Mr. Dion	9799
Pearson International Airport	
Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre)	9799
Mr. Anderson	9799
Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre)	9799
Mr. Anderson	9800
Pearson Airport	
Mr. Crête	9800
Mr. Anderson	9800
Mr. Crête	9800
Mr. Anderson	9800
Fisheries	
Mr. Cummins	9800
Mr. Mifflin	9800
Mr. Cummins	9801
Mr. Mifflin	9801
Indian affairs	
Mr. Bachand	9801
Mr. Irwin	9801
Mr. Bachand	9801
Mr. Irwin	9801
Taxation	
Ms. Cohen	9802
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	9802
Justice	
Mr. Ramsay	9802
Mr. Rock	9802
Mr. Ramsay	9802
Mr. Rock	9802
Hyundai plant in bromont	
Mr. Leroux (Shefford)	9803
Mr. Bodnar	9803
Minister of Canadian Heritage	
Mr. Mills (Red Deer)	9803
Ms. Copps	9803
Housing	
Mr. Blaikie	9803
Mr. Irwin	9803
Immigration	
Mr. Dromisky	9803
Mrs. Robillard	9803
Points of Order	
Comments during Question Period	
Mr. Mills (Red Deer)	9804
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
Government response to petitions	
Mr. Zed	9804

Dene and Metis Land Claim	
Mr. Patry	9804
Gwitch'in Land Claim Agreement	
Mr. Patry	9804
Committees of the House	
Health	
Mrs. Hickey	9804
Agriculture and Agri-food	
Mr. Vanclief	9804
Procedure and House Affairs	
Mr. Zed	9804
Privacy Act	
Bill C-405. Motions for introduction and first reading deemed adopted	9804
Mrs. Chamberlain	9804
Petitions	
Parental Rights	
Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	9805
Human Rights	
Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	9805
Criminal Code	
Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	9805
Parental Rights	
Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	9805
National Highway System	
Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	9805
Abortion	
Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	9805
Gun Control	
Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	9805
Excise Tax	
Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	9805
Age of Consent	
Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)	9805
National Highway System	
Mr. Dromisky	9806
Railways	
Mr. Dromisky	9806
National Unity	
Mr. Proud	9806
Health Foods	
Mr. Gallaway	9806
Highways	
Mr. Graham	9806
Taxation	
Mr. Graham	9806
Nuclear Weapons	
Mr. Graham	9806
Nuclear Reactors	
Mr. Graham	9806
Fuel Prices	
Mr. Riis	9806
Taxation	
Mr. Riis	9806
Highways	
Mr. Riis	9807
Age of Consent	
Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre)	9807
Nuclear Weapons	
Mr. Ianno	9807

Taxation	
Mr. Ianno	9807
Mr. Schmidt	9807
Public Safety Officers	
Mr. Szabo	9807
Taxation	
Mr. Szabo	9807
Labelling of Alcoholic Beverages	
Mr. Szabo	9807
Justice	
Mr. Hill (MacLeod)	9807
Health Foods	
Mr. Hill (MacLeod)	9807
Tax on Books	
Mr. McTeague	9808
Divorce Act	
Mr. McTeague	9808
Health Foods	
Mr. Steckle	9808
Credit Cards	
Mr. Crête	9808
Questions Passed as Orders for Returns	
Mr. Zed	9808

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Canada Marine Act	
Bill C-44. Motion for third reading	9808
Mr. Goodale	9808
Mr. Keyes	9808
Mr. Crête	9811
Mr. Silye	9817
Mr. Comuzzi	9821
Mr. Hoepfner	9822
Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood)	9823

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Committees of the House	
Finance	
Mr. Peterson	9824
Business of the House	
Mr. Zed	9824

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Canada Marine Act	
Bill C-44. Consideration resumed of motion for third reading	9824
Mr. Rocheleau	9824
Mrs. Ablonczy	9826
Division on motion deferred	9826
Criminal Code	
Bill C-55. Consideration resumed of motion for third reading	9826
Canada Marine Act	
Bill C-44. Consideration resumed of motion for third reading	9827
Motion agreed to on division: Yeas, 128; Nays, 39	9827
(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.) ...	9828
Criminal Code	
Bill C-55. Consideration resumed at third reading stage ..	9828
Motion agreed to on division: Yeas, 141; Nays, 27.	9828

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Canada Water Export Prohibition Act

Bill C-232. Motion for second reading	9829
Mr. Riis	9829
Mr. Godfrey	9832
Mrs. Guay	9833
Mr. Dromisky	9834
Mr. Penson	9835
Mr. Caccia	9836
Ms. Brown (Oakville—Milton)	9837

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Citizenship Act

Bill C-84. Motion for second reading	9839
Mrs. Robillard	9839
Mr. Nunez	9840
Ms. Meredith	9841
(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Kilgour in the chair.) ...	9843
(Clause 1 agreed to.)	9843
On clause 2	9843
Mr. Nunez	9843
Amendment	9843
(Amendment agreed to.)	9843
Ms. Meredith	9843
Amendment	9843
(Amendment agreed to.)	9843
Mr. Nunez	9843
Amendment	9843

(Amendment agreed to.)	9843
(Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.)	9843
(Clauses 3 and 4 agreed to.)	9843
On Clause 5	9844
Mr. Nunez	9844
Amendment	9844
(Amendment agreed to.)	9844
Ms. Meredith	9844
Amendment	9844
(Amendment agreed to.)	9844
Mr. Nunez	9844
Amendment	9844
(Amendment agreed to.)	9844
(Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.)	9844
(Clauses 6 and 7 agreed to.)	9844
On Clause 8	9844
Mr. Nunez	9844
Amendment	9844
(Amendment agreed to.)	9844
Ms. Meredith	9844
Amendment	9844
(Amendment agreed to.)	9844
Mr. Nunez	9844
Amendment	9844
(Amendment agreed to.)	9844
(Clause 8, as amended, agreed to.)	9844
(Clauses 9 to 12 inclusive agreed to.)	9844
(Title agreed to.)	9844
(Bill, as amended, agreed to.)	9844
(Bill reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed.)	9844

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