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Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

CONTENTS

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

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, February 17, 1997

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.) moved that Bill C-296, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (rehabilitation programs), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on my private member's bill, Bill C-296, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (rehabilitation programs).

• (1105)

The purpose of this bill is to require federal inmates to complete programs that will assist in their rehabilitation and make their release on parole contingent, and I emphasize the word contingent, upon their successful completion of such programs.

I hope that I will also be able to shed some light on the problems that exist in Canada's correctional system. I might point out it is a problem that not only I believe exists but the recent report by the auditor general seems also to support my fears.

The mission statement of Correctional Service of Canada is to actively encourage and assist offenders to become law-abiding citizens. Its mission therefore is not only to punish but to rehabilitate at the same time. Good corrections is in effect the successful reduction of the risk of reoffending.

To begin I would like to explain just what process is followed when an offender is remanded into custody at a federal penitentiary. An offender first undergoes an intake assessment to determine their level of risk and their programming needs. Upon returning to the institution, the offender is put through standardized tests which ask questions dealing with their education, intelligence, employment, psychology and lifestyle. Although an offender is allowed to

contribute suggestions regarding the correctional planning process, it is rare that their suggestions are actually followed up on.

The recently released report from the auditor general has shown that the assessment process is indeed weak. He questioned just how qualified are the individuals who assess these offenders upon their entrance into custody. He also stated that the length of time offenders have to wait before receiving counselling is far too long, which is another problem.

Systemic inefficiencies, time constraints, scheduling difficulties and program evaluation and availability tend to undermine the effectiveness and benefits achieved during the programming process. An offender may have to wait as long as three years before being put into any kind of program. What good is a program if it is too little too late? An offender is most vulnerable to help and counselling upon first arriving at the institution. After being left on his or her own for a number months, maybe years, the impact of programming to an offender is of little or no use.

In the Correctional Service of Canada's own literature it is stated that programming must be directly linked to meeting offenders' needs, particularly those who need them almost immediately. If addressed it will result in a pro social behaviour. It should be directed at changing lifestyle patterns to make individuals change their habits and hopefully when they are returned to society they can be contributing members. The literature goes on to state that institutions must ensure that a process is in place so that recommendations developed by case managers and program officers concerning program and work assignments are indeed implemented.

There are many questions that need to be answered. There are obvious weaknesses in the system as it is now. My bill may not be the complete answer but hopefully it will help focus attention on problems which threaten society and our homes as a whole.

The auditor general brought forth a suggestion that Correctional Service of Canada could be doing a much better job overall. In his report he stated that the service's range of programs is impressive but there is always room for improvement. He also went on to state that he found serious problems with federal efforts of rehabilitating offenders and returning them to society.

The auditor general also found that there are a number of cost discrepancies which exist within the system. One program may cost \$2,000 to treat an offender in one institution and a similar program may cost upward of \$7,000 per offender in another

Private Members' Business

institution. Let me state for myself and I know I speak on behalf of my constituents that this is unacceptable. I believe there should be unanimity right across the board in these programs.

The auditor general also reported that a disproportionate amount of resources is being spent on only very few offenders. For example in the 1994-95 budget only 70 per cent of the budget dollars were devoted to rehabilitating sex offenders which of course accounted for only about 20 prisoners in Quebec. That works out to approximately \$85,000 per offender. This is unbelievable and of course unacceptable.

• (1110)

All this is without any proof whatsoever that these individuals had indeed successfully completed the program. Meanwhile approximately 35 per cent of all sex offenders who have been released from federal prisons did not receive any prevention treatment at all. On behalf of my constituents, and I believe on behalf of most Canadians, I say that this is unacceptable.

From the studies I have received from Correctional Service of Canada it seems that the problem does not lie in the programs themselves. On the contrary the programs being developed by researchers of the service are among the best in the world. The problem lies in the way these programs are administered and managed.

Not all programs are accessible in all federal institutions. One reason may be the shortage of trained professionals to deliver these programs. For example, it was recently reported at the Warkworth penitentiary that there are only four therapists to look after 680 inmates. How can four people possibly do an effective job with a population of 680 inmates? I believe they cannot accomplish very much. I offer to the House as a result the tragic examples of two young individuals at the same penitentiary.

The first is a 25-year old by the name of Jamie Taylor who is serving time for killing his best friend when he was 17. When he was first incarcerated he was still considered a young offender and began serving his sentence in the youth detention centres. While there, Jamie began receiving treatment for his anger and violent behaviour on a day to day basis. He worked one on one with case managers and it was reported that he was improving along the way and his attitude was beginning to change.

Upon becoming an adult he was transferred to Warkworth federal penitentiary to complete his life sentence for second degree murder. He is eligible for parole in the year 2000 which if I may remind the House is only just a short three years away. Until that time Jamie Taylor is biding his time. With only four therapists for the entire inmate population, his treatment and therapy sessions have literally stopped.

Mark Williams is the other example. He is a 24-year old inmate at the same institution who is serving a life sentence for killing a Toronto woman during a robbery when he was 17 years old. Mark refers to jail as "a business with him being the inventory sitting on the shelf". He says he has had virtually no treatment since beginning the sentence. He has only seen his case management team four times in six years. He feels he has had no way to rehabilitate himself and no guidance whatsoever. Basically he has felt nothing but anger since he has been in the institution and behind bars and he has had no help in dealing with it.

Mark Williams comes up for parole in 1998, just one year from now. Without any assistance to deal with his problems and feeling anger the way he does, Mark Williams will probably be denied parole. I sincerely I hope he is denied parole because he is not ready to re-enter society. When an individual like Mark Williams is returned, we can see the threat that it might pose on our community and our country as a whole.

The legislation that has been brought forth by the Minister of Justice is intended to punish and rehabilitate at the same time. Therefore we have a responsibility to ensure that programs are available to people like Jamie Taylor and Mark Williams on a day to day basis, but four therapists for 680 inmates simply will not do the job.

These offenders are going to get out one day after they serve their full term. If we do not pay attention to them today, we can well imagine we are going to have problems in the future within our communities as a whole.

My bill today is really nothing historic. More so it is saying that if an offender who is behind bars is asking to be paroled we must make that parole request contingent upon their successfully completing a rehabilitation program. We should use their time in prison to give them the skills they need so that when they eventually become released they can be contributing members to society. It only follows that if a person is given the skills to acquire a job and possibly be a contributing member to society, the chances or opportunities for them reoffending certainly will be diminished greatly. We could help break this cycle which leads to career criminals by offering them these programs.

• (1115)

Correctional Service Canada spends only 7 per cent of its services total budget on rehabilitation programs. If the problem is a lack of funds for making these programs work properly, then perhaps the board could allocate more of its budget dollars toward rehabilitation programs.

I am not saying for more money to be put into the system. On the contrary, the last thing we need to do is ask the Canadian taxpayers to take from their hard earned dollar to put more money into these programs. I am simply saying that perhaps the money that is

already allocated for these programs could be spent more wisely and more efficiently.

It is not only the auditor general who is calling for changes in the systems. Victims rights groups are also questioning the safety of releasing the offenders before they have a chance for rehabilitation.

In a recent news story, the Canadian Resources Centre for Victims of Crimes has called for an inquiry into the National Parole Board's decision to release George Harvey Milne, a convicted sex offender. Milne is currently facing new charges for sexually assaulting young boys. Even though the parole board's own report raised concerns about his potential danger to the community, it approved his release.

The report went on to say that Milne demonstrated no real desire to change and only when all other options were exhausted did he become involved in treatment. When Milne came up for parole on October 30, 1991, the board again noted that he had not benefited to his full potential from treatment and denied parole.

Only one month later the board stated that the risk presented to the community was not unmanageable and granted Milne parole. Shame, I say.

Call me crazy, if you will, but I do not believe that this man could have been rehabilitated in less than one month. Due to the new charges pending against him, obviously he was not.

This is just another example of how the safety of the public is at risk. If the parole board felt that Milne was not fully rehabilitated and still posed a risk, even if it is a small one, it should not have granted him full parole. Because of its decision, more young boys were caused terrible suffering, along with the families and communities as a whole at the hands of this—I do not even know what to call him.

My bill has also received the attention of representatives, for example, from long term offenders in Saskatchewan. A gentleman by the name of Darrell McPhedran is currently the representative of long term offenders in this penitentiary and he has provided me with some insight regarding how our correctional system works from the perspective of an offender.

McPhedran has informed me that he has been exposed to a wide variety of both positive and negative feedback with regard to the usefulness of rehabilitation programs and the delivery of such programs at his institution.

He stated that the general consensus is that programs delivered under the auspices of the psychology department do appear to serve a purpose and are helpful indeed. However, the core group of

Private Members' Business

programs such as educational, vocational and substance abuse tends to be very basic and watered down.

He states that programs are very limited in their scope and that those who are delivering the programs are also under qualified. He has expressed great concern with the way Correctional Service Canada runs its institutions, but in the end his main concern is in the area of programs or lack of available space, especially for long term offenders.

One would say why worry about long term offenders. After all, they are serving lifetime sentences. I would remind people and everybody in this House that today we do not have capital punishment and at some point in time these individuals will serve their full time and re-enter our communities.

If an offender is given a life sentence, they are still eligible for parole after 14 or 15 years. Therefore, do we just forget about the offender for those 14 or 15 years? I do not think we should. We simply cannot just warehouse these people and throw the key away because after 14 or so years, there is that possibility that they might be released.

We feel secure that if we put them in these programs, possibly when they do return to the communities the chances of their reoffending will be greatly diminished. They will become, eventually, individuals who will be eligible for parole.

• (1120)

If I may point out again, my bill proposes that for individuals who are serving long or short term sentences who are asking for early parole, it should be contingent on their successfully completing a rehabilitation program before their request is accepted.

This brings me to another weakness, the lack of proper support being in place to help the offenders in their transition from an institution to the community. There must be in place community support groups for offenders to provide a bridge for individuals once they re-enter the community.

The auditor general has stated that the service has not established a continuing program in that area to support these individuals in their transition back into the community. Studies show that it is critical that offenders have access to such treatment programs so that their bridging back into the community is made easier and, of course, much more safe.

This is a time when they are confronted with the factors that originally led them to offend. The auditor general has stated that approximately 65 per cent of the demand for community based sex offenders relapse programs is being met. However, I am concerned about the other 35 per cent. This is why we have to address the concern in that area.

Private Members' Business

One criticism I was surprised to hear about my bill is that it is unconstitutional, that it would infringe on the constitutional rights of individuals if they are asked to participate in these programs against their will.

I hear comments from across the way. It is unfortunate that the criticism comes from members the Reform Party. If we want to talk about hypocrisy, I believe the use of that word has reached an all time high. In public they say "hang them high, throw away the key". They are the lone rangers with the white hats fighting crime. But behind the scenes they say something else.

I am disappointed that not one Reform Party individual would come forward to speak on the bill and give it some support and at the same time provide constructive criticism or input as to how we can possibly correct the system that unfortunately today is not working. Instead of calling them the lone rangers, I will just call them the lone.

In answer to the question whether my bill is unconstitutional, let me state that I am not asking anyone to do anything against their will. I am just interested in seeing that offenders are given the option of assistance that will help them rehabilitate themselves and prove that they can return to society without risk of reoffending. If they are not prepared to enter the program to rehabilitate themselves, their parole requests should not be considered.

The Minister of Justice has brought forward amendments that will increase sentences for individuals who are considered dangerous offenders. He has introduced measures to keep track of high risk offenders after they are released. I applaud the minister for those initiatives. But we also need to fine tune the system because nobody and nothing is perfect.

I do not believe my bill is the only or the perfect solution. I do believe it might be just one step to help our society become safer and maybe will help those people who have served their full sentence to re-enter society as contributing members. I hope my bill will receive the support of the House.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it has been interesting to listen to my hon. colleague across the way speaking about his private member's bill which will solve all the problems in the prisons.

For the life of me I cannot appreciate why this bill is even being put before the House. The assessment of inmates is done before they are placed in an institution on a permanent basis. Six weeks to two months is taken to do an assessment before they are placed in an institution.

A case management team already recommends the treatment which is appropriate for the inmate. Maybe it does not happen as much for the prisoners that he talks about.

• (1125)

We need to go into the prison system to find out what really happens instead of just talking to a couple of inmates who are unhappy with the treatment they receive or the lack of treatment.

There are problems with funding for these programs. There are not enough spaces for the number of inmates. However, there are problems with inmates who show no remorse for the offence they have committed and feel nothing for their victims but they are taking these treatment programs because it is an out for them. They are unlikely to get parole unless they participate in these programs.

The hon. member across the way should talk to some of the people who give these treatment programs and listen to their stories about the inmates who think it is joke. These inmates think they can go into these treatment programs simply to get parole. No, it does not work because these inmates are not in the right frame of mind to make it work.

The hon. member should have been at the justice and legal affairs committee the other day when we had experts talking about treatment programs. They said that treatment programs for some violent offenders do not work because those violent offenders are psychopaths and all psychopaths get from treatment programs is a better understanding of how to manipulate the system to make it work for them.

Treatment programs are the end all, be all. Yes, early intervention with young people is and yes, some treatment programs for alcohol and drug abuse would be far more effective than anything else in our prisons.

What do we do? We allow drugs into our prisons in such numbers that it is uncontrollable. What do we do? We give them bleach kits so they can bleach the needles. How is that helping these inmates with drug problems? It does not. What do we do for the prisoners with alcohol problems? Do we provide treatment? To a little degree I suppose. However, we have inmates who are so convinced that they need treatment that they make their own booze behind bars.

I do not think we should be wasting our dollars on any inmate who does not show the initiative, the want or the desire for treatment. I do not think this bill identifies or recognizes the problem. I repeat that I have no idea why this House is even dealing with this bill.

We are going to force people to take treatment programs against their will just so they can get parole. We are already doing that. One of the things with parole is that prisoners have to show that they have made some effort to be remorseful, accept that some harm has been done by their behaviour and that they have done something to

rectify that. They are already unlikely to get parole if they do not take these treatment programs that are made available to them.

I see absolutely no point in passing another piece of legislation. The law is there and the programs are there. Yes, we could be putting more resources into those programs, I do not deny that, but we do not need more legislation to provide more facilities for inmates. What we have to do is make sure that the right inmates are getting the treatment. If somebody has a violent personality, does not show any remorse, does not want the treatment and does not feel he needs the treatment, forcing treatment down his throat is not going to work. That has been proven in the past.

This hon. member should talk to some of the treatment people who deal with sex offenders, in particular. It is an absolute joke unless that person identifies that they do have a problem and wants to deal with it.

To this hon. member who is trying to change the system, to make the system work better, to help out these poor individuals who need treatment, I find it repulsive that this member voted against a private member's bill that was about having assessments done on dangerous offenders who committed serious sexual offences against an adult or any sexual offence against a child. Looking at the voting record, this member was one of the Liberals who voted against it. It confuses me. If he is so interested in seeing that treatment is given to protect society, why would he vote against something like that?

When the member talks about a Reformer telling him it was unconstitutional, I find that very hard to believe because I have a private member's bill before the justice committee and it is the Liberal members who are telling me it is unconstitutional to try to do something to make it possible to keep dangerous offenders off the street. It is the Liberal members and it is the Liberal Minister of Justice who is telling me it is unconstitutional.

• (1130)

I do not believe for a moment that any Reform Party member or Reform MP would feel that a question of constitutionality is a reason to walk away from doing what is right. It is the Liberals that are constantly using the charter of rights as an excuse to pass bad legislation which allows the government to sit on its duff and not deal with the real issues out there in society.

I am terribly confused. This Liberal member is putting forward a bill that is unnecessary. It will not accomplish anything. He claims it is the be all and end all on the issue. It seems to me that this member is looking for public support in the next few months. He is probably looking for a few votes. He feels that if he can parade this private member's bill, which will not do anything but looks good, maybe he can convince Canadians that he is serious about getting tough on crime.

Private Members' Business

I do not think Canadian voters are that stupid. They will see through this. All they have to do is go to the voting record, not only of this member but of all the members on the Liberal side, to see the true picture.

The true picture is that Liberal MPs are not that interested in getting tough on criminals. They are not that interested on changing the justice system to make it work. They are not interested in supporting bills that will actually deal with, address and solve a problem. They are not going to support a private member's bill which will actually keep dangerous offenders off the streets. Instead they look for some namby-pamby way of dealing with people who do not like the way things are behind bars.

Maybe the people who are offending, the people who are killing their best friends, should be thinking about what it is like behind bars before they kill. Maybe they should be looking for counselling to help them with anger management and drug abuse before they end up in prison, instead of waiting until they are in prison. Maybe they should be worrying about getting a better education before they end up in prison. It would make a whole lot of sense to me if our money was spent on alcohol and drug treatment programs before young people end up in prison. Our money should be spent on improving education facilities for young people who have dropped out of high school before they end up in prison.

Why does the government feel that all of those resources should be spent on these individuals after they break the law, after they murder somebody, after they are in prison? I would find it far easier to support a private member's bill that dealt with those issues rather than one that is a waste of my time and a waste of the time of the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, to really understand Bill C-296 introduced by the hon. member, we must remember what it says in the mission statement of the Correctional Service of Canada.

To be able to analyse and understand the hon. member's bill, we must know what this mission is. The mission, and I will read it to you from a very official document of the Correctional Service of Canada, says the following: "The Correctional Service of Canada, as part of the criminal justice system, contributes to the protection of society by actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law abiding citizens, while exercising reasonable, safe, secure and humane control".

And we in the Bloc Québécois want to say right away that the system may not be perfect, but it certainly is not the disaster implied by Reform members. In Canada, the correctional system works. However, there are some shortcomings. There are a number of questions, and perhaps I could get back to this later on.

Private Members' Business

• (1135)

When we look at the mission of the correctional service and the purpose of this bill, we see that the summary of the hon. member's bill reads as follows:

The purpose of this bill is to require federal inmates to complete programs that will assist in their rehabilitation and make their release on parole contingent upon their successful completion of such programs.

Immediately, I see something that is pretty obvious as regards the mission of the correctional service and the hon. member's bill. It is pretty obvious to me that the hon. member—and I am astonished that this should come from the government benches—is introducing a bill which is an admission of failure. That is what the bill says, because it will be necessary to require inmates to do such and such, while if we know how the Correctional Service Canada works, this is being done.

The correctional service proposes such and such, it does follow up, it assists inmates with psychological problems, problems with social reintegration, sexual problems or whatever. They will be helped in such a way that when an inmate leaves the institution, he again becomes part of the community and no one will notice the difference. That is the mission the correctional service has with respect to parole, but the bill seems to say the system has failed and that inmates will be required to do such and such that will assist in their release, to be contingent on the inmates completing the programs already available to them.

This is all very well, but I think it is dangerous to proceed this way because the government member seems to be saying there is a problem. Now, either the statistics we get from the department on repeat offenders are correct or they are not. I assume they are correct, unless the parole figures and the whole question of repeat offenders, unless the figures the Solicitor General gives us every year are not correct. However, if they are, this means the failure rate is minimal and the system works. It means that inmates are making good use of the programs available to them.

However, the hon. member's bill implies the statistics are not correct, because the hon. member has looked into this. He wants to oblige inmates to start and follow through with this process.

So the bill is not bad in itself, but I wonder whether it is worthwhile adopting this bill.

I know there are two versions with respect to recidivism. Apparently the police seem to be saying that the department's figures may not be accurate. As far as early parole is concerned—and I was very surprised to read this in *L'Express*, a magazine dealing with the judiciary system—we are told there is a failure rate of about 80 per cent for early parole. If this is true, there is a problem. The problem concerns early rehabilitation, or maybe

there is a problem with the figures the Solicitor General gives us annually.

One thing is sure. From sitting on the Standing Committee on Justice, from considering legal issues and from questioning witnesses who have come before the committee, I know that one thing is sure. While things have not yet reached catastrophic proportions, if the cuts of the past continue, and schooling, computer training or other programs for the purposes of rehabilitation or reintegration into society are eliminated, because the prison system is obliged to cut certain programs for lack of funding, we will have a problem, whatever bill the member opposite proposes, because we will have no money to implement it.

One thing is sure, the more the cuts, the fewer programs there are for inmates, the greater the chance inmates will find themselves really unprepared on their release and back within the prison system in no time.

• (1140)

The bill is indeed praiseworthy; however, it is quite distressing that it comes from a member opposite and that it is conditional, because I think that, in the long run, the outcome may be affected. It is not true that the result is better in the end if we legislate someone to do something. I think that, even inside, even having prisoners do time, we could encourage them from within and not force them.

People who are in prison are not law abiding people like the general public. Sometimes they have a bit of a revolt inside. You just have to tell them they have to do it for them to not want to. I think we have to continue, focus more on existing programs and ask them to take the programs, not spontaneously, but encourage them and not force them. I think we would be asking for real trouble if we made it mandatory.

I will conclude by saying that, in the past few weeks, months and years, there have been all sorts of issues concerning the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, and so forth. Recent events have shown us that there are great gaps in the system. They have also shown us that a lot of things work well.

The government opposite does not seem to have a global view of the problem society faces with inmates and their release. There are members, here and there, who introduce private bills to change the law. Even the government, which occasionally makes changes to the law, will do so piecemeal, in an effort to find a band-aid solution. That is not how to solve the problem once and for all.

We have seen really human cases of late, in which even the father of a young girl killed by someone on parole took part in the debate, saying: "There are gaps in the correctional system. It is good in some respects, but perhaps society ought to be involved

more". Far from condemning the system, he said it needed improving. I am referring to the Bolduc case.

Instead of changing things bit by bit, instead of making minor changes to please voters, instead of tilting totally right, like the Reformers, why will the government opposite not act on the request of the official opposition? In recent weeks and months, we have been calling for a thorough examination of the entire problem by a commission of inquiry or a parliamentary commission, which would report to us. Then we would really see what works, what does not work and what needs to be changed or not. We would not be doing it bit by bit.

[English]

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to my colleague from Scarborough Centre for his interest in urban safety and community issues. This is not the first time the member has brought forward issues of great concern on behalf of his constituents. He is a tireless individual who has done that many times before.

It is important to relate what is the objective of this private member's initiative. The purpose of it, as stated, is to require federal inmates to complete programs that will assist in their rehabilitation and make their release on parole contingent on their successful completion of programs.

Corrections Canada must invest further in programming, provide incentives for offenders to participate in programs aimed at changing their criminal behaviour.

• (1145)

My colleague introduced this bill based on comments made by the auditor general. Probably what motivated him at the same time is the fact that in 1996, of the 7,481 offenders released on parole almost half, 3,163, were returned to prison, 32 per cent for committing new crimes and 68 per cent for parole violations. Certainly it is a cause for alarm.

My colleague has tried in his initiative to bring to the attention of the House and to the public that there is a problem and this is one way to try to address it. I am sure that my colleague's intentions are not to have more money thrown at the problem. I am sure he is 100 per cent in agreement that the over \$300 million spent annually to reintegrate offenders into society in order to deal with the more than 14,400 inmates in prison, is a substantial amount of money. The issue here is a question of how do we spend that money?

Programs are in place now through initiatives the government has taken. However, still more can be done. There has to be co-operation between the provincial levels of government in areas of information sharing, standardization and access to information.

Private Members' Business

One of my colleagues in the Reform Party has tried to make it look as if the government is not doing anything. The fact is the government has done a tremendous amount. A truckload of prevention is better than a whole train of cure. What I am trying to say is that most of the legislation the government has introduced over the past three years has dealt with the issue of prevention in the community.

For example, members of the opposition and the Reform Party have unfortunately voted against the gun control legislation which dealt with taking weapons away from those who, if the weapon is left in their hands, may commit a crime.

Another initiative that the government has undertaken is amendments to the Young Offenders Act. It is to be commended. It dealt with young offenders in our society. Another initiative taken by the solicitor general and the Minister of Justice established a crime prevention council has been a very successful.

The whole issue has to focus mainly on prevention. I would like to give an example of how and where prevention is working in my community of Ottawa Centre. I want to pay tribute to the Ottawa police that have worked tirelessly with community groups in my area and have proved over and over again that they are capable of changing the trend and ensuring that the community is safe and good to live in. However, it can be made even better.

I want to mention the name of one member of the police force. Inspector Susan O'Sullivan is a committed, dedicated, energetic and outstanding member of the Ottawa police. She and her colleagues in the Ottawa police department have embarked on a number of major initiatives in the community to establish outreach centres throughout the riding and the Ottawa area. The police force man those centres in conjunction with volunteers in the community. That initiative and many other initiatives that were undertaken by the police force in my constituency have paid great dividends.

All anyone has to do is speak to people in the community such as Cheryl Parrot, who along with other volunteers in the community, have tackled the problem of prostitution. They worked very hard and with the assistance of the Ottawa police were able to literally eradicate this problem from the neighbourhood. That is a joint partnership between the police force which is the public sector and the community, the non-profit sector and a voluntary sector.

• (1150)

Other people in the community have worked with the Ottawa police and have proved that, collectively, crime can be fought and safety assured. Angelo Filoso, along with his people, have established another group in the community to work with the police and they have been successful.

Private Members' Business

There is no way the problem can be tackled by just looking at it and hoping it will go away. More resources have to be put into it for the people who are on the street, in particular for the police. We need community policing not only in one community but throughout the whole country. The provinces have to provide the police forces in their cities and municipalities with the tools they need. They have to ensure they have proper outreach programs. They have to ensure they have the proper resources in order to work with the community.

Only through working collectively and in co-operation with these groups and organizations can the problem be tackled. To turn around and dismiss what the hon. member has introduced before the House as being nothing but an initiative that is unwarranted is unfair. One would say that the government has taken a longstanding position that the root of the problem has to be dealt with by taking proper measures. We need proper prevention programs. We need to work with community policing. We need to work with the provinces.

The government has been doing that. Is it enough? It is not enough. What we have to do is continue working until there is not one single crime committed in any one part of the community in any one part of the country.

I have had the great honour and privilege of working with community groups and with the Ottawa police in my constituency. The experiment we have undertaken has been a great one. What is important, perhaps, is to share with other communities elsewhere across the country and across the provinces what we have done. However, we in the public can create an awareness and a need in our communities to the fact that our police forces need more tools with which to work.

Policing is a provincial responsibility, a municipal responsibility. However, the federal government can provide the experience and the expertise that exists in the different departments to work with the provincial governments to facilitate the co-operation between the different governments. In that way we will have a national standard when it comes not only to sharing information but also to sharing policing.

Once again, I want to congratulate my colleague on bringing before the House an initiative that will create awareness. I know he is not expecting this bill to become law. As many have indicated before, many parts of this proposal have already been undertaken by the department.

The fact that he wanted to bring awareness to it is fair. To that extent, I congratulate him and say that I appreciate the opportunity to bring to members' attention what is happening in my community.

Mr. John Finlay (Oxford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, following my colleague's positive words, I want to support my colleague from

Scarborough Centre because this bill, although not votable, puts a positive bent on what we are talking about.

My colleague from Ottawa Centre pointed out that a lot of the initiatives of the government in the justice area are aimed at prevention and have been successful.

I would say to my colleague from Surrey—White Rock—South Langley that this is a positive bill. Her remarks seem to suggest that there is only one way to deal with transgressors in society and that is to put them in prison and throw away the key. I do not think that is really what she intends, but that is the way her remarks appear to me. It is very important that we judge not so harshly lest we be judged. My colleague's bill puts the other side to the question.

• (1155)

In the course of this Parliament about a dozen changes have been made through a number of bills to the Criminal Code. Most of them have dealt with increasing the penalties, making them tougher, increasing mandatory punishment for crimes of long term offenders and serious offenders. For example, although the gun bill is preventive, it increased the mandatory sentence to four years for a crime involving a gun. I have no objection to that. In fact I am working on a private member's bill that would increase the penalties for the sexual abuse of children.

However, this bill adds the other dimension. To go on from the mission statement concerning the job of the parole board which was mentioned by my colleague from Berthier—Montcalm, the purpose of federal correctional system is to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society by assisting the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into the community as law-abiding citizens through the provision of programs in penitentiaries and in the community.

Some of those programs have been and are now very forward looking. Not only do they deal with substance abuse and anger management but also with native spirituality, elder counselling, educational upgrading and other programs appropriate to these individuals' needs. Since a preponderant percentage of the people in our prisons come from the aboriginal population, a couple of those programs need a lot more work and support, native spirituality and elder counselling.

This bill does not make it mandatory for prisoners to take part in these programs but it does hold out a carrot. It improves the chance for parole. It suggests that if inmates do not show any obvious interest in improving themselves and in living better lives when they are paroled, they will be denied it for a further period of time.

The other purpose of the bill is not to spend more money but to spend it more wisely, as my colleague said in reference to the auditor general's report in which one can read that while some programs of moderate intensity cost \$2,000 per offender, other similar programs cost \$7,000 per offender. This suggests there

needs to be some hard work done and the discrepancies between those kinds of costs for the same benefit need to be addressed.

A similar situation exists with programs for vocational and educational training which are much less expensive per inmate than the institutional employment programs. This means that instead of having prisoners stamp out licence plates it would be better to do it in the private sector where it can be done more cheaply. It would be better to spend the money at \$7,000 a year instead of \$13,000 a year to provide the same inmates with further vocational training that could be useful on parole.

I support my friend's initiative which speaks to what should be the overall aim and our reason for being. We want all our citizens to be free. We want all our citizens to be useful. We want all our citizens to contribute to society, and we have to go the extra mile to try to ensure that.

• (1200)

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise in the House today to speak on this very important piece of legislation, Bill C-296, even if it is with tongue in cheek.

Let me begin by congratulating my colleague, the hon. member for Scarborough Centre, for the innovative intestinal fortitude to table the bill. This bill could be seen as being somewhat controversial. However, the facts tell the truth. One out of three offenders released from correctional institutions goes on to commit another offence. This is simply unacceptable. What is the point of having prisons if the offenders just keep coming back? It is expensive, unnecessary and does not solve the problem of crime in this country. This bill offers a reasonable solution to the revolving doors of our prison systems.

Canada does boast one of the best correctional services in the world and it is indeed internationally recognized. My cousins in Michigan always point to our prison system in Canada and how their murderers escape to Canada and we fight to keep them here so that they will not be hanged. The prison system effectively serves the purpose of deterring crime, punishing offenders as well as rehabilitating them.

According to section 3(b) of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the purpose of the federal correctional system is to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society by assisting the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into the community as law-abiding citizens through the provisions of programs in the penitentiaries and in the community. I worry about the victims when these prisoners are released though.

More specifically, section 76 obliges the correctional service to provide a range of programs designed to address the needs of offenders and contribute to their successful integration into the community.

Supply

The mandate is already in place to offer these programs to offenders. This piece of legislation ensures that offenders take advantage of these programs before they go back into society. It is astounding that in the last decade we have released 70,000 federal offenders back into the community. Most of these were released with early parole. However, as I said earlier, one in three of these offenders is returning to commit more crimes. This begs the question what can we do.

Twenty-five years ago when an offender participated in rehabilitative programs they focused on job training or schooling that would help the offender readjust into the working world. Today these programs focus on social issues such as alcoholism or sexual violence, which attempts to solve the underlying problem behind many of the crimes committed.

Not only are these programs better suited to target the problems of the offenders and an attempt to solve them, they are cost effective as well. Years ago we would group all offenders into one category. Rehabilitative programs only work for a select group. Now we are more aware of the criminal mind and we can tailor our programs to work effectively.

John Gillis, the Atlantic regional special advisor to correctional services says: "Offender correctional treatment plans can also now be used to zero in on the program needed by individual offenders, as well as when and where they are needed. This allows more effective and selective management of specific cases and precious resources". In times of fiscal restraint these programs can reduce the number of return offenders to our jail cells.

• (1205)

I hope in the future I will be able to finish my speech.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, the hon. member will not be able to finish his speech as the matter is dropped from the Order Paper. It is not a votable item.

[*Translation*]

The hour provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the item is dropped from the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—HERITAGE CANADA

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ) moved:

That this House denounce the use of public funds squandered on propaganda activities sponsored by Heritage Canada, such as the Canada Information Office and

Supply

the *One Million Flags* Operation, at a time when cuts unprecedented in the history of Canada have been imposed on cultural institutions in Canada and Quebec.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is an official opposition day. As indicated in the motion, we once again condemn the federal government's policy, which basically consists in denying the existence of Quebec as a nation as well as the Quebec culture and using propaganda—we will clearly demonstrate today how extensive this propaganda is—in its relentless fight against the nationalist vitality of Quebecers and their desire to have their own country.

The purpose of this motion is to denounce the use of public funds squandered on propaganda activities sponsored by Heritage Canada, such as the Canada Information office and the *One Million Flags* operation, and other operations we will detail later, at a time when cuts unprecedented in the history of Canada have been imposed on all cultural institutions in Canada and Quebec.

Today, February 17, is Flag Day. This may be a proud day, a day that may mean something to Canadians in general, but I must add in the same breath that February 17, a day set aside for celebrating the Canadian flag, is a sad day for Quebec.

I would like to remind the House of the origins of the federal government's determination to use public funds to fight openly and specifically Quebec's legitimate and democratic aspiration to statehood. You will recall that, in one of his books, Pierre Elliott Trudeau stated that an effective way of defeating Quebec nationalists was to fight them with Canadian nationalism, regardless of the cost.

Today, we will demonstrate not only to this House but also to Quebecers and Canadians that, ever since this policy was established by Pierre Elliott Trudeau's Liberals, this government has been obsessed with spending as much energy, resources and money as necessary to fight Quebec.

May I remind you that this institution is publicly funded. Part of these public funds, the \$30 billion collected in taxes every year in this country, comes from Quebec and is used to fight Quebec's democratic aspiration to statehood.

Today, February 17, Canadian Flag Day, we must recognize that the heritage minister's *One Million Flags* operation, which will cost taxpayers in Canada and Quebec in excess of \$15 million, is the continuation of Trudeau's idea of spending endless money on fighting Quebec and its march toward sovereignty.

• (1210)

Today, February 17, is Flag Day in Canada, but it is a sad day in Quebec. Remember what happened a year ago in Hull, during the Flag Day celebration. The event was tarnished by an incident during which the Prime Minister grabbed a protester by the throat.

It became uglier when the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage immediately reacted by saying the protester was obviously a separatist, when in fact everyone realized in the hours that followed that the man was simply protesting against poverty in this country, against poverty generated by this government.

But the Deputy Prime Minister, this champion of propaganda, immediately said during a scrum that it was a separatist who had been protesting and who was grabbed by the throat by the Prime Minister.

These were unfounded accusations by the Deputy Prime Minister, who was guided by her state of mind, which is to constantly try to incriminate Quebec sovereignists, when everyone in this country knows that Quebec's evolution and march toward sovereignty is taking place through a democratic process and with respect for the rules of democracy.

Today, February 17, is also a sad day for Quebec because of the patriation of the Constitution, in 1982, which took place in spite of a motion passed by the National Assembly, asking that the Constitution not be patriated unilaterally.

The Liberals of the time, led by Pierre Elliott Trudeau, ignored the Quebec institution called the National Assembly and unilaterally patriated the Constitution, thus confirming, much to the pleasure of the federal Liberals, that, for once in Canada's history, they had bumped Quebecers out of the picture, no longer recognizing them as a founding people. The Quebec culture no longer existed, a culture which represents the essence of the people of Quebec, through its creators, artists, writers and film producers. Indeed, with that decision, the federal Liberals denied the existence of the people of Quebec and their culture.

From now on, according to this government, the people of Quebec will simply be a big cultural community within an English Canada. The government wants to turn the people of Quebec into a big cultural community within an English Canada.

Quebec's culture is sad today because artistic and creative criteria have taken a back seat to the political criteria of this government. Today, this policy of propaganda, which is designed to stamp out Quebec's culture and its aspirations to sovereignty, is now solidly entrenched in all departments, including the Department of Foreign Affairs, which just last week approved a policy for international cultural distribution that requires artistic works to be demonstrably in favour of Canada's national unity.

The heritage minister has obviously been instructed to concentrate on the Canadian national identity, and to stamp out Quebec's national identity. This is the mission of Heritage Canada, and we are going to show today how public funds are being used for

Supply

propaganda purposes. All departments, the entire machinery of government is taking part in this propaganda exercise.

• (1215)

The result is a sad day for cultural industries and for creators and artists who must work for Canadian unity if they want their projects to reach a larger audience. If they want to reach an audience in Canada, in Quebec as well as abroad, they must first now meet the essential criterion set by this government, by the federal Liberals, the political criterion of promoting Canadian unity, to the detriment of their own creations, of their own works.

We have denounced this government for interfering in Quebec's areas of jurisdiction, particularly manpower training, but also culture and communications. There was the very recent example where this government, specifically the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, actually told journalists that they were not doing a good job in their coverage of the referendum.

This government actually told journalists that they were not promoting Canadian unity in their coverage of the referendum. This is a government that is becoming increasingly totalitarian, calling to mind the Trudeau era with its emphasis on controlling content, controlling those who work in the field of artistic creation, those who shape our identity. Those who work in the print and communications media are being criticized for not working to build Canadian identity.

In this connection, I will refer to a quote from *La Presse* of November 14, 1995: "The accusations against the CBC arise out of the convictions of a number of the Liberal leading lights, federal Liberal leading lights, including the Prime Minister himself, if we are to believe this weekend's statements, that the public broadcaster did not fulfil its duty during the referendum campaign and has actively harmed the federalist cause".

This government has reached the stage of wanting to control the media, of wanting to tell the media what it must say on Canadian unity. We are not going to follow suit, for all Quebecers have built their democracy on clear rules of the game, under which all parties have a right to express themselves regardless of their position or their option.

This government is accusing the CBC, which it claims was mandated to promote conviction and national unity. The Prime Minister went on to say: "Obviously this is not one of its concerns; I saw something else this evening when I was watching television". The Prime Minister is concerned that his option be reflected by "his" Radio-Canada and "his" CBC, for his government had just stated that it was the owner.

Following along with that argument, creators, artists and cultural industries are called upon to serve Canadian unity. They are called

to serve the government's political ideology, convictions and political objectives, and not their own creations, which are essential to our society.

Mr. Chrétien stated that evening of November 14, in the context of the Commonwealth Summit being held in Auckland, New Zealand, that "the CBC, whose mandate it is to promote national unity, has not fulfilled its role".

When the Prime Minister of a country accuses the press of not supporting his political option, no more need be said. In this, we must acknowledge that the government is consistent with itself, and is continuing the legacy of Trudeau.

• (1220)

The government is pushing the political criteria that from now on are supposed to guide the whole government apparatus, all those useless investments. In future, its support for culture, its domestic and foreign policies will be based essentially on political criteria. We just saw this with the policy announced by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Today, I found it very depressing to read an article by Stéphane Baillargeon in *Le Devoir*. This journalist wrote: "Today, political and not artistic criteria are applied to the support given by the federal Department of Foreign Affairs to Canadian artists on tour abroad. Requests for grants will from now on be examined on the basis of the ability to promote respect for Canadian sovereignty and Canadian unity and to present Canada as a bilingual country consisting of various cultures".

That is this government's new policy: to promote, both outside and inside the country, a Canadian cultural policy in an English-speaking country where there is room for other cultural communities. What this government is trying to do is make Quebec and its culture one of the many cultural communities in this English Canada.

The Minister of Human Resources Development suggests in his statement that only Canada can own and preserve French and Quebec culture. May I remind the minister that the situation of francophones across Canada is such that year after year, the Commissioner of Official Languages has found there is ongoing assimilation? Francophones in Canada are constantly being assimilated, and the government would have us believe, in the kind of statements made by the Minister of Human Resources Development, that Canada is saving the French fact and French culture in Quebec. Not so: Quebec creators and artists are the ones who are doing that in Quebec.

I would like to first show you how much this government has been spending on propaganda activities alone since 1994 and then tell you about the cuts it has made in our cultural industries.

Supply

During this period, the government spent as much as \$98 million on programs to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Canadian flag. There was \$1.1 million for advertising billboards. Remember those billboards, all 600 of them? Coincidentally, 300 were put up in Quebec and the remaining 300 across the rest of Canada. That is how this government targets its propaganda.

UN 50th anniversary celebrations: \$1.8 million; Heritage Minutes: \$2.2 million; tourism promotion: \$15 million; the *One Million Voices* campaign, Fédération des communautés francophones: \$500,000; National Capital Commission: \$3 million; Canadian unity: \$4 million; Canadian passports: \$25,000; federal government services, television advertising: \$5 million; Operation Unity: \$11 million; Council for Canadian Unity: \$8.4 million; Canada Information Office: \$19.5 million; Operation *One Million Flags*: more than \$15 million; Operation Unity: \$5 million; *Word given, Word kept*: \$600,000; Services included: \$400,000; *Take it to Heart*: \$550,000, that is more than half a million; and the latest addition Attractions Canada: \$1.5 million, for a grand total of \$98 million.

Nearly \$100 million was spent on propaganda. Meanwhile, what is this government doing? It is literally putting the axe to cultural industries, including major industries and institutions in Canada and Quebec, namely the CBC, Telefilm Canada and the National Film Board.

• (1225)

This government, which is investing close to \$100 million for propaganda purposes, made drastic cuts affecting the broadcasters themselves, those who promote our culture and help build our national identity, and also the artists and creators who reflect our own identity.

This government is talking out of both sides of its mouth. In its red book, it claims that these are important institutions, that a stable financial process must be established, and that the Conservatives were wrong to target this industry. However, once they took office, the Liberals changed their tune. What did they do? They systematically cut. The CBC lost 4,000 jobs and \$14 million in an unprecedented series of cuts, while the National Film Board suffered a cut of \$20 million.

In conclusion, the official opposition declares that February 17, 1997, Canada Flag Day, is a sad day for Quebecers. It is a sad day because Canada is represented by a Liberal government that speaks out of both sides of its mouth, first promising to support and to develop the very essence of our identity, namely our culture, and then, once in office, cutting and systematically eliminating all the tools for these cultural institutions, by reducing budgets.

During the next election, the Bloc Québécois will fight this government in Quebec, this government that speaks out of both

sides of its mouth. The election will allow all Bloc Québécois members to come back here to protect Quebec's interests.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is a very happy day for myself and for all Canadians in this country. As you know, the majority of Canadians, including those living in Quebec and those living outside the country, are aware that we live in the best country in the world. We are not the only ones to feel this way. The United Nations has determined, on several occasions, that Canada was the best country in the world in which to live, work and raise a family.

I am still prouder to be an elected member of this Parliament on the government side under the direction of a Prime Minister who comes from the very fine province of Quebec. This Prime Minister is working, not only with his colleagues on this side of the House, but also with all Canadians, to ensure that we have a flexible, dynamic federation which responds to the needs of the Canadian public today and in the future.

I do not see why my colleague is attacking the government and its approach to Canadian federation, attempting to drive a wedge between Canadians in Quebec and Canadians in other provinces and in the entire country, when in Europe, France, Italy, Spain, England and Germany have joined together in a confederation to establish a system of European unity in order to address the economic and political problems, not only of Europe, but of the world as a whole.

My colleague ought to keep in mind that today, the whole world over, peoples are joining with one another, approaching one another, and that there is now a unity which makes it possible for the problems of poverty, unemployment and uncertainty which exist in certain countries to be addressed.

As my colleague is well aware, the time has come for us to all join forces to work at addressing the needs and problems of the Canadian people.

• (1230)

My colleague is doing nothing toward progress in this area when he attempts to create division and when he attempts to divert attention, to get things changed, to deprive us of the time required to attack unemployment. He knows that the priority of Quebecers is a government which will address the problem of unemployment, a government which will foster economic development, one that is truly interested in their needs.

This government, up to and including the Prime Minister, has adopted resolutions here in this House of Commons to protect Quebec's needs, which include culture, the division of power, and manpower. We know that culture is a provincial matter. This includes Quebec. It has the right to decide what kind of educational system it wants to have.

The same thing goes for manpower, immigration, health, the environment and transportation. If we look at all the things a province needs to truly decide what is best for its people, the provinces, including Quebec, have that authority. They are capable of determining what is best.

Finally, I would like to ask a question of my colleague. Does he not agree with the fact that the French culture in Quebec, in North America and everywhere in the world, will be better protected within a confederation which encompasses all of Canada than outside that confederation?

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank the hon. member for his comments. I sense a deeply held conviction in what he said. I think the hon. member defends his point of view very well and is a skilful defender of the Liberal government's policy. However, we are miles apart.

I would like to remind him of a number of positions taken by his own government. First of all, there is the matter of the European model, the unity of international trade, free trade within a geographical area. May I remind the hon. member that Quebec has been a determined proponent of free trade? It supported free trade. And who was against free trade? The Prime Minister and the Liberal Party, the hon. member's party.

The hon. member need not hold up the European market and the common market as examples. In Quebec we know all about opening up markets. North-south trade with the United States is worth more than \$34 billion, while trade with the other Canadian provinces is worth about the same. I may remind the hon. member that it was his party that opposed free trade.

Second, I may remind him that the European Union is a union of countries and that this is what Quebec wants, to be a country and enrich the continent with a francophone country.

In the Americas there are important, flourishing cultures: English Canadian, American, Spanish and Portuguese cultures. We simply want to add a French speaking country to the Americas, and thus add to these riches. Furthermore, we are offering an economic partnership to a partner and friend we have known for a long time, Canada.

This is an example of our open attitude to English Canada: we ask it to be a partner, once Quebecers have voted in favour of becoming a country and a nation, and this union will come in the form of agreements.

• (1235)

On the other hand, I would like to remind the member of his own ministerial responsibilities. When this government was elected,

Supply

there were over one million unemployed in this country, which he calls the finest country in the world, in the G-7. When the Liberals were elected, there were one million unemployed. They said they were going to fight unemployment. There were also more than one million children living in poverty. The Liberals said this situation was untenable. They said they were going to fight poverty.

And, today, what do we see? We are heading toward elections. We have over one million unemployed. We now have a million and a half children living in poverty in this country. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I remind the member who has just said that Canada is the finest country in the world that his government has created the situation we are in today through its budget choices.

I would point out that, instead of investing in jobs and fighting poverty, this government has decided to siphon off \$5 billion a year from the unemployment insurance fund. This money belongs to employees and employers and not the government. Year after year, the government dipped into people's pockets.

Tomorrow, the Minister of Finance will probably brag that he achieved his objectives in the fight against the deficit. He reached them by dipping into people's pockets rather than by giving money back to them, as they were entitled to expect, for job creation. He is responsible for the poverty related tragedies in Canadian and Quebec society. That is how things stand and you are going to have to swallow that, because we will be reminding you of it throughout the election campaign. We will not let you forget your track record and your fine promises in the red book, which you dropped as soon as you got elected.

[English]

Hon. Hedy Fry (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism)(Status of Women), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to address the opposition motion concerning the many activities of this government, activities which my colleague across the way has just called propaganda. In his impassioned speech he talked about the money that should have been spent on child poverty and money that should be spent on so many things Canadians need but is being spent on what our hon. colleague considers to be propaganda.

Propaganda? The cost to the Quebec taxpayers for the referendum as quoted by Quebec's chief electoral officer was \$63.5 million. Let us talk about where that money could have gone. Let us talk about propaganda. Let us talk about spending about \$5 million to promote pre-referendum votes. I do not want to continue in this vein but it is absolutely clear to me that when we talk about propaganda, what we are talking about here is hypocrisy.

When this government took office in 1993 our focus was twofold. At the forefront was our resolve to move ahead on a jobs

Supply

and growth agenda. Inextricably connected to that goal was our commitment to strengthen Canadian identity and Canadian unity. Today we remain committed to those things. The difference between then and now is the remarkable progress we have made in meeting those commitments. The proof of that progress is found in Canada's strengthened economy, in all of Canada working together, in the number of jobs created and in the strong sense of Canadian identity.

In this important work we will continue a longstanding Canadian tradition, a tradition of creating links across this vast land, a tradition of creating links between the diverse and scattered communities of Canadians, people of all backgrounds who share one thing, that they are proud to call themselves Canadians.

Canada's unique characteristics have shaped our destiny and interests. For example, Canada's huge land mass, our relatively small and scattered population with its bilingual and multicultural composition and our close proximity to the United States are forces that have combined to make us who we are.

Over the years these forces have created in us a strong need to connect with one another across vast distances and challenging landscapes, across diverse cultures and different languages. Canadians have responded to that need and in responding, we have created the ability to become the world's great communicators.

• (1240)

Early on, this need to connect was expressed through physical transportation links such as the sea to sea water routes of Canada's First Nations peoples and the voyageurs, or connecting the east and west coasts with the railway and much later, the cross-country link of the TransCanada Highway. More recently came the communications links such as Canada's sophisticated telephone, cable and broadcasting systems, and most recently as the first country in the world to connect itself through the information highway and the Internet.

For Canadians this need to connect with one another has its pinnacle in the connections we have among ourselves as a people; in our hearts, in our spirits as Canadians and our shared sense of common values that have made us a great nation. As a government we recognize ultimately that is what will keep Canada united, strong and growing: our shared sense of Canadian identity and our sense of pride in belonging to what is still for the fourth year running, the best country in the world in which to live.

We recognize that culture occupies a unique place in that sense of Canadian identity. Canadian culture underpins both our identity and our economy. We know that a healthy and growing Canadian cultural sector is one of the most powerful tools and ways we can promote unity and jobs. We recognize that Canadian cultural

identity is at the core of our destiny and our strength as a country and as a united but diverse people.

Consider the economic impact alone of Canada's cultural sector. In 1993-94 the total cultural sector contributed directly and indirectly \$42.8 billion to the Canadian economy. That amounts to 6.9 per cent of the gross domestic product, 1.2 million jobs and 9.3 per cent of the workforce, more than the construction industry, more than the transportation or agricultural sectors. This is why the Government of Canada has taken measures to strengthen both Canadian identity and Canadian culture. These initiatives include but are not limited to the Canadian Information Office and the one in a million flag challenge.

The fact that hon. members in this House chose to see such important Canada strengthening activities as propaganda activities says more about their weak sense of commitment to Canada than it does about this government's work. Nevertheless I will respond to the motion of the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe by highlighting the accomplishments of this government in creating initiatives that bolster Canadian identity and strengthen Canadian unity while improving the economy and creating more jobs and opportunities for Canadians. They are inseparable.

Only two days ago on February 15 Canadians celebrated the 32nd anniversary of our flag. The red and white flag with the maple leaf is known throughout the world in every country as signifying the greatest country in the world. On Friday in my city of Vancouver we walked with the largest Canadian flag in the world. There were hundreds of people holding on to the edges of the flag as we walked down the street in the glorious Vancouver rain to show our pride in our country. This government is committed to enhancing pride in Canada and promoting a sense of belonging and shared values.

It is one symbol that wherever they go in the world Canadians wear on their sleeves, their hearts, their backpacks. In fact, I have it on good information that a young person travelling in Europe can pay as much as \$200 on the black market to buy a small Canadian flag. It is being bought by people who are not Canadians but by young people who want to sew it on to their sleeves and their backpacks so people will believe that they are Canadians. That wonderful red and white flag with the maple leaf.

As a government we recognize our responsibility to enhance a sense of pride and belonging among Canadians through a heightened awareness of our symbols, our traditions, our achievements. That flag is recognized around the world and it is not just that other people want to wear it. The question is: Why do people want to wear our flag? They want to wear our flag because of the values it represents, values of freedom, democracy, respect, tolerance, compassion and understanding. It represents people who have learned to find peaceful resolution to conflict, the peacekeepers of the world.

• (1245)

That is why people want to wear our flag. The flag also represents the pride and citizenship of Canada as well as the qualities that make us such a great country in which to live.

The one in a million flag challenge is helping Canadians to wave the flag higher and stronger not only around the world but within our country. It is important that we take our flag when we leave Canada and within Canada celebrate it. It has been a great success. There are now more flags flying across Canada than in the history of this country. That is testimony to the depth of the pride that Canadians feel for this country. It is moving to see Canadians everywhere hoisting the flag higher and waving it with pride. As Canadians there is no better time than now to open our hearts and express the pride and love we feel and share for this great country and the glorious red and white maple leaf.

Just as Canadians have shown an ever growing pride in our flag, Canadians across the country are also showing that they want to know more about our country, more about the people living in other parts of this vast land. I have noted that the need to connect is something which is almost second nature, historically a tradition among Canadians.

The mission of the Canada Information Office is to facilitate the process by creating links among Canadians from sea to sea to sea, from coast to coast, across mountains and prairies. As we cross the country we realize how much we know and do not know about each other. The things which make us great are the things which also make us different.

The CIO provides up to date accurate information about the development of the Canadian federation, the history of Canada, the role the government plays in meeting its nation building objectives. That is what we are doing, building a nation. To fulfil these goals the CIO lends a hand to all Canadians who want to know. We work to establish partnerships with and among Canadians.

It is difficult for me to understand how a member of the House of Commons could object to a mechanism that ensures the flow of accurate, factual information about Canada, information sharing that has as its goal the promotion of all of Canada, all of Canadian identity and a mutual understanding among the people of this country.

The government is deeply and enthusiastically proud of its initiative to promote Canada's richness, its diversity, its heritage and its multi-faceted stories. What better work could we do for and with Canadians than to inform them about their country, about the different regions, about the different peoples.

Supply

We are proud of the work the CIO is doing. I would like to discuss some additional government initiatives that we are working on to strengthen Canadian identity and unity while improving the economy and creating jobs for Canadians.

Over the past four years the government has worked hard to ensure that the Canadian broadcasting system remains the best in the world.

[*Translation*]

Broadcasting is a powerful tool for building national unity and economic strength. It is a powerful tool for strengthening our social fabric, and our individual and collective empowerment. It is a powerful tool for strengthening our shared sense of Canadian identity and our international success.

[*English*]

Canada's broadcasters give Canadians a reflection of ourselves, a sounding board, a window on our neighbours, whether they are on the other side of town or whether they live on the other side of the country. Let me give a few of the most basic facts about the economic impact of Canadian broadcasting.

The Canadian film and television production industry generates \$2.7 billion in production activity, which includes \$800 million in production revenues. Today there are more than 700 large and small film and television production companies with profits of over \$60 million, sustaining 72,000 Canadian jobs, and giving us a sense of who we are. This is a sector worth supporting and encouraging, from an economic perspective, from a Canadian identity perspective and from a job perspective. This is what we are doing.

• (1250)

In response to the report of the mandate review committee, which Mr. Pierre Juneau chaired, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced last September the creation of the Canada television and cable production fund. The report has called for more distinct Canadian content in this time of expanding viewer choice.

The \$200 million a year fund is fulfilling that need by ensuring a greater sense of Canadian presence on Canadian television screens.

The fund results from a partnership between the private sector cable production fund and Telefilm Canada's television production programs. The response to the fund has been positive, especially from Canada's private broadcasters. They know firsthand how hard it is to fund the cost of producing high quality Canadian programs.

[*Translation*]

It costs around \$1 million to produce one hour of Canadian drama.

*Supply**[English]*

It takes us that amount to produce one hour of Canadian broadcasting. We recognize that if we are going to prove that we are committed to our Canadian identity in our broadcasting we must put our money where our mouth is. The \$200 million fund for broadcasting and production is doing exactly that.

It has been remarkably successful. To date, 140 projects have benefited from a total budget of \$269 million, of which \$69 million came from the Canada television and cable production fund. Those are amazing results from a fund that was launched only a few months ago.

We estimate that in the future the production fund's annual \$200 million investment will lever over \$700 million worth of Canadian production. That should mean as many as 10,000 new jobs to the broadcasting industry, a sector that already employs over 60,000 Canadians. It is growing at a rate of 14 per cent a year.

What about radio? I was weaned on Canadian radio even when I did not live in Canada. Today I listen to Canadian radio across this country. For almost half the life of this country, radio has been the principal source of self-discovery and self-expression for Canadians. It is our 24 hour electronic town hall to which 99 per cent of Canadians have access. The average Canadian spends 20 hours a week listening to Canadian radio and the vast majority of that time is spent listening to privately operated Canadian broadcasters. That also includes public radio, the CBC.

The CBC is a vibrant core. It keeps us in touch with one another wherever we live in this big country. This government is committed to ensuring that CBC radio's unique voice continues to be heard from coast to coast in both official languages.

That is why again last week the Minister of Canadian Heritage acted to support public radio in two ways. First, the minister announced \$10 million in additional annual funding for both English and French language CBC radio services starting April 1, 1997.

The minister also announced that the government has guaranteed stable funding for the CBC for five years starting April 1, 1998. That is good news for radio and good news for Canadian culture.

What I am saying is that in fact sustaining Canada's identity, its heritage and its culture is not just one thing. It is not simply the million flags. It is not simply the CIO. It is not simply the Canadian film industry. It is also the Canadian television industry, the Canadian radio industry and the Canadian publishing industry. The market share of Canadian authored books has risen from 5 per cent to 25 per cent since 1970. Exports of Canadian books are up by 151 per cent over the last five years.

In Canada we have literature in which we can take pride. We have internationally recognized talented and creative writers. We have publishers who want to make sure that Canadian stories are told. We recognize the consistent record of excellence in Canada in both English and French language literature and book publishing. As a government, we recognize that the climate of extreme challenge and change that faces authors, publishers and distributors of books must be dealt with.

The changing economic environment, the need to reduce government deficits, technological change, changes in the marketplace, we know that all of these factors will threaten Canada's publishing sector. In the face of these challenges, both short and long term, we have taken measures to ensure that publishers will enjoy a more stable fiscal environment and can continue to contribute to the vitality of our cultural sector.

• (1255)

That, again, is why the Minister of Canadian Heritage recently injected \$5 million into her department book publishing industry development program.

Another area that we need to talk about in this ongoing saga of publishing is the voice of the Canadian magazine industry, which has faced many obstacles. We are working hard to ensure that the Canadian case is defended vigorously in the WTO.

Last year has seen many changes. The Copyright Act, Bill C-32, marking the important step in moving forward and updating the rights of creators, will significantly improve the status of the cultural sector.

It evolved as a result of talks with Canadians from coast to coast and of listening to what they had to say. It has brought about fairness and integrity that Canadians embrace. It updates the Copyright Act, which is integral to the jobs and growth agenda that is our priority.

Canada's cultural sector is dynamic and rich with future promise. The role of the Government of Canada is to support, in every way we can and with every single strategy we can, with multiple strategies indeed, the culture of Canada.

The sound recording industry, the music industry, is a complex one but we have taken measures to bolster its growth. The minister made this decision in response to the March 1996 recommendation of the task force on the future of the Canadian music industry that funding levels for her department sound recording program be boosted in the next fiscal year.

This government is committed to continuing to address all the recommendations in the recording sector of Canada's industry. The money we will put in is an investment in our cultural industries. Our museums are well known. They are very important parts that tell us who we are as Canadians.

We must support and strengthen the culture which underpins Canada's identity and which strengthens our economy. To support the culture of this country, we must support its soul.

As we approach the next millennium, we would be wise to use every means at our disposal to do so. We will use partnerships. With the cultural sector using the \$30 billion that it pumps into Canada's economy, it will account for nearly—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, the time of the hon. secretary of state has expired. Questions and comments.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague from Richmond—Wolfe for the motion he tabled this morning. Part of this motion reads as follows:

That the House denounce the use of public funds squandered on propaganda activities sponsored by Heritage Canada, such as the Canada Information Office and the *One Million Flags* Operation—

I will never forget my high school teachers, particularly this history teacher who used to say that freedom is not something one can beg for; one has to assert it. Another favourite line of his was this one: "Love cannot be bought, it must be won, and it takes hard work to keep it".

Could the hon. member for Vancouver Centre tell me if there is any other country in the world that spends as much to buy the love of its inhabitants, its people?

When I visit my relatives in the U.S. and we attend sporting events, when the time comes to stand up and sing the national anthem, it is clear that my nephews, Canadians who have been living in the U.S. for several years, love the country where they now live. They are proud of it, because in the U.S. everyone is treated with respect.

• (1300)

Unfortunately, it is not the same here. I will point out to my hon. colleague from Vancouver Centre that, after the union, in 1841, when Upper and Lower Canada were joined, not only were both communities amalgamated, but so were their respective debts. Quebec, which was not heavily in debt but whose infrastructure was minimal, joined with Upper Canada, Ontario, whose debt was 12 times higher, but whose infrastructure—roads, ports, railroads—was highly developed. The total amount of the debts was split equally between the two.

From day one, equality between the two founding nations was trampled on. The people of Quebec have almost constantly been neglected in this federation.

Take industrial development in the automotive industry for instance. The automobile assembly plant in Sainte-Thérèse is the

Supply

only one in Quebec, while there are dozens of these plants in Ontario. Why is that? Mere coincidence, you say. Hardly. Pride in one's country cannot be bought with flags.

I was listening to Robert Gillet's radio show where, under the alias of Bob Sweater, he phoned the 1-800 number to order flags for free. He ordered enough flags for all the cottages along the St. Lawrence River. You fell for it and became the laughing stock of Quebecers with your million flags.

Indeed, the hon. member for Vancouver Centre can rest assured that Quebecers' love will not be bought with flags. Just as the love of a spouse cannot be bought, neither can love for one's country. As far as we, Quebecers, are concerned, our country is Quebec and two, three or even four million flags cannot change the fact that Quebec will always be our country.

[English]

Ms. Fry: Mr. Speaker, I want to respond again to the propaganda comment that is being made.

Buying freedom. I agree with the hon. member that freedom cannot be bought. But one has to ask oneself about the 1995 Quebec referendum that cost Quebecers \$63.5 million, or the pre-referendum public consultations that cost the Government of Quebec \$5 million, or the premier's office committing \$2 million to the Conseil de la souveraineté in Quebec to promote a yes vote, and the international affairs department signing a \$1.2 million advertising campaign with Marketel, is it along those same lines? I wonder. Do these work together? Are they the same thing? Is this buying pride? Is this buying freedom?

It should be known with respect to the Canada Information Office which is being considered to be a propaganda tool that similar offices exist in countries such as Belgium, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, The Netherlands and Denmark.

The one in a million flag campaign has been the most popular campaign in the history of this country. It is interesting to say that a group of people flew flags from that campaign on their chalets as a joke. I am here to say that the maple leaf with its two red stripes on either side, that red and white flag is not considered by any country of the world to be a joke. It is considered to be a proud symbol of a country the world looks to for peace, for humanity, for justice and compassion.

• (1305)

Flying flags on our homes is not a joke. It is a symbol of pride in our country, regardless of what others would call it.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the debate today is rather interesting.

It is my considered opinion that the heritage minister is a walking, or I should say, a flying disaster. The minister envisions

Supply

herself as a unity minister but cannot even maintain unity in her own cabinet on issues which surround her portfolio.

For example the defence minister supports a Reform position that would maintain funding for CBC radio, Newsworld and RDI, but would privatize CBC television and CBC stereo. He is clearly offside with her on that issue.

The industry minister and his ministry are understandably very upset with the last minute disjointed amendments to Bill C-32, an act to amend the Copyright Act, which destroyed the process of developing a thoughtful, balanced copyright law. After destroying the committee process, she presented a dog's dinner of disjointed amendments that will create a problem of great magnitude rather than solve the conflict.

The international trade minister appears to be going bald from pulling out his hair when she stumbles forward with frivolous comments about cultural exports totalling \$1.4 billion a year because she is jeopardizing Canada-U.S. trade relations. Serenity in Canada's exports of \$1 billion a day is threatened by her intemperate, illogical rants about Canadian culture.

I have in hand a letter from the Minister of Transport dated November 21. It should be noted that I also have department statistics which show that as of November 18 there had been 2,237 flags issued to his constituency against the provincial average of 2,500. In the November 21 letter, three days after those numbers came out, he went to great lengths to say that flags appeared to be held up. What he was really getting at was he wanted to be able to make the following comment.

I quote from the Minister of Transport's letter to the Canada flag challenge program: "I am writing to you to inform you that any flags distributed to my constituents may be done so under the signature and mailing privilege of my colleague, the Canadian heritage minister, under whose jurisdiction the program falls, or any other way you see fit. I do not believe that it is appropriate for myself or my staff to be directly involved". Clearly, on the issue we are debating today, the transport minister was going out of his way to distance himself from the frivolousness that surrounds this entire issue which was developed by the heritage minister.

To make my case that she is a loose cannon and a walking disaster in her heritage portfolio, here is what she has actually done with this extremely expensive flag program at a cost of \$15.5 million. Unfortunately, she has unwittingly proved that there are two solitudes in Canada and manufactured patriotism by flag waving does not close the gap.

I have figures indicating the number of flags ordered by riding throughout Canada. The question is: Why are these statistics

divided into ridings by the Canadian heritage department? There must be something there. Let us take a look at it.

For those of us who may not be aware, flags ordered in Liberal members' ridings were sent out through their offices. That is right. The members' frank or mailing privileges were used. Of course, there is a tidy list of individuals who ordered flags which no doubt will prove to be quite useful in the upcoming election. The heritage minister in a debate with me in the House made the statement: "The flag is not Liberal. The flag is Canadian".

As proof that she is taking a hypocritical position, let us look at the details. An average of 2,000 flags per riding were ordered in every province across Canada, excluding Quebec. However, the following ridings had a considerably higher number of flags ordered. What is the similarity among these ridings? They are held by Liberal members. I would suggest that these members were encouraged to ensure these numbers in order that the minister could meet her one million flag mark.

• (1310)

For example, 8,000 flags were given to the riding of the minister of fisheries; 8,000 flags to Brian Tobin's former riding; 6,406 flags to the riding of the minister of francophonie; and 8,440 to Lanark—Carleton. In contrast, to show how these members pushed so hard on this program, the heritage minister's own riding only ordered 2,847.

The real telling numbers are in Quebec. With 25 per cent of the population, that province only accounted for 11 per cent of the flags ordered. The average number ordered in Quebec ridings was only 400. Again I note the following numbers of flags ordered by the ridings of Liberal members in Quebec against an average of only 400 flags per riding in that province: Hull—Aylmer, 2,944; Pierrefonds; 3,075; Gatineau—La Lièvre, 3,338; Gatineau, 3,000. This clearly establishes that Quebec Liberal members were aggressively spreading as many Canadian flags around as possible in a vain attempt to get the numbers up in Quebec.

What did all this cost and how much planning was there? At the outset the minister clearly and specifically stated that without donations the program would cost \$6 million. Her press secretary, Duncan Dee, again confirmed the cost would be between \$6 million and \$7 million. Now the minister has applied her own mathematical skills to this program, which has cost the taxpayer \$15.5 million. According to this minister, she has actually saved us \$8 million because there was some wild and orchestrated speculation this past summer that the program would cost \$23 million.

In summary, the program announced on February 14, 1996 according to the minister would generate patriotism, drive Canadian unity and would be funded by donations. Instead we have a

Supply

program which has had little consequence in the province of Quebec and has cost all Canadians \$15.5 million. Remember, the minister originally said that it would cost \$6 million but because it cost \$8 million less than the wild speculation, she says she is under budget when she comes in at only \$15.5 million. We can only hope the Prime Minister will not make her the Minister of Finance.

Included in that cost is another tidy little contract for the minister's former campaign manager, a senior partner at Thornley Fallis, Inc., who is not doing too badly. Since Thornley's benefactor was made Minister of Canadian Heritage, it would seem he has obtained five contracts from the Liberal government.

The minister claims to have reached her goal of one million flags. How was this attained? As I reflected on earlier, with the assistance of her Liberal colleagues. I have received calls and letters from many Canadians who never ordered the flags they received. In many cases they received two, three and even four flags. A Montreal *Le Devoir* reporter indicated in a story that his offices received seven unsolicited flags, again not ordered. The reporter promptly stuck them in the bottom drawer of his desk. So we ask, what effect are these flags at *Le Devoir*? An anonymous source in the minister's office contacted me and said that they were instructed to invent names and addresses to get the flags out so the minister could reach her goal.

I ask members of this House, did they see a great flurry of flags this past weekend, which would have demonstrated the tremendous success of this program? How successful? Students in Halifax who have seen the Liberal government gouge \$4 billion from the CHST which includes funding for post-secondary education showed their contempt for this wasteful spending by ordering 750 free flags which flew from their windows in protest. This was the most significant flurry of flags that anybody could see this weekend.

All of this falls into the same category as the minister's ill thought Canadian Information Office which when announced was supposed to cost us only \$20 million. Using the same mathematics, one can only assume we are going to get dinged for considerably more when the government's term is over. What are we getting for this? Not even a free flag.

I remind the House that the office is not accountable to Parliament. It is not accountable to access to information requests; they are blocked by cabinet order. Employees of that office are considered to be exempt staff which means the minister once again can stuff in as many Liberals as she can dig up and put their services to work for her own partisan purposes. The minister said the CIO would not duplicate any other government service already in place. However, what about Reference Canada within the industry department and all the other information offices run by each department? Further, a minister is responsible for intergovernmental affairs. Does his department not respond to requests for information?

• (1315)

The minister clearly stated that the office was not aimed at the separatists in Quebec. In her July 9 press release she said "Canadians made it clear that they are proud of their country and want to know more about each other—the office will bring measures to help Canadians to understand each other and build a stronger Canada".

She denied very vehemently that it was aimed at separatists at that time. However, only two months later the minister admitted to a reporter "the federal government has a duty to respond to the propaganda which the Quebec government spread during last year's referendum campaign". Which is the truth, her position on July 9 or her position two months later because the two things are mutually exclusive.

Only in Canada could we have members of Parliament who come to dismantle our great, magnificent nation. While I share the minister's concern about the seeds of disunity that the Bloc Quebecois and other separatists are spreading in the province of Quebec, she does not have clue one as to what it will take to focus Canadians on what it means to be Canadian.

Her office has set up a web site, for example, at the CIO office. Not surprisingly Quebecers are ignoring the information office web site in the same proportion as they ignore the minister's ill-thought out expensive flag program.

Let me now remind members of the enormous pride we, as Canadians, all Canadians, feel when we have such enormously successful winning athletes standing on the podium at the Olympic ceremonies, athletes such as Silken Lauman, Donovan Bailey, Karen Magnussen, Sylvie Frechette and Canada's special Olympians at Collingwood, Ontario. Does this not instil a greater pride in our country than a bunch of flags filtered through Liberal MPs offices at the expense of the Canadian taxpayers to the tune of \$15.5 million?

On August 30, 1996 the minister insisted that the budget is sufficient to cover the costs and that she will not have to cut other programs to come up with the funds. She should tell that to the amateur athletes whose living funds are being eroded today by the heritage ministry. These are the athletes who grow to become Canada's athletes at home and abroad. Can patriotic Canadians afford to buy flags? You bet they can. Could athletes make use of the \$15.5 million for incidentals like track shoes and food? I guess so.

Why did this minister blow the \$15.5 million on this program when our athletes are starving to death? As part of the \$414 million slashed and bled from the CBC, CBC radio, which is supported by the majority of Canadians, took a \$30 million hit. With unbelievable massive cynicism last week this minister has now restored \$10 million to CBC radio. The net loss to CBC radio, \$20 million. The point is she is blowing away the same amount of money as she has

Supply

slashed from CBC radio and she is spending it on the Canadian Information Office.

As a consequence I move the following amendment to the Bloc motion.

I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the words "Heritage Canada" and substituting the following therefor:

"such as the \$20 million spent on Canada Information Office and the \$15.5 million spent on the One Million Flags Operation at a time when cuts unprecedented in the history of Canada have been imposed on cultural institutions such as CBC Radio and direct funding to amateur sports".

The Deputy Speaker: The motion is in order.

• (1320)

Mr. Abbott: Mr. Speaker, the point of my speech is very simple and straightforward. Patriotism cannot be manufactured.

Contrary to the ideas the Liberals have, that if it is not done by the government, somehow it is not worthwhile and it is not going to happen, the point of my speech is this. Canadian culture is what Canadians do. Canadian culture is what Canadians are. We are proud of our nation. We are proud not only of the magnificence of our nation and the bounty of its resources but we are particularly proud of its people.

We do not have to be told that we are different to someone else. We do not have to feel inferior to anyone else. Canadians are the greatest people in the world. They are industrious. They are forthright.

It bothers me so much when we run into a situation that unless somehow the government gets involved, the government mandates, the government controls, the government funds, the government over arches everything, somehow we cannot be Canadian.

The approach of the heritage minister to everything, whether it is the Canadian copyright law, or the Canadian content rules that she was musing about over the weekend with respect to the CRTC, or where we should be going as far as CBC or even the importation of books into Canada, I find absolutely appalling that this minister is so shortsighted that she cannot see the greatness of our people and the greatness of our nation right in front of her face.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Madeleine Daphond-Guiral (Laval-Centre, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness that I rise today because, in this great and extraordinary country called Canada, we have to condemn the use of public funds made by this government, which has earmarked money for propaganda activities that essentially seek to discredit the people of Quebec.

The Information Canada office, the one million flag operation, all these schemes are ways of telling Quebecers: "You are wrong to feel like a people, to feel like a nation".

I want to thank the Reform Party member for specifying the amounts involved. We all know these figures, but we can never repeat them often enough.

Tomorrow, the Minister of Finance will deliver his budget speech. Chances are the budget will be soft on Canadians. Since this government came to office in 1993, budgets have been harsh. The government did not hesitate to make drastic cuts, which primarily affect the poor and the needy, and which force provincial governments to cut health and social programs.

Culture has not been spared either. Cultural institutions of which Canada can be proud, and to which Quebec can deservedly claim to have contributed, such as the CBC, Telefilm and the National Film Board, have been the target of incredible cuts.

• (1325)

These institutions played a major role in the expression of my culture. In Quebec, Radio-Canada has been a tool to make people aware of the fact that French is a rich and dynamic language, as well as an original way of stating our identity.

When Prime Minister Trudeau came to office, he had something against Radio-Canada. He never hid the fact that, if he had had his way, he would have closed that institution. Since 1993, one can feel that the current Liberal government would very much like to fulfil the former Prime Minister's wish, as evidenced by the cuts made to cultural programs by the heritage department.

There have been a few heritage ministers since 1993. The most recent, the Deputy Prime Minister, is probably the most flamboyant. Without the slightest hesitation, she is diverting funds set aside for culture with a capital C towards purely propaganda activities. These are activities promoting Canadian unity and culture, multiculturalism. In other words, culture in Canada has only one face, only one colour—it must be Canadian.

You will have no trouble understanding that I am opposed to this state of affairs, because it is my contention, and the very great majority of Quebecers would agree with me, that my culture is the culture of Quebec. It is not better than Canadian culture, but it is different, and we are staunch advocates of this right to be different. Our understanding of the decisions made by the heritage minister is that what she is setting out to do is to take away our right to express this difference.

There are many examples. There was even one recently. We learned that the Department of Foreign Affairs has new criteria for awarding grants to artists. The determining factors will no longer

be talent, creativity and originality, but ultimately the colour of the flag artists prefer. If you prefer the maple leaf, you will get your grant; if the fleur de lis means more to you, forget it.

This means that the current image of culture outside Canada will gradually fade, because unfortunately there are many Quebec artists who identify with the Quebec culture and are not afraid to say so, even if it may mean the loss of grants. It is all vaguely reminiscent of the good old days in the USSR when artistic merit was measured by an artist's promotion of the values of the unitary state, by his adulation of the government's achievements. This is not, I think, what culture is.

Culture is the expression of a people, of its identity, of its difference. For as long as French survives in Quebec, for as long as the people of Quebec see the French language as the best means of giving expression to their identity, I am sorry, but we will speak of a nation of Quebecers.

• (1330)

Since it was elected, this government has made major cuts in the cultural sector. It is very interesting to read what the red book has to say, although in few months it will be more than obsolete. In the red book the Liberal Party set out to promote culture and condemn the nasty Conservatives who dared to make savage cuts.

On page 88, it says, and I quote: "Spending cuts to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canada Council, the National Film Board, Telefilm Canada and other institutions illustrate the Tories' failure to appreciate the importance of cultural development". And also: "A Liberal government will help Canadian books, films and sound recordings to increase their share of the domestic market. We will also take measures to enable Canadian producers of cultural products to export their work to international markets. Finally, a Liberal government will be committed to stable multi-year financing for national cultural institutions such as the Canada Council and the CBC". It took a long time to achieve stable multiyear financing. And before we get there, there will be more cutbacks amounting to tens of millions of dollars.

Since 1993, the Liberals slashed the CBC's budget by a third, for a total of \$414 million in cuts, resulting in 4,000 lay-offs, including 1,300 at the French network. Similarly, Telefilm Canada suffered funding cuts totalling \$46 million; at the Canada Council, it was \$12 million; at the NAC, the National Arts Centre, \$5 million, and at the National Film Board, \$27 million. Once you start cutting, you can go on. It is easy. You get used to it.

Last week we heard the Minister of Canadian Heritage, who is still Deputy Prime Minister of this country, promise stable financing for the CBC. After more than three years of cuts, promising stable financing means that the CBC will be left with a downsized,

Supply

inadequate budget, especially in the French television and radio sector, which are underfinanced compared with the English network.

However, francophones are wizards. They do wonders with reduced budgets. In other words, this government rewards the competence of artists and producers by cutting funding. All this is probably planned in advance.

But just the same, some crazy things have happened. They cut funding, and then they established an office called the CIO, or BIC in French. At home, Bic is a wonderful little village in Quebec on the shores of the St. Lawrence, with magnificent views. It is really beautiful countryside. So, obviously, calling the centre the BIC, Bureau d'information du Canada, is a bit disturbing, but we will let it go.

Extraordinary things came out of all this. There was, for example, the One Million Flags Operation. My impression, however, when I looked at my Christmas cards this year, was that things were not going as well as they might, because there were Christmas cards where an entire family was dressed in a Canadian flag. Now that is quite extraordinary.

• (1335)

It seems there were flags alright, when they were trying to colour Quebec red and white. It seems that only 10 per cent of the flags ended up in Quebec, compared to 40 per cent in Ontario. So 50 per cent of the operation took place in central Canada, except that I must say I saw few flags displayed in Quebec. I did not see any in the towns and villages. Perhaps I am colour blind.

They are doing other things too. They are setting up sweepstakes. Lotteries are in fashion. They are preparing Attractions Canada questionnaires. It seems to me that if you are proud of your country, you do not need this sort of incentive. Being proud of one's country, loving one's country, comes naturally.

When a government feels obliged to invest huge amounts to force people to love their country, we know it is not going to work. You cannot force people to love, and Quebecers cannot be forced to appear to love, because loving involves being treated with respect. And we can see from all that goes on with Heritage Canada that respect is not the watchword in this government's treatment of Quebec.

I had the opportunity to see the figures for federal spending since December 1994, that is, a few months prior to the referendum campaign. The figure is nearly \$100 million, which is a lot of money. I am no economist, but I recall our asking for Tokamak, a high tech industry, the sum of \$8 million, which was out of the question. Yet, \$100 million was allocated to propaganda before the referendum and immediately after.

Supply

More than \$1 million was spent on the Canadian flag 30th anniversary celebrations. I wonder how much France spent to mark the anniversary of its flag. It may be worth asking our researchers to look into that.

An amount of \$1,843,000 was spent for the UN's 50th anniversary; for the "Heritage Minutes"—I do not go to the movies often, but I remember seeing one or two on the big screen, but putting anything on the big screen is expensive: \$2,220,000.

Tourism promotion for Canadians: \$15 million. That is incredible. I have the figures right here; I can read them, even without my glasses. The "One Million Voices" campaign—they must have sung quite loud because it cost \$500,000. And that went in fact to the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne.

Canadian identity alone, in terms of subsidies not identified within Heritage Canada, cost \$3 million. There is the Canadian passport promotion. Is it not just incredible to be promoting the Canadian passports? Passports are used less and less. In Europe today, people can travel freely, but here the passport is being promoted. It is a well known fact that Canadians travel extensively around the world; therefore a small amount of \$25,000 was allocated to promoting the Canadian passport. You realize that there are single parent families with two and three children that do not earn that much in a whole year.

On federal government services, \$5 million was spent. For Operation Unity: \$11 million. And the list goes on, with \$23 million here and \$600,000 there. This all adds up to nearly \$100 million.

I believe the government should think again. Tomorrow is budget day. We cannot really tell what the finance minister's budget will contain, but one thing is for sure: in this country, culture will continue to have a strongly partisan connotation to it. I must say that it is a shame that propaganda takes precedence over respect.

• (1440)

I hope that, by the year 2000, our friends across the way will have learned to view Quebec in an honest, respectful and realistic way.

I think there is nothing wrong with being naive; it allows us to keep hoping. I tell you that my hope is alive. We should never lose hope.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the hon. member's speech.

The member sort of criticized, again, Canada and its proud and well-known institutions, which have worked hard to promote and to preserve the French fact, in Quebec and across the country.

I find it strange that, when numbers are mentioned, particularly by Bloc Quebecois members, there is a tendency to exaggerate. I

would like the hon. member to explain something. As she knows, Quebec accounts for close to 25 per cent of the country's population, 24.9 per cent to be precise, and pays 22 per cent of federal taxes. However, in the case of certain federal institutions, such as the National Film Board, we note that 73.9 per cent of the NFB's budget is spent in Quebec.

In the case of Telefilm Canada, which was used to edit a number of well-known Quebec films, close to 62.9 per cent of the budget was spent in Quebec, including 43 per cent on French language films. Again, Quebec currently accounts for 25 per cent of Canada's population.

As for the CBC, I agree with the hon. member that cuts were made. However, cuts are not unique to Canada. Indeed, major cuts were made to Radio-Québec and to community radio stations in various regions of the province. We could also mention the various cuts made in other countries. It is a fact that the media world is undergoing drastic changes as we are about to begin a new century.

I am looking at the figures for the CBC, and I agree that cuts were made. The corporation had a budget of \$918 million, of which close to 40 per cent, or \$367,280,000, was allocated to its French network, Radio-Canada. So, based on the proportion of the overall population living in Quebec, the province is actually getting close to \$140 million more than it should.

I find it strange and I wonder if, in this post-referendum context for us, which is probably a pre-referendum context for the Bloc Quebecois, the hon. member could tell us where Quebec would find that money, should it achieve sovereignty.

Mrs. Dalphond-Guiral: Mr. Speaker, the member asks how will we come up with this money once Quebec is independent.

You know, it has nothing to do with chance, if I may rely on the figures given by my colleague, the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, when he says that the NFB spent 73 per cent of its budget in Quebec, it is very simple. It is because the creativity is in Quebec, that is all.

What is the mainstay of Canadian culture right now? The mainstay of Canadian culture is the dynamism of the culture of Quebec.

Let no one think that money has been allocated to the NFB or Telefilm Canada out of the goodness of anyone's heart. That is not the case. It is because of our ability to turn to exceptional account the money given to our creators.

It is my view that, the day Quebecers take charge of their own affairs, become their own masters, our culture will have all the means to find its full expression, without being subject to the dictates of people who claim to have money, because they have forgotten that the money they have actually comes from the voters, from the taxpayers.

Supply

• (1345)

My colleague was saying that we represented almost 25 per cent, or a bit less, of the population, but as far as I know, we pay the same taxes as the rest of Canada. So he was worried about how we would manage. I can reassure him immediately. I think that our future will be on a level with our ability, our determination and our respect for ourselves and for our neighbours in Canada.

[English]

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Haldimand—Norfolk.

I am pleased to rise in the House to address the opposition motion today and in particular I want to remind the House of the accomplishments of this government in supporting Canada's publishing industry and its progress in the field of copyright reform.

Our government and our Prime Minister are deeply committed to supporting Canadian culture and promoting Canadian content. In partnership with leaders in the arts and culture in Canada, the Minister of Canadian Heritage is developing a cohesive vision for the real and sustainable support to culture in this country. Today I would like to highlight some of our accomplishments to date.

This government wants to ensure the continued development of the Canadian publishing industry. By directly assisting this sector and by implementing structural policy measures we are making sure that Canadian publishing remains an important agent of cultural expression.

The Canadian poet Hector de Saint-Denys Garneau once said that writers burst the boundaries of the globe. Our books and magazines connect us, first to deeper parts of ourselves, then to each other and finally to our sense of place. In turn, they reflect Canada back to the world.

Canadians want to read Canadian books and they are doing so. Recent market research shows that Canadians are reading more than ever and that most of them are reading Canadian writers. Eighty per cent of these works are published by Canadian owned firms.

The successes read like a hit parade of Canadian writers. Many are household names, remarkable talents, such as Robertson Davies, Michel Tremblay, W.P. Kinsella, Anne Hébert, Marie-Claire Blais, Emile Nelligan, Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, Gabriel Roy and Robinson Mistry, to name only a few.

Our writers are helping to forge a place for Canadian literature as a world class art form. It is being translated into dozens of languages, studied in some 40 countries and recognized internationally by being awarded some of the highest honours and awards. For example, Antoine Maillet has been the recipient of the most prestigious French language literary award, the prix Goncourt.

Michael Ondaatje won the Booker prize, Great Britain's most prestigious literary award.

Canadian magazines are another essential form of our cultural expression from news and opinion magazines like *L'Actualité* and *Maclean's* to health magazines like *Santé* and children's magazines like *Chickadee*. Our magazine industry is essential to our sense of who we are as Canadians.

Canada has over 1,400 magazines. They provide employment for nearly 6,000 Canadians and bear witness to the fact that our publishers, editors, art directors and writers are among the finest in the world. Through the book publishing development program, the Government of Canada is providing \$15.8 million in direct financial assistance to over 180 Canadian publishers in 1996-97. As well, over \$6 million was provided to support the marketing of books in Canada and to promote the export of Canadian books abroad.

• (1350)

The Government of Canada helps the Canadian publishing sector and Canadian authored books to achieve their considerable success. The Canadian market share of Canadian authored books has risen from 5 per cent in 1970 to 25 per cent today. In the last five years export sales of Canadian books have tripled.

Our commitment is stronger than ever. During the summer of 1996, the government worked with book publishers to study options to improve the financial health of Canadian owned publishing firms. The result of this study is fueling a three point publishing strategy, including short term funding assistance to stabilize the industry, a feasibility study for creating a publishers loan guarantee program and other long term measures to stabilize the financing environment for publishers.

Recently the Minister of Canadian Heritage provided our publishers with an additional \$5 million to bolster direct financial assistance to the sector for 1996-97. The periodical industry has received both direct assistance and support through structural policy measures.

Canadians are reading more Canadian magazines than ever before. In 1961 about 25 per cent of magazines circulating in this country were Canadian. By 1992 that had increased to almost 68 per cent. We want to keep this kind of growth in Canada's vital cultural industries. The book and the periodical publishing sector in Canada plays a pivotal role in telling us about ourselves, about Canadian places, events and issues. Our enormous successes in this sector at home and abroad are dependent upon industries with strong foundations in the domestic market. The government is working with members of the publishing community to strengthen it. That is partnership in action, working for Canadian culture and identity.

S. O. 31

An area relating to the publishing sector and directly affecting it is that of copyright. Among the initiatives of the government is its work in copyright reform. For several years Canadians have awaited amendments to the Copyright Act, important changes that would update the legislation and help the cultural sector to meet the challenges of the information age.

Bill C-32, an act to amend the Copyright Act, will soon receive third reading in the House. In the early 1980s the Liberal government of the day produced a comprehensive document, the Applebaum-Hebert report, which called for the reform of copyright legislation. In the years that followed, the Conservative government failed to act to update copyright legislation. We are remedying that situation by making sure that Bill C-32 passes into law.

As a member of the heritage committee I work closely with Canadian authors and publishers to ensure that Bill C-32 addresses the concerns of both groups. The bill as amended by the heritage committee effectively balances the interests of the publishers, authors and consumers of copyright material. Bill C-32 will help ensure that Canadian authors will be compensated for the unauthorized use of their works.

An amendment I proposed will ensure that users will have access to unpublished documents in archives while providing protection for authors who do not wish to have their papers copied. The bill will also ensure that Canadian publishers with exclusive distribution agreements will be protected from parallel importation.

I receive many calls from Hamilton book sellers expressing concern about the limits on parallel importation. I was able to assure them that amendments were made to the copyright bill that will ensure that book sellers have timely access to special orders.

This government has listened to Canadians. We have taken the measures to move ahead on such long sought after legislation as Bill C-32. We recognize that if there is any matter that Canadians hold dear, it is Canadian culture. By bringing Bill C-32 before the House we have made a significant contribution to the vitality of Canada's cultural sector. By protecting the legitimate right of Canada's creators who are the source of our cultural vitality, we are ensuring the continued vitality of Canada's cultural sector.

In 1993 the Liberal government pledged its commitment to support Canadian culture through concrete support and by the establishment of relevant policies and legislation. We are proud of our accomplishments and we stand by our commitment to complete the work we have begun.

• (1355)

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member could help me understand something about just one

of the many aspects of Bill C-32. I am thinking of the blank tape levy.

With the blank tape levy where people are going to be charged so many cents, which we talked about in committee, 35 or 40 cents a tape, it is going to raise \$12 million which supposedly will be distributed to artists. Could the member help me understand how this encourages Canadian artists, considering that the vast majority of the music being copied is an American product. The money is going to be distributed in small part to the Canadian artists.

This is actually simply encouraging two things, number one a trade battle with the U.S. where it says "if you are collecting \$12 million and the product that you are copying is an American product, we demand to have our fair share of that". Therefore we once again have the Liberals instigating a trade battle with the U.S. much like with *Sports Illustrated*.

Second, could she explain to this House, indeed to Canadians, how this will actually encourage more work by or for Canadian artists, if it is not what I have always called it, simply a tax on tapes.

Ms. Phinney: Mr. Speaker, it is hard to give a brief answer to that question, but maybe I could come back and finish it after question period. Would that be all right?

The Speaker: My colleague, if you would rather wait and give a fuller answer after question period, that would be fine with me. With that, the hon. member for Kootenay East will get an answer to his question and we will be able to begin Statements by Members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have received several complaints about apparent overstaffing at Corrections Canada's Okimaw Ochi Healing Lodge near Maple Creek, Saskatchewan.

For example, a certified day care worker was recently hired for the one toddler at the institution. I am told that there will soon be two toddlers. The lodge has a good working arrangement for foster care on the nearby Nikaneet Reserve, so that solitary child is at the lodge only half time.

There are two nurses on staff for the 20 inmates, whereas neighbouring taxpaying farmers and ranchers who have never

committed a crime still have to travel 30 or 40 kilometres to obtain basic medical services. Is this fair? [English]

This small institution has four clerical employees. I do not doubt that they are busy, but why is there so much paper to shuffle?

My diagnosis is that Corrections Canada suffers from chronic bureaucratic bloat.

* * *

TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Mr. Ron Fewchuk (Selkirk—Red River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I had the pleasure of attending the Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence in Science, Technology and Mathematics in Ottawa.

It was an honour to attend this ceremony and to witness my constituent Denise McWilliams receive this award, the highest honour in the teaching field.

On behalf of the people of Selkirk Red River riding, I rise today to thank Denise McWilliams for her hard work and teaching excellence.

Teachers play a critical role in shaping the attitudes of students and in equipping them for future careers in the global economy they face. The hard work of teachers today will mean a better Canada for all of us tomorrow.

* * *

[Translation]

MINISTER OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, again this week, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs gave us evidence that the federal government is like the Leaning Tower of Pisa; it always leans the same way, toward Alliance Quebec.

When the minister was questioned on his government's intentions concerning the organization of school boards along language lines, the minister launched an all-out attack against Quebec's language policies, accusing the Quebec government of dividing its francophone and anglophone communities.

• (1400)

How can we understand a minister from Quebec's constant attacks on the Government of Quebec, when he never has the courage to speak out against the failure of provincial governments to provide services in French to francophones living in their province?

Such behaviour clearly illustrates this government's complicity in the anglicization of francophones by closing its eyes to a number of facts, including the fact that the federal public service is one of the key tools in the anglicization of Quebec and Canadian francophones.

S. O. 31

NATIONAL HERITAGE DAY

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark national heritage day.

Heritage day, established by Heritage Canada in 1973, is an opportunity for Canadians from coast to coast to coast to celebrate, discover and share our rich and diverse heritage.

The diversity of our country and of its people is expressed in many ways and makes us unique among the nations of the world. Whether we were born here, or came to Canada later in life, together we have built a great nation, a country recognized by the United Nations as the best country in the world in which to live.

Today we should all take the opportunity to remember with pride the contributions of all of those who have helped form this great country, celebrate the diversity which makes up our heritage and strengthen the multicultural fabric of Canada.

I call on all members and all Canadians to join me in celebrating national heritage day.

* * *

THE BUDGET

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are congratulating themselves and expecting applause because tomorrow's budget, they say, contains no major new spending cuts. What hypocrisy!

The real story is that in the fiscal year starting April 1, there are \$11.9 billion in new spending cuts by federal departments, all announced in the 1995 budget.

For example, when the Minister of National Defence appeared on CTV with Mike Duffy this past Sunday, he said defence funding has stabilized. Some stability: beginning April 1, 1997, \$1 billion in further cuts will be inflicted on national defence. This will bring the total cuts at DND over the three-year period to \$1.9 billion. The list goes on.

All these cuts do not include the cutbacks to the federal cash transfers to the provinces for health and education.

* * *

PEARSON AIRPORT

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in shutting the Somalia inquiry, the defence minister is once again showing his lack of respect for due process. His interpretation of justice was clearly established when he was Minister of Transport responsible for the shameful Bill C-22 cancellation of the Pearson airport contract.

S. O. 31

While no one disputed the right of the government to cancel the deal, this bill would have denied Canadian citizens their day in court. They would have no opportunity to defend their contract or their reputations. Even Clifford Olson was not denied his day in court.

* * *

GREAT NORTHERN EXHIBITION

Mr. Murray Calder (Wellington—Grey—Dufferin—Simcoe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with a great sense of pride that I am pleased to share with the House the news that the Great Northern Exhibition in Collingwood has received at the annual meeting of the Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions in Saskatoon the Local Fair of the Year award for 1996.

Additionally, Jim and Donna Fraser of Collingwood received the 1996 Industry Achievement Citation. Jim and Donna have been involved as volunteers in the fair industry for 35 years, Jim as an associate director, director and president of the Canadian National Exhibition, Donna as a volunteer and director of the Great Northern Exhibition.

This is a great tribute to the town of Collingwood, its surrounding communities and the many volunteers that have made the Great Northern Exhibition an annual event that draws visitors from all over Ontario.

I would like to remind one and all to set aside September 26, 27, and 28 for the 1997 Great Northern Exhibition.

* * *

[*Translation*]**YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT**

Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I wish to express my deep disappointment in the Minister of Human Resources Development concerning the announcement of his new youth employment strategy.

After a wait of over three years, instead of presenting an innovative strategy aimed at helping young people find jobs, the Liberal government is still exhibiting its total lack of understanding of the hard reality faced by young people in Quebec and Canada, preferring once again to meddle in areas of provincial jurisdiction.

● (1405)

Where are the new measures to address the 17 per cent unemployment level among young people aged 15 to 24? Where are the new measures to help high school dropouts find a job? Where are the new measures to give a boost to the 500,000 or so young people who are looking for work?

I will close by reminding the Liberal government that organizing media events and inviting publicity-hungry ministers is not the way to improve the situation for young people. What is needed instead is to transfer the money which is being blatantly wasted over to the provinces, who are in a better position to understand my generation and to respond to its expectations.

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[*English*]**NATIONAL HERITAGE DAY**

Mr. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, February 17, is national heritage day in Canada, a moment to rediscover and appreciate the things that make our country a unique part of the world.

Newfoundland and Labrador is a proud partner in the Canadian Confederation. On Saturday, February 15, people from all over Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte gathered to demonstrate the pride and the hope that they share in Canada through our national flag day. People gathered in numerous community celebrations to fly proudly the maple leaf on its 32nd anniversary.

Approaching the new millennium, we are in the position to reinvent our future and strengthen our federation for generations to come. A strong nation is one that is confident. And, as Canadians, we are confident of the road ahead.

Celebrating national heritage day and flag day helps to strengthen our future. It is my pleasure to extend an open invitation to all Canadians to come and visit our province and explore the tremendous heritage that Newfoundland and Labrador has to offer as we celebrate Cabot 500.

* * *

MARIAN SWEETNAM

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today and inform the House of an award winning coach from Lindsay, Ontario.

Marian Sweetnam was presented recently with her second Ontario female coach of the year award at the 29th annual Ontario sports award ceremony in Toronto. The first time she won the award was in 1989, the same year she was selected Canadian swimming coach of the year.

Marian's swim club, the Lindsay Lightningbolts, won the division 3 team championship last year. Her most successful student is her daughter Nancy who has won 13 national championships while setting 7 national records.

Congratulations on your recent achievements, Marian.

S. O. 31

[Translation]

CANADIAN FLAG

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the One Million Flags Operation came to an end this week-end, in a most surprisingly understated fashion.

What could possibly have urged the minister to show such restraint, for she is known for her extravagant statements? Here are at least three reasons.

First: At a time when the federal government is applying unprecedented cuts to our social security net and our culture, this operation is a shameful waste of public funds.

Second: During this operation, 10 per cent of the flags were distributed in the province of Quebec and 40 per cent in Ontario, another unequivocal proof that there are two countries within Canada, two nations: Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Third: Last year, the Prime Minister of Canada put a damper on Flag Day when he grabbed a demonstrator by the throat. This very worrisome image is etched in our memory.

* * *

[English]

CANADA PENSION PLAN

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, let me get this straight. The Liberals and Conservatives have squandered funds going into the Canada pension plan for many years. Now they want average Canadians to pay as much as \$1,300 more per year out of their pockets to pay it back.

Most of us know that the MP pension plan is the best in the world, with exorbitant benefits after just two terms in office, more than any Canadian could ever get from the Canada pension plan.

I ask: How much are the Liberals, the separatists and other MPs paying in additional premiums to the MP pension plan, just like they asked the rest of us to do into the Canada pension plan? Nothing. That is right, nothing.

What comes to mind? Gimme. Gimme. "Please, sir, can I have some more. It's good for me but it is not good for you". Elitists at the trough, that is what this is all about.

* * *

• (1410)

[Translation]

TEAM CANADA

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec's small and medium size businesses are so taken up by the various trade missions that were led by our Prime Minister that they are asking for more.

This is essentially what emerges from a recent survey by the Everest company for *La Presse* and the National Bank. Most of the 301 small and medium size businesses surveyed wished to be part of future trade missions, preferably in Asia, Eastern Europe and Central America.

[English]

Ninety-six per cent of respondents considered Team Canada missions important for the economic development of the country; 94 per cent of small and medium size businesses felt these missions contributed to the enhancement of Canada's image abroad; and 88 per cent felt there were significant spin-offs.

[Translation]

Team Canada missions are a success, as Quebec's small and medium size businesses can attest to.

* * *

[English]

TRANSPORTATION

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was absolutely shocked last week when I learned that the Superior Court stopped the transfer of all commercial air flights from Mirabel to Dorval airport.

Several months ago the government and Aéroports de Montréal decided that all of Montreal's scheduled flights should use Dorval and that Mirabel should be used for charters, cargo and other miscellaneous operations. This was done because many international airlines, especially European airlines, were abandoning Mirabel and were using Toronto only. Montreal passengers had to first fly to Toronto if they wished to go to certain European cities that had always been served from Montreal.

Dorval is only 20 minutes from downtown Montreal while Mirabel is at least 45 minutes. The cost of taxis, transfers, shuttle services and time to Mirabel is uneconomic and an unnecessary nuisance. I urge the government and the Montreal authorities to get the Dorval consolidation back on track quickly.

* * *

EDUCATION

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while respectful of provincial powers to education under section 92 of the Constitution Act, the federal government recognizes its

Oral Questions

leadership role in advanced education and research in leading edge science and technology.

This means providing essential infrastructure and financial support for the outstanding teachers, researchers and students who will achieve and maintain competitive world standards in these fields.

We lead North America in areas such as biomedicine, pharmacology, solid state and particle physics, with a demonstrated highly successful correlation and application of such endeavours in new industries, both domestic and export, and also in the many highly trained professional jobs that come with that.

Federal leadership in higher education and advanced research in science and technology is the key to an economically prosperous Canada as we enter the 21st century.

* * *

CAPITOL THEATRE ASSOCIATION

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all those involved with the Chatham Capitol Theatre Association in my riding. This historic theatre was slated for demolition to make way for a parking lot.

Local citizens got together to save it, and they are now trying to raise \$2 million for renovation and restoration. The dream is to turn the building into a performing arts centre led by chairman Kevin McMillan, a world renowned baritone and Grammy award winner.

I am also proud of the federal government's efforts. It contributed \$216,500 for job creation to help the theatre become a tremendous economic and cultural boost to the downtown area while preserving an important part of Chatham's history. The federal government is investing in communities and people. Bravo to the Capitol Theatre Association and its foundation of fantastic volunteers.

* * *

FARM INDUSTRY

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's farm industry is fighting mad over the Liberal government's Pest Management Regulatory Agency, the PMRA. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Prince Edward Island Federation of Agriculture, the Ontario Soybean Growers and the B.C. Horticultural Coalition are just a few to be named. Producers are angry too.

Producers are angry that the PMRA's bloated bureaucracy has ballooned by 100 per cent. Producers are angry that it takes 11 PMRA bureaucrats to register one product in Canada. Producers are angry that the government's own studies show that almost one-third of currently registered pesticides will be withdrawn under the PMRA. Producers are angry that the PMRA proposes to

re-register all of the 900 farm pesticides now on the market, and do so every three to five years.

Once again the Liberal government is putting bureaucracy ahead of common sense. What the PMRA should really stand for is "producers made really angry".

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

• (1415)

[Translation]

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec's finance minister is asking the federal finance minister for \$1.9 billion in compensation for having harmonized that province's sales tax with the federal GST, so that Quebec will be given the same treatment as the maritime provinces, which will be receiving almost \$1 billion in compensation for having agreed to harmonization.

Quebec is backed in its demands by Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, which also find it unfair that this deal was only offered to the maritimes.

On the eve of his budget, does the federal finance minister intend to do anything about this unfair treatment of Quebec?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have provided the Government of Quebec with all the necessary information, the figures and how the calculation was arrived at. As the Leader of the Opposition well knows, the formula said that a province that lost more than 5 per cent of its revenues was entitled to compensation after the harmonization of sales tax.

The four Atlantic provinces and Manitoba and Saskatchewan are eligible, but Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia are not. Quebec has not lost any money; under harmonization, in fact, Quebec has made money.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance of Canada is considered a reliable authority on public finances, and he should hang on to his reputation.

Will the Minister of Finance of Canada admit that the losses incurred by the maritimes through harmonization with the GST are the result of fiscal decisions that, in the past, were made by those who set fiscal policy for these provinces, making it possible now, for example, for New Brunswick to woo Quebec businesses by offering much lower payroll taxes than in Quebec?

Will the Minister of Finance not admit that, in fact, the reason sales taxes are as high as they are in these provinces is that different fiscal decisions were made?

Oral Questions

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker. First of all, if we look at the formula, we see that Manitoba and Saskatchewan would have been eligible, and they still are. But their tax bases are very different from those in the Atlantic provinces.

So no, really, we looked at the financial ability of provinces; there is a formula, but it does not apply to Quebec, Ontario, Alberta or British Columbia.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what is unfortunate about the calculation of this compensation is that it only came to everyone's attention after Quebec demanded the same treatment as the maritimes. Then, the minister came up with what might be called the McKenna formula.

But in refusing to grant Quebec fair treatment, despite the repeated demands of the provincial finance minister, is the federal finance minister not forcing Quebecers to foot the bill for Frank McKenna's poaching expedition, when he tried to woo Quebec businesses with the more advantageous tax situation in New Brunswick? Is the finance minister not forcing Quebecers to foot this bill?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only consideration was the figures of the other provinces. We asked the other provinces if they had supplied them.

The formula, however, was known in advance. It is very simple. It says that if you lose more than 5 per cent of your revenues after harmonization, you are entitled to compensation. That is very clear. It does not take an accountant or an economist to work it out.

• (1420)

There is no doubt that each province has its needs. When it comes to the various treatments given other provinces, the member is well aware that Quebec is receiving 45 per cent of federal equalization payments. At the same time, Quebec, with 25 or 24 per cent of the population, is receiving 31 per cent of federal transfer payments. I must say Quebec has been treated very fairly.

* * *

POVERTY

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Again this morning, the newspapers were telling us that the Minister of Finance, thanks to the leeway provided by his exceeding his deficit reduction objectives, intends in tabling his budget tomorrow to announce measures—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Loubier: If I were they, Mr. Speaker, I would hold my applause, for what is coming is not all that worthy of applause.

Tomorrow, the minister intends to announce measures to combat child poverty and to improve the health care system.

Are we to understand that these measures the Minister of Finance is preparing to announce, in two areas of provincial jurisdiction, are intended to make us forget that the child poverty and health care situations have deteriorated as a result of his own cuts of \$4.5 billion to social and health programs?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, we have to look at what the government has done since it took office. For example, last year we announced the doubling of the income supplement for the children of the working poor. We raised this from \$500 to \$1000. This is money from the federal government to assist our country's families.

In Quebec alone, we inject \$11 billion in federal funds yearly. Looking at the assistance to the aeronautical industry, the pharmaceutical industry, the way the federal government is striving relentlessly to assist Quebec small and medium size businesses, I believe the hon. member ought to be thanking us.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the Minister of Finance has cut \$4.5 billion from social programs. There are 500,000 more poor children since he became finance minister. That is the reality.

How can he claim not to have money to give to the provinces through established social programs aimed at combatting poverty, and then announce tomorrow some stopgap measures, some campaign goodies?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is the question?

An hon. member: He had so much to say.

Mr. Martin (LaSalle-Émard): We will let him ask the question.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: It is a question about campaign goodies.

Mr. Martin (LaSalle-Émard): In that case, Mr. Speaker, the answer is very easy. There are no campaign goodies on our side, only excellent government.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

* * *

[English]

CANADA PENSION PLAN

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on Friday the finance minister announced one of the biggest single tax grabs in Canadian history, a 70 per cent hike in CPP premiums, payroll taxes with no increase in benefits.

Under the old system Canadians paid 5.8 per cent of their paycheques for a \$9,000 pension at the end of the day. Under the

Oral Questions

new system they will now have to pay 9.9 per cent of their paycheques to receive the same \$9,000.

Is this the government's primary response to the pension crisis: a \$10 billion tax grab that will penalize young Canadians and kill jobs? No wonder we need a fresh start on pension reform.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the position of members of the Reform Party as far as the Canada pension plan is concerned is very clear. They want to blow it up. They want to see it destroyed. Under those circumstances it is perhaps understandable that the leader of the Reform Party deliberately misinterprets what has been done. Let me simply set him straight.

• (1425)

Number one, this is not a tax grab; in fact, it is not a tax. Contributions to the Canada pension plan are akin to the contributions to a private pension plan. They are an investment in the future retirement needs of Canadians.

If the member wants to know what a tax grab is, then perhaps he ought to look at what the premier of British Columbia suggested, which was to increase the premiums but provide no value. That would have been a tax grab. What we have done here is we have increased the premiums and we have given value.

If the leader of the Reform Party does not want to accept my word for it, perhaps he is prepared to go into the election in Alberta and tell Grant Mitchell and Ralph Klein that what they have participated in is a tax grab. Let him tell Ralph Klein that he is overtaxing Albertans.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy of the minister's reply is not only an insult to every Reformer, but it is an insult to every senior citizen in the country.

Here is a well to do finance minister who himself qualifies for a fat MP pension and what does he do? He is clawing back old age security from thousands of seniors every month; he is gouging CPP contributors to the tune of a 70 per cent premium hike and he has his covetous eye on the RRSP savings as well. Then he has the nerve to stand in the House and pretend that he is taking care of seniors.

Will the minister not admit that the Canada pension plan is in trouble because of decades of Liberal and Tory mismanagement? If the minister had been the manager of a private pension plan and it had been mismanaged like the CPP has been, he and his colleagues would be making licence plates in some penitentiary instead of sitting in the House.

The Speaker: My colleagues, I would urge you to be very judicious in your choice of words. They sometimes give the wrong impression.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has stated on a number of occasions that if over the course of the last decade the previous federal government and provincial governments had taken the bull by the horns the way this government has done, then there would not have been a need for reform.

Let us understand what the hon. member is saying. He is not only saying the federal government is wrong, he is saying that his pal Ralph Klein is wrong, that his pal Mike Harris is wrong. He is saying that the eight out of ten provinces that had the courage to do what other provincial governments did not and the federal government which had the courage to do what other federal governments had to do were wrong. Well, we were not wrong. We were right. We saved the Canada pension plan.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to pensions, the government has a complete double standard.

Under the Canada pension plan Canadians will pay premiums of 9.9 per cent for a maximum pension of \$9,000 a year. Under the Liberals' MP pension plan the premiums are roughly the same, around 9 per cent, but the returns are much, much greater. For his 9 per cent the leader of the federal Tories will receive \$53,000 a year and for her 9 per cent, the Deputy Prime Minister will pocket \$49,000 a year. That is a far cry from \$9,000.

My question is one we are going to ask in every riding in the country: How can this government ask Canadians to pay 70 per cent more for a paltry pension of \$9,000 a year when Liberal members opposite continue to qualify for an obscenely wealthy MP pension?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government had not taken the action that was taken, the premiums would have risen not to 9.9 per cent and then been stable, but they would have gone to 14 per cent. As a result of our action, the premiums are down substantially.

• (1430)

I will tell you what question we will be asking throughout the election campaign. Hon. members opposite have stood up and they have said that the increase from 5.8 per cent to 9.9 per cent is a tax grab. If the Reform Party put into effect what it has talked about, which is its super RRSP coupled with some kind of funding for the Canada pension plan, the premiums would have been substantially higher. Why do Reformers not tell Canadians that what they want to do is a massive tax grab but they do not have the guts to give Canadians the calculations.

The Speaker: I am sure no one's courage is being called into question in the House.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

PUBLIC FINANCES

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and his cabinet can make all the scientific analyses they want and be as generous as they like in their speeches, especially to the neediest in our society, but the fact remains that they do not practise what they preach.

My question is directed to the Prime Minister. Is this government's real strategy not the one revealed by a senior Canadian official when he told us what the Prime Minister said to French president Jacques Chirac? He explained his strategy: in Canada, it was easy to cut health services because it was the federal government that made the decisions unilaterally, while the provinces had to make the cuts and pay the political price.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we consider the situation in Quebec, the transfer payments the Canadian government made to the province of Quebec in 1996 totalled more than \$11 billion, exactly the same amount that was transferred in 1993, when we formed the government.

When transfers for certain programs were cut, the slack was taken up by equalization payments for provinces that do not have the same per capita income as other provinces. The fact remains that during the past three years, the amounts transferred by the federal government to the provincial treasury in Quebec exceeded \$11 billion, and they have not gone below that level.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the figures show that \$1.3 billion was cut in transfer payments, and that there was a \$40 million increase in equalization. Is the Prime Minister saying we are lucky to get more unemployment insurance? Maybe he should realize this is because there is more unemployment, and it shows his complete contempt for the situation. If there is more unemployment, the federal government's policies are to blame. Reality proves the government is wrong.

I want to ask the Prime Minister whether he will finally understand that he should no longer intervene in provincial jurisdictions such as health, education and youth training and that he should withdraw from these sectors, give the money to the provinces and let them deal with the needs of their citizens instead of making propaganda at the expense of the needy.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the Canadian government has a duty to ensure that the neediest in this country receive sufficient compensation to give them an adequate standard of living.

This government is certainly not going to apologize for having done what the provinces jointly asked us to do. After the meeting in June with the provincial premiers, it was said we would have to work on the problem of child poverty. All the provinces agreed, and I hope the Minister of Finance will be able to do something about child poverty tomorrow in his budget.

* * *

[English]

CANADA PENSION PLAN

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Canada pension plan premiums are payroll taxes. They are set by the federal government and the provincial governments and employees and employers have no control whatsoever. They are taxes pure and simple. This \$1,300 increase in Canada pension plan premiums as announced by the Liberal government will result in a massive payroll tax increase for every working Canadian.

On May 3, 1994 the finance minister said right here in this House: "Payroll taxes are a cancer on job creation". Does the Minister of Finance believe today that payroll taxes are a cancer on job creation?

• (1435)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just because the Reform Party wants to destroy the Canada pension plan is no reason for the Reform Party to continue to misinterpret what Canada pension plan premiums are.

The fact is that workers compensation premiums are taxed. There are other forms of taxes at the provincial level, health levies and those kinds of things.

The hon. member, who is normally a fair person, knows full well that the Canada pension plan premiums are akin to contributions to private pension plans. They are an investment in the retirement of Canadians and should not be characterized in any other way.

It is really not incumbent upon the hon. member to scare Canadians or to mislead them. What he should be doing is explaining it to them. If he has a difference of opinion let him have it, but let us not misinterpret what is going on here.

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, no matter how you dress it up, this is a pig. You can put any face you want on it but it is always going to be a tax. It is going to be an unfair tax and will be particularly onerous on younger Canadians at the expense of older Canadians. That is the way it is. It is going to be a particularly expensive and onerous tax on young Canadians.

The increase in payroll taxes paid by every employer and employee will be about the combined monthly car and mortgage payment or about half the tuition fee for someone in university. It

Oral Questions

will suck \$10 billion out of the paycheques of Canadians every year.

How many permanent jobs will be lost by taking this \$10 billion out of the economy every single year?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the opposite. There are going to be thousands of jobs created as a result of the confidence Canadians are going to have now that the Canada pension plan will be there for them. Not only that, but when the new investment fund is set up under independent management and is able to operate and invest in the enterprises of Canadians, it will be a very large player in creating jobs within this country.

The hon. member has said that we have preferred one generation to another. Is the hon. member saying that we should have cut the old age pensions currently? Is he saying that we should deindex the old age pensions? Is he saying we should engage in discriminatory action against senior Canadians? Let me tell this House that we will not do it.

* * *

[Translation]

SOMALIA INQUIRY

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

Last Friday, the Minister of National Defence caused quite a stir by stating that the Somali killed in the events of March 4, 1993 was murdered. He thus contradicted the conclusions of the report of the military police and added to the complexity of the matter, because he spoke of several murders.

When he told the press that he considered the Somali killed on March 4, 1993 was murdered because he was shot in the back by Canadian soldiers, was the minister giving his personal opinion or was he revealing privileged information he had received from a high ranking army officer?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said last Friday, I clearly made a mistake by linking the incidents in Somalia and by describing the incident my hon. colleague is referring to as murder.

Obviously, murder was the conclusion reached in the case of the Somali killed following torture. In the case of the two Somalis who were shot, where one died, I apologize as I did Friday before this House for having mistakenly linked the two incidents.

I think it would be quite inappropriate for me today, just as it was on Friday, to make this sort of link until the whole issue has been examined and the conclusions of the Somalia inquiry are presented at the end of June.

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister himself has added somewhat to the confusion in this

matter, and, clearly, the commissioners will not be able to shed light on all the events of March 4, because they do not have time to hear any more witnesses.

Since the minister himself has said and repeated in this House that this question still needs to be resolved, what guarantee can he give us today that everything will be examined and that we will find out whether murder was committed on March 4, as he himself claimed on Friday, since we are no longer assured of getting this guarantee from the Somalia inquiry?

• (1440)

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this question is very important, there is no doubt. When I make a mistake, I try to avoid making a second or a third one.

I do not want to prejudice or cause any prejudice to the inquiry based on the testimony it has already heard or on testimony it may hear in the future. I do, however, make a commitment to my hon. colleague and to all the members of this House that, once the commission is finished, and the conclusions and recommendations have been made, obviously, the government will have to look at the whole issue in order to decide how best to react.

I interfered in an area I had no business in, on Friday, but I do not intend to do so today.

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[English]

PENSIONS

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, two years ago the finance minister said that payroll taxes kill jobs. Now he is saying they create jobs. A lot of us are wondering just what illness the minister was suffering from last week.

Two years ago Liberals voted themselves the best pension plan that taxpayer money could buy, a gold plated MP pension plan. Under the plan the Conservative leader would receive \$53,000 a year for his 9.9 per cent premium; the Deputy Prime Minister, \$49,000 a year. Meanwhile regular Canadians would get \$9,000 a year for their 9.9 per cent premium.

To be consistent, to be fair, will the minister announce an immediate 70 per cent increase in the premiums for the MP pension plan?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think what I would like to do is answer the question raised in the preamble.

If we take a look at the essential ingredient of a successful economy, we will see that it is confidence. It is confidence that health care is going to be there for the workers. It is confidence that old age pensions are going to be there for the workers. It is confidence by which the government is able to pursue a steady course, not simply the scorch and burn policies advocated by Reform and not simply ignoring the question as advocated by the

Oral Questions

previous Conservative government and now by the NDP; but policies that give Canadians the confidence to know that basic government programs will be there for them.

That is what we have done with the Canada pension plan. The hon. member ought to understand that.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister is trying to brush the question off, but it is a fair question. People want to know why the double standard. We have the member for Beaver River who voluntarily gave up a pension worth \$1.5 million because she believes in leadership by example.

Maybe the finance minister is well off and maybe it is not an issue for him, but ordinary Canadians do not think there should be a double standard between what Liberal government MPs give themselves and what they do for the rest of the country.

Why the double standard?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, when taking a look at the pensions of members of Parliament it will be recognized that the government has opted for one course while the Reform Party advocated a doubling of MPs' salaries. The fact is—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises the question of a double standard in the context of the increase of Canada pension plan premiums. I have asked the Reform Party to state what its model would increase premiums by.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, since the Reform Party will not. Compared to our 9.9 per cent, the model it advocates, which is chilling, has a 13 per cent premium. That is what the Reform Party would do.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

Last weekend, we learned that Major Michel Prud'homme and Colonel R.G. Taylor, who are military officers at the Canadian embassy in Washington, had asked an official of the U.S. Defence Intelligence Agency to spy on a Quebec diplomat working in the U.S. capital.

Will the Minister of National Defence confirm that the military staff at the Canadian embassy in Washington submitted such a request to the U.S. Defence Intelligence Agency?

• (1445)

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no policy, no direction whatsoever that anybody in any embassy should spy on any member of any provincial government, in fact on anybody at all.

As a result, there is an absurd assertion which has no back-up or basis in fact.

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have heard that line before, but we have not forgotten the barn burnings in Quebec, the PQ membership lists that were stolen, the bombs laid by the RCMP and the promotions given to reward those who had laid them, after the truth came out.

Will the minister give us, from his place, the solemn assurance that his department never asked any foreign government to spy on representatives of the Quebec government abroad?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just said very clearly that there is absolutely no direction that anybody do any spying. The individual case was an official of the U.S. government who gave a speech at a conference in which he took a position directly opposed to that which was the official position of the United States government.

We simply made inquiries to determine what the difference was. He then made an assertion. The hon. member, a rational, thoughtful member of Parliament in this thing, would know an absurd statement when she hears one.

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GRAIN SHIPMENTS

Mr. David Iftody (Provencher, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of agriculture.

Farmers in western Canada are losing millions of dollars because of the dismal performance of rail companies. Rail companies are refusing to ship grain to the west coast.

Over the weekend I met with farmers in the Morris area of my riding who are tired of being held hostage by the rail companies. They need grain cars and they need them now.

Will the minister tell these farmers the results of his meetings over the weekend with stakeholders? Can he assure the farmers in my riding that grain cars will be provided and grain will start moving today?

Oral Questions

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the grain backlog in western Canada is obviously a serious and costly problem.

There was a very constructive meeting held last week in Calgary, which I called and which involved all the players involved in the logistics of grain transportation in western Canada. There was a very determined attitude at that meeting aimed at solutions and not at finger pointing.

We identified the next six to eight weeks as obviously a critically important time not only to meet basic shipment targets but to whittle away at that accumulated backlog.

Agreement was reached to try to simplify grain collection logistics in the countryside on a temporary basis to make the most efficient use of locomotive power and to speed car turnaround times.

There were a variety of other measures agreed to to augment locomotive power, to improve terminal operations and to explore some trucking programs that could also add to the capacity of our system.

It is also important to note—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt.

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SOMALIA INQUIRY

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of National Defence said that everybody in Canada knows exactly what happened on the ground in Somalia.

By Friday we reached the point where the minister admitted to misleading the House and he had to apologize. The minister is confused about what happened. The minister does not understand the Somalia file.

My question is for the Minister of National Defence. How can Canadians trust anything that this minister says? How many other times has he mislead Canadians?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that, as I said on Friday, I had made a mistake when I used the term murder in the plural to describe the situation that occurred in Somalia in March.

As a matter of fact, as a result of that mistake having been brought to my attention by the press after I left the House and not actually brought to my attention in this place, I returned.

I checked the first edition of the blues to make sure of exactly what I said. I understood that I had made a mistake. I came back to the House at the very first opportunity and made the clarification.

• (1450)

I want to welcome my hon. friend back to the House after what I know was a difficult period with his health. Just to make sure there is no confusion in my mind, I would like to make sure that the hon. member can explain to me why in April 1996 he was quoted as saying: "There is now sufficient evidence of problems. The utility of the commission has been exhausted. The taxpayer's money should now be spent on a criminal investigation".

What is the position of the hon. member with respect to the Somalia inquiry today?

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister is being very humble today, but it is far too late for the minister's apologies.

The minister continues to interfere with the Somalia commission. From the start his department has hindered this commission, refusing to release information. Now the minister's reckless statements are sabotaging its work.

Does the minister see that his actions demonstrate his total disregard for due process?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the due process the hon. member refers to was established in March 1995, had its mandate extended three times, the third time just recently by the government, asking the commission to report by June 30, a substantially longer period of time than was originally foreseen when the inquiry was put together.

What I am saying is that the government had to make a decision. We felt it was in the best interests of everyone concerned that we move on and deal with the specific issues facing the Canadian forces and the Department of National Defence.

The very due process that the hon. member now speaks so highly of is the one he said nearly a year ago should be ended because the utility of the commission had been exhausted.

I know it is difficult, and I did make a mistake last Friday, but at least I recognize when I make a mistake and I try to correct it. I urge the hon. member to do likewise when he recognizes that perhaps he has made a mistake.

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[Translation]

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On February 10, the Department of Foreign Affairs very quietly released its new guidelines on the funding of the arts. The new

Oral Questions

policy provides that, in order to be sponsored by the Department of Foreign Affairs, cultural projects will have to promote national unity.

Given that the Department of Foreign Affairs is violating the freedom of expression of artists by restricting funding to cultural projects that promote Canada, will the minister pledge to transfer his department's cultural program to the Canada Council, which is an independent organization with no political ties whose mandate is precisely to manage support for artists?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these changes were made to improve access for various groups, including young people and native people. These changes also seek to promote the interests and values of Canadians abroad.

This policy is an important tool to promote Canada's interests here at home, and to ensure that groups from across the country have access to the programs.

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, surely the minister must know that this program has been in place for several decades to de-politicize the funding process, and that Telefilm Canada and the Canada Council were set up precisely for that purpose.

Does the Minister of Foreign Affairs not realize that he is taking part in a witch hunt that was started the day after the referendum by the heritage committee, and that is being led by the ineffectual Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member has it all wrong. The whole point of the program which has been traditionally within the third pillar of our foreign policy is to ensure that we have an ability to engage the outside world in the important values of Canada.

To give an example, this is the year of Asia-Pacific. We are trying to get Canadians involved in the enormous opportunities developing in the Asia-Pacific rim. Part of the cultural program is to develop partnerships between Canadian and Asian groups to develop joint cultural interests both outside of Canada and inside Canada, and to invite groups here.

• (1455)

They are all judged on merit. They are all judged on artistic value. We make no reference to politics. We simply want to ensure that in the burgeoning area of the Asia-Pacific, Canadian culture and the values it represents will have an opportunity to be expressed.

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last night CTV television revealed that \$160,500 was allotted last year to the

justice minister for strategic communications advice. In other words, taxpayer dollars were paid to spin doctors to try to make the justice minister and his government look good during the Airbus scandal.

How can the justice minister justify using Department of Justice money for purely partisan purposes?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing for which the hon. member for Crowfoot can be relied on, it is to get the facts wrong. Once again he has done just that.

In keeping with ordinary government practice, the Department of Justice entered into the usual competitive process and awarded a contract to an outside consultant in 1995. The usual rates were provided for in the contract. The contract was extended for a year and the services were used for a variety of legislative purposes, all in keeping with standard government practice.

It is true to say there was advice with respect to Airbus but that was one of the smallest aspects of the contract. The reality is this was the usual kind of advice provided to government departments and was well within accepted guidelines and practice.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, of course, \$160,000 is a small portion of the \$2 million that had to be paid out because of the bungling of the justice minister on the Airbus matter.

Seeing that all the money that was spent on the spin doctoring failed to make the justice minister look good, will he now demand a refund from his spin doctors?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is all in the eyes of the beholder. I can only imagine what my hon. friend must see from his distant perspective back there. But whatever it is, let me assure the hon. member and the House that everything in this matter was done entirely in accordance with appropriate government practice.

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RWANDA

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Co-operation and Minister responsible for Francophonie.

In recent days, officials of the Government of Rwanda have allegedly stated that it is justifiable for them to redirect foreign aid money toward objectives of the government. Can the minister tell this House if our foreign aid money in Rwanda has been redirected to those other than the people who need it the most?

Hon. Don Boudria (Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to report to the House that the Government of Rwanda does not receive any funding from the Canadian International Development Agency. All our aid in that country and in most other

Oral Questions

countries is provided to Canadian and multilateral non-governmental organizations.

Therefore if no money goes to the Government of Rwanda, no money—at least no Canadian money—can be redirected by the Government of Rwanda.

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AIRBUS

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice and it involves the communications strategic advice that he received under contract with a well known Liberal media company. The contract was for strategic communications advice to the minister on his legislative agenda. We all know that the Airbus was not on the minister's legislative agenda. Yet some \$160,000 was paid to the Liberal media company under this contract.

Why did the minister pay for advice when it was not provided for under the contract? How much did he pay for advice on how he should handle himself in the Airbus affair while at the same time he was saying that he was uninvolved in the actual affair?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is remarkable how the hon. member seems prepared, indeed enthusiastic, about interpreting a contract he very likely has never seen which contains terms with which he is entirely unfamiliar and is using amounts he has picked up from the odd television report. It is remarkable how enthusiastic the member is.

• (1500)

The member will know because his question was already asked and answered, much more capably I might add. The amounts at issue were paid over legislative advice with respect to legislative initiatives and all services that were rendered were entirely within those contemplated properly by the contract.

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POINTS OF ORDER

COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a point of order. I would like a clarification from you on the type of language being used on the government side during the course of question period.

During question period the Minister of Finance used two different phrases that I think have been ruled as unparliamentary language according to Beauchesne.

During question period the Minister of Finance referred to the leader of the third party and said “that he has not got the guts”. Then he went to say “that he should not be misleading people”.

Mr. Speaker, if you look on page 145 and 146 of Beauchesne they are both ruled as unparliamentary language. I would ask the minister to withdraw—

The Speaker: My colleague, as you well know and as all colleagues know, for the most part there are very few words that in and of themselves are not acceptable to the House but it does depend on the context in which they are used.

I quote you directly I believe with regard to using the term that one member “does not have the guts”. I mentioned to you here in the House that no member of Parliament's courage—and that is what this refers to, this type of thing—is ever questioned in the House of Commons. I would hope that all hon. members would refrain from using words like that.

As far as the word “misleading” goes, I listened to the words very carefully. I heard the word misleading used on both sides of the floor today. What I was looking for was in the tone, but on neither side did they say deliberately misleading. I would appeal to you not to use the word “misleading” because if it causes offence of any kind then we usually get a retaliation on the other side.

I appeal to you, my colleagues, that in the course of the question period and in the course of debate, we should refrain from using words like that. We are in an atmosphere where emotions are running very high and I would urge you to be very judicious in your choice of words. As far as these words today, I did not find them unparliamentary or I would have stated so.

I thank the hon. member for bringing this up as a point of order.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

This also arises out of question period today. It involves the finance minister who, in one of his answers, claimed that the leader of the Reform Party should not mislead the Canadian public. I take exception to his blatant misrepresentation.

• (1505)

The Speaker: Once again I encourage all hon. members not to use words like misleading in the House because we get one word and then a reaction from the other side.

I think the hon. member is getting into debate. He is welcome to join in any debate in the House. But I would judge this to be a point of debate rather than a point of order.

Mr. Silye: Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

The Speaker: Is this on the same point of order on which I just ruled?

Mr. Silye: Mr. Speaker, it is on another point of order.

On another reply during question period, the finance minister said that the Reform's position on the MP pension plan was something. Our plan is to cancel—

The Speaker: Once again, I rule that this is debate.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 30 petitions.

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege to present a petition calling on Parliament to ask the government to introduce some sort of an infrastructure program to deal with the infrastructure problems which exist across the country.

NATIONAL AIDS STRATEGY

Mr. John Godfrey (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition which points out that the second phase of the National AIDS Strategy will expire on March 31, 1998. The petitioners request that Parliament ensure that dedicated AIDS funding beyond March 1998 be guaranteed and that the National AIDS Strategy be renewed now.

I support this petition from members of the public of Don Valley West.

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present from constituents in places like Prescott, Brockville and surrounding areas.

The petitioners ask that the Prime Minister and the Parliament of Canada declare and confirm immediately that Canada is indivisible and that the boundaries of Canada, its provinces, territories and territorial waters may be modified only by (a), a free vote of all Canadian citizens as guaranteed by the Canadian charter or (b), through the amending formula as stipulated in the Canadian Constitution.

HIGHWAYS

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions I would like to present.

Routine Proceedings

The first is from petitioners calling on Parliament to urge the federal government to join with the provincial governments to make the national highway system upgrading possible.

DISABILITY BENEFITS

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is in response to the many people who get caught in the middle between unemployment insurance and other insurance plans because of sickness or disability.

The petitioners pray and request that Parliament introduce mid-term disability benefits legislation which would allow working Canadians who suffer from a debilitating illness or injury to receive continuous sickness benefits in the following form: (1) 15 weeks UIC; (2) mid-term disability; and (3) Canadian disability pension plan.

TAXATION

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is from people responding to the taxation on reading material.

The petitioners pray that the government demonstrate its support of education and literacy by eliminating sales tax on reading material. They ask Parliament to zero rate books, magazines and newspapers under the GST. As the provinces and Ottawa consider harmonizing their sales tax, reading materials must be zero rated under the provincial sales tax as well as the GST.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mrs. Elsie Wayne (Saint John, PC): Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present a petition which was presented to me by the people of my riding.

• (1510)

As there are over 30,000 nuclear weapons on this earth, the petitioners call on 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.

POST OFFICE

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions.

The first petition is signed by 982 people from the community of La Crête. The petitioners call on Parliament to provide a better postal facility in the La Crête area. The existing post office has been in use since 1972. It was adequate at the time but this is a growing community and the present building is no longer adequate or meets the needs of the people of the La Crête community. I have had the opportunity to look at the building and agree with this petition.

TAXATION

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has been signed by 100 members from my riding.

Routine Proceedings

It urges all levels of government to demonstrate their commitment to education and literacy by eliminating the sales tax on reading materials.

The petitioners believe that the application of the GST on reading materials is unfair and wrong. Education and literacy are critical to the development of our country and a regressive tax on reading hampers that development.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Waltham and Chapeau, Quebec, municipalities in my riding, dealing with a social issue.

The petitioners request that Parliament enact legislation against the distribution, sale and promotion of pornographic material in retail outlets.

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these petitioners from Manitoba call on Parliament to join provincial governments to make the national highway system upgrading a real possibility. "Fix the highways," they say.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have four petitions today.

First, the petitioners request Parliament to support the immediate initiation and conclusion by the year 2000 of an international convention that will set out a binding timetable for the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

HIGHWAYS

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the next two petitions call on Parliament to urge the federal government to join with provincial governments to make the national highway system upgrading possible.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last petition I wish to present requests that Parliament not increase the federal excise tax on gasoline in the next federal budget.

[Translation]

HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, members of the Canadian Automobile Association from the Quebec City area remind us that a large part of the Canadian highway system is substandard.

Therefore, the petitioners call on Parliament to press the federal government to work with the provinces to upgrade our national highway system.

[English]

POLICE DOGS

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition that recognizes the contribution of police dogs to our society.

The petitioners in western Canada request that the Criminal Code be amended to specifically include police dogs and specify penalties, including fines and/or imprisonment for the wrongful injury or killing of police dogs.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 96 and 101.

[Text]

Question No. 96—**Mr. Strahl:**

With respect to Canadians entitled to receive both Canada pension plan benefits and benefits under the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act, by what rationale and under what circumstances are CFSA benefits reduced by the amount of a CPP benefit, what is the general history of this practice, what specific law grants the government the power to do this and what changes to a specific law or laws using what wording would be required to eliminate this practice, how many Canadians are affected by this practice, by what authority can a private disability plan also deduct a CPP benefit in addition to and at the same time as they are deducted from a CFSA benefit by the government, how many Canadians are affected by this practice, has the practice ever been challenged in a federal court, what changes to a specific law or laws would be necessary to eliminate this practice, and what would be the potential wording of such a change?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): When the Canada pension plan (CPP) was enacted, the government was concerned that the introduction of the new plan not be disadvantageous to its employees, or members of the Canadian Forces (CF) or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). To the greatest possible extent, the introduction of the CPP was to be transparent to employees and members. When employees of the public service, and members of the CF and the RCMP became participants in the CPP, both the contributions and the benefits were integrated into each of their federal pension plans. The net effect was to provide the same retirement income for the same contributions.

On the benefits side, the integration was achieved by incorporating in each of the superannuation acts a clause defining a procedure whereby an individual's benefits under his/her basic pension are reduced by a formula which approximates the benefit that is paid by the CPP for the pensionable time under the individual's basic pension.

Thus, it is the pension plan itself, the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act (CFSA) for members of the CF, which authorizes a reduction of the pension benefits under given circumstances. The CFSA contains in section 15(2) a provision for the pension benefit to be reduced by a formula related to the CPP benefit formula. A deduction must be made from the annuity paid under the CFSA when the contributor reaches the age of 65 years (the age at which CPP benefits were payable, originally), and when the contributor becomes entitled to a disability pension under the CPP or a similar provision of a provincial pension plan.

The decision to integrate the CPP to the various federal superannuation acts was not limited to federal pension plans. At that time, many pension plans providing coverage to private sector employees were also adjusted to integrate the benefits from the CPP with the benefits of their own private plan.

The overall effect of this integration of the CFSA and CPP benefits is that an annuitant's retirement income is more evenly distributed than it would have been had the benefits not been integrated. If the plans were not integrated, the pre-age 65 benefits would be lower to provide for a levelled benefit for life, rather than being able to reduce it at age 65 to take into consideration the income that comes from the CPP. The number of CFSA annuitants in the age group 65 years and over, affected by a reduction in CFSA benefits related to the receipt of a CPP benefit at age 65, is approximately 30,000.

The same principle applies to long-term disability plans. Typically, long-term disability benefits are integrated with other sources of disability income such as workers' compensation, CPP, and other employer, government, and sometimes individual, disability plans. The objective of integrating disability income from various sources is to establish the disability income received from all sources to a reasonable percentage of pre-disability earnings. The inclusion of an integration of benefits provision reduces the costs of the disability plan to the employer. As a CPP disability benefit is often available (depending on the precise definitions of disability in the specific plan and the CPP), it is normal for the specific disability benefit of other plans to be reduced by any benefit derived from the CPP.

It is usual for plan provisions to include a clause whereby the specific plan provisions are reduced in some fashion when a CPP benefit is also being paid. In recognition of this practice as being a reasonable course, there is no provision in law to stop such wording from being written into the specific plans. Such legislation would make the design of adequate disability insurance plans much more difficult, as they would have to balance the individual's financial needs over an extended time period with income from either one or two sources, depending on age or degree of disability.

With regard to the numbers of Canadians affected by the possibility of double offsets in the event of becoming disabled while in receipt of both a pension and employment income, the department does not have data available to be able to provide such

Supply

statistics. However, the type of circumstances, for which there could be a double offset, would be rare, and the number of individuals in that circumstance would be expected to be low.

Finally, the department is not aware of any legal challenges to these practices. Besides an amendment to the different federal superannuation acts to remove the CPP reduction provision, the department is not aware of any other legislation which would require changes to eliminate this plan design practice from other pension and disability plans.

Question No. 101—Mr. Robinson:

Can the Government of Canada indicate whether any department or agency of the Government of Canada, including the Export Development Corporation, provided loans, grants or other monetary assistance to facilitate the sale or shipping of Ultramar Canada's refinery in Eastern Passage, N.S., to Sharjah Refining in the United Arab Emirates, and if so, what is the amount and nature of this financial assistance?

Mr. Paul Zed (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): I am informed as follows: The Export Development Corporation has been approached by Ultramar and has offered support for this transaction on a commercial (i.e., non-concessional) basis. Financing arrangements have not yet been concluded.

Other departments and agencies have no information on this subject.

[English]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—HERITAGE CANADA

The House resumed consideration of the motion and the amendment.

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to the question, more than 30 countries presently have in place a private copying regime or similar legislation. It should be noted that the United States has a similar regime but that it differs from Canada's in that it only applies to digital audio support and recording devices.

Supply

The proposed Canadian legislation allows the government to extend reciprocal treatment to any country that grants or has undertaken to grant similar benefits to Canadian creators of sound recordings.

The member for Kootenay East, who has worked very hard on the heritage committee with the rest of us, spoke earlier today. I was listening to his speech and believe I am quoting him correctly when he said that no constituency in Quebec had ordered more than 400 flags. I would like to make it clear to everybody so that wrong information is not on the record. There is no constituency in Quebec which ordered fewer than 400 flags.

• (1515)

There have also been comments today about the flag program being disastrous to stores that sell flags, flag poles, et cetera. Here is a quote from a citizen who has a store in Peterborough, Mr. Rick Johnson: "My flag sales are a little down, but the sales of poles are way up. The other thing is, flags are not made to last. Once these flags wear out, people will know where to come to buy a new one".

Another gentleman from Peterborough, Warren Davis, also sells flags. He said: "I think it is a great idea. I really do not see how this could have an adverse effect on my business. People are still going to buy flags". He feels that many people simply love to criticize government initiatives and look long and hard for negatives. He said: "Great innovative projects like this get stifled by naysayers. If people would work together as human beings, they would have a positive outlook. I think this project does just that. In fact, they might find that their business will prosper. Sure it costs money, but it has not affected my business one iota". He goes on to say: "This should get people thinking more about flying flags. It is very patriotic. I have been printing flags for 16 years and I think people are thinking more about it this year".

Another woman who owns a flag store said that her flag sales are also down a bit but everything should be all right in the long run. She said: "This business is basically just a hobby for me, but I have noticed an increase in pole sales. I am getting more and more inquiries these days. People are going to need new flags next year. Hopefully they will continue to purchase them. This should not hurt business in the long run, but I hope it does not continue as an annual thing".

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the motion put forward by the separatists. The motion denounces the activities sponsored by Heritage Canada such as the Canada Information Office and the one in a million flags operation.

We are now debating the amendment which was put forward by the Reformers who are supporting the separatist motion. They say

that all the words after "Heritage Canada" should be deleted, such as the \$20 million spent on the Canada Information Office, the \$15.5 million spent on the one in a million flags operation and unprecedented cuts to the CBC. Of course, we know their policy is to get rid of the CBC. I am somewhat shocked that the Reform Party is supporting the separatists.

I was pleased, as I am sure all Canadians were, this weekend to see Ed Mirvish on television getting the one millionth flag. I was very proud when that happened. He is one of Canada's biggest supporters of the cultural industries.

That flag program was a success. The people of Haldimand—Norfolk were very supportive of the program. When I went down the country roads, I saw that people were proud to be flying the Canadian flag. They were proud to show other Canadians that they love their country.

I am not surprised the Bloc members presented this motion. They want to break up and destroy the country. However, I am surprised that the Reform Party joined them. Canadians are proud to stand up for this country, as they are in my riding. I know that it is ideal for the separatists to try to do that, but it is somewhat surprising that the Reform Party would do it. I am sorry that the Reform Party has fallen for this trick of the separatists.

The Liberal Party will not apologize for promoting Canada. Liberal members will not apologize for setting up these programs which get individual Canadians together, get them excited and give them more information about their country. We are working with different community groups, different programs and young people throughout Canada so they will know more about the country. How can that be called propaganda?

The Reform Party has joined the Bloc in saying it is propaganda; that it is nothing but the Liberal Party spending millions of dollars to promote itself. Is it propaganda for the Deputy Prime Minister who today is in Moncton, New Brunswick to set up a new program with 800 different community leaders across the country, from 120 towns and villages, small communities in rural Canada and in the urban centres? They will come together in an exchange program across Canada. Is it propaganda to get Canadians to travel across the country?

• (1520)

I know the hon. member beside me here will remember the Canada 125 program. It was an incredible program that was brought out just before the last election for Canada's 125th birthday. We got Canadians talking to each other. Young Canadians got to know more about their country. This is what we should be doing as parliamentarians. Part of our role is to enable Canadians to know more about their country.

Supply

What about a town in western Canada which is planning a cultural event? Is it propaganda to let Quebecers know and to get in touch with towns in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba or Saskatchewan? Is that propaganda? I do not think so and I do not think the Liberal Party or the government thinks so.

Is it wrong to promote mutual co-operation and understanding on economic and social issues, on the cultural development of Canadians? I do not think so. It is not wrong to do that. It is important that we learn more about the cultural diversities of this country, that we learn more about some of the economic problems in this country. People sitting in downtown Calgary or in downtown Vancouver who have never left their community or their province may not know some of the issues facing people living in a fishing community or a remote community in Newfoundland or in Tuktoyaktuk or in my riding in southwestern Ontario.

One of the largest inland fisheries in the world is in my riding. We have a lot in common with people in Newfoundland or British Columbia, people on the coasts who rely on the fishing industry. Is it wrong for the Government of Canada to promote that these people get together to talk about their common concerns? I do not think so. I think it is right and it is an important role this government has.

I guess in Quebec it is wrong to promote Canada. This is what these federal members of Parliament seem to be saying, that somehow to promote Canada in Quebec and to show people around Canada the good things in Quebec are somehow wrong and the government should not be able to play a role in that. I do not agree.

TVA and CTV are major partners in Attractions Canada. It is surprising to think that these major networks in Canada would somehow be hoodwinked by the Government of Canada to be used in some sort of propaganda in Quebec or outside.

It is ironic that a Quebec member would bring forward this motion when in fact Attractions Canada's hotline had 9,200 Canadians call it this past week and 5,640 calls, 61 per cent of them, came from the province of Quebec. Simply put, a great number of people within the province of Quebec want to know more about their country. They want to know more about what is happening outside the boundaries of Quebec. In their present role the members across the way or the Government of Quebec certainly will not be the ones that will inform Quebecers about what is happening in the rest of Canada.

If we are going to bring this country together, if we are going to move forward into the next century, we are going to need to know more about each other. We are going to need to know more about some of the problems faced by Quebecers, some of the problems faced by rural Canadians or by people in downtown Calgary. TVA

and CTV in joining this program and promoting it are doing what they should be doing as networks.

We need to be serious about the challenges that lie ahead for Canada. We need to ask ourselves going into the next century how we will build Canada and what will be the Canada of the next century. We as parliamentarians going into the next election, if we happen to win the next election, will be the ones over the next millennium who will be making the early decisions as to what Canada will look like. The government is building a Canada for the 21st century.

• (1525)

Information and knowledge empowers Canadians. It lets them chart their own future and destiny. It must be a disappointment for the opposition members that Canadians want to know more about their history, that they want to know more about their institutions, their social and cultural fabric and their achievements. We have had achievements. It is important that this government remind Canadians about these achievements.

We need to understand the diversity. It is strange that this motion would come from a member from a province that is diverse, a province that is unique in Canada. To somehow challenge us on trying to promote Canada in that province is wrong. It shows that their heart really is not in their country. We need to understand our duality. We need to have a country that acknowledges, supports and protects our two official languages and our diversities. We need to work together to build knowledge about Canada and Canadians.

It must be a disappointment to the opposition that we want to know more about our symbols and about our heritage. The more we know about our heritage, the more we know about our culture, about our environment, the better we can understand the challenges we all face and the hopes and dreams of Canadians. We need to build on this. We need to know this before we move into the next millennium.

Canadians share some very fundamental human values. There is our value about having a compassionate and a caring society. We value fairness. We value integrity in our institutions and our practices. We value equality and we value knowing that our differences can strengthen us.

We have learned. What we have learned over our 100 years of history has made us one of the best countries in the world as wide groups like the United Nations look to Canada for leadership.

I appreciate this time and I would not mind being given one minute more.

The Deputy Speaker: My apologies to the member and to all hon. members when I fail to give them a one-minute signal. Questions and comments.

Supply

[Translation]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the member opposite defend Canada and its symbols. In principle, I have no objection to that.

We must, however, look at the expenses incurred by the Heritage Minister to promote Canada in light of the living conditions of real people. Would the 1.2 million children living below the poverty line in Canada be happy to wave the Canadian flag?

Would the millions of unemployed Canadians, whose number has not decreased since this government came to power, be proud enough to wave the Canadian flag? Are the millions of Canadians on welfare, whose number has actually increased since this government started making drastic cuts to social programs, ready to wave the Canadian flag?

The hon. member asks if it is wrong to promote Canada in Quebec. It is not wrong but it is rather pointless. If Quebecers were proud of the Government of Canada, we would not have to distribute flags. Pride is not based on symbols but on realities.

I will conclude by asking the following question to the hon. member: If Canadians are so proud of their country, why then did we have to give them flags to wave?

- (1530)

[English]

Mr. Speller: Mr. Speaker, I will never apologize for the Canadian flag, nor will I apologize for trying to promote Canada not only in Quebec but throughout this country. We have a wonderful country, as has been expressed by many people around the world. By flying our flag we are in no way taking away from the other, more serious problems we have across this country.

The government recognizes, as do all Canadians, that as we go into the next century, even though we have moved ahead in many areas, there are still many areas we have not resolved. The hon. member mentioned some. Obviously child poverty and jobs are areas that are very important to the Government of Canada, and we are moving in those areas.

Unless we stay together as a country, unless Canadians realize the importance of staying together and working together, and the importance of being Canadian, we will not last into the next century very long. It is important in the scheme of things to look at the bigger picture, to make sure that when we are resolving some of these fundamental problems we also look at the make-up of the country and what the country is about. It is important that we work toward resolving some of those problems, which is what we have tried to do.

We have tried to use the flag. We have tried to show Canadians the importance of the flag. We have also tried to show Canadians the importance of each other, to teach Canadians more about other

parts of the country. We have a large country. It is the second largest country in the world. It is difficult for somebody in downtown Hagersville, where I was born, to go into Quebec. We have a language problem. It is important and it should be a priority for the Government of Canada to take it upon itself to help in that area.

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, we are discussing a motion condemning the use of public funds squandered on propaganda activities sponsored by Heritage Canada, such as the Canada Information Office and the One Million Flags Operation, at a time when unprecedented cuts have been imposed on cultural institutions in Canada and Quebec.

When I got back to my riding, I went, as I do every week, to buy a number of magazines. One of these was *Le Point*, whose cover this week read *L'unité canadienne se crée-t-elle?*, or "Is Canadian Unity Developing?" This issue contains a very comprehensive report on the situation in Canada. The government members would be well advised to read this report in order to understand what is happening in Canada and what a foreign observer is thinking of it. The author comments on Winnipeg, for instance. Apparently, it is the coldest place in the world. He also mentions St. Boniface, which has been amalgamated to Winnipeg and where, unfortunately, 70 per cent of the people now speak English.

This is a statement of fact made by a total stranger having to describe our country in an international magazine. He must describe to his fellow countrymen what is happening in another country.

When the Conservative Party was in office, with Mrs. Campbell at its head, it was decided to drastically reduce the number of ministers. The government then thought of establishing a department called Canadian Heritage, which would contain everything that could fit nowhere else. Responsibilities were gathered from all over the place to form a *tutti frutti* department.

Amateur sports, parks, historic sites and the Department of the Secretary of State were included in its mandate. The department is also responsible for the Queen's visits to Canada, the choice of olympic athletes, etc., as well as funding for these activities. It does a bit of everything, but mostly propaganda. It has become a propaganda specialist.

- (1535)

The creation of this department was a problem for the Liberal Party when they were in opposition. I remember that the first time I went to the Department of Canadian Heritage to meet the then Deputy Minister, he told me he had recommended to the new government that it divide up the Department of Canadian Heritage, instead of using it as a grab bag as intended, and remove Communications from Canadian Heritage, leaving it with only those elements having to do with heritage. If the mission of the Department of Canadian Heritage had really been to reflect what this

Supply

country is all about, it would have been told not to forget that in this country, there are two peoples, two languages and two cultures.

But that is not what happened. Once in power, the Liberals, as usual, found things already prepared by senior bureaucrats who are ready to operate regardless of who is in power. The only visible change, when a new government is elected, is the colour of the CBC, which is red or blue depending on the party in power.

When this government came to power, they had to act and ensure passage of a bill creating the Department of Canadian Heritage. They created exactly what Ms. Campbell wanted, and asked it to promote Canadian identity. We then tried to make Canadians understand that they had to take Quebec into account, that in this country there are two cultures and two languages.

It is true that, when we debated the issue, we did not know what the Prime Minister was really thinking. One day, the Prime Minister answering a question happened to say in the House, and I quote: "Mr. Speaker, there is a French culture in Canada, which is Canadian. It is in Quebec primarily, but I think the culture of the Acadians and Antonine Maillet forms part of the French culture, and this culture is not necessarily Quebec culture. So, when we talk about a Canadian culture, it may be of French or English expression". The entire quote can be found in the December 6, 1995 issue of *Hansard*.

Shortly after the referendum the Prime Minister confirmed that, although a Quebecer, the little guy from Shawinigan had forgotten his roots and had made his another culture, the Canadian culture, renouncing his own, the Quebec culture, for ever. He made this statement on behalf of all his colleagues, confirming that in his view, Québec and the distinct society did not exist, as we saw later with the passing of his phoney motion on the distinct society, this empty shell devoid of any meaning.

Therefore, in the opinion of Canadians, Quebec culture does not exist. Yesterday, while listening to "Le Point", on Radio-Canada, I understood that for many Canadians, the Canadian culture does not exist either. We were shown Saskatchewan francophones, like Carmen Champagne. Since there are only 50,000 people who speak French in that province she opted for moving to Quebec to be able to grow, and make a fortune while selling her records, audio and video tapes, video clips and all the excellent material she produces for children. She was looking for a market and she found one in Quebec; she could not have found one in Saskatchewan.

I also saw other people who spoke English, but I felt they were more Ukrainian than Canadian. They extolled the beauty and the wealth of their culture, but they sounded more like Ukrainians talking to a Quebecer than Canadians. I felt how great their need

was to cling to their Ukrainian roots. I believe that the notion of multiculturalism Mr. Trudeau put in the heads of Canadians is probably the single biggest obstacle to the creation of a Canadian identity.

• (1540)

The Prime Minister is looking for ways to have people identify with Canada; I think he could simply abolish multiculturalism tomorrow morning, as they did in several countries like Brazil, and he would find that, tomorrow morning, all the people in Canada would be Canadians.

Except, of course, for Quebecers, who have already made up their minds, at least 50 per cent of them, and know they belong to a culture, they form a people, they have a territory. They still need a country before they can develop fully, but that threshold will soon be crossed and we will have the patience to wait for the next referendum to really fulfil ourselves.

Meanwhile, we observe what is going on in Canada. There is a subculture, the Quebec subculture, and a larger one, the Canadian culture. What happened until 1976, at the CBC for example? Those who governed our country respected both cultures, both people, and the CBC and the SRC received equal funding. The French network and the English network received the same amounts.

After the election of Mr. Lévesque, the surprise of 1976, Mr. Trudeau decided there was a separatist clique at Radio-Canada. He ordered an inquiry, which was considered to be almost an inquisition, to finally find out that it was not so, that there was no such thing as a separatist clique at Radio-Canada. There were only people doing an honest job who, in the news, showed what was happening in Quebec.

In 1995, after the referendum, the Trudeau heir adopted the same attitude. He also said that the CBC had not done its job properly. The French network of the CBC was, once again, hit by funding cuts. Clearly, it will be more and more difficult for the journalists of the corporation to do their jobs in the professional manner they are known for, if the government keeps casting doubt on the quality of the programming, which is excellent. The reason is that the government does not like the way what is happening in our society is presented.

The CBC suffered extensive cuts. The National Film Board lost 20 per cent of its budget. Funding for Telefilm Canada was reduced by \$50 million, over and above the cuts already announced, in order to create a fund, with headquarters and decision making in Toronto, for the production of television programs.

This fund will be made up of \$50 million from the cable distributors, \$50 million from Telefilm Canada and \$100 from

Supply

Heritage Canada. Directors of the fund have been advised to be careful and to finance programs with a Canadian flavour, programs which promote Canadian culture, in other words they should try to avoid films like "Octobre".

We saw after the referendum the way the heritage committee went on a witch hunt, how the chairman was given the mandate to try to see what was going on, and to promote Canada.

Today, we have reached a stage where we embarked on this campaign to give away a million flags. Not very long ago, a Liberal senator was telling me: "I do not understand you, in Quebec. We have given you bilingual stamps, bilingual bank notes, a flag, a national anthem". I could agree with the bank notes and the stamps, but it was the late great Réal Caouette, with the complicity of a minority government under Mr. Pearson, who felt, on the eve of the universal exhibition of 1967, that it would be shameful to receive the world without a flag which would identify us all. That is when the war to introduce the flag started.

● (1545)

Consequently, I even wonder if English Canadians ever wanted the flag, since the government still feels forced to promote this flag 30 years later. There are limits to thinking that it can impose something to people through propaganda.

As for the national anthem, the government took the one that we used to sing when we were kids and that was called *O Canada*. The words and the music were composed by two francophones from Quebec. The anglophones translated it, changed it here and there so it would fit their purposes, but the national anthem was not invented by an anglophone of this country; the government took the words and music that two francophones from Quebec had composed.

There are limits to trying to make us believe that we resist that. It is true that we resist because this was another era. The government took the name, the flag, the national anthem; it can have them, but we are somewhat disenchanted with the whole propaganda campaign it is conducting to try to impose these things.

My colleagues have also said it: almost \$100 million has been spent on propaganda at a time when the government tells us it has no money, for example, for programming, for small and medium size business, for job creation, for the destitute, for poor children. According to what the Prime Minister told us, some gifts for poor children will be announced in the budget tomorrow. We made them poor and now we are being told: "Thanks to the federal government, we will save poor children." It should have saved them four years ago, instead of waiting until the eve of an election to present us with a budget containing measures to save poor children. Consequently, until now, it is an appalling failure on all counts.

The official languages policy, which is another failure in Canada, is a responsibility of Heritage Canada. Most of the money went to anglophone minorities in Quebec or was spent on teaching English in the other provinces.

They give lip service to bilingualism, but what they really want to do is bilingualize Quebecers to better assimilate them, given that the anglophone minority in Quebec represents only 9 per cent of the population, whereas 54 per cent of civil servants are bilingual. The francophone minority in New Brunswick accounts for 38 per cent of the population, yet only 42 per cent of civil servants are bilingual. And this great government's latest cost-cutting innovation was to create only one 1-800 line for all francophones in Canada having problems with the child benefit.

So, the Official Languages Act has also been a pitiful failure in the public service. According to a study, in the Ottawa—Hull area, where the law provides that French and English are the languages of work, 76 per cent of francophones say that English is the language spoken at meetings. So, the public service is also a tool for anglicizing francophones.

Another innovation is the information highway, where the federal government is interfering again in areas of provincial jurisdiction. Here, as in other areas, the federal government intends to exert its leadership, regardless of Quebec's jurisdiction or its culture. We also find Canadian cultural content in the information society. They never miss an opportunity to express their contempt for the people of Quebec.

This morning, I read in detail about the minister's plans for schools. No one in Quebec can enrol in a school without asking for authorization. In her paper, the minister says that the great values in Canada are tolerance, mutual respect, compassion, and acceptance.

● (1550)

You have to see it on paper to believe it. It is unbelievable. There is no tolerance, no compassion, no respect, no acceptance for the people of Quebec. They talk about values, but they do not believe in them.

What does the minister put in her propaganda kit? She is providing a teacher's guide. This teacher's guide is not authorized by the Quebec Minister of Education. This is unacceptable; this cannot be done in Quebec. There are videos, an audiocassette, a CD-ROM, and a box one can check off to order a flag.

How much does each of these kits cost? There are various kits for various age groups. There is one kit for children between four and seven. The propaganda is adjusted to the children's chronological and psychological age. There is another kit for children between eight and eleven, and another one for children aged twelve and up. They are available in French or in English.

Supply

I think the Minister should substantially change her approach if she does not want to see the number of sovereignists keep rising in this country. At the rate she is going now, we thank her very sincerely because she is helping the cause of a sovereign Quebec.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to take the floor once again this afternoon to give the Bloc Québécois, the sovereignists, those hard line separatists who spend most of their time rewriting Canadian history a real history lesson.

Bloc members should realize one thing: they do not represent a majority of Quebecers. I challenge them to make a survey asking this simple question: Do you want to have a sovereign country, yes or no? We all know only 25 to 30 percent of Quebecers would support the separation of the province from the rest of the country.

When numbers are quoted, all kinds of examples are used. This morning, I asked a Bloc Québécois member why the National Film Board spends 73 percent of its budget in Quebec. Why does Telefilm Canada spend 62 percent of its budget in Quebec? Why does the CBC spend 40 percent of its budget in Quebec when the Quebec population is about 24 or 25 percent of the Canadian population? It is obvious that Quebecers can draw concrete benefits, financial, political and cultural benefits from being a part of the Canadian federation.

Cases of demagoguery and propaganda have also been raised. I did a little research this morning, and I found a few cases of propaganda. We will play the role of opposition to the Bloc majority in Quebec. I have questions to ask and my constituents do too.

The majority of Quebecers wonder why almost \$4 million in public money has been spent on the secret activities of the Conseil de la souveraineté du Québec. Why does Quebec have a 1-800 line, which costs \$300,000 to Quebec taxpayers, to promote the independence of Quebec? Why did the presentation in the Grand Théâtre de Québec launching the referendum campaign cost \$175,000. I would like to hear the comments of the hon. member for Rimouski—Témiscouata on this.

Lobbyists have been hired at a cost of \$531,000 to promote sovereignty in Washington. There have been mailings and all kinds of commissions at a cost of \$2.5 million. Some \$8.5 million was spent on this happening, on this survey and this referendum. It cost \$8.5 million. So, to bring up—

Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

I am ready to listen to the remarks of the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, but I would rather he would not put Quebec on trial, because we are not in Quebec, we are in Canada. Let him deal with the motion before us and stop his rambling.

• (1555)

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, it is simple. The Bloc Québécois is interested in only one thing, making Quebec a sovereign country. It is clear; we know that. But nothing is ever said about the propaganda campaign in Quebec.

Yes, \$20 million was spent on flags, and I am proud of it. Of course, I would have liked that money to be spent elsewhere. However, there is a \$80 million fund, and there is also the fact that an amount of \$20 billion was withdrawn from the Caisse de dépôt to bolster the Canadian dollar in case of sovereignty.

I am a Quebecer. The opposition is in no position to tell me who I am and whom I represent. However, as a Canadian and Quebec taxpayer, I have a right to know where that money is going in Quebec City. Let them phone their finance minister and let them give us an answer in the House.

Mrs. Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, it is quite difficult to answer on behalf of the Government of Quebec. We are not in Quebec here, we are in Canada. So the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine will lose his riding; he should think of being a candidate in Quebec. Indeed, Mr. Johnson would be quite happy to count on a new recruit because there is not much of a future for him in Canada and Bonaventure—Gaspé—Les Îles—Pabok with the kind of things he is saying here.

It is absolutely absurd not to recognize that the government has spent \$100 million on propaganda. If only it were done for interesting reasons, such as information. The CIO is supposed to be an information bureau. The minister told me: "Go on the Internet, you will see what is there". There is nothing interesting on the Internet, nothing that will inform us on Canada.

If money is being spent to inform people, it should be information, interesting information on the Internet instead of propaganda. It is a waste of time to try to force people to love a country that has not earned their love. That is the problem. The country must be lovable. How can you love someone who is not lovable? The country must be lovable, it must really put its values into practice. It must be tolerant, it must accept things: "If you can't beat them, join them".

So, reach out to us if you want to keep us with you. Otherwise, we will go, and faster than you think because we are fed up with the kind of speeches we have just heard.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask a question and say a little about the comment that this is not a lovable country. Surely the member did not wish to

Supply

convey the message that this country, Canada, and Canadians are not lovable. I request a clarification, please.

Mrs. Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, if you are going to love a country, you have to feel loved by it, not rejected. When you do not feel loved, you cannot find the situation or the people lovable. You feel rejected.

I made an attempt in this House that I thought would be a step toward unity between our two nations. But the Louis Riel bill was defeated in this House, something that should never have happened if there had been the slightest consideration for who Louis Riel was. The vote was against the Bloc Québécois.

In this country, people are always voting against something; people vote against someone. People never really show their acceptance.

If that had happened, I would have said this country was lovable, but now I know that you are rejecting us with all your being.

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. I simply want to say that for people of my generation, from my country—I was born in Europe—the money spent on flags brings to mind some unpleasant memories and unpleasant names like that of Goebbels in Germany.

• (1600)

When a country defends itself with flags, and I saw them all over the place, I saw thousands of them. I do not want to equate the maple leaf with the swastika—

Mr. Gagnon: The maple leaf liberated you.

Mr. Mercier: I want to compare, if hon. members would show me the courtesy of letting me speak, I want to compare two policies. When you want to promote a people with thousands of flags—

Mr. Gagnon: In Holland and Belgium, the first to get there was the Canadian army.

Mr. Mercier: What does that have to do with it? Obviously we are very grateful to Canadians. Let us use our common sense and see the problems for what they are. I am comparing two policies which use the same means, which is to fly flags everywhere, and this reminds me of Goebbels. Although the flags are not comparable, the policies are.

Mrs. Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I think we should get hold of ourselves. We must not confuse issues. This whole flag issue has a very negative impact on our country. I hope the government will think about it. We are not in a country where propaganda is acceptable.

We must appreciate the people, be open-minded and accept them. The Deputy Prime Minister's papers must not be the only

place where we find that attitude. It must be present in everyday life and for everybody.

We should stop spending money on propaganda. This measure is perceived as propaganda, it is regarded as propaganda and we all know what the results of propaganda are.

We must pull away from this situation we are in. The government must understand that the \$100 million must be spent elsewhere than on propaganda.

[English]

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Saskatoon-Dundurn.

[Translation]

I am very pleased to take part in this debate and I hope it will enrich the reflection brought about in the House by the motion presented by the member for Richmond—Wolfe. I am happy to see that my opposition friend is concerned about the future of Canadian culture and to have this opportunity to present our own vision on the issue.

To start with, if I may, I would like to remind everybody that when we talk about Canada, when we promote Canada, we are promoting Quebec as well, recognizing it as a distinct society with its unique language, culture and institutions.

When we are promoting ourselves, we get richer. I would like us to see the debate from this angle, at least for a few minutes. I was shocked when I was told that Canada was not a friendly country. This is not true. Of course, Canadians are not all the same. Their experience is different, but the vast majority of them love and respect their fellow citizens in Quebec. I believe the reverse to be true also.

I have learned over the years that what we do not know well, we do not understand well, and when we do not know well and do not understand well, we cannot appreciate of course. It is very difficult to love.

[English]

I often hear some of my English speaking colleagues who are less, at times, than totally generous toward their Quebec colleagues. I would maintain that is a minority.

Very often when that happens, they know very little about Quebec. They know very little about its language, its culture, its institutions, the unique place. The reverse is also true. When someone knows very little about the other, when they do not understand, how can they appreciate, how can they care?

Unfortunately that is one of the problems that exist at times in Canada, not just in Quebec but in every single province and territory.

• (1605)

[Translation]

The world has never been so easily accessible. New communications technologies have made it possible to develop a greater awareness of the world around us and to have direct access to an ever increasing volume of information and knowledge. Through the Canada information office, the government wants to provide Canadians across the country with accurate, factual and pertinent information about our country, its institutions, its regions and its people. It wants to give a Canadian slant to the mass of data and information we receive.

But this slant is not only Canadian, it is also a Quebec slant, something that affects, for example, my community in my Franco-Manitoban riding. We just had the Festival du voyageur, we even had artists from Quebec who came to our region and were warmly welcomed. We have artists, writers, all kinds of people who go to Quebec and are appreciated there. That is today's world. There is this huge sharing, not only in Canada, but also throughout the world.

Culture is first and foremost an outlook on the world. In this sense, it is important to have instruments such as the Canada information office and Canadian symbols to convey this typically Canadian outlook not only to Canadians but also to people in other countries.

When we talk about the flag, some may say this is propaganda, but we can also appreciate that it is a powerful symbol that affects all of us. This is what some people fail to understand sometimes.

With the advent of the information highway, content communication is becoming vital for cultural expression. When I talk about content on the information highway, of course I am referring to Canadian content. It expresses and reflects the values, the ideals and the knowledge shared by all Canadians.

In this context, because of the importance of communicating our cultural heritage for the strengthening of both the national identity and the economy, the Canadian government had to take major steps recently.

The government made many efforts to ensure access to cultural content on the digital information highway. It has become an international leader in this area.

At the G-7 conference on the information based society and development held in South Africa, the government stressed how very important it is to have a diversity of views expressed and languages used on the information highway. In the area of heritage for instance, the government participates in pilot projects put forward by the G-7 to promote the most democratic access possible to world culture while respecting individual national identities. It takes part for example in a project called multimedia access to

Supply

world cultural heritage and, through the National Library of Canada, in the *Bibliotheca universalis* project.

At home, the Canadian government has worked on setting up a task force on digitizing collections of cultural and scientific value. National institutions involved in heritage take an active part in integrating and developing new technologies. They are digitizing their collections and making them accessible to the public.

The government will explore many avenues to develop new ways of helping produce digitized Canadian content of heritage value. It also plans to promote conservation, distribution and access to this digitized content.

At the same time, the Canadian Heritage Information Network supports its institutions' efforts to make their collections available to a broader public. It provides, among other things, an Internet directory of Canadian museums and heritage sites. To date, the network has generated a total of 22 reference databases in both official languages and a few other information products available on Internet. More than 1.5 million net surfers have visited its site.

This is an exceptional showcase for Canada and its culture, history and heritage. In addition, the Government of Canada has worked together with CultureNet and the Canadian Conference of the Arts to develop the cultural electronic network of Canada. This network will be a window on Canadian culture for people in Canada and throughout the world.

• (1610)

The government is committed to promoting the establishment of a Canadian information highway that would provide goods and services in both official languages. As it indicated at the round table conference on culture, a few days ago, the government will take every necessary step to promote the creation of Canadian content.

The federal government also adopted, and is currently reviewing, a number of measures designed to increase access to traditional markets, to promote greater dissemination of Canadian culture abroad, and to penetrate specialized markets for the arts, heritage and cultural industries. Among the initiatives taken, the government organized, in December, a national round table on the marketing of Canadian heritage goods and services abroad.

Given their mandate, museums as well as cultural and heritage institutions play a prominent role in the preservation, the promotion and the sharing of our heritage. Some 2,000 museums and institutions dedicated to preserving our heritage are important cultural tools, not only because of their number, but also because of their popularity with Canadians and foreign visitors. It is estimated that 56 per cent of those who visit our institutions are Canadians. It is also estimated that Canada's museums welcomed over 55 million visitors.

Supply

Through its museums assistance program, the Government of Canada provides direct support to these institutions, so as to increase access to collections, to manage these collections efficiently, and to ensure their preservation, for the benefit of current and future generations.

This summer, the government will provide more than 800 young Canadian students with an opportunity to work in institutions dedicated to our heritage, such as libraries and museums. This will be done through the Young Canada Works program, which will include Quebec students. This summer job initiative will not only help young people earn money, but also help them gain better knowledge of their country, their province, their territory, their history and their culture.

We must make sure that our tools to promote culture, and our heritage institutions, are at the service of Canadians, and we must also make sure they offer a typically Canadian content. Our cultural productions and our own perspective on events should also be shown on tomorrow's networks.

The Government of Canada wants to give Canadians as many opportunities as possible to undertake initiatives in order to express their own identity. As we move into the 21st century, we need to be able to express Canada's uniqueness.

Before concluding, I want to say a few words about my own province and francophones outside Quebec. There are around a million of them and people sometimes try to forget about them. In my riding, close to 20 per cent of the people speak French. A high percentage of English speaking citizens have also learned to speak French and taken up the French culture in our province.

There is also a solid core of francophones in other provinces. Need I remind the House that a third of the New-Brunswick population speaks French? For the million people outside Quebec who still speak French, their language and their culture are very dear to them. When they travel to the province of Quebec, they feel very at ease. When Quebecers come to our region, they feel comfortable.

When I travel to France, I feel at ease. I have friends who went over there and they felt the same way. Yesterday, I had friends over from France and we went to the *Festival du voyageur*, and they really liked it. They had spent some time in Quebec City and had felt also very welcome over there. They felt very at ease in our area too. Do not forget that strong ties bind us together.

• (1615)

Mr. Yves Rocheleau (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is understandable that the Canadian government was scared by the results of the referendum and that it wants to try, with great difficulty, considering the limited budgets available, create a sense of belonging in all Canadian provinces including, for the purpose in

hand, in the "province" of Quebec, where most Quebecers are to be found.

But one should never forget, first, that for each dollar invested in such propaganda, 25 cents comes from Quebec. Thus, there should be some form of ethics, some respect, a gentleness and a sense of democracy in the spending of these funds, since they come in a large part from Quebecers, including sovereignists.

Also, when one wants to create a sense of belonging, one should be aware, as we have seen earlier, that the line is very fine between the will to create that feeling and mere propaganda. Approximately one year ago, Chantal Hébert wrote something in *La Presse* and I would like to know how the hon. member for St. Boniface responds to that. Mrs. Hébert who, as far as we know, is not a sovereignist does good work as a daily columnist for *La Presse*.

She wrote: "Since 1995, all departments have been instructed to celebrate the Canadian flag. A survey was made of their efforts. For example, on February 15, 1995, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation presented its employees with a cake in the form of the Canadian flag, and its cafeteria provided a "Canadian" menu. Even the Canadian spies were in on it. That same week, all the employees of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service found the story of the Canadian flag in their electronic mail. All public service managers were urged to circulate a questionnaire on Canada to their staff through the electronic mail. Consideration was given to the possibility of asking public servants' children to participate in drawing contests on their love of Canada. Public servants were encouraged to wear red and white on the anniversary of the flag".

One can promote Canadian patriotism but I think that the very fine line between patriotism and propaganda was just crossed, and I would like to hear what my colleague for St. Boniface has to say about this.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comment and his question. I wonder why they are so afraid of promoting Canada. Why that fear? When we promote Canada, we promote Quebec, Manitoba and all the other provinces and territories.

They do not understand and they do not want to understand. As for those spies, I do not know exactly what they did. I know Mrs. Hébert and she is a good writer. I respect her very much. But be serious. Every day I listen to a number of Bloc members. I accept them and I even like some of them a lot. They promote Quebec in many ways even though they have a tendency to exaggerate. They can go very far.

But can we call it propaganda? Some would speak of lies. Not me. They just do their work. They do it as best they can. They are promoting their province, their distinct society, their language, their culture, and their own special institutions. I commend them

for that but they should do the same for Canada, the country that is theirs as much as it is mine.

[*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, I am pleased to rise in the House to address the opposition motion today. The achievements of this government in support of Canadian culture and identity are significant.

Canada's culture has evolved through the contributions of our creative artists, our cultural institutions and the individual and collective expressions of who we are as Canadians. It is not one voice but many represented through the rich diversity of our regions and our varied ethnic roots.

• (1620)

In 1993 this government took over from a Conservative regime that failed to appreciate the importance of cultural development. The Liberal government has stayed true to our vision of creating a stronger, more unified country while strengthening the Canadian economy. In that vision, we place great importance on the need to support and strengthen Canadian culture and identity and to celebrate Canada's heritage.

The practical side is clear. We want to strengthen the economy and provide more jobs for Canadians. We are doing that. We are also creating a stronger, more unified Canada where Canadian culture and identity thrive and where jobs and growth are a given. Let me give a couple of examples of how well it is going.

The Department of Canadian Heritage is an active partner in the federal government's job strategy. A great deal has been happening. The young Canada works program is putting young people to work and nurturing their understanding of Canada.

In 1996 the young Canada works program provided interesting summer job experiences for over 2,000 young Canadian. This involved four key areas of Canada's diverse cultural and natural heritage, specifically our national parks and national historic sites, aboriginal urban youth, Canada's two official languages and our heritage institutions.

The young Canada works program is unique, providing the chance for many of its participants to travel to other parts of this country. I am pleased to say that it will run again this coming summer.

As a government we are proud that young Canadians have this chance to connect with other Canadians, people from different backgrounds and regions of Canada.

Supply

Young Canadians have a sense of passion and commitment about Canada; like the country they call home, their future is ahead of them. Through young Canada works we are helping young people to finance their education, gain invaluable work experience and learn more about Canada.

This year we are adding two more components, providing graduate students with internship opportunities that will build their skill sets and increase their future employment prospects. Putting young people to work is important for all of us. The pride and passion they feel for Canada touches each and every one of us deeply at the very core of our being. Our Canadian identity is something we can share and celebrate. Young Canada works is helping Canadians do just that.

Another area where this government is working hard to build Canadian identity and culture while strengthening the economy is the arts. The arts in Canada have grown rapidly over the last decade. They contribute to Canada in many ways. They serve as the human talent pool for all the cultural industries and broadcasting. They touch on other areas of the cultural sector such as heritage, architecture and advertising.

The cultural sector contributes overall over \$29 billion worth of economic activity to Canada's gross domestic product and supports more than 900,000 jobs. The Government of Canada knows that investing in the arts is a win-win situation. It is an investment in Canada. It makes good economic sense and it makes good sense for Canada's cultural identity as well as for Canadian unity.

The Department of Canadian Heritage is a success story in supporting the creation, production and distribution of the arts in Canada. For example, the performing arts are burgeoning in Canada. Over the last decade the number of live performances increased by 33 per cent. Attendance grew from 10 million in 1985 to over 13.5 million in 1995. Earned revenues, mostly box office receipts, grew 87 per cent to \$187 million.

In 1994 alone Canadians bought more than 13 million tickets to performances by not for profit professional dance, music, opera and theatre companies, most of which the Department of Canadian Heritage supports through the Canada Council.

The Stratford Festival receives almost \$790,000 from the Canada Council. In return Stratford generates \$25 million in taxes and a further \$100 million in economic activity.

• (1625)

The young Canada works program and support to the creation, production and distribution of the arts in Canada are just two mechanisms through which this government is building a stronger country.

Our commitment is clear. We will continue to lead the way in promoting the excellence of our artists and the success of our

Supply

cultural institutions and industries. We will continue to lead the way in engaging all Canadians in the life of Canada, including our youth who will take up our torch and create Canada's future.

Much remains to be done but our commitment remains. It is vital to ensuring Canada's strength and prosperity today and in the future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to my hon. colleague opposite that he neglected to address the issue raised in the Bloc Québécois motion. He did not speak to the motion, he drew us a picture that has nothing to do with the motion. The motion put forward by one of my hon. colleagues this morning reads as follows:

That this House denounce the use of public funds squandered on propaganda activities sponsored by Heritage Canada, such as the Canada Information Office and the *One Million Flags* Operation, at a time when cuts unprecedented in the history of Canada have been imposed on cultural institutions in Canada and Quebec.

This is the issue, this is the motion before the House today. As further evidence of this shameful waste of money, take the \$98 million taken from taxpayers in Canada and Quebec to pay for this propaganda campaign.

Today, February 17, the Canadian Flag Day, is indeed a sad day for Canada. How sad it is to see such a waste of money, when the unemployment level keeps rising, the number of jobs keeps decreasing, more and more people are out of work and more than 1 million children are currently living below the poverty line.

Could we not have used this \$98 million to better ends, to support better programs? Let me give you some examples: the celebrations surrounding the 30th anniversary of the Canadian flag, which cost \$1.1 million; the 600 billboards, 300 of which were put up in Quebec; the production of TV segments like the Heritage Minutes, a \$2.2 million expenditure which was pointless.

My question is the following: Could we not have used this money to help the children living in poverty? Why did the government not choose this option instead of undertaking propaganda activities for Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Bodnar: Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to hear the member speaking about the spending of money on flags, on the pride that we should take in this country and on keeping this country together which, I take it he has already heard, is the best country in the world to live in. But he fails to mention all the money that was wasted on the last referendum in Quebec, the wasted money on posters that were printed in Quebec. Why was that money not put into Quebec's economy to help the children of the province of Quebec?

He indicates that the unemployment level is going up. That is not so. The unemployment level has come down, not as much as we would like, and we are trying to get it lower and we will get it lower, but it has not been going up, as has been mentioned.

• (1630)

It is very sad when a member refers to flag day as being a sad day for Canada. It is very sad that any member of the House of Parliament of Canada would say that in the democratically elected Chamber of Canada. That attitude is not understandable. A strong country leads to employment for all, including youth.

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member for Saskatoon—Dundurn speak about the programs which are funded by the heritage department and the heritage minister. Coming from Saskatchewan as well, I know that the average person who walks on the streets of Saskatoon or in rural Saskatchewan is not very impressed with most of the programs and projects funded by Heritage Canada. There are a few things that need to be funded, such as discrimination against racism and so on and so forth.

The provincial government has withdrawn funding for health care and the federal government has followed suit and withdrawn billions of dollars from health care. How can the member stand in the House to defend the third or fourth rate priority funding of Heritage Canada when funding for health care has been so drastically reduced? It is certainly not going over well in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Bodnar: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the hon. member mentioned that the ordinary citizens of Saskatoon do not support what Heritage Canada is doing. He must be walking on different streets from the ones I walk on.

The member is critical of what he referred to as cuts in spending. It is interesting to look at the Reform budget and the cuts which it suggested. The cuts are very interesting. The Reform Party suggested cuts to post-secondary education, cuts in health, cuts in the Canada assistance plan and cuts in equalization. Equalization cuts of 35 per cent. Cuts to the Canada assistance plan of 34 per cent.

Reformers are critical of what has been done to get the finances of the country in order. They would have butchered the system and destroyed it but all of a sudden, lo and behold, now that it is almost election time, they are the saviours. Three years ago when it was not election time they were the ones who would have destroyed the system.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, let me begin my remarks by saying that those statements are absolute fiction.

We have said that we need to restore the fiscal situation in this country. Any of the cuts which were suggested in the taxpayers budget have been far superseded by Liberal cuts. The cuts which

Supply

have been made by the Liberals have been deep. They have been painful for people right across the country.

When we look at health care especially just to sum up the member's statements, this government has cut more in the area of health care than any Reformer would ever think of doing. Every hospital closure in the country ought to have a sign over its door which reads: The closure of this hospital has been brought to you by the Liberal Government of Canada.

Probably some of the acrimony which we have seen is what gave rise to this debate today. I cannot agree with Bloc members on how they feel about our flag, but I can understand their sense of disappointment with the status quo, the way the country has gone. In fact, that is why I am here too, because I cannot go along with the status quo.

On the one side we have a government which says status quo; Liberal or Tory, it really does not matter. That certainly was proved today by Guy St-Julien, the former member for Abitibi, an old Tory who used to scream from that side of the House across to this side. He is now going to run as a federal Liberal. What is the difference between a federal Liberal and a Tory? I do not think there is a difference. They are just flip sides of the same loonie.

Beyond that the other choice is out and out separation, which is what the Bloc Quebecois offers. Even though it has been proved wrong twice in province-wide referenda, it is still here squawking about it.

This debate today is in fact round two of the flag debate. I was a teenager when this debate was in the House in the sixties. It was a pretty painful process to watch. It took about six months because the government of the day did not bring in closure quite so much as it does now.

• (1635)

Mr. Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): I was not born yet.

Miss Grey: That explains a lot of things also. Nonetheless, that flag debate was one of the most acrimonious debates in this House.

We went to the Canadian flag in 1965 and this maple leaf is one of the proudest symbols worldwide. I am glad to be a member of a Canadian society where my flag is held to be so special to us in this country and internationally as well. That is so important.

It bothers me and upsets me that a group of people in the House of Commons wants to leave this country. They are out and out separatists. They try to dress it up with all kinds of fancy names but they want to pull out of this country. And they are calling our flag propaganda. We have heard it several times today. It is unfortunate that the context of that could not be ruled unparliamentary because

I certainly think it is unparliamentary. It is shameful that there would be people in this place who call our flag propaganda.

Unfortunately the Minister of Canadian Heritage has tried to offer this free flag program. It is a symbolic thing which, if times were great, would be appreciated. If we had a great surplus of extra cash lying around, it would be a great project. But we are \$600 billion in debt. The government is spending \$70 million a day more than it is bringing in. It has cut health care. It has cut transfers to the provinces incredibly, \$7 billion with the Canada health and social transfer.

However this minister wields so much power that she can go into cabinet and demand \$20 million, \$50 million, \$100 million for these special projects. That is probably the nub of the issue right now. It is not whether or not we celebrate our flag, or whether or not we should have a flag program. She said at the beginning that this would come from donations from people across the country and that it might cost \$6 million. Guess what? It has come from donations but it has come directly out of the pockets of Canadian taxpayers and they did not have any say in how that cash was going to be spent. It was another one of those voluntary-involuntary programs that we as Canadian taxpayers get stuck with over and over again.

The idea was a good one: to generate patriotism and drive Canadian unity. That is a noble aspiration and a good thing to do, but again the cost was exorbitant and the minister had no idea where the cash was coming from. She was able to get her elbows sharpened up and make some way at the cabinet table. She scared the Minister of Finance off so that he bought this thing: peace at any price; the Minister of Canadian Heritage will get some cash to keep her quiet. It is unfortunate when so many other priorities have had to be put aside, yet the minister has been able to get her way.

There is another thing that bothers me about this. It is not just the cost of it but this seems to me to be the government's idea of a national unity program. Is that all there is? Free flags to say that this is going to solve our national unity problem?

We do have a crisis in the country, which is that members of Her Majesty's loyal opposition are separatists. They do not like this place and they do not like Her Majesty. They have made that very clear. Is this the government's response in total? Is that all there is, my friend? Here is a free flag. This is our new national unity program. What a tragedy and only a year and a little bit after a referendum that saw us come so close to falling over the edge. The Prime Minister says: "We won that referendum".

It is like the Stanley Cup. We won. I have news for him and his seatmate the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage, and news for everyone on the government side and for everyone who is watching today. Unfortunately, that referendum was not the end of the Stanley Cup. This thing is going into overtime because Lucien Bouchard is at the helm in Quebec. Members know only too well that he was my seatmate for three and

Supply

a half years in the back row. Although I disagree vehemently with his politics, and I am a Canadian through and through, I learned to understand what a masterful strategist he is. I also know that if he gets his way and has another referendum in Quebec, he does not have any intention of losing.

• (1640)

Surely there must be something better that this government can offer those of us who are federalists and passionate Canadians. Surely there has to be more to offer than just a Canadian flag.

The minister criticized me one time in question period saying that people in Beaver River ordered flags, as if this was some terrible thing or some wonderful thing that she had discovered. The people in the Beav are proud and passionate Canadians as well and many of them did order a flag. They are not ashamed to fly the Canadian flag. When these things were being offered to them, many of them did write in and ask for a flag. And what happened? They each got three, four or five flags in an envelope. What in the world is going on in that office where they cannot even count to one? There is something sad about it.

There has to be something better than national unity just by a free flag. It has got to be deeper than that.

Our 20-20 plan addresses this so well. We have said that we understand that there are very real concerns of the people in Quebec. What we need to do is give back to the provinces what was originally in their jurisdiction.

We see so much overlap. There is so much incredible lust for power from the federal government. It has all that power to organize and administer everything and it simply cannot relinquish it. There still must be federal powers: defence, foreign affairs, monetary policy, regulating financial institutions, the Criminal Code, facilitating national standards, equalization, international trade, domestic trade. Those are things the federal government should do well and does do well.

We are always told that we are going to have to decentralize and there will be no federal powers left, but that is not true. The provinces still must have the jurisdiction they were originally designed to have. I think many Quebecers would be happy with that.

On the flip side of that are 20 reasons why you might want to stay in Canada, 20 realities about the cost of seceding—or the cost of separating, let us call it what it is—and those are not pleasant to think about. I think you should think twice before you decide to go away.

When anyone sits close to me here and is a separatist and says that my flag is propaganda, it really bothers me. I want to take them on and challenge them by saying: When you criticize my flag

or Canada Day, you criticize me because I was born on July 1 in 1952 and nobody is going to mess with my flag or Canada Day, or Dominion Day as I still like to call it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, from now on, for me, July 1 will not only be Canada Day but my hon. colleague's birthday.

I would like to point out to my colleague that the issue here is not the flag itself but the propaganda it serves. I have the utmost respect for national flags, for the Canadian flag, as have, I am sure, all members of this House and all my colleagues in the Bloc. But I do not like the way the flag has been used. It has been used for what we call propaganda. The issue is not the flag but the ends to which it has been used, the intent behind it.

I would ask my Reform colleague whether she is appalled by the fact that no ceremony celebrated the Canadian Flag Day this year and that there was only a small ceremony last year. Is this not in some way reducing the role played by the flag in representing Canada?

• (1645)

I love the Quebec flag and I understand why Canadians love their own flag, as it is legitimate and respectable to do. But when the government on the other side is unable to celebrate Flag Day as fervently as it denounces our speeches, I am puzzled. What we take issue with is the use this government has made of the Canadian flag. Do you not agree, dear colleague?

[*English*]

Miss Grey: Mr. Speaker, I think I made it fairly clear in my speech that I have a problem with the way the government went about it, first, in terms of the cost of the flag program, for which we do not have the money, and second, in terms of the fact the Liberals think this is their only national unity scheme.

The member said that he has respect for the flag and I appreciate that. He said he has a great love for his flag, the fleur de lis, the Quebec flag. I also have the same love for my provincial flag of Alberta. Over arching that is my citizenship as a Canadian. I celebrate the Canadian flag first and foremost and after that come the family of provinces and there I celebrate the Alberta flag.

He said that there was no great ceremony for flag day. Could it have something to do with the way flag day went last year? Members will remember what happened last year. The remembrance I have of flag day was not so much the celebration of the flag but watching my Prime Minister take a guy out because he got in his way at the flag day ceremonies. What a disgrace, what an embarrassment for a national leader.

Supply

He did not follow the RCMP who celebrate the flag and who were looking after the Prime Minister that day. He just bulldozed out into the crowd to be the great hero. Some protester got in his way and the Prime Minister said: "So I had to take him out". He just turned him around and threw him to the ground. Is this what we are to celebrate under our flag? Is this what other countries see when they look at our flag? Is this the way Canadians behave? I do not think so.

I appreciate what the member said about the flag. I was not sure I heard that earlier from his colleague from Rimouski—Témiscouata when she said it hard to love a country that is not lovable. That is shameful. It is absolutely shameful that someone would holler that out in the shouting match between two Quebecers. She said: "If you want us to stay, come and get us". For generations the rest of Canada has been coming to get Quebecers.

Quebec is in this family. There are days when we are not happy to be part of a particular family. I know that. There were four teenage sisters growing up in my family and lots of days I am sure we all wished we had another family, as is only normal. But love is not conditional. This is the family. These people are part of this family and family life is not conditional.

The flag is ours. And whether some days or some years the people in this separatist camp think they want to run away from home, they are part of the family. I think it is shameful to say: "It is hard to love a country that is not lovable" and "If you want us to stay, come and get us". You are here. We love you. Please stay.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment the member for Beaver River for an excellent and rational point of view on this whole issue.

The motion before the House today, an accusation from Bloc members of funds being squandered on propaganda, is a bit of a narrow-minded, hypocritical motion. I would like to point that out.

The balance of the motion states that instead of spending money on free flags and the Canada Information Office and in light of the cuts to the cultural institutions that more money should be spent on health care and education, et cetera.

I would like to point out to Bloc members that their former fearless leader who sat in this House, that same Lucien Bouchard who is now running and guiding the province of Quebec, in his next budget and the budgets in the ensuing years will cut spending on health care and education. He will have to make cuts and eliminate the waste in those areas because that is where savings can be had and that is where, even in welfare and other social programs, he is going to have to revisit.

• (1650)

This party, which claims it can do all and be all for everybody, will have to face the stark reality of what governments are all about. Governments are all about taking tax dollars and reinvesting them back into the country, for natural infrastructure and for human infrastructure. The group of people that best knows how to do this is the group that should be running this country.

For 30 years we have had politicians who have mismanaged these finances. They have mismanaged them so badly that they have had to borrow close to \$600 billion to cover everything they wanted to do for the people of Canada. They would not live within their means.

The stark reality for everybody, no matter to what political party you belong, is that we are in a time of fiscal restraint. We are in a time of having to balance budgets. We are in a time of not squandering and wasting taxpayers' dollars.

When talking about this motion that attacks the Department of Canadian Heritage we must ask what is its purpose. Why do we have a Department of Canadian Heritage? The purpose of the department is to promote Canada. The purpose of the Department of Canadian Heritage is to invest in Canada so we can be proud of ourselves and our country.

Let me point out what the department currently does in dollar terms. According to the public accounts, the Canadian identity program costs half a billion dollars. We spend over \$300 million on Parks Canada. We spend \$1.171 billion on the CBC. We spend \$95 million on the Canada Council which promotes Canadian arts and artists. We spend \$190 million on Canadian film development and the National Film Board combined. We spend \$91 million on museums of heritage, civilization, science and technology. We even spend \$4.45 million to protect the battlefields of Quebec. We spend \$23 million on the Canadian radio, television and telecommunications, plus an additional \$10 million this year because the Liberal government now wants to give stable multi-year funding to the CBC for the next five years. We spend \$19.6 million on the National Arts Centre which is right down the street.

We spend \$98 million on the National Capital Commission, the fourth level of government in this area of Ottawa-Hull. I have a hard time with that. Is there a need for four levels of government in the city of Ottawa? There is the federal government, provincial government, municipal government and a National Capital Commission on top of that.

Nobody gives you a ticket around here because they are afraid to. If they do give you a ticket they do not force you to pay for it because nobody knows whose jurisdiction it is. If there was ever a city that needed to be cleaned up, it is Ottawa. Toronto is a megacity. Why do they not make this a megacity, combine

Supply

everybody and kick the National Capital Commission people out of here. Let us just have one city and be proud of the city called the capital of Canada?

Across the bridge, Hull, Aylmer and Gatineau are thinking about getting together and forming one city. It is a great idea and there will be savings. We will have fewer politicians to boot which is what we need in this House and all across Canada, fewer politicians.

The National Gallery of Canada, the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada add up to \$129 million. That is \$2.9 billion, close to \$3 billion, which is recorded in the public accounts, that we spend through Heritage Canada to promote Canadian identity. That is to promote Canadian human infrastructure and to communicate information about Canada through the telecommunications medium.

Is that not enough? Should we not now be proud Canadians? Should we not now be able to show all across Canada, across the 10 provinces with \$3 billion that we are together and that we have it together? No, it is not.

This government throws money at every problem, from Indians to separatists to oil and gas people. It just throws money at everything. It does not throw what is really important at the Canadian public. What it does not throw is pride and the idea of being proud to be Canadian. There are better commercials from the private sector on being proud to be Canadian than what comes from this government.

We have to start promoting Canadians. One thing this government could do, which it does not have the guts to do—I know that is a parliamentary word, I know I can use it because it was used today in question period. This government and its Prime Minister do not have the guts, they have the power. But the heritage minister does not have the guts—yet she has the power—to do one thing on our census form. One simple little thing that would shut the separatists up. One simple little thing would bring us altogether from coast to coast to coast and that is to allow us on our census to put down Canadian, not Hungarian Canadian like I might have to put down, not French Canadian, not English Canadian, not Ukrainian Canadian, not German Canadian, not Polish Canadian but Canadian. Why do we not do that? Why is it that the government, with all its power, is too lazy and too stupid to do something so simple and so common sense?

• (1655)

We are all, first and foremost, Canadians, not French Canadian or English Canadian or Canadians from Quebec. We can be proud of the region we come from. We can be proud of our cultural distinctions and our differences but we are Canadian. Why do we not just put down Canadian? What would be wrong with that? How much would that cost? Very, very little and this government will not do it.

I have said that Heritage Canada spends close to \$3 billion on Canada, on Canadian identity and promoting this country. What about bilingualism? The separatists sit here and say we are not giving them enough. The Official Languages Commissioner claims we spend at least \$600 million, but that is ridiculous. We know the cost of bilingualism is a lot higher. The cost is probably more like 5 per cent of the gross expenditures of the government which is about \$120 billion.

Therefore, it is safe to say that we spend a great deal on bilingualism, on having everything in two languages and on promoting French outside of Quebec and English inside of Quebec, which the separatists do not want. The separatists believe in democracy, freedom and respect. You can take Quebec out of Canada but you cannot take anything out of Quebec. You can protect language as long as it is French. You do not protect English. That is hypocritical of this party. The cost of bilingualism promotes Canadianism and Canada and is another expenditure that we have.

My main point is that the government has not done enough. It has spent \$3 billion in Heritage Canada. It has spent anywhere from \$600 million to \$6 billion on enforcing official bilingualism.

In conclusion, national unity cannot be legislated. This fly a free flag program was a disaster. Where was the Prime Minister on Saturday? Where was the leader of this country? Where was his pride? Was there nobody to strangle this weekend? Was there nobody to get his hands on this weekend? Where was he? The papers state he was out grocery shopping. Yes, right. Why was he not proud of what his minister was doing?

National unity cannot be legislated. It cannot be done. You cannot make the separatists happy. They have it in their minds that they would be better off by themselves. They are not correct in that assumption. We have to do more for Canadians in Quebec. Why does the government, which has a lot of bilingual ministers, not go in there and do more for Canadians in Quebec, more for the anglophones and more for the francophones who want to stay in Canada? Just to fly a flag is not enough. It is a failure. It was empty rhetoric.

I would like to see Canada come together and stay together. The start would be with the census where we would mark down our origins as being Canadian. Everyone who is born here is Canadian no matter from which province.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the heritage minister today made one of many announcements, specifically about the fact that she is putting together a program for schools.

I must say that I agree with my colleague from Beaver River, as I do with my colleague from Calgary Centre, that we are proud Canadians and that these symbols, these flags, these crests and all of the information about the provinces are a very important part of Canada. I applaud the minister for the intent that she is exhibiting in making this kit available.

However, I wonder if my colleague would like to comment on this. In our so-called paperless society, it is rather interesting that all of the information is currently available from Industry Canada by way of Internet. Probably the majority of schools at all levels in Canada now have access to the World Wide Web, the Internet.

• (1700)

They can retrieve from the Internet all the graphic material which would include the flags, the coat of arms, all the provincial crests and provincial flags, and all the background and data that the teachers would require as teaching aids to tell our Canadian children more about Canada. However, while that is at no cost, this kit that the minister is putting together just by coincidence happens to include a CD ROM and a video. Very clearly there is going to be additional information on that.

I wonder if the member would agree that the probability is that once again our heritage minister is going to be giving to the students and teachers of Canada her own tiny perfect little vision of what Canada is really about rather than simply providing the information so that the people, the teachers and the students can come to their own judgment and inform themselves accordingly.

Mr. Silye: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the question. Certainly his comment and analysis of how you can promote Canada and disseminate information at a lower cost is a very valid one and I agree wholeheartedly with him.

It is clear in this whole fly a free flag program. A flag is supposed to be a symbol and if you are proud of your country why do you have to get a free one? Why not spend \$15 and buy one? One could still be proud to do it. I think that is something we could have achieved for flag day and promoted.

The concept was a good one but it was going to cost \$6 million, then actually \$17 million and then another program on how to promote Canada, not knowing the cost. The cost could be in excess of what is in her budget, although a \$3 billion budget is pretty good and there should some slush in a few places.

She said \$6 million. It was finally \$17.7 million with \$2.2 million coming from the private sector, both corporate and individuals, with donations. That is \$11.7 million net cost to the government. That is 195 per cent over budget. Obviously for this minister what is a million, what is a hundred million or what is fifty million?

In this promoting Canada and the failure of it, why when there were two 1-800 phone numbers for drapeau and for flag the rest of Canada subscribed to 89 per cent of the flags whereas in Quebec it was only 11 per cent? Why is it that we cannot wake up Quebecers?

Supply

Why is it that we cannot wake up those Quebecers who want to stay in Canada and get them to stay in Canada? Part of this education program through the CD ROMs and computers should tell the facts and the truths.

For four years in the in the high schools in the province of Quebec they were teaching their Quebec students that with respect to their contribution to equalization payments, they paid more into Canada than they received when the facts were just the opposite. They took more out of our \$8.5 billion equalization payments. The province of Quebec receives over half of that. They misrepresented the facts and this government let them get away with it and that is what I object to. It has the power, the knowledge and all it has to do is make some decisions. It does not cost to fix what is right. It does not cost a whole lot of money to be proud to be Canadian.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Frontenac—Asbestos industry.

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will share my time with the hon. member for Pontiac—Gatineau—LaBelle. I am happy to have the opportunity to speak to the question raised by my colleague from Richmond—Wolfe and to have a chance to correct some facts mentioned by the Bloc Québécois.

[*English*]

The expression the pot calling the kettle black is indeed one that would apply in this instance in my opinion. I have listened to the comments made by opposition members who feel it is a crime if you admit that you are proud to be Canadian and a Quebecer. As a Quebecer I am indeed insulted by the accusations that are being made today.

Through its efforts of promoting Canadian identity the Government of Canada is playing a crucial role in defining its future. We are committed to strengthening Canadians' sense of attachment to this country, as well as the links which unite them from coast to coast. To that end we have given Canadian citizens an increasing number of opportunities to learn more about their country and to communicate among themselves and with the rest of the world.

• (1705)

Through dialogue and understanding we have succeeded in building a society that is enriched by cultural diversity and two official languages, a society that is open to the rest of the world and facing the future head on.

Supply

Be it through the Canada Information Office or the one in a million national flag challenge program, the federal government is proud to promote Canada's richness and diversity both here at home and throughout the world.

[*Translation*]

If there is a subject on which the Bloc is ill-advised to criticize our government it is that of government propaganda.

The Bloc Quebecois and its brother, the Parti Quebecois, have mastered the art of political propaganda. For those two parties, everything is a good vehicle for the promotion of their separatist views. We could give a few examples of cases where the PQ government and its sovereignist allies used public money to promote their political option. This government and its partners spent large amounts of money promoting their separatist option and trying to obtain a Yes vote in the last referendum. All these expenses, all this money wasted came out of the pockets of Quebec taxpayers.

For the PQ and the Bloc Quebecois, propaganda knows no price or age limits. Whether it is producing new history books or replacing students' workbooks with propaganda books, whether it is sending pamphlets to senior citizens and those receiving social assistance, postcards to all households in Quebec, press releases and documentation to schools, material to professional corporations, whether it is by stepping up the number of regional tours, summits, consultations of all sorts, for these two separatist parties, the end justifies the means.

However, when the government decides to respond and to correct the inaccuracies being spread by the separatists, they come out with charges of propaganda and misuse of public funds. When the Government of Canada decides in turn to encourage national pride, the PQ and the Bloc Quebecois charge propaganda and misuse of public funds.

The Bloc Quebecois refuses to accept that the very great majority of Quebecers love Canada and are happy to see the Canadian government finally decide to promote Canada.

[*English*]

In the eyes of the Bloc it has become unthinkable that Quebecers still wish to be considered Canadian. What do I tell the 518 constituents in my riding of Saint-Denis who asked to receive a flag to display their pride in their country?

We received many phone calls for the Canadian flag. People are still proud to display the Canadian flag in the riding of Saint-Denis and all over the province of Quebec.

[*Translation*]

I will give a few examples of spending on sovereignist propaganda and, as I have said, the list is not exhaustive. First of all, with

respect to the use of public funds, the Bloc Quebecois would be well advised to take a little look at what went on in Quebec during the last two referendums.

In 1980, the entire government machinery was made available for "the cause". Millions of dollars were spent on polls, when the economic situation should have called for tighter control over public spending.

In 1995, the entire government machinery was again put into service, once again for "the cause". But sovereignists will use any excuse to make such behaviour acceptable to the public.

This motion refers to budget cuts to cultural institutions that are unprecedented in Canadian history.

The Government of Canada never dared use artists for political ends as the Parti Quebecois did in the last two referendums. The Government of Canada supports artists without ulterior motives and without asking for their allegiance to any doctrine. For at least 30 years, the Government of Canada has maintained programs to support cultural institutions and all Canadian artists willing to put their talents to contribution in any artistic or cultural activity.

• (1710)

In Quebec, it was not the Parti Quebecois but a Liberal government that introduced the act recognizing the status of the artist. The Bloc Quebecois would be well advised to look closely in the mirror before making accusations like the ones it made today.

I would like to quote Lucien Bouchard, who said in 1994: "I would respect the flag of any country, and especially that of my own country, which has been the flag of my ancestors for hundreds of years. I must respect it". We have numerous quotes from Mr. Bouchard when he was sitting in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to cite my own personal experience as an example.

[*English*]

My parents arrived from Greece. I have lived for over 37 years in this country. My parents chose Canada. This country has been good to them. They love this country. They are proud Canadians. I am a proud Canadian. Where else in the world would someone with my modest background have had the opportunity to serve their fellow Canadians in this respected institution which we call the House of Commons?

For me and the majority of Canadians of Hellenic origin as well as other Canadians of other origins, and the two are compatible for my friends from the Reform Party, the flag is one symbol that unites us. It is a symbol that tells us of the greatness of this country. Every year I hold a Canada Day celebration in my riding. Over 1,000 proud Canadians of all origins and including French Canadians participate in that event. We celebrate our flag and we celebrate our country.

I will continue to do so every July 1. That is my commitment to my constituents. I will continue to show the flag, to show how proud I am to be a Canadian, how proud I am of a symbol that is respected internationally. Everywhere I travel people talk about the greatness of this country. One of the symbols they have come to know is our flag.

We will continue to live in a society that is tolerant and that respects other opinions, but there is one thing that we will never compromise on, the Canadian flag and the symbols that unite us and the fact that we are and will continue to be proud Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have just listened to our distinguished colleague from the Montreal region, who told us about how her father came from Greece 37 years ago, and how much her family appreciates life in Canada. I respect the feelings she has shared with this House.

I would, however, like to ask her the following: she lives in Quebec, she was brought up in Quebec, she speaks French and English. Could she explain to us how she sees the Quebec culture, how she sees the Canadian culture, and what distinction she makes between the two?

Mrs. Bakopanos: Mr. Speaker, I think I would need more than one minute to respond to my colleague, if I have to explain my pride in being a Quebecer, my pride at belonging to a distinct culture, to use that term, one which I accept moreover.

I am proud to be a Quebecer, but I find that the two cultures are compatible. There is no difference between being a Quebecer and being a Canadian, for me they are the same thing. I can be a Quebecer, and proud of it, I have lived in Quebec all my life and I hope to continue living in the province of Quebec for the rest of my days, as a member of Parliament and as a Canadian citizen.

Mr. de Savoye: What about culture?

Mrs. Bakopanos: For me, culture is where the beauty of Canada lies. The beauty of Canada is that we have two cultures, and that we can draw from the richness of both the Quebec culture and the Canadian culture.

• (1715)

What I find a bit odd is that Bloc members cannot appreciate the cultures of Quebec and Canada and be proud to be both Quebecers and Canadians.

Mr. Benoît Serré (Timiskaming—French River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the hon. member for St. Denis when she referred, in English, to “the pot calling the kettle black”. How can Bloc members rise in the House and with a straight face say things like “Denounce the use of public funds”?

Supply

They object to our spending \$15 million on promoting unity and tolerance in this wonderful country, and they just spent \$60 million on a referendum that is divisive and hurts Quebec’s economy. Talk about a double standard.

I think that is appalling. I have friends among the First Nations, and they would probably call this speaking with a forked tongue. On one side, millions have been spent. The separatist movement, which the Bloc supports, has infiltrated our schools and the CBC. Millions have been spent. At this very moment, the Government of Quebec is spending millions of dollars of federal money to promote its independence option.

So I am proud to be a Canadian. I am proud of my Canadian flag. In recent years, I travelled in many countries, and people recognize the Canadian flag and the symbol it represents. It is not recognized because it has a nice maple leaf and it is red, although I am rather fond of the colour red. This flag is known throughout the world for what it represents: the best country in the world where tolerance is a fact of life. And it is this tolerance, this unity we want to keep in Canada and Quebec, because Quebec is still part of Canada.

I have my roots in Quebec as well. My ancestors arrived in Quebec City in 1634 and 1658, respectively. My francophone culture is not Quebec culture, not Franco-Ontarian but Canadian. When we refer to Canadian culture, we are talking about anglophone culture, francophone culture and the culture of all the ethnic groups in this country.

Mrs. Bakopanos: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his comments. In my speech I referred to what the PQ government spent on government propaganda so I will not repeat what I already said.

I believe we are all aware that public money is being spent for purely partisan purposes. I think we saw many examples of this in the last referendum. We can only hope that our Bloc colleagues will think about all this, and I will repeat what I said, that I am proud to be a Quebecer and a Canadian. I am proud to be both.

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to the motion by the member for Richmond—Wolfe, I would first like to say that the Government of Canada is taking a whole series of measures to promote Canada’s identity.

The Canada Information Office and the one in a million flag campaign are only two of a multitude of measures the government has taken to enable Canadians to express their pride and sense of belonging to Canada.

Culture is the collection of ways we see ourselves belonging to a group, a society and a country. It is not an abstraction outside reality, but, rather, the vital link binding us each to the other. It is therefore to be found at the heart of Canada’s culture.

Supply

As Canada's ninth largest industry, the cultural sector involves some 670,000 jobs and creates revenues of \$16 billion annually. By promoting our cultural industries, we are achieving a twofold objective: helping Canada's identity grow and Canada's economy expand.

Like all the other sectors in society, the cultural sector has had to do its part and come up with innovative solutions to meet the challenges posed by the state of the economy.

• (1720)

Even in times of cutbacks, the present government has taken direct and indirect measures to strengthen the cultural sector and promote cultural growth.

I am thinking of the television and cable fund for the distribution of Canadian programs announced last September, among others. Television is a unique vehicle for cultural programming and occupies a large space in our lives. No other medium is so much a part of our daily lives and has such sway over our leisure time than television.

Television allows francophones, especially those who live outside Quebec, to have direct access to French culture in this country and to follow what is happening in the community and in French Canada in general.

Television is a means of conveying values and realities specific to francophones, even to promote the growth of the French language. For minority francophones, the access to French programming is, in some cases, a matter of survival.

Despite the need to have French-language Canadian content on the air, only 30 per cent of French television dramas are produced in Canada. Furthermore, it is estimated that about half of Quebec children's programming is produced abroad.

We must expand our capacity to communicate our views on the world to others in Canada and abroad in both official languages. We must broadcast more television programs produced by Canadians about Canadians for Canadians and the entire world. In a multi-channel television world, it is also a matter of survival. Without competitive quality Canadian programming, the Canadian presence on the air will diminish gradually.

It is essential for Canadians to be able to watch programs which they like and which reflect their reality. It is in this perspective that the Government of Canada announced the creation of the Canadian television and cable production fund for the production of Canadian programs, which amounts to \$200 million per year. This fund is expected to produce \$650 million worth of investments and to create some 10,000 new jobs. As was announced a few days ago, in addition to this new fund, the government will now provide stable funding for the CBC.

These two measures will help boost the broadcasting industry in Canada. They will generate new dramas, new variety programs, new programs for children, new documentaries and new cultural programs.

We are committed to supporting culture, and we will continue to implement measures to promote it. These measures demonstrate without a doubt that we are committed to supporting every aspect of arts and culture, which is the cornerstone of our collective identity.

Whether we are francophones or anglophones, whether we come from Gaspé or Vancouver, we all have the same desires and the same goals: we all want our culture to reflect what we are. The measures taken by the government to support the cultural sector are a direct contribution to the vitality of the two large linguistic communities in this country.

Mr. Speaker, there are several ways to promote the development of the Canadian identity. The Government of Canada may not have all the answers but, even in a period of financial restraint, it is taking critical steps to strengthen our identity and reaffirm our presence within the international community, because the future of our country is at stake.

• (1725)

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's speech. I believe he overlooked several facts. He concealed some figures.

He did not mention the fact that his government has cut \$20 million from the French radio network of the CBC, nor that it has also cut \$7.5 million from the Canadian centre for magnetic fusion in Varennes. However, this same government found \$23 million for its heritage minister's flags. It also found \$550,000 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Canadian citizenship and passport. I could quote more figures in other areas where it failed to mention how it is going about its propaganda activities.

In Canada and Quebec, we have artistic creators. Current guidelines from Heritage Canada require that people wanting to deal with Canada in that area do so not on the basis of their artistic talents, in every aspect of artistic life, but on the basis of whether or not their work promotes Canadian unity.

Their talents are evaluated according to their capacity to strengthen Canadian unity. I ask my colleague if he believes that using artists to promote Canadian unity is a good way to meet this objective?

Mr. Bertrand: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. I agree that, in the present context, some cuts are necessary.

I would like to remind my colleague that the funding for Télé-Québec, the corporation which replaced Radio-Québec, has been cut nearly by half.

On the other hand, we in this government did not impose such drastic cuts on Radio-Canada. We did make some cuts, but their purpose was to ensure the survival and financial well-being of the corporation. I refuse to say that we are not protecting our cultural institutions.

When I look at what the Quebec government, Mr. Bouchard's government did, when I see the extent of the cutbacks in the cultural institutions' budgets, a 50 per cent cutback, I think there is something seriously wrong with the system.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, before anything else, I would like you to ask if we have unanimous consent to put this motion to a vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): We do not have unanimous consent.

• (1730)

Mr. de Savoye: I am truly sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I had to check the interest of my Liberal colleagues in this matter.

From a legal point of view, I am a Canadian; from a constitutional point of view, I am a Canadian. But in my heart, I am a Quebecer. This is the crux of the matter. How much money, how many flags will Heritage Canada have to distribute to change the deep feelings I have?

I travelled in a number of countries; I travelled in the rest of Canada. When I am outside Quebec I see the cultural differences, I see the difference in values, I see the difference in standards and benchmarks. When I am outside Quebec I know that I am not home, in the very deep sense of the term.

Yes, when I travel in Canada I am legally in that country given to me by the Constitution, but it is a country where people speak and think in English. The values are excellent, but different in their form and substance from the ones we have in Quebec.

There is an Anglo-Canadian culture, different from the American culture. I know, I have been on both sides of the border, but this culture is not the culture found in Quebec. To tell you the truth, I would be hard-pressed to name movie stars, singers, actors, etc. from English Canada. I would not have the same problem with Quebec artists. Why? Because I listen to radio programs from Quebec, and they introduce us to artists from Quebec and the rest of the French-speaking world; because I read in French and I soak up what happens in the environment where I was raised and educated, which is Quebec.

Supply

When I am on this side of the Quebec border, I certainly find a friendly environment, with people with whom I can develop some friendships, but who are not from my culture. These are people with their own culture, and I am pleased to share in, to know and to appreciate their culture, but it is not mine. How much money will the minister of heritage have to spend to entice me to adopt a new culture?

You understand that Canada does not have enough money to change this culture that is deeply rooted in me. And if this is true for me, it is also true for millions of Quebecers. No amount of money will ever change this people and assimilate them into another people. This is why the minister of heritage's work is doomed to failure and this is in fact a waste of public money.

What I am saying is my case and the case of millions of Quebecers, but not the case of all Quebecers. Earlier, the member for Saint-Denis expressed an opposite opinion: she feels comfortable in this English Canadian culture.

• (1735)

This is what she feels and I cannot blame her for it. But the opposite is also true. I cannot be blamed for my own feeling, millions of Quebecers cannot be blamed for sharing this feeling.

On this side of the border, the culture is different and, consequently, attitudes are different. A week ago today, I had the opportunity to attend, in the Lester B. Pearson building, at the Department of Foreign Affairs, a presentation by a panel of American experts on the second mandate policies of the American president, Mr. Clinton.

The masters of ceremony, of course an official from the Department of Foreign Affairs, opened the meeting exclusively in English. But at the registration table, we were welcomed in both official languages. The documents handed out were bilingual, and interpretation services were available in seven or eight languages. French was naturally among these languages.

This meeting ran all morning and into the afternoon. There was a question period scheduled for members of the audience. I was the only one who got up and went to the mike to put a question in French to our American guests, who were provided with interpretation services of course. In fact, of the 75 or 100 Canadians in the room, I was the only one who questioned these eminent panellists on the policy thrusts for Mr. Clinton's second mandate regarding cultural issues in Canada.

You will understand that there are serious matters at issue here. Take the matter of *Sports Illustrated* for instance. There is also the dispute between the Minister of Industry and Telesat Canada, on the one hand, and the American FCC, on the other hand, over who will acquire two American satellites to be used for television broadcast.

Supply

Nobody but me raised this cultural question. It is important to all of Canada, but I was the only one to raise it, and I did so in French. I was not in my own country.

You will understand that the differences I perceive as I travel across Canada are important enough to make me feel like anyone who travels to a foreign country. Of course, I use the same currency, Canadian money. Of course, I do not need a passport. But I do not find myself among people who share my values, feelings and nationality.

A little more than a century ago, Calixa Lavallée and Adolphe Routhier composed the music and the lyrics of "O Canada", in French. These lyrics referred to their francophone ancestors. The translation in English came only later, and it does not render the notions and the feelings of the original, but is rather a transposition reflecting the values and the feelings of those of British ancestry.

• (1740)

In so doing, already 150 years ago, they created two Canadas, one of which is now called Quebec. How much more will the Minister of Canadian Heritage have to spend to change this reality which persists after 400 years, of which the first 150 were totally French? The Minister of Canadian Heritage has invested a lot of money to influence my heart.

For the celebrations of the 30th anniversary of the Canadian flag, 300 of the 600 billboards were put up in Quebec, while the other 300 were scattered throughout Canada. In that sense, we were already distinct.

An amount of \$1.1 million was allocated to heritage moments, or heritage minutes, designed by the Charles Bronfman Foundation, but \$2.2 million was paid. For the Canadian identity, we are talking about \$3 million; for the operation unity, during the referendum campaign, the Privy Council was allocated \$11 million; the Council for Canadian Unity received \$8.4 million, while the Canada Information Office, which was funded by Heritage Canada, got \$19.5 million. The one million flag operation cost \$23 million; operation unity cost \$5 million; the *Attractions Canada* spots currently shown on the TVA and CTV networks cost \$1.5 million. All these figures add up to \$100 million. And let me tell you this: even after spending \$100 million, the heritage minister has not managed to change one bit the feelings that make me a Quebecer.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to say that, in my opinion, the Minister of Canadian Heritage is using all these resources to deny Quebec's specificity and to make it a Canadian region like any other. You will understand that, after spending \$100 million, the minister still has not succeeded in her attempt.

As for the language issue, the government is trying to hide its failed Canadian policy. All the key federalist players deny the fact that francophones outside Quebec are being assimilated—thank goodness there are some left, thank goodness they are taking their destiny into their own hands, and thank goodness Quebec will always support them. However, the fact is there were many more 10, 20 or 100 years ago.

The goal of the Canadian language policy is no longer to preserve and promote the linguistic duality but, it seems, to make Canada a bilingual country for francophones, which will eventually lead to their assimilation.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage is responsible for culture and communications. She is in charge of official languages, national parks, historic monuments and sports. Parliament created that department to put together all the areas relating to the promotion of the Canadian identity, to which I do not relate and never will.

• (1745)

Here are four examples of Ottawa's attitude toward Quebec culture, a culture which, as far as the federal government is concerned, does not seem to exist. First of all, the passage of the Act to establish the Department of Canadian Heritage, which provides that the Department of Canadian Heritage shall initiate, recommend, coordinate, implement and promote national policies, projects and programs with respect to Canadian identity and values, cultural development and heritage.

On both sides, existing values are excellent and impressive, but they are different and consequently should be treated differently and distinctly with all due respect, through appropriate mechanisms developed by the people who espouse these values.

After the referendum, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage held hearings to help promote Canadian unity and Canadian identity. The committee invited major Canadian cultural institutions to testify about their activities to promote Canadian unity and asked citizens to suggest activities that would reinforce Canadian identity and unity.

Merging these two cultures is sheer fantasy. Quebec culture is fundamentally distinct from the culture of the rest of Canada. And perhaps there are a number of cultures in the rest of Canada that are just as distinct, if we consider the aboriginal people.

A third example: the director of the National Gallery in Ottawa, Shirley Thomson, made a submission to the committee without a single reference to the visual arts of Quebec. Believe it or not, John Harvard, who chaired the committee and only speaks English, commended her for remaining silent on the subject.

My fourth and last point is this. The director general of the Canada Council, Roch Carrier, was scolded by committee members

because the council awarded a grant to Marie Laberge, a sovereignist artist who co-wrote the preamble to the sovereignty bill.

My point is that as far as culture and values are concerned, it is impossible—and history has shown this to be the case with even the smallest groups on this planet—to change the values by which we live, to assimilate a population and especially a population like Quebec, which has been around for 400 years and is developing by leaps and bounds.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your attention, and I hope that what I just said will help my colleagues in this House understand that the Minister of Canadian Heritage is wasting public funds.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will share my time with the member for Timiskaming—French River.

I listened carefully to the remarks of the hon. member, which were, in my opinion, at times, anecdotal and personal.

• (1750)

I would like the member to tell us what these values are. He talks of Quebec values, of Canadian values. Canadian values are universal: those of tolerance, sharing, equality among Canadians. I think this has given the country its strength for these many years.

I agree that Canada is in a league of its own. The member opposite will agree with me, as do most people on this planet, that Canada is nevertheless a success. I recognize that the program of the department of cultural affairs cost nearly \$20 million.

I would ask the member to explain the dramatic costs of Quebec's separation from Canada and the divisions it would create. Walls are tumbling down these days. The focus is on unifying and sharing in every respect, not only in terms of trade, but in terms of values as well. These Canadian values are part of our daily lives.

We hear international commentators saying that they would like to have lived in Canada. Our standard of living, our economic successes are the envy of many.

It is sad to hear people criticizing Canadian values. Canada is a success compared to other countries. The United Nations has said so on a number of occasions. We can go as far back as Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who said, a little over 100 years ago, that the overriding thought in his life was to reconcile the various elements of this extraordinary country. The combining of these various forces is what made Canada into what it is today.

I hope the member opposite will remember that these values are universal and that they have served not only all of Canada, but Quebecers especially.

Supply

Mr. de Savoye: Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that I have never, ever, put down Canadian values. They deserve respect, but these are values that belong to the rest of Canada. Quebec has its own cultural values, as every nation has. There are no values with a capital V that are universal. Even the French have values that are different from ours. The fact that we speak the same language does not necessarily mean that we share the same values.

The Americans speak English and so do English Canadians. Do they have exactly the same values? No, there are some differences, just as there are similarities, I am sure. There are, of course, values that transcend cultures. Tolerance is one value that we share, I agree.

But when I discuss our cultural foundations and our vision with my English speaking colleagues, given their cultural baggage, they sometimes see certain values differently than I do. This difference is normal and natural, and I respect it.

What I ask is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage to show the same respect and stop stubbornly spending tens of millions of dollars on eliminating these differences. The richness of our respective cultures would suffer. These differences must remain. We must remain who we are. We must develop a new co-operative approach and partnership. Sovereign states sharing certain responsibilities seems like a modern alternative to the old approach that does not work.

• (1755)

Earlier, the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine indicated how prosperous a country Canada was. You must agree with me that, for a time, Canada did seem to be a prosperous country, but that was only because of endless borrowing, resulting in this accumulated debt we have today, totalling approximately \$600 billion. Any country ill-advised enough to accumulate such a huge debt would become the best place in the world to live in.

At present, in all our ridings, and I am sure this situation exists in Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine as well, some people can barely afford three square meals a day. There are children who go to school hungry. This country we call Canada is not the best place in the world to live in for these people. Such situations should not exist.

During that time, approximately \$100 million was spent on trying to swallow up Quebec's culture. That is a waste of time and money and, more importantly, it is money that would be better spent helping the most disadvantaged in our society.

I think I have made my point. The hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine will certainly agree with me that there are people in his riding who could use this money.

Supply

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Portneuf is right when he says that Canada's current prosperity is largely the result of loans we have a hard time paying back.

I want to tell my colleague, and the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, that this prosperity was generated by the work of Canadians and Quebecers; it is not related to the confederation. Canada's prosperity should not be used as an argument in favour of the federation. We all know other federations which are definitely not prosperous, such as Russia or the former Yugoslavia.

There is no causal link between the political system of this country and its prosperity. It is work, the work of the people, that generated this prosperity. So, let us stop raving about this prosperity and use it as an argument in favour of federalism.

If you cut a cake into two pieces, the pieces are as good after as they were before the cake was cut. If we split Canada into two parts, will Quebec and the rest of the country be less prosperous? The answer is no. So, let us cut the cake into two pieces, let each one have a piece, let us remain friends, and let us stop raving about how good the cake was before it was shared. It will be just as good after it is shared.

Mr. Benoît Serré (Timiskaming—French River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier, the hon. member for Portneuf talked about wasting time and money. The biggest waste of time and money for Quebecers was to elect 50 some members from the Bloc Québécois.

These members have been sitting here for about three and a half years. I did some quick calculations. I figured that, over the last three years, they collectively spent, in salaries, budgets for their ridings and transportation, some \$100 million, all this on purely separatist propaganda.

The only motion which I could support today in this House would be: "That this House condemn the use of public funds by the Bloc Québécois on purely separatist propaganda activities".

Mr. de Savoye: Mr. Speaker, whatever amount we cost the public purse, each of us costs exactly the same as any member of this House.

However, the money used to pay for my salary and for the operation of my office comes from my constituents who elected me with 54 per cent of the votes. That is democracy. If my hon. colleague opposite cannot respect the fact that 53 members of the Bloc were democratically elected according to the rules of this Parliament and of this Canada to whom we belong legally and constitutionally and which also govern the way he was elected himself, if there is a double standard allowing him to sit here

because the rules are good for him whereas they are not good for us and we are not entitled to sit here, then he should say so and assume that Quebec would be better off forming a country of its own.

• (1800)

In any case, that is what we want. We are asking for it, we are waiting for you to grant it to us, and if you refuse to do so, then the people, by way of a referendum, will demand it.

Mr. Benoît Serré (Timiskaming—French River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too was elected by 60 percent of my constituents to serve Canada in this House. That is what I intend to do.

I would like to address the House today to set the record straight. I want to talk about the exceptional measures taken recently to help francophones in this country develop culturally. It is true that the arts and culture sector in Canada has suffered cutbacks, on both the anglophone and francophone sides. You know this better than anyone: the economic situation in which we find ourselves requires that the government reduce spending. It has no other choice. This is the case for Canada and it is the case for all other countries in the world, including Quebec, more about which, which is now up against new international stakes.

All sectors in society, including the cultural sector, must look at the situation and carry their share of the load. Canada's prosperity depends on it. But let us be clear: there is no question of the economic development of our country moving ahead to the detriment of our culture and our collective identity.

Above all, the Government of Canada has no intention of weakening without due cause a sector as important as culture, which alone contributes \$30 billion to the Canadian economy and represents almost 900,000 direct jobs, even less so in this time of expanding markets and borders when the cultural vitality of a country is a key to success and to the future.

Francophones share in this cultural wealth that makes Canada so unique and so successful. One quarter of the population speaks, sings, writes and lives in French, including my community in northern Ontario. From our earliest history, francophones have constituted an influential force that has contributed to the growth of this country, culturally, socially and economically.

In this context, the government's commitment to francophone communities in minority situations takes on its full significance. The government wants to help its communities meet the challenges of their situation so that they can continue to take part in Canada's development and help strengthen its cultural identity.

Francophones outside Quebec recently expressed their concerns regarding government cuts to the CBC. They were worried that these cuts would have adverse effects on regional programming.

We know how important it is for these communities to have access to French language broadcasting that reflects their values, presents their perspective on the world and enables them to communicate with each other. For those who are most isolated, it is nothing less than a matter of survival.

Aware of this reality, the CBC and the government took the necessary decisions. Last January, the CBC announced a series of measures to reduce the impact of these cuts on French language programming outside Quebec.

First, the four western television stations will give up the news cast *Ce soir*. In addition, regional stations will continue to produce children's, news and special broadcasts focusing on events of importance to these communities.

Second, the CBC will make available to independent producers and community groups of the Acadian community in the maritimes a mobile T.V. unit to cover cultural and community events. It will also provide a \$500,000 line of credit.

Third, the sum of \$500,000 will be set aside for the most affected radio stations outside Quebec, those in Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina and Windsor, in order to augment the content of local broadcasting.

• (1805)

I remind everyone that radio stations serving minority francophone communities were less affected by the cuts than other CBC radio stations on the average throughout the country.

In a press release dated January 30, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne, a national coalition of nine provincial and two territorial francophone associations, praised the efforts of the CBC. It said: "This reorganization demonstrates that the CBC is becoming increasingly attuned to the needs of the communities in the various provinces, as well as to its mandate to those communities".

Subsequent to this, the Government of Canada also made two major decisions which will help the CBC fulfil this mandate. It announced that it would be giving an additional \$10 million to the French and English language services of CBC radio.

According to Marcel Pépin, Vice-President CBC French language radio, this will enable radio to better fulfil its primary missions: to support talent, maintain information systems which are strongly anchored in the regions, and properly reflect regional voices on the AM and FM networks.

One piece of good news follows another. Starting April 1, 1998, the government will guarantee stable financing to the CBC for the next 5 years, in keeping with the announcement it made less than a week ago.

Supply

In addition, a new television and cable production fund has been created for the production of Canadian programs, totalling \$200 million yearly, and now accessible to the CBC.

I hardly need to point out that these announcements were received with a great deal of joy by the francophone communities in this country. Canada's cultural vitality must of necessity include the cultural development of its francophone population. French speaking Canadians have shaped the history of this country, and they lend a singular face and a special voice to Canada. That is why, despite the financial restrictions facing it, the government has intervened to strengthen the cultural foundations of the francophone communities outside Quebec.

To touch the culture of a country is to touch its very soul. On the eve of a new millennium, we are becoming increasingly aware of the necessity of using every possible means to strengthen the soul of this country. All of these measures, and those the government plans to take in future to safeguard Canadian culture, are paving the way to the Canada of tomorrow.

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to my hon. colleague, the member from northern Ontario.

In this country, there are two founding nations; it is a little bit like a couple. You cannot buy love. I recall that on October 27, 1995, people in the party opposite spent an inordinate amount of money on a sudden show of love for the Quebec people. Tens of thousands of people from Ontario and New Brunswick converged on Place Canada, downtown Montreal. Even the airlines were asked to do their share. People were supposed to suddenly show their love.

Twelve month later, there was an attempt to repeat the performance, but this time the airlines and the Liberal Party of Canada were not asked to contribute. The result: hardly 225 people showed up to profess their love for the Quebec people.

• (1810)

Was it love for one day or love for ever? Quebecers will not be bought with flags, biased information, information that sounds like the kind of propaganda that could be heard on the airwaves in Europe at a certain time.

I must commend my hon. colleague, the member for Richmond—Wolfe, for his motion. I would like to read the part I am interested in. As he said so rightly a little while ago, the government must reduce its expenditures. It has been cutting everywhere except in the area of propaganda.

The member for Richmond—Wolfe wrote:

Supply

That this House denounce the use of public funds squandered on propaganda activities sponsored by Heritage Canada, such as the Canada Information Office and the *One Million Flags* Operation—

Finally, I would like the member to tell me how it is that his government has been had by Robert Gillet? While on the air on his Quebec radio show, he dialled the infamous number 1-800-DRA-PEAU and said he was Bob Sweater. He ordered thousands of flags to fly on every cottage on both sides of the Saint Lawrence River, from Quebec City to Gaspé. Thousands of flags were actually shipped.

They had to give get rid of these infamous flags; the magic number was one million and there are 30 million of us. This means that one Canadian in 30 had to receive a flag. Robert Gillet, alias Bob Sweater, received several thousands of them. Sirs, you have become the laughing stock of Quebecers.

We are in the thick of budget cuts. Try to explain to your government that it is currently squandering public funds on propaganda activities that are underhanded, disgusting and verging on the ridiculous.

Mr. Serré: Mr. Speaker, I am indeed one of those Canadians who travelled to Montreal in 1995. I did it with pride, and I would gladly do it again tomorrow. I went back there afterwards too. It has not been just a one day love affair, as you say. I do not believe in the love of one night, also called a one night stand.

I went back to beautiful Quebec City. And I have to tell you I visit Quebec City with the same pride I feel when I visit the Rockies, Vancouver or the maritimes. Each summer, I spend a week down there visiting my Acadian brothers and cousins. Incidentally, I met the hon. member there.

Let me say just this. We did not go to Montreal just to tell Quebecers we love them, but also to undo some of the misinformation by the Parti Québécois and the Bloc Québécois. I visited Jonquière, not far from Mr. Bouchard's riding. I asked about 200 people how many French speaking Canadians they thought we have in Ontario: 5,000, 10,000, or 50,000?

When I told them 50,000, they were amazed and would not believe there were more than 10,000, because that is what they had been told by the separatist propaganda. When I told them there were 600,000 francophones in Ontario, and that 400,000 anglophones had learned French, they would not believe me. One million people speak French in Ontario, and they are not even aware we exist, and they want to make an informed decision on the future of this country. This is the problem we have in Canada. There is a lack of communication.

• (1815)

Quebecers are ill-informed by the media which are very often separatist but work with federal money. That is why it is so important that the federal government should make sure Quebec-

ers and all Canadians are proud of their flag and have all the information they need if another referendum is ever held, so that Quebecers can make an informed decision. This time you will be soundly beaten.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): With your propaganda.

Mr. Serré: I would rather use public funds for propaganda to promote pride in this country—and I am proud of it—than to promote separation and job loss.

My colleague, the member for Portneuf, just said that there are children who still live in poverty and suffer. I admit this is true. It is true in Quebec and outside. But the problem may now be more serious in Quebec because of the separatist option which hinders job creation and economic recovery in that province and elsewhere in Canada.

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member who just gave an impassioned speech. He spoke with a lot of conviction about the Canadian francophonie and, of course, the preservation of Quebec within the Canadian federation.

However, I want to point out that the promotion of a sovereign or an independent Quebec is hurting Quebec and is worrying some people, including investors. We must ensure that the people know the full cost of independence.

We talked about the unemployed young people in my riding and the economic problems we have, which are, indeed, very serious. If we do not have the opportunity to address the concerns of our people it is mainly because of the political instability which is being propagated and pursued by the Parti Québécois and also because of the presence of the Bloc Québécois here, in Ottawa.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member argues that political instability is hurting the economy, but what about Team Canada's missions in countries where human rights are violated? What about these missions in countries where the political system is almost undemocratic and even in some cases totalitarian? This is going too far.

We have to tell it like it is. Federalism comes with a price that the province of Quebec has been paying for the last 150 years. Federalism comes with a price tag that has reached an unacceptable level, and sovereignty is the option supported by the province of Quebec, which is asking the rest of Canada to set up a new framework called a partnership. This framework would be particularly well defined, absolutely negotiable and would put an end to any so-called political instability.

It takes two to create instability. As long as this problem is maintained by our federalist friends, it will not go away. The only way to settle it is to opt for a partnership where the province of Quebec will become sovereign and take its responsibilities, and where Canada will do the same. Only then will we be able to face

the problems of the 21st century, instead of trying to deal with problems left over from the 19th century.

[English]

Mr. Serré: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Frontenac a while ago was talking about love of one night.

Mrs. Picard: On parle tous français ici. Ceux qui t'écoutent parlent français et comprennent le français.

Mr. Serré: It is my right, Madam, to speak English or French in this country, and I prefer at this point to address the House in English. Please have the decency to accept that.

• (1820)

The member for Frontenac was referring to a love of only one night. I think the member for Portneuf is talking about having a separation, a divorce, because the family is not working anymore. After that he said "We want to get back together. We want to remarry. We will get divorced but we want to keep not only alimony from Canada but also bed privileges". I say that they cannot have it both ways.

[Translation]

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think there is very little time left in this House. I can assure you that Quebec will be part of the Canadian Federation for still a very long time because I can feel things are changing.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Gagnon: Things are changing in Quebec. I feel the will of a new generation. The will not of the old generation, not of these backward-looking people, but of a new generation that has taken the opportunity to travel, to explore, to exchange, to find new ways to communicate, new ways to create jobs, to open up to new horizons often unexploited.

You know, the great Canadian project meets the real needs of the people. Lucien Bouchard came to my constituency in the Magdalen Islands to announce a \$200,000 grant for a small project there. As for us, we invested \$1.5 million to send workers back to school, to develop programs, to train a new generation of workers. That is what the Canadian government wants; that is what the people want: to put Canadians back to work.

I hear them in the House talk about telecommunications, and the electronic highway, but, as you may know, my constituency has the greatest number of net surfers in all of Quebec. More than eight villages are on the net. This is not the case, unfortunately, throughout Quebec. Through federal programs, thanks to the Canadian government, these new community centres are linked to

Supply

the Internet. I hope they will be able to create long term jobs in my riding.

Unfortunately, there is always some lag time in communications.

Mr. de Savoye: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I recognize that, as usual, our colleague is brilliantly doing his thing but I think he is not speaking on the motion and therefore is out of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): I have no doubt that the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine will soon speak to the motion and that his remarks will surely be similar to others made during debate this afternoon.

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I wish to highlight, so to speak, these values. And one of the great values of our Canadian federation is taking care of the needy. It is also to say the truth and, often, to denounce iniquities, injustices frequently committed by the government of Quebec.

Of course, I sometimes speak as someone in opposition, but what concerns us most is not propaganda, it is not flags, it is to put people back to work. And I believe that we must tell this to Quebecers, we must condemn the opposition once and for all, by saying that there are costs—

[English]

Mr. de Savoye: Mr. Speaker, I will now speak in English. Maybe I will be better understood by the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine. I appreciate whatever he is saying but obviously he did not get the point you made, that he would eventually come to the motion.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): As I said earlier, today's debate has been quite general, at least while I occupied the chair.

I have no doubt that the hon. member who is making remarks concerning national unity, which really has been the topic of today's debate during most of the time I occupied the chair, is making his remarks on the same subject and that directly he will be moving on to the subject of the motion.

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, one must conclude that the hon. member of the opposition has not understood anything because Quebecers said no on two occasions. I wanted to remind him of that.

• (1825)

I think that we must make sure that Quebecers and the rest of Canadians gain a better understanding of the way the Canadian federation works. Our system is not perfect, I admit, but I believe that it is our duty to explain to the people how our federation works and to promote exchanges between Canadians.

Adjournment Debate

I do not think that we must put up obstacles. I do not think that we must isolate Quebec from the rest of Canada or from the international mainstreams. I think that sometimes, we must spend all the money that is necessary. Some people may not like it, but some others are happy with it and I believe that the ultimate goal is to make sure that for Quebecers, the sovereigntists do not take over the debate without being challenged in their assertions.

I mentioned the millions spent by the Quebec government in nonrecurring or special projects, like the \$4 million that went to the Conseil de la souveraineté, to which I often allude, the \$300,000 spent on the 1-800-INDEPENDANCE toll free line, and the \$8.5 million used to finance the separatist commissions and the sovereignty commissions just before the referendum.

That opposition that is supposed to be the loyal opposition is not so loyal to Canada after all. This is not the case. These people have used most of their time dismantling the Canadian federation, and I believe and hope that the figures provided by the opposition and the things it says will be put in the proper context, based on clear explanations of the benefits of the Canadian federation to the people of Quebec.

I know of no government, be it in England, Germany or France, which would not do anything in its power to preserve the unity of its country. I believe we have shown an exemplary tolerance. We are not propagandists, but people who wish to share true information. We want a balanced debate. I believe that the primary goal of the Department of Cultural Affairs and of this government is to make sure that the truth is known. The reason we are here in this Chamber is to discuss a substantive issue. We talk about the Canadian flag, Canadian colours and Canadian history.

I wish to talk about the future and about employment. Now, we all know that the future lies within the Canadian federation and not outside as the opposition claims.

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my distinguished colleague—

Mr. Serré: Mr. Speaker, I think that this discussion is being conducted on my time, and we already had two interventions. I did not have the opportunity to answer the hon. member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): As I indicated, there are two minutes left for questions or comments. As we all know, it is customary for the first question or comment following a speech to go to an hon. member from a different party, and this is the reason why I recognized the hon. member for Frontenac who now has the floor for one minute.

Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for playing Solomon. That is perfect, one minute for me and one minute for the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

When I met the constituents of the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, on three occasions, these very warm people told me: “This is strange, you are coming to visit us, but we never see our own MP”.

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. These are allegations. I can tell you that I go there every month and I do not think it is appropriate for the hon. member to discuss the problems in my riding. I can assure you that I look after my constituents’ interests and I believe that they will be the judges of that.

Things like the *Irving Whale*, the \$1.5 million invested in the Magdalen Islands, the new ferry soon to be put in service, will remind people that the member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine is working hard on their behalf, for their well-being.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Milliken): Debate is now closed. It being 6.30 p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that proceedings on the motion have expired.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

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

ASBESTOS INDUSTRY

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Monday, I asked the Prime Minister about his visit to France on January 22 and 23.

In my first question, which was very straightforward, I asked the Prime Minister to tell the House about the outcome of his representations with his counterpart, Alain Juppé, concerning the safe use of asbestos. By way of an answer, the Prime Minister merely pointed to some facts known to everyone, namely, the announcement during a press conference of France’s refusal to reconsider its position on the asbestos issue.

In a supplementary question, following the answer given by the Prime Minister, that I considered totally inadequate, I asked for a simple explanation about the Liberal government’s stubborn refusal to go to arbitration before the WTO.

As early as last December, I had raised this alternative with the minister of international trade and the Prime Minister. Almost three months later, the government is starting to examine the issue more seriously. I was hoping the Prime Minister, despite his inability to adequately manage this crisis, which goes way beyond the trade dimension, could have given at least one good news to the asbestos people. On the contrary, the Prime Minister seems to lose

total interest in the issue and only gives vague interpretations of our regional realities.

I would like to know the underlying reasons behind the Liberal government's refusal to take serious steps to make France respect its commitments to the WTO and the OTI. France is violating a significant trade commitment based on a single report, the scientific bias of which seems basically flawed.

In fact, this past January, the Royal Society of Canada made public its analysis of the INSERM report which clearly demonstrated that the basic premises of the French specialists no longer reflected the current reality of asbestos handling methods and the safety aspects.

The Liberal government is unwittingly losing all of the opportunities available to it to preserve more than 2,000 jobs in such a vital sector of our economy. What could the underlying motivations of the cabinet possibly be to explain this chronic hesitancy to draft a concrete action strategy to deal with the French government?

During the 80's, Canada dared confront the US on the same questions. Today, it refuses to get involved in a process which could enable the asbestos industry to gain some exemptions from the French decision.

The Bloc Québécois has been calling, ever since this crisis began, for a structured intervention from the Liberals. We are still waiting for even the foundation of such a structure. The government, and the Prime Minister and his minister of international trade in particular, are settling for saying over and over that negotiations are under way. The people in the asbestos mining region are concerned, and the government's shilly-shallying is not enough for them.

I am therefore making a formal request to the government to initiate as quickly as possible a procedure to contest France's ban on asbestos before the World Trade Organization.

If the asbestos mines were located anywhere but Quebec, would the response have been as vigorous as the government's response, past and present, to defend Sherritt's interests in Cuba in relation to the ban under Helms-Burton?

[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, during his visit to Paris on January 22 and 23, the Prime Minister raised Canada's concerns over the French ban with both the French prime minister and the French president.

Adjournment Debate

During the same visit, the Minister of Industry provided the French authorities with a copy of the report from the Royal Society. This study, commissioned by the Canadian government, raises some important questions regarding the report from the Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale which is used by the French authorities to justify its asbestos ban. Prime Minister Juppé has agreed to have its experts examine the Royal Society report.

The federal government meets regularly with the Quebec government, the industry and the unions to develop a common approach in addressing the French ban on asbestos use, as well as its potential effects in other markets. This is in line with the concerted action plan agreed upon on July 24, 1996 by all the parties.

The federal government has raised this important issue at the highest levels in France. I anticipate that all interested parties will continue to play their respective roles in this jointly managed file.

As an example of that concerted approach, our missions facilitated the current meetings by the Quebec minister for international affairs in Germany, Belgium and the U.K., where the asbestos issue will be raised, as well as his upcoming visit to Senegal and the Ivory Coast.

The Canadian Minister of Natural Resources is also writing to her Quebec counterpart on a memorandum of understanding with the industry on the responsible use of asbestos.

We are also invoking our rights under the World Trade Organization to address the French ban. As a first step we formally asked the French government on January 27 to justify the ban under the technical barriers to trade agreement. France's reply will help us in assessing the asbestos ban in the context of France's WTO obligations.

Pending that reply, it is premature at this stage to discuss other options available to Canada under the WTO. When all relevant information on that file will have been gathered with the help of the Quebec government, the industry and the unions, the Minister for International Trade will decide on any further action.

Meanwhile, it is irresponsible to discuss publicly any strategy with regard to further WTO actions, as it could prove harmful to the asbestos industry and its related jobs in the region.

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

(The House adjourned at 6.38 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, February 17, 1997

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Corrections and Conditional Release Act

Bill C-296. Motion for second reading	8165
Mr. Cannis	8165
Ms. Meredith	8168
Mr. Bellehumeur	8169
Mr. Harb	8171
Mr. Finlay	8172
Mr. Crawford	8173

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Supply

Allotted Day—Heritage Canada

Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	8173
Motion	8173
Mr. Harb	8176
Ms. Fry	8177
Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac)	8181
Mr. Abbott	8181
Amendment	8184
Mrs. Dalphond—Guiral	8184
Mr. Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	8186
Ms. Phinney	8187
Mr. Abbott	8188

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Correctional Service Canada

Mr. Morrison	8188
--------------------	------

Teaching Excellence

Mr. Fewchuk	8189
-------------------	------

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Mrs. Picard	8189
-------------------	------

National Heritage Day

Ms. Phinney	8189
-------------------	------

The Budget

Mrs. Wayne	8189
------------------	------

Somalia Inquiry

Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre)	8189
----------------------------------	------

Great Northern Exhibition

Mr. Calder	8190
------------------	------

Youth Unemployment

Mr. Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean)	8190
-------------------------------------	------

National Heritage Day

Mr. Byrne	8190
-----------------	------

Marian Sweetnam

Mr. O'Reilly	8190
--------------------	------

Canadian Flag

Mrs. Gagnon (Québec)	8191
----------------------------	------

Canada Pension Plan

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West)	8191
--------------------------------------	------

Team Canada

Mrs. Bakopanos	8191
----------------------	------

Transportation

Mr. Allmand	8191
-------------------	------

Education

Mr. McWhinney	8191
---------------------	------

Capitol Theatre Association

Mr. Crawford	8192
--------------------	------

Farm Industry

Mr. Hermanson	8192
---------------------	------

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Goods and Services Tax

Mr. Gauthier	8192
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	8192
Mr. Gauthier	8192
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	8193
Mr. Gauthier	8193
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	8193

Poverty

Mr. Loubier	8193
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	8193
Mr. Loubier	8193
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	8193

Canada Pension Plan

Mr. Manning	8193
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	8194
Mr. Manning	8194
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	8194
Mr. Manning	8194
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	8194

Public Finances

Mr. Duceppe	8195
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	8195
Mr. Duceppe	8195
Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)	8195

Canada Pension Plan

Mr. McClelland	8195
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	8195
Mr. McClelland	8195
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	8196

Somalia Inquiry

Mr. Brien	8196
Mr. Young	8196
Mr. Brien	8196
Mr. Young	8196

Pensions

Mr. Solberg	8196
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	8196
Mr. Solberg	8197
Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard)	8197

Canadian Embassy in Washington

Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	8197
--	------

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	8197
Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	8197
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	8197
Grain Shipments	
Mr. Iftody	8197
Mr. Goodale	8198
Somalia Inquiry	
Mr. Hart	8198
Mr. Young	8198
Mr. Hart	8198
Mr. Young	8198
Department of Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	8198
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	8199
Mr. Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	8199
Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre)	8199
Department of Justice	
Mr. Ramsay	8199
Mr. Rock	8199
Mr. Ramsay	8199
Mr. Rock	8199
Rwanda	
Mr. Flis	8199
Mr. Boudria	8199
Airbus	
Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing)	8200
Mr. Rock	8200
Points of Order	
Comments during Question Period	
Mr. Strahl	8200
The Speaker	8200
Mr. Silye	8200
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
Government response to petitions	
Mr. Zed	8201
Petitions	
Infrastructure Program	
Mr. Harb	8201
National AIDS Strategy	
Mr. Godfrey	8201
National Unity	
Mr. Jordan	8201
Highways	
Ms. Meredith	8201
Employment Insurance	
Ms. Meredith	8201
Taxation	
Ms. Meredith	8201
Nuclear Weapons	
Mrs. Wayne	8201
Post Office	
Mr. Penson	8201
Taxation	
Mr. Penson	8201

Pornography	
Mr. Bertrand	8202
Highways	
Mr. Duhamel	8202
Nuclear Weapons	
Mr. Bodnar	8202
Highways	
Mr. Bodnar	8202
Gasoline Prices	
Mr. Bodnar	8202
Highway System	
Mr. Paré	8202
Police Dogs	
Mr. Williams	8202
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Zed	8202

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Supply	
Allotted Day—Heritage Canada	
Consideration resumed of motion and amendment	8203
Ms. Phinney	8203
Mr. Speller	8204
Mr. Paré	8206
Mrs. Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)	8206
Mr. Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	8209
Mr. Duhamel	8209
Mr. Mercier	8210
Mr. Duhamel	8210
Mr. Rocheleau	8212
Mr. Bodnar	8213
Mr. Fillion	8214
Mr. Hermanson	8214
Miss Grey	8214
Mr. de Savoye	8216
Mr. Silye	8217
Mr. Abbott	8218
Mrs. Bakopanos	8219
Mr. de Savoye	8221
Mr. Serré	8221
Mr. Bertrand	8221
Mr. Fillion	8222
Mr. de Savoye	8223
Mr. Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	8225
Mr. Mercier	8226
Mr. Serré	8226
Mr. Serré	8226
Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac)	8227
Mr. Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	8228
Mr. de Savoye	8228
Mr. Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)	8229
Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac)	8230

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Asbestos Industry	
Mr. Chrétien (Frontenac)	8230
Mr. Bodnar	8231

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